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METAFIGTIONAL TECHNIQUES AND THEIR FUNCTIONS IN LAURENCE STERNE'S NOVEL TRISTRAM SHANDY AND JOHN BARTH'S COLLECTION OF SHORT STORIES LOST IN THE FUNHOUSE

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METAFIKCIENĖS PRIEMONĖS LAURENSO STERNO APSAKYME TRISTRAM SHANDY IR JOHNO BARTHO NOVELIJŲ RINKINYJE LOST IN THE FUNHOUSE

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ABSTRACT

METAFIGTIONAL TECHNIQUES IN LAURENCE STERNE’S TRISTRAM SHANDY AND JOHN BARTH’S LOST IN THE FUNHOUSE

The purpose of the thesis is to compare and contrast the types and functions of metafictional modes employed in Laurence Sterne’s novel *Tristram Shandy* and John Barth’s collection of short stories *Lost in the Funhouse*. The aim is achieved by applying the method of a textual analysis and comparative approaches as well as through studying and presenting an overview of metafiction as a literary device, critical reviews on Laurence Sterne’s and John Barth’s philosophic and aesthetic preferences, as well as general historical, philosophical and literary background of postmodernism and the 18th century. The analytical part of the paper, which consists of two chapters, each presenting various modes and functions of typographic and non-typographic metafictional means, revealed an extensive similarity in the two works despite the two-century gap. The fictions bear huge resemblance in terms of visual play of the text, the focus on the disparity between art and life as well as treatment of the role of narrator and the narratee. Barth and Sterne speak of literary stagnation of contemporary writers who cannot express the complexity, fragmentariness and isolation of a present day illogical individual with the help of already existing traditional literary means. The solution is the repetition and overt meta-comment on the use of a collage of a variety of literary genres, styles and techniques that offer its readers a wide range of possibilities for interpretations so that the narratees are able to bestow their individual meanings. However, the metafictional character *Tristram Shandy* is different from *Lost in the Funhouse* in its conversational approach to readers, its physical treatment of the narratives, the metafictional metaphors and in the number of specific metafictional means employed in the works.

Key words: metafiction, typographic, non-typographic, exhaustion, replenishment, reality, fictionality, narrative, self-reflexive, meta, collage, digression, overt, narratee, narrator.
INTRODUCTION

Patricia Waugh, a literary critic and professor of English literature, has created a comprehensive definition of metafiction as “fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artifact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality” (Waugh, 1984, 2). She argues that metafictional works are the ones that “explore a theory of writing fiction through the practice of writing fiction” (Waugh, 1984, 2). However, Ann Jefferson and some other literary critics disagree with Patricia Waugh’s idea, which was expressed in her work *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-conscious Fiction* (1984), that metafiction refers mainly to contemporary fiction. Despite the differences between their definitions, most theorists agree that metafiction cannot be classified neither as a genre nor as the definitive mode of postmodern fiction. They suggest that metafiction itself displays “a self-reflexivity prompted by the author’s awareness of the theory underlying the construction of fictional works,” without dividing contemporary metafiction from older works containing similar self-reflective techniques (Waugh, 1984, 2). Mark Currie, a Professor of Contemporary Literature, emphasizes recent metafiction’s trend to self-criticizing by describing it as “a borderline discourse, a kind of writing which places itself on the border between fiction and criticism, which takes the border as its subject” (Currie, 1995, 2). Though, he also includes works which are metafictional by suggesting “to see the dramatized narrator or novelist as metanarrative devices is to interpret a substantial proportion of fiction as meta-fiction” (Currie, 1995, 4). Regardless of the dissimilarities between their definitions, majority of theorists share the same opinion that metafiction should be neither categorized as a genre nor as the distinct approach of postmodern fiction. They propose that metafiction on its own exhibits “a self-reflexivity prompted by the author’s awareness of the theory underlying the construction of fictional works,” (Waugh, 1984, 2) without separating modern metafiction from former works having similar self-reflective aspects. The early roots of metafiction as a literary technique can be traced back in 17th century Spain in the prominent works of a Spanish novelist, Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, and a Spanish playwright, Félix Arturo Lope de Vega y Carpio.

This investigation is placed in the field of literature. It deals with the selected works by two representatives of metafiction, namely Laurence Sterne and John Barth. For the analysis, I have chosen Laurence Sterne’s novel *Tristram Shandy*, which belongs to the 18th century and John Barth’s collection of short stories *Lost in the Funhouse*. In the context of the 18th century English novel, *Tristram Shandy* presents itself as an outstandingly unique work of metafiction. The nature of
metafiction of the 20th century emerges from the comparison of the two metafictional masterpieces belonging to the two different epochs, where Sterne’s work, as Christensen has put it, „is seen against the background” of the modern fiction making experience (Christensen, 1981, 11).

**Hypothesis**

The findings are expected to confirm or at least partly prove the following:

- The metafictional devices employed in the analyzed fiction of Barth and Sterne differ in their type and functions due to the differing philosophical historical and literary aspects of the epochs;
- Sterne’s writing is extremely rich in a variety of metafictional modes, which are more obvious as the author is more “intrusive” by welcoming his audience into cooperation and realization of the disparity between reality and art. However, Barth’s nature of metafictional techniques is more of a literary critical review probably due to his scholarship and a vocation as a literary critic. However, the metafictionality of their works bears an extreme correspondence despite of a two century gap and the difference in socio-historical, philosophic and literary experience parting the two writers;
- Sterne’s fiction might be treated as a postmodern literary work in terms of its metafictionality.

**Aims and Objectives**

To explore of the use of metafictional techniques and their functions employed in the 18th century novel *Tristram Shandy* (2001) by Laurence Sterne’s and the postmodern American writer’s, John Barth’s, collection of short stories *Lost in the Funhouse* (1988) to reveal the similarities and differences and to show how the two writers’ metafictional techniques expose their world outlooks and the spirits of the epochs.

To achieve the foreseen aim, the following objectives were raised in the research paper:

- To examine metafiction as a literary device;
- To examine Laurence Sterne’s and John Barth’s philosophic and aesthetic views, as well as to provide the analysis of the general historical and literary background of the 18th century and postmodernism as well as to define the ways the mentioned elements influence the manifestation of metafictional devices in the selected works;
• To provide the analysis of the selected works;
• To reveal John Barth’s and Laurence Sterne’s concept of metafictional devices;
• To define the function of the use of metafictional devices (contextual means (graphic and non-graphic) as well as their functions related to the historical background) applied by Laurence Sterne and John Barth.

**Methodology**

The theoretical and analytical parts of the research are based on the works of the authors on the theory of metafiction, namely (Hutcheon, Scholes, Currie, Waugh, Christensen, McCaffery, Klinkowitz,) and the critical essays on John Barth’s and Laurence Sterne’s philosophic tastes, as well as general historical and literary background of the period of 18th century and postmodernism related to the realization of metafictional devices. The research methods chosen for the study involve descriptive and comparative methods as well as textual analysis.

The research procedures include collecting information about metafiction, the critical essays on metafictional works and especially ones closely related to Barth’s and Sterne's works. Broad historical and philosophical information about the epoch of writers has been traced. The information have been drawn from both printed sources and electronic media. To make sure the information is up-to-date, all-sided and relevant, books, essays, journals and search in the computerized databases of the Internet that were related to the research were applied.

After formulating the thesis and making a draft plan, the collected research data is to be reduced according to the sources and examined. Then, information will be analyzed and reorganized. The final step would be reading and reducing final scope of the material into smaller groups according to the final plan of the research.

**Significance of the Work**

The research has a professional significance as it makes a contribution to the broadening of the notion and understanding of metafiction as a literary device stressing the process of writing, discussing the problems the writers encounter in the process of fiction making. By doing employing metafiction writers not only emphasize the artificial nature of fiction but also they explore the possible fictionality of the world outside the fictional text. Consequently, I recommend a close study of *Tristram Shandy* and *Lost in the Funhouse* for a search of correlations between the fictional and external author. This study might reveal an entire new approach to literature, which could become a
source for exploring biographies of authors or a means illustrating the ways fiction is created. It could also ignite a comparative analysis of meta-art techniques employed in the novel *Tristram Shandy* and the metafictional 2005 British comedy film *The Cock and the Bull Story* directed by Michael Winterbottom. Also, it provides an opportunity to fill the existing knowledge gap in the field of comparative study of metafictional devices in the works of the two writers representing two different epochs. Thus, the paper contributes to understanding of metafictional techniques used in the 18th and 21st century.
1. THE NOTIONS OF METAFICTION

The 1950’s and 1960’s was the literary period which was marked by the self-reflexive process of writing, also known as metafiction. The metafictional writings of Argentinean writer, Jorges Borges, French Alain Robbe-Grillet, Englishman John Fowles and Austrian Peter Handke gained a huge response from the critics, who spoke of the death of the novel genre, and supporters, who proclaimed the metafictionality as innovation (Hutcheon, 1980, 2). Linda Hutcheon, Patricia Waugh, and Robert Scholes are the major theoreticians who developed typologies aiming to define and classify metafiction as well as to explicate its literary value through the analysis of metafictional writings.

Perhaps one of the first known literary terms of metafiction was “mise en abyme” that was coined in the 18th century by a French writer, Andre Gide, who referred to artistic works within works (Gide, 1973, 441 - 442). The present term of metafiction is said to have first been used in the essay by William H. Gass, Fiction and the Figures of Life (1970) to indicate the feature of self-reflexive writing that implied the start of extensive growth in critical texts of self-reflexive writing (Waugh, 1984, 2). Four years earlier in Northern America, Scholes in his work, The Fabulators (1967), employed the term fabulator which stands for metafiction. However, only in a decade further on, as Linda Hutcheon argues, theorists really started to deal with the “critical implications” of self-reflexive fiction as seen in Robert Alter’s essay Partial Magic: The Novel as a Self-Conscious Genre (1975) (Hutcheon: 4). I believe that Linda Hutcheon, in her work Narcissistic Narrative (1980), was the theoretician who most accurately delineated the notion of metafiction through expanding on Scholes’ and Ricardou’s typologies. In this work she describes metafiction through four types of self-awareness (Hutcheon, 1980, 23):

- Diegetical self-awareness is the writing which is either aware of its own creational process;
- Linguistically self-reflexive phenomenon which deals with the knowledge of the limits and powers of language;
- Overtly self-conscious texts – the feature of making self-reflection the theme and allegory of the fiction;
- Covertly self-reflective process of writing which is “structuralised, internalized, actualized” (Hutcheon, 1980, 23).
Hutcheon argues that the basic forms of overt diegetic metafiction are parody and the allegory. The aim of this type of metafiction, as she sees it, is that of didactical one. It is about teaching the reader “his new, more active role” (Hutcheon, 1980, 53). Whereas covert diegetic metafiction does not insist on commanding the reader by giving them straightforward orders to deal with text. Instead it expects the reader to be aware of “the story-making rules” (Hutcheon, 1980, 71). She points out four most explicit metafictional literary forms as a detective story, fantasy, games and the erotic, in which the reader is supposed to get oneself involved via “act of reading into one of active “production”, of imagining, interpreting, decoding, ordering, in short of constructing the literary universe through the fictive referents of words.” (Hutcheon, 1980, 86) The overt linguistic narcissism, for Hutcheon, is the parody of a particular style of writing, the self awareness of the text which is brought about by various linguistic and stylistic means drawing readers’ attention to the fact that the text is a construction of words. (Hutcheon, 1980, 101) Eventually, the covert linguistic metafiction deals with linguistic self-awareness that gives “way to an implicit, actualized process which in effect would come most close to equating reading with writing as active, creative process efforts with language” (Hutcheon, 1980, 118).

Hutcheon’s classification of metafiction is extremely different to the one suggested by Scholes, in his work Metafiction, in which he distinguishes the four types of the text, namely the formal, structural, behavioral and philosophical aspects of the text which are based on the the categories of text: form and ideas, essence and existence of fiction, which are again related to the four categories of fiction-romance, myth, allegory and novel. (Scholes, 1995, 102-105)

<table>
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<th>formal criticism</th>
<th>behavioral criticism</th>
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<td>structural criticism</td>
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<th>fiction of forms (romance)</th>
<th>fiction of existence (novel)</th>
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<tr>
<td>fiction of ideas (myth)</td>
<td>fiction of essence (allegory)</td>
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Hutcheon harshly criticizes Scholes’ division explaining that his offered categories have been “roughly paralleled” and his limitation on “the collections of short pieces” is the cause of unsuccessfulness of his investigation (Hutcheon, 1980, 21).
Hutcheon also presents in her work theory of novel. She argues that contemporary novel is representational. As a result, “the familiar categories of novel criticism - and in particular, mimesis – need not to be reflected, but merely reworked” (Hutcheon, 1980, 46). She further distinguishes between mimesis of product and mimesis of process (the story told and the story telling) paralleling it to the “traditional realism and metafiction. She claims that traditional realism illustrates the mimesis of product which is related to characterization and in which the reader has to identify it in the novel. However, metafiction, as she believes, presents a mimesis of process where the reader is supposed to “be conscious of work, the actual construction, that he too is undertaking, for it is the reader who, in Ingarden’s terms, “concretizes” the work of art and gives it life” (Hutcheon, 1980, 39).

What is more, she widely investigates the reader’s role in metafictional fiction. She claims that such reader’s role is highly paradoxical since such fiction requires its readers to realize and admit the fictionality of the world in which they exist by “engaging himself intellectually, imaginatively, and affectively in its co-creation” (Hutcheon, 1980, 7). She finds the reader of metafictional novel to be highly encouraged into involvement and construction of narrative (Hutcheon, 1980, 152) while the text, as she argues, operates only when the reader is incorporated. Otherwise it remains “still”. At the same time as, metafiction frees critics from the limitations of methodology due to the fact that “metafiction embodies within itself its own critical frame of reference as part of its theme and often its form” (Hutcheon, 1980, 152).

Consequently, metafiction may be explained as fiction dealing with the nature and function of fiction (Scholes, 1995, 21). Patricia Waugh, defined metafiction as a fictional writing that “self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artifact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality…Metafiction explores a theory of writing fiction through the practice of writing fiction”(Waugh, 1984, 2). It aims at erasing line between fiction and reality. With the help of metafiction writers violate the linear narrative to reveal their creative process of writing.

Scholes sees metafiction as the prevailing subject of postmodern fiction (Scholes, 1995, 110-115). The opponents of postmodern metafiction view self-reflexive as the death of author and exhaustion of the novel as a genre whereas advocates state that it marks the rebirth of the novel. (Waugh, 1985, 5). These notions became a postmodern literary manifesto after they were presented in John Barth’s influential essays: The Literature of Exhaustion (1967) and The Literature of
Replenishment (1980) (McCaffery, 1984, 196). Conventional literary forms, genres and structures could not, according to Barth, express the spirit of the contemporary world and consequently had to go through transformation. The revitalisation of old limited in possibilities forms gave endless literary solutions and as a result became a continuation and “a contribution to an even more thoroughgoing sense that reality or history are provisional: no longer a world of external verities but a series of constructions, artifices, impermanent structures” (Waugh, 1984, 7). Overt use of metafictional technique originates from questioning of reality and consciousness in modernism. Contemporary metafiction is often described in such terms as self-conscious, introspective, introverted, narcissistic or auto-representational writing technique (Currie, 1995, 14).

Despite the fact that metafiction is both a dominant technique and a subject of postmodern writing, as majority of the literary critics such as Hutcheon, Scholes, Waugh and others see it, its traces can be found in a number of older literary works. According to Inger Christensen, the Danish literary critic, the origin of metafiction dates back to 17th century Spain and was represented by such writers as Lope de Vega and Miguel de Cervantes Savedra or the French Renaissance writer, François Rabelais (Christensen, 1981, 9). Lawrence McCaffery, an American literary critic, indicates that metafictions often reflect biographies of imaginary writers, for instance Barth, balding and bespectacled is a frequent element in some of his novels or as the author of Tristram Shandy who alongside with his creator suffers from illnesses and sets off on a tour of France. Moreover, metafictionists are fond of involving readers into a situation which is removed from its position by presenting and discussing the fictional work of an imaginary character. (McCaffery, 1995, 182) Metafictional devices in this way make us treat the work as an artifact „undercutting the realistic impulses of the work and turning it into a self-reflective creation in that it not only takes art as its subject but ties to be it own subject“ (Currie, 1995, 183). Stanley Fogel has in in some respect summarised the above mentioned features and presented a comprehensible definition of a metaphor: “Metafiction entails exploration of the theory of fiction through fiction itself. Writers of metafiction... scrutinize all facets of literary construct-language, the conventions of plot and character, the relations of the artists to his art and to his reader” (Fogel, 1973, 16). Alastair Fowler, even coined a term, Poioumenon, to refer to a specific type of metafiction in which the story is about the process of creation. Whereas Hutcheon created a term of historiographic metafiction which deals with self-reflexive writing but which involves historical events or personages.
2. LAURENCE STERNE AND THE HISTORICAL, PHILOSOPHICAL AND LITERARY BACKGROUND OF THE 18TH CENTURY

Historical and social contexts of the 18th century play an important role in interpreting the literature of the epoch since *Tristram Shandy* is fulfilled with references as well as allusions to the writers and thinkers of 17th and the 18th centuries. The core impact on novel was formed by humorous nature driven from the satires of Alexander Pope and Jonathan Swift, as well as Swift’s sermons and John Locke’s *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* that became the framework of *Tristam Shandy*. Also, such essential influences as the essays by Miguel de Cervantes and Micheal de Montaigne, Tom Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, and *Battle of the Books* by Swift are of substantial relevance when dealing with Sterne’s novel in terms of the historical, philosophical and literary background.

Sterne belongs to Neoclassical Period that dominated the mid of the 17th until the end of the 18th century and which is divided into the four major literary movements, namely the Enlightenment, the Restoration period, the Augustan Age, and the Age of Sensibility. Since Sterne was heavily influenced by either historical, social, literary or philosophic issues of the times thus it is difficult to assign him to a one particular literary movement. The beginning of the 18th century was marked by the age of Reason or the Enlightenment, the literary movement that formed major framework of *Tristram Shandy* and was a source of the ironic and humorous nature of the work. The Age of Enlightenment was the time of increasing availability of printed material, both for readers and authors as well as advancement in exact sciences and philosophy and above all, political-religious instability. (Sanders, 1999, 276-283; Hawkins-Dady and Dearborn, 1996, 93-97; Humphreys, 1991, 53-85) Due to a dramatic decrease of print in price resulting in a fast spread in readership and consequently in the rising level of education, literacy in the early 18th century passed from the upper classes into the working and middle classes brought about the number of educated women. (Encyclopedia Britannica) The sharp increase in reading bore two significant new kinds of prose writing and journalism, like travel writing, diaries, memoirs, biographies as well as autobiographies, histories, and the novel (Hawkins-Dady and Dearborn, 1991, 92-97). The 18th century is also marked by the revolution in “scientific thought” which was initiated by Copernicus 150 years earlier and enhanced by Isaac Newton. His theory about the ideal of universal law, order, and tidiness had a strong influence on the philosophers of the age. Among the most outstanding ones are John Locke and his pupil Anthony Ashley Cooper. Their theories created the basis for theories of politics, religion, language and aesthetics as well as suggestions how to achieve social happiness.
Locke’s theory stressing the importance of the experience and knowledge, which is based “on external sensations and internal reflection” was broadly accepted and used in a number of the descriptions of the world in the 18th century. For Locke, the mind is a *tabula rasa* or a white paper without any ideas at birth and is gradually filled through experience. Both Newton and Locke with his follower believed in the intelligent and “benevolent Creator” who must have caused the perfect “Nature’s Wonders” and the “Uniformity in the Planetary System” as well as human being’s place in the universe of order (Sanders, 1999, 276-278). The belief in an innate morality and righteousness of an individual has led to the generation of the principles of a virtuous citizen. This Locke’s concept was later developed into the concept of “Good Breeding”, which implied “a shared education and shared expectations rather than insistence on the personality or the eccentricities of the artists” (Sanders, 1999: 279). This influence of science and empirical philosophy on eighteenth-century thought made the literature of the period “skeptical and realistic”, as Hawkins-Dady and Dearborn see it, “satire and the rise of the novel are evidence of that literature’s critical fascination with society” (Sanders, 1999, 276-278). The Age of Reason for Sterne was the source of and a means to express his world outlook. I assume that Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy* is a theory about human behavior that does not deal with reason, in comparison to works of the Age of Reason, but it rather implies that human mind is not a blank which can be filled with experience or philosophically reasoned out. (Watt, 1987, 43-57) Sterne with his overt frequent references to Locke’s essay *Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) remarks that the availability of the books is not the same as reading them, nor reading is the same as understanding them. Tristram Shandy also uses Locke's theories of empiricism, namely, the manner in which knowledge of ourselves is collected through associations create our world that arise from five senses. (Encyclopedia Encarta) Sterne seems to be quite satirical of Locke's theories but at the same time respectful. He employs Locke’s the association of ideas to build characters' personalities, especially their obsessions “hobby-horses” that forms digressions. (Jefferson, 1951, 225-241) As a result, he achieves in creating disordered frequently irrational characters that contradict Locke’s idea of order and “leaned wit”. However, the very irrationality becomes a rational tool to show human being’s irrationality.

The English literature of the 18th century is said to be explicitly political due to extreme political instability which was marked by the results of the Restoration among which there was Glorious revolution, constant violent riots (The Jacobite Rebellions, the Gordon Riots in London). The phenomenon which, according to Sanders, reinforced the artistic awareness that society was subject to disruption “from below” rather than orderly influence from “above”. The majority of the
Augustan period authors were frequently politically active. Sterne was not the exception. The source of Sterne’s both religious and political writing lies in this life experience. After graduation, Sterne became a clergyman, and was ordained as a deacon and as a priest. Sterne’s was greatly encouraged by his uncle, Dr. Jacques Sterne, the Archdeacon of Cleveland and a British Whig Party supporter, to begin a career of political journalism (Sterne, 1986, 6). At the time, authors dealt specifically with the crimes and vices of their world and this was probably the reason why satire was the genre that was mostly appreciated. The literature of the 18th-century was a subject to historical statements, even if the writing seemed not to deal with policy but in fact, it did in a subtle way of addressing a different topic. Therefore, the 18th century history and literature are uniquely correlated if compared to other times as literary critic, Humphreys claims, stating that “this metropolitan and political writing” can seem like to be devoted to a specific audience with the aim of entertaining it, however, it was the literature of “people deeply committed to sorting out a new type of government, new technologies, and newly vexatious challenges to philosophical and religious certainty”. (Sanders, 1999, 89)

The eighteenth century English literature can be divided into the early and the Mid-Century writing. The early century was marked with “the rise of the novel” by such noted writers, also known as the founding fathers of the novel, as Swift, the political, religious and social satirist, Defoe, Addison, and Steele (Sanders, 1999, 306). The literature of the early 18th century is also referred as Augustan literature. It is a literary epoch that faced, as David Humphreys and Sanders see it, the rapid development of the novel, the transformation in drama from political satire into melodrama, an evolution towards poetry of personal exploration, and a rise in satire. (Hawkins-Dady and Dearborn 1986, 53-84; Sanders 1999, 288-311) The essay, satire, and dialogue (in philosophy and religion) thrived in the age, and the English novel was truly begun as a serious art form. Mid-Century novel writers, namely Samuel Richardson and Henry Fielding did not reject the writing experience of the early 18th century but rather “superseded” it, especially the autobiographical model which has been established by Defoe. The prose of the mid-century literature emphasized the creation of natural events, (Sanders, 1999, 311) making the prose rich in “design and appeal”. The mid-century writing was also marked by the Age of Sensibility, literature reflected the worldview of the Age of Enlightenment. The works of the period have been largely inspired by the discoveries of

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1 Augustan literature dates between the reigns of Queen Anne, King George I, and George II in the first half of the 18th century, ending in the 1740s with the deaths of the famous writers Alexander Pope and Johnata Swift

2 The Enlightenment (or Age of Reason) – a rational and scientific approach to religious, social, political, and economic issues that promoted a secular view of the world and a general sense of progress and perfectibility
the previous century (Newton) and the writings of Descartes, Locke and Bacon. The writers of Age of Sensibility were inspired by the Middle Ages and therefore such forms of writing like medieval ballads and folk literature as well as Gothic Novels were written. Sterne, can also be treated as a sentimental writer from his literally and financially successful work - *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy*, which was based on the records of his daily thoughts and feelings to Eliza Draper, the young wife of an official of the East India Company who has departed to her husband after forming strong emotional attachment with Sterne. His letters to Mrs. Draper were collected in the *Journal to Eliza*, a more sentimental than humorous love letter to a woman Sterne was courting during the final years of his life. The tender emotional character of the letters ascribes Sterne to the sentimentalist writers of the 18th century, who were deeply opposed to rationalism and in acquiring knowledge through intuition. As a result, the character of Walter in *Tristram Shandy* is subjected to failures and a witty ironic mock due to his obsession to rationalize. Humphreys claims that it is possible to trace “three axes: drama, journalism, and satire, as blending in and giving rise to four different types of novel” such as the sentimental and gothic novels, as well as the novels of manners and didacticism (Sanders, 1999: 288-316). What immediately distinguished Sterne from his fellow writers of the period is his collage of the literary genres as well as the problematic relationship between *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* and the other works of the contemporary fiction, obviously strikingly distinguishable by its title itself. Sterne pleased his readers and greatly amused critics by allowing them to become aware of the “life and opinions” rather than just life, which was typical title of the 18th century novels. For instance, *The Life and Adventures of Robison Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe, *History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews* written by Henry Fielding, *The Adventures of Roderick Random* by Tobias Smolett, *The History of Sir Charles Grandison* by Samuel Richardson. The second distinguishable feature was addressing to the learned readership which was unique as the majority of the writers aimed at “mere English reader - i.e. the reader who is ignorant of classical Latin and Greek languages that Sterne perfectly mastered alongside with classical literature, philosophy and divinity at Jesus College in Cambridge which he had graduated from after the death of his father, Roger Sterne. Furthermore, *Tristram Shandy’s* uniqueness, at the background of other 18th century novels, is marked by extensive intertextuality: references to a profound number of “models of literary heroism” (Howe, 1958, 139) including the Bible (Old and New Testaments), classical epic (Homer’s Oddysssey and Virgil’s Aeneid), classical romance (Xenophon’s Cyropeadia), Renaissance tragedy (Hamlet), Renaissance prose romance (Don Quixote) and contemporary autobiography (Laureate Colloy Cibber’s An
Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber, Comedian [1740; 2nd ed.1750]). This very profusion of literary categories might suggest Sterne’s wish to add to a “tradition of learned wit” which he demands from his audience by directly referring in the novel to John Lock’s essay Concerning Human Understanding.
3. JOHN BARTH AND THE PHILOSOPHICAL, HISTORICAL AND LITERARY BACKGROUND OF POSTMODERNISM

Postmodernism is a mostly an American literary movement after 1950’ or World War II as a series of the aesthetic features of which, in my opinion, have been outlined by such literary critiques as Linda Hutcheon, Jean Baudrillard and Fredrick Jameson. (Waugh, 1984, 13) The number postmodern works appeared in the late-1960s and ‘70s, represented by writers like Kurt Vonnegut, John Barth and Thomas Pynchon. However, some critiques argue that the first postmodern novel is Sterne’s *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*. The definition of postmodernism is very controversial and its time span is very flexible. Therefore postmodernism must be viewed in terms of its philosophic, historic and literary development.

Since postmodernism is mostly American phenomenon, thus its features might be clearly highlighted through the sketch of American history and philosophy. Speaking of postmodern society, its birth has been brought about by advance of science and technology, mass culture and such historical events as wars (World War II, Vietnam War, Korean War) the murders of John Kennedy (the president) and Arthur Luther King (the defender of the rights of Afro-Americans) and Watergate Scandal which all resulted in the downfall of values that might be treated as “death of God and a man”. The idea that a man has lost his spiritual guidance, ideals and morality is extremely postmodern and therefore fully relative to the condition of postmodern individual. (Hutcheon, 2000, 2-62) A shift in a person’s self-awareness and understanding is another characteristic of postmodernism. An individual is thought to be fragmented and to have a tendency to change his social masks and his image. A postmodern person is also constantly influenced by mass culture and media that melts a person’s identity by creating stereotypical thinking which lacks creativity. (Hutcheon, 1999, 22-37; 87-104) The condition of creativity has become an issue in postmodern literature, as postmodern art became based on, according to Barth in his noted essays that were released in 1967 and 1980, - *The Literature of Exhaustion* and *The Literature of Replenishment* in which he claimed that the contemporary writer create a new piece of art by rearranging the already existing literary forms, styles, genres, etc. (Barth, 1984, 193-206). Barth rejects the idea that literature is exhausted explaining that with changing times artistic conventions should also alter, disappear or exist “against themselves” to create a new work as they cannot render the character of the new era or otherwise they become exhausted (Barth, 1984, 29). Consequently, a **literary collage** becomes an efficient way of solving the matter of refreshment of postmodern condition of literature. By applying and mixing a number of traditional styles, genres and techniques, a
postmodern writer creates an extraordinary works which are full of possibilities to suit its readers needs and interests so that the work can be differently treated by different readers. Thus, a collage will enable the individual approach of individual narratee who would cast their own subjective light upon the literary work and in this way will become an involved co-author of the work they are reading. As a result, postmodernism is viewed as both a split from modernism and its continuation. According to Barth, a perfectly balanced postmodern novel should contain features of both realism and irrealism, pure and committed literature as well as coterie and junk fictions (Barth, 1980, 70), whereas realist literature carried a mimetic function by aiming to reveal absolute truth by imitating reality. However, postmodernism rejects existence of absolute knowledge and as a result, the world is seen subjectively dependent on an individual’s perception that cannot be wrong as there is no absolute truth. Consequently, postmodern literature raises the question of reality which is relative and therefore is subjected to doubt. In this way, metafictional writing is born, where writers view a world as chaotic and unstable. Through writing about writing and breaking literary conventions of language use, relationship of author to his writing and his readers as well as the rules of plot and character construction, - they question the relationship between fiction and reality, their own role as authors, the importance of readers and art by making them the core questions and theme of their work. In this way, postmodernism increases the importance of the role of a reader. Consequently, the death of author is substituted with the birth of a reader, where narratee’s participation is not merely a passive reader but an interpreter who filters fiction through his own prism of experience (education, historical period, etc.) and a co-author of the text who adds to the narrative by creating his own meanings of interpretation, therefore the wider readership the wider possibilities of interpretation or even production are available. In order to encourage a reader into involvement in the creational play, postmodern writers do not impose inclusive context or world view, but instead they leave a gap or disturb them by scrutinizing their expectations or beliefs, by so doing they are encouraging a reader to produce his own world and by doing so a reader becomes a narratee.

The postmodern philosophy rejects classical traditional values, absolute metaphysical truths, or a unified systematized world where humankind’s history is seen as evenly progressing process. Postmodernism speaks of relative, local truths and views world as a chaotic, undefined phenomenon which is randomly made of split cultures constructed through various discourses, in which an individual, according to postmodern French philosophers Jean-Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault, is seen as a weak faceless creature which is unable to make decision because social institutions and mass society form its identity. As a result, bureaucracy and technology enslave a
postmodern person into language. Derrida believes that in this way, the postmodern world lacks correspondence of signified and signifier, which consequently leads to an individual’s loss of ability to learn an absolute truth, as meanings tend to be modifying and acquire new shades when they are used in different contents. The philosopher compares this phenomenon to a form of labyrinth to which a person needs to adapt due to the constant change (Russel, 1984, 206-214).

Barth’s literary career has been influenced by three life events. The first one is his interest in music which though formally discontinued, played a substantial role in the arrangement of his fiction. The second aspect that had a strong impact upon his literary work is the landscape and history of his native Maryland where he spent almost all his entire life and where the bulk of his fiction writings set. Lastly, Barth’s long academic career in literary criticism and theory was a rich source for his fiction. The year in which Lost in the Funhouse was published (1967) was an outstandingly chaotic and disorderly period in American social history. Barth found himself at the center of the social stir as to his vocation as a writer and a professor, due to the protesting students against the Vietnam War which was at its peak and rigid domestic resistance. The majority of students participated in the Civil rights’ movement, which was stimulated by the assassination of its leader, Martin Luther King. Consequently, the black students began to doubt their privileges in the social order realizing injustices and inequalities that the movement represented and insisted on accountability of the educational institutions. These revolutionary urges were not only political, but also cultural and artistic. Young artists and writers searched for innovative means of expressing their world outlook, means to represent the fragmented world in which they lived. Modernism's search for order was seen as fruitless. Barth’s publication of The Soft Weed Factor (1960), Giles Goat Boy (1966) expressed his attitude to the present day person whose aims are worthless as he seeks merely glory and strength forgetting sacred meanings and values and instead practicing spirituality as a fashion or follow rigid religious dogmas. (Rice, 1992, 60-82)
4. METAFICTIONALITY IN *TRISTRAM SHANDY*

Laurence Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy* is a perfect example of the narrator’s frustrated attempt to tell his own story. However, this novel is a manifold of self-reflexive means, where each mode carries out a variety of functions that consequently result in the brilliancy of the work. The uniqueness of the literary form has been greatly admired by a number of critics among whom is Christopher Fanning who in his work on the analysis of *Tristram Shandy* emphasized the importance of the ”sense of the narrator’s presence to the formal structure of the narrative that had important implications for the history of narrative”(Fanning, 1998, 429). Fanning stresses the importance of paying a considerable attention not only to the narrative but also to “the physical material of the book”. (Fanning, 1998, 430)

Typographic or graphic metafictional devices in Laurence Sterne’s novel are numerous. It has to be noted, though, that individual examination of each metafictional technique would be one-dimensional, as there is a tight correlation among all the modes.

4.1. **Typographic Uniqueness**

4.1.1. **Oddity in Punctuation**

To start with, it would be the most logical to start analysing the “visible” or typographical means as they are the most striking features that cannot be disregarded by any reader at the very start of the novel. Christopher Fanning in his work *Sterne’s Page* draws critics attention to the “oddities of appearance” or “physical material of the book”, as he calls it, alongside with the Shandian “narrative method” (Fanning, 1998, 1) among which a reader of *Tristram Shandy* faces asterisks, dashes, squiggles, empty, marbled or black pages, as well as a choice to read for instance either in Latin or a translation of Ernuphulus’s curse (III:11, 202-11) or “Slawkenburgius’s Tale (Sterne, 1986, 288-299). Fanning argues that the visual text questions the conventions of oral delivery as well as a spatial form, that can be treated as a metaphor for the fictional world for its characters (Fanning, 1998, 2) (mimetic), the formal aspect which concerns the ordering of a narrative and finally the literal spacing of that has previously been to some extent ignored.

The invention of print had a huge impact on the writing of the 18\textsuperscript{th} century which by expanding a number of printed material and reducing its price encouraged millions to read and as a result this phenomenon gave rise to a variety of literary forms. However a parallel cannot be drawn between Sterne and his contemporary writers due to his maturity of thought and experimentation of form. Sterne parodied the newly created literary forms, such as a travel journal, pamphlet or novel,
by creating a mixture of all and adding self-reflexive aspects, among which a distinct attention is spared to the printed presentation of his work which was intentional. This could be proved by Sterne’s letter to the publisher of Tristram Shandy where he insists on printing and editing details such as quality of paper and shift (Fanning, 1998, 432) and his latter request in 1767 to change the length of dashes in fifth and sixth volumes of *Tristram Shandy*.

The extracts including asterisks, commas and dashes on pages 281, 254, 149, 138, 308, 442, 532, 514 unfold multi-meaningful content. First of all, the odd punctuation, as for instance the multiple dashes in the first extract, serves as a descriptive means to arise the reader’s their sense of hearing because the dashes stand for the Toby’s humming while writing a letter. In the excerpt below, the narrator presents a debate between the midwife and Dr. Slop, in which he leaves out the information about the possibility of damaging a male child’s genitalia with the doctor’s invented forceps in case its hip comes foremost (Sterne, 1986, 149).

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------ because, Sir, if the hip is mistaken for the head, --there is a possibility (if it is a boy) that the
forceps******************************************************************************.
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The numerous asterisks function as both the means to involve the reader into cooperation, by allowing him to imply the meaning, what consequently results in arousing consciousness of reading and also as the way to emphasize the artificial nature of the novel. As a result, the readers can influence the novel with their individual treatment of the punctuation. Moreover, the example presents a spatial separation of men and women in Volume II. While male characters are obsessively involved into intellectual dueling over “hobby-horsical” matters, females, namely Mrs Shandy and the midwife, who are lobouring over the birth of Tristram’s birth in the bedroom ab.*

Correlation of different gender activity is subjected to satiric distinction between theory and practice. The literary critic Christopher Fanning draws attention to the spatial metafiction which is expressed by linking spatial form, which is fragmentation of the narrative plot\(^3\), with the mimetic space, which stands for the intimacy of a private conversation, the mixture of the two means serves as another example of intimate confidenciality of the scene. The extract below (Sterne, 1986, 6) makes

\(^3\) Fragmentation of the narration related to the particular example is based on the broken narrative line of the narrator’s presented beginning of his existence “Ab Ovo” (the Homeric tradition of telling stories in the middle of the things and then allowing the background to unfold along with the action, which Tristram takes to an extreme by presenting the beginning before beginning, namely his conception before his birth) by weaving in numerous digressions by interrupting the plot to give the character portrayal of Toby and later to comment on the digressiveness of his writing.

For closer examination of digressiveness of writing see the chapter Broken Narrative.
“curious and inquisitive” (Sterne, 1986, 5) readers to experience the “shared intimate space” of Tristram’s conception. (Sterne, 1986, 438).

Asterisks are also subjected by the narrator to denote swearing over his lost notes “if I ever swore a whole oath into a vacancy in my life, I think it was into that-------*** **** **” (Sterne, 1986, 425).

Tristram frequently speaks of erudition by referring to numerous philosophers and philosophic concepts as well as scholars and various foreign languages. However, the context in which the references are found are subjected to a harsh irony, for instance the scene where Walter reproduces Locke’s essay Concerning Human Understanding to explain the notion of duration which does not make any sense (Sterne, 1986, 150) or when Walter repeatedly distorts the names of the scholars Albertus Rubenius instead of Albert Rubens (Sterne, 1986, 19), Cluverius for Philip Cluwer (Sterne, 1986, 17), WATER–LANDISH – Daniel Waterland (Sterne, 1986, 11), etc. By constant reference to the Walter’s obsession for rationalize, Sterne criticizes the age of Reason. To achieve the goal, he also uses textual representation, - footnotes – a traditional scholarly device the function of which is to supplement the subject under discussion with additional information. However, these footnotes in Tristram Shandy are endowed with peculiar function that consequently turns them into the metafictional means. In some respect, a few footnotes actually provide readers with definitions or as to say explanations of elaborate words or phrases such as the one in volume I (Sterne, 1986, 60) which delineates the meaning of pentagraph in narrator’s digression on printing process. Though the footnote carries encyclopedic nature, its presence is unique as it emphasizes the self-reflexive writing in which Tristram makes the audience aware of writing. Whereas the footnote in the second volume of the 19th chapter on page 119 indicates a completely diverse and essential metafictional issue related to the relationship between author and the narrator of Tristram Shandy, which has been profoundly discussed by Christensen in the chapter devoted to the analysis of the narrator and author’s correspondence. The footnote below intentionally points out and presents the possible reasoning of the narrator’s mistake drawn by Sterne (the author), as a result, the disparity of the two becomes obvious. What is more, the footnote stresses the artificial sense of the narrative thus creating a feeling of reading a novel as an artifact or reveals the inequality of the author and the narrator, implied by Sterne’s correction which is presented further in the novel in the footnote: “*This must be a mistake in Mr. Shandy; for Graaf wrote upon...”. (Sterne, 1986, 528) The footnotes in the third and eighth volumes, though, are marked with digressions as Christensen would
suggest, or spatial fragmentation, as Fanning would put it, where the reader is referred to go back to the place in the previous volumes. *Vid. Vol. II. p. 115. 1 (Sterne, 1986, 125) … *Vid. Vol. VI. P. 379. 1 (Sterne, 1986, 436). The footnotes also disclose a reference to non-literary sources, as for instance, the example of Locke’s philosophic passage from *The Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, II. xiv.3 (Sterne, 1986, 150) or references to the existing legal documents and people working with cases on the testaments *Swinburn on Testaments, Part 7, chapter 8. Brook Abridg. Tit. Administr. Nr.47*. Tristram calls his novel a “history of “what passes in a man’s mind” (Sterne, 1986, 70) by informing the reader that his book is going to be a “history book” (Sterne, 1986, 70) by drawing attention that he is writing his own “life and opinions”. In this respect, Sterne rebelled against the rationalism of the earlier periods of the Age of Reason or the Enlightenment. He believed that the most important thing in literature was to illustrate the inner life of characters, the psychological states that are constantly changing. He expresses the desire to demonstrate the emotional state of his characters in this way rejecting logical approach of 18th century philosophers’ treatment of experience and knowledge. Therefore, *Tristram Shandy* is a parody of the novels of the eighteenth century which presented the logical evolution of the character’s life from his birth to his death.

4.1.2. Emotional Misprints

The parallel to the Locke’s social ideology about the impact of mentality on the life of a person questions the genre of Sterne’s book. A number genres, such as an extract from a letter (Sterne, 1986, 13-14) a sermon, a story (Sterne, 1986, 4-10; 334 - 342), a speech (Sterne, 1986, 368), a tale (Sterne, 1986, 196-217) weaved into the work is said by the critics to be an intentional step of the author to criticize the conventions of these writings as well as to ridicule narrator as the “truth teller” (Christensen, 1981, 26). In respect to the Lockean ideology on the importance of mentality and Tristram’s goal of presenting subjective account of his life based on opinions, and Fanning’s critical account of narrator’s verbal strain for communication, which Tristram desired to have his volume read aloud, further footnotes may serve as a critical “whispered” gossip that serves as a means of Walter’s portrayal in the scene in fifth volume about Tristopedia - Tristram’s father’s book regulating Tristram’s education as a compensation of his misfortunes. Tristram ridicules Walter’s view of systematizing world through hypothesis and having a great trust in words to grasp the truth of reality (Sterne, 1986, 295) and the footnote below alongside with the comparison of Trim’s “empiric approach to reality” (Christensen, 1981, 24) serves as a harsh critical means of
metafiction as it makes the reader aware of the differences of art and reality by presenting characters’ approaches to interpretation of reality.

The further mode which serves as a typographical metafictional technique is the motion like line which was figuratively drawn by Corporal Trim, the manservant to Uncle Toby in the ninth volume during the eager conversation of liberty in relationship with the reference to Widow Wadman and Captain Toby Shandy’s affair.

Whilst a man is cried Corporal free – cried the Corporal, giving a flourish with his stick thus –

A thousand of my father’s most subtle syllogisms could not have said more for celibacy.

My uncle Toby look’d earnestly towards his cottage and his bowling green. (Sterne, 1986, 490)

The flourish, or a graphically presented spiral line, is a further mode which functions as a vivid description of emotionality of Corporal Trim intensifying reader’s imagination and encouraging them to repeat the same gesture. In this way, Sterne wants his reader to make a physical bond with the novel and as a result decrease the gap between fictionality and reality. However, the example also functions as a representation of Tristram’s autonomy as a narrator. Tristram’s writing independence is obvious if sustained with the following extract: “But this is neither here nor there – why do I mention it? -Ask my pen, - it governs me, - I govern not it” (Sterne, 1986, 334) as well as the omitted 24th chapter in the fourth volume, the absence of which Tristram clarifies by condemning standards of writing which he emphasizes by inserting a hand indicator with a comment the reinforcing the effect:

“A dwarf who brings a standard along with him to measure his own size - take my word, is a dwarf in more articles than one – And so much for tearing out the chapters.” (Sterne, 1986, 253) Tristram expresses his right to freedom of writing and by including this explanation into the novel, he realizes that this makes his work unique “nor is the book imperfect, …but, on the contrary, the book is more perfect and complete by wanting the chapter, than having it” (Sterne, 1986, 251) The similar metafictional technique is the skipping of 18th and 19th chapters that are placed after the 25th part of the ninth volume due to the necessity of
leaving the chapters blank and writing them only after the twenty-fifth one is completed. The displacement is again justified by Tristram in the form of his repeating plea to the world “to let people tell their stories in their own way” (Sterne, 1986, 524). The narrator’s wish serves a weighty metafictional mode as an author’s autonomy in writing and a drawn reader’s attention to its process. Moreover, the narrator’s further means aims to make the narratee duly consider the shifted chapters by changing their font from “Times New Roman” to “Old English Text Md” or by writing the plea in italicized shift.

The particularity and success of the work is stressed in the novel before the marbled page which Tristram refers to as a “motly emblem” (Sterne, 1986, 178) of his work. Tristram warns and encourages and expects the reader to be largely educated and attentive as readers will not “be able to penetrate the moral of the marbled page” (Sterne, 1986, 180). The meaning of which is difficult to delineate. There has been an extreme manifold of meanings offered by some critics and artists at the exhibition devoted to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the marbled page. However, it must be noted that the page is variously reproduced in each edition. No meticulous examination is needed to notice mismatches in pattern and colour.
Thus, the marbled page has to be textualised. By addressing the reader Tristram implies the possible meaning of death as the marbled page is referred to the earlier printed page, the black one, “the moral of the black marbled page … has been able to unravel the many opinions, transactions, and truths which still lie mystically hid under the dark veil of the black one” (Sterne, 1986, 178), in which the narrator encourages reader into emotional experience of death as well as to read the inscription in their own way as it is read by each person who walks by, “with such a variety of plaintive tones as denote a general pity and esteem for him” (Sterne, 1986, 27) sighing: “Alas, poor Y O R I C K!” (Sterne, 1986, 28). The first exclamation is boxed, representing the inscription over the grave of Yorick, the court jester whose skull the gravedigger uncovers in the last act of Hamlet, the skull Hamlet holds up in his archetypal moment and says, “Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio”. The emotionality of the death of Yorick can also be treated as the morbid state of the author or may partially represent the external narrator or the actual author, Laurence Sterne, who was a parson and a man of infinite jest. Sterne’s involvement as a character within a novel, as Cervantes does in Don Quixote, explores his relationship to the text from within.

White or empty pages alongside with the colored ones also serve as a metafictional technique. However, it has a different function. In the sixth volume, Sterne invites the reader to play a part in the fiction by allowing them space, “call for pen and ink—here’s paper ready to your hand”, (Sterne, 1986, 376) in which they can:

- draw a picture of Widow Wadman “Sit down, Sir, paint her to your own mind----as like your mistress as you can-----as unlike your wife as your conscience will let you----‘tis all one to me-----please but your own fancy in it ”(Sterne, 1986, 376)

- “swear into it” (Sterne, 1986., 425) over the forgotten remarks that Tristram had put into the pocket of the sold chaise (Sterne, 1986, 424).

The previously mentioned replaced chapters 18th and 19th that are inserted after the 25th chapter were
also empty at their customary position (Sterne, 1986, 512-513). The blank chapters only inform the reader about the page, volume and chapters, whereas these chapters which are oddly situated are contextualized, but as I have previously mentioned, they are marked with the change in shift (from Times New Roman to Old English Text MD) and a note in 25th chapter expressing a repeated narrator’s plea to “let people tell their stories in their own way” (Sterne, 1986, 524) which serves as narrator’s freedom from writing conventions.

Narrative lines in the sixth volume carry an extensive metafictional value with the help of which Sterne efficiently forces the narratee to realize the extent of his digressions and the self reflexive effect of the narrative as well as to mock the conventionality of the straightly plotted novels by speaking of the linear plot as of mathematical or spiritual proposition to hinge on that cannot be altered and therefore must be treated by both philosophers and ordinary people, such as “Cicero, Archimedes, Christians … cabbage planters (Sterne, 1986, 380) as “the right line,—the pathway… to walk in!... The emblem of moral rectitude …the best line…the shortest line” (Sterne, 1986, 380).

The first “four lines” that Sterne “moved in through his “first, second, third and fourth volumes” (Sterne, 1986, 379) are deprived of the narrator’s detailed description, whereas the fifth letter marked narrative line provides readers with the actual digressive events and their value: “for as for c c c c c they are nothing but parenthesis, and the common ins and outs incidents…and when compared with…my own transgressions at the letters ABD---they vanish into nothing.” (Sterne, 1986, 380)

The concern for the uniqueness of Shandean narrative lines has been given by a number of critics. Shklovsky finds the diagrams “relatively accurate”. (Shklovsky, 2007, 210) However, Williams presents the most meticulous account of the Tristram’s technique. Jeffrey Williams pointed out micro and macro plots and subjected them to the close study in respect of digressional methods as well as self-reflexive modes. He attempted to recreate Tristram’s schematized narrative plot by marking digressions accordingly with letters. As a result, he offers the following summarized sequence of the narration of the second volume:

“E(C(C_{1}, A, A_1) - C(A, B) - C(A, B) - C(B, C_d)C_2 - C(C_2, A, B) - D(D_d) - BB)” (Williams, 1981, 20) which shows that “overall trajectory of the novel is surprisingly staid and immobile”. (Williams, 1981, 21) What he means is that the narrative lines serve also as Tristram mentions himself in the sixth volume, the duality of the narrative plots or the shift in the emphasis of the book, where
initially the focus is on the conception, birth, baptism and circumcision of the narrator, whereas at this point Tristram’s story is seen as a background for that of the Toby, which conventionally must have been a subordinate narrative line. Moreover, these diagrams as Shklovsky calls them, or schemes according to Williams, are of pure metafictional nature, which serve as a reminder that readers are reading a novel which is composed, where the author creates his fictional world and controls his characters, thoughts and lives the way he wants. (Williams, 1981, 21-32) As a result, the reader might be struck by the idea that the world is also like a fiction, people’s construct. The world is a text which is read differently by individual people. Reality is a fleeting phenomenon and cannot be grasped. There is no single universal truth.

4.2. Non-Typographic Metafictional Techniques

4.2.1. Questionable Narrative

The narrator of the novel has been differently treated by its audience. The Picture (1 pic.) depicts Thomas Bridges and Lawrence Sterne as Mountebanks, where Sterne is illustrated as a merchandising cunning fraud with a hat in his right hand. This image reveals the public opinion of Sterne’s authorship in his time.

![Picture](https://example.com/thos-bridges-and-lawrence-sterne-as-mountebanks)


Sterne as the narrator was also accepted as a jester or philosopher. Richard Lanham, an expert in prose stylistics and rhetoric, sees Sterne’s novel as both serious and humorous. However, according
to Christensen, there is a lack of correspondence between narrator and author as well as Tristram’s and Sterne’s roles in the work. The difference between author and narrator is stressed by Tristram, who mentions his fictional existence. The narrator can exist merely in the book alongside with other characters in the novel. When narration of the story is finished, the narrator’s role and presence should stop existing, too. This idea is clearly seen from the following extract from the third volume: “being determined as long as I live or write (which in my case means the same thing)” (Sterne, 1986, 128) and also from the example from the fourth part where narrator addresses the reader: “Let us leave, if possible, myself:-But ‘tis impossible, - I must go along you to the end of the story” (Sterne, 1986, 343) This fictional existence of Tristram is further emphasized by the author, the outer creator, who edits or comments on the narrator’s narrative as, for instance, in the footnote in the second volume (Sterne, 1986, 119):

Tristram as the narrator sees himself as a fool wearing jester’s outfits:”----Here----pray, Sir, take hold of my cap, -- nay, take a bell along with it, and my pantoufles too.---” (Sterne, 1986, 149) who invites reader to laugh together with him or at him (Sterne, 1986, 11). As a result, Tristram is simply a fictional being playing a role in the novel which is writing his life “for amusement of the world, and… opinions for its instruction” (Sterne, 1986, 170). However, this role of entertainer is that of the serious one too, as the character of Yorick, who is though weak and serve as a clown to Tristram’s family is serious from inside likewise usual jesters. Some critics argue that Yorick’s character is the embodiment of Laurence Sterne himself, who through the prism of comedy laughs at serious matters. This ability to entertain readers, earns the author the role of a god, who is capable to remain objective of the issue he touches upon. Whereas the acoustic presentation of the text, that has been distinguished by Alexander Tadie in his work Sterne’s Whimsical Theatres of Language: Orality, Gestures, Literacy, emphasizes the meaning of author’s inclination to have his text verbalized by his readers. Tadie called Tristram Shandy the noisiest printed literary conversation of the 18th century, which is full of sounds, “tunes and sounds” that “relate to the self-expression of Tristram as a great story teller, the king’s jester, who orchestrates these sounds”. (Tadie, 2003, 19) The accurate example may be the following extracts from the seventh volume:
Tristram, being an amusing vocal narrator, is also seen as a satirist who parodies a travel guidebook. By giving the account of his critical tour of France, he reaches a number of metafictional techniques. First of all, he presents a definition of his applied method of writing as well as the picture of the entire novel. Secondly, he describes his flee from death, and lastly, the narrator creates a metaphor of writing and a flow of life.

The narrator’s sense of narrative constructive freedom is further noteworthy aspect. Tristram constantly emphasizes his right as an independent writer. The most apparent instances, which have been mentioned in the section on typographic metafictional techniques, is on the one hand,- the deliberate omission of two chapters (the 18th and 19th) in the ninth volume and then, their placement after the 25th chapter; and on the other,- the written preface in the middle of the novel (in the third volume). This freedom, as Tristram claims, is his privilege to write in the manner he wishes to: “-----So I don’t take it amiss-----All I wish is, that it may be a lesson to the world, to let people tell their stories in their own way.” (Sterne, 1986, 524). Also, the already mentioned typographical means of metafiction as the stick motion, empty, marbled or black pages and drawn narrative lines are all the examples of both narrator’s creational freedom and originality. Tristram also feels comfortable with non-typographical means when:

- Finishing Tristrapædia, the guidebook for the fictional character – his father, Walter Shandy, was writing to help Tristram educate, but ironically Tristrapedia was a futile waste of energy as it did not catch up with Tristram’s maturity and was rather a source of academic neglect as Walter invested his time into writing the guidebook instead of socializing with his son;
- Writing chapters on the unrelated or themes, such as a chapter on whiskers (Sterne, 1986, 276)
“Upon Whiskers
...----A chapter upon whiskers! Alas!”

or Slawkenbergius’s Tale in 4th volume just because he feels like doing so “---’twas inconsiderable a promise as ever entered a man’s head”. (Sterne, 1986, 276). As a result, Sterne attempts recreating a human’s consciousness which is full of often illogical, unrelated or unimportant ideas and decisions. Therefore, Tristram Shandy becomes as an scandalous theory illustrated in practice against Locke’s theory of association of ideas which is based on logics.

- Constantly reminding: “I told the reader ...I repeat the observation, and a fact which contradicts it again.” (Sterne, 1986, 367)
- misleading his readers by digressing:
  1. backwards: “I have told you in the fifth chapter of this second book ...” (Sterne, 1986, 90); “Let us go back to the *****-----in the last chapter” (Sterne, 1986, 146); “I take the benefit of the act of going backwards myself” (Sterne, 1986, 306); “----------How could you be so inattentive in reading the last chapter? ... Madam, I beg leave to repeat it over again. ... No, Madam, --you have not miss’d a word. ... My pride, Madam, cannot allow you this refuge.” (Sterne, 1986, 47);
  2. forwards: “...’tis the subject of the next chapter to set fourth ...” (Sterne, 1986, 75); “...when you read, (which you are just going to do” (Sterne, 1986, 85); “what business Stevinus had in this affair,--is the greatest problem of all;--it shall be solved,--but not in the next chapter.” (Sterne, 1986, 87); “---But where am I going? These reflections crowd in upon ten pages too soon...” (Sterne, 1986, 366); “And what is it? You shall hear in the next chapter”( Sterne, 1986, 238);
  3. stopping to comment on his writing: “...if I reserve it for either of those parts of my story,--I ruin the story I’m upon, -- and if I tell it here –I anticipate matters, and ruin it there” (Sterne, 1986, 164); “Take notice, I go no farther with the simile” (Sterne, 1986, 179); “Let us drop the metaphor”( Sterne, 1986, 519);
- incorporating a variety of genres and modes of characterization or scene setting: “I have but one more stroke to finish Corporal Trim’s character...” (Sterne, 1986, 77); “At present the scene must drop, - and change for the parlour fire-side” (Sterne, 1986, 80); “...all which put together, must have prepared the reader’s imagination for the entrance of Dr. Slop upon the stage ...”(II Sterne, 1986, 84); “I could not give the reader this stroke in my uncle Toby’s picture, by the instrument with which I drew the other parts of it...this is a part of his moral character” (Sterne, 1986, 91); “In all nice and ticklish discussions,-(of which, heaven knows, there are but too many in my work)...I write one half full, --and t’other fasting,--and correct it full...”( Sterne, 1986, 351);
“...and so the chapter ends.” (Sterne, 1986, 305); “it would have made my story much better, to have begun by telling you...” (Sterne, 1986, 251); “To avoid all and every one of these errors, in giving you my uncle Toby’s character, I am determin’d to draw it by no mechanical help whatever...I will draw my uncle Toby’s character from his HOBBY-HORSE.” (Sterne, 1986, 61);

- or using a mixture of the techniques, as for example in the following extract, where the narrator not only reminds readers of scene but also refers to mythological literary source but and to the genre of drama: “At the end of the last chapter, my father and my uncle Toby were left both standing, like Brutus and Casius at the close of the scene...”. (Sterne, 1986, 93) Moreover, the narrator regresses and progresses in the play-like fashion: “I have dropp’d the curtain over this scene for a minute, -- to remind you of one thing,--and to inform of another.” (Sterne, 1986, 115).

Even though the narrator is autonomous in the process, he is also aware of the limits which are imposed by certain literary traditions that cannot be avoided. The restraint is mentioned at beginning of the sixth volume in the story of Le Fever: “---But this is neither here nor there—why do I mention it?-----Ask my pen,---it governs me,--I govern not it.” (Sterne, 1986, 334).

It can also be clear that despite experiencing difficulties in writing which are connected to handling multitude narrative digressions, that are described in volumes seven and (“My ink burns my fingers to try----and when I have ----‘twill have a worse consequence----it will burn (I fear) my paper: ...But if you wish to know how the abbess of...got over difficulty (only first wishing myself all imaginable success)---I’ll tell you the least scruple” (Sterne, 1986, 404)), the narrator is thrilled and takes pleasure in the writing: “I enter upon this part of my story in the most pensive and melancholy frame of mind...My nerves relax as I tell it...Every line I write ... I feel ...the quickness of my pulse”( Sterne, 1986, 170), “---In a word, my pen takes its course; and I write on as much from the fullness of my heart, as my stomach.”( Sterne, 1986, 351).

Using all the above non-typographic metafictional means of broken narrative or digressions related to a variety of motifs or ways of characterization, Sterne and allows his readers to catch a short glimpse of an artist’s intricacies in writing and so he aims at diminishing gap between art and reality. Both progressive and regressive narrative techniques not merely reveal the already mentioned originality of the novel, but through humour Sterne allows his readers to take a distance and to laugh at “the infirmities of ill health, and other evils of life, by mirth” (Sterne, 1986, 3). As a result, readers are once again forced to realize the difference between the external (extremely ill Sterne) and internal author (who is also portrayed as suffering from a poor health). Besides forcing his readers to doubt their perception of reality, Sterne also wants them see the “disintegrated”
narrator’s mind (Zimmermann, 1987, 140) as Everett Zimmermann, an American expert in 18th century British Literature, in his work *Tristram Shandy and Narrative Representation* (1987) described, which is full of shifting usually illogical ideas. Once again, Sterne in this way, wishes to mock Locke’s ideas of logicality of human mind.

4.2.2. Questionable Narrative

Traditional novels are often concerned with the bond between art and reality, whereas metafiction aims at conscious presentation of the diversity between these two. Metafictionists believe that art cannot be a pure imitation of reality and, opposite to realists, who aim at imitating the reality by hiding the difference between the outer world and fiction, they exhibit this disparity. *Tristram Shandy* reveals the discrepancy between art and reality in four various ways, which are further analyzed in detail:

1) by presenting characters’ various treatments of reality;
2) through mocking traditional literary practices;
3) by drawing attention to the fact that fictional time does not match the real clock time.

The Greek motto which is placed under the title of the first volume of the work implies that Sterne realizes that objects can cause a variety of contradictory meanings which may lead to misunderstanding and quarrels among people. *Tristram Shandy* is a subject to misunderstandings due to its characters’ misinterpretations of each other’s words, such as bridge. It is variously understood by Dr. Slop, who had in mind the treatment for Tristram’s broken nose, and Toby, who thought it was a construction for his own town. “When Trim came in and told my father, that Dr. Slop in the kitchen, and busy in making a bridge,—my Uncle Toby,—….took it instantly for granted that Dr. Slop was making a model of the marquis d’Hopital’s bridge.” (Sterne, 1986, 169) This misunderstanding is caused, according to Lock’s theories about the meaning of words, because people impose various meanings onto words that represent reality.

The novel accommodates two characters with opposing approaches to reality, namely Walter Shandy and Toby. Toby believes that recreating the battle of Namur through a careful analysis of facts will help him achieve the straightforward representation of reality. His empiric method of recreational work bears realistic literary approach. Walter, however, is convinced that facts, science, words or names themselves may reveal the essence of reality. He construes reality through a number of ready-made hypotheses. Walter assumes that knowledge can be obtained through systems, which is clear from his theory of teaching auxiliary verbs and his given example of a white bear in the fifth
volume that tempts him into thinking that he has found “North west passage to the intellectual world.” (Sterne, 1986, 324) Unfortunately, both Walter and Toby are misled in their belief of grasping the truth. The different treatment of reality and the absence of single universal truth as well as inability to learn the truth is the idea which Sterne repeatedly stresses in his novel, which is completely controversial to the treatment of the world proclaimed by the philosophers and writers of the 18th century.

Christensen infers that Walter’s “quasi-scientific reasoning” (which stands for his approach to reality through words and systems) and insertion of authentic text of “Memorandum presented to the Gentlemen Doctors of the Sorbonne” about the procedure of baptizing an unborn child while still in the womb through injection, function as criticism of scientists. The misplacement of dedication (it is set in the middle of the third chapter instead of being at the very beginning of the novel) as well as informing the reader of the narrator’s conception rather than his actual birth puts literary conventions of writing, the goal of which is usually to give precise details, under the satiric attack. In this way, Sterne’s Neoclassical fellow writers’ works become a source for his original work Tristram Shandy, that in its nature proclaims the idea of postmodern literary replenishment using existing literary resources and remaking them to create something truly valid.

The treatment of time is another means revealing disparity between art and reality. The narrator repeatedly tries to make the reader aware of the discrepancy between the fictional time in the novel and the actual time in the external world. The following extract is one of the many evidences of the technique to which almost an entire chapter is devoted in the second volume:

“IT is about an hour and half’s tolerable good reading since my uncle Toby rung the bell, when Obadiah was order’d to saddle a horse, and go for Dr. Slop…so no one can say, with reason that I have not allowed Obadiah time enough, poetically speaking, and considering the emergency too, both to go and come…If the hypercritick will go upon this; and is resolved after all to take a pendulum, and measure the true distance betwixt ringing of the bell and the rap of the door:--and, after finding it to be no more than two minutes, thirteen seconds, and three fifths…should take upon him to insult over me for such a breach in the unity, or rather probability, of time;--I would remind him that the idea of duration and of its simple modes…is a true scholastic pendulum,--and by which, as a scholar, I will be tried in this matter,--abjuring and detesting the jurisdiction of all other pendulums whatever….”(II, 8:83-84)

The example indicates reading time of the external world (which is highlighted), the narrator’s treatment of time (the underlined segments) and the fictional time in which all the characters dwell (the italicized bolded instances). What is more, the narrator, additionally emphasizes the feeling of inequality of fictional time with the one of the reader’s, by incorporating an aspect of the actual time
that of the author that enforces the feeling of artificiality of the novel. The author repetitively refers to the release of the novel and its new installments indicating its time of publishing as for example:

- in the end of the second volume: “the reader will be content to wait for a full explanation of these matters till the next year,---when the series of things will be laid open which he little expects.” (Sterne, 1986, 115);
- at the final chapter of the fourth volume: ‘…I take my leave of you till this time twelve-month…(unless this vile cough kills me in the mean time)” (Sterne, 1986, 270);
- at the beginning of the seventh volume in which Tristram reminds about his promise to write two volumes each year if he is in good health: “…I think, I said, I would write two volumes every year provided the vile cough which then tormented me…would but give me leave.” (Sterne, 1986, 385)

The last two extracts stress the fictional nature of the work not only in terms of the external author’s time but also by enclosing into the fiction facts from his life. He even allows the reader to learn about tiny element of the circumstances of his writing routine in the fourth chapter, where he boasts about writing his “chapter upon chapters” before going to sleep to relieve his conscience and mind. (Sterne, 1986, 225). He also mentions such facts of writing as number of pages written, drying ink, turning leaves of the novel (Sterne, 1986, 312), bargaining with his book-seller upon the price (Sterne, 1986, 33) or burning the carefully written page by throwing it into the fire having mistaken it for the wrong one (Sterne, 1986, 233), or even aging with progression of his novel: “I am this month one whole year older than I was this time twelve-month; and having got that, as you perceive, almost into the middle of my fourth volume-and no farther than to my first day’s life” (Sterne, 1986, 228). The frequent mentioning of fictional and real time puzzles the readers encouraging them to realize the diminishing boundaries between art and reality. Furthermore, readers as if are welcomed into experiencing difficulties and peculiarities of process of literary writing that again may confuse their sense of reality.

4.2.3. Involved Reader

Reader’s role in terms of analysis of metafiction plays as essential part as narrator and his narrative. The author encourages the reader to fill in the gaps, the blank spaces and to assemble fragmented parts into the coherent whole. By allowing readers participate in the creational process of the novel, Sterne resembles the postmodern idea that a literary work does not exist without the reader who brings life into it. Postmodern feature of metafictionists is their encouragement of
readers to become exclusively involved into reading to the extent in which their interpretation and involvement becomes a creational process. As a result, readers are meant not to be passive but productive in compositional process. In this way, readers become a part of fictional world changing their status to that of narratees or partial co-authors. Considerable attention in the novel is devoted to narratees because Tristram believes that his writing method heavily depends on them and their wishes, this is why he tells the reasons for using particular writing techniques, for instance, finishing a chapter in the middle of events (Sterne, 1986, 440), just to please the readers or withholding a character’s description to intrigue. In this way, the narrator employs numerous ways to involve the reader into co-operation. Sterne, similarly to postmodern writers, wants to stir the reader’s mind and make him think, reflect upon the nature of reality, create new forms of subjectivity and his outer world.

At the very beginning of the first volume, the narrator invites a reader to read his story in order to create “a slight acquaintance” which is “beginning to betwixt” them, and eventually “grow into familiarity; …and terminate in friendship.” (Sterne, 1986, 10) The co-operation between the narrator and his audience is unquestionably revealed in the 20th chapter of the fourth volume. The multiple use of the first person plural of the personal pronoun in phrases “Leave we” or “Let us leave” hints at the Tristram’s co-authorial attitude to his audience (Sterne, 1986, 355). Tristram exceptionally frequently but always respectively addresses his narratees in these ways: Sir, Dear Reader, Madam, your reverences, your worships, Christian reader, non-believer (Sterne, 1986, 370), female reader, male reader, painters (Sterne, 1986, 97) and critics (Sterne, 1986,.: 153), etc, sparing his attention for audience of both genders, all beliefs and occupations as if in his desire to please all without leaving someone behind. The narrator is also outstandingly cautious at monitoring their assessment as if trying to maintain interest and get their response, which is a key to efficient delivery of any conversation. Tristram’s efforts to get in touch with a reader may come from the fact that he was a vicar, or his fictional resemblance to a playwright who draws up and down curtains, switches scenes leaving some characters offstage and inviting others onto the stage. Sustaining narratees’ absorption is the task which the narrator ensures through caring for the reader by directly inquiring about their eyesight (“Will this be good for your worships eyes?” (Sterne, 1986, 228)), rewarding them for the labour of reading (“Here’s a crown for your trouble” (Sterne, 1986, 228)), letting narratees imagine (“Let the reader imagine then...Let him suppose...Let him imagine that...Let him imagine the Doctor...”( Sterne, 1986, 88), but not allowing them to foresee the event in the novel (“...if I thought you was able to for the least judgment or probable conjecture to
yourself, of what was to come in the next page.--I would tear it out of my book." (Sterne, 1986, 63), making the audience become aware of constructive parts of the plot ("(and to rise properly in my climax") (Sterne, 1986, 344)), expressing a plea for attentiveness ("I beg we may take more care" (Sterne, 1986, 440)), blackmailing the audience to present further events only if they are attentive enough (Sterne, 1986, 149) or by instructing them not to stop reading until they are through with the next two chapters (Sterne, 1986, 20), read as fast as they can “and never stop to make any inquiry” about the issue (Sterne, 1986, 60) or repeatedly insisting on their rereading of the previous chapter and blaming them for the inattention:

“------How could you, Madam, be so inattentive in reading the last chapter?... Madam, I beg leave to repeat it over again...My pride cannot allow you that refuge...I do insist upon it, that you immediately turn back, that is, as soon as you get to the next full stop, and read the whole chapter over again." (Sterne, 1986, 47)

The narrator’s detailed reading instructions for the narratees, as Tristram explains, might be offensive or off-putting. However, they have an educational purpose of making the audience to be able to “make wise reflections, and draw curious conclusions” (Sterne, 1986, 48). Tristram allows his readers to choose either Latin or the translation of Emulphus's curse (Sterne, 1986, 202-211) or "Slawkenburgius's Tale" (Sterne, 1986, 288-99) on the opposite page. As a result, the narrator ensures the audience’s involvement not only by typographic means such as letting to swear or draw the image of the character in the provided empty spaces or non-typographically,- through not completing the description, stirring reader’s imagination and breaking the narrative.
5. METAFICTIONALITY IN LOST IN THE FUNHOUSE

*Lost in the Funhouse* (1968) is a collection of short novels which is said to be a major landmark of metafictional fiction (unknown source). Barth investigates self-consciousness of a postmodern author and an individual belonging to the end of the 20th century. Metafiction helps Barth in revealing the ways in which self-consciousness influences the process of writing, author’s and his characters’ awareness and creation of themselves. Barth illustrates the very essence of metafiction, as Christensen would say, by presenting “the ties between the writer’s creative work and his self-creation, art and life, love and art”. (Miniotaite, 2007, 31) Metafiction makes his work a postmodern experimental work in which he delineates the condition of postmodern literature. By using old “exhausted” forms, styles and genres that cannot transmit the complexity of the period, he as if revitalizes and makes them “up-to-date”. Barth emphasizes the role of the reader and exposes the fictitiousness of the world and literature, and presents the wish of postmodern author to make his life meaningful with the help of writing and creating. The episodes are linked in between by the postmodern theme of human identity and the exhaustion of traditional characterization.

5.1. Typographic Oddity

5.1.1. Moebius Strip

Similarly to Sterne’s interest in the typographic play, John Barth entertains his readers with the innovative treatment of the printed text. In this way, reader’s attention is drawn to the materiality of fiction. The first short story called Frame-Tale in the collection *Lost in the Funhouse* serves as an experimental step towards unconventional management of books and fiction. Besides author’s request to damage the book by cutting off the edge of the page, twisting and fastening it accordingly to the indicated small letters with the capital ones, the reader is invited to realize that language is material, in which a story serves as a material container. Moreover, construction of the Moebius strip implies that a narrative has a form which can be constructed, similarly to the reader’s constructive project of the Moebius strip, where a reader builds a story out of the material of language. Finally, the *Frame-Tale* story reveals the postmodern treatment of exhausted literary forms, where form is both endless and closed, repetitious and infinitely rich in possibilities as compared to reading the physically constructed endless repetitious story “Once a upon a time there was a story that began once upon a time there was a story that began once upon a time there was a story…” (Barth, 1982, 1-2). The *Frame-Tale* short story serves as an introduction to a disordered
labyrinth-like narrative line with a central character, Ambrose and his telling his life story with comments and reflections in the collection of the short story *Lost in the Funhouse*.

**5.1.2. Blank Gap**

A typographic space is another means of uniquely employed metafictional device which welcomes readers into the cooperation in the creational process and also reminds them about the fictionality of the work. The very first obvious example of an extraordinary space is presented in the beginning of *Autobiography – A Self-Recorded Fiction*. The wide spaces between the phrases as well as direct addressing the outer reader and the message of the title imply a highly metafictional nature of the gap as a technique. The author pleas for a specific handling of his work by endowing it with physical form – sound. In this way, the author again invites the reader to physical co-production of the work. If in *Frame-Tale* the reader is encouraged to damage the book and make a shape, now they are allowed to voice or read aloud. The deliberate graphic spaces stand for the natural pauses, which are used in public speaking to attract listeners’ attention, and in this work they serve as an instruction to the manner the phrase has to be acted out. The reader however, might not carry out the given task as the writer gives them choice not to read it, claiming that he will not hold them responsible (Barth, 1982, 35). As a result, the gaps function as an example of the narrator’s treatment his readers as a free coauthors who have a great impact on the narrative.

“You who listen give me life

in a manner of speaking.

I won’t hold you responsible.” (Barth, 1982, 35)

Further metafictional mode related to a blank space is employed the in the episode *Petition*. Its literary form reminds of a letter which is written by Siamese twins to the king of Siam asking for his help in arranging a surgery to separate them. The addressee is omitted as the letter lacks signature. As a result, readers are invited to create the names of the twins as in *Tristram Shandy* where readers are given space to draw the image of the character of Ms. Wadman or curse in over the lost notes. (Barth, 1982, 71)

Your Highness may imagine with what eagerness His reply to this petition is awaited by

Yours truly,

Another deliberate printed gap which has a multi-functional purpose is found in *Menelaid*. However, the space which graphically separates and frames the answer to the rhetorical question expresses silence and a doubt in the existence of the both the inner and outer author of the work. The
wide space before and after the expected answer to the question of who the author is as well as the lack reply, presented as an empty space in the inverted commas, forces reader to realize the disparity between the factual and fictional author. Whereas the three dots after the empty answer might imply an infinite loss and inability to find an answer to the question and to realize the limit separating the reality from art (Barth, 1982, 158).

“Who am I?”

... …… " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " \n\nThe self-doubt, inability to perceive one’s personality and overt self-awareness makes Menelaus a postmodern weak man who is fragmented and lost. Who is instead of being somebody only dreams of being them. He is lured into various imaginary lives of his each of which is presented in the layered narrative and marked by inverted commas.

5.1.3. Multiple Inverted Commas

The literary critique Edward A. Levenston, the author of The Stuff of Literature: Physical aspects of Texts and Their Relation to Literary Meaning, profoundly appreciated Barth’s punctuation in Menelaus, stating it to be “most alive to the potentialities of variation in graphic form, especially in punctuation and layout, which is the theme of the book” (Levenston, 1992, 87). Menelaiad is the highly typographically metafictional episode in terms of punctuation as it bears an idea “of a story of a report of a report of a report of a report of a story” which requires “inverted commas within inverted commas within inverted commas” (Levenston, 1992, 87).

(Barth, 1982, 153)
The inverted commas not only mark various narratives levels\(^4\) but they elevate the inequality between the fiction and art. The reader becomes lost in the number of the stories within stories and like in a maze. The frustration, which may be caused by inability to follow the narrative, is reinforced by a sharp ending of a chapter. The similar technique of puzzling the readers and forcing them realize the several layers of narratives is achieved by open – ending chapters 2, 3, 4 and 6 using a semicolon. Whereas an exclamation mark, as an odd example of punctuation which is used as a paragraph itself, reminds and encourages readers to empathize the condition Menelaus was in when talking to Helen. (Barth, 1982, 155)

5.1.4. Freitag’s Triangle

Among the metafictional oddities in print, the reference to the two versions of Freitag’s Triangle\(^5\) (Barth, 1982, 91) in *Lost in the Funhouse* episode is another extremely metafictional typographic means,

\[\begin{array}{c}
A \\
B \\
C \\
D
\end{array}\]

\[\begin{array}{c}
A \\
B \\
C
\end{array}\]

\[\begin{array}{c}
A \\
B
\end{array}\]

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\(^{4}\) In fact, there are seven narrative levels: the first one when Menelaus speaks to himself, the second, is the talk between Menelaus and Telemachus with Peisistratus; third - Menelaus converses with Helen on a boat, the fourth narrative line is between Menelaus and Proteus; The fifth: Menelaus and Eidothea; The sixth – Menelaus speaks to Helen after the saving from Troy, finally, is the story of Menelaus, Helen and Paris prior to the Trojan war.

\(^{5}\) 350 years BCE, Aristotle, the Greek philosopher, in his work *Poetics*, explained that a drama’s unified plot structure is shaped as an ordinary triangle. The lowest left (*protasi*) is the introduction; the highest part (*epitasis*) stands for the crisis while the lowest right (*catastrophe*) carries the conflict’s delineation. Freytag’s Pyramid is an alteration of Aristotle’s structure in which the triangle has been changed into a pyramid adjoined two additional levels, in this way a five-element structure (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action and resolution) started to be used to analyze literary structures by Freytag. (Abrams, 1993, 227)
which compared to Ambrose’s inability to be a “regular person”, is the narrator’s helplessness to create a traditional narrative with basic elements such as: “exposition..the introduction of conflict…, the “rising action,” complication, or development of the conflict, …the climax, or turn of the action…, the denouement, or resolution of the conflict.” (Barth, 1982, 91) As Ambrose loses himself in the labyrinth of his self-consciousness, similarly the plot does not evolve in a usual way by digressing, retreating, collapsing, sighing or expiring. As a result, the narrative has become a funhouse itself trapping readers and being stuck without reaching an end or a traditional climax with resolution. The reason of the failure to come to a conclusion and be a conventionally constructed short story is the enormous attention given to the construction of the story. The effect of the maze narrative is also to trap its readers in it forcing them to realize artificiality of the text. Moreover, the Barth’s decision to mention labyrinth and Freytag’s triangle is to show that the conventional plotting is no longer suitable for contemporary readers and their complex maze like identities. Therefore, writers have to revitalize their plots like Barth did, simply by thematizing the issue of no longer applicable traditional writing.

5.1.5. Odd Chapter Sequencing

The duplication (1;1;2;2;3;3;4;4;5;5;6;6;7;7 in Menelaiad) of chapter numbers, the odd sequencing (1;2;3;4;5;6;7;7;6;5;4;3;2;1 in Menelaiad) or omission of the parts of a short story (1;2;4 in Anonymiad), or eccentric division of chapters 1/2 (Barth, 1982, 177) form a visually striking typographic metafictional peculiarity of the work that stresses author’s autonomy in structuring his narrative which seems endless and impossible to be handled: “No use, this isn’t working either, we’re halfway through, the end’s in sight; I’ll never get to where I am; Part Three, Part Three, my crux, my core, I’m cutting you out ;__________; there, at the heart, never to be filled, a mere lacuna.” (Barth, 1982, 183) What is more, the extract also reveals the disparity of an inner and outer fictional author at the process of the creation of the narrative. A straight lower line, though, denotes the removed chapter. Instead of leaving a gap or continuing with the following episode, the author chooses to stress his choice of deleting a chapter by both explaining the reason for doing so and drawing a graphic sketch in the shape of a straight line which again emphasizes the freedom the author which he advocates in constructing his narrative and at the same time shocking the readers and reminding them of diminishing boundaries between art and reality.

5.2. Non-Typographic Metafictional Techniques
5.2.1. Self-Conscious Narrator

The narrators of *Lost in the Funhouse*, similarly to the narrator of *Tristram Shandy*, are extremely self-conscious of their fictional existence. While Tristram’s, as the narrator’s humorous but at the same time serious, erudite and socializing character’s nature can be partly explained by the vocation of the external author, the narrators’ of *Lost in the Funhouse* profound resourcefulness and skill at literary theory remind of Barth’s scholarly erudition as a professor of English. Consequently, the learning results in a profoundly extensive and frequent reference to the works of other writers (contemporary experimental works of Samuel Beckett, Marian Cutler, Jorge Borges (Barth, 1982, 114); mythology (“Tiresias himself employs in the interest of objectivity and to rid himself of others’ histories—Oedipus’s…” (Barth, 1982, 95); “‘By Zeus out of Leda,’ I commenced, as though I weren’t Menelaus, Helen … Achilles…” (Barth, 1982, 153) Thomas Man’s self-conscious writing which the narrator finds “unoriginal” (Barth, 1982, 114), direct reference to James Joyce and the features of his mostly noted work Ullysses, and the availability of the novel’s copies (Barth, 1982, 71)) as well as a discussion on the conventions of literary writing methods which create an illusion of reading a short story and its thorough critical analysis:

- “Initials, blanks, or both were often substituted for proper names in nineteenth century fiction to enhance the illusion of reality” (Barth, 1982, 69)
- metafiction as a literary “experimental” means (“Another story about a writer writing a story! Another regressus in infinitum! Who doesn’t prefer art that at least imitates something other than its own processes?” (Barth, 1982, 114);
- stylistic means (“A fine metaphor, simile, or other figure of speech …” (Barth, 1982, 71);
- literary typographic analysis (“…italic type…is the printed equivalent on oral emphasis of words and phrases…Italics are also employed, in fiction stories, especially, for “outside”, intrusive or artificial voices of, such as radio announcements, the texts of telegrams and newspaper articles, et cetera.” (Barth, 1982, 69);

Barth’s main characters of short stories are frustrated to identify themselves through their narratives. Consequently, majority of the stories in the episodes portray narrators as authors who are so aware of their existence and the impact of this self-awareness on diminishing their creative skills that they cannot help constantly intruding their presence into the fiction which they narrate. The explicitness and abundance of narrator’s presence disrupting the narratives, causing to restart their stories is apparent in *Life-Story*, especially due constant reoccurrence to repetitions of several
phrases and structures, such as “Discarding what he’d already written... he began his story afresh...straightforward” (Barth, 1982, 116-121).

- “Without discarding what he’d already written he began his story afresh in somewhat a different manner. Whereas his earlier version had opened in a straightforward documentary fashion and then degenerated or at least modulated intentionally into irrealism and dissonance he decided this time to tell his tale from start to finish...” (Barth, 1982, 116)

- Discarding what he’d already written as he could wish to discard the mumbling pages of his life he began his story afresh, resolved this time to eschew overt and self-conscious discussion of his narrative process and to recount instead in the straightforwardest manner possible the several complications of his character’s conviction that he was a character in a work of fiction, arranging them into dramatically ascending stages if he could for his readers’s sake and leading them (the stages) to an exciting climax and denouement if he could. (Barth, 1982, 121)

The coupling of the dull self-conscious character and self-reflexive broken narrative is clearly vivid in Life-Story, which deals with an author laboring at creating an interesting and meaningful story. It appears to him that the literary “vehicle” which he can use is rather too “self-conscious, vertiginously arch, fashionably solipsistic, unoriginal-in fact a convention of twentieth-century literature” (Barth, 1982, 114). As a result, narrator comes to a conclusion that the problems from which he suffers deal with literature in general. He presents his writing efforts in the following manner:

“Another story about a writer writing a story! Another regressus in infinitum! Who doesn’t prefer art that at least imitates something other than its own processes? That doesn't continually proclaim "Don't forget I'm an artifice!"? That takes for granted its mimetic nature instead of asserting it in order (not so slyly after all) to deny it, or vice-versa?” (Barth, 1982, 114);

The obvious reaction to the idea that contemporary literature is too self-reflexive is repetitively presented in the series of stories. Likewise, the narrator in the episode, Title, bewails: "Oh God comma I abhor self-consciousness. I despise what we have come to" (Barth, 1982, 110), but later applies self-consciousness as a "temporary expedient" in order "to turn intimacy, exhaustion, paralyzing self-consciousness and the adjective weight of accumulated history ... against itself to make something new and valid, the essence whereof would be the impossibility of making something new. What a nauseating notion." (Barth, 1982, 106). The mentioned contradiction forms the core paradox of fiction: despite the fact that narrators criticize spread of current narrative self-consciousness, but there are no alternative measures of construction for them to use.

The idea of Barth’s essay, Literature of Exhaustion, is presented in the collection. Barth believes that novelists have already told everything that can possible be told, therefore postmodern
writers do not need to aim at modernist necessity to be original. For instance, *Life-Story*’s narrator having already well progressed with his narrative, feels incapable of determining “ground situation” – the source of meaningful story in the medium that seems to be vanishing. However, the deficiency of meaningful story may create a meaningful story, which results in changing narrator’s technique or form into the metaphor of self-reflexivity. This thought is illustrated by the narrator of *Life-Story*, who finally understands that he should consider “the absence of ground-situation...as itself a sort of ground-situation” (Barth, 1982, 123). Having wasted two-thirds of his life on writing novels, "it was perhaps inevitable that one afternoon the possibility would occur to the writer of these lines that his own life might be a fiction, in which he was the leading or an accessory character" (Barth, 1982, 113), the narrator makes up his mind to write a story about a character who assumes that he is a character in fiction, which is a story about himself. The character unexpectedly realizes the existence of his narrator. In this place short story begins to be the story about writing the story.

The narrator’s role is further analyzed in the title episode *Lost in the Funhouse* of the collection. Ambrose, - the narrator of the episode, *Lost in the Funhouse*, attempts to re-establish the narrator’s role of textual meaning. Both Ambrose’s losing of his way in the funhouse and his inability to experience life because of his heightened consciousness of the self, (when, for instance, he was playing with Magda masters and slaves and had a sexual intercourse which he experienced on the language level by narrating it, rather than physically undergoing the moment: though he had breathed heavily, groaned as if ecstatic, what he’d really felt throughout was an odd detachment, as though someone else were Master. Strive as he might to be transported, he heard his mind take notes upon the scene: This is what they call passion. I am experiencing it. (Barth, 1982, 81) lead to his concern of becoming a “regular person”. Likewise, the narrator of the story is anxious if his narrative is going to become the “regular” one, following the narrative structure, which is delineated in the version of Freitag’s Triangle (Barth, 1982, 91). The more self-conscious Ambrose is, - the less efficient is his handling of situation in the desired way. Equally, the more digressive narration becomes, the more it is threatened to be moving beyond the narrator’s control until the narrator tells that “We should be much farther along than we are; something has gone wrong; not much of this preliminary rambling seems relevant. Yet everyone begins in the same place; how is it that most go along without difficulty but a few lose their way? (Barth, 1982, 75) The narrative depicts the features of a funhouse as a maze, in which both narratees and narrative are trapped and lost, with some hope of getting to the desired end. Even though narrator is aware that resolution or at least a conclusion should be, but cannot produce it: "The climax of the story must be its protagonist's
discovery of a way to get through the funhouse. But he has found none, may have ceased to search” (Barth, 1982, 92). This story illustrates the failure of the hero and the narrative itself to reach the expected outcome. Just as Ambrose's self-reflections became the reason for his trapping in funhouse without finding the way out, the story is too much based on its own construction to make enough progress to reach a conclusion. However, the self-consciousness by making him realize that he is merely a character forced him to create a narrative for himself which constructed his selfhood. In this way, Ambrose becomes the narrator as he has created a narrative of self-conscious events. So, Lost in the Funhouse is not only an episode about an author telling a story, but it is the story, through its telling, that changes the main character into a narrator, who is capable to narrate the story of his own creation as author (Warthington, 2001, 124).

5.2.2. Questionable Narrative

The disparity between reality and art is repeatedly stressed in the series of collection by the narrators’ realization of their fictional being. One of the examples in Lost in the Funhouse episode is Ambrose’s realization of that he is not a real person but a fictional character makes him sad at first as he understands that he will not be able to escape his fate of loneliness and alienation. However, he decides to become an author and a creator of funhouses (Barth, 1982, 97). In Life-Story, the narrative self-consciousness illustrates the realisation of the fictionality of life. But narrator's self-awareness as a self-conscious person lures him into thinking that he is not a character in somebody’s fictional world. But when the narrator eventually realizes that he is merely a character in one of the short stories in Lost in the Funhouse, he states that it is “particularly disquieting to suspect not only that one is a fictional character but that fiction that one’s in – the fiction one is – is quite the sort one least prefers.” (Barth, 1982, 129) The narrator’s disappointment is followed by a rage in which he expresses his disgust with exhausted metafictional works: “Another story about a writer writing a story! Another regressus in infinitum! Who doesn’t prefer art that at least overtly imitates something other than its own processes? That doesn’t continually proclaim “Don’t forget I’m an artifice?”. (Barth, 1982, 117) Narrator’s self-consciousness helps him construct his identity and in this way he refuses to admit to being fictional, but self-consciousness also withholds him from successful completion of the story which he started to write. The moment when he realizes that he is not a fictional character, it “makes it impossible for him to write the story about a character who is” (Warthington, 2001, 119).
The fictional nature of the stories is further stimulated with the extensive use of narrator’s comments upon literary writing conventions and usage of literary devices which is distinctly exemplified in the Title and Lost in the Funhouse episodes. By doing so, Barth emphasizes the stagnation of creational power contemporary writers. He explains that it is not enough to be aware of literary writing conventions as they have exhausted themselves are not able to convey the meaning of the new fragmented and alienated world. As a result, the narrator being able to proceed to create something meaningful keeps trying to “fill in the gaps” by creating a collage of literary genres and theory.

The short story Lost in the Funhouse constantly employs meta-comments on a variety of writing aspects, such as:

- the use of conventional writing strategies related to
  - description: “Description of physical appearance and mannerisms is one of several standard methods of characterization used by writers of fiction. It is important to “keep the senses operating”; when a detail from one of the five senses, say visual is “crossed” with a detail from another, say auditory, the reader’s imagination is oriented to the scene, perhaps unconsiously.” (Barth, 1982, 74); “The boys’ father was tall and thin, balding, fair-complexioned. Assertions of that sort are not effective; the reader might acknowledge the preposition, but. (Barth, 1982, 79);

- ways of portraying reality in the 19th century: “Initials, blanks, or both were often substituted for proper names in the nineteenth-century fiction to enhance the illusion of reality. It is as if the author felt it necessary to delete the names for reasons of tact or legal liability. Interestingly, as with other aspects of realism, it is an illusion that is being enhanced, by purely artificial means.” (Barth, 1982, 73);

- importance of shift change: “A single straight underline is the printed equivalent to oral emphasis of words and phrases as well as the customary type for titles of complete works, not to mention italics are also employed, in fiction stories especially, for “outside” intrusive, or artificial voices, such a as radio announcements, the texts of telegrams and newspaper articles, et cetera.” (Barth, 1982, 72);

- theory or fashion of narration: “The more closely an author identifies with the narrator, literally or metaphorically, the less advisable it is, as a rule, to use the first person narrative viewpoint.” (Barth, 1982, 77); “At this rate our hero, at this rate our protagonist will remain in the funhouse forever. Narrative ordinarily consists of alternating dramatization and summarization.” (Barth, 1982, 78); “No character in a work of fiction can make a speech this long without
interruption or acknowledgement from the other characters.” (Barth, 1982, 90); “…First, our hero found a name-coin someone else had lost or discarded: AMBROSE...second, as he lost himself in the reflection the necessity for an observer makes perfect observation impossible, better make him eighteen at least, yet that would render other things unlikely, …” (Barth, 1982, 94);

The action of conventional deamatic narrative may be represented by a diagram called Freitag’s Triangle... or more accurately by a variant of that diagram...in which AB represent the exposition, B the introduction of conflict, BC the “rising action,”, complication or development of the conflict, C the climax, or turn of the action, CD the denouement, o resolution of the conflict…” “All the preceding except for the last few sentences is exposition that should have been done earlier or interspersed with the present action instead of lumped together.” (Barth, 1982, 95);

✓ punctuation: “The inverted tag in the dialogue writing is still considered permissible with proper names or epithets, but sounds old fashioned with personal pronouns.” (Barth, 1982, 81);

• literary devices and their functions: A fine metaphor, simile, or the other figure of speech, in addition to its obvious first order relevance to the thing it describes, will be seen upon reflection to have a second order of significance: it can be drawn from the milieu of the action, for example, or be particularly appropriate to the sensibility of the author.... (Barth, 1982, 74);

• theme of the work: “One reason for writing a lost-in-the-funhouse story is that everybody’s felt what Ambrose feels...”Is anything more than tiresome, in fiction, than the problems of sensitive adolescents?”” (Barth, 1982, 92);

• the choice and functions of literary symbols and means of images: The “diving would make a suitable literary symbol”. (Barth, 1982, 82); “In a short story about Ocean City, Maryland, during World War II, the author could make the use of the image of sailors on leave in the penny arcades and shooting galleries, sighting through the crosshair of toy machine guns at swastika’d subs, while out in the black Atlantic a U-boat skipper squints through his periscope at real ships outlined in the glow of penny arcades” (Barth, 1982, 86); “Moreover, the symbolism is in places heavy footed.” (Barth, 1982, 94); “What revelance does the war have to the story? Should there be fireworks outside or not?” “All the preceding except for the last few sentences is exposition that should have been done earlier or interspersed with the present action instead of lumped together.” (Barth, 1982, 96);

• the errors and imperfections that need to be corrected: “What a sentence, everything’s wrong from the outset.” (Barth, 1982, 88); “This part needs to be dramatized.” (Barth, 1982, 89); “All the preceding except for the last few sentences is exposition that should have been done earlier or interspersed with the present action instead of lumped together.” (Barth, 1982, 94);
• the other writers’ fiction and descriptive methods: “…the excursion was made by train as mentioned in the novel “The 42nd Parallel” by John Dos Passos.” (Barth, 1982, 73); “The Irish author James Joyce, in his unusual novel entitled Ulysses, now available in this country, uses the adjectives snot green and scrotum-tightening to describe the sea” (Barth, 1982, 74); James Joyce once wrote. (Barth, 1982, 89); “They’d match their wits together against the funhouse, struggle like Ulysses past obstacle after obstacle, help and encourage each other.” (Barth, 1982, 87);

• the fictionality of his own work: “I’ll never be an author” (Barth, 1982, 86); “Is there really such a person as Ambrose, or is he a fragment of the author’s imagination? (Barth, 1982, 88);

• on the narrative structure of the very work:

✓ Beginning: “The function of the beginning of a story is to introduce the principal characters, establish their initial relationships, set the scene for the main action, expose the background situation if necessary, plant motifs and foreshadowings where appropriate, and initiate the first complication or whatever of the “rising action”. (Barth, 1982, 77);

✓ Climax: “The gypsy fortune-teller machines might have provided a foreshadowing of the climax of this story if Ambrose had operated it.” (Barth, 1982, 84);

✓ Ending: “One possible ending would be to have Ambrose come across another lost person in the dark.” (Barth, 1982, 84);

These ample examples serve not only as an overtly emphatic break between art and reality but also a writers inability to create a meaningful text. By citing a range of traditional literary techniques that generally used to create a story, Sterne expresses the lack of creational power of postmodern artists. He implies that it is no longer enough to follow already known literary guidelines and apply traditional patterns and techniques since they do not make sense and cannot express the complexity of postmodern area where every individual has his own subjective relative truth. As a result, a collage of techniques, that Sterne offers for his readers is supposed to fit every reader’s needs so that they can find space for their own interpretation and in this way shed their own light and meaning on the work of art.

The comments on the choice of a story construction not only demolish any tendencies toward realism, but also directly complicate the linear development of the plot. For example, the remark on the purpose of introduction in the beginning of the episode: The function of the beginning of a story is to introduce the principal characters, establish their initial relationships, set the scene for the main action, expose the background of the situation if necessary, plant motifs
and foreshadowings where appropriate, and initiate the first complication or whatever of the ‘rising action.’ (Barth, 1982, 77) But as meta-comments increase in number, the plot digresses, risking that the story will never get started or even completed: *So far there’s been no real dialogue, very little sensory detail, and nothing in the way of a theme. . . . We haven’t even reached Ocean City yet: we will never get out of the funhouse* (Barth, 1982, 77). Frustration of incompleting the work is intensified by the repetition of the structure of the digression: *There is no point in going farther; this isn’t getting anybody anywhere, they haven’t even come to the funhouse yet.* (Barth, 1982, 83) As the story progresses, lost Ambrose wanders around the funhouse, the text considers a variety of possible endings. By inserting the diagrams of conventional narratives, Barth digresses the text away from any conventional conclusion. Consequently, the narrator is in despair: “This can’t go on much longer; it can go on forever.” (Barth, 1982, 95); “A long time ago we should have passed the apex of Freitag’s Triangle and made a brief work of denouement; the plot doesn’t rise by meaningful steps but winds upon itself, digresses, retreats, hesitates, sights, collapses, expires. The climax of the story must be its protagonist’s discovery of the way to get through the funhouse. But he has found none, may have ceased to search” (Lost in the Funhouse: 96); By making the reader aware of the conventional strategies and theory of writing and mentioning instead of applying them in the story, Barth confirms the postmodern condition of literature which deals with revitalization of exhausted traditional forms, styles and genres. As a result, the reader is forced to realize the disparity between fictional and real life. He also expresses creational stagnation of writers who, in his opinion, have to fight the issue by making the issue the topic of their work and use the already existing tools to create a collage that could be subjectively interpreted by their readers. The very subjective approach of a narratee to the literary work is the aim that a postmodern author according to Barth. He believes that in this way, a writer will enable an efficient communication with a reader.

*Title*, is the further episode in the collection, which is a much more explicit defense of Barth’s break from literary tradition. The text in it frequently emphasizes the overt reflexivity of the contemporary narrator who struggles “to make something new and valid” (Lost in the Funhouse: 109). However, he realizes the exhaustion of literary means claiming that “Everything’s been said already, over and over;...there’s nothing to say. Say nothing. What’s new? Nothing.” (Barth, 1982, 105) The narrator, the alter ego of Barth, repetitiously tries to create despite the lack of limited used up literary resources. “Try to fill in the blank. Only hope is to fill in the blank. Efface what can’t be effaced or fill in the blank. With words or more words, otherwise, I’ll fill in the blank with this noun
here in prepositional object.” (Barth, 1982, 105) Consequently, he suggests three ways of “up-to-dating” contemporary literature (Barth, 1982, 109):

“The first is rejuvenation: having become an exhausted parody of itself, perhaps a form – Of what? Of anything?-may rise neoprimtively from its own ashes. A tiresome prospect. The second, more appealing I’m sure but scarcely likely at this advanced date, is that moribund what-have-yous will be supplanted by vigorous new: the demise of the novel and short story, he went on to declare, needn’t be the end of narrative art, nor need dissolution of used-up blank fill in the blank. The end of one road might be beginning of another...The final possibility is a temporary expedient... To turn ultimacy against itself to make something new and valid, the esesse whereof would be the imposibility of making something new.”

Metafictionality of Title forms the theme, which is the difficulty and even lack of necessity to produce original literary works. According to Barth, the impossibility to create new works becomes the foundation for innovative creation.

5.2.3. Co-operative Reader

Postmodernism speaks of the birth of a reader, stressing his immensely growing role in the creative process of fiction making through his active participation as an interpreter who bestows the text with meaning.

As it has been mentioned before, The Frame-Tale functions as a drastic direct encouragement to physically involve into the co-creation of literary work. The reader not only has to give meaning to the unfinished story and also a shape. In this way, the reader is reminded that a story has a shape, narrative can be built out of the material of language whereas form is endless and close, repetitious and endless in possibilities. In this way, Barth forces to realize the boundary between art reality and practically illustrates how the exhausted forms can be up-to-dated in the manner of craft. Lost in the Funhouse, on the other hand, is subjected to a verbal representation of text in which readers are invited to use both visual and hearing senses when processing the tape for a single voiced Echo, lively or tape multi-voiced Glossalalia and or even recorded Title as well as listening to silent but visible author of Autobiography.

The narrator of Life-Story makes the reader’s attentive reading responsible for the existence of the narrator. The narrator directly asks, insists and even dares the reader to stop reading and to silence him throughout the short story: “But as he longs to die he and can’t without your help you force him on, force him on. Will you deny you’ve read this sentence? This? To get away with the murder doesn’t appeal to you, is that it? As if you hands weren’t inky with other dyings! As if he’d know you’d kill him! Come on. He dares you.” (Barth, 1982, 128) The reader is even scolded at the
end for their interest in reading: “The reader! You, dogged, uninsultable, print-orientated bastard, it’s you I’m addressing, who else, from inside this monstrous fiction. You’ve read me this far, then? Even this far? For what discreditable motive? How is it you don’t go to a movie, watch TV, stare at a wall, play tennis with a friend, make amorous advances to the person who comes to your mind when I speak of amorous advances? Can nothing surfeit, saturate you, turn you off? Where’s your shame?” (Barth, 1982, 127) Sterne offers readers to take up a variety of other kinds of leisure activity, implying that literary exhaustion, especially the one of metafictional nature, is boring. However, at the same time, through irritating his readers by pointing out dreariness of the parodied conventional literary tradition, Barth creates a “heroic deed” and maintains their attention and even succeed in greatly entertaining his readers.
CONCLUSIONS

The undertaken research of the paper has achieved its aims of comparing and contrasting the nature and functions of metafictional techniques used in Laurence Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy* and John Barth’s *Lost in the Funhouse* and illustrating the similarity and difference of metafictional experience in the two literary works. The hypothesis of the thesis has been fully confirmed by the analysis of the fictions in the analytic part. The examination of metafictional techniques in the two works has been carried out according to the classifications of literary critics Mark Currie and Ingrid Christensen that deal with graphic and non-graphic metafictions. The latter has been divided into the analysis of the narrator’s conception of his role, study of the narrative and the significance of the narratee (or the external reader). The results of the study have shown that:

- Despite being a product of 18th century, *Tristram Shandy*, due to its metafictional similarity related to expression of writer’s world outlook and aesthetic preferences in comparison to postmodern collection of short stories *Lost in the Funhouse*, can be ascribed as a forerunner of postmodernism. Both Sterne and Barth having faced profoundly changeable eras, that were prone to social and political shifts as well as scientific and literary inventions, created extremely metafictional sarcastic works that served to critically assess the social and literary conditions of their eras. The amplitude of a variety of typographic metafictions and non-typographic metafictional devices helped Sterne illustrate the subjective nature of a human consciousness which is not linear but rather illogical one with a tendency to digress and repeat itself. Sterne’s presented conception of a man’s thinking and individuality is extremely different to the one that is nurtured by the philosophers and writers of Neoclassicism who view an individual’s objective conception of the world as a continuous progress based logics and cognition. Sterne’s individual is very alike to the condition of a postmodern individual illustrated in *Lost in the Funhouse*. The postmodern human in Barth’s short stories is seen as creatively powerless, faceless, deconstructed, lonely and lost in continuous digressions. Both Sterne’s and Barth’s narrators experience difficulty in creational process of writing which is extremely postmodern.

- The resemblance between *Tristram Shandy* and *Lost in the Funhouse* is clearly visible from the overt reference or employment of a vast variety of literary and non-literary sources which serve as collages representing complexity and fragmentation of postmodern human consciousness.

- Moreover, Sterne in the same way as Barth tried to incorporate the existing literary forms with the latest possibilities of print inventions. This innovative writing feature can be viewed not only as a wish to break from conventions but a postmodern literary theory in practice that confirms the key idea of postmodern theory of literary exhaustion and replenishment where literary means are seen as incapable of conveying the complexity of present world and as result have to be revitalized.
• There is a major difference related to the character of metaphictional metaphors of the two works. The metaphictional metaphor of journey in *Tristram Shandy*, which stands for the narrator’s flee from death, is seen as a negative force that threatens the existence of the narrator and his creation. Whereas the metaphor of labyrinth in *Lost in the Funhouse*, on the other hand, functions as a positive power which constructs the narrator’s identity.

• Even though there is some similarity of typographic and non-typographic metafictional techniques in *Lost in the Funhouse* and *Tristram Shandy*, as for example, the overuse of inverted commas, or graphic representation of the narrative, or the highlighted disparity of life and art, there are many differences in the quality of metafictional modes which may probably evolve from the various life backgrounds of the authors. Laurence Sterne as a vicar by profession aims at ensuring the connection with the audience to deliver his message. As a result, Tristram, is exceptionally encouraging in the co-operation with the reader/narratee, offering them a wide spectrum of activities: rereading, imagining, drawing, swearing, going forwards and backwards, etc. Whereas, Barth as a university professor needs to make students reason or speculate. Therefore, the narrators of the collection of short stories spare less attention for the “conversation” with the audience, by addressing them directly, but they rather allow their readers to impart the text with their own meaning by interpretation.

• Furthermore, *Tristram Shandy* is much richer in typographic metafictional means than *Lost in the Funhouse*. Sterne is extremely strict about the printgraphics related issues such as the length of dashes or the quality of pictures of his work. Whereas Barth seems to spare major concern for non-typographic metafictional modes which are often deal with metacomment on literary writing choices that deal with characterization, construction of narrative and referencing.

• Also, the functions of the use of metafiction are different. Sterne’s metafictional means mainly served as a tool to mock the works of his fellow writers and to prove Locke’s ideas of associations, that are based on logics, wrong. Whereas Barth’s *Lost in the Funhouse* can be treated as a practical exemplification of the literary theory on the state of potmodern literature and personality which is expressed in his noted essays *Literary of Exhaustion* and *Literary of Replenishment*.

• Despite the varied approach to their audience, both the narrators of *Lost in the Funhouse* and *Tristram Shandy* invite their readers to experience the voiced and constructed text. Tristram wishes to have his text read aloud, while Barth wants to have some of the episodes recorded. The readers in *Tristram Shandy* are asked to draw, whereas the narratees in *Lost in the Funhouse* are challenged with the construction of the story. Consequently, the narrators of the works encourage their readers to become the co-authors of the text by not only imparting their meanings to the text but also by sharing an individual physical bond with it.
SUMMARY

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METAFIKCIŅĖS PRIEMONĖS LAURENSO STERNO TRISTRAM SHANDY IR JOHNO BARTHO PASIRINKTUOSE APSAKYMUOSE

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