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The Evolution of Narrative Structures in Postmodern Literature: A Comparative Study of Eastern and Western Perspectives

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This study aims to analyze the evolution of narrative structure in postmodern literature through a comparison of Eastern and Western perspectives. With a qualitative approach that focuses on literature study and literature research, this article examines the differences and similarities contained in the narrative structure of postmodern literature of the two cultures. Postmodern literature, which is often characterized by fragmentation, non-linearity, and deconstruction of meaning, exhibits unique developments in two different cultural contexts. Western perspectives tend to emphasize individuality and skepticism over metana, while Eastern perspectives often retain strong spiritual elements and community togetherness despite adopting postmodern forms and themes. The study also explores how each literary tradition adapts to non-conventional narrative structures and combines local elements with the global concepts inherent in postmodern literature. The results of this study show that despite fundamental differences, both East and West influence each other in the application of complex and experimental narrative structures. This article is expected to provide an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of cultural interaction in the development of postmodern literature and open up new insights in comparative literature research. These findings are relevant in the context of literary globalization and demonstrate the importance of understanding the diversity of narrative approaches in contemporary literary studies.

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1. Introduction

The development of narrative structures in postmodern literature has attracted the attention of researchers because of the complexity and dynamics it displays, especially in the context of cross-cultural comparisons between East and West. Postmodern literature is known for its traits that deconstruct traditional forms, prioritize uncertainty, and often avoid linear narratives to express the uncertainty of reality (Hutcheon, 1988; McHale, 1992). In the West, this postmodern approach is often rooted in a critique of metanarration and a rejection of the concept of absolute truth, as seen in works that carry skepticism and relativity (Jameson, 1991; Lyotard, 1984). In contrast, in Eastern literature, despite the adoption of postmodern elements, there is a tendency to retain aspects of spirituality and collective values that are deeply rooted in local cultures (Chow, 1993; Miyoshi & Harootunian, 2002). However, research on the differences in postmodern narrative structures between these two cultures is still minimal, especially in studies that focus on comparative approaches.

Postmodern literature reflects a critical phase in literary history that rejects conventional forms and structures, preferring to prioritize diversity of interpretation, ambiguity, and deconstruction of meaning. In the West, postmodern literature was born in response to modernism and focused on the deconstruction of metana, or the grand narrative that is perceived as a singular narration of reality (Lyotard, 1984). Figures such as Jean-François Lyotard and Fredric Jameson underline how Western postmodernism recognizes a plural reality and fragmentation of subjectivity, eliminating the concept of absolute truth and challenging the authority of traditional knowledge (Jameson, 1991). In the Western perspective, postmodern literature uses non-linear narrative techniques, metafiction, and language games to show the uncertainty and relativity of truth, a view that is thought to reflect Western capitalist society and individualistic culture that tends to be skeptical of authority (McHale, 1992).

In contrast, postmodern literature in the East has a different approach although it adopts some universal elements of postmodernism. Eastern postmodern literature often retains spiritual and community values, which are rooted in their cultural traditions. In the context of Eastern culture, postmodern literature does not completely reject tradition, but tends to update or combine it with new elements (Chow, 1993). Postmodern literary works in the East often feature deep reflections on the balance between the

influences of globalization and locality, depicting concerns about identity and the loss of tradition in a rapidly changing world. Thus, while the West tends to prioritize the deconstruction of meaning, the East emphasizes more creative adaptations that still maintain a connection with the original culture.

The interaction between Eastern and Western postmodern literature can also be seen as a response to cultural globalization that increasingly unites aesthetic and narrative boundaries. In the era of globalization, the influence of the West on postmodern literature in the East cannot be ignored, especially through the translation of Western works and the adoption of new narrative styles that break through cultural boundaries (Miyoshi & Harootunian, 2002). However, postmodern literature in the East did not fully adopt the Western style. Instead, many Eastern writers use postmodern styles and techniques to explore local social issues, such as the impact of capitalism, environmental damage, and identity conflicts resulting from modernization (Ryan, 1999). This shows that, despite global influences, Eastern postmodern literature retains a strong local uniqueness.

Thus, postmodern literature in an East-West perspective not only offers two different interpretations, but also shows how these two traditions influence and enrich each other. Western postmodern literature provides a foundation for the exploration of non-absolute truths and fragmented subjects, while the East adds dimension to postmodernism through the integration of strong spiritual and communal aspects (Hutcheon, 1988). This opens up new insights into the study of postmodern literature, which shows that the adaptation of local culture in the postmodern style results in rich and innovative narrative variations. This fusion of Eastern and Western perspectives underscores the importance of a cross-cultural approach in understanding postmodern literature as a form of global expression that still respects local uniqueness.

In general, previous research has focused more on the development of narrative structures within a single culture or on studies that compare works from a Western perspective without taking into account the Eastern perspective in depth (Vaugh, 1984; Hassan, 1987). This creates a research gap in understanding how each culture interprets and applies the principles of postmodernism in their narrative structures. This research aims to fill this void by providing a more thorough analysis of how local elements and global influences blend together in the postmodern narrative structure from an Eastern and Western perspective.

The urgency of this research lies in the need for cross-cultural understanding in global literature in the modern era. Through this comparative approach, it is hoped that a deeper understanding of how different cultures adapt to postmodern narrative forms can be achieved. Thus, this research offers an important contribution in the field of postmodern literature and comparative studies, which can enrich the academic discourse on cultural diversity in literature (Bauman, 1998; Eagleton, 2003).

Within the framework of this study, novelty lies in a systematic comparative analysis of the adaptation of postmodern narrative structures in Eastern and Western contexts, which has rarely been done in previous literary studies (Ryan, 1999; Bertens, 1995). This study aims to identify similarities and differences in the postmodern narrative structure between the two cultural perspectives. The benefit of this research is to provide a new perspective in the study of postmodern literature, while encouraging the development of more inclusive theories that include the influence of local culture in the formation of global narrative structures.

2. Research Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with the type of literature study research to analyze and compare narrative structures in postmodern literature from Eastern and Western perspectives. This literature study approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore relevant literary texts, theories, and previous research to understand the phenomenon of postmodernism in depth in a cross-cultural context (Moleong, 2013). The study of literature also allows for the collection of data from a variety of sources, including books, journal articles, and theses, which serves as a key reference in identifying and deciphering the differences and similarities in narrative structures between East and West.

The main sources of data in this study consist of postmodern literary works from Eastern and Western authors, as well as theories and analyses related to postmodernism in literature (Creswell, 2013). In addition, this study also refers to scientific journal articles that examine the theory of postmodernism, especially those related to narrative structure and cultural comparison, as a secondary source of data to provide a broader conceptual basis and analytical perspective. The data is collected through a literature review process, which includes literature searches in online journals, books, and related academic documents.

The data collection technique used is a documentation technique, where relevant data is collected and selected based on the relevance and credibility of the source (Sugiyono, 2017). The data collected are further classified based on specific categories, such as narrative elements, postmodern narrative techniques, and cultural differences between East and West, making it easier to conduct a comparative analysis of the two perspectives.

Data analysis was carried out by the content analysis method, where the data was analyzed and interpreted in depth to identify the main patterns and themes in the narrative structure of Eastern and Western postmodern literature (Krippendorff, 2004). This technique is used to understand the structural and thematic elements that make up the characteristics of postmodern narratives in different cultural contexts. This analysis also involves a critical interpretation of how the two cultures adapted elements of postmodernism, which is expected to provide insight into cross-cultural influences in the development of postmodern literature.

3. Result and Discussion

The table below contains 10 articles that have been selected through a strict selection process from a number of related articles found in this study. These articles were selected based on their relevance to the topic discussed, namely the evolution of narrative structures in postmodern literature, with a comparative focus between Eastern and Western perspectives. Each article includes information about the author, title, year of publication, key findings, as well as the article's contribution to understanding the structure of postmodern narratives in different cultural contexts. This table is expected to provide a comprehensive summary of the findings that form the basis of the analysis in this study.

Writer	Year	Article Title	Key findings
Lyotard, J.F.	1984	The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge	Describes the distrust of metanarratives in postmodernism.

Jameson, F.	1991	Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism	Highlights the relationship between capitalism and postmodernism in Western culture.
Hutcheon, L.	1988	A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction	Explaining the role of metafiction and historiography in postmodern narratives.
McHale, B.	1992	Constructing Postmodernism	Discusses the fragmentation of subjectivity and the plurality of reality in the Western postmodern narrative.
Chow, R.	1993	Writing Diaspora: Tactics of Intervention in Contemporary Cultural Studies	Analyze the impact of globalization on the narrative structure of the East in relation to the diaspora.
Miyoshi, M., & Harootunian, H.D.	2002	Learning Places: The Afterlives of Area Studies	Explain the interaction between local traditions and global influences in East Asia.

Bauman, Z.	1998	Globalization: The Human Consequences	Describe the impact of globalization on cultural identity and narrative in a cross-cultural context.
Eagleton, T.	2003	After Theory	Criticizing postmodernism as a Western phenomenon that has the potential to distort non-Western cultural identity.
Ryan, M.	1999	Narrative as Virtual Reality: Immersion and Interactivity in Literature and Electronic Media	Exploring interactive techniques in Western postmodern narratives.
Bertens, H.	1995	The Idea of the Postmodern: A History	Traces the development and variation of postmodernism interpretations in different regions of the world.

This table displays the contribution of each article to the study of postmodern narratives in Eastern and Western perspectives. The findings from this literature form the basis for comparative analysis in this study, especially related to narrative techniques, the influence of capitalism, the impact of globalization, and differences in cultural contexts. Each of the

above references adds insight into understanding how these two cultural perspectives adopt and adapt elements of postmodernism in their narrative structures.

The literature data presented in the table show that the concept of postmodernism in literature has different characteristics and influences when implemented in the context of Eastern and Western cultures. One of the main findings is that Western postmodern literature emphasizes metanarrating deconstruction, that is, skepticism of the grand narrative or single truth that previously dominated the modern narrative structure (Lyotard, 1984). This deconstruction became central to many Western postmodern works, reflecting a skeptical view of traditional institutions and values. This allowed Western literature to explore the plurality of reality and emphasized the importance of subjectivity, where there is no one absolute truth. This deconstruction of the grand narrative, as described by Lyotard and Jameson, also reflects the strong influence of capitalism and mass consumption in the Western world, which influences individual and collective mindsets in understanding reality (Jameson, 1991).

In contrast, Eastern postmodern literature, although it also adopts some postmodern elements such as narrative uncertainty and criticism of modernity, still retains aspects of traditional culture and spiritual values. In the context of Eastern postmodern literature, works often touch on issues of cultural identity and collective relationships, which reflects the character of Eastern culture that tends to be collective and spiritual (Chow, 1993). These findings show that despite globalization and Western influence in the form of postmodern narrative techniques, Eastern culture still retains its uniqueness and rich local traditions. It also signifies that Eastern writers are utilizing postmodern narratives to adapt, rather than completely reject, local cultural values in their narrative structures.

These differences are also supported by findings from Bauman (1998) and Eagleton (2003), which highlight that globalization not only spreads Western ideas and styles but also presents challenges for local cultures in the East. Globalization blurs the boundaries between local and global cultures, however, in the East, authors often see it as an opportunity to reflect on national or regional identities. Through the use of postmodern techniques such as metafiction and intertextuality, Eastern writers adopt Western styles while inserting strong local elements. As such, Eastern postmodern works not only explore the uncertainty of reality but also reinforce local identities in a global context, which makes them different from Western postmodern

literature that focuses more on individuality and fragmentation of subjectivity.

On the other hand, narrative techniques such as interactivity and virtuality explored by Western writers are more focused on experimenting with narrative form and structure. Western writers such as Ryan (1999) use these techniques to highlight the uncertainty and involvement of the reader in understanding the narrative. This is in contrast to the postmodern works of the East, which, although they may have adopted similar techniques, are often used to reflect on specific social and cultural issues faced by Eastern societies. The use of this technique shows how the West and the East have different approaches to postmodern literary forms, with the West more oriented towards experimental aesthetics and the East more oriented towards cultural functionality.

Analysis from Hutcheon (1988) and McHale (1992) further shows that metafiction and fragmentation in Western postmodern literature are used to challenge traditional narratives as well as introduce ironic and paradoxical elements. Meanwhile, in the Eastern context, metafiction is often used as a means to question the pervasive influence of modernity in local culture. This indicates that although there are similarities in the application of postmodern narrative techniques, their thematic orientation is different. In Eastern works, there is a greater effort to defend cultural values and counter global homogenization, in contrast to Western works that tend to celebrate diversity and boundless subjectivity.

Overall, the data from this literature show that the development of postmodern narratives in the East and West influenced each other but still maintained their uniqueness. In the West, postmodern literature developed as a critique of modernity and a rejection of traditional authority, while in the East, postmodernism was more widely used to reaffirm cultural identity in the face of globalization. These findings reinforce the argument that although postmodernism is a global phenomenon, local cultural adaptations provide a unique color that distinguishes between postmodern narrative structures in the East and the West.

Discussion

This study reveals that the development of narrative structures in postmodern literature shows significant variation between Eastern and Western perspectives, as well as the Middle East. In the West, postmodern literature developed in response to modernity, with a critique of metanarration, a rejection of absolute truth, and an emphasis on fragmented

subjectivity (Lyotard, 1984; Jameson, 1991). This is in line with the individualistic and skeptical character of Western society. The use of techniques such as metafiction and narrative deconstruction in the West reflects a social shift that emphasizes the plurality of reality and the skepticism of traditional narratives. This phenomenon remains relevant today, given the increasingly complex development of Western popular culture and the ambiguity of reality in the age of social media, where information is often presented in a fragmented and multi-perspective manner.

On the other hand, Eastern postmodern literature, although it adopts some postmodern elements, tends to retain traditional elements and cultural values. Authors such as Haruki Murakami and Wang Xiaobo describe how postmodern literature in Asia still respects local cultural roots while integrating modern narrative techniques (Chow, 1993; Miyoshi & Harootunian, 2002). Eastern literature tends to reflect a balance between modernity and spirituality, an approach that suggests harmony between tradition and innovation. In this context, the postmodern narrative structure in the East becomes a medium to explore cultural identity and spirituality in the face of globalization. This phenomenon is also seen today, where Asian culture is increasingly dominating the global landscape and influencing global aesthetics, but still retaining the uniqueness of its traditions.

Studies of Middle Eastern writers, such as those conducted by Mehrez (1992) and Al-Musawi (2009), show that postmodern literature in the region has also undergone a unique development. Postmodern Middle Eastern literature is often used as a medium to criticize Western cultural imperialism and fight against global homogenization. Postmodern narrative techniques are used to voice dissatisfaction with colonialism and social injustice, reflecting the more collective and political character of Middle Eastern literature. These narratives are relevant to current conditions, especially in an era when issues of injustice and Western global influence are major topics in the Middle East. In works such as *The Golden Age* by Wang Xiaobo, the use of metafiction and irony suggests that Middle Eastern postmodern literature is not only aesthetic but also a means of cultural resistance.

The theories of Islamic scholars are also relevant in the context of this study. For example, Al-Farabi's thoughts on ethics and aesthetics in literature emphasize the importance of moral and social values in literary works (Al-Farabi, translated in *Al-Madina Al-Fadhila*). Although postmodernism often ignores traditional ethics, in the context of Middle Eastern postmodern

literature, we see the merger of moral and spiritual values with postmodern narrative techniques, which shows that literature can be a tool for moral education and reflection. This thought leads us to understand that in the postmodern literature of the Middle East, there is a harmony between aesthetics and ethics that is characteristic of Islamic culture, creating a narrative that is not only entertaining but also educational.

The combination of modern narrative elements with traditional values in Middle Eastern and Asian postmodern literature shows cultural resistance to global homogenization. On the one hand, Zygmunt Bauman's theory of globalization which highlights the identity crisis due to globalization is relevant to this phenomenon, where Eastern cultures seek to maintain their local identity amid the influence of Western culture (Bauman, 1998). However, unlike identity crises that tend to be destructive, the East and Middle East use postmodern narrative structures to adapt and affirm their identities, which is a way of showing that globalization does not always have to eliminate local uniqueness.

Middle Eastern writers such as Najib Mahfuz use postmodern techniques to explore socio-political issues that are deeply rooted in Arab culture. This emphasizes the importance of understanding postmodernism not as a product of the West alone, but as an adaptive and flexible tool according to the context of each culture. This thinking is in line with the view of the Islamic philosopher Ibn Khaldun who emphasized that culture develops through interaction and adaptation to its social environment (Ibn Khaldun, Muqaddimah). In this context, the postmodern narrative structure in the Middle East becomes a means of cultural adaptation and development that reflects contemporary reality.

Eastern postmodern literature, especially from Asia, also plays an important role in responding to modernity in a more inclusive way. Narrative techniques such as magical realism are often used by writers such as Haruki Murakami to convey profound messages about spirituality and the human condition. This suggests that although postmodern techniques are universal, their adaptations in the East result in more diverse narratives and often retain a strong spiritual dimension. This view is in line with the concept of unity initiated by Rumi, who sees the world as a unit where the specific and the universal can coexist harmoniously.

As an author, I argue that this phenomenon indicates that although postmodernism was born in the West, a cross-cultural approach can result in more complex and varied narrative structures. Studies of the East and

the Middle East show that postmodernism is not the end of modernity, but rather an evolutionary phase that allows flexibility in integrating local values. Globalization and the rapid development of technology today have also encouraged the adaptation of postmodern styles in various cultures, creating literary works that reflect the complexity of the contemporary world.

Thus, the results of these findings provide new insights that the evolution of postmodern narrative structures not only reflects aesthetic techniques, but also represents the struggle for cultural identity, spiritual reflection, and resistance to global homogenization. Postmodernism in the East and Middle East shows a wealth of interpretations that make postmodern literature a mirror of global cultural diversity. This view reinforces the idea that postmodern literature can be a bridge across cultures, allowing each culture to express its values without losing its uniqueness.

4. Conclusion

This study shows that narrative structures in postmodern literature are developing dynamically and show significant variation between Eastern, Western, and Middle Eastern perspectives. In the West, postmodern literature tends to reject grand narratives, highlight the fragmentation of subjectivity, and use metafiction techniques to express doubts about a single reality. This approach reflects the skeptical view of Western society towards traditional authority and absolute truth. In contrast, in the East and Middle East, although postmodernism techniques were also adopted, local culture and spiritual values remained the main elements that colored literary works. Postmodern narratives in the East tend to be more reflective of cultural identity, spirituality, and the balance between tradition and modernity.

In the Middle East, postmodern literature serves as a medium of criticism against imperialism and resistance to global homogenization. The narrative structure used not only reflects the ambiguity of reality but also voices national identity and social criticism. Middle Eastern literary works such as those produced by writers from Egypt, Lebanon, and other Arab countries show that postmodernism can be used as a tool to challenge dominant narratives, both in social, political, and cultural contexts. This phenomenon indicates that postmodernism is not just an aesthetic style or technique, but also an adaptive and socially significant tool for any culture that adopts it.

Based on these findings, the study recommends that further study of postmodern literature needs to be conducted with a focus on broader cross-cultural comparisons, covering other regions such as Latin America and Africa that also have different histories and social dynamics. In addition, more in-depth research into the role of spirituality in postmodern literature in the East and Middle East could provide a richer understanding of how local values affect postmodernism's adaptation. With an interdisciplinary approach, future research may explore the impact of digital globalization on the development of postmodern narrative structures across cultures, allowing the study of postmodern literature to remain relevant in understanding the complexities of the contemporary world.

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