Breaking the Magic Code:
Finding the Pattern of Goodkind's Fantasy Fiction *Wizard's First Rule*

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims at identifying the pattern of the story through analyzing the fantasemes and the ways the story constructs the logic of the secondary world. Utilizing a qualitative research particularly descriptive method, the study adopts Nikolajeva's (1988) fantasy theory. The study found that the fantasy story construction is presented through combination of fantasemes. From the analysis of the fantasemes it is clear that the story utilizes a pattern linear to common fantasy fiction, however it also creates a new pattern. Similar to other fantasy stories, this story has a character traveling and leaving home, challenged and helped, performing a task and gaining triumph. The differences are in the absence of primary world which is replaced by heterotopias. The story constructs the logic of the secondary world through following magic laws, namely limitation and consistency.

INTRODUCTION

Fantasy fiction is delineated as stories possessing significant feature, namely the presence of magic including magical beings or events, unrealistic world, the mysterious sense, a wonder, and the destruction of the natural laws (Nikolajeva, 1988). Those magical elements are the important elements that characterize a text as a fantasy fiction.

The children and young adult's literature including magical elements as stated above are classified into fantasy fiction. One of the examples of fantasy fiction is Terry Goodkind's *Wizard's First Rule* (1994)—the first book of *The Sword of Truth* series—sets in the invented world. The main character, Richard who lives in the free land of magic called Westlands is named to be the Seeker of the Truth. He has task to find a magical box to stop evil power of Darken Rahl in the lands of magic Midlands and D'Hara. To do his task, he is supplied by a magical thing namely the Sword of the Truth, and accompanied by a wizard, a mother confessor, and a boundary warden. In the end, Richard succeeds in finding the box and killing Rahl. The present study chooses to use *Wizard's First Rules* because it is a good example of narrative containing several magical elements to reveal how the story constructed as fantasy fiction; and to show the ways in which the story constructs the logic of the secondary world. The study adopted theoretical framework from Nikolajeva (1988) called *the magic code*. She identified

The use of magical pattern in fantasy for children. According to her theory, there are five key concepts in revealing the nature of fantasy, namely magic space, magic time, magic passage between the two worlds, magic passage, and magic laws. The description and presentation of the analysis are critically analyzed and interpreted by means of uncovering how the story is constructed as a fantasy literature and investigating the ways in which the story constructs the logic of the secondary world in the text. Therefore, by analyzing *Wizard's First Rules*, it reveals the way how the story tells the fantasy story

construction and the logic of the secondary world in it.

Fantasy fiction possesses a number of features that only inherent to this genre (Nikolajeva, 1988). The features are the narrative elements that she terms as *fantasemes*. According to her, fantasemes are used to introduce magic surroundings, events, figures, objects, and their interaction in a certain story where its presence constructs a text as fantasy genre. Specifically, she categorizes fantasemes into four major fields among others are magic space, magic time, magic passage between two worlds, and the impact of this passage. She explains that the presence of fantasemes is what constructs a text as fantasy genre. Therefore, an analysis of fantasemes can show how the story is constructed as fantasy fiction.

Fantasemes are interrelated where the analysis of one element narrative fantasy cannot be separated from the others. It is in line with Nikolajeva's notion that every element is related to each other. She uses Bakhtin's notion of *chronotope*

to explain the relation. According to Bakhtin (1975; cited in Nikolajeva, 1988, p.24), chronotope means "a significant connection of temporal and spatial relations artistically assimilated by literature". From this view chronotope is defined as the relation between place and time. Widely, contextualizing chronotope in fantasy fiction, the fantasy cronotope is the unity of different fantasemes which can be used to describe the secondary world of the story (Nikolajeva, 1988; cited in Salminen, 2009). Furthermore, this relation of fantasemes and interrelated fantasemes can help the writer to find the pattern of *Wizard's First Rule* fantasy fiction.

Besides the narrative elements or fantasemes and its relation or chronotope, fantasy fiction has some important rules. Nikolajeva (1988) formulates the rules in the term of the magic law that consists of two main laws: limit and consistency to make a fantasy fiction logical for the readers. Gates, Steffel, and Molson (2003) approve Nikolajeva's notion of the magic law in which the limit and consistency

should be involved in writing fantasy where the laws aim to help evaluating the literature which is read. The laws can help the study to evaluate the logic of the secondary world presented in the novel.

METHODOLOGY

The data of analysis were collected through reading and re-reading to *Wizard's First Rule* by Goodkind for several times. It is because the study mostly deals with narrative textual analysis. The data were in the form of words, utterances, and dialogues that were critically analyzed and purposively selected and directed to answer the research questions. The collected data were categorized into how every element of fantasy which appeared in the text was related each other, thus it formed an intact narrative. The collected data were analyzed and categorized by using the framework of the magic code as proposed by Nikolajeva.. The result of the study is expected to provide new insights for understanding fantasy fiction through a deep analysis of the nature of fantasy.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The fantasy fiction *Wizard's First Rule* is constructed based on a pattern that makes this story different from the other fantasy fictions. The story follows linear pattern reflected in magic passage and magic time, however develop its own pattern of the other elements presented in magic space and magic impact.

The magic space in *Wizard's First Rule* presents heterotopias. At the beginning, the story seems set in the primary world where the Westlands is depicted as a land that has towns and woods. This depiction in fact, follows the rule of consistency, which means the author creates its physical nature similar to structure of the fundamental physical nature in real world, such as reddish leafs in the autumn (Swinfen, 1984; cited in Nikolajeva, 1988). Another point is that one of the characters, Kahlan told about the history of the creation of the three lands. Before war their world just consists of two lands of magic, the Midlands and D'Hara. After war the Westland is created as a free land of magic. The three lands are separated by the

boundaries which are part of the underworld. Clearly, the invention of the Westland and the boundaries in the story indicates that the closed secondary world forms heterotopias where the Westland imitating the primary universe and the boundaries which are part of the underworld the land of death. According to Nikolajeva (2003), heterotopias refer to a multitude of discordant universes in which one world can differ greatly from each other. The concept of these heterotopias seems like the Chinese boxes' metaphor.

The textual evidences of magic space show that, the absence of primary world in *Wizard's Fisrt Rule* is replaced by the presence of heterotopias. Those heterotopias are what make the novel different from another fiction. Mostly, a fantasy fiction presenting multitude worlds or heterotopias also presents the primary world in the story. In other words, generally fantasy fiction presenting heterotopias are open world. One example is in Edith Nesbit's short story *The Town in the Library in the Town in the Library* (1898) where some characters from the primary world gets into toys town built by them, and that town there is one more town (cited in Nikolajeva, 1988).

However, the complex structure of the secondary world presented heteretopias does not influence the idea of magic time to be complex too. Although there is time distortion found, it does not influence the whole narrative story. In *Wizard's First Rule*, the concept of time is linear. It is in line with Nikolajeva's (1988) statement that the times of heterotopias develop the concept of simultaneity of all times.

The textual evidences of the magic passages demonstrate that Richard's adventure follows some phases of the basic plot of fairy tales inherited by fantasy. Nikolajeva (2003) mentions that the plot includes the hero leaves home; meets helpers and opponents; goes through trials; performs a task; and gains triumph. It also has inherited some essential conflicts and patterns, for example the fight between good and evil. The textual evidences also strengthen Nikolajeva's statements that in fantasy the ancient pattern of

the mythical passage is reflected on the passage from the primary to the secondary chronotope.

The adventure from one of heterotopias to the closed secondary world in *Wizard's Fisrt Rule* gives the magic impact to the traveler's identity, Richard. Before he leaves home (the Westland, one of heterotopias), he is a woods guide. Then, he is named as the Seeker of Truth which is his new identity in the closed secondary world, the Midlands. He still keeps his identity as a woods guide although he is attached new identity. In the middle of his travelling he is arrested by his opponent, Rahl. He becomes Rahl's apprentice's slave. He gets new identities during his adventure, but he keeps his original identity as a woods guide until he succeeds defeat Rahl. Those various identities reveal that the main character's adventure from a heterotopia to closed secondary worlds has attached various identities to him where his original identity from the beginning never changes until he gains triumph.

Additionally, the adventure gives the character a moral result namely about love. As stated by Nikolajeva (1988), many fantasy authors make the adventure into the secondary chonotrope as a test to get a moral and psychological evolution as its result. Before his adventure, he feels miserable because his father death. At that time, she meets Kahlan who comes from the Midlands. During his adventure, he is accompanied and guided by her. In the end, he gets Kahlan love.

The logic of secondary world in *Wizard's First Rule* is constructed through following the magic laws namely limitation and consistency (Nikolajeva, 1988). One example of the limitation can be seen in the most powerful magical object in the secondary world of text that is the three boxes of Orden.

> "an ancient and dangerous magic of immense power. It's a magic spawned from the earth, from life itself. It is held in three vessels called the three boxes of Orden. The magic is dormant until the boxes are put into play, as it is called. To do so is not easy. It requires a person who has knowledge gained from long scholarship and who can call upon

considerable power on his own. Once a person has at least one of the boxes, the magic of Orden can be put in play. He then has one year from that time to open a box, but he must have all three before any will open. They work together; you can't simply have one and open it. If the person who puts them in play fails to acquire all three, and to open one within the allotted time, he forfeits his life to the magic. There is no going back. Darken Rahl must open one of the boxes, or die. On the first day of winter, his year is up." (chapter 9, p. 76-77)

The textual evidence above shows that the boxes of Orden do not only have massive power, but also have restrictions, namely the boxes requires a person who has knowledge how to open the boxes right; the boxes also should be put together to be opened in right time which is on the first day of winter; and someone who open the boxes in wrong way can die. It clears that the author shows the restriction and the danger of the magic.

The second law that constructs the logic in the text is consistency. The nature of chronotope in the text follows a firm basis in primary world. One example is the season in the story. At that time, the story set in autumn. The story begins from the free land of magic, the Westland.

> …, Richard spotted the purplish red autumn leaves of a small nannyberry tree, ….
> ….
> Richard had been on that part of the trail many times. In the spring it was wet and soggy down by the lake, but this late in the year it would be dry. (Chapter 1, p.3-4)

The textual evidence above shows that the natures of autumn in the story are consistent with the nature of autumn in the real world, namely red leaves and dry. Then, when the story moves to the land of magic, the season is autumn and the natures of the season do not change.

> Wind and rain bowed the long grass in broad slow waves as the two of them made their way across the open, flat plain. … they were near the Mud People's territory. Richard followed silently behind, keeping her

under his watchful eye, as
always.
….
Autumn was wearing on,
and their time was
dwindling. Still, the Mud
People might not help
them, and then the time
would be wasted. (Chapter
22, p.210)

The textual evidence shows that the
story sets in the Mud People's
territory where that place are part of
the Midlands, the land of magic. It
also shows that the season has same
characteristic with the nature of
autumn in the real world, namely
wind and rain. It indicates that the
story is logical.

CONCLUSION

Referring to the above explanation, it
can be inferred that *Wizard's First
Rule* is constructed through
following both linear pattern and
inventing the new ones. Similar to
the other fantasy fiction, this story
tells about a main character traveling
and leaving home, challenged and
helped, performing a task and
gaining triumph—these are the
common pattern of fantasy fictions.
However, the distinctive features are

in the creation of heterotopias.
Commonly, fantasy fictions are set in
two worlds, primary and secondary
world in which the main character(s)
travel from the first to the latter. In
Wizard's First Rule there is no
primary world, instead, the author
creates heterotopias which imitates
the primary universe and the land of
death. In addition, the story
constructs the logic of the secondary
world through following magic laws,
namely limitation and consistency.

The study suggests that more
studies of fantasy literature be
conducted because fantasy is one of
popular genres in literature for
children and young adults. This study
is also expected to motivate future
readers and researchers to better
understand about fantasy literature.

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