

METAFICTIONAL DISCOURSE AND THE DECONSTRUCTION OF LITERARY REALITY

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Abstract

This article examines the role of metafictional discourse in the deconstruction of literary reality within postmodern fiction. Unlike traditional narratives that seek to maintain coherence and represent reality through stable narrative structures, postmodern metafiction deliberately destabilizes assumptions concerning truth, representation, and textual authority. Through qualitative literary analysis and discourse-based interpretation, this study investigates how self-reflexive narration, narrative fragmentation, authorial intrusion, and ontological uncertainty function as mechanisms of literary deconstruction. Selected works by John Fowles are analyzed within the theoretical frameworks of metafiction and postmodern narrative studies. The findings demonstrate that metafictional discourse transforms literary reality into a dynamic and unstable construct, requiring readers to participate actively in meaning production. The study concludes that postmodern metafiction challenges conventional

literary systems and reconstructs narrative reality through self-conscious textual practices.

Keywords: *metafiction, postmodernism, literary reality, discourse analysis, deconstruction, narrative experimentation*

Introduction

The emergence of postmodern literature produced significant changes in the understanding of narrative representation and fictional reality. Traditional literary narratives generally attempted to establish coherent fictional worlds in which reality appeared stable and objectively represented. Realist narratives commonly relied on chronological structures, unified perspectives, and transparent narration in order to create the illusion of authenticity.

However, postmodern writers increasingly questioned the assumptions underlying representational certainty. Literary texts gradually shifted from attempts to imitate reality toward examinations of how reality itself is produced through language and narrative structures.

Patricia Waugh (1984) defines metafiction as fiction that systematically draws attention to its own constructed nature. Metafiction does not merely tell stories; rather, it explores the process through which stories are created. Consequently, readers become aware of literary artificiality and are encouraged to question assumptions regarding narrative truth.

Linda Hutcheon (1988) similarly argues that postmodern fiction simultaneously constructs and destabilizes narrative meaning. Rather than presenting fixed interpretations, postmodern narratives expose the mechanisms of representation itself.

Brian McHale (1987) further suggests that postmodern fiction shifts attention from epistemological questions such as "How can reality be understood?" toward ontological questions such as "Which reality exists?" and "What constitutes reality within fiction?"

Research Gap

Although numerous studies have explored the structural features of metafiction, relatively limited attention has been devoted to the discursive mechanisms through which metafiction deconstructs literary reality. Existing studies frequently emphasize narrative experimentation while providing insufficient examination of how discourse itself destabilizes fictional worlds.

Aim of the Study

This study aims to investigate the role of metafictional discourse in challenging conventional literary reality and reconstructing narrative representation.

Materials and Methods

This research employs qualitative literary analysis and discourse-oriented interpretation.

Primary texts include:

- John Fowles — *Mantissa*
- John Fowles — *The French Lieutenant's Woman*

The study applies comparative narratological methods and theoretical interpretation based upon:

- Waugh's theory of metafiction (1984)
- Hutcheon's theory of postmodern poetics (1988)
- McHale's theory of postmodern fiction (1987)

- Currie's theory of metafictional discourse (1995)
- Derrida's theory of deconstruction (1978)

The analysis focuses on:

- narrative fragmentation;
- narrator intervention;
- self-reflexive discourse;
- ontological uncertainty;
- reconstruction of fictional reality.

Results

Narrative Fragmentation and Reality Disruption

The findings indicate that narrative fragmentation functions as a primary mechanism of literary deconstruction within metafictional discourse. Traditional narratives typically rely upon chronological progression and coherent development. Postmodern fiction, however, frequently disrupts such structures.

In *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, Fowles intentionally interrupts narrative continuity by offering alternative endings and directly commenting on narrative decisions. Such strategies destabilize reader expectations and undermine assumptions regarding textual authority.

Hutcheon (1988) argues that postmodern texts frequently combine narrative construction with simultaneous self-questioning. Consequently, narrative progression becomes uncertain and multiple possibilities emerge.

Narrator Intervention and Self-conscious Narrative Structures

The analysis demonstrates that narrator intervention significantly contributes to the deconstruction of literary reality.

Unlike conventional narrators who remain invisible, postmodern narrators frequently reveal themselves and directly address readers.

In *Mantissa*, the narrator repeatedly comments upon literary creation and writing processes. Such interventions expose narrative artificiality and transform fictional representation into a discussion of literary production itself.

According to Waugh (1984), self-conscious narrative structures reveal that literary texts are constructed systems rather than transparent representations of reality.

Ontological Uncertainty and Multiple Realities

Another significant finding concerns ontological instability.

McHale (1987) argues that postmodern literature frequently creates uncertainty regarding the status of fictional worlds. Readers become unable to distinguish clearly between imagination and reality.

Within Fowles's fiction, multiple narrative possibilities coexist simultaneously. Rather than presenting a singular truth, narratives generate competing realities that remain unresolved.

Discussion

The findings support Derrida's (1978) argument that textual meaning remains unstable and continuously deferred through linguistic structures. Literary reality, therefore, cannot be considered fixed or complete.

Similarly, Currie (1995) suggests that metafiction creates awareness concerning relationships between fiction and reality. Readers are not passive recipients of meaning but active participants involved in interpretive processes.

The findings further confirm McHale's argument regarding ontological dominance within postmodern literature. Rather than asking whether fictional events are true, metafiction questions the nature of reality itself.

Consequently, literary reality becomes dynamic and discursively constructed.

Conclusion

The present study concludes that metafictional discourse functions as a significant mechanism in the deconstruction of literary reality within postmodern fiction. Narrative fragmentation, authorial intervention, self-conscious commentary, and ontological uncertainty collectively destabilize traditional assumptions concerning representation and textual authority.

Postmodern metafiction, therefore, transforms literature from a system of representation into a process of textual investigation and interpretation.

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