



## **Appraisal of Multivocality in Both Versions of the Novel *10:01***

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**Abstract.** This paper compared the concept of multivocality in the narrative structures of both printed and hypertext versions of the postmodern novel *10:01* by Lance Olsen. The motivation behind this assessment is to point to specific aspects of its implication and reader's experiences while interacting with numerous characters. The purpose of this paper is to account for changing reader's role, which is reinforced by multivocality in an interactive environment. This evaluation indicated that how mutivocality in the digital environment fosters readers' different roles to engage in a story and incorporate their identities toward fictional characters. Further, it would prove that reading and interpretation of printed texts are far more participatory when readers encounter various layers of meaning in a digital space. Recognition that some English novels are renovated by introduction of the internet and digital space, this paper is an inevitable area of research.

**Key words:** Mutivocality, Novel *10:01*, Hypertext novel, Reader's role.

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### **I. Introduction**

Multivocality in a digital narrative is acknowledged as a functional paradigm. It is portrayed by mingling the content, the visual and virtual space where readers can enjoy increasingly by having a greater interactivity while associating a set of characters and their stories. Indeed, readers have a more stupendous role with the substantial number of characters that constituting multivocality in the novel. Along these lines, by playing within different perspectives readers order their own particular stories and gain a very plural significance of the novel. However, making pertinent and coincidental determinations in very unpredictably, changeable and

impressive structured medium is quite challenging. In *10:01*, Olsen by using prominent frequent temporal shifts and spatial swings in characters' imaginations depicts an outstanding multivocal novel both in printed version as well as hypertext one. The focus is that the fictional world shows up reality-like; it is as though we are in touch with actuality through characters. However, the feeling about reality is elevated when the narrative is combined with other voices from other texts instead of just limited characters in a direct way. This technique gives a chance to Olsen to shift the narrative from one place to some other region, and further he is welcomed to move his temporal episodes. Each episode often takes place in every character's mind and imagination.

## **2. Materials & Methods**

Postmodernist approach structures the theoretical framework and the entire assessment has been done following the qualitative substance analysis methodology.

## **3. Text Analysis**

### **3.1. Analysis of Multivocality in *10:01***

*10:01* is multivocal in a sense that it is composed of multi sub-stories written in various styles of a stream of consciousness, comic, lyrical, speculative, and surreal, each from the perspective of around fifty characters waiting for the movie to begin. For instance, the novel's second character, Stuart Navidson, is confined in horrible reflection of his Palm Pilot. The third character Lara McLuhan imagines her future husband to be the cleancut Republican financial advisor, and his name will be Christopher or Brian or David with whom she produces three high IQs children. Another character Zdravko Prcac is semi-dreaming of his late wife Kosa and imagines her presence beside him at places where they have never been like a party with well-dressed people or inside an expensive car Citroen. Milo Magani, the media capitalist who is another character in *10:01* may be enchanted that so many individuals who are in the delimited location like the mall and the theater can be

watched, mapped and formed. After all, his behavior too might be observed and modeled as well. In fact, Olsen used heterogeneous characters to make his postmodern printed novel, multivocal and further he mingled the properties of the digital environment with it to produce a new implication for multivocality in the hypermedia version of *10:01*. Through multivocality in this novel, a reader experiences to be someone else or being somewhere else, and this turns the reading into the self-present reflect. Landow asserts “complete read-write hypertext does not permit a tyrannical, univocal voice. Rather the voice is always distilled from the combined experience of the momentary focus, the lexia one presently reads, and the continually forming narrative of one’s reading path”(Landow, 2006: 56). In this sense, *10:01* can be regarded as the completely multivocal novel through by diverse characterizations and their inner voices in reflection of every single theme. In one narrative strand:

Vito Paluso imagines each brief shot in the experimental short he is making a heavy gray stone. His project will be to sew them all together into a suit of rocks, which he will wear everywhere he goes. Some people will say the suit makes walking a formidable task, but Vito Paluso believes it will also allow him to fully appreciate each step he takes. He plans to embroider it with delicate butterfly wings (Olsen, 2005: 127).

Indeed, he is declining to let the public beliefs of USA schedule his life, on the other hand, he is rehearsing a manifestation of tasteful challenging in the light of the fact that living is a series of contrasts, burdens, and surprises, which give a subject matter for particular imaginative activities. In fact, there is no univocal voice of the main character in the novel and all characters’ sounds contribute to the multivocality of the narrative. Consequently, as Fredrik Fahlander asserts reader’s contribution for associating numerous voices becomes their “individual experiences” (Fahlander, 2012: 116). Another fictionalized character, Leon Mopati, a Unitarian minister from Africa criticizes the relationship between the mall and the alienation its agendas inspire: "Unending space crowded with an excess of sameness. Makes

you feel lost even when you're not" (Olsen, 2005: 53). Opposite this consumerism, Leon has produced a vivid inner space filled with verbal rhythms and phrasings:

The day a motionless ocean you will cross. Again. Rowing through the minutes, one home to another. Morning fog suffused by peach sunshine. Coffee and apples. These are your angels walking arm-in-arm, faces white light splashed on broken columns. Picture this, but picture it taking place in another dimension. An antispaces thought. I have spent my life asserting the possibility they are there. Here. Here, of course, and not here. Call it the dynamics of metaphor...That's it. That's all. The ways we miss our lives are life (Olsen, 2005: 76).

Leon later straightforwardly differentiates the extravagance of his internal monologue with the dullness of the mall and its theaters: "in this place lightmist is no angel's breath but a clamor from morning to midnight. A filmic racket crazying the afternoon...Childish Americans with their eyes shut against the World. All they want is more" (Olsen, 2005: 163). Therefore, there is a constant struggle in his mind and his inner voices that foster the multivocality of the novel and additionally, the association of multiple names within his monologues promotes intertextuality as well.

### **3.2. Different Points of View Create Multivocality**

Olsen also used different types of narrators in order to blur the reader's vision. The reason behind this is to engage and immerse readers. Indeed, the process of presenting the sub-narratives occurs because of the diverse narrative points of view. It encompasses several characters but most importantly third-person point of view whose perspective the story is viewed. In fact, such narrative voices determine a set of consistent characteristics regarding the way the story is communicated to the readers. Therefore, by multivocality the author is not a stand-alone entity that narrates the story, but such multivocal account considers the reader as an actual character within the story.

However, when the narrator is a third-person singular which is overwhelmingly the most common type of narrator in *10:01* at different times, the reader's engagement depends upon the number of characters being referred to in the sub-stories. Because, the mode of narrative also encompasses how the story is expressed and not only who narrates the story and this fact makes the reader an interactor who sometimes participates as an actual character in the novel, particularly in the hypertext version with interactive narrative structure. On the other hand, the narrator, in *10:01*, is more than one person because some sub-stories are from different points of view, displaying distinguished story lines of individuals at the same or different times. For instance, in Jaci's narrative, two narrators at the same time tell the story. First statement starts with "Um, isn't that Josh Hartnett over there? Jaci wonders. Nope. No way" (Olsen, 2005: 40). Here, Jaci herself is the narrator, but she narrates through by the stream of consciousness to enlighten it from the vantage purpose of her own life and personification of her voice. Then, the third-person narrator continues Jaci's story, "She smiles to herself, clearing her head and cozies once again into the rhythms of trailer unfurling before her" (Olsen, 2005: 40). In order to enlighten her story Olsen uses different voices to manifest multivocality. This pattern of narration is used to illustrate the novel from different perspectives in time segments, and it is more efficient than a solitary outlook in light of the fact that it gives a better impact for a more interactive story line.

Another evidence of multivocality is at the final pages of the novel, or it may say the last two minutes where different parts of characters' stories are narrated in every single sentence. For instance, Fred Quock tells his shocked father, "honest", to which his sister Leni adds hastily: "He made me do it, daddy. Freddy made me do it" and in row nine, "Celan Solen resolves to drop in at Mona's apartment after the film because she told him she was going to be busy doing exactly nothing special all day" (Olsen, 2005: 40). Here, as Judith Roof claimed, hyprenarrators like Olsen "fronting a far more complex, systemic, multidimensional effect that reflects the growing complexity and paradigmatic shifts of narrative itself" (Roof, 2013: 1). Therefore,

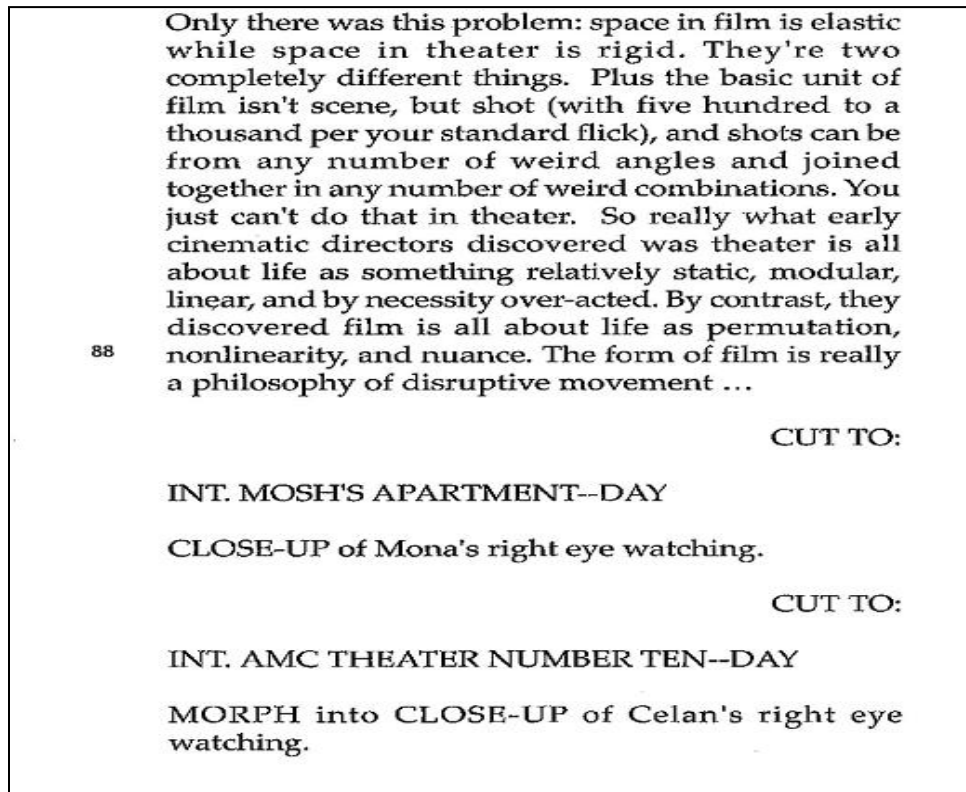
multivocality is used as a technique to create the significant effect by which the reader interacts simultaneously with diverse characters.

#### **4. Reader's Affective Experience in Multivocal Novel**

With the large number of characters constituting the novel, the intension is to provide an extremely plural comprehending of the story and make it multivocal which is one of the essential characteristics of postmodern novels. In fact, reading such a novel does not bring forth enthusiasm to reveal the next resulting event, on the other hand, it is more of a process of acquisition new views and experiences. Indeed, readers get pleasure by conjoining multiple voices. For instance, at 00:04:57:04 “a soft, sad, fluid Philip Glassian piece--rises on the soundtrack” (Olsen, 2005: 81). Here, the American's composer's name is used intentionally to focus on his way of composing. Philip Glass on his website describes himself as a composer of music with repetitive structure. Indeed, different fictional and real characters' voices are used together to create an interesting mutivocality. Moreover, hypertext can be seen as multivocal through its hyperlinks and multilinear means of structuring narrative. Therefore, textual units can be seen from different positions or voices. In this way, as Landow asserted texts are no longer bound by the physical limitations of print which foster the tyranny of a univocal voice (Landow, 2006: 56).

Another technique for creating multivocality is using cuts of narration, which exemplify shots in the movie. This method of writing enhances readers' affective experience while reading but at the same time may be disorienting. For instance, from page number eighty one to page number ninety (from 00: 04: 57: 04 to 00: 05: 36: 26) the narrative typology of the printed novel is changed as if Olsen tends to use different voices and shots in his writing. Each piece of texts can be considered the beginning for a new episode or character's voice that makes up the narration of the other shot. It's a depiction of his typographical skill. Although in some cuts, there is no actual dialogue between characters but instead, Olsen stops each frame and goes inside his characters, investigating their depths and complexities. The

following figure illustrates shots or textual fragmentation at page 88 in the printed version of the novel:



Textual fragmentation inside printed novel *10:01*

However, when this page is compared to its lexia in the hypertext version, it is become clear that digital technology makes the manipulation of images and changes in typography easy to affect in digital version of the novel. In fact, in interactive narrative, the printed constraints do not exist. Therefore, Olsen by utilizing pictures, sounds and the short movies simultaneously along with lexias makes multivocality more simulating and in this way he invites readers to explore other voices along the actual character's voices. However, sometimes such interactive prose and multivocality demand careful examination and rigorous state of attention and create sort of confusion and disorientation for readers which will be analyzed in the next section.

## 5. Multivocality and Reader's Disorientation

Olsen uses some cuts within his novel because the setting of *10:01* is in the movie theater. Such crucial fragments leaving some readers with gaps in their respective narrative, and they confuse. For these readers, the advantage of multivocality in the print narrative is that it holds the connection and possible association among voices within the constraint of the print account. However, the possible association between such disparate cuts causes ambiguity and needs reader's determination for linking between items, events, and characters in the hypertext version. On the other hand, the print narrative may cut off other possible voices and alternate connections, which can be existed in the text, because Olsen adequately retains the simplicity of textual presentation by keeping away graphics and basically, any additional illustrations. Yet multivocality is depicted in the minds of countless characters waiting in their theater seats and their inner voices. Therefore, on one side, the way each character is told resembles an episode in the movie in which a person's experiences and inner voices are disclosed. On the other side, the way it is read by readers resembles correlated stories, which should be organized and sequenced by them. Indeed, with the large number of characters, readers may face a sense of disorientation but, by playing within diverse perspectives, they can organize their own stories and receive a very plural meaning of the novel which is the main function of the multicovality.

However, even though, fluctuation in narrating the story causes multivocality through by which the reader can explore various characters and their affairs but the reader may bewilder and confuse while reading or navigating such sub-stories in digital narrative as well. At this time, reader's response and ability for re-arranging different texts may cause the reader to see characters and their actions differently in each reading or navigating path. It should be remembered that such multivocality often encounters the reader of hyperfiction to a blurring experience of the unknown narrator's identity. The reader will regularly face an obscuring of who is narrating or which character is speaking. The fusion of lexias with diverse points of view, time and space, might make personalities confusing. Therefore, the reading



experience may focus on attempting to confirm who says what. In this regard, character's chapters/lexias signal conceivable reader's movements in time and place, and this technique makes it less necessary for the author to describe transitions very clearly in words. This ambiguity of narrators' identities also decreases the author's authority, since his voice does not appear clear and consistent. In fact, multivocality in the hypertext version is focused and amplified more in a sense that there are certain additional characters and voices within the digital narrative. Such external voices are introduced to readers via hyperlinks. For instance, the hyperlink of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" in Kenneth's episode or another hyperlink "die" in Josh Hartnett's story are the musical hyperlinks which can be regarded as hyperlinks that provide a plural understanding of the novel. In fact, within interactive structure, multivocality is realized as a structural criterion.

## **6. Conclusion**

The appraisal of multivocality suggests that the characterizations involve readers and their identities to dispose themselves in various situations and motivate them to respond to text varyingly. A consideration of hypertext version in which texts in collaboration with digital elements rouse readers' interactivities, as well as lead them to personalize themselves in numerous prescribed settings provide evidence that readers in their journey inside sub-narratives are not fulfilled by a single perspective. And insofar, as readers experience the presence in the multivocal novel, they, therefore, experience literary identities.

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