POSTMODERNISM IDEAS AS SEEN IN THE CHARACTERS’ THOUGHTS OF JOSTEIN GAARDER’S MAYA

AN UNDERGRADUATE THESIS

Presented as Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Sarjana Sastra in English Letters

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ENGLISH LETTERS STUDY PROGRAM
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LETTERS
FACULTY OF LETTERS
SANATA DHARMA UNIVERSITY
2018
A Sarjana Sastra Undergraduate Thesis

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Yang menyatakan,

Fidelis Krisna Hayati
Unlearn what you have learnt.—Yoda
For my juniors and all learners
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I would like to thank Almighty God, the source of life, whose power resonates within me so that I can finish this undergraduate thesis.

Secondly, I send my gratitude for my first and second thesis advisors, Dr. F. X. Siswadi, M.A. and Drs. Hirmawan Wijanarka, M.Hum., for their kindness and patience in guiding me through the writing process. Then, I thank my co-advisor, Dr. Tatang Iskarna, M. Hum., for his willingness and patience to review my undergraduate thesis. I also thank my academic advisor, Dewi Widyastuti, S.Pd., M.Hum. for her patience in guiding me through my early years in Sanata Dharma University.

Thirdly, I send my gratitude to people around me, who witness my struggle in finishing this undergraduate thesis. They are my sisters in Syantikara Dormitory for the love, cheerfulness, and lessons which I will never forget and to them I want to come back, especially Floren, Kristi, Putri, Dike, Enji, Mesti, Dewi, Pascal, Helen, Yeni, Fira, Ita, Eci, and Iin. I also send my love and gratitude to my parents for their love, patience and prayers along the writing process. I also thank Luk Coffee and Book and the owner, Arif, for providing a cozy place to work and for the staff’s friendliness. Not forgetting my friends in Sanata Dharma University especially Rani and Putri for the love and companionship in studying together in Sanata Dharma University. Last but not least, I send my love and gratitude to Agung for his unconditional love, support, and belief in me in good and bad times.
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ABSTRACT

HAYATI, FIDELIS KRISNA. Postmodernism Ideas as Seen in the Characters’ Thoughts of Jostein Gaarder’s Maya. Yogyakarta: Department of English Letters, Faculty of Letters, Sanata Dharma University, 2018.

Nowadays people consume information about science which is spread in the internet or science magazine. Historically speaking, science emerged in the eighteenth century within the Enlightenment Project. However, science has lost its credibility to determine truth. This was signified by the emergence of postmodern era whose aim is to restore narrative knowledge in order to pose heterogeneity of ideas. The culture is called postmodernism. This undergraduate thesis discusses postmodernism ideas which are reflected in the characters of the novel Maya by Jostein Gaarder.

In order to make systematical analysis, problem formulation is formulated as follows. The first problem formulation questions the characteristics of the characters in the novel. The second problem formulation questions the ideas of postmodernism which are reflected from the characteristics of the characters in the novel.

The method used in this undergraduate thesis is library research. The writer gathered data from written sources. The processes are described as follows. Firstly, the writer chose the novel Maya by Jostein Gaarder. Secondly, the writer chose the theories and approach which are relevant the analysis of this undergraduate thesis from secondary sources books. Thirdly, the writer collected the data from the primary and secondary sources. Fourthly, the writer used the data to answer the problem formulation. Fifthly, the writer draws conclusion from the analysis and made sure that it did not slip from the objectives of the study.

The findings of this research are as follows. The novel Maya by Jostein Gaarder contains the main idea of postmodernism as stated by Lyotard ‘incredulity towards metanarrative’ (Lyotard, 1979: xxiv). That idea is manifested as follows. Firstly, the dissension in science is posed by John and José in order to give another perspective about evolution, which is purposeful evolution. As a result, Frank admitted that there is uncertainty in science which he never acknowledged before. Secondly, Frank believed in the narratives posed by José, Ana, and Laura. As a result, he was not so certain about science anymore and he spook about the importance of other ideas besides science.

Keywords: postmodernism, modernism, metanarrative, narrative, dissension in science
ABSTRAK


Guna membuat analisis yang sistematis, rumusan masalah disusun sebagai berikut. Rumusan masalah yang pertama mempertanyakan karateristik dari tokoh-tokoh yang ada di novel. Rumusan masalah yang kedua mempertanyakan ide-ide posmodernisme yang direfleksikan dari karateristik tokoh-tokoh di dalam novel.


Kata kunci: postmodernisme, modernisme, metanaratif, naratif, ketidaksetujuan dalam sains
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Recently many people consume information about science which is spread in the internet and science magazine, whether it is popular science, science as ideology, or pseudo-science. There are many reactions towards science, some who believe probably apply its principles into everyday life. However, many voices reject the idea of science in the context that it is being used as the only way to find truth. The loss of science credibility as a construction which totalizes truth is reflected by a Norwegian author, Jostein Gaarder, in his novel, *Maya*.

Historically speaking, science was the fruit of rational thinking of eighteenth century philosophers. Its aim was to emancipate human beings from superstitious thinking using human intellect (Barry, 2002: 85). To signify the new era the philosophers called it Enlightenment Era or modernity (Edgar & Sedwick, 2002: 244).

The culture in which science dominates almost every aspects of human life is called modernism (Sarup, 1993: 131). Some of which are the merchantilization of knowledge which prior to get profit than give truth (Sarup, 1993, 138-139), the vulgarity of popular culture such as photography and cinematography in delivering message (Lyotard, 1979: 73-79), and the abandonment of traditional values in order to reach objective truth (Sarup, 1993: 135-137). There was a major problem caused by modernism that science is a terror in the context that it totalize
truth or what Jean François Lyotard called as ‘metanarrative’. That caused the birth of postmodernism (Sarup, 1993: 144-145).

Postmodernism is a movement which distrusts metanarrative. It aims to restore the narrative knowledge (mininarrative or local stories or traditional stories) in order not to be dominated by metanarrative, so that there are various ways to see the truth (Lyotard, 1979: 26-27).

One late twentieth century novel which the writer assumes as a postmodernism literary work is Maya, the work of a Norwegian author, Jostein Gaarder. Probably, Maya or Jostein Gaarder haven’t been familiar to the readers. Nevertheless, the readers might have heard one of his very popular novel, Sophie’s World. Unlike Sophie’s World which only discusses philosophy, in Maya Gaarder weaves science, philosophy, myth, and love story.

Maya tells about a Norwegian evolutionary biologist, Frank, who always asked about the meaning of life and the purpose of life. What troubled him was because he represented an institution which does not allow to mix science with meaning and feeling. He stayed persistent in his view as a dedicated scientist. The confusion led him into a great sadness. Until once upon a time he met some people who challenged his way in seeing life using the ideas of dissension in science and narratives. They were from various hemisphere and backgrounds. They were a Spaniard couple whose job as a journalist and a flamenco dancer, José and Ana, and an American environmental activist, Laura. In facing his confusion, Frank was accompanied by Gordon, the gecko. Gradually, Frank
acknowledged that other perspectives besides science were no less important to give us understanding about life and reality.

B. Problem Formulation

To arrange this undergraduate thesis, some questions are formulated as follows.

1. What are the characteristics of Frank, José, Ana, Laura, Gordon, and John described in the story?
2. What are the ideas of postmodernism seen in the characters of Frank, José, Ana, Laura, Gordon, and John?

C. Objectives of the Study

This research is intended to examine the postmodernism ideas reflected in the characters’ thoughts. In revealing this topic, the writer starts from analyzing the characteristic of the characters to grasp their flows of ideas of modernism and postmodernism. Lastly, the writer grasps the ideas of postmodernism in the novel.

D. Definition of Terms

To conform the writer and the reader’s perception about the term used in the title of this undergraduate thesis, “Postmodernism Ideas as seen in The Characters of Jostein Gaarder’s *Maya*” explicitly or implicitly, explanation is necessary.
Since the most confusing terms are probably the terms modernism, postmodernism, dissension in science, narrative and metanarrative the writer explains the definitions one by one.

*Modernism*, according to Sarup,

concerns a particular set of culture or aesthetic styles associated with the artistic movement which originated around the turn of the century and have dominated the various arts until recently. Modernism developed in conscious opposition to classicism; it emphasized experimentation and the aim of finding an inner truth behind surface appearance.

Modernism is the culture of modernity in which there is the progressive economic and administrative rationalization and differentiation of the social world. What is meant by differentiation of the social world is the separation of fact from value and the ethical from the theoretical spheres. It happened in eighteenth century onwards (Sarup, 1993: 130).

*Postmodernism*, according to Sarup, is

...the name for a movement in advanced capitalist culture, particularly in the arts. There is a sense in which if one sees modernism as the culture of modernity, postmodernism is the culture of postmodernity. The term postmodernism originated among artists and critics in New York in the 1960s and was taken up by European theorists in the 1970s. One of them, Jean François Lyotard, in a famous book entitled *The Postmodern Condition*, attacked the legitimating myths of the modern age (‘the grand narrative’), the progressive liberation of humanity through science, and the idea that philosophy can restore unity to learning and develop universally valid knowledge for humanity (Sarup, 1993:131).

In other word, postmodernism is a movement particularly in the art and culture whose idea is to distrust grand narrative (a story which can explain everything) particularly science and to restore philosophy as a valid knowledge for humanity.
Dissension in science is proposed by a French philosopher, Jean François Lyotard to destabilize the consensus in normal science manifested in the establishment of new norms for understanding. ‘Applied to scientific discussion and placed in a temporal framework, this property implies that “discoveries” are unpredictable. In terms of the idea of transparency, it is a factor that generates blind spots and defers consensus (Lyotard, 1979: 61).

Narrative is local stories (popular stories, myths, legends and tales) which are practiced within traditional societies. It has always existed in competition and conflict with scientific knowledge due to the different features they possess (Sarup, 1993: 135).

Metanarrative is associated with modernism. It is ‘the idea of unitary end of history and of a subject’ such as Christianity, Marxism, or the myth of scientific progress. The idea of metanarrative is what Lyotard refutes in his essay due to its nature which totalizing and overarching other knowledge (Barry, 2002: 86).
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A. Review of Related Studies

To understand the topic of modernism and postmodernism better, the writer looks for similar researches with the same topic or novel.

The first one is Lisistrata Lusandiana’s undergraduate thesis entitled “Power Struggle between Modernism and Postmodernism to Determine Truth as Revealed in Restrepo’s The Angel of Galilea”. It is about power struggle between modernism and postmodernism. The setting of the story is in Colombia in which there are poor people and superstition but it has had social institution with modern characteristic, such as the emergence of nation-state with its military power supported by asylum, church, and science institution which represents metanarratives (Lusandiana, 2009: lxix). Nevertheless, there is power struggle between modernism and postmodernism. Modernism practice is reflected in its institutions in controlling and dominating, or in other words, modernism’s repressive characteristic. Postmodernism practice is reflected from the society who ‘constitute a community bond by their belief toward the angel’. The social bond is said to have the characteristic of mininarrative (Lusandiana, 2009, lxix).

From her research the writer gets the idea that everything that is not systematically structured and illogical is considered as having postmodernism characteristic in the context of Colombia society. While the institution which
represses belief is the representation of metanarrative which dominates mininarrative (Lusandiana, 2009: lxx).

The second related studies is Andrea Eileen Shannon’s Undergraduate Thesis, “The Ideas of Modernism as Projected through the Character of Vladimir in Samuel Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot*”. Shannon does not reveal the ideas of postmodernism, but in revealing the ideas of modernism she compares it with the ideas of postmodernism. The major character, Vladimir, practices modernism thought compared to other characters who practice postmodernism thoughts. It is clearly seen in his attitude which are anticipating, being relevant, having critical thinking and having logical way of thinking. Moreover, he relies his hope in a person called Godot and believes that Godot will come and gets frustrated when he comes to think that there is nothing meaningful to do (Shannon, 2016: 49).

Another major character, Estragon, practices postmodernism ideas. He is a dreamer and likes to tell stories to Vladimir about his imagination and mundane behavior. He prefers to do nothing and just let the time pass, even suggest the others to sleep or commit suicide. He tends to escape from reality and gives up on waiting for Godot (Shannon, 2016: 49).

Pozzo, Lucky, and the Boy are the minor characters or complementary characters. They also practice postmodernism ideas. Pozzo and Lucky don’t do any useful and meaningful thing. Lucky only does what he is told to do. Pozzo forgets things easily because he has difficulty to focus on something. They do not even care about the reason why Pozzo turns blind and Lucky turns dumb. The last character is the Boy. He is obedient and respect the elders but just like Pozzo and
Lucky, he is does not remember anything from previous events (Shannon, 2016: 50).

From Shannon’s undergraduate thesis, the writer concludes that someone who relies on reason or think that something happens based on sequence and uses his mind to contemplate something is someone who practices modernism ideas. While someone who doesn’t rely on reason and doesn’t do any meaningful thing is someone who practices postmodernism ideas.

The third review of related studies is Paulus Sarwoto’s article, “Postmodernism: Nothing More than the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism?”. In his article he reviews theory of postmodernism from David Harvey’s book, *The Condition of Postmodernity*.

Initially, he reviews the theory of modernism, then he reviews the theory of postmodernism. He states that the aspects of modernism are also found in postmodernism, such as ephemerality, fragmentation, discontinuity, and the chaotic. The difference is in the thought which underlies those movements (Sarwoto, 2005: 171).

Modernism whose Enlightenment Project was to emancipate human being from their chain put forward human intellect as the measure of things. Enlightenment thinkers developed ‘objective science, universal morality and law, and autonomous art according to their inner logic’ or universal truth. In fact, the goal to emancipate human beings was not reached because it was used for oppression (Sarwoto, 2005: 171).
However, the second movement of modernism in 1848 had a different perspective. It refused the idea that there is only single representation but on the divergent system of representation. It was popularized by Saussure’s structuralism. Nevertheless, it still had a ‘belief in the existence of a unified reality no matter of how multifaceted the phenomena or the essence is’ (Sarwoto, 2005: 171).

Postmodernism, on the contrary, ‘do not have any single universal representation or any stable truth underlying them.’ He says that in literature, postmodernism is characterized by ‘a shift from an ‘epistemological’ to an ‘ontological’ dominant’, means that the focus is not on the singular reality but on the interplay of various reality. Postmodernism refutes the existence if any meta-language, meta-narrative, or meta-theory ‘through which all things can be connected or represented’ (Sarwoto, 2005: 172).

Post-structuralism and deconstruction, therefore, are the ‘powerful stimulus to postmodernist ways of thought’. Sarwoto explains that post structuralism in literary criticism denies any permanent structure behind a literary work because it consists of words whose meaning is arbitrary and whose meanings leads to another endless process of signification. One way the post structuralist approaches a text is by using Deconstruction which popularized by Derrida (Sarwoto, 2005: 172).

Another characteristic of postmodernism is the ‘depthlessness’. Sarwoto gives the example from architecture realm. Unlike the modern architect who always questions the significance of the surface to the ‘essential meaning’, the
postmodernist architect ‘refuses to contemplate that question’. In Harvey’s words, their interest is more on ‘surfaces rather than roots, on collage rather than in-depth work, to super-imposed quoted images rather than worked surfaces, to a collapsed sense of time and space rather than solidly achieved cultural artifact’ (Sarwoto, 2005: 173).

Later on, Sarwoto explains what being the focus of his article. He is interesting in how Harvey mentions that the characteristic of postmodernism art is ‘simply a cultural aspect of the economic and social fabric’ (Sarwoto, 2005: 173). His focus is not related to this undergraduate thesis, so the writer does not review the continuation.

From Sarwoto’s article, the writer gets the idea that post-structuralism is a powerful stimulus to postmodernism way of thought. What has been known is that post-structuralism and deconstruction are critical theories while postmodernism is cultural movement. That puts some light to the writer about the reason of some similarities between post-structuralism and postmodernism.

B. Review of Related Theories

1. Theories of Character and Characterization

Theories on character and characterization are necessary in this undergraduate thesis to examine the intrinsic element of the fiction. The writer need to examine the characteristics of a characters in the fiction to understand how their life going and how he respond to it. Characterization is the way the author
delivering the characteristic of the character. Characteristic is the qualities of a character.

According to the book *Fiction: An Introduction to Reading and Writing* by Edgar V. Roberts and Henry E. Jacobs there are several ways to examine how a character is disclosed in a fiction.

Firstly, what the characters themselves say (and think, if the author expresses their thoughts). The characters’ speech can indicate how their emotional or intellectual state. But we have to note that their condition is within a certain context. For example, if characters are in despair we have to make it balance by examining what they say when they are happy. Just like knowing a real person we cannot judge a character only by one of his statement. Sometimes the character we analyze can change his/character anytime (Roberts & Jacobs, 1987: 147).

Secondly, what the characters do. We can examine characteristic of characters by “interpreting” their actions. We often find the inconsistency of the action with logic and expectation. ‘Such behaviors may signal naïveté, weakness, deceit, or a scheming personality; they may also signalize inner conflicts, and also change or growth’ (Roberts and Jacobs, 1987: 147).

Thirdly, what other characters say about them. People often talk about other people in story. We can believe someone who is honest. But mostly someone’s prejudice towards other characters is distorted. For example, if a woman hates a man she only talks bad things about the man, or if a woman loves a man she only talks good things about the man, and those prejudices sometimes
being exaggerated. We have to be careful to consider those judgements before we draw conclusion (Roberts & Jacobs, 1987: 148).

Fourthly, what the author say about them, speaking as storyteller or observer. What the author says about them is to be accepted as accurate. However his/her analysis can be subjective because he/she put himself/herself as a critic or reader. In that position his/her opinion may be right or wrong. Hence, he/she avoids to give interpretation and let the readers give their own interpretation (Roberts & Jacobs, 1987: 147).

2. Theories of Modernism and Postmodernism

Due to vast array of the scope of modernism and postmodernism, the writer simplifies them. The writer also only uses the theories which are related to the analysis of this research. The writer contradicts modernism and postmodernism for the significance of this research.

Understanding the theory of postmodernism presupposes the understanding of the theory of modernism. Before understanding the term modernism, the writer of this undergraduate thesis explains the term modernity first.

Modernity, according to Jurgen Habermas, is associated with the Enlightenment project and The Age of Reason, whose idea is to foster the belief that ‘a break with tradition, blind habit, and slavish obedience to religious precepts and prohibitions, coupled with the application of reason and logic by the disinterested individual, can bring about a solution to the problems of society’
(Barry, 2002: 85). In other words, its project is to emancipate humanity from superstitious thinking using human consciousness. Its cultural movement is called *modernism* (Sarup, 1989: 131).

The characteristic of modernism is the ambition to gain ‘objective science’ or metanarrative (Sarup, 1993: 143). Pragmatically the rules of science different from the rules of knowledge (narrative). The logical and objective result in science is gained based on deductive testing, in which a general statement is collected from some relevant statements. (Popper, 2002: 9-10). Lyotard borrowed Wittgenstein term, *language game*, to explain how science ‘moves’. ‘The rules of language games are determined, explicitly or not, between players. Messages have quite different forms and effects depending on whether they are, for example, denotatives, prescriptions, evaluatives, performatives, etc’ (Sarup, 1989:119). Science ‘moves’ using denotative statement, any other statement used in science is for the significance of its dialectical argument (Lyotard, 1979: 25). The procedure used in science language game is that ‘the sender is supposed to be able to provide proof, and in the other hand s/he is supposed to be able to refute any opposing or contradictory statements concerning the same referent’. This is called falsification. The truth of a statement necessarily draws consensus (Sarup, 1989:121). Consequently there is homogenous way to find truth because science ‘has always existed in addition to, and in competition and conflict with, another kind of knowledge, which I (Lyotard) call narrative in the interest of simplicity’ (Lyotard, 1979: 7). Narratives (fables, myths, legends) are said to be belong to backward mentality (Lyotard, 1979: 27-31).
That is the characteristic of modernism. The following paragraphs is the characteristic of postmodernism. Before the writer explains the characteristics of postmodernism it is necessary to give a slight explanation of the thought underlies the postmodernism movement. The goal of Enlightenment Project which was hoped to promote ‘the control of natural forces, the understanding of the world and of the self, moral progress, the justice of institution and even the happiness of human beings’ was not reached. Gradually, each domain has been institutionalized; science, morality and art have become autonomous domains separated from the life-world’ or secular. They have come under the control of special experts (Sarup, 1993: 143).

The characteristic of postmodernism is ‘incredulity towards metanarratives’ as said by Lyotard (1979: xxiv). It is the skepticism toward overarching and totalizing theory used to understand life. His focus was attacking Habermas willingness to continue the Project of Enlightenment. Science (as metanarrative) suppresses narrative with its privilege universal truth. He also said consensus is never reached due to legitimation of itself. It has two formulations. The first one because it is the dialogue among intellectual men with their free will. The second one because consensus is a system which manipulates itself in order to improve its performance. In other word, it decides its own truth. If modern science uses consensus to reach conclusion, Lyotard proposes dissension (disagreement) for postmodern science to search for instability by producing the heterogeneity of ideas besides the existed stable norms (Lyotard, 1979: 61). Consequently there are the heterogeneous ways to view truth. Postmodernists do not see science as the
only valid way to judge truth and as a construction which is more developed than narrative. It is simply because science and narrative have different competences. Even narrative has its own preeminence compared to science (Lyotard, 1979: 19-27). In traditional societies narrative tradition is ‘the tradition defining a threefold competence—‘know-how’, ‘knowing how to speak’ and ‘knowing how to hear’—through which the community’s relationship to itself and its environment is played out’. In narrative there are various language games performed. Statements about truth, justice, and beauty are often woven together. Narrative is ‘what makes someone capable of forming “good” denotative utterances, but also “good” prescriptive and “good” evaluative utterances’. Narrative also constitutes social bond using the way it is transmitted in a community (Lyotard, 1979: 18-23).

C. Theoretical Framework

There are some theories in this chapter used to analyze the object of study of this undergraduate thesis. Theories of character and characterization are used to reveal the characteristic of the characters. In revealing the characteristics of the characters, the writer uses the theory of character and characterization from Edgar V. Roberts and Henry E. Jacobs. The characteristics of the characters might develop along with the occurrences which happened in their life. Because the writer assumes that the novel Maya is a postmodernism novel, the categorization such as major and minor character is not applied in the analysis because postmodernism writer does not obey the pre-established rules.
After the characteristics of the characters are revealed. The writer uses the data to find out who brings the ideas postmodernism from the characters’ characteristics. Then, the writer reveals what ideas of postmodernism that they bring with their characteristics. The theory which is used to reveal the postmodernism ideas is mostly from Jean François Lyotard.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

A. Object of the Study

The object of the study of this undergraduate thesis is the work of Jostein Gaarder, *Maya*. *Maya* is 344 pages novel which consists of four chapters. *Prologue* and *Postscript* were narrated by John, and *A Letter to Vera* narrated by Frank with a slight additional narration from John, and *Manifesto*. The novel was published by Phoenix in 2001.

The author of the work, Jostein Gaarder, is a Norwegian novelist and an environmental activist. He had been a lecturer of philosophy in Norway. One of his phenomenal philosophical novel is *Sophie’s World* which has been translated into 55 languages and is used by many lecturers and teachers of philosophy as introduction to philosophy subject. He popularly writes metafiction novel (story within story).

*Maya* is a late twentieth century novel about a Norwegian scientist, Frank, who is in a phase in understanding life and reality. He turns from a man who has a scientific way of thinking and relies on human logical thinking to a man who accepts philosophy and stories as other ways of thinking. In his ‘philosophical’ journey, he met some people from many backgrounds. Two of those were a Spaniard couple. The male one is José, a journalist, and the female one is Ana, a flamenco dancer. There were also an American environmental activist named Laura and an English author named John. They were important in giving Frank
influence about how to see life using the practice of dissension in science and narratives. In facing his confusions, Frank was accompanied by Gordon, the gecko.

B. Approach of the Study

In analyzing the novel, the writer of this undergraduate novel uses Postmodernism Approach. This approach is best used for the analysis of this undergraduate thesis because Postmodernism Approach as cultural study examines the object from many perspectives in the context of Postmodernism. Another reason this approach is chosen is to make the theory and approach conformable.

Wilfred L. Guerin quotes Daryl B. Harris description on Western postmodernism as an approach that tends to

Reject all notions of epistemological, ontological, and methodological certainty as expressed in the varied discourses of European modernity ranging from the arts to the sciences. Postmodernism sees designs that look for certitude as circumspect because of their possible use—especially in tyrannical hands, for example—for interposing a not so rigidity, orthodoxy, and finality (Guerin, 2001: 320).

Moreover, Guerin says that ‘postmodernism celebrates the very act of dismembering tradition. Postmodernism questions everything rationalist European philosophy held to be true’ (Guerin, 2001: 320).

In the art forms, modernism and postmodernism are more or less the same, only the mood are different. In modernism, art is expected to be able to provide the unity, coherence, and meaning. In contrast, ‘postmodernism not only does not mourn the loss of meaning, but celebrates the activity of fragmentation. Whereas
modernism still seeks meaning in a work of art, postmodernism explores the provisionality and irrationality of art’ (Guerin, 2001: 321).

C. Method of the Study

In gathering the data and analyzing the object of the study, the writer uses library research as the method of the study. It is the most appropriate method since the sources are from novel, articles, journals, essays, and other sources related to this undergraduate thesis. There were several steps taken to complete this research.

First, the writer picked a novel the writer interested in. The novel used in this undergraduate thesis as the primary source is Jostein Gaarder’s Maya. The writer read the novel thoroughly and examined which aspect of the novel the writer wanted to analyze. While examining the novel, the writer decided the object, framework, and problem formulation of the intended undergraduate thesis.

Second, the writer chose theories and approach related to the problem formulation, which are theory of character and characterization, theory of modernism, theory of postmodernism, and postmodern approach. The theories were taken from Peter Barry’s Beginning Theory, Jean François Lyotard’s The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge, Madan Sarup’s An Introductory Guide to Post-structuralism and Postmodernism, Edgar V. Roberts and Henry E. Jacobs’ Fiction: An Introduction to Reading and Writing and other sources related to this undergraduate thesis. While choosing the theories, the writer also decided the framework which appropriate to this undergraduate thesis due to vast scope of the theories.
Third, the writer collected all the data needed from the primary source and secondary sources which were important in analyzing section. From the primary source the writer collected the data about the characteristics of the characters and the ideas of modernism and postmodernism that they pointed out. From the secondary sources the writer collected the data about theory of character and characterization, theory of modernism, and theory of postmodernism.

Fourth, the writer used the data to answer the problem formulations using the framework that the writer already decided. The writer used related studies for example which has some aspects which is used in this undergraduate thesis.

Fifth, after the analysis is done, the writer draws conclusion from it. The writer makes sure the conclusion does not slip from the aim of this undergraduate thesis which is emphasized in Chapter I.
CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS

The writer divides this chapter into two subchapters. The first one is the analysis of the characters. There are six characters that the writer analyzes. They are Frank, José, Ana, Laura, Gordon, and John. Since the writer assumes that this novel is postmodernism novel, it is difficult to analyze it using conventional rules in classical literary work. The classification such as who acts as major character and who acts as minor character is not valid. Also whether the character is only an imagination or a real person difficult to be deciphered. Sometimes it blurs the idea of the real and the unreal. Because postmodernism work does not follow the pre-established rules (Lyotard, 1979: 81). All the writer can do is revealing their characteristics using the theory written.

The second subchapter is revealing the ideas of postmodernism reflected from those characters. This subchapter is divided into sub-subchapters. The first one is the dissension in science. The second one is the belief in narratives.

A. The Characteristics of the Characters in the Novel

The writer analysis the characteristics of the characters mostly from their thoughts because the thoughts are used to analyze the dissension in science and their belief in narratives. Postmodernism is more about perspective or attitude in seeing ideas than characteristic of a person. To reveal those ideas analyzing the characters’ standpoints is necessary.
1. Frank

Frank had a scientific way of thinking, such as being logical, reasonable, and rational. These characteristics were shown particularly when he was teased by John and José about purposeful evolution. José gave an opinion whether evolution was purposeful or not. At first, Frank presumed that he was naïve. Therefore, Frank gave classic text book answers for José’s questions. But José’s questions went serious. According to José, human being had two arms and two legs because that was enough (Gaarder, 2001: 70). That led Frank into a slight confusion. According to Frank, that was not the way an empirical science reasoned. Frank opinion was ‘We’ve actually got two arms and legs because we’re descended from a tetrapod like that’ (pointing frogs) (Gaarder, 2001: 71). Aside from José, John also contributed his voice about evolution. His opinion was that the reason for the Big Bang was that they could sit there and thought back on it. Frank refuted John opinion. According to Frank ‘A cause can never belong to the future’ (Gaarder, 2001: 79).

Frank was anthropocentric in the way he praised human consciousness or intellect as a precious result of evolution. This was illogical, for a scientist should not had fulfilled life with meaning. That’s why he merely said it to Gordon, the gecko.

… the balance of power between universal consciousness and a similar universal unconsciousness is a precarious one … in this balance it is reason that is David with his puny catapult, against the massive Goliath of irrationality with its ready arsenal of irascible comets and meteoroids. Intellect is a rare adaptation ....(Gaarder, 2001: 99)
For information, in the bible, it was David who won the fight against Goliath. So metaphorically, Frank stated that rationality has won over irrationality. The pride over human intellect even stirred him to be superior to Gordon. He said rude words to Gordon when Gordon argued about human consciousness. Firstly, he said ‘I don’t usually argue with reptiles, but I could lose my rag quite soon’ (Gaarder, 2001: 95). Secondly, he said ‘I’ve actually got more respect for ‘creatures like you’ than you might think’ (Gaarder, 2001: 95). Thirdly, when Gordon stated his knowledge about evolution and asked Frank whether he has been known or not, Frank answer was ‘Of course I see. And you only see because I see. Or is there a special university for geckoes on the island?’ (Gaarder, 2001: 96).

Frank had a materialistic or spiritless perspective in viewing life. He had not believed something that cannot be seen, such as soul. It is seen in how he described himself as follows. Firstly, after he had been reawoken by José and Ana by hearing them uttering aphorisms to each other such as

We bear and are borne by a soul we do not know. When the riddle raises itself on two legs without being solved, it is our turn. When the dream picture pinches its own arm without waking, it is us. For we are the riddle no one guesses. We are the fairy-tale trapped in its own image. We are what moves on and on without arriving at understanding … (Gaarder, 2001: 55)

he said ‘It struck me how mesmerized I’d always been by a reductionist view of the world in general, and my tiny life on this planet’ (Gaarder, 2001: 56).

According to Encyclopedia Britannica, reductionism is ‘a view that asserts that entities of a given kind are collections or combinations of entities of a simpler or more basic kind or that expressions denoting such entities are definable in terms
of expressions denoting the more basic entities’ (1983: 466). In the context of Frank’s view of the world related with his other characteristics and his reaction after he heard the words about spirits, it can be concluded that what he meant by reductionist was that he had reduced the magical view of the world including spirits probably into psychology or any other sciences which could explain the thoughts about spirits (Webster, 2001: 911). When one tries to define and theorize a phenomena he hardly sees the phenomena as a magical thing. Secondly, when he was with Laura alone after talking about Laura’s Hinduism philosophy he said ‘I wasn’t close to being converted on any ideological grounds …’ (Gaarder, 2001: 121). Thirdly, when he insisted that Laura’s philosophy could not change his perspective ‘Although, on certain level, what she’d said (Laura) was quite irrefutable, as irrefutable as my own spiritless individualism’ (Gaarder, 2001: 121). According to Encyclopedia Britannica, individualism is ‘political or social philosophy that places high value on the individual’ or man-centered (1985: 339). So, it could be concluded that spiritless individualism is an idea which does not believe in spirit and relies on individual thought.

Frank had repressed his unscientific thoughts deep in his mind. He never said it to other people, except to Gordon, the gecko, and Vera. Firstly, when he overheard José and Ana’s aphorisms about soul, he acknowledged that his unscientific thoughts had been buried deep in his mind, ‘It struck me how mesmerized I’d always been by reductionist view of the world in general, and of my own tiny life on this planet. Ana and José had rewoken a slumbering sense of what an adventure life is’ (Gaarder, 2001: 56). Secondly, when he was arguing
with Gordon, the gecko, how human consciousness causing him to be dejected because he was aware that his life in this planet is limited therefore it is impossible for him to understand more about life and to find out whether human can be more conscious or not, he said to Gordon, ‘So it’s not an intellectual point I’m discussing, but an emotional question, not to mention a moral one’ (Gaarder, 2001:133). Thirdly, when José challenged him with the idea of intentional life, he acknowledged to Vera, that he too, has asked similar things to his inner self related to his own meaning in life.

I think I settled back in my seat a bit. José had done no more than air the questions I’d been asking myself in recent days. After what befell us, Vera, I’ve done a lot of thinking. Why did we have to lose Sonja (Frank’s daughter)? I’ve lost count of the number of times I’ve asked myself that question. Why couldn’t we keep her? If any of my students had raised such a question in an exam paper, I’d have had to consider failing them. But we are human beings, and human beings have a tendency to seek meaning even where there isn’t any (Gaarder, 2001: 72).

Deep down buried in his mind, he had doubted science but he could hardly admit it to anyone except in his letter to Vera due to his profession as a scientist. Firstly, when he was attacked by José about the idea of purposeful life, he remembered once he was young he had the same thought after read the idea of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin about purposeful evolution. However, he said, ‘for science sake I felt I had to provide some resitence to José. I represented an august institution, far too august perhaps’ (Gaarder, 2001: 73). Secondly, after he finished discussing the purpose of human life with some people in Fiji he ‘developed a deeper understanding on the many uncertainties in natural science’ (Gaarder, 2001: 72) which he’d never acknowledge before. Thirdly, after he had gradually heard José and Ana uttering aphorisms to each other as if it is a ritual.
ceremony about life from the spiritual perspective, he felt like science had blinded him for he could not see the magic in everyday life. He stated

The question I was asking myself was whether I’d got lost inside my own science and forfeited the ability to see the fairy tale magic of each single moment on earth. I saw the extent to which the agenda of natural science had been to explain absolutely everything. In that lay the obvious danger of becoming blind to everything that ‘couldn’t’ be explained (Gaarder, 2001, 28).

Fourthly, he thought that probably ‘science is at an end’ (Gaarder, 2001: 108) because theoretically human beings cannot be conscious more than they are now, if the object of science is consciousness, and that they’ve known everything worth knowing (Gaarder, 2001: 108).

After all that he had been through in Fiji, such as being struck by the ideas of purposeful evolution and narratives containing the magic of life, he finally admitted to Vera via telephone that he did not think like a scientist anymore. His words are sometimes unreasonable at all. Firstly, he said ‘I do feel that life has a meaning’ (Gaarder, 2001: 277). Secondly, when Vera said that Frank did not speak like a scientist anymore, Frank simply answered, ‘In which case, maybe it’s important to speak about something other than science’ (Gaarder, 2001: 280). Thirdly, at that time Vera had known the reason behind his shifting perspective because she had read the letter Frank gave to her. In Frank’s letter, he told that Ana was dead and Frank and Vera had planned to go to her funeral in Seville, Spain, but all of a sudden he said, ‘The sun isn’t merely a star, the earth isn’t merely a planet, a human being isn’t merely an animal, an animal isn’t merely a dust, a dust isn’t merely lava, and Ana isn’t dead’ (Gaarder, 2001: 281). When he was asked why he said that, he gave the answer, ‘I don’t know. I just blurted it
out, it fitted the sentence so well’ (Gaarder, 2001: 281). Vera asked again, ‘Just for the rhythm, eh?’ (Gaarder, 2001: 281) Frank simply answered ‘Yes, just for the rhythm’ (Gaarder, 2001: 281). It was as if Frank was infected by José and Ana’s aphorisms. Fourthly, when Vera asked whether Frank had booked two hotel room in Seville, he answered ‘I’ve booked both’ (Gaarder, 2001: 282). For in narrative, Frank’s statement contains the meaning ‘I’ve booked one room’ and ‘I’ve booked two rooms’ so that both statements are correct but it was not correct in science because in science connotative statement was not allowed. Fifthly, Vera said that he ‘far too slack about logical principles’ (Gaarder, 2001: 282). He answered, ‘Logic is far too lacking in ambivalence. That’s why it isn’t much use in conflict resolution, or processes in general. It’s as dead as a doornail, Vera’ (Gaarder, 2001: 282).

2. José

José knew too much about evolutionary biology as a layman as José picked Frank’s brains about various evolutionary hypotheses. ‘He (José) used technical terms like gradualism and punctualism without batting an eyelid’ (Gaarder, 2001: 127). One night José teased Frank about evolutionary biology. He contended that evolution was intentional. For him there were two reasons why human being had two arms and two legs. First, because human being descended from tetrapod (frog). Second, because it was practical (Gaarder, 2001: 71). If there was intellectual being in other planets they must resemble human being because nature seemed to know where it was going or that nature was pregnant with
intellect or consciousness (Gaarder, 2001: 73). José’s opinion led Frank into slight confusion as a scientist.

José was mysterious. It is seen from his behavior. Firstly, he and Ana uttered aphorisms to each other from the beginning until the end of the story. Secondly, it was odd that José and Ana always won the bridge card game over Frank and Mario, until Mario exclaimed, ‘They’re clairvoyant!’ (Gaarder, 2001: 68). What was suspicious was that they always uttered those aphorisms when they were playing cards. At last, in the end of The Letter of Vera that mystery was solved. Those aphorisms were Andalusian gypsy tradition, which was Ana’s big family tradition. José was considered as one of them because José was Ana’s lover who had been clung into Ana’s family tradition (Gaarder, 2001: 217). The family associated every card in bridge card with an aphorism, so that every card had its own meaning. That’s the secret behind José and Ana’s victory in playing cards (Gaarder, 2001: 260-261). Thirdly, he smiled and grinned at Frank as if he had planned something secret. This behavior was constant from beginning A Letter to Vera until the end of the story. It might have a relation with the favor John asked for him and Ana to help him stage-managed the odd social process in Fiji (Gaarder, 2001: 293-294).

Just like Frank, José was anthropocentric. It was seen from the view that if the universe had born another planet with livings beings, sooner or later it definitely would had a living being which has consciousness (Gaarder, 2001: 75). The difference between Frank and José’s view were that José argued that it was for the sake of human consciousness did the universe sprung or in other words
consciousness was the object of evolution. He asked Frank, ‘Do such thing (evolution) happen overnight? Or does nature ‘know’ where it’s going?’ (Gaarder, 2001: 73). For him universe could not be just arbitrary coincidence, if not they would not had sat there having rational debate (Gaarder, 2001: 71). However for José, other living beings were no less important because had it not because of evolution (we are the progeny of those living beings) they would not had had that consciousness. He got Ana’s agreement ‘the eye that surveys the universe is the universe’s very own eye’ (Gaarder, 2001: 76).’

José believed in spirits. It was seen from the way he believed that evolution had been purposeful and not just arbitrary coincidence (Gaarder, 2001: 75). The aphorisms that he and Ana had uttered ‘ritually’ contains spirits, such as ‘soul’, ‘fairy tale’, ‘heavens’, ‘imagination’, ‘the Creator’, and many other spiritual words (Gaarder, 2001: 333-344).

3. Ana

She knew José’s idea about purposeful evolution. Ana was Jose’s partner. It was likely that Jose had told her that idea before they were in Fiji. For when José furiously asked Frank whether he believed in purposeful evolution or not, Ana added ‘He’s mad on the idea that intelligent life on other planets must resemble us a little’ (Gaarder, 2001: 70). She even could explain more to aid José’s explanation

He means that every planet that’s capable of it will arrive sooner or later at a form of consciousness. The road from the first living cells to complex organisms like us may take many detours, but the goal is the same. The
universe is striving to comprehend itself, and the eye that surveys the universe is the universe’s very own eye (Gaarder, 2001: 76).

Ana was spiritual. Differed from José, her spirituality did not contain evolutionary theory but an odd one. It did not sound like an ideology. She stated that, ‘We aren’t capable of understanding what we are. We are the riddle one guesses’ (Gaarder, 2001: 77) and ‘I’m a divine being’ (Gaarder, 2001: 77). When Mario asked whether she’s God, she replied, ‘Yes. That’s me’ (Gaarder, 2001: 77). Here is the continuation

There is a reality beyond this one. When I die, I won’t die. You’ll all believe I’m dead, but I won’t be. Soon we’ll meet again in another place. … You’ll all think you’re at a funeral, but in reality you’ll be witnessing a new birth. … There is something beyond this. … Here we are merely spirits in transition (Gaarder, 2001: 152).

From that statement, it was also known that she believed in another reality. This was strengthen with José’s statement to Frank that ‘Ana was convinced that this life was not the only one. She firmly believed in an after-life as well’ (Gaarder, 2001: 261).

She was mysterious. Just like José, she uttered odd aphorisms which made Frank wondered. Later on, it was known that it was Andalucian tradition, which is her big family’s tradition. She was as beautiful as ‘in the creation myth’ (Gaarder, 2001: 45). This was also a mystery. For Frank felt that he had met her in ‘previous life or another existence’ but he could not remember when and where (Gaarder, 2001: 45). The odd thing was that it was her head that Frank had seen (Gaarder, 2001: 127). Later on, it was known that Ana’s face was similar to the face of the woman in La Maja Desnuda painting which was hung in Prado Museum, Spain. Even José referred at the painting and said to Frank ‘It is her’ (Gaarder, 2001: 152).
It was a painting from more or less two hundred years ago, painted in around the year 1800. Coincidentally, Ana’s surname is Maya. Her full name is Ana Maria Maya (Gaarder, 2001: 216). The similarity of Ana’s face and La Maja Desnuda’s face was answered within Ana’s family tradition. There was a dwarf who appears to of Ana’s progenitors every fifty two years. The first one was in 1842 the dwarf appeared Ana’s great-great-great-grandfather. In 1894 the dwarf appeared to Ana’s great-grandfather. In 1946 the dwarf appeared to Ana’s great-uncle. It had been believed that in 1998 the dwarf would appeared to one of the family descendants (Gaarder, 2001: 236-243). They had been anticipated the moment. Until José told Frank that Ana died after she chased a dwarf who had captured her using his camera in 1998 in Alcazar Garden, Spain. The family believed that that dwarf who looked like a court jester or a joker, was the one who brought Ana’s photograph to the past. So here was the connection between Ana, La Maja Desnuda and the dwarf. Joker (card) has existed from 1780 when a pack of card was made in France. In 1790 a German sailor bought a pack of card from five or six years old boy who later known as El Planeta. After that he sailed to Mexico using Ana schooner which was sunk in the middle of the voyage. He was stranded in a volcanic island with his cards. Every day he played that card and imagined that those card could become real so that he could speak to them. His imagination came true. The last who appeared was Joker. Joker ‘was what’s often known as an afterthought (Gaarder, 2001: 245)’. José said to Frank that Joker or the dwarf was sort of fantasy so it is possible to move further and backward in time (Gaarder, 2001: 250). In 1790 when the German sailor would just leave
Cadiz to Mexico, there was the dwarf who pocketed a small picture of a young woman as realistic as something we could see with the naked eye which was believed as Ana’s photograph. Goya, the painter of La Maja Desnuda was from Seville, Spain. He used to paint many dwarfs and bufons (clown). So when he saw a jester in Sanlucar de Barrameda, the place where the dwarf showed the realistic woman picture, he caught him by force and dragged him into his studio but the dwarf screamed and tried to resist as best as he could but the painter was stone deaf. Only when the dwarf pulled out Ana’s picture did the artist let go, for he’d never seen anything like it before. It was right before he finished La Maja Desnuda. Now he added Ana’s face to the body (Gaarder, 2001: 252). Since Ana was a teenager she had been more and more similar to La Maja Desnuda. Just she had become identical to the painting she died (Gaarder, 2001: 223). José told Frank that Ana died after she chased the dwarf in Alcazar Garden. He said it was because she had a heart defect. She was not allowed to do a hard activity including dancing flamenco dance. She also should not had chased the dwarf but she did and then she died (Gaarder, 2001: 218-221).

4. Laura

Laura was spiritual. She stated to other characters that she was inspired by Indian philosophy with its concepts, such as brahman and maya. She said there is only one reality and it is called brahman or the world soul. Brahman is eternal, indivisible and non-material. The multifarious reality is called maya and that is illusion (Gaarder, 2001: 147-148). She explained with a longer explanation.
When you have a dream, you think you’re part of a multifarious reality and that you’re in an external world. But everything in the illusory world of dreams is the product of your own soul, it is your own soul and nothing more. The problem is that you don’t realise this until you wake up, and then the dream is no longer exists. Now it’s been stripped of all its fals masks and emerges as what it’s been all along, just yourself. … We believe we are nine souls sitting round this table and that’s because of maya. In reality we’re aspects of one and the same soul. It’s the maya illusion that makes us think the others are something different from ourselves. That’s why we don’t need to worry about death. Nothing can die. The only thing that disappears when we die is the actual chimera of being separate from the rest of the world—just as we believe that our dreams are not part of our soul (Gaarder, 2001: 148-149).

At a glance her view has some common ideas with Ana’s view which was the deception of reality.

Differed from Frank and José, Laura was misanthropic. Firstly, when José stated his view about universe which born consciousness, Laura said, ‘Isn’t that a bit anthropocentric? Nature doesn’t exist just for us’ (Gaarder, 2001: 75). Secondly, she also agreed with Ana’s word by restating, ‘It’s true. The eye that surveys the universe is the universe’s very own eye’ (Gaarder, 2001: 76). Thirdly, when José stated that human beings were the descendants of amphibian and it was for the sake of consciousness the evolution had happened, Laura stated, ‘I can’t see why that (frogs) should be any less meaningful than a mankind being mankind … I see things totally different. All life on earth is equally valuable’ (Gaarder, 2001: 80). Fourthly, she believed that the earth was an organism which she called Gaia (a Goddess in Greek Mythology), Mother Earth, or Eartha. She believed that ‘the earth was suffering an acute attack of fever, but it was a purifying fever and would ensure that she’d soon get better’ (Gaarder, 2001: 118). She was more afraid if the world was dying rather than herself because she had ‘a deeper and
more permanent identity in her (Gaia)’ (Gaarder, 2001: 119). This view also had similarity with Ana’s view. It was when Ana acknowledged to Mario that she was God. Indirectly, Laura stated a similar idea. If she was part of Gaia, then she was part of God.

Laura was not amateur on the subject of evolution. One noon in Fiji she asked Frank about Frank’s research that he was conducting. She knew because she was also from the same region. She was an environmental activist. So, understanding evolution was necessary (Gaarder, 2001: 117).

5. Gordon

Gordon was a gecko who inhabited in Frank’s room in Fiji. It was not clear whether Gordon’s voice was only Frank’s imagination or not but he could read Frank’s mind. When Gordon didn’t want to move from Frank’s gin bottle, Frank said Frank would hit him but Gordon didn’t believe him because he had knew Frank would not dare to do that.

‘You realise I could just lash out and squash you with my bare hands?’

I could almost hear him laughing.

‘I don’t think you’d dare. Or that you’d managed it. Only just now you were praising the speed of my reactions, weren’t you? Almost clairvoyant, you said’.

‘That was something I thought, not something I said, don’t mix the two up’.

Now he really did laugh.

‘If we’re clairvoyant, we’re clairvoyant, so it makes little difference what I hear you say and what I just guess you’re thinking. …’ (Gaarder, 2001: 94-95).

Frank depicted Gordon as someone who knew his innermost secret. The morning after he had spent the night doing existential debate with Gordon, he
said, ‘The whole of the following morning you’re nagged by a conviction that you’ve made an enemy for life—or worse still, a friend—and by that I mean a best friend, ergo someone who knows your innermost secrets’ (Gaarder, 2001: 113).

Frank had been spent four nights in Fiji arguing with Gordon. Gordon always had opposite ideas from Frank. They always mocked each other’s ideas. Firstly, when Frank praised human consciousness over reptile, Gordon didn’t withdraw. Gordon posed the idea that human evolution derived from reptile so there was no use to praise human consciousness (Gaarder, 2001: 96). Secondly, Frank had been believed that the reality which had been existed was only the material reality. When Frank denied his own words by making an aphorism containing spiritual ideas, Gordon mocked him again by stating what had used to be Frank’s thought. ‘There’s unlikely to be any other world than this one, and it’s this one that unfolds in time and space’ (Gaarder, 2001: 132). Thirdly, when Frank was facing difficulty in understanding the concept maya and brahman posed by Laura, Gordon helped and mocked him at the same time. Frank had tried to understand those concept but Gordon mocked him, ‘Maya has some people so firmly in its grip that it can be painful to wake up. It’s rather like waking from a nightmare’ (Gaarder, 2001: 156). Laura stated that maya was the world illusion, the real one is brahman or the world soul. So believing material world was the same as believing maya, the illusory world. Gordon helped Frank by suggesting, ‘You must break the bonds of the self, mister. Just try looking up from your own navel—and out, out at the works of nature about you, out into one unbroken
cascade of magical reality’ (Gaarder, 2001: 157). Fourthly, the last night Frank spent with Gordon was for arguing human beings who had consciousness were also animals. Frank was caught having sex with Laura. Gordon mocked him by stating, ‘I don’t know if what I witnessed last night deserves to be called “higher” anything’ (Gaarder, 2001: 184). Gordon had known that Frank and Laura both had partners but they betrayed their own partners. Frank made an excuse that human’s sexuality differed from animal because they had what was called love but then Gordon remembered Frank broke his own promise that he would be completely finished with Vera, his wife, after that Pacific travels, not before it (Gaarder, 2001: 184-185). Gordon meant to stress that just because human beings were good at making excuses, it did not make any difference with other animals in term of sexuality. Human intelligent and culture were used only for masquerade. That was how their conversation going and never seemed to reach any agreement.

6. John

John believed a similar idea with José that modern man was much lacking of what they chose to call ‘cognitive imagination’ (Gaarder, 2001: 294). Later on what they meant was that the idea that evolution had aimed to bear consciousness or that evolution was purposeful. For him, the reason for the Big Bang was that they could sit and thought back on it (Gaarder, 2001: 79).

Apart from it, he could mediate the others’ perspectives in seeing life. He acted as a moderator. It was also because he prearranged the discussion with the
help of José and Ana. In the end of the discussion with the other characters, he concluded

For all we know the riddle may have been solved. I wouldn’t be at all surprised if the solution to the universal enigma already lay in some ancient Greek, Latin or Indian tract. And the answer needn’t be all that complicated, it might be between ten and twenty words long. Just as I’m sure that Laura’s ‘maya’ theory can be condensed into a couple of sentences (Gaarder, 2001: 151).

B. The Ideas of Postmodernism Reflected from the Characters in the Novel

a. The Dissension in Science

The dissension in science was initiated by John as the man who stage-managed the occurrences in Fiji. John and José had arrived in Fiji before Frank. John got information that there would be a Norwegian who would come to Fiji. Later on, he knew that Frank was an evolutionary biologist. John had planned to tease him about evolutionary biology with the help of José while playing cards.

John and José agreed that modern man was much lacking in what they chose to call ‘cognitive imagination’ (Gaarder, 2001: 294). So, using José’s help John attempted to attack the consensus in normal science, which Lyotard called dissension. Its concept is to give a disagreement about consensus in science. Frank had difficulties in answering their answers and opinions, not only because for him the topic that they posed were sensitive (Gaarder, 2001: 69) but also because he was a scientist who represented science institution (Gaarder, 2001: 73). Therefore, he chose to give classic text book answers (Gaarder, 2001: 69). However, he admitted that José’s question caused him ‘some professional embarrassment (Gaarder, 2001: 72)’. The followings are the dissensions posed by José and John.
First, after José said ‘There are two reasons why we have two arms and legs. One is that we are descended from tetrapods (frogs) like that. The other is that it’s practical (Gaarder, 2001: 71)’ Frank admitted inwardly that José’s opinion difficult to be refuted. He thought ‘For the first time I had the feeling I was the one in retreat. He certainly had a point which at the moment, sent me into a slight confusion. Two arms and two legs were enough. Though that wasn’t the way empirical science reasoned’ (Gaarder, 2001: 70). As in science, the method used is deductive testing in which a general statement is collected from some relevant statements. Moreover, the language game that science poses is denotative statement (objective). So, there is no room for meaning such as ‘We have two arms and legs because it’s practical’. Frank continued his thought ‘I think I settled back in my seat a bit. José had done no more than the air the questions I’d been asking myself in recent days. … But we are human beings, and human beings have a tendency to seek meaning even where there isn’t any’ (Gaarder, 2001: 72).

Second, Frank explained that the first vertebrates that took to the air were the pterosaurs which could not had been the ancestors of modern birds because they had died out with dinosaurs. Pterosaurs had no feathers and flew like a huge bats. ‘The evolution of wings and feathers in birds occurred quite independently of the pterosaurs’ (Gaarder, 2001: 73). So, at last pterosaurs and birds had wings even though they were not from the same branch in evolution. José posed difficult questions to Frank ‘Wings and feathers. Do such thing happen overnight? Or does nature “know” where it’s going?’ (Gaarder, 2001: 73). José’s question implied the same idea with his previous statement that evolution is intentional. So Frank
laughed and thought ‘Again, he had touched the tiny kernel, the nub itself, of dissent, even though this time I think his question was rhetorical’ (Gaarder, 2001: 73).

Third, John argued that ‘Devonian period was reason’s embryonic state’ (Gaarder, 2001: 79). By this he meant that at that time the world had been pregnant with consciousness and if we could witness that age, it would be premature to conclude that it was for the sake of consciousness. He went backward to the Big Bang ‘But now I would say that the reason for the Big Bang is that we can sit here and think back on it’ (Gaarder, 2001: 79). Then, Frank objected ‘I think you’re turning everything on its head. When we speak of causes, we always mean something that points back in time. A cause can never belong to the future’ (Gaarder, 2001: 79). It’s still the same case like the first dissension. In deductive reasoning (science), the causes always belong to the past so we can draw conclusion from it. John posed an opposite idea from science to understand life.

As a result from that conversation, Frank acknowledged that there were many uncertainties in natural science. ‘I won’t say I learnt anything new during the course of the conversation, but I think I developed a deeper understanding on the many uncertainties in natural science which I’d never acknowledge before’ (Gaarder, 2001: 72). In the end, he told Vera via telephone that he was not sure about science anymore (Gaarder, 2001: 277).
b. The Belief in Narrative

There are many narratives ideas posed in the novel. Such as José and Ana’s aphorisms, the myth about the similarity of Ana and La Maja Desnuda painting, and Laura’s philosophy. What makes the belief in narratives postmodernism is because it happens after modernism, or after science has dominated. Actually, all the characters that the writer analyses brought the idea of narratives in postmodernism because all the characters were familiar with the concept of evolution but they believed in local stories. However, the most prominent one was Frank who altered from a person who relied his understanding on science as metanarrative to the one who accepted stories and philosophy as other versions of truth to understand life and reality.

First, when Frank was overhearing Ana and José’s aphorisms, such as

We bear and are born by a soul we do not know. When the riddle raises itself on two legs without being solved, it is our turn. When the dream picture pinches its own arm without waking, it is us. For we are the riddle no one guesses. We are the fairy-tale trapped in its own image. We are what moves on and on without arriving at understanding (Gaarder, 2001: 55).

Frank admitted that he’d been mesmerized by reductionist view of the world in general and of his own tiny life on the planet. He thought

Ana and José reawaken a slumbering sense of what an adventure life is, and not just here in this South Sea paradise (Fiji), but life on earth, the life we live in big cities too, even though there we are in danger or not seeing how magical man’s world is because we immerse ourselves in activity, in distractions and sensual pleasure (Gaarder, 2001: 56).

His thought implies meaning that the thought about magical world has been there in his own mind but he ignores it because he had been blinded by human activity. Moreover, he guessed that it was science who had blinded him.
The question I was asking myself was whether I’d got inside my own science and forfeited the ability to see the fairy-tale magic of each single moment on earth. I saw the extent to which the agenda of natural science had been to explain absolutely everything. In that lay the obvious danger of becoming blind to everything that couldn’t be explained.

Frank thought about the aphorisms until he brought it into the conversation with Gordon. From the analysis of Gordon’s characteristics, it is known that he was able to read Frank’s mind, he knew Frank’s innermost secret, he always mocked each other with Frank and he always had opposite ideas from Frank. It was seen that Frank was interested in José and Ana’s aphorisms for he made one in his own room. When he uttered it, Gordon replied with what used to be Frank’s thought so far ‘Romantic nonsense, if you ask me’ (Gaarder, 2001: 131). By that Gordon was mocking him by mimicking Frank’s usual reaction to unscientific thoughts because Frank would had never admitted to Gordon that he believed in unscientific thoughts. In the end of A Letter to Vera when he was conversing with Vera on the phone he talked as if he was not a scientist. He concluded that ‘The sun isn’t merely a star, the earth isn’t merely a planet, a human being isn’t merely an animal, an animal isn’t merely dust, dust isn’t merely lava, and Ana isn’t dead’ (Gaarder, 2001: 280-281). What he meant was that they were not just matters but also spirits. But all of a sudden he mentioned Ana. He said it was for nothing but the rhythm (Gaarder, 2001: 281) as if he had been affected by José and Ana’s aphorisms. His opinions were not based on science anymore.

Second, Frank was inspired by Laura’s philosophy, maya and brahman even though for him those concepts were difficult to be applied in his mind. At
first, it was Laura who suggested him to learn her concepts. Then, he was helped by Gordon.

She said, ‘You must learn to lose yourself, Frank.’
‘What?’
‘But what you lose is nothing compared to what you gain.’
In the candlelight from the table I looked into a brown eye. Deep in the dark pigment a narrow stripe of green struggled not to be overwhelmed by the brown.
‘And what do I gain?’
‘You’ll gain the whole world.’
‘The whole world,’ I repeated.
She nodded.
‘What you lose may seem big and important. But it’s no more than an enforced illusion.’
‘The self you mean. Is that what’s an illusion?’
‘Only the smaller self. Only the illusory self. That’s as good as lost already anyway. But you have a greater self’ (Gaarder, 2001: 154).

Gordon was a gecko who could read Frank’s mind and know Frank’s innermost secret. So, probably the topic that Gordon brought into their conversation was what was currently in Frank’s mind. One night when Frank was in his room with Gordon contemplating Laura’s maya and John’s words when he was putting his finger on Ana and said ‘This spirit’s name is Maya’ (Gaarder, 2001: 156) he was lectured by Gordon about the concept. Frank said he did not need any lecture but then Gordon said ‘Maya has some people so firmly in its grip that it can be painful to wake up. It’s rather like waking from a nightmare’ (Gaarder, 2001: 156).

Gordon suggested him ‘You must break the bonds of the self, mister. …’ (Gaarder, 2001: 157). Frank replied with ‘I’m trying’ (Gaarder, 2001: 157). Frank asked why it was bloody difficult. Gordon replied that it was because he would not let go his own self (Gaarder, 2001: 158).
Third, gradually Frank believed in the story of the similarity between Ana and La Maja Desnuda involving Joker (dwarf). His belief was manifested in the letter to his wife, Vera, which in this novel it is the chapter A Letter to Vera. If it was not because José’s story about Ana, La Maja Desnuda, and Joker the letter would not exist. In Prologue it was told that Frank and Vera had the same need. It was the craving for eternity. Frank particularly had an anxiety of not knowing what would happen to consciousness in the future if he die. He was curious whether human beings could be more aware if they had bigger brains or not. What Frank and Vera meant by craving for eternity was to have posterity so that part of them would bear consciousness. Unfortunately, they lost their daughter and decided to live apart because the sorrow was unbearable. But after the occurrences in Fiji particularly José’s story about Ana and her resemblance with La Maja Desnuda painting he had altered his mind about consciousness and about matter. He considered this as an important story which had to be shared to Vera. In the beginning of his letter, he said

You’ll naturally be wondering how Ana and José could possibly concern you, or us for that matter. Perhaps I ought to remind you of a greeting you once sent me from Barcelona. You wrote: ‘Is there any step we could both take to reconcile ourselves to the brevity of life?’ Now I’m putting that question again, and to answer it I must first speak of Ana and José. To understand the full extent of my mission, you must step back with me even deeper into the past, perhaps as far back as the Devonian period when the very first amphibians made their appearance. That’s where I think this story begins (Gaarder, 2001: 17).

The writer retells a little bit about Ana and La Maja Desnuda painting. Since Ana was young she got more and more similar to Maja. She was enshrouded by the painting’s myth in her big family tradition. When she had become very similar to
the painting, she died. It was when she was chasing the dwarf who took her photograph and was believed gave it to La Maja Desnuda’s painter, Goya, in 1800. Had just been told about that long story by José, Frank was mesmerized and immediately wrote a letter to his wife. He convinced his wife via telephone about José’s story about Ana. Frank believed that Ana died and for that news he invited his wife to go to Ana’s funeral. It was odd for a scientist like Frank to believe in myth and Ana’s death because they were not based on any real event or any proof, but story. Here was Frank and Vera’s telephone conversation.

‘I believe she died in Seville at any rate.’
‘You do?’
‘Don’t you?’
‘I was going to let tomorrow decide that.’
‘I saw the attack she had on Taveuni. I saw how excitable she was in Salamanca. I saw how crushed José was when I met him in the Prado. I mean, you don’t lie about your wife’s death.’
‘No, perhaps you don’t . . .’
‘No, you don’t’ (Gaarder, 2001: 276).

After all that he’d been through in Fiji, he stated to Vera on the phone that he had a new perspective in seeing life. When Vera said that in science José and Ana’s aphorisms were rubbish, Frank replied ‘I’m not so certain any more [about science]’ (Gaarder, 2001: 277). Now, he was brave enough to state the aphorism he created himself to Vera. It was for the first time he stated his unscientific thoughts to another person. Even Vera considered him to not speak like a scientist anymore. For Frank, it was important to speak other than science because logic is far too lacking in ambivalence (Gaarder, 2001: 280). What he meant by logic is far too lacking in ambivalence is that because the way logic moves using denotative statement. It doesn’t allow any other statements which are practices in
narrative knowledge. Conflict resolution or processes in general require more than denotative statement because what happens in society is relative and complicated. Sometimes they need various statements to be woven together, such as interrogative statement, evaluative statement, or deontic statement.

Finally, Frank’s acknowledgement to Vera represents Lyotard’s idea of postmodern condition, which is ‘incredulity towards metanarrative’ (Lyotard, 1979: xxiv). In this context, the metanarrative is science as an institution which constitute truth.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Finally, we arrive at the conclusion of this undergraduate thesis. Before the writer draw a broader conclusion, the writer concluded the findings based on the problem formulation.

Frank has the quality of a scientist. His opinions always based on consensus in science particularly when he was facing other person’s argument. Consequently, he only believed in what was empirical, such as matter. Therefore, he was materialistic or spiritless. When he was alone, he tended to think about unscientific ideas which he repressed in his mind. One of his unscientific idea was that he praised consciousness over other animals. Secretly, he doubted science but hardly acknowledged it to another person. Only after he was struck by the idea of narratives by the other characters he gradually lose his scientific way of thinking.

José had a deep understanding about evolutionary biology. His knowledge was used to tease Frank about the consensus in science. His ideas about evolution were that evolution was purposeful and that its process had been fulfilled with intellect. He was mysterious because he often uttered mysterious aphorisms with Ana. Later on, it was solved. It was the tradition of Andalusian tradition to utter verses containing spiritual ideas. He was anthropocentric from the view that evolution had happened for the sake of consciousness. Jose was a spiritual person because he did not deny the existence of spirits which contained in his aphorisms.
Ana knew the concept of evolution. Her knowledge was used to help José to tease Frank about evolution. Ana was as beautiful as goddess. Her face was similar with the woman’s face in the painting La Maja Desnuda painted in 1800. There was a myth in her family tradition which could explain their similarity. She was a spiritual person. It was shown from his opinion about reality. She believed that reality was not only one and they were only spirits in transition. She was mysterious as well as José because she also uttered mysterious aphorism which was her family tradition.

Laura was a spiritual person. She believed in the concept maya and brahman in Hindu philosophy. She also believed in Gaia, that the earth was a single organism. She was misanthropic from her view that universe did not exist just for human beings. She was not amateur on the subject of evolution because she was an environmental activist.

Gordon was a gecko who inhabited in Frank’s room in Fiji. Gordon could read Frank’s mind. He also knew Frank’s innermost secret. He always had ideas opposed to Frank.

John was the man who stage-managed the odd social process in Fiji. He was the one who encourage José to tease Frank about purposeful evolution. His opinion about universe more or less the same with José but he mediated the other perspectives and gave conclusion for the discussions they had in Fiji.

The dissension in science was posed by José and John about purposeful evolution and that its reason was that they could think back on it. Their ideas opposed to what had been constituted in science. Firstly, purposeful evolution
contains connotative statement which is meaning. Science only uses denotative statement. Secondly, reason in science cannot exist in the future because reason is used to draw conclusion as in deductive testing or reasoning. So, it has to appear before conclusion.

The belief in narratives was posed by all the characters that the writer analyses. The most prominent character who brought the idea of the belief in narratives as postmodernism idea was Frank because he changed from a person who relied his understanding on science to the one who accepted stories and philosophy as other versions to understand life and reality. Firstly, Frank was interested in Jose and Ana’s aphorisms so that he tried to make new ones. Secondly, he was interested in Laura’s concept about maya and brahman and tried to understand them even though for him those were difficult concepts. Thirdly, Frank believed in the story of the similarity of Ana with La Maja Desnuda painting. Frank also believed that Ana died at any rate even though he relied his belief only from José’s story about Ana.

From the results the writer reflects that what was called ‘cognitive imagination’ by John and Jose was that it was an imagination which is cognitively possible. The metanarrative of the story is evolutionary biology. One of the narrative is the idea of purposeful evolution. The idea of evolutionary biology became metanarrative in Frank’s life because it dominated his perspective in seeing everything, including his private life. It became conflict within himself and with other animals like Gordon, because he felt superior. For him there was only one way to see life, its way was empirical. In purposeful evolution there was an
idea that consciousness is the object of evolution or even Big Bang. That was the idea which was not considered in evolutionary biology because it had not been proved. Moreover, for Jose and John consciousness was the reason of evolution or Big Bang. It might be as abstract as the idea of Laura’s maya and brahman. Therefore that idea was not considered science anymore. It might be closer to philosophy of evolutionary biology.

What happened in the novel was the resemblance of postmodern society in which truth was not constituted by one criteria which was science as metanarrative. Local stories or narratives also took their part in contributing the versions of truth to understand life and reality. All the characters that the writer analyses had the knowledge about science. The narratives that they believed even though originally from traditional culture were not lose against science. The narratives were still worth to be discussed together with science as dialectical argument to understand life and reality.

The writer does not find anything new related to the theories used in this undergraduate thesis. The writer has an opinion why there is no anything new in the research findings related with the theories used. It is because the author of Maya, Jostein Gaarder, was once a teacher of philosophy who was quit and then decided to write philosophical novels. The writer also to read his other novels. The writer catches the impression that Jostein Gaarder writes his novels for learners of philosophy. Many of his novels have the characters of children. One of his most popular novels, Sophie’s World, has been used to teach by philosophy teachers around the world because it contains the summary of the history of
philosophy. So, probably he always bases his novels on theories and books that have been existed. He is one of serious writers who is worth considering related to the awards he has gained as a novel author.

The writer believes that the novel *Maya* contains postmodernism ideas more than what the writer has written in this undergraduate thesis. The writer just simplifies the analysis following the problem formulation that the writer has formulated. The writer only picked some theories particularly from Lyotard. The writer believes there are more theories from Lyotard which also relevant to be used in analyzing *Maya*, such as the form of postmodernism literary work. The writer also glances the other theorists’ ideas in this novel, such as Jean Baudrillard and Julia Kristeva’s theories seen in the plot and the setting of the novel. The writer suggests that the readers read more about postmodernism theories if the readers are interested in analyzing the novel *Maya* from its literary work or using other theorists’ theories.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX

Summary of Jostein Gaarder’s Maya

The novel tells about a Norwegian evolutionary biologist, Frank, who travelled along Pacific Islands to conduct a research for three months. It was in January 1998. He was separated from her wife, Vera, after they lost their only daughter, Sonja. It was a painful separation because before the accident happened they hoped they could live forever. It meant that by having a child, part of them would bear consciousness. That’s because they shared an uncompromising thirst of eternity. They wondered whether human beings would understand more about life if they had bigger brains.

Before he finished his travel, he rested in Fijian Island for a few days. There he met other characters from different parts of the world. John was from England. José and Ana were a couple from Spain. Laura, Bill, Mark, and Evelyn from America. Mario from Italy. John arrived in Fiji before Frank. He got an information that there would be a Norwegian whose occupation as a scientist who would arrived at the island. He planned to tease Frank about evolution using the help of Ana and José.

When José, Ana, Frank and Mario were playing cards José posed a question whether Frank believed in purposeful evolution or not. The conversation went serious until Frank had to explain academically about evolution using text book answers. But José kept asking rhetorically using more examples that there were signs that it was for the sake of consciousness the evolution happened. This
embarrassed Frank and made Frank thought that there were many uncertainties in science which he had never acknowledge before. José and Ana always won the card game over Frank and Mario. The odd thing was that they uttered aphorisms about life during the game. Ana contributed the idea that she was a divine being or God. Mario related her idea with Ana and José’s victory in playing cards. Laura also contributed her misanthropic idea. For her, all life on earth is valuable. The discussion was closed with John’s statement that man was probably the only creature in the entire universe who has a universal consciousness so conserving the living environment was not only a global responsibility but a cosmic one.

In Frank’s room there was a gecko who can talk to Frank, named Gordon. He could read Frank’s mind, knew Frank’s innermost secret and always had opposite ideas from Frank. After the discussion about purposeful evolution Frank thought about it in his room. Frank felt superior to Gordon because Frank had human consciousness. But Gordon refuted that human beings was the descendants of reptile too. Frank also thought that it’s impossible to comprehend much more than human beings already do. If the objective of evolution was consciousness probably science was beginning to draw its end.

Another day, Laura fought with his father, Bill. This was because of their family problems. Frank calmed her by conversing with her about evolution and Laura’s philosophy. Laura believed that the earth was a single organism or Gaia. Frank was interested in her. Gordon had warned him if he could not tame his animal instinct he could be lost. But Frank did not listen him.
Frank overheard José and Ana’s aphorisms which they uttered to each other. Hi tried to write them down and made a new one by himself. When he showed it to Gordon, Gordon mocked his aphorisms because he knew Frank would never admitted to Gordon that he believed in those aphorisms.

One night John had set up the dinner table to ease him starting discussion. This time Laura explained her philosophy, which were the concepts maya and brahman. John believed that the universal enigma could be answered within a few sentences, just like Laura’s maya theory. Then, Ana contributed her belief. She believed that there was a reality beyond this one. Without any reason John put his finger on Ana’s head and said. ‘And this spirit’s name is Maya!’ After the discussion finished, Laura suggested Frank to lose himself in order to understand the concept of maya and brahman. In his room, Frank dwelled on Laura’s concepts. He wanted to understand those concepts but they were difficult for him. Gordon helped him to understand the concepts.

The last night Frank in Fiji was spent with Laura. He was in love with her. Laura’s attitude showed an interest in Frank. She seemed looked for Frank after she fought with her dad as if Frank could cure the agony of her soul. In Frank’s room they had sex. Gordon caught them. The next night after Laura’s gone to America Gordon argued with Frank about human sexuality which was the same as animal. The etiquette, morality, and culture were just for masquerade. So according to him there was no point in praising human consciousness.
In March 1998 Frank attended a conference in Salamanca, Spain. This time he had an opportunity to meet his wife, Vera. Vera was a paleontologist and Frank was an evolutionary biologist. The conference was about science. One evening they walked over the bridge. They recalled the time when they were together. They were still grieving for their daughter’s death. All of a sudden, they saw Ana and José from afar. The next day Frank and Vera saw them again in a café. Ana shouted to José that she wanted to go to her home in Seville. José bumped into Frank and said that they had to talk in Prado, Spain.

Frank met José in Prado Museum. There hung a painting called La Maja Desnuda by Goya which was painted around 1800. The odd thing was that the woman face was extremely similar to Ana’s face. That’s why Frank and John felt that they had already seen her in another place before they met her in Fiji. José said that the woman in the painting was Ana. Ana’s full name was Ana Maria Maya. That too was an odd similarity. José told that the aphorisms that they uttered was from the tradition in Ana’s big family. There were also a myth proliferated in the family. It was about a dwarf and a pack of solitaire cards.

It was told that there was a dwarf who showed to one of Ana’s relatives every fifty two years. It was in 1842, 1894, and 1946. In 1998 the family believed the dwarf would show himself to one of the descendants. One day in March 1998 Ana was in Alcazar Garden, Spain. She saw that dwarf who captured her using his camera. Ana chased him and died because of exhaustion. Actually she had a heart defect. She was not allowed to do a hard activity but when she saw that dwarf she felt she had to meet her destiny. Here was the relation between Ana, La Maja
Desnuda and the dwarf. The dwarf brought Ana’s photograph to the year 1800. La Maja Desnuda painter loved to paint court jester. One day when Goya saw the dwarf, he drag him to his studio to be painted. But the dwarf refused. Instead, he gave Ana’s photograph. At that time the painting La Maja Desnuda had not yet finished. Goya painted Ana’s face on the painting. That was the myth in Ana’s family. José invited Frank to attend Ana’s funeral in Seville, Spain. He also gave Frank the *Manifesto*. It contained the fifty two aphorisms they uttered in Fiji. The *Manifesto* had to be shared between two lovers because the ideas it possessed was difficult without a hand to grasp.

Frank was amazed with José’s story. He believed Ana died. He wrote a long letter to Vera which told about what he witnessed in Fiji and Spain. The long letter to Vera. He rang Vera and invited her to attend Ana’s funeral that week. Frank belief was based on story. The story that José told was provided with minimum data. But Frank believed that José would not lie about his wife’s death.

In *Postscript* the story was so different. John met Frank in Rotunda, Spain, in November 1998. John was an English author. In Fiji he was caught writing something in his note. Probably, John was inspired by Frank and the others because he said the novel he was writing used Frank as the narrator. He did not expect to meet the main character in the middle of the writing process. When he met Frank, he got an idea to make interrelated story. That’s why the reality in *A Letter to Vera* was so different from the reality in *Postscript*. Probably, *A Letter to Vera* was only John’s imagination based on real situation in Fiji.
In Postscript John and Frank had a short conversation before they went to Seville, Spain. Before John met Frank he had planned to write about Ana’s funeral but he had to steer clear the idea. In other hand, they went to Seville to watch flamenco dance in a flamenco bar. There Ana was dancing with the other dancers but Ana was the star. They also met José who brought a little baby named Manuel. Obviously, it was José and Ana’s baby. Vera also came after had been invited by John the day before. Frank did not know this. Vera was pregnant with Frank’s baby.

Lastly, John stated that the story he was writing was not about José and Ana nor Frank and Vera. It was about him, Sheila, and her solitaire. Actually, John was still grieving for his wife’s death, Sheila. Sheila loved to play solitaire card during her life. The novel he was writing was inspired from her and her solitaire card. Probably John also the author of the aphorisms because the numbers were the same with the cards in solitaire card and because he had the Manifesto. If the rule of the Manifesto was obeyed he should not had it because he did not had a lover’s hand to grasp.