

SHAPING CHARACTERS THROUGH METAFICTIONAL DEVICES IN A.S. BYATT'S POSSESSION

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Starting from the second half of the 20th century, the Victorians became a source of inspiration for the contemporary, postmodern writers. The literary movement that involves the rewritings and re-imaginings of the Victorians has been defined as neo-Victorianism and it is closely linked with Postmodernism. Neo-Victorian novels draw on a postmodern discourse and their postmodern techniques serve as the foundation for the effect of drawing the readers' attention to the text as a literary artefact. This literary technique was defined by the critics as metafiction. In Possession: A Romance, A.S. Byatt draws the readers' attention to the process of storytelling and they are compelled to acknowledge the fictional status of the story and to become, at the same time, co-creators of its essence. The aim of this paper is to analyze the way in which the metafictional devices used in Possession contribute both to the fluidization of the action and most importantly, to the development of the characters. The self-reflective narration helps characters unfold throughout the novel, and the presence of the intertextual elements gets to define their psychological features, by means of their reactions, emotions, affections and impulses, and their interest in analyzing and understanding the meta-text.

Key words: metafiction, historiography, neo-Victorianism, ethics, aesthetics, intertextuality, characters

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