

Language and Donald Barthelme's *Snow White*

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Abstract

The current study assessed Donald Barthelme's *Snow White* which shares a new version of our language world. This postmodern novel illustrates different plays of language, in that different problems get originated. The first problem is the heap of words which change their sanctity to a second handed commodity. Words which are once the base of every fiction's coherence are now just at the center to fill up but not to fulfill anything. Then self and personality lack and at last the endlessness and the circularity of any structure which is built by language. The essay, through its invented world of nothing/everything, tries to open a new outlook toward language which was hidden in a labyrinth of its own plays. In the meantime, it reaches to a point that its language decenters everything. Although different critics have investigated language in many respects through this novel, the essay utilizes a new perspective toward the problems originated from language plays to generate a modern world called "world of nothing". On the other hand, the main purpose is not to search the philosophical aspects and explanations of Barthelme's *Snow White*, but discussing the role of language through a literary text. In conclusion, the study will show how deconstruction reading strategy is deconstructed for it uses the same medium as language. Finally, it asks how a literary text and its reading strategy can be against themselves and stand at the threshold of new meanings and interpretations.

Keywords: Différance, Undecidability, Iterability, World of Nothing

1.1. Introduction

For the sake of language discussion, deconstructive reading strategy basically provides contexts for the ones who were ignored once, who were never allowed to have their own voice for expression. The first step to give language voice is cutting it loose from its pillars. Therefore, throughout this process, words themselves fall under erasure. They prove their existence; however, simultaneously deny it. In other words, they do exist and simultaneously they do not. This marks the moment of radical scepticism in Western culture that Jacques Derrida points to when language itself is "invaded by the universal problematic; that moment in which, in absence of a center or origin, everything became discourse. . . . when everything became a system where the central signified, the original or transcendental signified, is never absolutely present outside a system of differences. The absence of the transcendental signified extends the domain and interplay of signification ad infinitum" (Lodge 91). In other words, language turns out to be relative. Another step beside this is constructing other new bases out of the factual and the postmodern fictitious realities. That is "the world of nothing" experiencing a new medium other than language. This "world of nothing" constructs its ideological structure from what these postmodern fictions refuse to be.

For Donald Barthelme today's language represents the arrangements that sometimes slipped. Words which are once the base of every fiction's coherence are now just at the center to fill up but not to fulfill anything. On another aspect, the amorphous play of language within his fictions though has no ultimate meaning, it introduces new patterns. Regarding the notion of language as the base structure of any meaning, the first scene that the reader in *Snow White* confronts with is a multiplicity of lexical fields which are stumbling into one another. As Lance Olsen has noted, "the discursive universes of social science, philosophy, business, technology, politics, academics, and advertising misstep on those of comic books, television cartoons, hip lingo, film, songs, and fairy-tales" (74). According to our logocentric world view, this mixture of everything within one structure is the source of chaos. "Just as *Snow White* finds it impossible to concern a steady and coherent identity for herself since her existence is an un-interpretable and inadequate script, accordingly the text finds it impossible to attach itself to a steady and coherent genre or language" (Olsen 74). This impossibility is simply occurred as far as there is no transcendental or unique center to feel a wholeness. Nonetheless, the sense of completeness is never accessible even in traditional genres. Meanwhile, in this story Derrida's "the center is not the center" is thoroughly put into practice and be absolutely tangible.

Inasmuch as *Snow White* is denying its traditional fairy tale structure, its language and diction derive their coherence from what they are not; from what they refuse to do. As an example *Snow White*'s letter is an indication of the fact that language plays with different strategies within different contexts:

Dear Mr. Quistgaard:

....You and I are not in the same universe of discourse. You may not have been aware of it previously, but the fact of the matter is, that we are not. We exist in different universes of discourse. Now it may have appeared to you, prior to your receipt of this letter, that the universe of discourse in which you existed, and pattered about, was in all ways adequate and satisfactory. It may never have crossed your mind to think that other universes of discourse distinct from your

own existed, with people in them, discoursing. You may have, in a common-sense way, regarded your own u. of d. as a plenum, filled to the brim with discourse. You may have felt that what already existed was a sufficiency. People like you often do. That is certainly one way of regarding it, if fat self-satisfied complacency is your aim. But I say unto you, Mr. Quistgaard, that even a plenum can leak. Even a plenum, *cher maître*, can be penetrated. New things can rush into your plenum displacing old things, things that were formerly there. No man's plenum, Mr. Quistgaard, is impervious to the awl of God's will(Barthelme *Snow White* 13).

2.1. Words

The novel is called an anti-novel. This is not because of its postmodernist style which refuses any traditional format but, according to John Leland, it is more because of its deliberate play of language with forms. Language like literature loses its holiness within this postmodern *Snow White* because it becomes conventional by the changes of contexts. Language illustrates itself within the novel as totally consumed and habitualized as Snow White mentions "I wish there were some words in the world that were not the words I always hear" (Barthelme 12). As Barthelme himself depicts through the novel, everything, even language itself are taken to the edge of consumption.

The first problem originated from language plays within this postmodern fiction is words. As the bases of language, words are in the edge of consumptions. To make it tangible, for example, various sheets of paper are blank but at the center totally dedicated to a list of words full of incoherency, irrelevancies and digression.

EBONY
EQUANIMITY
ASTONISHMENT
TRIUMPH
VAT
DAX
BLAGUE (Barthelme 101)

In other pages, sometimes there is a white sheet of paper full of clichéd scholarly sounding assessments of literature and psychological backgrounds; fragmented phrases with no coherency, simultaneously, full of everything.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SNOW WHITE
IN THE AREA OF FEARS, SHE FEARS
MIRRORS
APPLES
POISONED COMBS (23)

About Literature and history:

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 (30)

Testing Freudian analysis:

WHAT SNOW WHITE REMEMBERS
THE HUNTSMAN
THE FOREST
THE STEAMING KNIFE (44)

As a historical paradigm is:

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,
WHENEVER NATURAL BARRIERS
HAVE NOT SUFFICED, MEN HAVE
ERECTED CONVENTIONAL ONES. (82)

Another page on the anthology of revolution;

THE REVOLUTION OF THE PAST GEN-
ERATION IN RELIGIOUS SCIENCES
HAS SCARCELLY PENETRATED POPU-
LAR CONCIOUSNESS AND HAS YET
TO SIGNIFICANTLY INFLUENCE PUB-
LIC ATTITUDES THAT REST UPON
TOTALLY OUTMODED CONCEPTIONS. (60)

Words are in their fictitious reality but not for communication, they do exist just to be used haphazardly without considering any specific transcendental signified. On the other, we have a page full of blank spaces with no punctuation marks; full of silence and ellipses “Those men hulking hulk in closets and outside gestures eventuating against a white screen difficulties...” (37) These blanks and silences are explored within the novel in order to let the characters free themselves from the traps constructed by language plays. In this postmodern culture, word has changed its ancient sanctity to a second-handed commodity. Unfixed, it drifts among a multiplicity of meaning and this multiplicity leads to the emergence of two deconstruction’s concept; *différance* and *undecidability*. Any attempt to find a stable linguistic significance decomposes into an infinite free play that refuses truth. Barthelme’s fragmented pieces tries to indicate the fact that “signs are signs, and some of them are lies as does the narrator in “Me and Miss Mandible” (Barthelme *Sixty Stories* 34). And since one does not know which signs are not lies, it follows that, Peterson in “A Shower of Gold” knows, “possibilities . . . proliferate and escalate all around us.” Hence, the reader is asked to become a partial prevaricator of the texts he reads, asked to frolic in a free play where, as Snow White knows, “my nourishment is refined from the ongoing circus of the mind in motion. Give me the odd linguistic trip, stutter and fall, and I will be content” (Barthelme, *Snow White* 145). Moreover “the existence of discursive slapstick in the texts does not only interrogate our notions of language, it also interrogates that to which the words try to point-our culture” (Olsen 75).

2.2. Self and Personality

Another problem originated from language is the notion of self and the language plays. This problem of personality outbursts from the lack of meaning by using and erasing the language itself within the texts. As an initiation, the first pages of the three chapters of *Snow White* all begins with bold words of “SHE PERHAPS SNOW WHITE”; interpreted as Snow White could perhaps be like its fairy tale version. This shows the multiplicity of meaning by the multiplicity of contexts. It means by the changes of contexts, we could have the chance to hear other potential voices. However, in this regard Snow White is not the only one who could not identify herself as its traditional version. This identifies one of the effects of the meaning problem which happens for all the characters throughout the story. At time dwarfs seem to have a difficult time identifying not only each other but also their own father. For example, “That’s true Roger,” Kevin said a hundred times. Then he was covered with embarrassment. “No I mean that is true Clem”” (Barthelme 73) or in another context the dwarfs have a sentence in describing their father but totally unknown “Our father was a man about whom nothing was known. Nothing is known about him still. He gave us the recipe. He was not very interesting. A tree is more interesting” (25).

This is a futile effort to find any character to be in its role and fits desirably to what they are called for. As readers we can know characters according to the ready-made words they speak. However, the novel gives us neither physical description of the dwarfs nor that of their father then there is no way to get acquainted with them. Even words have blocked such kind of identification. One could know nothing by words and their plays because words have lost their essence and meaning. The logos are just there in order to be; in fact they signify no physical description, no background and no idiosyncratic traits. Although within the text you could find nothing worth of being read, the text is made up of a heap of words. This problem of personal identification is originated from where language puts itself under erasure throughout the novel. Hence, the language play begins and goes on. As John Leland has noted, the story names a Paul who has trouble realizing his princeliness despite his “blue blood,” and a Bill, the leader, who cannot realize his potential to be great and make a “powerful statement”. Such kinds of confusions according to John Leland will provide a “definitive account” (810). Creatures of discourse, the characters in *Snow White* continuously search for the limits of language in an attempt to wrest from the texts which articulate their existence. They need this fulfillment which lies beyond the order of words, the orders of discourse. As another example for proving this fact is that the novel does have a Prince, even though he has problems in realizing his role:

Paul stood before a fence posing. He was on his way to the monastery. But first he was posing in

front of a fence. The fence was covered with birds. Their problem, in many ways a paradigm of our own, was “to fly.” “The engaging and wholly charming way I stand in front of this fence here,” Paul said to himself, “will soon persuade someone to discover me” (Barthelme *Snow White* 84).

As Leland mentions; while Prince Charming awaits discovery by a Hollywood agent (or someone), Snow White wonders if her “someone” will have a Hapsburg lip. And, while contemplating, she lets her own hair hanging out the window which is a common motif in all cultures, Snow White speculates: “But I am not ‘people,’ Hogo. I am me. I must hold myself in reserve for a prince or prince-figure, someone like Paul” (Barthelme 176). Snow White has potentially been waiting for reluctant Paul to complete his duties although she is not sure about his existence; “Paul? Is there a Paul, or have I only projected him in the shape of my longing, boredom, ennui and pain?” (108). Yes, there is a Paul in search of his princely calling- in Spain, in France, in a Nevada monastery, and finally underground from where he spies, a voyeur, on Snow White. And Prince Paul, modeling his actions after television heroes, drinks the poisoned vodka intended for Snow White. But neither seems destined to live “happily ever after”. In fact, this is the crux of the personality problems of both Paul, who does not want to act like a prince though he is one, Snow White, who is unsure about the nature of her role and the dwarfs who makes mistake even in identifying each other. In spite of all these subtle uncertainties, Snow White continues to long for a prince but at the same time feels it necessary to undertake the writing of a lengthy pornographic poem that constitutes her attempt to “find herself.” PAUL is frog. He is frog through and through. I thought he would, at some point, cast off his mottled wettish green-and-brown integument to reappear washed in the hundred glistening hues of princeliness. But he is *pure frog*. So. I am disappointed. Either I have overestimated Paul, or I have overestimated history. In either case I have made a serious error.... Total disappointed (Barthelme 175). This is our unrealistic expectations which has conditioned us to think otherwise thus the fault, Snow White realizes may not lie so much Paul as in our realistic expectation of him. We also as individuals are trapped within this personality problem by the language which covers all literature and literary stereotypes. The characters and our individual beings are like a white spot lost in the darkness of language. Paul dies, leaving Snow White trapped in her own story or better to say in her own words which lacks ending. The problem of personality has a circling effect. This circular process stimulates another language trick named lack of ending.

2.3. Closure

Another problem originated from language within this fiction is a desire for closure. The sense of closure and a definite interpretation out of its every page could never reach to an end. “Trying to break out of this bag that we are in. What gave us the idea that there was something better? How does the concept ‘something better’ arise? What does it look like, this *something better*?” (Barthelme 185) Paul as Prince, as “the abstract notion that,” to Snow White, “meant ‘him’”(186), remains just a feature within the fiction which he “is”. Yet Barthelme has re-constructed the old fairy tale texts, and in so doing has disjoined expectation and fulfillment while simultaneously conjoining imagination and text.

Paul who is expounding on the purpose of the artist, mentions, “I don’t care what, I insist only that it be relevant, in a strange way, to the scene that has chosen to spread itself out before us, the theatre of our lives” (Barthelme 120). As far as poststructuralism is the base structure of all postmodern fictions, there is no insistence on being meaningful but just being relevant. This relevance is the aim which goes forth not only within the text but also within this essay by deconstructive reading context. Accordingly, “Barthelme is not concerned with the reader’s heart; rather, his destiny is to crack the mind and set it free to spin in his created wonder” (Bocock 145) so too does this context. Paul and Snow White both represent, ultimately, a failure of the imagination when they try to escape from their text. This process of going beyond the context or text where they are living is the aim of deconstructive reading strategy. This reading strategy is aware of the limitations which have been set by the world of language. However, it also submits itself within this system of language to let its analyzers think beyond the world of language and free themselves in other parallel worlds. One of the steps in destroying our world of words systematic structure is breaking the teleological compulsion and the desire for closure and completion. The transcendental signified or *différance* of desire for ending is the first step which destroys all logocentric world view. The same process takes place for deconstruction to destroy its temporal ideological system. Furthermore, deconstruction puts language under question by the same medium (language) in order to let us get free ourselves from this world of words, endings, personal identification, meaning, language and its consequent limitations.

“As Snow White moves from the pages of Grimm to New York to write poetry and screw in the shower with her seven male roommates, so too does the mythic subject matter of the original tale become dissipated”. As what Leland calls; “this is a waste of structured content (Snow White as subject) as well as form (Snow White as text)” (804). Similar to the structure of the words within the story which the characters articulate, the codes and conventions of its fairy tale version function implicitly at the surface, but inoperative. They are potential for being but no longer can be activated. The codes are just there as a series of unfulfilled expectations rather than as a means. This indicates that the codes could no longer transform anything fit into its role and status; that is what exactly happens for the prince of Barthelme’s *Snow White*. Simultaneously, “the cyclic structure of

the fairy tale degenerates into serial form". As Leland has noted; "Snow White searches for the happy ending to the story she is but no longer can be: she searches for the realization of her mythic paradigm, for its closed structure and its resolution" (804). Kept away from its fairy tale paradigm, Snow White must exist, instead, within structures of reduplication. Therefore, in the end as Leland has mentioned, this succession of episodes and this fragmented reduplication, takes inadequately the place of the closed structure of its fairy tale version. At this point, "Barthelme's *Snow White* becomes a form of a form" (804), it is the same as Jacques Derrida's notion of iterability which is absorbing the aspirations of the original structure yet surviving only as it endlessly repeats itself without resolution. Throughout this process, everything seems failed at the surface; however, it is not the same as what it appears.

As the substance of the original story degenerates, accumulating other episodes from stories of the same type, so too does the plot degenerate. In fact, the plot loses its ability in the process to speak or coherently to structure our lives. On the other hand, Barthelme's refusal of closure is perhaps most dramatically seen at the last lines of the story. We come across the idea that this story is not a linear one and, in addition, the base concept of this phrase laid within the novel when Snow White does not want to hear the words that she always hears; "Murder and create" (Barthelme 12). *Snow White* does have a circular plot throughout which new worlds get opened. Our desire of ending is not fulfilled instead we are left with only a series of possible beginnings with undecidability:

THE FAILURE OF SNOW WHITE'S ARSE
REVIRGINIZATION OF SNOW WHITE
APOTHEOSIS OF SNOW WHITE
SNOW WHITE RISES INTO THE SKY
THE HEROES DEPART IN SEARCH OF
A NEW PRINCIPLE
HEIGH-HO

Perhaps ending is a return to its beginning spot like a circle but each beginning is different from the one which has been experienced. Beginning is not the beginning. As Thomas M. Leitch mentions; "this ending is "the end of the end" (129). This is an ending which plays with our formal and structured expectation of an ending, an illusory one. "Each of the endings written on the final page of *Snow White* provides us with a theme in terms of which to see *Snow White* from beginning to end. Then we are faced, potentially, with infinity of possible plots stemming from a multiplicity of points of view" (Leland 805). However, this is not a null circulation as it seems. These are the steps toward the emergence of 'nothing' world full of everything; a world in which even deconstruction, itself, is in an unstable position and is criticized under its own constructed rules. This is the world of both acceptance and denial. As a reader, one starts from the beginning, then experiencing a process but at the end there is no sense of ending; only new subjects for new beginnings are found.

Now one could rewrite the story, it could be started with new different beginnings and plot line as what Barthelme had done with Snow White's fairy tale. Everything is in a state of flux within the creative world of this story. Its endlessness is a new beginning for the essence of telling and retelling of other new stories. This is the requisite essence of any laws of nature; the circulation of creation, eternity and again creation. That open-ended nature of language within such stories is one of the reasons the logocentric readers cannot stand. The decentring process and the circular structure of the story make any reader frustrated and desperate. Our world of words gets used to its logocentric rules created by language and it would be hard to accept other worlds constructed by another rules such as postmodern fictitious reality.

That is the same as what has happened to us in accepting the newly invented world of 'nothing'. It seems *Snow White* creates a new outlook by denying to have an access to inaccessible. As John Leland has noted; the last page "are all possible variations of Snow White story, which in effect is repeated and subjected to another serialization every time we re-tell it-every time we re-mark it as critics or readers according to our desire for closure, for termination" (805). However, the story denies that closure. It seems "Snow White/*Snow White* is destined to begin, to begin, to begin" (ibid.). Although the book is a notion complete in itself, this notion of the Book or of literature as a finished object, a self-enclosed text, seems to be radically denied by *Snow White*. The unity of the Book is fragmented by the text as it emerges a re-telling of what has already been told and as its end emerges only as another beginning. This fragmented unity includes what has been traditionally located within the supposed unity of a subject, the author's experimental world, vision, intention, imagination and many other factors. It seems fragmentation, as another logocentric format, is the only reliable form in Barthelme's postmodern texts. In this way, *Snow White* refuses to form a totality. "Neither its own beginning nor its own end is circumscribed by the unity of the Book, which exists only as a site of transformation. "To find a stable meaning, a point of identity and closure, becomes then only an exercise in exhaustion" (Leland 806) just like the inaccessible transcendental signified left in *undecidability*.

Throughout this endlessness, the inversion of canonical literature vs. literature opposition is notified within *Snow White*. This is the subversion of traditional vs. modern, classical vs. postmodern. Prelude, development and especially finale or better to categorized as beginning, middle and end are the concepts which

always remain problematic in this regard. About postmodernism as one of Barthelme's character, Edgar in "The Dolt" has mentioned; "Endings are elusive, middles are nowhere to be found, but worst of all is to begin, to begin, to begin" (Barthelme 89). This aptly expresses the ontological and epistemological despair which spreads all through Barthelme's writing. Barthelme's text is a fiction in which prelude meets finale in a cyclical process. Barthelme's refusal of literature is originated from this despair that literature has lost its privileged status as the myth of its origins. It becomes a dream reduced to a mere filling and not the dream of fulfilling. Literature becomes the desperate activity of submission in stimulating the world of 'nothing'. The aim of this subversion is the construction of new values in new contexts of new worlds. But Barthelme's aesthetic of frustration could merely disguise the well-matured decadence belief. His fictions merely dance upon the ruins of traditional literary categories and conventions.

Within Barthelme's Babel, in effect all meanings are equivalent to non-meaning. This is the particular ideology constructed throughout postmodern fictitious reality. These murmuring of massive signs with no significance produce something beyond non-meaning. From these global mass of signs, fragments, collage a meaning bursts forth and that is the newly constructed world of anonymous "Nothing". Upon this huge trash heap of words, "Barthelme's fiction plays at (with or in) the play of signification". "It divides, fragments, and shatters to expose the essential subversion of non-meaning within the calling forth of meaning. That is the repression of non-meaning which constitutes the possibility of surrogation" (Leland 808).

According to Derridean deconstructive reading strategy, there is no absolute, pure and complete meaning. In fact deconstruction sacrifices itself by assuming the strategies which were made by man-made words in order to let us get free ourselves and go beyond this world of language. Considering a value system to call something as prior to the other is proved totally futile and man-made by these postmodern fictitious worlds. According to John Leland; what is transformed is the accumulation of signs- the dreck- with and within which we "make our homes" (809). However, Barthelme himself refuses to allow the subversion of non-meaning on the surfacing of meaning to go unnoticed. "Leave thing alone, it means what it means" (Barthelme 113). "To discover the meaning there is no other way except to articulate our own seeing of things as something but whether there is something or there is not, this question leads the dwarfs to the abyss of non-meaning" (Leland 809) although they fail to fulfill the distinction. The story leaves the dwarves in aporia. When the dwarves search for the true solution to the aesthetics of their newly acquired shower curtain, the nature of disordering of fixed and basic orders of apprehension and understanding is revealed in Barthelme's handling of the problem of meaning judgments, hence, the result is that orders are built up, only to be decomposed. It seems they get confused but step by step they get near to their first place in a new light of experience. At the end, the dwarves can only say: "But we had not known that it was the best-looking shower curtain in town. That we had not known. We looked at the shower curtain with new eyes, or rather; saw it in a new light, the light of the aesthetician's remark" (Barthelme 123) which is precisely where they began.

This is the gap which exists always within our selves, texts, forms, style. But as Hogo says to Jane: "Nothing is to become of us Jane. Our becoming is done. We are what we are. Now it is just a question of rocking along with things as they are until we are dead. . . . It's not my picture Jane. I didn't think up this picture that we are confronted with. The original brushwork was not mine. I absolutely separate myself from this picture. I operate within the frame it is true, but the picture-" (Barthelme *Snow White* 134).

This nothing word is also originated from this story. "Space bounded by language: the frame, always there, in effect creating the picture, for without that one, our pictures are boundless" (Leland 810). "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' . . . 'My God but we are fragile'" (Barthelme 135-6). "It is only Barthelme, unlike Hogo, refuses to simply rock along. We may be prisoners of our own fictions by the medium of language as we search for ultimate meaning" (Leland 810).

To sum up, as Johnson mentions; "nothing may precede language but language, as an interpretation of nothing, is not only something, but the basis for another something never ending. All language even all life maybe ex-nihilo (this nothingness which includes everything in itself) but for Barthelme this does not mean that the nothingness is there waiting to engorged the pretended being once the noise stops" (87). The reading strategy of deconstruction is a new outlook to let us go beyond the world of words and its limitations. It tries to break the border lines and break their holy positions. It breaks the rules and creates new perspectives like Snow White in her story. That new perspective as a new world of an unknown, unrecognizable, unreachable and indefinable status is named world of 'nothing'.

Snow white and the readers are in the status of the people within the Plato's cave. Deconstruction as their light, they are trying to come out from the limitations constructed by cave of language. It is the individuals' decision whether to stay or return to their former cave. That is the decision whether to stay in the newly born world or like deconstruction to return back to the prison of words (our present situation). Deconstruction is itself once going beyond the limitations. But in order to be understood, it returns to the world of language and gets stuck in this position to let us free ourselves. By applying deconstruction's assumptions and strategies on

postmodern fiction, the strategy lets us define a new window to unknown worlds. Deconstruction has to use the limitations exists automatically within the medium it uses but at the same time put a cross on language to let us get free ourselves from the limitations constructed by language. These are the limitations of our own construction. Beyond language, it is not 'nothing' that is forever waiting but it is we waiting for nothingness forever. A world unique in itself parallel to ours; however, it is constructed by other mediums. 'Nothing' instead of anonymous at the same time dialectically calls forth both its opposites but the opposites are the ones meant to interpret that world. Neither beautiful nor fruitful, world of nothing moves from and toward 'nothing'; however, it will never arrive at its destination like other signs. Because once it arrives, the goal has moved forward. The ultimate joke on language is that it makes the word both possible and necessary. Are these language problems stimulated by deconstructive reading strategy or are the notions stimulated these problems or the world of 'nothing'? This is an unreachable and undecidable transcendental world; an instant of both construction and deconstruction; of murder and create. An instant world in which there is no limit of the heart and the mind. There is no knowledge of that instant of this insanity and sanity. This space of 'nothingness' is an instant world of both absurdity and logic. Nothing/everything are inseparable and this inseparability of the polar is irresistible. By accepting the rules of this world of nothing, for sure it should also be constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed in a cyclic process of the space within that gap. Again there exists the multiplicity of worlds which does never reach to an end. Thus, this fluctuation between center/decenter always exist. The world of that gap of nothing is full of these antithesis poles and their third and fourth concepts. There is both no beginning and no end. That is why Barthelme's Snow White is not based on "happily happily ever after" of its fairy tale version; however, new anti-fairy tale structure is constructed throughout which new meanings and new outdoors are getting through within it.

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Analyzing Donald Barthelme's novels brings me to the conclusion that this novel is modernist rather than a postmodernist work. I can agree with McHale that Barthelme's Snow White's reflections are not reflections on the human condition, but on the role and function of a myth in the contemporary period Snow White represents. It is a myth of innocence, but also of the simplified black and white vision of the world represented by the popular genre conventions, especially the fairy story of which Snow White is protagonist. The language he uses. For example, the questionnaire concluding Part One in Barthelme's Snow White asks the reader questions such as: 1. Do you like the story so far? 2. Does Snow White resemble the Snow White you remember? About Snow White Snow White Summary Character List Glossary Themes Quotes Analysis Symbols, Allegory and Motifs Metaphors and Similes Irony Imagery Literary Elements Essay Questions. Snow White Metaphors and Similes. These notes were contributed by members of the GradeSaver community. We are thankful for their contributions and encourage you to make your own. Written by Timothy Sexton. Everything about this simile seems a little off and it may be part of Barthelme's methodology for manipulating language to make a familiar fairy tale seem unfamiliar. The term wire-walker seems archaic or like an example of some sort of cultural patois or regional dialect: most people would say tightrope-walker at least high-wire walker. Snow White is a post-modernist novel by author Donald Barthelme published in 1967 by Atheneum Books. The book inverts the fairy tale of the same name by highlighting the form by discussing the different expectations and compromises the characters make to survive in their world. This is done through Barthelme's fragmentary rhetoric and discourse, by shifting perspectives from the seven "dwarves" or Snow White herself, as well as the wicked step-mother, "Jane." It was Barthelme's first novel, published Snow White [Barthelme, Donald] on Amazon.com. *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers. Snow White. My introduction to Donald Barthelme were his short stories. I learned of this book, dove right in and discovered quite a romp! I feel for the other reviewers that may have felt that this was a faithful rendition of Grimm classic. It certainly is not!! It is twisted and thought provoking. My favorite passages are the quiz and the end of Part One, and the letter that Jane (the evil stepmother) writes to a stranger in the phone book, Mr. Quistgaard. That truly makes you stop and think about the way things are today and how we insulate ourselves in our own plenum. In a rather strange way, it made