



THE CHARACTERISTICS OF POSTMODERN LITERATURE

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Xorijiy filologiya kafedrası v.b dotsenti

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Annotation. *This paper explores the defining characteristics of postmodern literature, which emerged in the postwar era as a reaction to modernist traditions and a reflection of contemporary complexities. Central features such as fragmentation, intertextuality, parody, hyperreality, playfulness, nonlinear time are analyzed.*

Key words: *postmodern literature, fragmentation, intertextuality, parody, hyperreality.*

Annotatsiya. *Ushbu maqolada urushdan keyingi davrda modernistik an'analarga javoban hamda zamonaviy murakkabliklarni aks ettiruvchi oqim sifatida shakllangan postmodern adabiyotning asosiy xususiyatlari o'rganiladi. Fragmentatsiya, intertekstualik, parodiya, giperreallik, o'yinchanlik, noxronologik vaqt kabi asosiy belgilar tahlil qilinadi.*

Kalit so'zlar: *postmodern adabiyot, fragmentatsiya, intertekstuallik, parodiya, giperreallik.*

The postwar era marked a remarkable evolution in literature, leading to what many critics and scholars label as postmodern literature. By examining the defining features of postmodern literature, we gain insight into how it reflects, critiques, and constructs narratives relevant to contemporary society.

Fragmentation stands out as a key trait of postmodern literature. Unlike the linear narratives typical of modernist works, postmodern texts frequently present disjointed plots, nonlinear timelines, and incomplete story arcs. Authors such as Thomas Pynchon and Don DeLillo employ fragmented storytelling techniques to convey the chaos and complexity of contemporary existence, mirroring a world overwhelmed by information and characterized by perceptual discontinuity. [Hawkes, 2003. 75] This fragmentation encourages readers to actively engage with the text, assembling different elements to construct their own meanings. Intertextuality is another crucial aspect of postmodern literature. This concept posits that texts are interconnected through references, adaptations, and quotations, rather than existing in isolation. [Kristeva, 1980. 36]

Postmodern writers often interact with prior works, weaving together a rich tapestry of narratives that both acknowledge literary predecessors and subvert them. Works like Pynchon's "Gravity's Rainbow" and DeLillo's "White Noise" illustrate



this interplay of historical, literary, and cultural references, challenging the reader's understanding of originality and authority.

Metafiction refers to a literary device where a work self-reflectively comments on its own fictional nature. Postmodern authors frequently blur the distinctions between reality and fiction, urging readers to recognize the constructedness of narrative. In "If on a Winter's Night a Traveler" by Italo Calvino, for example, the focus is on the form of storytelling itself, prompting readers to reflect on the act of reading and the conventions associated with it. This self-awareness inherent in metafiction raises questions about the nature of reality and narrative reliability. [Kristeva, 1980. P.36]

Parody and irony are prevalent techniques in postmodern literature, often used to critique cultural norms, styles, and ideologies. Writers frequently replicate and exaggerate particular genres, themes, or clichés to expose the absurdities underpinning traditional narratives. Kurt Vonnegut's "Slaughterhouse-Five", for instance, employs humor and irony to confront the serious implications of war, revealing the disconnection between the harsh realities of conflict and the narratives built around it. This playful yet critical approach challenges reader expectations and encourages deeper contemplation of storytelling's role in shaping human experiences.

Pastiche involves blending various styles, genres, and voices within a single narrative. [Jameson, 1991. P.3] Postmodern literature frequently draws upon an array of cultural and artistic influences, creating a collage effect. This characteristic allows authors to incorporate multiple perspectives and voices, showcasing the diversity of human experience. Tom Wolfe's "The Bonfire of the Vanities" intertwines highbrow and lowbrow cultural elements, reflecting the complexities of contemporary society and the interaction between social classes. Pastiche celebrates the eclectic nature of postmodern culture, rejecting the idea of a singular dominant narrative.

Hyperreality, a concept emphasized by theorists like Jean Baudrillard, represents a significant theme in postmodern literature. It refers to the difficulty of distinguishing reality from simulations or representations. In works such as "White Noise" by "DeLillo" and "The Crying of Lot 49" by Pynchon, characters navigate a world saturated with signs and symbols, where the lines between real and simulated experiences become increasingly nebulous.

This theme reflects the influence of media and technology on human perception, highlighting a society inundated with information that shapes and obscures reality.

Playfulness is an essential element of postmodern literature, exemplifying authors' readiness to experiment with form, structure, and language. This playful approach invites readers to engage with the text and cultivates a sense of wonder and exploration. In "The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy", Douglas Adams employs



absurd humor and whimsical situations to challenge conventional narrative forms, providing a lighthearted yet thought-provoking commentary on existence and the human condition. This playfulness underscores the role of imagination in shaping our understanding of reality.

Another important thing in postmodern literature is mixing genres. Writers do not always follow one style, like only drama or only fiction. They put many styles together in one story. For example, Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* is a mix of science fiction, politics, and real-life problems. This helps the writer to talk about more ideas.

Postmodern writers also like to play with language. They show that words are not always clear. Sometimes, words can mean different things. Samuel Beckett, for example, writes in a way that shows how hard it is to talk and understand. This makes readers think about how we use language.

The reader is also very important in postmodern literature. Readers need to think more and find their own meaning. The writer does not give one clear answer. Everyone can understand the story in their own way. Roland Barthes says that meaning comes from the reader, not only from the writer.

Postmodern books often show many cultures and countries. Writers like Salman Rushdie and Zadie Smith talk about people from different places. They write about race, culture, and identity. This helps readers learn about the world and how people live in different ways.

Finally, technology is also a big part of new postmodern books. Writers talk about the internet, social media, and digital life. For example, Dave Eggers' *The Circle* shows how technology changes people's lives. These books help us understand how we live with phones, computers, and information today.

In short, postmodern literature is special because it tries new things. It mixes styles, uses funny language, lets the reader decide, shows many cultures, and talks about modern life. It helps us understand the world around us in a different way

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