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INTEGRATSIYASI ASOSIDA RIVOJLANISH ISTIQBOLLARI
RESPUBLIKA ILMIY-AMALIY KONFERENSIYASI
VOLUME-3, ISSUE-05

TEXT, AUTHOR, AND CHARACTER RELATIONS IN POSTMODERN
METAFICTION

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Abstract

This article investigates the discursive relationships among text, author, and character in postmodern metafiction. Traditional literary narratives generally establish clear distinctions among these elements by presenting authors as invisible creators and characters as independent fictional entities functioning within stable narrative structures. Postmodern metafiction, however, destabilizes such boundaries and reconstructs literary authority through self-reflexive discourse. The study applies qualitative literary analysis and comparative narratological methods to selected works by John Fowles and David Lodge. Particular attention is devoted to authorial intrusion, character self-awareness, and textual autonomy as metafictional devices. Findings reveal that postmodern fiction transforms conventional narrative hierarchies and creates multidimensional interactions among literary participants. These interactions reshape readers' perceptions of fiction, authorship, and narrative reality.

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Keywords: metafiction, postmodernism, discourse analysis, authorial intrusion, narrative self-consciousness, textuality

Introduction

The emergence of postmodern literary theory significantly transformed conventional understandings of narrative representation and textual authority. Classical narrative traditions commonly presented literature as an imitation of reality, where authors remained invisible behind fictional structures and characters functioned independently within coherent narrative worlds. Such narratives attempted to create an illusion of realism through chronological progression and stable narrative perspectives.

However, postmodern writers increasingly questioned these assumptions by emphasizing the constructed nature of literary texts. According to Waugh (1984), metafiction is "fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artifact" (p. 2). Rather than concealing literary mechanisms, metafiction foregrounds them and exposes the process of narrative creation.

Linda Hutcheon (1988) argues that postmodern narratives challenge the notion of objective literary truth and reveal narrative representation as a constructed process. Similarly, Robert Scholes (1979) defines metafiction as a literary practice that examines its own fictional procedures while simultaneously questioning relationships between literature and reality.

John Fowles and David Lodge frequently employ such metafictional strategies. Their works illustrate the shifting relations among textual elements and demonstrate how narrative authority becomes unstable through self-conscious discourse.

Research Gap

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Although previous studies have examined metafiction from structural and narratological perspectives, relatively limited attention has been devoted to discourse relations among authorial presence, textual agency, and character construction.

Aim of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the dynamic relationship among text, author, and character in postmodern metafictional discourse.

Materials and Methods

The research employs qualitative literary analysis and comparative narrative methodology. Selected texts include John Fowles's *Mantissa* and David Lodge's *Changing Places*.

Theoretical interpretation is based on:

Waugh's theory of metafiction (1984)

Hutcheon's theory of postmodern poetics (1988)

McHale's theory of ontological uncertainty (1987)

Currie's analysis of metafictional discourse (1995)

Results

The analysis identified several major patterns.

Authorial Intrusion and Narrative Authority

Traditional fiction generally attempts to conceal authorial intervention. However, postmodern narratives frequently make the author visible within fictional structures.

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In *Mantissa*, Fowles repeatedly interrupts narrative progression and foregrounds the process of literary production. These interventions destabilize the authority of the narrator and reveal narrative construction itself.

Character Self-awareness

Metafictional characters frequently demonstrate awareness of their fictional existence. Such characters challenge conventional literary assumptions and become active participants in narrative discourse.

According to Currie (1995), metafiction often creates characters that function simultaneously as narrative agents and critical observers of textual construction.

Textual Autonomy

The text itself acquires an independent discursive function. Rather than serving as a transparent medium, the text becomes an active participant in meaning production.

Discussion

The findings support Waugh's (1984) argument that metafiction reveals literary construction and destabilizes representational certainty.

Similarly, McHale (1987) states that postmodern literature shifts emphasis from epistemological concerns toward ontological questions concerning reality itself.

Conclusion

Postmodern metafiction reconstructs relationships among text, author, and character by replacing hierarchical structures with multidimensional interactions. Consequently, literary texts become self-conscious systems that invite active reader participation.

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