

学校编码: 10384

分类号 \_\_\_\_\_ 密级 \_\_\_\_\_

学号: 12020070153879

UDC \_\_\_\_\_

廈門大學

博士学位论文

*Allegorical Impulse: On Donald Barthelme's  
Textual Practice*

寓言的冲动: 唐纳德·巴塞尔姆的文本实践

郭亚娟

指导教师姓名: 詹树魁 教授

专业名称: 英语语言文学

论文提交日期: 2010年11月

论文答辩时间: 2010年12月

学位授予日期: 20 年 月

答辩委员会主席: \_\_\_\_\_

评阅人: \_\_\_\_\_

2010 年 月

厦门大学博硕士学位论文摘要库

---

## 厦门大学学位论文原创性声明

本人呈交的学位论文是本人在导师指导下,独立完成的研究成果。本人在论文写作中参考其他个人或集体已经发表的研究成果,均在文中以适当方式明确标明,并符合法律规范和《厦门大学研究生学术活动规范(试行)》。

另外,该学位论文为( )  
课题(组)的研究成果,获得( )课题(组)  
经费或实验室的资助,在( )实验室完成。

(请在以上括号内填写课题或课题组负责人或实验室名称,  
未有此项声明内容的,可以不作特别声明。)

声明人(签名):

201 年 月 日

厦门大学博硕士学位论文摘要库

## 厦门大学学位论文著作权使用声明

本人同意厦门大学根据《中华人民共和国学位条例暂行实施办法》等规定保留和使用此学位论文，并向主管部门或其指定机构送交学位论文（包括纸质版和电子版），允许学位论文进入厦门大学图书馆及其数据库被查阅、借阅。本人同意厦门大学将学位论文加入全国博士、硕士学位论文共建单位数据库进行检索，将学位论文的标题和摘要汇编出版，采用影印、缩印或者其它方式合理复制学位论文。

本学位论文属于：

1. 经厦门大学保密委员会审查核定的保密学位论文，于 年 月 日解密，解密后适用上述授权。

2. 不保密，适用上述授权。

（请在以上相应括号内打“√”或填上相应内容。保密学位论文应是已经厦门大学保密委员会审定过的学位论文，未经厦门大学保密委员会审定的学位论文均为公开学位论文。此声明栏不填写的，默认为公开学位论文，均适用上述授权。）

声明人（签名）：

201 年 月 日

厦门大学博硕士学位论文摘要库

## Abstract

Donald Barthelme distinguishes himself in postmodernist American literature by his brilliant experiments with literary forms and his daringly amazing employment of the past literary and cultural sources. Yet he is among the writers who have been misunderstood for long. A statement by one of his characters--“Fragments is the only way I trust”--has been taken by most of the American critics as his major literary principle so that words like “depthlessness” and “fragmented” loom large in most of Barthelme reviews. In China the critical attention Barthelme enjoys turns out to be less than satisfactory. Most of the reviews focused on *Snow White*, probably the only novel of Barthelme’s known to Chinese readers. Thus a systematic, in-depth study on Barthelme and his fiction is badly needed in order to achieve an overall understanding of this representative figure of postmodernist fiction. This dissertation focuses on a salient feature of Barthelme’s work--his strong tendency to allegorize in his writing, with an intention to provide a new perspective for the study on Barthelme and his artistic achievements.

William Gass spoke of his friend Barthelme “putting himself in the center of modern consciousness.” This well sums up Barthelme’s three-decade long literary endeavor. In terms of style, traditional novelistic elements such as settings and plots are minimized to the greatest extent in Barthelme. His interest, solely and primarily, is on the flowing consciousness. He is also preoccupied with the experiments on literary forms, which distinguishes his work from other postmodernist writers. Influenced by modernist predecessors such as Kafka and Beckett, Barthelme’s fiction is usually full of surrealistic scenes and with a mystic tinge. His protagonists, like those of Kafka’s, often find themselves stuck in an absurd circumstance without any way out. The apocalyptic nature of his fiction thus can not be mistaken. The tone of Barthelme’s fiction, however, greatly departs from the modernist tone of depression and seriousness. His is a tone of playfulness. What is worth noting is that Barthelme’s allegorizing of textual worlds is closely associated with his preference to parody and irony. Parody and allegory share the nature of “double texts.” His parody, however, is without the traditional purpose of satirizing a pre-text or its author; rather, its irony is directed

otherwise. Therefore when researching into Barthelme and his literary motivations, we can not isolate such basic elements as allegory, parody and irony that are combined to constitute the very soul of his fiction. Instead, these elements should be viewed as an organic whole, in which they interact and work out particularly amazing literary effects.

The dissertation aims at giving an in-depth study of the construction of Barthelme's allegorical worlds and the literary techniques and strategies involved. The theoretical framework features theories on allegory by Deborah L. Madsen, Edwin Honig and Maureen Quilligan, together with relevant theories proposed by Fredric Jameson, Linda Hutcheon, Brian McHale and Alan Wilde on postmodernism, parody, irony and allegory. With a research on Barthelme's four novels and a number of his short stories, the ultimate purpose of the dissertation is to reveal a series of characteristics unique to postmodernist allegory and how the postmodernist temperament is embedded in postmodernist allegory. The study provides a new approach to the further research on postmodernist writers, especially the so-called experimentalists as a whole.

This dissertation begins with a focus on the debate on literary forms and contents. In *Against Interpretation* Susan Sontag speaks against a tradition of literary criticism that prioritizes contents over forms. She maintains that literary critiques nowadays should have a fair share of attention to forms and that literary review should take into consideration both ideas and forms.

Barthelme is the very postmodernist writer who has worked on the integration of ideas and forms. His interest in the tempo of language leads to the experiments with phrases and sentences, and his focus on forms is equally productive. Forms, from the perspective of Barthelme, are no longer meaningless subordinates to contents. They can be endowed with rich layers of meaning. He also incorporates his philosophical thoughts on language and forms into his writing. Thus in some sense, his literary works can be regarded as a special kind of literary critiques. Beneath all the thoughts about language, forms, and literary aesthetics is his preference to allegorizing. Barthelme is an excellent postmodernist allegorist.

In order to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the construction of postmodernist allegory, a basic knowledge about the general history of allegory, its



transformation and characteristics in postmodernist literature is necessary. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, allegory has undergone changes and has exhibited some new features, particularly in postmodernist literature. Firstly, postmodernist parody is often considered to be a kind of allegory. Scholars such as Fredric Jameson and Linda Hutcheon have already noticed that parody and allegory share something in common in temperament and that both involve double texts. Secondly, postmodernist allegory/parody differs greatly from its traditional predecessors in the fact that its irony can be directed at virtually everything. Irony, as Alan Wilde believes, is no longer a mere literary technique in postmodernist fiction; it becomes a vision instead. Postmodernist irony is, in essence, “suspensive.” As Hutcheon says, postmodernist irony could be directed at every object that happens to occur in the writer’s mind, even at postmodernism itself! This fundamentally explains the playful tone and attitude of postmodernist fiction. Thirdly, while in traditional allegory there is a distinctive meaning, in postmodernist allegory, however, the so-called “center of meaning” totally disappears due to the uncertainty of its irony. Barthelme is quite self-conscious in allegorizing his textual worlds with the postmodernist spirit. By so doing he offers a mode of allegorical writing in postmodernist fiction.

There are three major features in Barthelme’s construction of allegorical worlds. The first one is that Barthelme brings forth his literary aesthetics and his experiments with forms into the allegorical writing of his short stories. As John Barth comments, short story is Barthelme’s natural narrative space. The early Barthelme is not without traces of influence from his modernist mentors. These early stories, however, are particularly postmodern in temperament. The world of “Me and Miss Mandible” is certainly absurd, yet its tone is by no means of modernist depression and seriousness, but of postmodernist playfulness and carefreeness, and its irony is directed at classic modernist themes of isolation and depression. In “The Shower of Gold” it is the worn-out existential language that is in Barthelme’s target of parody and attack. Thus ever since the earliest phase of his literary career Barthelme has stood staunch as a postmodernist writer by deconstructing and allegorizing the modernist staples.

Most of Barthelme’s short stories take a deliberate departure from all literary conventionalities. And surprisingly the apparently bizarre forms can produce amazing literary effects that well serve the writer’s purpose. Ostensibly a parody to the form of

traditional fairy tales, "The Glass Mountain" turns out to be about the overthrowing of virtually all conventionalities about form. With this is a non-linear narration flow, in which all the sentences are orderly numbered. This short story thus becomes an allegory constructed through form and on form. "Explanation" is representative of Barthelme's dialogic stories. In this type of stories, the flowing consciousness is directly dealt with through a large bulk of dialogues. The dialogues thus become allegorical on human consciousness and emotions. Barthelme makes not only his thoughts on form but also his contemplation on meaning the very theme of his stories. In "The Balloon" there is a wide range of possible interpretations on the true meaning of the coming-from-nowhere balloon. The certainty of meaning is thus questioned; and the world of "Paraguay" also rejects certainty of any sort, embracing instead improvisation and creativity. In such stories, Barthelme is actually creating allegories on his literary aesthetics.

The second feature of Barthelme's postmodernist allegory is that his rewriting on pre-texts usually produces multiple world visions. The notion of parody and palimpsest must be distinguished from each other first of all: Parody involves a negative and ironic attitude towards the pre-text and/or its author, but palimpsest does not. Palimpsest is what Fredric Jameson calls "a neutral parody." The employments of certain pre-texts are mainly, for postmodernist writers, palimpsest. Barthelme's rewriting of the classic fairy tale results in a plurality of world visions in *Snow White*: The characters, with trans-world identities, often can not tell which world they are now living in; and the old fairy tale world interweaves with a somewhat contemporary milieu; even the classic scenes are displayed and denied in no time. In terms of language, everyone is living in his/her world of discourse; the crisis of language is, in essence, that of human connection. Barthelme's irony is directed here not at the classic *Snow White* or the Green Brothers, but at the postmodernist condition, at modern language's loss of reference and at the spiritual crises of modern men. *Snow White*, in the final analysis, is a postmodernist allegory.

The characters in *The King* maintain their original identities so that the anachronism enables them to see clearly the sharp contrast between the world they are supposed to belong to and the one that they are forced to be living in. Barthelme invites both the characters and the readers to give serious thought to the morality of the

two worlds in light of each other. What is in Barthelme's concern is also the confrontation between public image and inner self, and the interaction and conflicts between men and women. Unlike most of Barthelme's fiction that features a sustained interest in literary philosophy, *The King* explicitly expresses the writer's concern on the issue of morality. It is a moral allegory.

The last feature of Barthelme's allegorical construction has something to do with his postmodernist orientation as a writer. As one of the leading figure of postmodernist literature, Barthelme also constructs his fictional spaces with very distinctive postmodernist traits, namely, hybridity, uncertainty and self-deconstruction. Firstly, most critics agree that postmodernist art is in essence a "confiscation" from the past sources. This also explains the hybrid nature of postmodernist allegory in terms of narrative styles and the shaping of characters. Secondly, for postmodernist writers, the construction of an image or a discourse must be followed by the deconstruction of it, due to their rejection to "logocentrism," a western philosophical tradition that postmodernism is basically against. Finally, the hybrid and self-constructed nature of postmodernist allegory in turns results in an uncertainty of the allegorical meaning.

In *The Dead Father* the deconstruction and reconstruction on the ancient Greek myths and psychoanalytic assumptions, the co-existence of allegorical and non-allegorical narratives produced by the book-within-a-book structure, and the confrontation between counter-narratives and the major narrative all add up to the inner uncertainty of the novel. The self-deconstruction of *Paradise*, however, progresses with the narration itself. The surface text centering around a male fantasy is ultimately deconstructed, and with this is a question on the existence of paradise--a world that provides promises and hopes to its residents.

It is more appropriate to term postmodernist allegory an allegorical impulse, with hybridity, uncertainty and self-deconstruction at its core. In postmodernist allegory layers of meaning keep being produced without settling down safely on any single one. There is no such thing as an "ultimate meaning" in Barthelme's allegorical worlds.

Barthelme is probably the best at palimpsest and irony, and with his postmodernist outlook, a kaleidoscope of allegorical worlds are produced. The study on Barthelme's endeavor in the integration of forms and ideas will provide a new perspective for a better understanding of this leading figure and his postmodernist

allegorical writing and for the further research on experimentalist novels as a whole.

**Key words:** Donald Barthelme; postmodernist allegory; palimpsest; parody; irony;

厦门大学博硕士论文摘要库

## 摘要

唐纳德·巴塞爾姆以对文学形式的大胆革新和文学经典的创意改写在美国后现代派作家中独树一帜，却也是长期被误读的作家之一，这从国内外学界的研究状况或可略见一斑：就美国评论界而言，巴塞爾姆作品中某主人公的一句话“断裂是我信任的唯一形式”时常被援引为其本人的美学宣言和创作理念，此后一切关乎巴塞爾姆之评论莫不以“碎片”、“形式”、“无深度性”等后现代“御用”字眼为纲，导致评论千篇一律，对其作品的研究则长期停滞不前；在中国，从学界到读者对巴塞爾姆的认知大多仅限于他那部著名的戏仿之作《白雪公主》，各种评论文章皆出于此，另有零星数篇是对其短篇小说的译介，但缺乏对作家全部作品的整体研究。针对这一研究现状，本文拟选取巴塞爾姆作品中强烈的寓言化倾向为视角，将其作品的内涵和外在表现形式统一考察，以期推动国内学界巴塞爾姆研究的深入开展。

作家威廉·加斯曾评价好友巴塞爾姆“将自己置于现代意识的中心”。纵观巴塞爾姆的创作生涯，一切传统文学因素或遭摒弃，或被加以改造，作家笔下直接接触的与其说是血肉丰满的一个个实体人物，不若说正是那鲜活、流动着的意识；此外，对文学语言的关注与试验，对文学形式的大胆创新以及对文学经典的恣意颠覆亦始终占据他创作的核心，而贯穿其中的是作家刻意为之的一种玩世不恭的态度。同时，巴塞爾姆的创作风格受现代主义作家如卡夫卡、贝克特等人的影响颇深。他擅长处理非现实的题材，笔下的主人公或突然深陷荒谬无比的境地，或偶被无可名状的情感所攫，在一切荒诞背后通常是作家对当代美国社会文化生活方方面面冷峻的嘲讽与深沉的思索，因此，巴塞爾姆的作品往往又兼有启示录的意味。值得一提的是，他为人所津津乐道的戏仿作品在功能与目的上有别于传统戏仿，其批判的矛头并非指向某个作家或特定的前文本，而包涵着对社会万象的影射与讽刺。从此意义上看，戏仿与寓言这一文类正有暗合之处，即，“双重文本性”。再者，后现代主义作家改写的虽并非全为童话或寓言，但“改写”这一文学再创造过程本身所涉及的解构与重构以及种种隐喻性的表达也往往使后

现代主义小说表现出强烈的寓言化倾向。此外，巴塞尔姆甚至把对文学形式的思考和探索融入故事的情节本身，他作品中相当一部分优秀的实验性小说同时也是极为出色的文学评论，这部分小说又可被看作是以形式构成的、关于形式本身的寓言。综上所述，在研究巴塞尔姆及其创作意图时，不可孤立地看待后现代性、形式、戏仿、反讽等文学因素，而应把它们统一于寓言这一大框架内，厘清它们之间相互联系、相互作用可能碰撞出的特殊的文学效果，方可达到对这位后现代派寓言作家的全面理解。

本文旨在全面阐述巴塞尔姆作品中强烈的寓言化倾向以及其在构建各类寓言世界时分别采用的策略和技巧。全文以沃尔特·本雅明、岱博拉·麦德森、莫林·奎林根等学者关于寓言的学说为主要理论框架，以及布莱恩·麦克黑尔、艾伦·王尔德、弗列德里克·詹姆逊及琳达·哈钦在后现代主义、反讽、戏仿、寓言等方面的相关论述，对巴塞尔姆的四部长篇小说和部分短篇小说进行文本细读，最终目的在于通过巴塞尔姆这一个案揭示后现代语境下寓言的本质变化和叙事特征，确立后现代派小说与寓言文类的内在精神之契合，尝试为后现代派小说研究提供一个崭新的视角，以期推动国内学界在后现代主义文学研究这一领域更进一步的发展。

在学术界，关于文学“内容”与“形式”孰轻孰重之争由来已久，但重内容轻形式的文学传统仍占据评论主流，因此后现代主义文学因“重形式轻内容”而备受诟病，或被拒于“严肃文学”的殿堂之外，或仅因其标新立异的形式创新受到关注。苏珊·桑塔格在《反对阐释》一书中反对的是以“内容阐释”为主导的批评传统。她认为，当下的文学评论应将关注的焦点分散到对形式的阐释上，并指出只有将内容之思想性与形式之艺术性融合并重的评论方是真正出色的文学批评。

本文主要论点的形成正是对后现代主义文学批评所存在的误区的一种反拨。巴塞尔姆是一位杰出的实验派作家。他讲究语言的韵律美，认为语言具有“光晕”和“光泽”，热衷于对语言的试验，擅长断裂、视点转移以及无甚逻辑的言语跳跃。对文学形式的求新同样是他创作的主动动力之一，在他笔下，形式不再是承载内容和意义的空壳，形式本身被赋予意义。他尤善于把对语言和形式的哲学思索融入文学创作里，并与魔幻的文风和戏仿、神话元素相结合，这使得他的作品呈

现出强烈的寓言化倾向。他笔下的寓言世界五彩斑斓，或因戏仿而生，或以形式构建而成，但无不包涵着作家的哲学、美学观点和对生活本质的反思。巴塞尔姆堪称书写后现代主义寓言的一代大师。

寓言具备成为后现代主义文学主要叙事形式的可行性，且在后现代文学中寓言在表现形式和内在精神上均发生了根本的变化。笔者首先简要回顾了寓言从对宗教教义的阐释模式向文学叙事类别转变的历史演变过程，指出寓言在 20 世纪文学，尤其是在后现代主义文学中体现出区别于传统寓言的一系列基本特征：其一、后现代主义文学中的寓言叙事往往以戏仿/改写的形式出现。弗列德里克·詹姆逊及琳达·哈钦都曾提及寓言与戏仿都具有旨在声东击西的“双重文本性”，二者内在气质相互契合；其二、后现代主义寓言/戏仿之所以有别于传统寓言/戏仿，主要取决于其讽刺对象的随意性和多样化。正如艾伦·王尔德所指出的，后现代主义反讽不再单纯只是一种文学技巧，而成为了贯穿作品始终的一种“意象”，是一种“悬置式”的讽刺。所谓“悬置”，乃是指其讽刺目标的不确定性。哈钦说，后现代主义式的反讽可以指向任何物体，甚至是后现代主义自身！这也从根本上解释了后现代作品中一贯的戏谑口吻与玩世姿态。其三、传统寓言因其意义指向明晰而具有单个稳定的意义中心，而讽刺指向的不确定性则恰恰决定了后现代主义寓言的杂糅性和去中心性。从这个角度来看，后现代主义寓言的核心本质正与后现代主义精神相契合。巴塞尔姆十分自觉地将笔下的文字世界寓言化，同时赋予其作品一种强烈的后现代精神。他为书写后现代主义寓言提供了一种创作范式。

作为后现代主义寓言小说家，巴塞尔姆的寓言世界构建有三个基本特点。第一、巴塞尔姆擅长把对文学的思考，特别是文学形式的创新融入寓言式的短篇小说创作中。约翰·巴思认为，作为一名作家，巴塞尔姆在短篇小说这种篇幅的叙事空间里发挥得最为游刃有余。早期的巴塞尔姆作品在情节上仍不免带有卡夫卡、贝克特式的现代主义的些许影子，叙述陷入精神困境的主体所遭遇的种种荒诞不经之事。不过，从本质上说，这些短篇与旨在反映存在之荒谬性的现代主义显然大相径庭。《我与曼蒂博小姐》中的世界尽管有悖现实常理，其基调却并非现代主义式的深沉与凝重，取而代之的是后现代主义式的戏谑和轻松，处处暗含着对现代主义经典主题的嘲讽。《金雨》中存在主义语言泛滥成灾，已然毫无生

命力可言，作家的戏仿之意不言而喻。在创作生涯初期，巴塞尔姆对现代主义的种种命题进行后现代主义寓言式的重构，以此坚定地表明了自己的后现代主义立场。

如果说巴塞尔姆早期的短篇小说在形式上仍大致遵循文学传统，情节尚还清晰可辨，那么他的大部分短篇小说无论从哪个角度看，都和传统大相径庭，甚至刻意与其背道而驰。巴塞尔姆在形式上的创新可以说无人能出其右，但更为难能可贵的是，看似天马行空的小说形式往往竟能与小说内容互为烘托、呼应，这足见作家颇具匠心。《玻璃山》表面上是对传统童话的一种戏仿，却并不止于此，而是由此推及对一切传统形式的颠覆。与此相呼应的是，小说打破了线性叙述的常规，所有句子都按序号排列。人为的断裂不仅突出了巴塞尔姆一贯注重的句子独有的韵律美，更实现了小说形式与内涵的相互映衬。《玻璃山》因此也成为一个个以形式构建的关于打破形式传统的寓言。《解释》是巴塞尔姆颇具代表性的对话小说，连篇累牍的对话折射出当代人的精神状态，读者可一窥人物的内心的挣扎和恐惧等种种情感。除形式之外，对意义的思索同样成为巴塞尔姆的小说主题。在著名短篇《气球》中，对气球意象的阐释存在着无数的可能，意义的确定性因此遭到了质疑；《巴拉圭》中的世界同样拒绝一切形式的确定性，倡导即兴与创新。在这类小说中，巴塞尔姆以寓言的形式阐述自己的文学理念。从这个意义上说，巴塞尔姆构建了关于文学评论的寓言。

巴塞尔姆的后现代主义寓言的第二个特征是，作家对前文本的改写方式往往导致了笔下寓言世界的多重性。必须区分戏仿与改写这两个不同的概念。戏仿涉及到对前文本和/或其作者的一种否定与讽刺的态度，而改写则并不带此种感情色彩，或可说，改写是对前文本的一种中立的戏仿。后现代主义作家对前文本的借用大致都属于改写的范畴。巴塞尔姆在保留前文本《白雪公主》原班人物和基本结构的框架下对这一经典童话进行了改写。人物因其跨界身份显得既熟悉又陌生，童话世界与现实世界相互交织，经典情节的再现与颠覆并存，巴塞尔姆构建的是一个飘忽不定的异质空间。从语言层面上看，各人固守着自己的一套语言规则，活在只属于自己的话语世界里。语言产生的交流壁垒恰恰反映了精神上的隔绝。巴塞尔姆对现代语言指示功能缺失、现代人渴望交流却缺乏共同理解基础的嘲讽之情表现得淋漓尽致。他所戏仿的与其说是经典童话，不如说是后现代社会；



Degree papers are in the "[Xiamen University Electronic Theses and Dissertations Database](#)". Full texts are available in the following ways:

1. If your library is a CALIS member libraries, please log on <http://etd.calis.edu.cn/> and submit requests online, or consult the interlibrary loan department in your library.
2. For users of non-CALIS member libraries, please mail to [etd@xmu.edu.cn](mailto:etd@xmu.edu.cn) for delivery details.

厦门大学博硕士论文摘要库