

## **MCHALE'S POSTMODERN PERSPECTIVE IN AIMEE CARTER'S NOVEL *THE GODDESS TEST***

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**Abstract:** This research study intends to reveal the postmodern features in *The Goddess Test* (2011), especially in the existence of the plurality of the worlds, the strategies used to construct the worlds and in its construction, the worlds under erasure. The theory that is used to analyze is the concepts of postmodern fiction by Brian McHale. The main data comes from *The Goddess Test* by Aimee Carter which is published in 2011. The result shows that there are plurality of the worlds and its construction of world under erasure in *The Goddess Test*. Therefore, *The Goddess Test* fulfills the postmodern fiction requirements by using McHale's strategies to illustrate the worlds, and its construction.

**Keywords:** postmodern; ontological; construction; strategy

### ***PERSPEKTIF POSMODERN MCHALE DALAM NOVEL "THE GODDESS TEST" KARYA AIMEE CARTER***

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan ciri-ciri posmodern dalam novel *The Goddess Test*, khususnya tentang keberadaan pluralitas dunia, strategi yang digunakan untuk membangun dunia, dan konstruksi dunia. Teori analisis yang digunakan adalah konsep fiksi posmodern oleh Brian McHale. Sumber data berasal dari novel "*The Goddess Test*" karya Aimee Carter yang diterbitkan pada tahun 2011. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan dalam novel *The Goddess Test* direpresentasikan pluralitas dunia dan konstruksi dunia di antara dunia. Oleh karena itu, *The Goddess Test* memenuhi kriteria fiksi posmodern dengan menggunakan strategi McHale dalam menggambarkan dunia-dunia dan konstruksinya.

**Kata Kunci:** posmodern; ontologis; konstruksi; strategi

## **INTRODUCTION**

According to Merriam-Webster, postmodern is of, relating to, or being any of various movements in reaction to modernism that are typically characterized by a return to traditional materials and forms (as in architecture) or absurdity (as in literature). This research will focus on postmodernist fiction by Brian McHale. McHale explains that postmodernism is the reaction against modernism movement of early twentieth-century. For it does

not come after the present, but after the modernist movement (McHale, 2004: 5).

McHale distinguishes modernist fiction and postmodernist fiction in term of its dominant. In this case, ontological dominant means that the fiction focuses on the '*modes of being*' (McHale, 2004: 10). Dick Higgins in McHale says that an ontology discuss about what we want to know and how far we want to know, or in other words, study about the theory of

“exist”. In his theory, McHale adapts Hrushovski’s three dimensional models of semiotic objects called repertoire of strategies to show the ontological dominant in fiction. Those are Worlds, Words and Construction. The construct of worlds are constructed by the words or language in the fiction itself.

*The Goddess Test* tells about Katherine Winters adventures. Katherine Winters or so called as Kate is portrayed as an New York 18-year-girl who had to go to Eden, Michigan in her birthday. Her new friend, Ava, killed herself by jumping into a shallow river in front of Kate. Stranger boy or man, called Henry, came to her, claimed to be the God of the Underworld, and brought Ava back from dead. He offered Kate a deal, if she accepted his bargain, he would also keep Kate’s mother alive. The bargain was Kate had to live in the Eden Manor for six months and tried to pass seven tests. Kate accepted the bargain and came to the Eden Manor. In living in Eden Manor, she found out that she would replace Persephone role in helping Henry lead the Underworld. She would become Henry’s future bride and a goddess. At the end of the story, Kate was told that Eden was not actually exist outside the building. Finally, Kate had to leave Eden Manor for six months to live her life as human. She could live as mortal human in six months and accompanied Henry ruled the Underworld for another six months.

The emergent of plurality of the worlds in *The Goddess Test* leads to the postmodern perspective by McHale. For example, there are Eden city and Eden Manor. Eden city is the human world while Eden Manor is the

goddess world. There are also strategies to construct those worlds that will be revealed. In McHale postmodernist fiction, intertextuality techniques used to construct one of world in fiction. In this context, Greek mythology is within *The Goddess Test*. This novel adapts Greek mythology into the story. It is showed up through the characters in the novel, for example namely Henry and Kate which resemble Hades and Persephone.

Furthermore, this research is conducted to examine the existence of plural worlds *The Goddess Test*, how the plural worlds are constructed and to explain the relation of each worlds in *The Goddess Test*. This research and its findings are also expected to help other researchers and readers that a postmodern is a problematic term. This thesis can contribute to be their reference in further understanding about postmodern, especially in understanding McHale postmodern perspective.

According to McHale, postmodern fiction is governed by ontological dominant (McHale, 2004). Further, McHale says that there are three strategies to show the ontological dominant in fiction. They are Worlds, Construction, and Words. The strategy of constructing world uses languages or words as the medium as in any form of literary work.

The classical logic world is constructed under three logical modalities: necessity, possibility and impossibility. Real world is constructed under the modality of necessity. The world in fiction is constructed under the modality of possibility. It is called possible world. Possible world is also a world of

either true or false. The world which is constructed under the modality of impossibility is a world of both true and false. Possible worlds depend on somebody's prepositional attitude: that is, in order for them to be possible, they must be believed in, imagined, wished for etc., by some human agent (McHale, 2004: 34). Characters which are in the real world in the fiction are able to maintain prepositional attitude and draw another possible world. Possible world that is in or within possible worlds is called as sub worlds. Those worlds are belongs to the real world in fiction or fictional real world. Therefore, there are two categories of worlds. They are fictional real world (possible world) and the other world (subworlds).

There are also intertextuality zone. This zone supports the existence of the worlds in the story. Intertextuality zone is created by intertextuality. Intertextuality is the relations among two or more texts. The intertextual zone is projected in a fictional universe and is concretized by readers in the process of reading the text (McHale, 2004:56). There is only one potential technique called transworld identity within the intertextuality. Umberto Eco in McHale (2004: 56) defined *transworld identity* as the transmigration of characters from one fictional universe to another. *Transworld identity* is the device of "borrowing" used to integrate and

foreground the intertextuality toward the text's structure. The word, "borrowing", means a character that reutilizes again in the other literacy. By way of explanation, this situation will lead the readers to a new perspective on the story that is still ongoing from each other but with a

different plot. To construct or deconstruct those worlds, McHale proposes four strategies; they are *juxtaposition*, *interpolation*, *superimposition*, and *misattribution* (McHale, 2004: 45). The first strategy is *juxtaposition*. It is a strategy to place some non-contiguous and unrelated worlds in a parallel way. The second strategy is *interpolation*. The strategy is introducing an unfamiliar world within the familiar world.

The third strategy by Brian McHale is *superimposition*. It is a unique strategy. It is a strategy that placing one familiar world on top of another world. Those two worlds mentioned before will create another dimension, which is completely different from the original ones. McHale also introduces the forth strategy called as *misattribution*. The strategy is in recognizing place or something else and its attributes wrongly. Some places have their own attributes and some attribute remain to a certain place or thing. This strategy requires a lot of unordinary perspective.

Words are also the part of constructing the worlds. The features of the words, which McHale mentioned are realization of metaphor, hypertrophy, and postmodern allegory. The first segment from the words is realization of metaphor. McHale (2004: 134) stated under the name of "realization of metaphor": events, objects, situations initially introduced as metaphors, literal only within a nonexistent and secondary frame of reference, eventually develop into realities within the fictional world. It represents the metaphor that comes into reality. Postmodern fiction basically plays with its metaphor; it presents metaphor to be realized or it

presents metaphor to be read as a figurative speech at the end.

Another figure in words to construct the world is hypertrophy. Postmodernist writers are not always so considerate. Their metaphorical miniature worlds tend to acquire an internal consistency and “liveliness” of their own, gathering the moment. They may even lose touch with the ground of their literal frame of reference and “take off” (McHale, 2004: 138). In other words, they undertake a tricky mindset to illustrate the character, the place, or the event within the literacy. As the metaphorical frame of reference swells and complicates, the language of the passage becomes increasingly abstract, making it is easy to forget the concrete scene.

The last part of words introduced by McHale is postmodern allegory. It can be formed from a hyper sector from hypertrophy that belatedly loses its metaphor and becomes an allegory—or, it is in itself an allegory, without having to be derived from actual hypertrophy. As McHale stated, the fictional world of an allegorical narrative is a tropology world, a world within a trope (McHale, 2004: 141). As supported by another statement from McHale (2004: 141), in terms of Hrushovski’s model of the ontology of metaphor. Allegory is metaphor’s *inverse*: where in a metaphor the metaphorical frame of reference is absent, the literal frame present, in allegory it is the literal frame of reference that is missing and must be supplied by the reader—only the metaphorical frame is given. In short, the meaning is that if you write it using a metaphor, what is written is literally literal. If you write using an

allegory, what is written is a metaphor.

In the postmodern fiction whereas McHale explained ontological dominant, there is a construction techniques lied within the theory. A world under erasure is when the text can be either replaced, erased, has a multiple choice with a weird sequel, has a multiple opening and ending, and also has a circular ending.

The first element of world under erasure is that the text being replaced. It means that the part of a narrative is actually being replaced, backtracked, and then changed with another scene. The writer often draw on the repertoires of peripheral or sub-literary genres—thrillers, gothic horror, pornography, cinematic or televised melodrama and farce, and so on. The aim of such sensationalism is to lure the reader into making an emotional investment in the sequence under erasure, typically by arousing his or her anxieties, fascination with the taboo, or prurient interests. Having become “involved” in the representation, the reader thus resents it when the representation is de-represented, erased (McHale, 2004: 102).

Erased is the second element of the existence of the world under erasure. The word ‘erased’ defines as the particles of the story depicted in the manuscript that will be disappeared all of sudden. As supported by McHale (2004: 103), narrated events, then, can be un-narrated, placed sous nature; and, in much the same way, projected existents—locales, objects, characters, and so on— can have their existence revoked. Evidently, it is literally the

author erased the existence of something.

The next element is called as the multiple choice of events that the McHale mentioned as excluded middles, forking paths. In other words, the character is faced with choices, branched choices, and it is possible in going through all the possibility in postmodern fiction. One can also “bend” a sequence back upon itself to form a loop, in which one and the same event figures as both antecedent and sequel of some other event.

The following feature of the world under erasure is that it has multiple opening and ending which represents as the sense of a non-ending. It will cause a little bit confusing statement, in reason of the beginning and ending seems to be similar each other, especially for the readers. But what are we to say about texts that seem both open and closed, somehow poised between the two, because they are either multiple or circular? (McHale, 2004: 109). For instance, *One beginning and one ending*, the narrator of Flann O’Brien’s *At Swim Two-Birds* (1939) tells us was a thing I did not agree with. As the final elements to draw within, the story will probably have a circular ending. Basically, it leaves the needing actually open. Therefore, you can go back to the first page of that novel to complete the sentence, thus looping the story all over again.

Some previous researches that are relevant to this research are a thesis by Septiana (2015) entitled *Magical Realism and The Erasure of the Worlds in Yann Martel’s Life of Pi in Postmodernism Perspective*, another thesis by Zajkas, (2015) entitled *Persephone and Hades Revisited:*

*Modern Retellings of the Myth in Young Adult Literature*, and the last one is a thesis by Pujiati (2009) entitled *Novel Enchanted dalam Kajian Postmodern Brian McHale*. Septiana (2015) discusses about the literary strategies used in presenting the postmodernism aspects in *Life of Pi*. She focuses on the construction of world under erasure. The result is that in *Life of Pi*, magical realism does not only become the cause of the erasure of the worlds, by the way making the character resist the magical events and objects. Furthermore, *Life of Pi* is also concluded as the reflects of the postmodern culture of the “anything goes” by presenting the event of Pi taming the tiger, projecting three religions in *one* person and not creating an ending for *Life of Pi*. Zajkas (2015) discusses about the intertextual relation between the original Greek myth and its modern retelling related to the field of Young Adult Literature, fantasy fiction and mythology. She uses two novels as her research objects, *The Goddess Test* by Aimee Carter (2011) and *Abandon* by Cabot (2011). Pujiati (2009) discusses about the ontological issues of the construction of the worlds and the concept of re-enchantment in *Enchanted*. The result of the discussion is that *Enchanted* is a postmodernist fiction, which is lead by ontological dominant by presenting the plurality of the world.

There are differences and similarities of the previous researchers with this research. The similarities of the first and the last research by Septiana (2015) and Pujiati (2009) with this research is in the use of the theory, which is Postmodernist Fiction by Brian McHale. The difference is on the object of the studies, which is *Life of*



*Pi* by Yann Martel and *Enchanted*. The similarity between the second research by Zajkas (2015) and this research is the object of the studies, which is *The Goddess Test* by Aimee Carter. The difference is in the focus of the discussion and the use of the theory. I focus on the plurality of the world that exist in *The Goddess Test*, while Zajkas (2015) focus on the intertextual relation of the original myth and its modern related to *Young Adult Literature*. Therefore, Zajkas (2015) and I use the different theory.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research is qualitative research since the data are taken from the form of sentences and words. The data are collected by doing close reading to the novel, as the primary data and from other sources as the secondary data. This research discusses about the ontological dominant and the strategies used in constructing the worlds *The Goddess Test*.

After collecting the data, the next step is analyzing the data. The analysis starts from the discussion about kind of world inferred from the narration of *The Goddess Test*. This kind of world is also included the intertextual zone illustrated in the novel. The data which are classified and related to any kinds of worlds is illustrated in *The Goddess Test* are used to answer the first question. Then it leads to the discussion about the relation of Greek Mythology and the kind of worlds illustrated in the *The Goddess Test*. The next discussion is analyzing postmodern strategies that used in constructing worlds in the novel. This strategies used in the novel is going to be the

answer of second question as the last discussion.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Worlds in *The Goddess Test*

There are three worlds presented in *The Goddess Test*. Those are Eden, Eden Manor and the Underworld. The reality of Eden comes from the main character point of view, Kate. Eden is her rational real world. It is presented as a normal village where there is no an instant of food vendors, it just sells antiques and groceries. In Eden, Kate are demanded to graduate from her school, start her own family, and live her own life. Kate also has to accept the reality that her mother will soon leave her alone. In real life, we are most likely face unpleasant reality that we cannot control. As a mother, Kate's mother also shows her concern towards her daughter's life after she died. When Kate experience illogical thing, such as her friend that come back to live, Kate explained her experience as it was just a dream or kind of stupid prank. Those reality are just the same with our daily live.

Eden Manor and the Underworld are as real as Eden for Kate, but in Eden Manor and in the Underworld Kate experiences magic and supernatural things. Eden Manor resembles as unbelievable manor that exist in the middle of the woods in Eden. Every night, in Eden Manor, Kate meets her healthy mom in their favorite place, Central Park, New York. While in Eden, her mother is dying and is supported by machine to stay alive. Henry as the resident of Eden Manor and the god of the Underworld explained those experience as both dream and real. Eden Manor occupants are also behaved similarly to the occupants of

Eden. There gardeners, workers, and also armed guards, food testers for Kate as the future queen of the Underworld. In Eden Manor, Kate is also required to learn some general study subjects, like astronomy, mythology, art, theology, and etc.

The underworld resembles as a majestic palace inside Eden Manor. The occupant of the Underworld is the living die. This is a place where they live and their souls stay for eternity. Kate and Henry also interact to the occupants of the Underworld. It happens when Henry interview some of the death girls to ask them out who is responsible for their death.

Those three world are both possible and sub worlds. It is because those worlds are equally projected in the text as the world where the characters are aware of. The occupants between the worlds are also aware of the existence of the other worlds. The difference between possible and the sub worlds is in the focus of the story. Eden Manor and the Underworld will become the sub worlds when the story focuses in Eden. Eden and the Underworld will become the sub worlds when the story focuses in Eden Manor. Eden and Eden Manor will become the sub worlds when the story focuses in the Underworld.

*The Goddess Test* are created by the story of Hades and Persephone in Greek Mythology. Carter takes the story from the myth to build her own story in *The Goddess Test*. This is what we referred to as inter textual, which creates inter textual zones in the story. This zone supports the existence of the worlds which we had been explained above. The story of Persephone and Hades trail are recognized in *The Goddess Test* from the beginning of the story. In

his first meeting with Kate, Henry had told Kate to read the story about Persephone and Hades. After that, Henry asks her to stay six months, autumn and winter at Eden Manor. She would spend her live as mortal on the other six months of the year, summer and spring. Kate also has to swallow six mythical seeds, as the official ceremony of Kate approving the deal. In the official story, Persephone could not go back to her mother, and has to stay in the Underworld because she has eaten pomegranate fruit from the Underworld. It makes Persephone has to spend the autumn and winter in the Underworld with Henry, and spend her summer and spring time with her mother, Demeter. It could be seen that the pomegranate seeds are showed as the six mythical seeds in *The Goddess Test*. Inter textual zone of the *Goddess Test* are also supported by trans-world identity. Kate's role in the story put her as Persephone. In this case, Persephone shows in Kate characterizations. The Character of Persephone in Greek Myth is also experiencing trans world identity.

Another trans world identity is showed by Henry's character. At the first, Kate is not accept Henry deal. It is because she does not believe what Henry's said. Henry who revives Ava, and helps Kate, makes Ava back to death again. It makes Kate feel guilty and directly come to the Eden Manor to accept Henry's deal. Indirectly, Hades forces Kate to accept his bargain. In the official story, Hades abducts Persephone when Persephone is picking flowers in the garden. Hades also cunningly made Persephone eat pomegranate fruit in the Underworld. It makes

Persephone cannot completely return to her mom. In short, Carter borrows the character Hades from the Greek Mythology and brings him to The Goddess Test. In the end of the story, it is also revealed that Henry creates Eden for Kate. The other proof that Carter borrows the character from the Greek Mythology is in the last page of the novel.

Carter directly shows that she brings the characters in The Goddess Test from the fourteenth goddess in Greek Mythology.

### **Strategies to Construct the Worlds**

Juxtaposition is used here when the main character, Kate, talks about another character named Sofia who, she believes, is her mother's nurse in Eden. When she comes to find Henry in Eden Manor, she meets Sofia again and it untangles truth that Sofia is living there. It is concluded that Kate's world and Sofia's world is parallel. They are able to interact to each other.

Interpolation is happened when Kate entering Eden Manor for the first time. She enters Eden Manor through the 'monstrous gate' which is something unbelievable for her. She also feels that the atmosphere is different from eden, even if it is inside Eden. Through this strategy, the author introduces the supernatural world inside the rational real world. The next strategy is misattribution. In this case, the author uses this strategy to highlight the differences between Kate's real world, and the supernatural world.

The phenomenon of how a living thing that passes away can have another chance to live again. Generally, it is impossible for a dead living thing to come back alive. In Kate's real world, this kind of things are not her part of

reality. Ava who has been dead, is alive and asks Kate what really happened.

In order to support the existence of each world, the author also uses the characteristic of fantastic fiction. It is when sometimes there are confrontation between the worlds. As a girl from the rational real world, Kate could not believe in an irrational thing such as man can bring the dead to life. It shows that Kate hesitated about the thing that she had passed in her real world.

There is no dead human who can come back to life. She could not believe to what she had seen and she could not tell Ava or James because it is impossible to be believed. Kate tries to rationalize her experience and it represents hesitation.

After experiencing hesitation, Kate is experiencing banality. Kate, finally adapts to an unfamiliar world after facing several unbelievable moments. Inside of the story line, it implies about the situation of main character, Kate who is neglecting the existence of the magnificent world which has a lot of irrational phenomena inside. In this case, Kate experiences *banality*, after Henry brings Ava back to her. She slowly *banalized* her hesitation and believe in her new reality. Kate accepts and adapts to her new reality. She is already getting used to the situation surrounding her by mentioning that a new place is a pleasant place for her. I found there a few parts which regards as an element in the words to construct the worlds inside the story. There are hesitation revisited, hypertrophy and postmodernist allegory.

Hesitation revisited occurs when the use of the metaphor hesitates between its literal function and its metaphorical function. Married at sunset. What had felt like a far-fetched



fantasy hours ago now pressed against me, (Carter, 2011: 279). The word far-fetched fantasy is an expression to show something far-fetched, far and impossible to happen, but that is what happened. Fantasy is imagination made by humans, most of which only exists in the mind and is not a reality that can happen. But, the reality is that the fantasy that Kate mentions does happen.

The feature is a metaphorical frame of reference that comes to dominate the foreground, and the literal free retreats into the background, the metaphor threatens to take off (McHale, 2004: 138) which is explained below.

...His eyes were the color of moonlight. I could see his face clearly now that she was closer, and something about it looked of. ... And he was too beautiful to be out in the middle of the woods like this. He should've been on magazine covers, not spending his time hidden away in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. But his eyes drew my attention. Even in the darkness, they shone brightly, and I had hard time tearing myself away from his gaze. (Carter, 2011: 43-44)

When Kate first meets Henry in the forest to bring Ava back to life, the word eyes and the color of moonlight portray praise which is exaggerated because the human eyes don't have any features to shine as moonlight. Even though this is categorized as overemphasized words, it can't be included in hypertrophy because this is still more or less exaggerated and does not make the audience forget what was meant at the beginning of the reading.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the figure of postmodern allegory symbolized an event that becomes the core of *The Goddess Test*

story which is depicted as follows.

**Gluttony.** I had to think for a moment, but once I realized where I'd heard the word before, I froze. "The seven deadly sins? That's what I'm being tested on?" (Carter, 2011: 193) "As for **envy**, Kate passed with flying colors." (Carter, 2011: 236) "For the seventh and final test, **pride** and **humility**." My mother paused and smiled. "Kate passes." (Carter, 2011: 242)

From a series of evidences that have been attached in some of the excerpts above, it has been proven that the main role here is Kate has successfully completed her test even though it is a very difficult thing and beyond the limits of human normality. Thanks to the will of Kate, in the end she managed to become a goddess. This test aimed at Kate helps to clarify the journey of the main character from the whole story.

### World Under Erasure

As explained before, McHale stated that the world's construction will create a world under erasure which has various elements inside. In short, several parts of the world under erasure have a special influence on the readers. There are four elements of world under erasure, something being replaced, something being erased, multiple choices and both open and closed ending.

The first is something being replaced, here, there are a few parts like a character, a place, or an event that suddenly change into another.

...What had once been Main Street in Eden was now a dirt road surrounded by trees on either side, and the spot where Eden High School had stood was nothing more than a meadow (Carter, 2011: 289)

This shows that there are a lot of changes from the past to the

present time, for instance, Main Street that lies in Eden previously change into a dirt road and Eden High School earlier becomes grassland. The replacement of place in the story will give a special illusion for the reader's perspective. Which it means there are something being replaced here.

The next is something being erased. The element of being erased in the story stated a sudden disappearance from the compartment in the story, for instance: a character, a place, or an event represented. Henry once said, "Eden does not exist outside of the few weeks you occupied it," (Carter, 2011: 282). As stated in the quotation, Eden is the real world where the main character, Kate lives abruptly passes from her sight. The element shows how the author attempts to demolish Eden which is a primary part of the place in *The Goddess Test*.

"As I was saying before I was so rudely interrupted." She ran her fingers through my hair, and I knew she didn't mean any of the sharpness in her voice. "You always had a choice, sweetheart. If you didn't want to do this, we would have all accepted it and proceeded without you. You have always been in control of your life—all we did was offer you the opportunity." (Carter, 2011: 245)

According to McHale, there is a possibility that the character experience the stage of the unsure in order to decide the story line utilizing various choices. It is shown above that Kate actually has several choices. Even though her mother, or Diana, does not tell her directly, it can be considered as a multiple choice. Furthermore, Kate's mother described the alternative, the other possibility if Kate does not accept the offer, that is, they will proceed with the ceremony without

her.

Another fragment from the world under erasure found in this literacy is both open and ending as displayed. Kate said that "..., this wasn't an ending. It was the beginning..." (Carter, 2011: 292). The reference stated that the ending is both open and closed ending which the evidenced by Kate's statement. Henry has finished looking for Persephone's replacement as his partner in commanding the Underworld. However, Kate's life doesn't stop there, because Kate has just started her eternal life as Persephone's surrogate.

The reason *The Goddess Test* is classified as postmodern fiction is that it fulfills the requirements of postmodern fiction by using McHale's strategy of illustrating the world, constructions, and words. This finding reinforces previous findings that in the film script for *Insidious*, a postmodern science fiction strategy known as astral projection is an ability that a person has to leave his physical body and explore an astral world or the spirit world (Rauf, 2027). This is in line with several findings about the techniques and devices that characterize works of postmodern fiction. Adeniyi (2020) identifies the use of paratactic techniques in postmodern fiction, namely by facilitating the juxtaposition of clauses or sentential elements with or without conjunctions, thereby enabling the production of spontaneous, conversational, rhythmic, and enjambed prose. Kurniawan (2022) identifies that Remy Sylado's novel *Menunggu Matahari Melbourne*, which is a work of postmodern fiction, has

distinctive characters, namely trying to revive the marginalized, breaking the main narrative, a tendency to fold the world, and an unusual text aesthetic. Meanwhile, Al Faqih (2023) identifies that the fragmentation used by writers in postmodern fiction is a device that disrupts linear narratives, enriches texts through references and allusions, metafiction that suppresses self-reflection, irony that contradicts conventions of meaning, and skepticism that limits established ideologies. However, these tools have contributed to a complex and critical understanding of the postmodern world.

The results of this study identify the lifting of the theme of the two worlds in *The Goddess Test* as a marker of the work as postmodern fiction, namely expressing and animating humans with postmodern thoughts about the story of Greek gods and goddesses with only the names changed to modern people's names. The researcher finds that the novel *The Goddess Test* is classified as postmodern fiction by using McHale's strategy of the real world of fiction and the supernatural world. Similar themes are also found in other works of postmodern fiction. Ayu Utami's novel *Bilangan Fu* has a criterion spiritualism theme in the form of processing related to mysticism, superstition, offerings, monotheism, and presenting the intertextuality of the world through the myth of Nyi Roro Kidul related to the history of Babad Tanah Jawi, the myth of Watugunung, and historical events

that are contradictory to the factual events (Satriani, 2016).

In addition to the above themes, the novel *Aruna dan Lidahnya* by Laksmi Pamuntjak shows postmodern society which is reflected through culinary, namely traditional culinary, multicultural culinary, and contemporary culinary (Larasati, 2028). In Murakami novel identified the author of the novel as distinguishing modern consciousness from Japanese postmodern consciousness which is described as dissociative. The author of the novel also finds the complexity of the emergence of culture in the spirit of Japanese aspirations which is reflected in Murakami's character (Kawai, 2020). Meanwhile, in A. Mustafa's novel *Anak Gembala yang Tertidur Panjang di Akhir Zaman*, issues regarding Ahmadiyya and political practices in Indonesia are illustrated, and the political representation of LGBT actors (Putri, Warni, & Wilyanti, 2022).

Kadhim, Alshingity, and Alnoor (2022) suggest that postmodern fiction generally represents worlds of ontological pluralism including the zones of science fiction, fantasy fiction, and historical reality. This is in line with Satriani's findings (2016) which characterizes the postmodern novel as a form of literature characterized by the use of metafiction. The same thing was found by Waugh (2017) one of the characteristics of postmodern fiction is charged metaphysics and this is often found in the works of female authors. Meanwhile, Larbi (2019) states that

postmodernism is considered a reevaluation of the modern enterprise. In connection with this phenomenon, Al Faqih, et al (2023) stated that postmodern writers tend to break down narratives into disorganized pieces, presenting complex and ambiguous realities that reflect uncertain world conditions. Doyle (2018) suggests that socially and culturally conscious post-postmodern fiction must exist in a state of constant questioning — sincerity challenges irony and irony challenges sincerity.

## CONCLUSION

The researcher finds out that the novel categorizes as a postmodern fiction by using McHale strategy. In this investigation, *The Goddess Test* seems to include as ontological dominant which portrays in the construction of the world. The plot of story also similar to the story of Greek's god and goddess with only the names changed into a modern people's name. In the beginning, the story opens with a girl named Kate who described as a teenager on the way to accompany her sick mother into her hometown.

The researcher start by analyze the narrative by dividing the world into two which are fictional real world and the supernatural worlds. The fictional real world, Eden, is defined as the place where the main character in this story, Kate, lives with her mother. She lives as usual teenager who will turn eighteen soon. The place also resembles our world. Meanwhile, the supernatural worlds, Eden Manor

and Underworld are different places where only the gods and spirits can live there.

The analysis of the story continues to McHale strategy used by the author, Aimée Carter. According to the investigation, the researcher finds out three strategies from the literacy for instance *Juxtaposition, Interpolation, and Misattribution*. Carter, *The Goddess Test* author, uses those triple strategies to construct the fictional world as mentioned above. The researcher also finds that the main character, Kate, experiences a *hesitation* and *banality* throughout the storyline.

The reason why the researcher considers *The Goddess Test* as a postmodern fiction is that this novel fulfills the postmodern fiction's requirements by using McHale's strategies to illustrate the world, the construction, and the words. In this story, it is also clearly described in a clear way how the world is formed through several elements that are included in McHale's strategy. The language used is also vividly reminiscent of how this novel was confirmed as a postmodern novel. Those strategies are used to show the ontological dominant of the story. Furthermore, *The Goddess Test* is a form of a way to convey dissatisfaction with the reality of modern life that glorifies rationality. *The Goddess Test* expresses and brings people to life with postmodern thoughts, in which turns out that there are many possibilities in this world

besied rationality. There are many possibilities exist in this world that cannot be explained other than accepted and lived for granted.

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