

A Lacanian Construction of Subject in Selected Works of John Barth

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Abstract

John Barth's novels *Lost in the Funhouse* and *The Floating Opera* have been studied by different critics through different perspectives and theories so far; however, this book focuses on Barth's two mentioned works based on Lacan's three orders of subject formation named Imaginary, Symbolic and Real order. The researcher investigates how the process of subject construction takes place and how character's identity constructed. In the present book we deal with how Lacan's theory of subject formation can be applied to John Barth's main characters in *Lost in the Funhouse* and *The Floating Opera*, and whether full subjectivity and stable identity are possible or not. Poststructuralism has revealed the unstable and fragmentary nature of identity; therefore subjects in poststructuralism are constructed and their identities are floating, dynamic and fragmentary. Main character's identity is not essential to their nature and is produced through contingent social practices and interactions; worded differently, their identities are inflected by Others. The process of identity creation is not a one-time event, new feedback of Others provide the means to shape identities anew. The subject is constructed in a continuous process and is never ever a unified and stable one and as Lennard J. Davis puts it beautifully: "wholeness is in fact a hallucination".