



ELEMENTS OF POSTMODERNISM IN UZBEK PROSE

Toxirova Dilnavoz Akbar qizi
A Teacher in Linguistics Department
Karshi State University
dilnavoz.toxirova7580@gmail.com

Abstract

This study explores the elements of postmodernism in Uzbek prose, focusing on how contemporary Uzbek writers reinterpret narrative form, meaning, and literary structure in the context of global postmodern thought. Postmodernism, as a literary and cultural movement, challenges fixed meanings, linear storytelling, and the authority of a single narrative voice. In Uzbek prose, these tendencies have become more visible particularly after the independence period, when writers began to experiment with new artistic forms and narrative strategies.

The research highlights several key postmodern features in Uzbek prose, including fragmentation of narrative structure, intertextuality, metafictional techniques, and the use of ambiguity and irony. These elements demonstrate a shift from traditional realist storytelling toward more open-ended and interpretative forms of writing. The study also shows that Uzbek postmodern prose often blends local cultural traditions, such as folklore and historical memory, with global literary influences, creating a hybrid narrative space.

Keywords: Postmodernism, uzbek prose, interpretation, intertextuality, metafiction, narrative structure, perspective.

Introduction

Postmodernism is a literary movement associated with the late twentieth century, characterized by distinctive principles in art, architecture, and literary criticism. It emerged as a reaction against modernism, separating itself from earlier traditions and firmly rejecting the theoretical foundations and ideological assumptions that had previously dominated artistic expression. Unlike conventional literary approaches, postmodernism embraces non-traditional forms and often creates complex, problematic situations within works of art, challenging readers to question meaning, structure, and interpretation. In both art and literature, postmodernism opposes the



rigid and often dogmatic principles established by modernism. This resistance is particularly visible in architecture, where postmodern design moves away from uniform, functional styles toward more decorative, eclectic, and historically influenced forms. As a result, postmodern works frequently incorporate elements from earlier periods, combining them in innovative ways to produce layered, visually rich, and sometimes illusionistic creations.

The term “postmodernism” itself has been in use since at least the late nineteenth century, and possibly even earlier, across various fields of cultural production. For instance, the English painter John Watkins Chapman is believed to have used the concept to propose a style of painting that moved beyond French Impressionism, suggesting an early attempt to redefine artistic direction.

In global literary studies, postmodernism has been defined in multiple ways. According to the Routledge Dictionary of Literary Terms, postmodernism can be understood as a philosophical response to the fragmentation of modernism after 1945, significantly influencing how cultural products are created, evaluated, and interpreted. Similarly, J. A. Cuddon, in his Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory, describes postmodernism as a broad and sometimes controversial term that refers to developments and transformations in literature, art, music, architecture, and philosophy since the mid-twentieth century. He emphasizes that postmodernism is not only distinct from modernism but often operates in direct opposition to it.

Within Uzbek literary scholarship, postmodernism has also been interpreted from different perspectives. The literary scholar Dilmurod Quronov defines postmodernism as a movement and creative method that began to emerge in the second half of the twentieth century across literature, art, and the humanities. He notes that its philosophical foundations lie in French poststructuralism—particularly deconstruction, associated with Jacques Derrida—as well as in post-Freudian theories such as schizoanalysis and the “language of the unconscious,” developed by thinkers like Jacques Lacan, Gilles Deleuze, and Félix Guattari. Additionally, semiotic theories of irony proposed by Umberto Eco play a significant role in shaping postmodern thought.

Overall, postmodernism can be understood as a dynamic and evolving framework that redefines artistic and literary practices. It replaces certainty with ambiguity, order with fragmentation, and singular meaning with multiplicity, encouraging both creators and readers to engage with texts in more open, critical, and interpretive ways.



Postmodernism in Uzbek literature did not appear suddenly—it developed gradually as part of broader cultural and intellectual changes, especially after independence. While modernism had already challenged traditional literary forms, postmodernism went even further by questioning the very idea of a single, stable reality. Instead of presenting life as something clear and unified, postmodern Uzbek prose tends to reflect complexity, uncertainty, and multiple layers of meaning.

In Uzbek literature, postmodern tendencies became more noticeable from the 1990s onward. Writers began to move away from rigid narrative structures and started experimenting with form, style, and perspective. One of the defining features of this shift is the blending of reality with imagination. Events are no longer strictly realistic; instead, they may include фантастик elements, symbolic episodes, or reinterpreted historical facts. This creates a narrative space where the boundaries between truth and fiction are intentionally blurred.

Another important aspect is the use of **intertextuality**—authors actively engage with earlier texts, traditions, and cultural memory. Uzbek writers often revisit historical themes, folklore, and classical literature, but they do so in a new way, reshaping and reinterpreting them rather than simply repeating them. This gives their works both a national identity and a modern, experimental tone.

Postmodern Uzbek prose is also marked by **multi-layered narrative structures**. Instead of a single storyline, texts may contain several parallel or overlapping narratives. These layers encourage readers to think more deeply and to interpret the text from different angles. The goal is not to deliver one clear message, but to open up a range of possible meanings.

Writers such as Tohir Malik, O‘tkir Hoshimov, and Asqar Mahkam explored these kinds of approaches in different ways,. In their works, we can see attempts to break away from traditional storytelling and to introduce more flexible, creative forms of expression. Their texts often reflect inner experiences, personal viewpoints, and philosophical questions rather than straightforward social commentary.

Overall, postmodernism in Uzbek prose can be seen as a movement toward freedom—freedom in form, in meaning, and in interpretation. It allows literature to become more dynamic and open-ended, where both writer and reader participate in creating the final meaning of the text.



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