

**“The ‘blanketing’ effect of ordinary language”:
Donald Barthelme’s *Snow White* and American Myths**

Gordon E. Slethaug
Journal of American Studies 34 ● 2(Winter 2002)

“The ‘blanketing’ effect of ordinary language”:
Donald Barthelme’s *Snow White* and American Myths

Gordon E. Slethaug
(University of Hong Kong)

Although Donald Barthelme published his short novel *Snow White* in 1965, well before Roland Barthes’s important *Mythologies* was translated into English in 1972, demystification, demythologizing, and dis-enchantment were already more or less absorbed into American and European cultures. At the turn of the century theologians demythologized the Bible, in 1957 Barthes demystified popular culture in his French edition of *Mythologies*, and, in 1968 in the now-famous Johns Hopkins University conference, Barthes, along with Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault, deconstructed and demystified structuralism, in effect introducing post-structuralism to American academics and changing the academic landscape for the rest of the century.

As one of the main documents in cultural criticism and semiotic inquiry, Roland Barthes’s seminal essay, “Myth Today,” included in *Mythologies*, provides a helpful guide for reading cultural myths and ideology. In it, Barthes argues that “myth is a system of communication” and “type of speech chosen by history It can consist of modes of writing or of representations; not only written discourse, but also photography, cinema, reporting, sport, shows, publicity, all these can serve as a support to mythical speech. Myth can be defined neither by its object nor by its material, for any material can arbitrarily be endowed with meaning . . .” (118).

Barthes claims that pictures, fashion, music, animals, and the like “become a kind of writing as soon as they are meaningful: like writing, they call for a *lexis*” (119), and he demonstrates in several critical works how they can be interrogated and interpreted. As such, myth “what-goes-without-saying, the ideological abuse” (11)— is embedded in and part of popular culture and requires demystification. Myth is always ambiguous and slippery for it comprises what we take as “natural,”¹⁾ what culture takes for granted as a value system so that we hardly think about it; it is an unconscious presence, its meaning hidden behind its existence.

In *Snow White* Barthelme has indeed interrogated several American myths and their written and visual “sedimentary strata” (Foucault 3), and he delights in highlighting the self-consciousness of his interrogation. In one instance at the outset of the novel, the narrator describes Snow White’s beauty spots, which appear in eight places up and down the front and back of her body, but he represents these as a line of bullets on the page:

•
•
•
•
•
•
•
•

The failure of print to replicate the body suggests the lack inherent in, and utter failure of, language to describe the reality and complexity of experience. In still another instance, the witchlike Jane writes to Mr. Quistgaard, “We suffer today I believe from a lack of connection with each other. That is common knowledge, so common in fact, that it may not even be true” (50). Jane’s comment, which reinforces that of the inadequacy of the representation of beauty spots, reminds the

1) In another instance, the narrator observes that Snow White studied the difference between “the nature and nurture of women” (31), buzzwords of feminism from the ‘60s onward.

reader that common beliefs and forms of representation are at least partly falsehoods, for myth tries to naturalize itself and hide its meaning, as the novel's various narrators help the readers discover.

Barthelme's story of Snow White and her seven companions, who are certainly not a "natural" part of the American cultural landscape, is a primary instance of the "blanketing" effect of ordinary language" (102) and the way that myth hides its parasitic nature. Although her origins lie in European culture, for most Americans and nearly everyone else in the world nowadays, Snow White is identified with Walt Disney's film, *Snow White*, released in 1937 and further incarnations at California's Disneyland and Florida's Disneyworld. Barthelme distances himself from this Disneyfication by Americanizing the story in a disruptive way he gives very common American names to Snow White's "dwarfish" companions ---- Clem, Bill, Hubert, Henry, Edward, Kevin, and Dan. In the process Barthelme reminds readers that the Snow White tradition, as represented by the Grimm Brothers and other versions, was decidedly not all-American.²⁾ Moreover, the narrator reminds the readers of this older tradition:

WHAT SNOW WHITE REMEMBERS:

THE HUNTSMAN

THE FOREST

THE STEAMING KNIFE (45)

2) As Katalin Horn, Alejandro Herrero-Olaizola, and others remind us, there are various fairy tales lying behind Barthelme's novel and Walt Disney's animated cartoon, including: the 1812 and 1857 German versions of "Little Snow White" by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm; "The Death of the Seven Dwarves," a folk legend from Switzerland; "The Crystal Casket," a folk tale from Italy and Giambattista Basile's "The Young Slave" also from Italy; and the "Gold-Tree and Silver-Tree" from Scotland.

Rhetorical tag ends of those European texts also remain in Jane's remark: "I was fair once . . . I was the fairest of them all" (46), picking up the wicked stepmother's pleas to her magic mirror. Such reminders are strategically placed throughout *Snow White*, not to take the stories entirely back to their origins or merely to modernize them, but to look squarely at the twentieth-century Americanization of this legend, thereby exploring the construction of cultural narratives. K.C. Chase may well be right that "our idea of Snow White and her seven diminutive companions is one of innocence, complete with animated bluebirds warbling joyfully in the background" in short, the myth of soft, innocent femininity that is in tune with nature and that requires male protection but, if that is so, it is because we are fundamentally influenced by the visuals of the Walt Disney version, the so-called "third life" of the tale rather than second life written versions (Grimm et al) and first life oral tellings.³) After Disney's film and various theme parks, international audiences could hardly think otherwise, and this version is entirely "at home" and naturalized in our culture.

Because Barthelme does not follow Disney's sentimentalized "third life" tale that has overtaken other versions, it is tempting to argue that Barthelme, in his parody, goes back to a more original form or shows a dislike of contemporary cultural dreck — his term for the inauthentic in culture. I would argue, however, that, in presenting a contemporary twenty-two year old Snow White living with seven men in a '60s Manhattan commune, Barthelme suggests that all accounts of experience are always already second hand, filtered through language and previous narratives.

3) Horn remarks that "it may well be true that oral tradition and literary tradition are not completely separable; also that the sources of the Grimm Brothers were written literature, or not exclusively, oral. Moreover, it is certainly difficult to decide wither or not the tales about Snow White, collected since the Grimms, depend on them. . . . Furthermore, *Snow White* and other tales of the Grimms live a 'third life' . . . : worldwide diffusion through mass media, multiple applications in advertisements, in everyday commodities, adaptations in music, art, *Witz* and in literature" (273).

For instance, when Snow White longs for her prince, she wonders “*Which prince?* . . . Will it be Prince Andrey? Prince Igor? Prince Alf? Prince Alphonso? Prince Malcolm? Prince Donalbain? Prince Fernando? Prince Siegfried . . .” and so on (83). Snow White’s longings for a prince are wholly mediated by literature, music, and history. Even her hair, she acknowledges, is mediated by culture — “This motif, the long hair streaming from the high window, is a very ancient one I believe, found in many cultures, in various forms” (86) — and the dwarf Bill recognizes those links when he remarks on “the sexual meaning of hair itself, on which Wurst has written” (98). As these examples intimate, Barthelme’s view may be very like that of Fredric Jameson who has argued that all of us live in a prison-house of language in which our experience and beliefs are mediated, for better or worse, by the culture and expression that we inherit and shape. That, after all, is the nature of myth — experience so ideologically mediated and shaped that we live it without recognizing its signification.

What, then, besides the tale itself, has Barthelme taken from popular culture in *Snow White* that seems so “natural” and in need of demystification? Alejandro Herrero-Olaizola argues that “Barthelme’s text . . . revises interpretations of this narrative by including a wider reflection on literature, language, psychology, history, and feminism” (4). I accept this view but wish to take it still further and argue that the book is really *about* these subjects as cultural *myths*, and I wish to focus primarily on psychology, political ideology, and art. In addition to language, which has already been widely discussed in other essays, these three represent important aspects of the self, state, and cultural matrix of the American society. In building on *Snow White* narratives, Barthelme plays the role of the wicked stepmother, holding the mirror of American myth up to itself, suggesting that one text always bears a resemblance with others, that myth mirrors myth, and that American popular culture is deeply imbricated with, and implicated in, myth. In short, Barthelme’s text does not explore a living, breathing Snow White of some psychological depth who has an existence apart from Disney’s sentimental narrative

nor is it mainly about language and “flawed communication” (Pizer 330), but rather it interrogates the systemic American cultural myths of the twentieth century and, as such, is decidedly metamythical.

As suggested by Sandra Gilbert, Susan Gubar and Katalin Horn, interpretations of the traditional Snow White story do center on the psychological, and this certainly contributes to Barthelme’s narrative strategy.⁴⁾ According to Horn, the Snow White legend has been associated with “sexual phantasies, sexual problems, . . . Oedipal difficulties between mother and daughter,” the “process of individuation [and] the development of the mature personality” (275). This depiction of the traditional Snow White’s psychology is drawn straight from Freudian (Oedipal conflicts) and Jungian (individuation) constructs and interpretations.

These psychological views in themselves might be a clue to Barthelme’s strategies of representation, as Gilbert and Gubar argue, but he seems decidedly less interested in the psychological profile of Snow White than in the twentieth-century myth of the individual based upon dominant theories of sexual and psychological consciousness. To emphasize his awareness of the prevalence of psychology and psychological theories in American culture, Barthelme begins one chapter with an italicized statement, “*The psychology of Snow White,*” followed by the fairly mundane, “What does she hope for? ‘Someday my prince will come.’ By this Snow

4) According to Cristina Bacchilega, those who write contemporary incarnations of the story Barthelme, Angela Carter, and Robert Coover simultaneously legitimate “sexual reproduction” and ratify “narrative production” (3). In keeping with this double view, Christopher Lasch finds that Barthelme’s *Snow White* describes narcissistic behavior but lacks positive alternatives, while Jerome Klinkowitz and Ronald Sukenick believe that Barthelme’s short little novel is about writing and language. Indeed, Robert Morace calls it a “verbal vaudeville show” (4) designed to describe “the loss of their linguistic and (thinking of Orwell’s equation) political freedom, including the freedom to choose the extraordinary possibilities of language rather than accept the blanketed language of dwarf culture” (8). Similarly Jonathan Culler speaks of its revelation of “the clichés that make up our culture” (11), of the verbal rubbish that litters our linguistic landscape.

White means that she lives her own being as incomplete, pending the arrival of one who will 'complete' her" (76). Though the emphasis here is upon individual wholeness and completion, yet another chapter isolates Snow White's fears:

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SNOW WHITE:
IN THE AREA OF FEARS, SHE FEARS
MIRRORS
APPLES
POISONED COMBS (23)

Though some critics remark that Barthelme's "use of language such as vulva, excited groans, kinky, and groin" create a sense of someone "distinctly human. Filled with the all too real passions, jealousies and mercurial storms of any real flesh woman" (Chase), I would argue that these "distinctly human" terms and those explicit references to her physiological and psychological profile make the reader acutely aware of the currency and value of psychological and sexual cultural theory in twentieth-century America. Indeed, when Snow White longs to have two *real men*, instead of her seven dwarfish companions, she undercuts physical and psychological desire by commenting on those filmic and artistic versions that have taken the place of experienced reality: "It is possible of course that there are no more real men here on this ball of half-truths, the earth. That would be a disappointment. One would have to content oneself with the subtle falsity of color films of unhappy love affairs, made in France, with a Mozart score. That would be difficult" (48). In these examples, then, the allusions to Snow White's psychological make-up are deconstructed, undercut, and even retracted by references to an engagement with psychological constructs and theories.

Snow White herself is not the only one whose psychology is extended to the reader and then retracted. Her companions suffer from absent fathers (24-25), and "Bill can't bear to be touched We speculate that he doesn't want to be

involved in human situations any more. A withdrawal. Withdrawal is one of the four modes of dealing with anxiety Dan does not go along with the anxiety theory. Dan speculates that Bill's reluctance to be touched is a physical manifestation of a metaphysical condition that is not anxiety" (10).⁵ Snow White appears to agree with Dan and speculates that Bill has not taken his turn with her in the shower "because of his reluctance to be touched" (40). Snow White is, of course, familiar with psychology, having studied it in college — "mind, consciousness, unconscious mind, personality, the self, interpersonal relations, psychosexual norms, social games, groups, adjustment, conflict, authority, individuation, integration and mental health" (31) — but her companions are also familiar with it, a number of them are in therapy, and the psychiatrist himself is the subject of dinner conversation. By revealing how much the characters know about the field of psychology and believe or question its methods, the narrator calls attention to the very process of theorizing the self. Consequently, the comments do not so much emphasize Snow White's or Bill's psychological profile as the American acceptance of the existence and value of the individual self and models of psychology and psychiatric care.

These psychological models go still further into American culture for certain images are immediately identified with psychological theories, especially those of Freud. For instance, the narrator — here a collective of Snow White's seven companions — gives psychological theories a tweak by observing that three women viewed from the window-washing platforms resemble a target: "We are very much tempted to shoot our arrows into them, those targets. You know what that means" (14). The collective narrator, of course, plays with the Freudian observation that arrows and guns are phallic objects, though in the next episode when Snow White

5) By commenting on Dan's view that Bill's revulsion against touching is part of a metaphysical condition, perhaps some existential angst, the narrator specifically links psychological and metaphysical theories, once again resulting in comments about theories of the self rather than the psychological condition, and this is very much part of the popular culture.

claims to have written a four-page poem, the narrator does not show the same degree of self-awareness about the phallic representation of pens and writing.

One does not have to watch more than one Woody Allen film or read many of John Barth's postmodern tales, for example, to recognize how popular culture has been imbued with Freud's and Jung's psychological theories and how their key images and symbols have become the myths that twentieth-century people live by. Indeed, of the theories that have most shaped the twentieth-century consciousness, certainly Freud's theory of the self is at the top of the list.

Also at the top of that list would be Marx's theories of government and economics, and Barthelme shows that theories of the state are just as important to the moderns—and in need of demystification—as Freud's, and he alerts the reader to that recognition early in the book. The collective narrator, comprising the voices of Snow White's seven male companions, seems instilled with the American mystique, taking it for granted without an awareness of other possibilities. Clem, one of the companions, expresses his regard for America's "long democratic tradition which is anti-aristocratic," but is troubled that "egalitarianism precludes princeliness," that money is not more evenly distributed, and that the richest have "the faces of effete homosexuals" (147). He shows his limitations and prejudices, and perhaps those of Americans in general, by blurring the distinctions between democracy, manners, wealth, and gender. Of course, the dwarves are good capitalists, washing windows on tall buildings, manufacturing plastic buffalo humps, which they know to be trash (103), and making vats of baby food with faux-Chinese names. As Snow White herself observes though with some disdain "here everyone has a penny. Here everyone worships the almighty penny" (108).

Since each dwarf is born in a national park, together they affirm, "the common experiences have yoked us together forever under the red, white and blue" (68).⁶

6) Barthelme implicitly draws a comparison between the red, white, and blue of the United States with red and communism. However, he also displaces the equation of red and communism by other allusions: Snow White's red lips and towel, the

That birth in a national park should be linked to home and political ideology is seriously called into question, as is the view that marching music should shape a political consciousness, e.g., the evil Hogo de Bergerac loves band music that will induce American patriotism, “reduce you to tears, in the right light by speaking to you from the heart about *your* land, and what a fine land it is, and that it is your land really, and my land, this land of ours — that particular insight can chill you, rendered by a marching unit” (80). That the circumstances of birth or the sounds of music can induce patriotism and nationalism and that capitalism can be conflated with democracy and homosexuality suggest the shallowness of political beliefs and interrogate myths of democracy, freedom, capitalism, and individual rights.⁷⁾ Indeed, all of these are seriously undermined for the companions eventually agree that “voting has turned out to be a damned impertinence” and pay a youth to tear down election posters and stop the voting (152). They also erect an underground bunker with mirrors and a trained dog to keep Snow White under surveillance. Their commitment to democratic principles is weak and their actions increasingly fascist. These companions are truly dwarfish in stature, and through them Barthelme suggests that an uncritical assessment of myth leads to ignorance and brutality.

While Barthelme uses the dwarves and Hogo to critique western political beliefs, he uses Snow White to present an opposing political and cultural perspective, which is also demystified. Snow White does not think of culture and politics in the same way as her seven companions. Her imagination extends further as does her

bishop's red mantelpiece (110); Bill's red towel used to tie up the money for the vault (118), Kevin's red blushes (136), the rose-red wine stains the dwarves leave on a restaurant tablecloth, and the blood that falls from Hogo's thumb as he sharpens his kris to harm Paul. Finally, there is the red and yellow shower curtain (129). Perhaps the red and yellow shower curtain also relates to the Chinese flag.

7) Hogo also tries to bargain with the Internal Revenue Service when he informs on the dwarves' failure to report all their money, and he told that he will receive only eight percent of the money collected because patriotism is a factor as well (127).

taste, and she often expresses her discontent with the limitations of those around her. Her companions, for example, often come to expect certain typically American foods such as a leg of mutton or fried catfish, but Snow White disappoints them by serving “fried calamaretti or some other Eastern dish” (146). She reinforces her preference for Eastern food and culture by her choice of vocabulary in pondering whether “the Japanese are happier than their piglike Western contemporaries” (142). The collective dwarfish narrator is often perplexed by Snow White’s different views, but even when it / they seem to know of them, they do not understand them. So, the narrator notes that she comments, “Let a hundred flowers bloom” (22), a mystifying allusion for the male companions but a comment historically linked to Mao and the cultural revolution. Although the companions know that it is Chinese, observe that Snow White has taken to wearing “People’s Volunteers trousers,” tire of red flags and bugles nailed to the dining room table, and dislike finding copies of “Chairman Mao poems in the baby food,” they do not make the connection between her, Marxist theories of politics, and non-western political ideology.⁸⁾ Indeed, while one of them — Dan — discourses on the significance of Snow White’s red towel to her identity in almost the same breath that he says, “That was the trouble with being a Chinese. Too much detachment” (107), none of them draws connections between Marx, Mao, the Chinese, and red towels. While they draw all sorts of connections and make easy links between their places of birth and political ideology, they are blinkered toward another ideology because it cannot hide itself in western culture in the same way as democracy and capitalism can.

By references to Chinese culture and Marxist ideology, then, the text leads the reader to fill in the blanks (as he / she always must, anyway) and recognize the place of Marxism in the international scheme of governments — especially as it relates to the American government during the Cold War period in which this book

8) She is not, of course, the only one in the text linked to things Chinese: the witchlike Jane loves to have her “cup of Chinese-restaurant tea at 10 a.m.” (46) before going about her malicious activities.

is produced. Then, too, although the commune-style setting of this book especially relates to the sexual revolution of the '60s, communes on the West and East Coasts arose for political reasons as well, based on disillusionment with conventional American family life and political ideology. The allusions to Maoism thus raise profound questions about American myths of democracy and freedom along with opposing Marxist ideologies embraced by the Chinese and Russians.

Of course, Barthelme could simply have referred to Marx and Russian communism in this Cold War period, but, by pointing to Marx and Mao, he indicates in what ways ideology travels and becomes naturalized, though perhaps contradictory in culture at the same time. For example, the male companions seem not to notice the discrepancy between their western notions of the individual psychological self and Snow White's radical eastern communist ideals of the mass. Barthelme's narrative is sprinkled throughout with allusions to China and the Far East, but these become dispersed in such a way that their possible meanings are displaced.⁹⁾ Through their inappropriateness to the New York commune seemingly based upon sex, they signal the ways that the narrative interrogates a rich variety of American myths.

Psychology and political ideology are not, however, the only defining American myths that Barthelme examines. Another concerns art and transcendence, which are closely related to a sense of self, and these are key because the Snow White discourse comes out of nineteenth-century narratives that have been taken over (and overtaken) by those of the twentieth century. Nineteenth-century Romantics, of course, thought of art — both literature and pictorial art — as integrally related to nature, the two fundamentally tied to views of God and spiritual transcendence. However, later Romantics and twentieth-century Modernists thought that art replaced

9) For instance, the collective narrator comments on the low grade of pork ears in their Baby Ding Sam Dew, hoping that the shipper in Hong Kong will take better care next time (125), a comment that does not take political allusions anywhere.

nature and itself became the primary form of transcendence for the modern person. Barthelme shows an awareness of this cultural belief by writing a very short chapter entirely about art:

THE SECOND GENERATION OF ENGLISH ROMANTICS INHERITED THE PROBLEMS OF THE FIRST, BUT COMPLICATED BY THE EVILS OF INDUSTRIALISM AND POLITICAL REPRESSION. ULTIMATELY THEY FOUND AN ANSWER NOT IN SOCIETY BUT IN VARIOUS FORMS OF INDEPENDENCE FROM SOCIETY:

HEROISM

ART

SPIRITUAL TRANSCENDENCE (30)

And he wrote another short chapter entirely about literature:

IT WAS NOT UNTIL THE 19TH CENTURY THAT RUSSIA PRODUCED A LITERATURE WORTHY OF BECOMING PART OF THE WORLD'S CULTURAL HERITAGE. PUSHKIN DISPLAYED VERBAL FACILITY. GOGOL WAS A REFORMER. AS A STYLIST DOSTOEVSKY HAD MANY SHORTCOMINGS. TOLSTOY . . . (149)

Since Snow White has taken Oil Painting I and literature in college, she shows an awareness of the potency of art and writing and is able to talk about such

values in relation to abstract expressionism, action painting, and poetry. She can also critique the painting of her artist/hero Paul, asserting his “hard-edge” style to be unique (54).

Both Snow White and her designated hero Paul are artists searching for transcendence. Snow White is also able to write poetry, although the collective narrator — apparently her seven companions themselves has — to ask about her rhyme and theme and is able to understand only a little of what she writes. Snow White’s poem, then, remains between them “like an immense, wrecked railroad car” (65). As opposed to the art-conscious Snow White and Paul, the collective narrator (“we”) actually seems opposed to certain forms of art. The narrator had hoped that Paul “would take up his sword as part of the President’s war on poetry” but notes with dismay that Paul did not and that “pockets of poetry still exist in our great country, especially in the large urban centers,” but believes that they “ought to be able to wash it out totally in one generation” (61). Aesthetically and ideologically, then, the companions seem one with the United States and its president, while Snow White and Paul seem removed and critical of them.

Unlike that of Snow White, Paul’s art is not critiqued by the collective narrator, but another narrator does transmit his views. Paul is an artist/seeker who tries to find joy in life and hopes to achieve some great act of spiritual transcendence that will liberate him. He comments on the beauty and joy of dancing and is in awe of Snow White when he sees her standing naked in the window. He is not at all lascivious about it, but remarks, “Looking through this window is sweet. The sweetest thing that has happened to me in all my days. Sweet, sweet.’ Paul savored the sweetness of human communication, through the window” (155). His dreams for himself and others are sweet, and he searches for both religious and aesthetic transcendence in traveling with a religious group in Spain and explaining music to French citizens. To heighten his spiritual awareness, he joins a monastery in western Nevada.

Snow White, however, shows her human limitations by mistaking Paul’s qualities.

She has longed for such a hero with the “blood of kings and queens and cardinals in his veins” (176) — rational, understanding, sensitive, aesthetic, artistic, and spiritual, but she feels no deep love for him and thinks of him as only “*pure frog*” (175) until he consumes her drink, poisoned by Jane. Then, too late, she recognizes her hero, but in this short novel heroes do not last. A man such as Paul who “tries to break out of this bag that we are in,” (185) and strives for excellence, beauty, and transcendence has a difficult time in this world of half-truths and myths. Perhaps his views and aspirations, too, are myths, but they hurt no one and make the world a better place. His sweetness, strong feeling, artistic qualities, and admiration of reason are admirable qualities that help him see through the concealed myths and structure of culture. In Barthelme’s world such characteristics provide a strong antidote for the various myths that constrict us and cloud our cultural consciousness.

Snow White, then, is a book dealing with a number of subjects, not just to say something about their content, but to explore the very processes of myth making and the need for demystification. Though the book is rooted in popular culture, it interrogates the larger social constructs of self, political ideology, and artistic expression to suggest the broad range of myths that define the American and which need to be deconstructed so that the United States can contemplate fertile alternatives. Even though those alternatives will also be grounded in myth.

Works Cited

- Bacchilega, Cristina. “Cracking the Mirror Three Re-Visions of ‘Snow White.’” *Boundary 2* 15.3/16.1 (1988): 1-25.
- Barth, John. Thinking Man’s Minimalist: Honoring Barthelme. (*The New York Times Book Review*), September 3, 1989.
- Barthelme, Donald. *Not-Knowing: The Essays and Interviews of Donald Barthelme*.

- Ed. Kim Herzinger. New York: Random House,
 _____. *Snow White*. New York: Scribner Paperback Fiction (Simon & Schuster),
 1967.
- Barthes, Roland. "Myth Today," *Mythologies*. 117-174.
 _____. *Mythologies*. Trans. Annette Lavers. London: Paladin Books, 1973.
- Chase, K. C. "Storytelling & Ideology." http://www.cwrl.utexas.edu/~mcnicholas/critical_tools/e3141_fall_1999/discussion/barthelme/messages/943739197.html
- Culler, Jonathan. "Junk and Rubbish: a Semiotic Approach." *Diacritics: A Review of Contemporary Criticism*. 15.3 (1985): 2-13.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. Trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith. London and New York: Routledge, 1972 (reprint 1989).
- Gilbert, Sandra M. and Susan Gubar. *The Madwoman in the Attic*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1979.
- Gilman, Richard. "Barthelme's Fairy Tale." *Critical Essays on Donald Barthelme*. Ed. Richard F Patterson.
 _____. *The Confusion of Realms*. New York City: Random House, 1969.
- Gordon, Lois. *Donald Barthelme*. Boston and New York: Twayne, 1981.
- Herrero-Olaizola, Alejandro. "Revamping the Popular in *Snow White* and *Pubis angelical*: The Residual Fictions of Donald Barthelme and Maneul Puig." *Journal of Popular Culture*. 32. 3 (1988): 1-16.
- Horn, Katalin. "The hair is black as ebony. . .". The Function of *Mrchen* in Donald Barthelme's *Snow White*." *Orbis Litterarum*. 38 (1983): 271-79.
- Jameson, Fredric. *The Prison-House of Language: A Critical Account of Structuralism and Russian Formalism*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1972.
- Klinkowitz, Jerome. *The Self-Apparent Word: Fiction as Language / Language as Fiction*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1984.
- Lasch, Christopher. *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations*. New York: Warner Books, 1979.
- Morace, Robert A. "Donald Barthelme's *Snow White*: The Novel, the Critics, the

- Culture." *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*. 26.1 (1984): 1-10.
- Patterson, Richard F. Ed. *Critical Essays on Donald Barthelme*. New York: G. K. Hall, 1992.
- Pizer, John. "The Disenchantment of Snow White: Robert Walser, Donald Barthelme and the Modern/Postmodern Anti-Fairy Tale." *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature*. 17.3-4 (1990): 330-47.
- Sukenick, Ronald, "The New Tradition." *Partisan Review* 39 (Fall 1982): 580-88.
- Wagner-Martin, Linda and Charles Molesworth. *Donald Barthelme Instructor Guide* University of Missouri, 1986.
<http://college.hmco.com/english/heath/syllabuild/iguide/barthelm.html>
- Zeidner, Lisa. "The Way of Don B." University of Houston, 1990.
<http://www.eskimo.com/~jessamyn/barth/nytbr.html>