

“METAFICTION AS A CROSS-CULTURAL NARRATIVE STRATEGY: A  
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF JOHN BARTH AND KHURSHID DAVRON”

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**Abstract.** *This study explores metafiction as a cross-cultural narrative strategy through a comparative analysis of John Barth and Khurshid Davron. Metafiction, characterized by self-reflexivity and narrative experimentation, serves as a bridge between different literary traditions.*

*The research examines how both writers employ metafictional techniques to challenge conventional storytelling, reconstruct reality, and engage readers in active interpretation. While Barth represents postmodern Western literature, Davron reflects national and cultural identity within Uzbek literature. The study highlights similarities and differences in their narrative approaches, demonstrating how metafiction functions within diverse cultural contexts.*

**Keywords:** *Metafiction, postmodernism, narrative strategy, cross-cultural analysis, John Barth, Khurshid Davron, self-reflexivity, Uzbek literature.*

**Introduction:** Metafiction has emerged as one of the most significant features of postmodern literature, emphasizing the artificiality of narrative and questioning the nature of reality and authorship. This literary technique allows writers to break the boundaries between fiction and reality, encouraging readers to reflect on the process of storytelling itself. John Barth, a prominent American postmodernist, is widely known for his experimental narrative techniques and metafictional style. In contrast, Khurshid Davron represents Uzbek literature, where metafiction is intertwined with historical, cultural, and philosophical elements. The purpose of this study is to analyze how metafiction operates as a cross-cultural narrative strategy in the works of these two authors and to identify both universal and culture-specific features.

**Main Body:** Metafiction is commonly defined as a narrative mode that self-consciously reflects on its own artificiality and interrogates the relationship between fiction and reality. As a central feature of postmodern literature, it challenges traditional narrative conventions, undermines authorial authority, and foregrounds the constructed nature of literary texts. In this context, metafiction not only functions as a stylistic device but also as a critical framework through which issues of meaning, representation, and interpretation are explored.

John Barth, as a prominent representative of American postmodernism, makes extensive use of metafictional strategies such as narrative fragmentation, intertextuality, self-reflexivity, and authorial intrusion. His works disrupt linear plot development and reject the idea of a unified, stable narrative voice. Instead, Barth constructs multi-layered texts in which the boundaries between author, narrator, and reader are deliberately blurred. This creates a participatory reading process, where meaning is not fixed but continuously negotiated. His frequent use of parody and irony further reinforces the postmodern tendency to question originality and to reinterpret existing literary traditions.

Moreover, Barth's metafictional practice reflects a broader epistemological concern with the limits of language and representation. By exposing the mechanics of storytelling, he reveals the inability of language to fully capture reality, thereby encouraging readers to approach texts with critical awareness. His narratives often remain open-ended, emphasizing ambiguity and multiplicity of interpretation as essential characteristics of postmodern fiction.

In contrast, Khurshid Davron incorporates metafictional elements within a culturally and historically grounded framework. His works demonstrate that metafiction is not limited to Western postmodernism but can also emerge in non-Western literary traditions with distinct functions and meanings. Davron's narratives frequently combine fictional techniques with historical themes, national identity, and philosophical reflection. Unlike Barth's predominantly experimental and playful approach, Davron's use of metafiction is more purposeful in terms of cultural expression.

His texts often seek to reinterpret historical events, preserve collective memory, and strengthen a sense of national consciousness. Through symbolic imagery and poetic language, Davron creates a narrative space where fiction and reality coexist, allowing readers to engage with both imaginative and historical dimensions simultaneously.

Additionally, Davron's metafiction reflects the influence of Uzbek oral and literary traditions, where storytelling has long served as a means of transmitting cultural values and historical knowledge. This synthesis of traditional and modern elements gives his work a unique position within the broader discourse of metafiction, demonstrating its adaptability across different cultural contexts.

A comparative analysis reveals that while Barth emphasizes formal innovation, narrative experimentation, and philosophical inquiry, Davron prioritizes cultural meaning, historical continuity, and identity formation. Despite these differences, both authors employ metafiction as a means of expanding the boundaries of conventional storytelling and encouraging active reader engagement. Therefore, metafiction can be understood as a cross-cultural narrative strategy that transcends literary boundaries while adapting to specific cultural and historical contexts. It retains its core function of self-reflexivity, yet its purpose and expression vary depending on the literary tradition in which it is employed.

Furthermore, this study highlights that metafiction functions differently across literary traditions while maintaining its core principle of self-awareness. It reveals the flexibility of metafiction as a narrative mode that can be reshaped according to diverse cultural, historical, and ideological contexts. This adaptability confirms its relevance not only within Western postmodernism but also within non-Western literary frameworks. Ultimately, the findings suggest that metafiction should be understood as a universal yet context-sensitive literary phenomenon. It expands the possibilities of storytelling, encourages critical engagement, and deepens readers' awareness of how narratives are constructed. Future research may further explore metafiction in other cultural settings, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of its role in global literature.

**Conclusion:** In conclusion, metafiction emerges as a significant and dynamic narrative strategy that transcends cultural and literary boundaries. The comparative analysis of John Barth and Khurshid Davron demonstrates that, despite differences in stylistic approach and cultural context, both authors effectively employ metafiction to challenge traditional narrative conventions and to redefine the relationship between fiction and reality.

Barth's works exemplify the postmodern tendency toward formal experimentation, self-reflexivity, and epistemological inquiry, emphasizing the instability of meaning and the active role of the reader in constructing interpretation. In contrast, Davron adapts metafiction to serve culturally specific purposes, integrating it with themes of historical memory, national identity, and philosophical reflection. His approach illustrates that metafiction is not merely an experimental technique but also a meaningful tool for cultural expression and preservation.

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