

**INTERTEXTUALITY AND FRAGMENTATION IN POSTMODERN FICTION: A  
READER-CENTERED APPROACH****Rokhila Bafoeva**

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**Abstract:** This research examines the development of the distinctive literary style of postmodernism, which mirrors the social, political, religious, philosophical, and intellectual milieu of its time. Postmodern works arose from the amalgamation and reworking of writings from earlier times, fostering an aware, engaged, and critically inquiring audience. Literary works were deconstructed based on the theoretical perspectives of academicians and philosophers such as Roland Barthes, John Barth, and Jean-François Lyotard. Postmodern authors fostered intertextual linkages between metanarratives and micro-narratives to attain success in text creation, using the phenomena of intertextuality widely. This method is strongly associated with literary tropes like parody and pastiche, which are deeply interwoven.

**Keywords:** postmodernism, intertextuality, parody, pastiche, deconstruction, micro-narratives, metanarratives, fragmentation, literary techniques, postmodern novel, literary interpretation, aesthetic aspects, philosophical foundations.

**Introduction.** Literary trends have always developed via dialectical or reactionary interactions with their antecedents. Postmodernism, by its own complimentary methodologies, generates new options for comprehension by associating contemporary literary aspects with earlier periods. Thus, it bestows fresh significances and interpretations onto previous works. Consequently, postmodern literature, characterized by their deconstructive essence, endeavor to establish a connection with prior literary legacy, especially those produced after the 1950s. The primary components of this interlinking process are literary techniques like as intertextuality, parody, and pastiche, which, by alluding to the past, facilitate the generation of new meanings.

**Research Purpose.** This research aims to enhance the understanding of postmodern texts by elucidating the relationships between literary devices and specific works: John Fowles’s *The French Lieutenant’s Woman*, Martin Amis’s *Night Train*, and Thomas Pynchon’s *The Crying of Lot 49*.

**Materials.** The modernist period persisted for over fifty years until merging with the postmodern literary movement. This era was characterized by innovative concepts, intricate frameworks, and the examination of both conscious and unconscious reality. In contrast to postmodernism, modernism aimed to eliminate the conventional writing styles of the Victorian period by repudiating its literary traditions. Postmodern literature does not disconnect from modernism or other periods; instead, it integrates them by reinterpreting older works via diverse literary strategies.

Postmodernism originated after World War II, influenced by the ideas of notable philosophers such as Roland Barthes (*The Death of the Author*, 1967), John Barth (*The Literature of Exhaustion*, 1967), and Jacques Derrida (*Of Grammatology*, 1967). Barth (1967) asserts that postmodern writings are crafted to engage the reader actively in understanding the text's function rather than the author's goal. The roles are inverted; readers develop their own interpretations of the text. Concerning reader-based knowledge, Zafer Ayar asserts: “Postmodern fiction does not readily permit readers to make decisions and fails to furnish them with all the necessary materials to derive meaning.” The absence of significance and skepticism towards the overarching narratives of earlier literary epochs is evident in postmodern literature, which seeks to encourage readers to construct their own meanings and truths.

The postmodern writer provides the reader with more freedom of investigation, making the primary characteristic of postmodern writings the author's deconstruction of the narrative using many literary strategies. Consequently, the reader adopts a more participatory role; as Ayar articulates, "In this manner, the postmodern narrative permits the reader to engage in an exploration throughout the reading experience and uncover meaning through a complex or intertwined plot structure." This reading approach enables the reader to go on an inward journey that engages the subconscious imagination. In contrast, similar to metanarratives, "texts impose constraints on the reader regarding meaning, and as Barth observes, they promote passive consumption due to their design, which restricts the reader's imagination." Postmodern literature serves as a critique of metanarratives, arising in response to preceding grand narratives. Brian Nicol (2009) remarks on Jean-François Lyotard's depiction of the movement: "Lyotard contends that postmodernism endorses *petits récits* ('little narratives') — narratives that eschew the pursuit of a singular 'Truth,' instead providing a competent, contextual 'truth' pertinent to a particular situation." Postmodernism not only permits but necessitates that the reader deduce or reconstruct the narrative from their own perspective.

Postmodern intertextuality — the recognition and citation of prior works — is a crucial postmodern literary method that forges a link between the past and the present for both readers and authors across many literary genres. It enables readers to see events through the perspective of previous writers while interpreting them in the vernacular of the current literary epoch. Hutcheon (1988) elucidates that "Intertextuality is the formal expression of the aspiration to bridge the divide between the reader's past and present, alongside the ambition to reinterpret the past within a new context." Intertextuality indicates methods by which a text may be reinterpreted from a novel viewpoint.

In *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, Fowles employs epigraphs from 19th-century authors to ignite the reader's intrigue over events and people. For instance, Fowles (1969) cites Tennyson's Maud to explain Sarah's condition: "And once, but once, she lifted her eyes, And suddenly, sweetly, strangely blushed, to find they met mine own..." Through the use of anachronism via analepsis or flashback, Fowles conjures a temporal voyage. Consequently, he effectively connects Victorian culture with his contemporary period, substantiating his thesis via each literary excerpt appropriated from prominent Victorian writers. Hutcheon's (1988) further elucidation of intertextuality corroborates Fowles's use of epigraphs from preceding authors: "It is not a desire to organize the present through the past, nor to render the present simplistic in light of the complexity of the past." This is not an endeavor to negate or evade history. Instead, it directly addresses the historical context of both literature and history, since it is also derived from other writings (documents). Consequently, intertextuality enables the author to link current works with historical literature, so enhancing the comprehension of contemporary events. In this context, Fowles, in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, creates a web of intertextual connections between his narrative and the works of Victorian authors like Thomas Hardy, the Brontë sisters, and George Eliot, who explored contemporary social issues including gender, romance, and class disparities. He underscores Victorian clichés, whereby the anticipations of both genders were molded by societal conventions and attitudes particular to that era. Many of these assumptions indicate that Victorian social conceptions are being recounted from the viewpoint of the late twentieth century. Fowles deconstructs the romantic narrative of the Victorian age and reconfigures it to align with the sensibilities of the postmodern time.

**Methods.** Postmodern parody functions to highlight certain occurrences via the sarcastic reinterpretation of existing literature. Numerous postmodern authors adeptly use parody in their writings to enhance awareness via a whimsical depiction of occurrences. This gadget facilitates critical thinking about specific occurrences from an objective perspective, while simultaneously fostering the generation of new meanings. Hutcheon (1988) asserts that "parody is, in a sense, the quintessential postmodern form because it paradoxically integrates and contests what it parodies."

Postmodern works exhibit incorporation and resistance by altering the traditions and norms of the original text, thereby making parody a critical literary tactic. Parody, like to intertextuality and pastiche, references prior writings but is differentiated by its comedic tone. Consequently, postmodern readers recognize both the advantageous and disadvantageous aspects of the scenario being analyzed. Martin Amis's *Night Train* (1998) exemplifies parody by both altering the stylistic elements of detective fiction and deconstructing the conventional story structure—comprising setup, investigation, and resolution—characteristic of crime narratives. “You preserved my existence.” I would undertake any endeavor for you. You are aware of it. He stooped to get his briefcase. Retrieved the folder from it.

He gazed at me and said, “Provide me with something I can endure.” Due of my inability to coexist with this. He let me to observe him. The terror had dissipated from his eyes. I had seen it several times. Skin lacks luster and radiance. Eyes that gaze vacantly. They do not enter. Seated at the table, I had transcended rage. This excerpt illustrates how the author simultaneously alters and dismantles the linear trajectory of conventional detective novels. Amis proposes that the ludicrous emulation of detective fiction be altered to enable readers with adaptable viewpoints to comprehend the core of events via comedy. The author conveys events so that the deconstructed components align with the context, infusing a funny tone that imparts fresh significance to the text.

In the last segment of *Night Train*, Detective Mike Hoolihan despondently narrates the unsuccessful inquiry into Jennifer Rockwell's death and apprises Colonel Tom of his daughter's fate: “...Pleasant roof, Colonel Tom.” For a year, he had been questioning his intellect. Bucks Denziger informed me that he was experiencing a decline in his performance at work. And discussing mortality. Contemplating mortality. Trader's situation was dire, since she was involved with another man. I will not be present. I am OK. I really am—truly, Cutting... This is superior. I have concluded my engagement with this matter. However, it is now completed. You must leave it there, Colonel Tom. I apologize, sir. I sincerely apologize. Mike, it is concluded. The conclusion indicates that Hoolihan arrives at no definitive resolutions, whereas Amis intentionally undermines readers' anticipations by leaving the narrative unsettled. Consequently, the anticipated genre tropes are subverted. According to Norman (2019), *Night Train* both adheres to and transgresses the narrative patterns of the hardboiled procedural, however by its stylistic choices, it undermines these epistemological techniques by asserting authenticity. This deviation from conventional genre connects seamlessly with the postmodern aesthetic, illustrating the flexibility of parody.

Pastiche is a literary technique used in postmodern literature that emulates the style of an earlier work without the satirical intent characteristic of parody. The objective is to integrate pertinent prior works to elucidate various facets of the novel. Pastiche does not replicate full passages verbatim, hence it is not classified as plagiarism; instead, it employs them in a consciously modified manner. MacArthur (1992) defines pastiche as: “A text constructed entirely or predominantly from directly appropriated excerpts from one or more other works.” It contrasts with plagiarism in that plagiarism obscures steals to mislead. Furthermore, in contrast to parody, pastiche does not always seek to create sarcastic references; rather, it incorporates diverse elements from other texts to construct intertextual connections across literary works.

Nicol elucidates this connection between texts: “Barthes posits that literary creation is not an original endeavor; instead, it involves the author reorganizing established literary and linguistic conventions rather than generating something wholly novel.” Consequently, literary strategies like parody and pastiche allow writers to adapt and partially mimic older writings. In *The Crying of Lot 49*, Thomas Pynchon used pastiche to link his narrative with other writings. Oedipa seeks the genuine edition of *The Tragedy of the Courtiers* and uncovers “a book that ought to have been a mere reprint but is astonished to find that it also includes commentary.” The work amalgamates many literary forms as pastiches. Pynchon intricately intertwines events to mirror the disjointed framework of post-World War II society, emblematic of postmodernism. He

integrates aspects of science fiction, fantasy, and detective fiction to construct a multi-dimensional worldview, referencing the splintered essence of consumer culture. Nicol (2009) characterizes the work as “a reversed rendition of the Oedipus narrative.” While Oedipus resolves the puzzle and uncovers the concealed truth, Oedipa is incapable of either. Her endeavor is a failure. Pynchon’s *The Crying of Lot 49*, as a twisted parody of Sophocles’ Oedipus, portrays its protagonist on a futile quest: a reversed detective narrative where Oedipa never attains a conclusive resolution to the enigma of the underground organization known as “Tristero.”

**Conclusion.** In conclusion, postmodernism, intricately associated with historical, social, cultural, religious, and political elements, engenders varied literary traits, culminating in a degree of fragmentation. This fragmentation is a major characteristic of postmodern narrative, hindering the understanding of a work's concealed meanings. Literary strategies like intertextuality, parody, and pastiche dismantle the narrative and disrupt conventional writing techniques, therefore complicating interpretation. The inversion of roles between author and reader enables the reader to actively connect with the material and inspires them to seek their own truth. The postmodern style requires the reader to use their prior knowledge to reveal the text's concealed dimensions. This research seeks to examine the interaction of postmodern readers with literary elements and promotes individual interpretation of the text. From this viewpoint, postmodern texts like John Fowles’s *The French Lieutenant’s Woman*, Martin Amis’s *Night Train*, and Thomas Pynchon’s *The Crying of Lot 49* provide readers with numerous opportunities to discern the complex intertextual connections deliberately or inadvertently incorporated by their authors.

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