

**TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY**

**Barthelme's *Snow White*: A Study in Parody and Intertextuality**

**A Thesis submitted to the Department of English, Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara**

**in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of**

**Master of Arts in English**

**By**

**Ananda Raj Paudel**

**Class Roll No. : 93/063**

**Exam Roll No. : 1007**

**T.U. Regd. No. : 4969-93**

**Department of English**

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**Letter of Recommendation**

This is to certify that Mr. Ananda Raj Paudel has prepared this thesis entitled "*Barthelme's Snow White: A Study in Parody and Intertextuality*" under my guidance and supervision. He carried out his research from December 2009 to April 2011 A.D. I, therefore, forward it to the Research Committee of Department of English, Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara for final evaluation, approval and acceptance.

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**Approval Letter**

This thesis entitled "*Barthelme's Snow White: A Study in Parody and Intertextuality*",  
Submitted to the Department of English, Prithvi Narayan Campus.

by Ananda Raj Paudel,

has been approved by the undersigned members of research committee.

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## Abstract

Barthelme's *Snow White* is a postmodern parodic intertextual novel. In this novel Barthelme emphasizes snow white's dissatisfaction through the use of fragmentary composition, self- reflection, metafiction, intertextuality, irony, parody and imagery evoking incompleteness. He also demonstrates the bankruptcy of language and literary traditions by parodying well known style and methods which is an innovative technique of postmodernism to foreground the subversive and intertextual mode of postmodern novel. He manipulates myth of a fairy tale for his own comic or parodic purposes. His parody of the genre of a fairy tale, of its mythical status and meaning, does not mean the rejection of fairy tales. In his depiction, Snow White has lost her mythical innocence as a representation of goodness, traditional values and morality as well as literary tradition a fairy tale represents. By becoming vulgar, erotic, anti- psychological, pseudo- intellectual and construction of clichés associated with contemporary consumer sensibility i.e. eroticism instead of traditional platonic and mythical innocence, indecency instead of politeness, calculativeness instead of honesty, *Snow White* has become a parodic version of her pretextual ancestor. In the novel, self- reflexivity is developed by narrator's frequent allusions, reference to and meditations on various works of art, scientific works and subjects. Metafictional strategies are used to reveal the fictional nature of the work itself. In providing a critique of their own methods of construction, such texts also explores the possible fictionality of the world outside the literary fictional texts.

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## CHAPTER - 1

### 1.1 Introduction: Footprints and the Work

The main purpose of this study is to analyze the novel, *Snow White*, written by Donald Barthelme in terms of postmodern parody and intertextuality. In other words, this Study aims at discovering why the novel gives its meaning only with relation to other works. The narrator imitates a fairy tale in such a way that makes the original thing ridiculous. The novel *Snow White* is focused on indecency and eroticism instead of Platonic and mythical innocence of the fairy tale. There is a ridiculous disparity between the manner and matter. The narrator takes different bits and pieces to make the novel complete. His presentation is different from traditional narrating techniques.

Donald Barthelme (1931-1989), who was blind from his birth, was a dynamic figure popularized as a short story writer, novelist, editor, journalist and teacher. He was born at Philadelphia in USA. He was an enthusiastic man who decided to become a writer at the age of ten. Barthelme also loved the place- the theatres, the restaurants, the jazz clubs, the swampy odors of Buffalo Bayou- and had a strongly developed sense of citizen, a loyalty to his city and its institutions. He admitted at the University of Houston in the early fifties and became editor-in-chief of School newspaper. He was passed by the School priests for being too irreverent, too iconoclastic.

Barthelme's craft and career was highly influenced by his father and his Catholic Schooling. He received a Guggenheim Fellowship and the National Book Award, plus numerous other literary prizes. In Rome, in 1989, he was also awarded a Senior Fellowship by the American Academy. He had several times married and divorced. Barthelme's daughter, Anne was a delight to him, and soon babies and children were

regular fixtures in his work. He fell gravely ill and died in the Summer of 1989 at the age of 58, with his fatal illness, throat cancer.

Barthelme wrote with both deep feeling and sardonic style about the quality of personal lives, relationship, and material fortunes in contemporary America. In 1962, he moved to New York and published his first story, *L' Lapse* in *The New York Times*. He was awarded the National Book Award for Children's Literature in 1972 for his book *The Slightly Irregular Fire Engine* in which his daughter Anne had helped him. He wrote 4 novels- *Snow White*, *The Dead Father*, *Paradise* and *The king* in his life. *Snow White* (1967) is based on a fairy-tale Snow White. Barthelme's attitude towards his father is delineated in the novels- *The Dead Father* (1975) and *The king* as he is pictured in the characters King Arthur and Lancelot. He wrote over a hundred short stories. They are collected in *Come Back* (1964), *Dr. Carigari* (1964), *Unspeakable Practices* (1968), *Unnatural Acts* (1971), *City Life* (1971), and, *Sadness* (1972) and later compiled into two best of books, *Sixty Stories* and *Forty Stories* (1987). Other writings of Barthelme are *Guilty Pleasures* (1974), *Amateurs* (1976), *Great Days* (1979), *Presents* (1981), *Overnight to Many Distant Cities* (1983) and *Sam's Bar* (1987). His contribution to literature is remarkable. Barthelme is often called a highly philosophical writer whose deepest intellectual roots seem to lie in the philosophies of existentialism and postmodernism. His principal methods are the collage and pastiche, but also occasionally makes use of script formats and more traditional forms.

The novel *Snow White* was appeared as a 'novella' in February 18, 1967, in *New Yorker*. Fragmented narrative, scattered plot, economical writing, use of allusions and references, visual references and typographical variations are dominant in the novel. Different perspectives are possible in the novel because of the

fragmentation in the narration. Thus, each and every fragments are significant in the novel though they may not have order. The plot is so scattered that nobody can fix the order. If we try to give a linear way to the novel it becomes narrow and loses significant features. Parallel lines can be drawn from the fairy tale for the general understanding. According to the story, the protagonist of the novel is a female character Snow White, who cohabits and makes loves with seven Dwarfs Kevin, Edward, Hubert, Henry, Clem, Dan and Bill- the leader. They involve themselves to wash the buildings and tend the vats in which they prepare their father's recipes of Chinese baby food. Snow White who is waiting for her prince figure, Paul for a longtime, enjoying by drinking alcohol and having sexual relation with the seven dwarfs. After finishing journey around the world, Paul returns to New York and plays a role of a trained dog to watch over Snow White. Jane, the villaneous character, just as stepmother in the fairy-tale, attempting to poison Snow White with a drink is intercepted by Paul. Paul drinks the conspired drink and dies. All the above factors are derived from different sources in a mocking style.

Critics and reviewers have their own views about Donald Barthelme and his novel, *Snow White*. The plot construction in the novel is not chronological; as the narrative technique is fragmented. Reader can not grasp the plot line smoothly. Jeffrey T. Nealon thus, comments: "The reader of *Snow White* does not take away a singular moral or plot line, but he or She does take away a revelation: the revelation that the ironic perspectives the one best suited to the contemporary situation" (127).

Barthelme's *Snow White* is drastically different from the Snow White in the fairy tale. It is ironic towards consumerist contemporary society. The single moral and plot line of the fairy tale i.e. platonic and mythical innocence is distorted by presenting

sexually active characters. The plot is varied and scattered with fragmented narrative which creates different perspectives for analysis. As Abrams defines, antinovel that is a work which is deliberately constructed in a negative fashion, relying for its effects on the deletion of standard elements, on violating traditional norms, and on playing against the expectations established in the reader by the novelistic methods and conventions of the past (134). This suits to *Snow White* which creates a negative fashion, violates traditional norms and established novelistic conventions. There is no attention paid to the standard elements such as plot, characterization, descriptions of states of mind, normal setting in time and space and the frame of reference to the world in which the novel is set. The novel doesn't lead reader's consciousness in a linear way. The characters act against the expectation of readers; for e.g., Paul is portrayed as a monk that suggests not having any interest in women's body but he prefers to look Snow White's naked body hiding under the tree. In this case, Cristina Bacchilega expresses her view as: "In Barthelme's *Snow White* language, structure, and style, then, are already a challenge to the conventions which regulate its interest *Snow White*" (13).

Snow white has become a sexual object of dwarfs. These sexual activities take place in the shower room turn by turn but her lap is unfertile. So the notion of sexuality as procreation is altered in this novel. They used sex as a means of pleasure not as a means of continuation of generation. In this context, Cristina Bacchilega further comments: "Quite explicitly, in fact, Barthelme's no longer muted *Snow White* criticizes the idea of sexuality as procreation (i.e. production, authorship, authority) and contrasts a different kind of pleasure, her own, to it" (15).

Along with the alteration in the traditional folktale it ruins the fame of Snow White in the novel. She has been changed in to a plaything of dwarfs and socially outcast woman in the conventional sense. She is a garbage and blame of the contemporary society as Herrero-Olaizola remarks:

Barthelme's *Snow White* not only parodies the folktale but converts it into garbage, destroying the popularity of Snow White by trashing Snow White. Barthelme's text consciously reflects on this trashing exercise and fosters an appreciation of the qualities associated with residual fiction (11).

Barthelme is free and frank. He is open to interpret. He thinks that it is not necessary to pretend reality. So the novel *Snow White* is a curious as well as an innovative novel which is being stylistically appropriate and remarkably entertaining performance that is sufficient to ensure its worth. Barthelme strives to blur the generic boundaries by using the language of newspaper in this novel. He also makes fun of hackneyed opinions and styles; and mocks Freudian psychology, existential patterns and silly concrete poems. In this regard, Larry McCaffery says:

Often Barthelme incorporates into his work the sorts of events, names, facts and data which can be found in the daily newspaper. Even more often, however, these fragments are drawn from cliches of learning hackneyed opinions dressed up in even more hackneyed styles. We find, for example, parodies of specific literary styles and conventions, pseudo- learned digressions about history, sociology, and psychology, mock presentation of Freudian and existentialist patterns, and innane concrete poem (21).

Eventhough literature is permanent which can't be time bound is filled with the events, names, facts and data which can be found in the daily newspaper. Aestheticity differentiates newspaper and special genre. Newspaper is time bound thus it is temporary but the novel which is a literary work is permanent despite its association with spatiality and temporality.

The purpose of Barthelme writing this novel is also to exercise the full play of his own imagination. He rejects the traditional chronology, plot, character, time, space, grammar, syntax, metaphor and simile, as well as traditional distinction between fact and fiction. Barthelme never prepares a draft for writing. He begins to write suddenly. So, Time Magazine quotes that Donald Barthelme's work creates the impression that something miraculous happened to him overnight –as if, blind from birth, he could suddenly see, or, fluent only in Urdu, he abruptly grasped English entire. The result is quite an explosion, on staccato burst of verbal star shells, pinwheel phrases, Cherry bombs of Joycean puns and wordplays... an amusingly refurbished fairy tale novel of the absurd (Afterword).

Barthelme brought the free-spirited and highly self-conscious stream of writing. The novel *Snow White* is an example of experimentation. His fragmentary style of writing is further commented by Herrero- Olaizola as:

The fragmentary nature of Barthelme's story is highlighted by typographical alteration in the text, specially a series of headings in boldface that occupy entire pages. These alternate with the story's narration to enuciate its thesis about the protagonist's psychological condition (16), or to comment on themes apparently unrelated to the story being told (11).

Barthelme intends to clarify that the different perspectives are only possible when there is fragmentation in narration. Each and every fragment is significant in the novel though they may have order. He finds equal importance and similarities in different binaries. As Josephine Hendin views; Barthelme's episodes show to avoid either asking or answering the questions where "Emptiness and boredom operates as alternatives to fury and pain. If there is nothing that signifies anything, then feeling and not feeling, having and not having are alike" (262).

The final section of the novel is extremely misleading for Barthelme who is much more interested in creating collage effect than following the story line to develop in any straight forward fashion. Supporting this stance, McCaffery further says:

Relying mainly on juxtaposition rather than more usual novelistic principle of transition to achieve its effects, Barthelme's apparent intent in bringing together this collection of fragments in such a blatantly non-linear fashion is to create the verbal equivalent of a collage (22).

The novel is an example of collage in which the narrator has juxtaposed heterogeneous fragments. He seems unwilling to exploit usual novelistic principles of transition. Thus the novel is resulted as the verbal equivalent of a collage.

In this way, the above mentioned critics and reviewers have expressed their opinions in regards to the style of Barthelme's writing in the novel, *Snow White*. They have failed to analyze parody as postmodern cultural agenda as used by Barthelme in his novel *Snow White*. For this aforesaid perspectives i.e. narrative, theme, technique etc. are not sufficient. They have slightly touched the issues of parody and irony. Thus, the study is going to justify that Barthelme through parodic subversion and

intertextuality, parodies the linear narrative, concept of hero; and challenges the hierarchies of meaning and use of language, philosophical and psychological systems of thought and psychoanalytical notion of subjectivity. The novel is self-reflexive which is developed by narrator's frequent allusions, references and meditations on various works of art, scientific works and subjects. So, his parodic depiction of Snow White, who has lost her mythical purity and innocence, is focused on the indecency and eroticism, and is challenged and distorted traditional platonic and mythical innocence. Through his hyper textual techniques, meta-fiction, self-reflexivity, and fragmented composition, he depicts the modern version of Snow White, her position and meaning in the contemporary American popular cultural context.



## CHAPTER - 2

### 2.1 Postmodernism is a Multitudinous Variant

Postmodernism is a complicated term or set of ideas, one that has only emerged as an area of academic study since the mid- 1980s. Postmodernism is hard to define because it is a concept that appears in a wide variety of disciplines or areas of study including in art, architecture, music, film, literature, sociology, communication, fashion and technology. It is hard to locate it temporally or historically because it is not clear exactly when postmodernism begins. The term applied to wide- ranging set of development in critical theory, philosophy, architecture, art, literature and culture which are generally characterized as either emerging form in literature to or superseding modernism.

Jean Baudrillard claims that contemporary culture is postmodernism. For him, the word, Postmodernism suggests fragmented and trivialization of values. In the field of architecture, the word Postmodernism denotes the rejection of the functionalism and brutalism of modern architecture. In the field of literature and art, postmodernism denotes to a break with or a continuation of modernism. To define the term Postmodernism would betray the spirit of Postmodernism itself as Lyotard rejects the notion of grand narrative. Thus, Nial Lucy in his *Postmodern Literary Theory: An Introduction*, states:

The basis of the Postmodern idea is that everything is a text. The idea that everything is text, which denies any special value to literary texts, is taken usually for a central tenet of Postmodernism. In Postmodern world, nothing is central and everything is paradox (ix).

Simon Malpas in his *The Postmodernism* points out the essence perspectives of different scholars in a huge variety of different ways: as a new aesthetic formation

(Hassan, 1982, 1987), a condition (Lyotard, 1984, Harvey, 1990), a culture (Connor, 1997), a cultural dominant (Jameson, 1991), a set of artistic movements employing a parodic mode of self-conscious representation (Hutcheon, 1988, 2002), an ethical or political imperative (Bauman, 1993, 1995), a period in which we have reached the 'end of history' (Baudrillard, 1994; Fukuyama, 1992; Vattimo, 1988), a 'new horizon of our cultural, philosophical and political experience' (Laclau, 1988), an 'illusion' (Eagleton, 1996), a reactionary political formation (Callinicos, 1989), or even just a rather unfortunate mistake (Norris, 1990, 1993). It evokes ideas of irony, disruption, difference, discontinuity, playfulness, parody, hyper-reality and simulation (Malpas: 6-7).

Postmodernism, originally a reaction to modernism, was largely influenced by the second world war. Postmodernism tends to refer to a cultural, intellectual, artistic state lacking clear central hierarchy or organizing principle and embodying extreme complexity, contradiction, ambiguity, diversity and interconnections or interreferentiality. Postmodernism like modernism follows most of the ideas like rejecting of boundaries between high and low form of art, rejecting the rigid genre distinction, emphasizing pastiche parody bricolage, irony-entropy, and playfulness. Postmodern art favours reflectivity and self-consciousness, fragmentation and discontinuity especially in narrative structures, ambiguity, simultaneity and an emphasis on the destructured, decentered, dehumanized subject. Thus the Postmodernism turns its head to the modernists order and highest state of artistic endeavor.

The term postmodernism is a very vague and broad idea. It is the non-defining discipline because it is paradoxical and always resist definition. So, to try to know the meaning of it is to involve in a problematic issue. For general understanding, *Webster's New Collage Dictionary* defines the word postmodernism, coming after and usually in reaction to modernism in the twentieth century, especially in art and

literature relating to diffuse culture and artistic trend or movement, especially in art, architecture and writing, since the 1950s, characterized by eliticism in style and content freedom from strict theatrical constraints, indifference to social concerns and so on". Thus, it is a trend from order to disorder and open-endedness. It describes further designating or of various theories used widely in criticism and interpretation, which question or reject claims of absolute intrinsic meaning, regarding such claims instead as assertion of privilege political power and so on.

Thus, the tendency from centering to decentering was officially inaugurated in theory-celebrating writers such as William Burrough, Jean Genet, James Joyce and Samuel Beckett, the music of John Cage and futurist Marshall McLuhan and Buckminster Fuller. These figures involved the rejection of the modernist's commitment to experiment and originality and a return to the use of older style and artistic methods even if this is done in an ironic manner. Jean Francis Lyotard, a prominent figure of postmodernist, discusses in his well known work, *The Postmodern Condition a Report on Knowledge* that:

postmodernism, surveys the status of science and technology and has become something of a bible of postmodernism. For the past few decades science has increasingly investigated language, linguistic theories, Communication, cybernetics, informatics computer and computer language, information storage, data banks and problem of translation from one computer language to another. He proclaimed that these technological changes would have a knowledge (8).

On the other hand, Postmodernism presents itself in a lucid and flexible way; it doesn't limit in a narrow boundary and becomes the never ending process. Friedrich Nietzsche who become the central figure of postmodernist mind revolted against the universal truth. Like Nietzsche, the postmodern intellectual situation is profoundly complex and ambiguous perhaps its very essence. What is called postmodern varies

considerably according to context but in its most general and widespread form, the postmodern mind may be viewed as an open-ended indeterminate set of attitudes.

According to Lyotard, since World War II, people no longer believe in the grand narratives like science and reason. After applying science and reason to the construction of gas chambers and efficient railroad schedules, the Nazis exterminated millions of human beings. Therefore, people did not experience freedom and liberation as promised by the grand narratives. Because of disbelief in the metanarratives that had legitimized science, science no longer plays the role of a hero that would lead us slowly towards full freedom and absolute knowledge. When science encounters paradoxes, such as the electron that goes opposite directions simultaneously, it abandons its search for decidable truths and seeks to legitimize itself through performativity. So science is no longer concerned with truth, but with performativity- performing- producing more of the same kind of research, because the more research you produce and the more you are seen as being right, the more money and power you get. Lyotard, further, defines postmodernism as: "Simplifying to the extreme, I define Postmodern as incredulity toward metanarratives" (xxiv). For Lyotard, the difference is that where traditional societies are under the narrative, post modern society is a society in which no one narrative, big or little, dominates. In Postmodern societies, many micronarratives are jammed together. He further says, "And this carnival of narratives replaces the monolithic presence of one metanarrative" (32). Moreover, postmodern society is made up of zillions of incompatible little stories or micronarratives. And where not one of these little stories can dominate or explain the rest. In fact, Lyotard's notion is that people have stopped believing in grand narratives because such narratives marginalize minorities and assumes that people universally believe in justice, and that is a metanarrative. Yet, despite its inadequacies, Lyotard's definition of postmodern as incredulity toward metanarratives continues to have a great influence.

Another influential postmodern thinker is Fredric Jameson. Lyotard celebrates the multiple, incompatible, heterogeneous, fragmented, contradictory and ambivalent nature of postmodern society while Jameson distrusts and dislikes it. In his famous essay *Postmodernism; or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, Jameson does not see the Postmodern era as postindustrial- as an ebb in the tide of capitalism. Rather, he sees it as an intensification and latest phase of a capitalistic world system. Jameson was highly influenced by Ernest Mandel's *Late Capitalism*, which broke down the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries into three definite historical periods. First: from 1700 to 1850, the period of market capitalism. Second: monopoly capitalism, during the age of imperialism. Third: the postmodern phase erupted on the world scene with the unrestricted growth of multinational corporations like Coca-Cola. This is the purest form of capitalism yet to emerge- invading nature by destroying the precapitalist forms of agriculture- and invading the unconscious mind by advertising. Mandel's history inspired Jameson to proclaim three cultural periods in which a unique cultural logic dominates. First is the age of Realism, the era of the bourgeois, historical novel. Second is the age of Modernism. Jameson admires modernism because modernist culture expressed its dissatisfaction with the world. And third is the age of Postmodernism. Postmodern cultural forms reflect the dislocation and fragmentation of language communities, splintered into small groups, each speaking: "... a curious private language of its own, each profession developing its private code or dialect, and finally each individual coming to be a king of linguistic island, separated from everyone else" (114). Thus, according to Jameson, postmodern city- dwellers are alienated, living in an hallucination, an exhilarating blur, a reality evaporation into mere images, spectacles, strange new warps in time and space, fixated on commodities, on products, on images, like the explosion of Andy Warhol's pop art, on flows of images stolen from consumer culture and reproduced with industrial repetition, Campbell's Soup cans, Brillo boxes, bottles of Coca-Cola, collages of

identical images of Hollywood stars such as Marilyn Monroe, all sameness, all surface, all depthlessness. Jameson is perhaps most well-known for his distinction between parody and pastiche. One thing that postmodernity has exploded is the subject- ego. In the age of modernity, people still believed in the subject- ego. But postmodernity has fragmented language and the subject, both have become schizoid. Jameson feels that parody and satire are only possible in the era of healthy linguistic normality. But, in the postmodern age, there is no linguistic normality. Thus, we can only produce pastiche.

The next significant map-maker of postmodernism is Jean Baudrillard who seems to suggest a kind of passive surrender to the flow of images in the postmodern media. In this regard, Jim Powell says, "You are wired. The passive victim of TV, computer and advertising. You are hypnotized by the tube, by the obscene flow of image" (41). This, according to the imagery of Postmodern theorist Jean Baudrillard, is similar to society's relationship to the world of mass media, advertising, television, newspapers, magazines. The era of mass communications invades our darkened rooms, embracing us with its cool, lunar light, penetrating into our most private recesses. We succumb to the fatal attraction, surrendering ourselves in an ecstasy of communication. Just as Nietzsche once proclaimed the death of God, Baudrillard's thought also declares the death of modernity, the death of the real, and the death of sex. Baudrillard undermines deep foundations of thought in disciplines such as Marxism, semiotics, political science, economics, religious studies, anthropology, literature, film and media studies, and many others. Semiotics is the structuralist study of various systems of meaning, like myths, traffic signals, language fashion, etc. Baudrillard's works combine a semiotic, structuralist study of culture with a neo-Marxist analysis. For instance, in his early works- *The System of Objects*, *The Society of Consumption* and *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*-Baudrillard argues, "Just as a young boy who grows among wolves becomes wolf like, people in

postmodern society, growing up in a world of objectives, become more object-like (45)".

Postmodern societies, dominated by computers and television, have moved into a new reality, which Baudrillard outlines in *The Orders of Simulacra*. For Baudrillard, simulacra are copies of real objects or events (48). According to him, a first-order simulation would be where the representation of the real (say, a novel, a painting or a map) is obviously just an artificial representation. A second-order simulation, however, blurs the boundaries between reality and representation. But third-order simulation goes beyond these positions: third-order simulation produces a hyperreal, or the generation by models of real without origin or reality. In a reversal of order, in third-order simulation, the model precedes the real, but this does not mean that there is a blurring between reality and representation. Baudrillard's worry with third-order simulation is that the model now generates what he calls hyperreality, that is, a world without a real origin. So with third-order simulation we no longer even have the real as part of the equation. Eventually, Baudrillard thinks that hyperreality will be the dominated way of experiencing and understanding the world. According to Baudrillard, we are now in the Third Order of Simulation- the era of postmodernity- the era of models. So, the presiding power in this era is the model or the code. "Digitality is its metaphysical principle.... and DNA is its prophet" (52). Just as language is governed by the code of grammar and our biological processes are controlled by the DNA code, our cultural life is bided on a variety of codes; we have sex videos, how-to manuals, advertising, television and newspapers to provide these codes. These codes not only provide models but also continually test.

Originally, simulacrum, according to Plato, is the false copy that overshadows our experience of the essential and ideal form. But in Baudrillard's view, postmodernity has overthrown the very concept of true copy. And this has happened

in stages. In the postmodern era, icons, images, copies- simulation- bear no resemblance to any reality. In fact, "the simulation, the simulacrum, the copy, becomes the real" (56). Therefore, for Baudrillard, one of the characteristics of postmodern society is that we are all similarly entranced by surfing the simulacra. In the universe of Hollywood, Pop Art, TV, Cyber-blitz, and dazzling spectacle of the mediaspaces, signs and images no longer bear any correspondence to the real world, but create their own: "hyperreality- an order of representation that is not the unreal, but has replaced 'reality' and more than real, more real than real" (58). If we think about a place such a Disneyland, in the US, we tend to think in terms of a fantasy representation of reality, a simulation of the real taken to extremes. But Baudrillard regards Disneyland, and the country that surrounds it, as partaking of the third- order of simulation. It is to think about Disneyland as second-order simulation, where fake castle look more real than the real, because they embody all of our childish and romantic notions of what a castle should ideally look like, and the machinery representation is so well hidden that reality and representation blur together. But the implications of Disneyland as third- order simulation are much harder to come to grips with. So, Baudrillard argues:

Disneyland is there to conceal the fact that it is the "real" country, all of "real" America, which is Disneyland .... Disneyland is represented as imaginary in order to make us believe that the rest is real, when in fact, all of Los Angeles and the America surrounding it are no longer real, but of the order of the hyperreal and simulation. It is no longer a question of a false representation of reality (ideology), but of concealing the fact that the real is no longer real ... (25).

Finally, postmodernism is a critique of the aesthetics of the preceding age, but besides mere critique, postmodernism celebrates the very act of dismembering tradition. Postmodernism questions everything rationalist European philosophy held



to be true, arguing that it is all contingent and that most cultural constructions have severed the function of empowering members of a dominant social group at the expense of Others. Beginning in the mid 1980s, postmodernism emerged in art, architecture, music, film, literature, sociology, communications, fashion, and other fields.

To understand modernism and postmodernism it is necessary to understand the concept of modernism because the postmodernism is the movement which attacks on modernism. Modernism generally refers to the broad aesthetic movements of the twentieth century. From the literary perspective modernism emphasis on impressionism and subjectivity in writing. Postmodernism emphasis on fragmented form, discontinuous narratives, and random seeming collages of different materials. It rejects the elaborate formal aesthetics theories, in favour of spontaneity and discovery in creation. Postmodernism like modernism follows most of the ideas rejecting boundaries between high and low forms of art defying rigid genre distinctions, emphasizing pastiche, parody, bricolage, irony, entropy and playfulness. Many modernist writers tried to capture the unity, coherence, order, meaning which has been lost in the modern life. They presented a fragmented view of human subjectivity and history. They lamented for the loss and become tragic. They felt nostalgia and regretted. Postmodernists reject the hierarchy and makes the culture openended.

One of the first writers to employ the term postmodern was the American literary critic Ihab Hassan. In the second edition of his groundbreaking book from 1971. *The Dismemberment of Orpheus: Toward a postmodern literature* (1982), he produces a schematic list of differences between modernism and postmodernism. This list purports to present the changes in focus between modern and postmodern art in terms of the wider questions they raise about representation. Although many of the categories it introduces have remained highly controversial, it is worth reproducing here as a guide:

Modernism	Postmodernism
Romanticism /symbolism	Pataphysics /Dadaism
Form (conjunctive, closed)	Antiform (disjunctive, open)
Purpose	Play
Design	Chance
Hierarchy	Anarchy
Master / Logos	Exhaustion/Silence
Art object/Finished work	Process / performance/ Happening
Distance	Participation
Creation/Totalization	Decreation/ Deconstruction
Synthesis	Antithesis
Presence	Absence
Centring	Dispersal
Genre/Boundary	Text/Inter text
Semantics	Rhetoric
paradigm	Syntagm
Hypotaxis	Parataxis
Metaphor	Metonymy
Selection	combination
Root/Depth	Rhizome/Surface
Interpretation/Reading	Against Interpretation/ Misreading
Signified	Signifier
Lisible (readerly)	Scriptable (writerly)
Narrative/ Grande histoire	Antinarrative/ Petite historie
Master code	Idiolect
Symptom	Desire

Type	Mutant
Genital /phallic	Polymorphous/Androgynous
Paranoia	Schizophrenia
Origin/cause	Difference-difference/trace
God the Father	The Holy Ghost
Metaphysics	Irony
Determinacy	Indeterminacy
Transcendence	Immanence

(Hassan, 1982:267-8, qtd. in Malpas 7-8)

## 2.2 Postmodernism As the Intertextual Study

According to Jean Francois Lyotard postmodernism is the inter- textual study. Intertextuality is the shaping of text's meanings by other texts. It can refer to an author's borrowing and transformation of a prior text or to a reader's referencing of one text in reading another. As critic William Irwin says, the term intertextuality "has come to have almost as many meanings as users, from those faithful to Kristeva's original vision to those who simply use it as stylish way of talking about allusion and influence" (228). So, all the features of narrative come out of a pre- existing cultural web of expressive forms. What intertextuality refers to is the fact that all texts (films, plays, novel, anecdotes, or whatever) are made out of other texts. Just as a language pre- exists any narrative written in that language. Thus the term intertextuality means the text within which other texts reside or echo their presence. Seen in this way, narratives have no borders but are part of an immense unfolding tapestry. To interpret intertextuality is to bring out this complex embeddedness of a narrative's meanings in the culture from which it comes. In some usages the term transtextuality is reserved for more overt, relations between specific texts, or between two particular texts, while intertextuality is reserved to indicate more diffuse penetrating of individual text by

memories, echoes, transformations, of other texts. H. Porter Abbot, in his book *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, states about the subversive nature of narrative in this way:

Narratives [...] draw on pre-existing genres and that they imitates or allude to pre-existing genres and that they imitate or allude to pre-existing narratives. But the terms imitation and allusion shift the emphasis from an inescapable intertextual web that generates the narrative and produces its effects to an individuality distinct narrative, shaped by an author through a process of skillful selection. Where intertextuality tends to minimize the author's role and distinctive wholeness of the work, allusion and imitation tend to the reverse: featuring the author's control and the singular wholeness of the work (94- 95).

Intertextuality in any narrative has thus to be seen in association with the whole complex issue of the reader's varied expectations as formed by ideological and generic factors. It must also be seen not as something which is just handed to the reader on a plate, as it were congealed into the text, but as something which to at least a certain extent the reader can control and change.

In a Postmodern context intertextual codes and practices predominate because of a loss of any access to reality. Jameson (1991), commenting on the manner in which postmodern theory tends to eradicate notions of what he styles depth writes: "depth is replaced by surface, or by multiple surface (what is often called intertextuality is in that sense no longer a matter of depth)" (12). He is not merely referring to the manner in which, in postmodernism, earlier division between serious and popular or high and low cultural productions are merged. Jean- Francois Lyotard argues that, in the culture of late capitalism, traditional notions of national identity and culture are supersede by global forms deriving from transnational corporations in

control of the media, of scientific research and other technological and commercial areas of life. In such a situation, argues Jameson, previous modes of identity and expression, based on a shared sense of the ruling norm, give way to a heterogenous, rootless culture in which neither norm nor a resistance to that norm seems any longer possible. In the culture of late capitalism, Jameson argues, a play of images and styles, with no attachment to any recognizable cultural norm or social class, pervades the way in which people speak and art they produce or consume. Such a dialogic, double voiced phenomenon as parody, the mixing of official with unofficial language or style, becomes impossible. Intertextual practice, no longer capable of radical double- variedness, collapses into a kind of pointless resurrection of past styles and past voices. John Barth's essay, *The literature of Exhaustion*, might seem to confirm such a view of the present state of culture and cultural production. However, Barth begins his essay thus: "By 'exhaustion' I don't mean anything so tired as the subject of physical, moral or intellectual decadence, only the usedupness of certain forms or exhaustion of certain possibilities-by no means necessarily a cause for despair" (qtd. in Allen, 184).

Postmodern intertextuality, thus is a formula manifestation of both a desire to close the gap between past and present of the reader and a desire to rewrite the past in a new context. It is a modernist desire to order the present through the past or to make the present look spare in contrast to the richness of the past. It is not an attempt to void or avoid history. Instead it directly confronts the past of literature and of historiography, for it too derives from other texts. It uses and abuses those intertextual echoes, inscribing their powerful allusions and then subverting that power through irony. According to Linda Hutcheon, "intertextuality replaces the challenged author-text relationship with one between reader and text; one that situates the locus of textual meaning within the history of discourse itself" (*Poetics*: 126). In the same book she further says, "A literary work can actually no longer be considered original;

if it were, it could have no meaning for its reader. It is only as part of prior discourses that any text derives meaning and significance." (*Poetics*: 126)

Intertextual parody of canonical American and European classics is one mode of appropriating and reformulating - with significant change- the dominant white, male, middle- class, heterosexual, Eurocentric culture. It doesn't reject it, for it can't. Postmodernism signals its dependence by its use of cannon, but reveals its rebellion through its ironic abuse of it. Along with the development of literary and philosophical theory on modernist formalist closure, postmodern fiction has certainly sought to open itself up to history. As Linda Hutcheon views:

But it seems to have found that it can no longer do so in any remotely innocent way, and so those un-innocent paradoxical historiographic metafictional texts situate themselves with historical discourse, while refusing to surrender their autonomy as fiction. And it is a kind of seriously ironic parody that often enables this contradictory doubleness: the intertexts of history and fiction take on parallel status in the parodic reworking of the textual past of both the "world" and literature. The textual incorporation of these intertextual pasts as a constitutive structural element of postmodernist fiction functions as a formal marking of historicity both literary and "worldly". At first glance, it would appear that it is only its constant ironic signalling of difference at the very heart of similarity that distinguishes postmodern parody from medieval and renaissance imitation (*Poetics*:124).

Postmodern narrative is quite different from modern narratives. Postmodern novels are avante-garde, experimental in form. In these avante-garde novels, narrative experiment has introduced new ways of handling characters plot, description, dialogue and so on. Postmodern novels focus on the movement or the narrative present at the expense of larger temporal development. Heise in her *Chronoschism*

says, "The reduction of temporal scope in the postmodern novels forms part of a more general culture of time that has become wary of hypostatizing long term historical patterns and development" (64). Such reduction of temporal scope in postmodern novel is what creates intertextuality through parody.

### **2.3 Parody As a Postmodern Mirror**

Parody imitates something in such a way that makes the original thing seem ridiculous. It is an incongruous imitation which imitates the form, style or the subject matter of a serious literary work or a literary genre in verse or in prose; however, it makes the imitation amusing by a ridiculous disparity between the manner and the matter.

Parody means the imitative use of the words, style, attitude, tone and ideas of an author in such a way that which ultimately leads to ridicule themselves.

Exaggeration of certain features provides a way to gain ridiculous elements.

Postmodernist authors make the use of parody and irony to undermine the traditional genre of popular literature and give an intramural critique of traditional narrative techniques and the extramural critique of consumerism and popular culture.

Postmodern parody is contesting revision of the past that both conforms and subverts the power of representations of history. That's why parody is a paradoxical conviction of the remoteness of the past and the need to deal it in the present. Thus Linda Hutcheon says:

Many novels today similarly challenge the concealed or unacknowledged politics and invasions of aesthetic representation by using parody as a means to connect the present to the past without positing the transparency of representation, verbal or visual (*Politics*: 94).

Postmodern parody is fundamentally ironical and critical, not nostalgic in its relation to the past. Against the modernist assumptions about closure, distance,

artistic autonomy, and the apolitical nature of representation, postmodernism sets out to uncover and deconstruct. In post modern parody, Burgin writes:

Modernist pretensions to artistic independence have been further subverted by the demonstration of the necessarily 'intertextual' nature of the production of the production of meaning; we can no longer unproblematically assume that 'Art' is some how 'outside' of the complex of other representational practice and institutions with which it is contemporary - particularly, today; those which constitute what we so problematically call the mass-media (204).

Postmodernism's central question is of the ideology's relation to subjectivity where a modernism has investigated the grounding of experience in the self; its focus is on the self seeking integration amid fragmentation. In other words, its focus on subjectivity was still within the dominant humanist framework, however the extensive quest for wholeness itself implies the beginning of what would be a more radical postmodern questioning, a challenging brought about by the doubleness of postmodern discourse. So, postmodern parody works both to underline and to undermine the notion of the coherent, self- sufficient subject as the source of meaning or action. Postmodern novels seems to be particularly open to the referential complexities of parody.

The fundamental confrontation of postmodernism, according to Hutcheon, is that of documentary historical actuality with formalist self-reflexivity and parody. These contradiction are certainly manifest in the presence of the past. Postmodern art ironically rethinks the history. All forms of postmodern art and thoughts are known as postmodernist contradiction. Postmodern novels are both intensely self- reflexive and yet lay claim to historical event and personages, its self awareness of the history and fiction as human constructs i.e.historiographic metafiction is made the grounds for its rethinking and reworking of the forms and contents of the past. Postmodern both



metafictionally self reflexive and yet speaking powerfully about real political and historical realities,. This self reflexive and self conscious about its literary heritage has become a king of model for contemporary writers, Hutcheon is arguing that all parody is dual-coded, all postmodernism is dual-coded. Therefore all parody is postmodernism and all postmodernism is parodic.

Parody is a term which throws sharp arrows towards the weaknesses of the historians or society. It searches the hidden truth and finds out why it was hidden. It is a kind of mocking toward something which illustrates the cause and effect of the particular event. As Hutcheon says:

Parody is not ahistorical or de- historicizing it does not wrest past art from its original historical context and reassemble it into some sort of presents spectacle. Instead, through a double process of installing and ironizing, parody signals how present representations come from past ones and what ideological consequences derive from both continuity and difference (*Politics*: 89).

Postmodern parody makes quite complex new demands on attention and recognition. The postmodern texts, as Ermath says:

preserve particulars from erosion by 'meaning' so that they can function, in their particularity and discreteness, as the basis for a new kind of order: one that reorders relations between present and past that constitutes such new orders entirely by differential relationships (240).

Such sequences, in novel or film, leave a residue of intensely felt value that, like linguistic value in Saussure's sense, exists quite apart from, and even prior to, all established meanings. Such texts, such writing, insist on value in a new sense that is systematic, profound, and adequate.

Parody has proved particularly serviceable as one of the concepts and critical categories used to chart the open and metamorphic territories of postmodernism. Its

double coding accommodates the anxious sense of belatedness or exhaustion diagnosed by the critics of the postmodern as well as the hybridization and the ensuing sense of aesthetic replenishment extolled by the exponents of postmodernism. The aesthetic narcissism of parody also displaces and crystallizes the seminal if questionable opposition introduced by Ihab Hassan between modernist transcendence and postmodernist immanence, the immanent quality of contemporary art having been also explored by Charles Altieri in the Field of poetry. For Hassan, the self-conscious combination of styles and trends effected by parody is characteristic of the antifoundationist, anarchic dispersal of values central to his conception of postmodernism (128). Indeterminacy and absence of closure, the multiplication of hybrid idiolects in texts which eschew the teleological dynamics of aesthetic renewal, contribute to the alleged immanence of postmodernism. The modern episteme, which posited a difference between a transcendent referent or origin and its representation, have shaken to its foundations. Parody has become the arch-symptom of the precellence of simulacra and of the triumph of difference over semiotic difference.

Within this paraodic and intertextual tropings of postmodern narratives, fairy tales and other forms of popular culture have changed in their character. They have become the products of visual rather than oral or written culture, a change which expresses the sensibility of the contemporary period. Famous stories, myths, legends, but especially fairy tale have become popular pretexts for their cinematic and television adaptation popularized especially through Walt Dishney's cartoon series, popular films and TV serials. Not only because of the world audiences' familiarity with famous fairy tales, but especially because of the considerable impact of the contemporary (tele) visual versions of the traditional fairy tales, these have become models influencing children's imaginations in a global televisual village.

Postmodernist literature has often used and, at the same time, parodied the narrative conventions of popular literature including fairytales. Through the use of parody, irony, metafiction and other narrative strategies, its aim is not to undermine the traditional narrative conventions for its own sake, but through their undermining to give a critique of the traditional objective, unitary vision of reality mediated by traditional narrative techniques, used mostly in popular genres, which evoke a make-believe, mimetic representation of reality. As Kusnir says:

another aim of postmodernist literature is to give a critique of popular culture as a product of consumerism; and last, but not least, through the use of intertextual and metafictional strategies it aims to point out a sensibility of contemporary postmodernist culture influenced by visual and popular culture (35).

Postmodernist literary works using and parodying the older forms of representation point out the textuality of reality and the interconnectedness of the signs representing reality rather than the interconnectedness between reality and its linguistic representation. Postmodern literary texts using, reworking, alluding and referring to other texts emphasize the instability of the referent, of the signified, its imperfectness and inability to express a clear, understandable and unified vision of reality. Similarly, Kusnir further views:

The use of the narrative techniques of traditional genres shows one of the basic aesthetic tenets of postmodernist literature ... In postmodernist literary work, various narrative strategies, conventions, and myths are reconsidered, transformed or recycled to show the connection between cultural products (including popular culture), social reality and cultural codes representing particular cultures. Such a strategy breaks the illusion of newness; reality is perceived and

understood as a copy, as a collection of image which has already been used in the past (35).

These image, copies, and reproductions are mostly conveyed through mass media and popular cultural forms. They distort people's vision of reality and relativize the difference between fact and fiction, between morality and immorality.

The language and narrative conventions of popular literature are parodied to criticize traditional linguistic representation of the forms and genres producing a simplified image of reality. As Linda Hutcheon opines, "this is not a traditional parody with a mocking intent, but a neutral parody, a postmodern parody, showing a difference between the past and the present, between past and contemporary representations of reality" (*Poetics* 202). Parody and irony are the means the authors use to criticize the consumer culture, the simplified vision of reality conveyed through media and popular culture as well as the linguistic representation traditional artistic forms give. Linda Hutcheon further says:

The post modern still operates, in other words, in the realm of representation, not of simulation, even if it constantly questions the rules of that realm. In writing of the avant-garde, Lyotard has used the image of psychoanalysis: the attempt to understand the present by examining the past. The same image is suggestive for postmodernism's orientation towards the "presence of past" and its deliberate rejection of either a positive Utopian (Marxist) or negative apocalyptic (neo - Nietzschean) orientation toward the future. Its aims are more limited: to make us look to the past from the acknowledged distance of the present, a distance which inevitably conditions our ability to know that past. The ironies produced by that distancing are what prevent the postmodern from being nostalgic: there is no desire to return to the past as a time of simpler or more worthy values. These ironies also

prevent antiquarianism: there is no value to the past in and of itself. It is the conjunction of the present and the past that is intended to make us question-analyze, try to understand-both how we make and make sense of our culture. Postmodernism may well be, as so many want to claim, the expression of a culture in crisis, but it is not in itself any revolutionary breakthrough. It is too contradictory, too wilfully compromised by that which it challenges. (*Poetics* 230).

As Lyotard celebrates the multiple, incompatible, heterogeneous, fragmental, contradictory and ambivalent nature of postmodern society. Postmodernism rejects the depth of subject, accepts chaos and delight in surface. Postmodernism does not seek to rise above chaos. Lyotard, in his essay, *Answering the Question: what is postmodernism*, warns us: "We can hear the muttering of the desire for a return of terror". and suggests us to "wage a war on totality: let us be witness to the unrepresentable" (82). For him, fragmentation or celebration of chaos is deliberately given from because postmodernism happily accepts it.

Thus, on the one hand, using the narrative strategies of popular cultural forms, postmodernist literature can appeal to a broader audience; it can reach a mass audience and thus stimulate its interest in reading. On the other hand, many postmodernist works, quite paradoxically, do not overcome the gap between the popular and high culture, but tend to be either highly intellectual or naively popular and kitsch. Postmodern parody, irony and metafiction are understood as important means, narrative strategies, and tropes which have a subversive function and which provide a critique of both the linguistic representation of traditional and popular genres and the vision of the world these genres convey.

## CHAPTER - 3

### 3.1 Parody and Intertextuality in *Snow White*

Donald Barthelme's novel - *Snow White* is a playful mid-1960s' counter-cultural novel, which presents incongruous reconstruction of the popularized Disney version of the traditional fairy-tale. Set in the modern-day world, Barthelme presents Snow White not as a virginal maiden, but as a tall seductive woman who habitually makes love in the shower with her seven dwarf-lovers. She is a contemporary young woman as well as parodied version of a famous myth, indulging in both the physical and spiritual life. In the sense of physical life she involves in sex and alcohol. Her knowledge about art, literature and intellectual ideas represent spiritual life. She tries to maintain her sexual identity but fails to do so and falls in confusion. She represents the fragmented multiple identities of both a person and a popular icon which crosses the border and closes the gap between the past and present, between popular and high culture, between spiritual and physical experience. The writer, Donald Barthelme undermines both traditional narrative conventions and the mythical status of Snow White's innocence at the very beginning of the novel through the enumeration of unimportant details evoking erotic connotations, as well as through the inclusion of the graphic patterns representing Snow White's beauty spots. These beauty spots and graphic patterns represent sexual connotations. Such sexual connotations are developed and mentioned further in the novel.

According to the story the protagonist of the novel, Snow White, self-consciously waits for her prince figure-named Paul-who is busy and trying to come to term with his destined role, his heroic form. After a series of humorous, self-conscious meditations, he enters a monastery, then quits journey around the world, and finally returns to New York. There, he sets up a complex underground

surveillance system, complete with trained dog, to watch over Snow White, who in turn is being conspired against by the Villainous Jane, the wicked stepmother figure. True to form, the vindictive antagonist attempts to poison Snow White, but Paul intercepts the drink, consumes it himself, and dies. Barthelme's version of the tale ends with the dwarfs departing, but not before hanging one of their own clan, having found him to be guilty of vatricide and failure. As the last page says Snow White continues to cast chrysanthemums on Paul's grave, although there is nothing in it for her ,that grave.

The protagonist of the novel, Snow White is beautiful but the narrating is confronted with a series of difficult aesthetic, linguistic, and ideological questions from the self-evident opening passage. The novel begins:

SHE is a tall dark beauty containing a great many beauty spots: one above the breast, one above the belly, one above the knee, one above the ankle, one above the buttock, one on th0e back of the neck.

All of these are the left side, more or less in a row, as you go up and down:

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

The hair is black as ebony, the skin white as snow (3).

Here the protagonist Snow White is portrayed physically. She is put in bold face. The enumeration of the beauty spots, many of them placed around her sexual organs, appeal to the readers' erotic imagination rather than to their sense of beauty and

innocence and allude to sexual pleasure. There is slippage in the word *beauty*- initially used as a noun, then as an adjective. However, this slippage, easy enough to deal with and explain linguistically, leads directly to higher-order questions: Is Snow White beautiful because of the spots? Do the spots make her beautiful? Or are the spots seen as beautiful because they are attached to such a 'beauty'? Does she make them beautiful? Is the word *Spots* even right here? etc. The whole question of beauty here is a merely tautological one. This shows that the version of *Snow White* is in improper beginning i.e. parodied one. Also there is no aesthetic progress from the linguistic point of view.

The novel depicts Snow White's educational background and her interests in different fields. But her education is incomplete and unsatisfactory due to the lack of sexual fulfillment. When she does not find suitable environment to quench her thirst for sex, she tries to compensate it by reading about modern women, English romantic poets, playing guitar and so on. She also can not complete her education due to her search to fulfill her desires. There is a defeat of intellectuality by sexuality. It shows that quest of knowledge is negligible when one is sexually unfulfilled. If she had got sexual satisfaction, She might complete her education as well. Her unfulfilled sexual act with many dwarfs makes her sexual identity fragmented. So, she is hanging in between physical aspect of life and spiritual one. The narrator comments on her education:

BEAVER COLLEGE is where she got her education. She studied *Modern Woman, Her Privileges and Responsibilities*: the nature and nurture of women and what they stand for, in evolution and in history, including householding, upbringing, peace-keeping, healing and devotion, and how these contribute to the rehumanizing of today's world. Then she studied *Classical Guitar I*, ... Then she studied *English Romantic Poets II*: Shelley, Byron, Keats. Then she studied



*Theoretical Foundations of Psychology*: mind, consciousness, unconscious mind, personality, the self, interpersonal relations, psychosexual norms, social games, groups, adjustment, conflict, authority, individuation, integration and mental health (25).

The place where she got education, 'BEAVER COLLEGE' is in bold face. Her study discipline lies 'Modern women' especially 'Her Priviledges and Responsibilities' with the women' norms of the modern world. Another interests of Snow White are music, referring to the popular instrument 'Guitar' and the 'Romanticism' especially the second phase poets referring to the deep feeling bearing romantic figures, such as Shelly, Byron, Keats etc. Her study is enumerated focusing to the psychological field referring to the mind, personality and psychosexual norms. These characterization for an immoral woman in a consumerist culture aptly suits in parodic version. This shows her unfinished education or the failure of the protagonists' artistic ambitions which all undermine the completion of any meaningful action. These strategies throw sharp arrows towards the weaknesses of the contemporary postmodern world and ridicule the popular and consumerist culture. The different texts inclusion in the same narrating and the typographical deviation and juxtaposed words also challenges the writing conventions of the past.

Similar enumeration can also be found in other parts of the book. In combination with the repetition of words, phrases, questions, and the strange combinations their juxtapositions creates, these techniques make a reader aware of language, its working and meaning. Enumeration and the strange juxtaposition of different utterances, self- reflections, illogical statements and unfinished fragmentary sentences blur the meaning. The words and sentences are deprived of their referential function very often, and thus they become mere objects, material things, recycled, as in consumerist culture.

Barthelme is much more determined on creating his collage effect than on permitting a story-line to develop in any straightforward fashion. The progression of events in *Snow White* is, for example, continually interrupted by digressions, catalogues, lists and seemingly gratuitous trivia. Each of the heterogeneous fragments is given its own individual section or Chapter, which is usually very short. They are rarely more than two pages long, and several are only one or two lines. Transitions between the sections are sketchy at best and often are entirely lacking; to establish a time scheme for the events in the book, for example, is quite impossible. Relying mainly on juxtaposition rather than the moral usual novelistic principle of transition to achieve its effects, Barthelme's apparent intent in bringing together this collection of fragments in such a blatantly non-linear fashion is to create the verbal equivalent of a collage.

In the novel, the passage seems to trial off into total incoherency, as when the following neatly centered list of words appears:

EBONY  
EQUANIMITY  
ASTONISHMENT  
TRIUMPH  
VAT  
DAX  
BLAGUE (95)

Such digression and irrelevancies, of course, considerably impede the narrative of the book and prevent Barthelme from relying on conventional tension, development, and plot. For Barthelme, the formal structures belong to a previous literature, the product of a defunct reality. Indeed, even the characters in *Snow White* seem to be openly conspiring to refuse to cooperate with our expectations. For Barthelme the changes in modern society make the holding of any mythic center impossible. We find that the

mythic parallels in *Snow White* follow only up to certain points, and then forwards to the appropriate alternations. The characters openly defy their traditional roles and undercut nearly all our expectations about them.

Barthelme switches the typography back and forth between conventional type and large black upper-case letters-much like silent-film titles. This device, however, is also being used self consciously, so that the authorial insights are themselves parodies, as in the following banal and inconsequential asides:

PAUL: A FRIEND OF THE FAMILY (47)

PAUL HAS NEVER BEFORE REALLY  
SEEN SNOW WHITE AS A WOMAN (150).

Likewise, the background sections typically turn out to be clichéd, scholarly-sounding assessments-sometimes attributed to specific writers but usually not-of literature, history, or psychology:

THE SECOND GENERATION OF ENGLISH ROMANTICS  
INHERITED THE PROBLEMS OF THE FIRST, BUT  
COMPLICATED BY THE EVILS OF INDUSTRIALISM AND  
POLITICAL REPRESSION. ULTIMATELY THEY FOUND AN  
ANSWER NOT IN SOCIETY BUT IN VARIOUS FORMS OF  
INDEPENDENCE FROM SOCIETY:

HEROISM

ART

SPIRITUAL TRANSCENDENCE (24)

Barthelme links the entropy of social, political and industrial situation to the romanticism for which there is repression which is now varied and isolated from heroism, art and spiritual transcendence.

One of the subtitles parodically alludes to Freudian theory which is one of the main sources of the modernist vision of the world. When there appears conflict between emotion and rationality, there is dominance of emotion most of the time. When we are very emotional, our rational faculty of mind gets marginalized. Although we know that we can make mistakes when we are swept by heart, we can't control it. The values set by mind become negligible in front of the power of erotic needs. The conventional rules and assumptions are put at side when we are overcome by our powerful sexual impulses. This is shown as:

THE VALUE THE MIND SETS ON EROTIC NEEDS INSTANTLY  
SINKS AS SOON AS SATISFACTION BECOMES READILY  
AVAILABLE. SOME OBSTACLE IS NECESSARY TO SWELL  
THE TIDE OF THE LIBIDO TO ITS HEIGHT, AND AT ALL  
PERIODS OF HISTORY, WHEN EVER NATURAL BARRISERS  
HAVE NOT SUFFICED, MEN HAVE ERECTED  
CONVENTIONAL ONES (76).

Entrapped in the context of parodic allusions to the famous fairy tale, Freudian and other theories, and various literary works *Snow White* acquires a transspatial and transgeneric identity which enables her to oscillate between the traditional innocent world and the contemporary modern world; between the physical and spiritual; between the past and present. This, however, does not enable her to cope with any of these worlds and modes of experience. The past world is symbolically criticized and rejected through Barthelme's depiction of Snow White's moral and material corruption in a contemporary, technologically advanced world. In other words, through Snow White's rejection of innocence and tradition, the contemporary world is rejected because it does not bring Snow White either physical or spiritual satisfaction.

In addition, Barthelme emphasizes Snow White's dissatisfaction through his use of fragmentary composition, self-reflection, metafiction, and imagery evoking incompleteness. This imagery is represented by unfinished sexual acts, by Snow White's unfinished education, or by the failure of the protagonist's artistic ambitions, which all undermine the completion of any meaningful action. Snow White's asking "Which Prince?" (77) is thus symbolically asking about the role she is to fulfill in these worlds. Including 31 different prince names, the narrator comments:

"Which prince?" Snow White wondered brushing her teeth. "which prince will come? will it be Prince Andrey? Prince Igor? prince Alf? Prince Alphonso? Prince Malcolm? Prince Donalbain? Prince Fernando? Prince Siegfried? Prince Philip? Prince Albert? Prince Paul? Prince Akihito? Prince Rainier? Prince Porus? Prince Myshkin? Prince Rupert? Prince Pericles? Prince Karl? Prince Clarence? Prince George? Prince Hal? Prince John? Prince Mamillius? Prince Florizel? Prince Kropotkin? Prince Humphrey? Prince Charlie? Prince Matchabelli? Prince Escalus? Prince Valiant? Prince Fortinbras?" (77).

Here, Snow White is in confusion to complete meaningful action of her life so she takes 31 names of the different princes belonging to her, placing the central figure Paul in the eleventh position. According to the traditional concept of hero Paul is unsuited here. Paul is clearly parodied when snow white utters the following:

I must hold myself in reserve for a prince or prince- figure, someone like Paul. I know that Paul has not looked terribly good up to now and in fact I despise him utterly. Yet he has the blood of kings and queens and cardinals in his veins, Hogo. He has the purple blood of exalted station (170).

Here, Snow White is overestimating the ability of royal blood to produce a contemporary prince figure. One may question whether such concepts as royal blood, Princeliness and heroic action were viable in any age, but literature has conditioned us to think otherwise. We are led, like Snow White, to react to Paul through these filtered, largely literary stereotypes. Paul can't be Snow White's Princely Paul but a frog when she reacts as: "PAUL is frog. He is frog through and through. [ ... ] I am disappointed. Either I have overestimated Paul, or I have overestimated history" (169). Thus Snow White realizes, the fault may not lie so much in Paul as in our own unrealistic expectations of him. Even more unsuited is Paul, whose princely role is to rescue Snow White from her captivity with the dwarfs and save her from the murderous intentions of the witch- like Jane. But Paul is destined to be defeated in both his attempts, apparently doomed by the conditions of contemporary life which make sustaining the archetype which Paul should embody impossible. This is the reality of the contemporary society which militate against true princeliness.

Barthelme depicts Snow White's connection with both the past and the traditional story only loosely through his use of the motif from the original tale, such as poisoned combs, apples, Snow White's hair, a prince, a stepmother and other characters. These motifs form an inventory of devices which construct her identity and her symbolic role as a mythic figure of innocence, beauty, goodness, and a moral authority. Such a symbolic construction expresses a belief in the victory of good over evil, in the fulfillment of ideals, and in an idealized vision of the world. However, Snow White's identity is immediately undermined since she is depicted as pseudo intellectual who has to struggle with both her traditional meaning and the consumerist reality of the contemporary modern world. Thus the narrator's construction of Snow White's function in the contemporary world manifests itself also in his use of self-reflexivity and metafictional strategies. Self-reflexivity emerges in the narrator's

constant questioning of her/his statements and his/her constant reflection on issues that are often illogical. This can be seen in the following:

Kevin spoke to Hubert. "There is not enough seriousness in what we do," Kevin said. "Everyone wanders around having his own individual perceptions. These, like balls of different colors and shapes and sizes, roll around on the green billiard table of consciousness..." Kevin stopped and began again. "Where is the figure in the carpet? or is it just ... carpet?" he asked. "Where is —" "You're talking a lot of buffalo hump, you know that," Hubert said. Hubert walked away. Kevin stood there (129).

Such self-reflexivity is further developed by the narrator's frequent allusions, references to and meditations on various works of art, scientific works, and subjects. Metafictional strategies are the strategies that reveal the fictional nature of the work itself. Fictional writing which self consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artifact in order to post questions about the relationship between fiction and reality. In providing a critique of their own methods of construction, such writings also explore the possible fictionality of the world outside the literary fictional texts.

By making marginal objects important, Barthelme corrects as well as the skewed values that have attached alternately to both the dominant social or institutional aspects of culture and to those of individualism which has opposed them. This strategy of producing value, blurred meaning can be seen in the following:

Informal statements      the difficulties of ownership and customs  
surprises you by being love exchanges      paint it  
understanding brown boys without a penny      I was      bandit  
headgear      And the question of yesterday waiting      members

clinging clear milk of wanting fever hidden      melted constabulary  
extra inning of danger      hides      under the leg resume... (103)

This passage, reminiscent of a modernist interior monologue but deprived of its understandable meaning, becomes its parody, through which Barthelme expresses his critique of modernist narrative conventions marked by psychological subjectivity and its potential to grasp the meaning of the world through psychology. In *Snow White*, Barthelme rejects any possibility of seeing and explaining the world as it is in the traditional fairy tale, realistic or modernist conventions, and emphasizes the plurality of discourses, worlds, and understandings of reality. The rejection of psychology and its potential to understand the world manifests itself not only in this passage, but also throughout the whole text. The depiction of the protagonists' behaviour and the psychological motivation of their acting is reduced either to a simple description of their or to reflections. These reflections mostly manifest themselves in dialogic exchanges.

The rejection of a traditional vision and understanding of the world manifests itself in Barthelme's use of ironic comments, such as, "WHAT is Snow White thinking? No one knows." (16); in Pseudo-titles i.e., subtitles ironically alluding to psychology; as well as in boldface chapters consisting of mock subject headings, philosophic or historical commentary, psychological interpretation of the characters, or indications of narrative development. For example:

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SNOW WHITE;  
IN THE AREA OF FEARS, SHE FEARS  
MIRRORS  
APPLES  
POISONED COMBS (17).

Likewise, Barthelme takes special delight in poking fun at the Freudians. At times we are presented passages so teasingly Freudian that they slip over into parodic self—commentaries, as follow:



WHAT SNOW WHITE REMEMBERS:

THE HUNTSMAN

THE FOREST

THE STEAMING KNIFE (39).

By emphasizing these phrases, Barthelme satirizes Freud's notion of free- association at the same time that he invokes the method to expose the reductive nature of the presumed link between words and what they mean to an individual.

Sometimes, Snow White involves in writing. Through writing, she express her unfulfilled feelings and desires. Human needs and desires have no limitation. Human behaviour is motivated by sexuality. The narrator narrates about Snow white's writing, "NOW She's written a dirty great poem four pages long, won't let us read it, refuses absolutely, she is adamant." (10). This sentence shows her unfulfilled desires and emotions which are repressed in her unconscious part of mind. She is able to express it through her writing a poem. Here, the word 'dirty' is presented as a derogatory term for sex but the theorists of sexuality take it as a natural phenomenon.

Barthelme links his characters' linguistic free-play with a bodily promiscuity. These characters reveal their constant interest in sexual matters. Barthelme presents a scene in which the dwarfs openly steal Paul's Olivetti 22 typewriter:

THEN we went over to Paul's place and took the typewriter. Then the problem was to find some body to sell it to. It was a fine Olivetti 22, that typewriter, and the typewriter girls put it under their skirts. Then George wanted to write something on it while it was under their skirts. I think he just wanted to get under there, because he likes Amelia's legs. He is always looking at them and patting them and thrusting his hand between them (50).

Here, the dwarfs establish a literal connection between the writing process and sensual or even sexual expression. They also reveal their almost constant interest in

sexual matters. By developing a bond between text and bodily imagery throughout the novel, the narrator thus exposes another level of inter-play between Snow White and the dwarfs.

Barthelme's strategy involves extending words beyond their already determined meaning and denotations by combining the literal with the figurative. One of the dwarfs declares, "THERE is a river of girls and women in our streets." (15). The word river overshadows girl, which it is meant to modify. Likewise, one of the dwarfs compares a girl with the earth and her sexual organs with the features of the earth. He says "The earth is broad, and flat, and deep, and high. And remember what Freud said." (75). This shows that emotion is more powerful than rationality. There is no place for rationality when one is very emotional.

Barthelme portrays *Snow White* as a young woman who habitually makes love with her lovers in the contemporary world. She has many lovers but they fail to satisfy her sexual hunger. Through the use of self-reflexivity, she thinks and rethinks about her sexual life. Her sexual life becomes unsatisfactory by her sexual relation with multiple lovers. Her lovers' constant questioning on different issues is often illogical and nonsensical. Their illogical statements are coming out of their repressed sexual desires. This can be seen in the following example:

Kevin spoke to Hubert. "There is not enough seriousness in what we do," Kevin said. "Everyone wanders around having his own individual perceptions. These, like balls of different colors and shapes and sizes, roll around on the green billiard table of consciousness ..." Kevin stopped and began again. "Where is the figure in the carpet? or is it just ... carpet?" he asked. "Where is —" (129).

Here, Kevin and Hubert are dwarfs. They are not serious about their personal lives and their individual perceptions about sex, love and life are like balls of different colors and shapes and sizes. But they cohabit together with Snow White. In this

passage, Snow White is taken as a green billiard table and their sexual play with her is like playing balls on the green billiard table. The dwarfs try to yoke their sexual desire with different events and games. They try to give logic in illogical manner.

In *Snow White* Barthelme rejects any possibility of seeing and explaining the world as it is in the traditional fairy tale, realistic or modernist conventions, and emphasizes the plurality of discourses, worlds, and understandings of reality. The depiction of the protagonist's behaviour and the psychological motivation of their acting is presented in a simple description which is manifested themselves in dialogic exchanges. The rejection of a traditional vision and understanding of the world manifests itself in Barthelme's use of ironic comments, such as, "Today she came into the kitchen and asked for a glass of water. Henry gave her a glass of water." (16). In fact, she is intending for sexual thrust. Her asking for a glass of water is understood literally by Henry. So, there is irony because what she expects and what she gets do not match at all. Barthelme engages in an ongoing exploration of the properties, relations and structure of both actual and fictional worlds, thus extending his text beyond the parameters of the expected and the realist.

At the end of the novel, there is also a display of sexual jealousy. Jane, a stepmother character, feels jealousy of the beauty and attraction of Snow White. So, Jane wants to kill Snow White by providing poisonous Vodka Gibson but accidentally it kills Paul. This event shows jealousy hidden in Jane's psychology. but this jealousy is the result of Jane's harassment. When Jane finds a lot around Snow White and no one with her, she develops envious attitude toward her. Readers can not get what they expect because of the subversive nature of the story. In this case Paul is killed by Jane which is not her intention. Not only this but also Bill, the leader of those dwarfs, has been hanged. One of the dwarfs clarifies this, "Bill was hanged because he was guilty, and if you are guilty, then you must be hanged. He was guilty of vatricide and failure" (180). And then Dan becomes the new leader among them. In

addition, Snow White offers chrysanthemums on Paul's grave. She had tried to make him her best lover through whom she might get satisfaction but he is not understand her. In fact she was also not satisfied with her sexual intercourse with him. She had wanted much more sexual enthusiasm from him but she failed. The reality is supported by the following argument of the narrator:

But she was fond of his blood, while he was alive. She was fond not of him but of the abstract notion that, to her, meant "him". I am not sure that that is the best idea (180).

The final page of the novel mocks traditional expectations of a denouement or epilogue, by presenting us with an inconclusive series of possible endings:

THE FAILURE OF SNOW WHITE'S ARSE

REVIRGINIZATION OF SNOW WHITE

APOTHEOSIS OF SNOW WHITE

SNOW WHITE RISES INTO THE SKY

THE HEROS DEPART IN SEARCH OF

A NEW PRINCIPLE

HEIGH - HO (181).

Here, Barthelme systematically refuses to provide a linear narrative with a satisfying ending. He also makes use of those key fairy tale characteristics in the novel not to make his modern retailing of the tale somewhat real to his audience, but to produce disrupting anti-fairy tale effects.

Thus, through the self- reflexive and metafictional strategies focusing the reader's attention on language and its ability to construct meaning; through the construction of his protagonist's modern versions of fairy tale figures corrupted by the contemporary materialistic and popular culture-sex, alcohol, or popmusic; through emphasis on Snow White's physical and sexual rather than spiritual experience; and by replacing the idea of innocence by moral corruption and evil, the narrator

Barthelme not only undermines the narrative conventions of traditional romantic, realistic, and even modernist writing, but also evokes a parodic effect. This parody is not a coherent parody of a particular genre, but it is scattered throughout the text and dissolved in the narrative techniques. The function of such a parody is not to evoke a mocking effect and to ridicule the parodied text or its author as in traditional parodies, but to point out a difference between past and present forms of experience and the art representing it; to give a critique of traditional past artistic representations of reality which tried to convince a perceiver about their objectivity and truthfulness; and to give a representation of reality which blurs the distinction between fact and fiction. The function of such depiction of reality is to give a critique of some aspects of contemporary cultural experience. This is a kind of neutral parody which implies a distance between the background text being parodied and the new work, a distance usually signaled by irony. But the irony is more playful than ridiculing, more critical than destructive. Through the reference to the original text, Barthelme playfully presents a difference between the past and the present and between the literary forms which represent both past and present realities. By referring to an American geographical context, Barthelme refers also to its cultural context, which is a context in his presentation, of popular and consumerist culture which he seriously criticizes.

Barthelme's *Snow White* seeks to exploit the decay of language and literature. Like so many other works of art in this century, the novel has as its subject matter and art itself. It is not the real world which the novel seeks to represent but the status of art; and as with any significant work of art, we can learn something about ourselves if we respond to it. *Snow White* can, therefore, best be termed as a self-reflexive work in that even as it is being created, it seeks to examine its own condition. The novel presents a profusion of bits and pieces, both high and low, drawn from books and other literary storing houses i.e. folk tales, myths, newspapers, advertisements. Often Barthelme incorporates into his work the sorts of events, names, fads and data which

can found in the daily newspaper. Even more often, however, these fragments are drawn from clichés of learning hackneyed opinions dressed up in even more hackneyed styles. One finds, for example, parodies of specific literary styles and conventions, pseudo-learned digressions about history, sociology, and psychology, mock presentations of Freudian and existentialist pattern, and inane concrete poems. Barthelme's use of the heterogeneous mixture of learning and verbal trash does not contribute to any verisimilar design but communicates a sense of what it is like to be alive at a given moment.

Barthelme manipulates myth for his own comic or parodic purpose in *Snow White*. His mythic perspective is prevented from being seriously mythic to any extent. We can find parallels between the events and characters in Barthelme's *Snow White* and those of the historical version of the fairy tale. The action of the story often twists and halts unexpectedly, but eventually it fulfills the basic situation of the fairy tale as follows: Snow White, now twenty-two and beautiful, has grown tired of the words she always hears and has rebelled by writing a dirty poem. She is presently living with seven men, the dwarf figures, who daily sally forth, Heigh-ho to fill the vats and wash the building of a Chinese food factory. Concerned about her promiscuity i.e. she copulates with her roommates daily in the shower room, Snow White has rationalized that they only add up to two real men, hence their dwarfishness. Later on, the rest of the familiar cast is completed with the appearance of Jane, a young woman who is the witch-figure, and Paul, the Prince for whom Snow White is waiting. While Jane begins to spin her wicked web, Paul digs a bunker, sets up a dog-training program, and keeps watch over Snow White with a self devised Distant Early Warning System — all designed to help him watch and eventually win her. Paul finally makes the fatal error of eating the Poisoned apple himself, in this instance, a poisoned vodka Gibson, which the evil Jane has intended for Snow White.

As the story concludes, Snow White is left to cast flowers on Paul's grave, and revirginized, she rises into the sky.

Like every other literary device in the book, the characters themselves are parodied of their archetypes, uniformly flat and almost comic -bookish in nature. Any sense of their actual identities is minimal and the whole realistic notion of developing a history or background for them is ignored. The book is almost devoid of the sort of details usually provided by novelists to help realize the action in their stories. Thus, the name of the city, physical descriptions of the characters of settings, indications of a daily routine -all are left out. Any background information provided is usually obscure and serves to mock and defeat our expectations of the dwarfs' background, for example, we know virtually nothing except that they were born in various National Forests. Of their father we are told; "Our father was a man about whom nothing was known. Nothing is known about him still. He gave us the recipes. He was not very interesting. A suitcase is more interesting. A canned good is more interesting. When we sing the father hymn, we notice that he was not very interesting" (19). Since we are given no physical descriptions, no backgrounds, and no idiosyncratic traits, we can know the characters only through the words they speak — and even here only minimal distinctions are made.

If we turn now to the role of language in Barthelme's book, we find that, more than anything else, the book seems to be about the condition of language and the possibilities which exist today for a writer to communicate something meaningful to his readers. Throughout the book a variety of very topical subjects are brought up: the Vietnam War, crowded street conditions, air pollution, political corruption. In some place Barthelme uses pastiche without political purpose. He is, therefore, not so much interested in using such material for satiric analysis as he is in seeing how such things have affected the public consciousness, especially in the way that consciousness is reflected in language.

The most pervasive way in which Barthelme demonstrates the bankruptcy of language and literary traditions is much more familiar approach of parodying well-known styles and methods. *Snow White* is created out of a variety of narrative styles traceable to specific literary sources; in addition, allusions to these works, some direct and others veiled are everywhere and serve to reinforce the reflexive nature of the work. Often the short sections of the book are created from a hodge-podge of styles, modulating rapidly between specific literary parodies, current slang, academic cliché, and advertising jargon. The style, whatever its source, is usually wholly inappropriate to the subject at hand: an eloquent sermon is delivered against buffalomusic, a learned commentary is presented on the horsewife in modern society. By employing a strategy which parallels popular cartoons, Barthelme amplifies a narrative segment of the tale of 'Snow White' — heroine's stay with the dwarfs— invites the readers to become aware and beware of their expectations. The novel has three parts which represents on a narrative level *Snow White's* three—fold nature and the three phases of her traditional initiation process. While one would expect such a tripartite structure in the retelling of a tale of magic, most of the other narrative devices in *Snow White* are puzzling there is told by several narrators, including Snow White, thereby dismembering the voice and authority of the traditional omniscient narrator. The unity of style is also disrupted as the text moves from the language of comic books, cartoons and film to that of social science and philosophy. Finally, in spite of Bill's and Paul's sacrificial deaths there is no happy ending, in fact, there is no recognizable ending.

Barthelme culminates a self-parodying questionnaire to make readers active but that gives them no reliable direction. At the end of first part, the questionnaire is given as follow:

1. Do you like the story so far? yes ( ) No ( )
2. Does Snow White resemble the Snow White you remember? Yes ( ) No ( )



3. Have you understood, in reading to this point, that Paul is the prince-figure?  
Yes ( ) No ( )
4. That Jane is the wicked stemother figure? Yes ( ) No ( )
5. In the further development of the story, would you like more emotion ( ) or less emotion ( )?
6. Is there too much *blague* in the narration? ( ) Not enough *blague* in the narration? ( ) Not enough blague? ( ) (82).

By including this questionnaire, Barthelme not only addresses America's fascination or even obsession with surveys and statistics, but also engages its literary self-consciousness. Defining this general strategy of Barthelme's as self-reflective, anyone can argue that his fiction examines and exposes the process of its own composition, thereby revealing its meaning as the construct of so many literary codes and conventions. By developing such reflexive moments through *Snow White*, Barthelme is able to comment directly on his presentation of the story and, in the process, he playfully subverts meaning and systematic discourse.

Through his textual graphics, Barthelme also ironically highlights his own ideology, as when he devotes an entire page to one sentence in bold print and capitalized typeset:

ANATHEMATIZATION OF THE WORLD IS NOT ADEQUATE RESPONSE TO THE WORLD (178).

While thus parodying bold slogans, he also uses the technology to call for perhaps ironically, an active involvement with the world and an engaged stance in life. Here *THE WORLD* and the text is shot through with this ironic revelation because one can't merely anathematize the world, as much as one might like to. That's why any thematization falls short of capturing the wonder of objects.

By distorting normal spacing between words, Barthelme highlights the removal of discourse from reality and the loss of meaning and referentiality. A number of these disjunctive semiotic networks appear in close succession toward the end of the novel, graphically distinguished from the rest of the conventionally printed text through the use of bold capitalization, ellipses, and unusual lineation:

SNOW WHITE THINKS: WHY AM I ... GLASS ... HUNCHED AGAINST  
THE WALL ... INTELLIGENCE ... TO RETURN ... A WALL ... IN  
TELLIGENCE ... ON THE ... TO RETURN ... HE'S COLD ... MIRROR ... (166).

Thus, *Snow White*, the protagonist, a young woman living in a modern American world, leads both physical and spiritual aspects of life by involving herself in the pleasures of sexual experience with many dwarfs and she involves in art, literature, music and academic studies that represent her spiritual aspect of life, is so neatly narrated that the whole calligraphy of Barthelme can be reflected through his hyper textual techniques, meta-fiction, self-reflexivity and the fragmented composition. He depicts the modern version i.e. parody of Snow white, her position and meaning in the contemporary American Popular cultural context. Although by parodying both the famous story of Snow white and the narrative conventions of fairy tales, Barthelme's parody is rather neutral. It is not aimed at mocking either the author or the story itself, but to playfully deconstruct the original story. He uses the postmodern intertextuality which is a formal manifestation of both a desire to close the gap between past and present of the reader and a desire to rewrite the past in a new context. Thus, *Snow White* is a new kind of experience, to create new art out of the junkpile of the text.

## CHAPTER - 4

### Conclusion

Barthelme's *Snow White* is a challenging new art out of the junk pile of different texts which subverts both traditional narrative conventions and the mythical status of *Snow White's* innocence. The novel is the output of various works of art, scientific works and subjects. It is full of self reflection of frequent allusions and references. Metafictional strategies are used to reveal the fictionality. The Postmodern dissatisfaction is reflected through the protagonist's fragmentary composition, self-reflection, metafiction, intertextuality, irony, parody and the imagery evoking incompleteness. By interweaving extratextual discourses within his retelling of the traditional fairy tale, Barthelme establishes a multi-leveled text. He not only playfully highlights his characters' sense of despair and isolation in contemporary American consumerist culture but also parodies literary applications of psychoanalytic discourses. He adopts the principle of mosaic and collage as visual art by weaving intertextual references. These fragments of discourse, imagery, overall unity of the predetermined story and the illogical narratives are also remarkable.

As the story runs through the enumeration of unimportant details evoking erotic connotation with the graphic patterns representing *Snow White's* beauty spots, the novel represents the fragmented multiple identities of both a person and a popular icon which crosses the border and closes the gap between the past and present, popular and high culture, and, spiritual and physical experience. Barthelme uses modernist interior monologue which doesn't have understandable meaning. He expresses his critique of modernist narrative conventions marked by psychological subjectivity and its potential to grasp the meaning of the world through psychology. He rejects the possibility of seeing and explaining the world as it is the traditional

fairy tale, a realistic or modernist conventions, and, emphasizes the plurality of discourses, world and reality.

Barthelme uses parody and various innovative techniques to analyze the texture of contemporary life. He tries to clarify the relationship between the state of the society and the state of its language which demonstrates the bankruptcy of language and literary traditions of parodying well known styles and methods. The characters openly defy their traditional roles and undercut nearly all our expectations about them. So, the novel is built of multiple plot lines. The princely figure, Paul, is driven underground resembling the contemporary peoples' parodic plights of neuroses and the self-consciousness. He also gives the detail picture of interplay between *Snow-White* and the dwarfs to develop a bond between the text and the bodily imagery throughout the novel. To undermine the completion of any meaningful action his imagery is represented by unfinished education, failure of the protagonist's artistic ambitions and physical pleasures.

Thus, the novel consists of parodies of specific literary styles and conventions, pseudo-learned digressions about history, sociology and psychology, mock presentations of Freudian and existentialist pattern, and inane concrete poems. Relying mainly on juxtaposition rather than the moral usual novelistic principle of transition to achieve its effects, Barthelme's apparent intent in bringing together this collection fragments is such a blatantly non-linear fashion is to create the verbal equivalent of a collage. This novel reflects distinctly playful and postmodern view of subject, the word, and the world as interrelated and constantly transforming phenomena.

Through this parodic intertextual novel, Barthelme shows that in postmodern every person quests for establishing a fixed identity but gets a lot of confusions and

hindrances. Indeed, the question of identity is a very complex matter. According to postmodern assumption, the protagonist *Snow White* should enjoy the mood of life she is encountering with. Whatever happens to her, she should enjoy without any worry to the happenings. But the result goes opposite the expectation which is the nature of postmodernism. This is the fact that the narrator is going to explain it in a mock copy style and the intertextual mode. Even people in this contemporary era have realization of their failure in life inside but they try to shadow it forgetting this reality and enjoying the superficial moments.

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