

Flights of Realism: Themes and Strategies in Postmodernist British and American Fiction

Notes on Metafiction

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Written in 1991, edited in 2014
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1. Introduction
2. Reflexivity and Metafiction: Some Related Concepts
3. The Reflexive Novel
4. Reflexive Devices in Fiction
5. Theory of Reflexive Fiction
6. Metafiction as Thought
7. Postmodernism and Reflexivity
8. Appendixes:
 - The Reflexive Moment in...
 - Some Metafictional Works
 - Some Other Writers of Metafiction
 - Bibliography on metafiction

1. Introduction

Possible definitions of metafiction:

1. Fiction about fiction.
2. Fiction which contains fiction within it.
3. Fiction which comments itself
4. Fiction which calls attention to its own fictional status
5. Fiction which experiments with its own form as a way of creating meaning

But literature has been defined by many critics as a continuous experiment in form, and indeed literature is in constant evolution, always reworking and transforming the genres, motifs and conventions inherited from a past tradition. Is all literature metafictional, then?

"Reflexive" is a better term in this case, because it is less specific, more inclusive. E.g. nonfiction can be reflexive (playing with the time of writing and the time of reading in a letter) or in the arts generally —reflexive structures of

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