

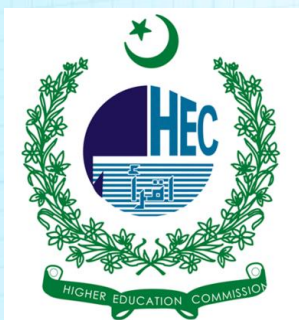
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**Dreams Within Dreams: Borges' *The Circular Ruins* and the
Postmodern Labyrinth**



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Abstract

Jorge Luis Borges' short story *The Circular Ruins* is a critical study concerning the approach of the post-modern literary theory. Positioned as a seminal narrative in the development of postmodern fiction, Borges's story addresses profound philosophical concerns related to identity, authorship, and the nature of reality. With the help of the qualitative textual analysis, the research examines the main postmodern concepts in the story, including simulacra and hyperreality, ontological instability, metafiction, intertextuality, magic realism, and fragmentation of the narrative. Resorting to the theoretical work of Jean Baudrillard, Jean-Francois Lyotard, Linda Hutcheon, Brian McHale, among other authors, the paper illustrates how the work of *The Circular Ruins* foreshadows and sums up major postmodern fears and aesthetics. This can be seen in the fact that the protagonist of Borges who dreams of another human who happens to be a dream and then finds out he is also a dream, is a representative of what Baudrillard calls the simulacrum which has no beginning. The metafictional reflexivity can also be observed by the recursive structure of the story and self-referential nature of its narrative voice overstepping the issues of realism and the quest of a single narrative line. Also, the mythical and the cultural allusions demonstrated by Borges place the story in a tightly-conceived intertextual network supporting the theory of the death of the author presented by Roland Barthes. Ultimately, the research affirms Borges's status as a literary precursor to postmodernism, highlighting the story's enduring relevance in discussions of identity, creation, and the instability of truth.

Keywords: Jorge Luis Borges, *The Circular Ruins*, postmodern literature, simulacra, hyper-reality, metafiction and ontological instability, intertextuality, magic realism

Introduction

The postmodern is a multi-dimensional and complex cultural, philosophical and literary movement which occurred in the mid-later 20th century. It emerged as a reaction to the perceived failure of modernism and Enlightenment project and was fueled by the shock of the Second World War. Postmodern distaste with reason,

progress, and the unity of art replaced modernist faith in the same. Although definition is unwanted, as Ihab Hassan (1981) once declared, postmodernism is one of those moving things and not a specific ideology. Among them are irony, pastiche, metafiction, intertextuality, distortion of time, and boundary between high and low cultures collapsing. At the core of postmodernism is its extreme questioning of the reality, identity and authorship. This research article seeks to explore how Jorge Luis Borges's iconic short story "The Circular Ruins" embodies the thematic and stylistic elements of postmodernism and thus serves as a quintessential example of postmodern short fiction.

Within literature, postmodernism represented an important break with the linear narratives and psychological realism of 19th -century fiction, and the epistemological imperatives of modernist writing. Rather, in postmodern narratives the construction of fiction itself is frequently brought to the fore, collapsing the distinction between reality and imagination. Literary theorist Linda Hutcheon (2003) coined the term "historiographic metafiction" to describe how postmodern literature questions history and narrative authority, blending fact with fiction. In the same measure, the concept of simulacra and hyperreality developed by Jean Baudrillard (1981) argues that in the postmodern age, a representation may be even truer than reality, which leads to the disappearance of the difference between the original and a copy.

Jorge Luis Borges, though writing before the term "postmodernism" was widely used, is frequently credited as a foundational figure in the postmodern canon. Borges's work challenges the very structure of narrative, time, and existence. "The Circular Ruins," first published in 1940 in the collection *Ficciones*, predates many of the critical texts that later defined postmodern thought, yet it engages with many of its key themes: simulacrum, recursive structures, ontological instability, intertextuality, and metafiction. As John Barth (1967) stated in his seminal essay "The Literature of Exhaustion," Borges was instrumental in opening new paths for literature through self-referentiality and philosophical inquiry.

"The Circular Ruins" tells the story of an unnamed man who arrives at the ruins of an ancient temple with a sacred mission: to dream a human being into existence. By means of disciplined dreaming he raises a young man in whose

consciousness he inserts a sense of living that is ultimately awakened by the Fire God. The twist in the story arises as the main character, spending years alone realizes that his son, whom he fantasized, has the ability to walk in fire without being burnt. Upon encountering fire himself, the protagonist discovers that he too is immune to its effects, leading to the chilling realization that he himself is nothing more than another man's dream. This is the realization of postmodern destruction of firm realities highlighting the genius in Borges when he foresees the philosophic and literary issues of the second half of the 20th century.

Statement of the Problem

The primary problem this study addresses is the need to re-examine Borges's short story "The Circular Ruins" in the context of postmodern literary theory. Despite the high number of references to Borges in the various postmodern texts, there has always been the lack of concentrated analysis that breaks down the individual story by breaking them over the particular postmodern paradigms. Since Borges wrote before the postmodernist school had been defined formally, this scholarly gap exists in judging the extent to which his writing is effective in predicting and incarnating postmodern issues. This study aims to bridge that gap by closely analyzing "The Circular Ruins" through theoretical frameworks proposed by Lyotard, Baudrillard, Hutcheon, Hassan, and others. The big question this inquiry begs to ask then is: how can such a short story written prior to the advent of postmodernism develop any deepest-rooted anxieties and innovations?

Research Objectives

- To explore the thematic elements of postmodernism in "The Circular Ruins."
- To examine structural and stylistic devices through which the story can be found postmodern.
- In order to apply Borges to the view of the philosophical thinking of postmodernism.

Research Questions

- How does "The Circular Ruins" exemplify the themes and concerns of postmodern literature?
- Which structural and style-related characteristics in the story by Borges will fit into the definition of the postmodern narrative technique?

- What is Borges trying to predict about philosophical discussion in the fashion of post-modern thought, with fiction?

Significance of the Study

The intellectual nature of the work, the maze-like structure and the philosophical undertones in the work of Borges have attracted the attention of scholars ever since he created his work. According to David Harvey (1989) in *The Condition of Postmodernity*, the postmodernism itself is an expression of the new state of human consciousness, namely, where it has broken up, cannot be centered and it has lost the sense of the world. This condition is addressed by the work of Borges. The work is interesting because it is a reconsideration of Borges no longer as a literary precedent but as a prophet and a theorist who expounded an idea of postmodernism before it was developed in its fullest form. It unites literary theory, philosophy, and textual analysis to provide a complete insight into how a single short story can illustrate the wide and sometimes contradictory characteristics of the postmodern fiction. What is more, the paper sheds light on the role of the Latin American literature in determining the world literary paradigm.

Delimitations of the Study

This study confines itself to a close postmodern reading of Borges's "The Circular Ruins," excluding broader comparative analyses with his other stories or with the works of other postmodern writers. It is concentrated on the postmodern literary and philosophical theories, and does not include other critical methods that could be psychoanalysis, Marxist criticism or feminist readings. Such methods may provide additional knowledge; however, it is not the topic and purpose of the present study.

Literature Review

The connection between literature and postmodernism has created a huge number of critical engagements and there are those who regard Jorge Luis Borges as a critical element in the discourse. This chapter critically examines relevant scholarly literature and theoretical frameworks that elucidate the postmodern aspects of Borges's short story "The Circular Ruins." Interested in the works of a number of different literary theorists and philosophers, the review places the story in the central postmodern paradigms, such as simulacra, metafiction, magic realism, ontological instability, and intertextuality.

Postmodernism Theoretical Framework

Postmodernism is primarily a repellent to the certainties and the big stories of modernism. Jean-François Lyotard's landmark work *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1984) identifies the defining feature of postmodern thought as an "incredulity toward metanarratives." This doubt exposes the usual authority and common truth, and promotes the local, contingent knowing. This gives rise to disjointed narratives, unclear characters and a denial of linear time in the literature.

Jean Baudrillard (1981) advances this theory of representations or simulations which are more real than the real when he introduces the concept of hyperreality and the theory of simulacra according to which in a postmodern society things become more real than the real. He writes, "The real is no longer what it used to be: it has been replaced by images, by simulations." Borges's "The Circular Ruins," which features characters who are revealed to be dreamed simulations, powerfully resonates with Baudrillard's theory. A set of simulated realities is developed throughout the story to the moment of overwhelming doubt of what is actually the real.

Linda Hutcheon (2003) introduced the concept of "historiographic metafiction," defining it as a form of postmodern literature that simultaneously represents and undermines historical narratives. She argues that these kinds of texts are described by their self-consciousness and the game with narrative structure. While "The Circular Ruins" is not historical fiction per se, it certainly aligns with the metafictional tendencies Hutcheon identifies: the story is self-aware, recursive, and self-reflexive.

Peter Barry (2002) makes the differentiation between modernist approach to fragmentation and postmodernist one. Whereas texts produced during the modernism phase, e.g. *The Waste Land* of T. S. Eliot, lament the loss of meaning, and are called by Barry mournful, the postmodern texts, instead, rejoice in the splintering of meaning. Borges exemplifies this celebratory fragmentation through his non-linear narrative structure and the blurring of ontological boundaries in "The Circular Ruins."

Borges and the Postmodern Literature Origins

Jorge Luis Borges is often recognised as one of the greatest predecessors to postmodernism. Jason Wilson (2006) emphasizes Borges's pioneering role in exploring themes such as infinite regress, labyrinths, and the self-reflective nature of

storytelling. The characters created by Borges tend to challenge their own reality or deal with the instability of identity areas of postmodernist fiction.

In "The Circular Ruins," Borges constructs a recursive narrative structure in which a man dreams another man into existence, only to later discover that he himself is a dream. This is the recursion that Ihab Hassan (1981) credits as being characteristic of postmodernism. Hassan names a few features of the postmodern literary works which include indeterminacy, irony and self-consciousness; all which are evident in Borges story.

In addition, Borges literary architecture is frequently featured with labyrinths, mirrors and doppelgangers as they represent multiplicity and ontological skepticism. Stories like "The Library of Babel," "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius," and "The Garden of Forking Paths" contain philosophical musings on infinity, multiplicity, and alternate realities. These themes do not simply break the thread of time and cause and effect but they underscore the boundaries of human knowledge.

Latin American Postmodernism and Magic Realism

Magic realism belongs to that type of genre where the fantastic gets interwoven with ordinary and the supernatural happens in the world of rationality without explanation. It forms a very big part of Latin American literature and Borges is one of the biggest designers of this Latin America literature. Seymour Menton (1982) finds Borges as one of the contributors of the genre in such a way that he states that: Borges combined philosophical speculation and dream imagery, and he was able to bridge the gap concerning how things appear and how they happen to be.

In contrast to fantasy fiction, magic realism incorporates the elements of the supernatural into recognizable settings, the element of the fantastical is therefore sanitized. In "The Circular Ruins," the protagonist's dream creation and the eventual revelation that he himself is a dream are presented without surprise or disbelief. The hero is even passing through fire and coming out unhurt but this supernatural phenomenon is presented in a rational, calm voice. This light hand in the treatment of the extraordinary represents the aesthetics of magic realism, but it also supports postmodern concerns in the issues of unreality and circularity.

Angel Flores (1955), who coined the term "magical realism," emphasized its philosophical bent, particularly in Latin American literature. Flores claims that the

work of Borges is not about the development of a character but a business of ideas. The forgiveness of polar philosophical questions and their prioritization over emotional significance is in line with the postmodern approach to the use of fiction as the playing field of conceptual experimentation.

Ontology, Metafiction and Simulacra

Metafiction is a very common literary approach in the narratives of Borges wherein a text becomes self-aware about its nature as a fictional creation. Patricia Waugh (1984) defines metafiction as "fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artifact." Borges accomplishes this example by narratological breaks, philosophical digressions, and circular constructions. In "The Circular Ruins," for instance, the protagonist's realization that he is a dreamed being introduces a metafictional twist, disrupting the narrative and implicating the reader in the collapse of ontological certainty.

Simulacra is a term theorized by Baudrillard, and denotes imitations to things which no longer possess an original- or perhaps which never did. The son of the main character is a simulacrum, the main character is a simulacrum as well. They are representations without referents, echoing Baudrillard's idea that "it is no longer a question of imitation, nor duplication, nor even parody. It is a question of substituting the signs of the real for the real" (Baudrillard, 1981). The interweaving between dream and reality in Borges story weakens to breaking-point and it is used to show how the bases of ontology can be de-stabilized as suggested by postmodernism.

These ontological concerns by Borges coincide with the transition of epistemology to ontology in the postmodern theory, as explained by Brian McHale (1987). McHale position in Postmodernist Fiction is that the modernist literature was centered around the questions of knowing whereas the post-modernist work was centered around questions on being. "The Circular Ruins" is thus quintessentially postmodern in its central question: What does it mean to exist, if existence itself may be a dream?

Allegory and Intertextuality

Postmodern texts are highly intertextual where they are loaded with references and allusion to other texts and various traditions and mythologies. Borges's writing thrives on this intertextual play. In "The Circular Ruins," one finds echoes of Plato's Allegory

of the Cave, Gnostic creation myths, and Jewish folklore about the Golem—a being created from clay and animated through mystical means. These references enhance the philosophical and symbolical appurtenance of the story providing an objection to the concept of originality.

As Julia Kristeva (1980) argues, intertextuality implies that "any text is the absorption and transformation of another." This spirit can be found in work of Borges. The recursive act of dreaming a being into existence mirrors the creative process of fiction writing, wherein characters are "dreamed" into being by the author. The narrative, in this way, turns to be the allegory of authorship where the writer becomes some sort of demiurge whose creation can also gain agency.

Umberto Eco (1984) defines postmodernism as a movement that is very much textual aware. Borges's intertextual references underscore the idea that stories do not exist in isolation but are part of a network of cultural and philosophical discourses. The fact that the story is set in a ruined temple can also be used to refer to decay of old meanings and emergence of new and uncertain meanings a classic postmodern situation.

Conclusively, the literature surrounding postmodern theory and Borges's oeuvre provides a robust foundation for analyzing "The Circular Ruins" as a quintessential postmodern text. The theoretical conceptions of Lyotard, Baudrillard, Hutcheon, Hassan, McHale, and others enable the story narrative stratagems and also its topical focus to be perceived in many ways. The confluence of magic realism, metafiction, simulacra, and intertextuality represented in Borges should be connected only with the key characteristics of postmodernism writing but also is the foreshadowing of them. As such, "The Circular Ruins" serves not only as a literary artifact but also as a philosophical inquiry into the nature of reality, creation, and the instability of existence.

Methodology

This chapter outlines the comprehensive methodology employed to analyze Jorge Luis Borges's short story "The Circular Ruins" through the lens of postmodern literary theory. It is interpretive, qualitative and analytical in approach and is geared towards the distillation and interpretation of the interweaving of themes, symbols and narrative techniques of the story as a postmodern text. The methodology used in the

research her is interdisciplinary as it is based on literary theory, philosophy and cultural studies.

Research Design

Research design is qualitative, explorative, which is based on textual analysis. In contrast to proving or disproving something, this research will focus on discovering the levels of meaning inside the story of Borges by performing the close reading and interpretive analysis. Qualitative approach is appropriate application in the study of literature where the phenomenon to be studied aims at interpretation and not measurement. As presented by Creswell (2013), the qualitative research is effective to explore the meaning and interpretation whenever the research questions require exploring complex, philosophical or symbolic material. Thus, the study is inductive by its nature, that is, meaning is built on the text and reinforced with the help of appropriate theoretical insights.

The analysis pattern is thematic and based on the postmodern literary theory principles. To trace the interaction with the paradigms of postmodernity, specific components, the narrative voice, ontological issues, meta-fictional elements, and intertextual allusions, are analyzed systematically to pursue the interest of Borges in postmodern paradigms. Major theorists including Jean Baudrillard, Jean-Francois Lyotard, Linda Hutcheon, Fredric Jameson, Ihab Hassan, and Peter Barry can be considered to be the sources of these paradigms.

Data Collection

The primary source for this study is Borges's short story "The Circular Ruins," originally published in the collection *Ficciones* in 1940. This piece of literature is going to be the focus of examination. Because the narrative is pre-postmodern, the concept of postmodernism had not yet achieved a formal conception, and thus, the narrative is especially appropriate to reflect how postmodern elements can be found in pre-postmodern literature, a fact that makes Borges a forerunner of postmodernism.

Secondary sources represent literature, scholarly articles, books, literary criticism, and essays mentioning post modernism in literature, stylistic and philosophical contributions of Borges and general ideas in literary theory. These are:

- Baudrillard, J. (1981). *Simulacra and Simulation*.
- Lyotard, J.-F. (1984). *The Postmodern condition: A report on knowledge*.

- Hutcheon, L. (1988). *A Postmodernism Poetics*.
- Barry, P. (2002). *Beginning Theory*.
- Wilson, J. (2006). *Jorge Luis Barque: Critical lives*.
- Hassan, I. (1987). *The Postmodern Turn: Essays in Postmodern Theory and Culture*.

These writings are useful to put Borges into a larger literature history and explain the philosophical implications of his writing. They are applied in order to justify the analysis of the text and in order to contextualize the results in well-established theoretical frameworks.

Data Analysis

This stage of study involves analysis which is mostly the textual and thematic. The narration is deconstructed along several structural, telling, and thematic aspects, thus exuding the postmodern sensibilities. These are structured on six main characteristics of postmodern features:

Simulacra and Hyperreality

Based on the theory of Baudrillard, the discussion examines elements of the allegations about how the main character and the object he has created in his dream are simulations of humanity but they do not have an original reference. Borges's narrative blurs the line between authentic creation and mimetic reproduction. The theory concept behind the dreamer and the dreamed being the fictional aspects of existence forms part of the hyperreal structure where reality is created by artifacts not by establishment.

Ontological Instability

In the light of what Brian McHale (1992) says that the postmodern literature is ontologically oriented the paper tries to look at how Borges asks questions about being and existing through the realization of the reality of the protagonist that he is but a dream. This wake-up call undermines the conventional constructs of the self and its material dimension.

Metafiction

The passages are examined where there is a self-description and story intrusion. As an example, parenthetical style and the attempting of an indirect reference to the plot presented by Borges indicate a meta-fictional approach that focuses on the process of

telling stories. Hutcheon's concept of "historiographic metafiction" is employed to explain how Borges foregrounds fictionality.

Magic Realism

The magic realism theory of Seymour Menton has been employed into the supernatural circumstances of the narration the idea to dream up a human being, to pass through the fire undisturbed, and to call the divine strength through the ritualism. These realities are handled in a manner that is sensible, rather than sensational, which strengthens the aspect of magic realism.

Intertextuality

It is critical to discuss the references of the story to mythologies (Greek, Judaic), gnostic cosmologies and the literary tradition (labyrinths, mazes, the Golem myth). The idea of inter-textuality (as articulated by Julia Kristeva) is applied to show how Borges destroys the boundaries between texts to create meaning alluding and referring to previous texts instead of being unique or ground-breaking.

Fragmentation

The broken narrative, non-existent time and self-referencing narrative are all pointed out as a sign of a postmodern form. The difference between modernist anxiety and postmodern acceptance of fragmentation distinctions that have been presented by Peter Barry is used to interpret the narrative tone and structure of the story by Borges. This is why in the analysis it shifts away, as it were, to general theoretical statements. There is a hermeneutic circle such that a portion of the text explains the entire text and vice versa.

Orientation Theoretical

Theorizing that organized this study is mostly postmodern, but it includes connections with structuralist and existentialist interpretations where they are applicable. The philosophical background of Borges and the metaphysical issues in the story needs a flexible approach of analysis that can cater to different schools of thought. The interdisciplinary approach is also the symbol of the nature of postmodern theory, which lives on the plural, paradox, and multiplicity.

To analyze the work of Borges, this paper takes on Peter Lyotard doubts about metanarratives, Jean Baudrillard simulated reality concept, and Hutcheon thoughts on self-reflexive fiction. This approach is also guided by the taxonomy of the

postmodern doctrine developed by Hassan, particularly the following characteristics: indeterminacy, irony, and hybridization.

Ethical Considerations

Since the entire research will be a process of textual analysis and secondary sources, no human subjects will be involved, and, therefore, no ethical risks. Despite this, citation and references to all the works, used, helps enforce academic integrity. Explanations are not distorted or twisted in an attempt to portray their own interest on source materials.

Limitations

The methodology is stringent and is based on theoretical traditions, however it is not limitless. The research is narrowly focused on one piece, which prevents the conclusion of its applicability to the oeuvre of Borges or the postmodern literature as a whole. More so, literary analysis is subjective in nature. Various readers will have different conclusions depending on their theoretical orientations.

The lack of comparative reading or contemporary Latin American criticism, or other more sociopolitical understanding can restrict the depth of the specific findings given. Moreover, although the postmodern theory is helpful as an analytical tool, it can also lead to interpretive biases being present, particularly when conducting an analysis of the texts that were written prior to the emergence of the postmodernism formalization.

Justification of Method

Use of qualitative literary analysis can be rationalized through philosophical and literary orientations of research questions. Inherently, postmodernism cannot be a subject to quantitative inquiry and determinism. This fluid, stratified and evasive aspects of the writing of Borges would be most apt to be expressed in terms of interpreting approaches.

This is the methodology that allows examining thoroughly the manner in which literary form, literary theme, and literary structure coincide and make up meaning. It also helps to have a philosophical approach to the text so that the researcher can read ontological and epistemological worlds that are key to the postmodern theory.

To sum up, the identified methodology is appropriate to the goals and theoretical

focus of the study. This chapter lays the foundation of analyses provided in the rest of the sections by conducting close reading, thematic making sense of, and experiential application of theory.

Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the results of the study as derived from the detailed textual and theoretical analysis of Jorge Luis Borges's short story "The Circular Ruins." The results are organized by themes according to the main features of postmodernism which appeared as a result of the qualitative interpretive methodology. All the aspects of postmodernism are put into context in the narration and are then discussed in order to relate it to the analysis on literature further to wider philosophical and theoretical issues.

Simulacra and Hyperreality

Among the most evident findings of the analysis, it is also possible to note the mention of simulacra and hyperreality as the determinants of the story. The main character of the story and he who dreams the human being into being *resión* comes to the realization that it is he who is a dream and a simulacrum fashioned by some other dreamer. The unending chain of simulacra besets perfectly with what Baudrillard (1981) defines as a simulation, which is the lack of attachment of representation to the reality so as to establish its own self-contained existence.

This effect identifies the fact that the story written by Borges foreshadows the critical postmodern condition: the collapse of reality. The protagonist's belief in the authenticity of his creation is shattered by the revelation of his own simulated nature. According to Baudrillard, simulation is not anymore that of a territory, a referential being, or a substance. It is the production of a real by models as such without origin or reality." Borges puts the same concept into a dramatic literary shape decades prior to the publishing of the theory by Baudrillard and thus, the story is a deep inquiry into postmodern identity and epistemology.

Ontological Instability

The second significant finding is associated with ontological unsteadiness depicted in the narrative. Following Brian McHale's (1992) classification of postmodern fiction as ontologically dominant, "The Circular Ruins" exemplifies how literary texts can question the nature of being and reality itself. Such existential destabilisation is seen

in the shift of the protagonist whose self-assured creator is shaken into a frightened simulacrum and cannot be reduced to character development.

This realization is another postmodern assertion of Borges against fixed realities. Maybe we experience what we believe to be existence, as nothing but the layers of the narrative construct or dreams, insinuates the text. The fictional reality also correlates ontologically with postmodern scepticism because being is said to be temporal, circular and irrefutable. This finding contributes to increasing scholarly agreement that the fiction of Borges should be not only considered as a storytelling but a metaphysical inquiry.

Narrative reflexivity and Metafiction

Another important result was the existence of metafictional elements. Borges's story is self-referential and acknowledges its own constructedness. This can be seen in the narrative devices like the use of parentheses where one can say (It would have been better that he destroyed it). Such narrative techniques are not only stylistic but postmodern devices that help deconceptualize the illusions of neutrality of the author and the linearity of the narrative.

This reflection lies at the center to the Linda Hutcheon (2003) idea of historiographic metafiction where fiction does not only deal with what happens but also how these events are reported. Borges employs metafiction in encouraging readers to contemplate the art of reading. The book becomes introspective and reveals the fictionalism that moves it onwards. This supports the postmodern philosophical character of overthrowing traditional authority in narratives and the adoption of various standpoints.

Magic Realism as a Philosopheme Generator

In the study, it sees no match of style that Borges uses magic realism as a mere flourish as a tribute to style but on the other hand it is the means to raise profound questions of philosophy and metaphysics. The supernatural elements: the dreaming of a human being, the magic rituals, the immunity to fire are not to be understood as extraordinary but they are presented as a part of the logic of the story. This ordinariness of the story adds some credibility to the fantastic and leaves the reader wondering how far is the real.

In the context of magic realism, the most significant argument by Seymour Menton

(1982) is that this form of literature has the potential of enabling the mundane and miraculous to coexist. In magic realism, make-believe is the key to ontological and metaphysical questions in the story written by Borges. By this the story crosses the boundary of reason and belief, of science and fantasy, of reality and dream, a crucial aspect of postmodern literature which aims at erasing opposites.

Intertextuality, Cultural Palimpsest

The results also confirm that intertextuality is deeply embedded in "The Circular Ruins." Borges is appealing to various traditions, Greek mythology and Judaic folklore, Gnostic theology and literary archetypes. All the intertextual signifiers, such as the labyrinth, the Golem, the demiurge, and the fire god, add to the narrative but disrupt the concept of originality as well.

It corresponds to the perspective of Julia Kristeva (1980) according to whom any text is a collage of quotations and to the claim by Roland Barthes (1977) that an author does not create a text but is rather the collector of textual influences. This way is achieved by Borges, as he creates a narrative that can be characterized as a palimpsest of the cultural symbols and myths. Intertextuality in the story is not aesthetic in designing but part and parcel of the postmodern structure.

Non-linearity / Fragmentation

Another significant finding regards the fragmentary form of the story and its non-linear, self-shifting. The circularity, starting with ruins and crowned with fire, is typical of the postmodern fragmentation. The story does not move forward in a linear way, but returns to the beginning in several ways anchoring the thematic element of repetition and revisiting. The story also has vague and repetitive time, which also helps in contributing to the post-modern aesthetic.

Peter Barry (2002), compares this post-modern celebration of fragmentation with the modernist effort to repair the fragmentation. Borges does not aim at finding some coherence, resolution. Rather he resigns himself to the partial, the circular, the incomprehensible. Such a choice of narration emphasizes the pointlessness of finding ultimate meaning within a world that is ruled by indeterminacy- the key postmodern principle.

Discussion Synthesis and Implications

The synthesis of these results reveals that Borges's "The Circular Ruins" is not only

compatible with postmodern theory but anticipates many of its major themes. The narrative can be seen as a literary precursor of the theoretical ideas that came to represent postmodernism. Its attention to identity, reality, authorship and truth however exemplify a full-blown deliberation of the philosophical anxieties that rose in the wake of modernity.

Moreover, Borges even questions the authority of narrative. Destabilizing the reliability of the narrator, breaking linear time, and showing identity as a simulation, he questions the reader in the assumptions that he or she has on fiction or reality. This has serious implications to literary studies. Borges turns out not only a storyteller but also a philosopher of language and life.

Such tale, thus, represents the move between the modernist examination of introspection and interrogation of post-modernism. It bridges differences naming differences between author and reader, reality and fiction, original and copy, and it thus complies with the very nature of the post modernistic reasoning. The findings affirm that "The Circular Ruins" is a profound narrative experiment that foreshadows and embodies postmodernism in both form and substance.

To sum up, the study confirms the research hypothesis that the short story of Borges is a paradigm case of postmodern fiction literature. Simulacra, metafiction, ontological uncertainty, intertextuality, magic realism, and fragmentation do exist, but serve as major pillars upon which this text runs. Borges's literary artistry and philosophical depth mark "The Circular Ruins" as a seminal work that bridges classical literary traditions and contemporary theoretical discourses.

Conclusion

"The Circular Ruins" is not merely a literary experiment but a profound philosophical artifact that encapsulates the essence of postmodernism. The themes explored in the narration of Borges are of deeper nature including instability of identity, unreliability of reality and demolition of conventional narrative structures. All these elements put the story to another level beyond its mere fictional premise, as it becomes a text of reflection, reflection, and criticism of the modern assumptions both in thought and in art.

The analysis has been carried out through elaborate thematic and stylistic study which has revealed that the story has been heavily laced with the characteristics of a

postmodernist narrative. The concept of simulacra, borrowed by Baudrillard reveals the myth of originality and disrupts the concepts of authorship. The ontological doubt, which forms the foundation of the story, is consistent with the theory of McHale that postmodernism is focused more on a question of being rather than a question of knowledge. It is a matter that is dramatized by the fact that the protagonist finds out his illusory nature himself which makes Borges a literary thinker who struggles with the metaphysical issues of human existence.

Moreover, metafictional work of Borges fractures the immersion of the reader into the story making him or her think about its artificiality. This narrative reflexivity contradicts modernist thirst of wholeness and authority. The intrusion of the magic realism technique to include events of a fantastical nature into the otherwise common reality of the narration demonstrates the unreliability of the border between the dreamlike and the real worlds, between the dream and the waking state.

Also of great importance are intertextual richness of the story as well. Borges relies on myth, theology, philosophy and literature, creating a web of narrative that is not easily interpreted. In doing so, he exemplifies Barthes's notion of the "death of the author," where meaning is not imposed but discovered through reading. The episodic and self-reflexive form of the story only strengthens the postmodern reverence of fragmentation and the non-existence of meaning.

Ultimately, "The Circular Ruins" is a literary realization of postmodern skepticism and self-awareness. It plunges the reader into the space of the inaccessible, into the boundaries of knowledge, into relativism of truth, humanity subjectivity. As a short fiction, it does what long novels do not do, that is, it merges the key new crisis of thought in form of a compressed, symbolic, and multi-level narrative.

Recommendations for Future Research

While this study focused exclusively on a postmodern reading of "The Circular Ruins," numerous avenues remain unexplored. Future research might undertake comparative literary analyses between this story and other works by Borges, such as "The Garden of Forking Paths" or "The Library of Babel," which share similar philosophical and structural motifs. These parallelisms may illuminate more on the changing narrative strategy and maturing interests in postmodernism by Borges.

A study of cross-cultural or transnational comparisons of Borges with other

postmodern writers (Italo Calvino, Thomas Pynchon, Haruki Murakami, or Gabriel Garcia Marquez), the researcher would be able to find out how various traditions relate to the postmodernist concepts as explored through magic realism, metafiction, and ontological games. A larger corpus may also bring to light trends and deviations regarding how dream, identity and authorship are treated in different cultures.

Also, some interdisciplinary methods based on psychoanalytic, feminist, or Marxist criticism may help to derive the other ways of interpretation of the text and get its purely valuable results. To take but one example, a psychoanalyzing interpretation could examine the repressed desire that the dreamer has to write at the expense of all other matters; that a feminist reading could challenge the lack or peripheralization of gender in the philosophical fictions by Borges; and that a Marxist approach could call into question a politics of authorial control and creative work.

Further, it may be useful to compare the fiction of Borges with other media of the present day, e.g., movie, digital forms of stories and virtual reality. The themes of simulacra and hyperreality in "The Circular Ruins" are directly relevant to discussions of digital identity, virtual worlds, and the age of artificial intelligence. By doing so Borges story remains an eternal point of reference when addressing the relations between literature, philosophy and technology.

Delimitations

The limitation of this study involved the study of one short story paired with one theory. It did not seek to explore the entire oeuvre of Borges nor to situate "The Circular Ruins" within the broader socio-political context of 20th-century Latin America. Also, no reader-response or empirical approaches were used in the study, with an increased focus given to a close textual study and a theoretical analysis.

This methodology did provide depth and focus, but obviously had to preclude the consideration of other potentially enriching ways of looking at the phenomenon. Comparative, empirical or even interdisciplinary settings that expand a field of analysis would be beneficial in future research. By so doing, the scholars would perhaps reveal additional aspects of meaning to the work of Borges, adding to some of our realizations of the postmodern condition as well as the legacy of Borges as an author who had the power to dream not only people but worlds into existence.

In sum, "The Circular Ruins" by Jorge Luis Borges remains a masterclass in literary

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innovation, philosophical speculation, and postmodern experimentation. It is also a labyrinth of narratives that forces us to question what we are, what narratives are, and what structures are, thus becoming a must-read object of critique by literary scholars and philosophers, as well as any readers.

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