

**THE EXPRESSION OF THE FEMALE VOICE IN POSTMODERN LITERATURE:
THROUGH THE LENS OF MURIEL SPARK'S FICTION**

Djalaldinova Malakhat Zuxurdinova,

teacher, researcher

Andijon state institute of foreign languages,

Department of the theoretical aspects

of the English language,

Dr Anand Binod Singh

Sharda university Uzbekistan

Dean of the FoH,

PhD, Associate professor

Abstract: This article examines the means of expressing the speech of female characters in postmodern literature. Postmodern authors use techniques such as metafiction, intertextuality, and narrative dissection to construct complex representations of women's experience. By analyzing the works, concepts such as how narrative strategies oppose traditional gender roles and social norms are analyzed.

Keywords: speech, meta fantastic, intertextuality, short story, gender relations, strategies, social norms.

INTRODUCTION

In postmodern literature, the image of the female character is shaped by emphasizing nontraditional aspects through diverse narrative strategies. This leads to a reimagining of female identity that breaks away from conventional portrayals. These representations, existed within a historical and cultural context, reflect the evolving social position of women, their rights, responsibilities, and the extent to which they utilize available opportunities. Furthermore, they capture the development of postmodern feminist thought and its connection to the emergence of second-wave feminism in the 1960s and 1970s. While the first wave focused on legal and educational rights, the second wave introduced critiques of gender roles and identities as socially constructed phenomena.

THE MAIN PART

The concept of “social structure” is central to understanding how truth and knowledge are produced and transformed within society. It highlights how women’s roles have shifted over time, with increased access to education, participation in various professional sectors, and enhanced political agency. These societal changes are reflected in postmodern fiction through the creation of autonomous, dynamic female characters.

Postcolonial and intersectional theories provide critical frameworks for analyzing contemporary issues related to power, identity, and inequality. Postcolonialism interrogates the lingering impact of colonial rule on formerly colonized societies, while intersectionality explores the overlapping systems of discrimination based on race, gender, class, sexuality, ability, and other identity markers. These approaches enrich the literary analysis of female characters by considering the complex social realities they navigate.

Postmodern literature, influenced by globalization and cultural pluralism, frequently showcases women from diverse backgrounds and experiences. The representation of female characters transcends boundaries of nationality, culture, and ethnicity. Inspired by media and popular culture, postmodern works often feature female figures in various nontraditional roles and professions. For instance, Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale* offers a dystopian critique of gender oppression and patriarchal control (Atwood, 1985), while Toni Morrison’s *Beloved* explores the traumatic legacy of slavery through the lens of African-American female experience (Morrison, 1987). Jeanette Winterson’s *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* examines gender and sexual identity in a restrictive religious environment (Winterson, 1985). These works deconstruct normative gender roles and celebrate the multiplicity of women’s lived experiences.

The female characters in such narratives are not confined to passive or domestic roles; instead, they are portrayed as complex and multifaceted individuals, intellectually capable, socially engaged, and emotionally resilient. They embody a range of perspectives, often questioning societal expectations and redefining their own identities. Through metanarrative techniques, these characters become conscious participants in their stories, engaging in self-reflection and critical analysis of their circumstances. As a result, they emerge as active agents of change rather than mere witnesses to history.

Indian scholar Dr. Ganesh observes Muriel Spark’s exceptional talent for character development, stating:

“Her characters reflect the complexity, fullness, and diversity of humanity. She portrays characteristics common to all human beings—aging, indecision in the face of marriage, jealousy, suffering—as part of the human experience” (Ganesh, 2006, p. 101).

Spark’s female protagonists frequently undergo journeys of self-exploration, driven by a desire to understand themselves and assert their autonomy. These women confront internal conflicts and external pressures, ultimately resisting cultural clichés and embracing responsibility for their own choices. This journey toward self-realization underscores their independence and determination. As Dr. Ganesh further notes:

“She skillfully portrays how one person envies another and, upon finding a new rival, how this envy intensifies. Spark, like a true psychologist, considers jealousy and hatred as core human weaknesses” (Ganesh, 2006, p. 103).

A prime example is Caroline Rose, the protagonist of Spark’s debut novel *The Comforters* (1957). Caroline is a distinctive and psychologically complex character whose internal monologue and existential questioning exemplify Spark’s postmodern narrative style. Throughout the novel, Caroline experiences a sense of being written into existence—an author seems to narrate and control her every move, turning her life into a metafictional text. She perceives her life as part of a novel, caught within what she describes as a predictable and formulaic narrative (Spark, 1957, p. 49).

Caroline’s awareness of this constructed reality situates her firmly within postmodern discourse. As a character who recognizes her narrative function, she engages in self-interrogation and challenges the notion of authorial control. Her auditory hallucinations and sense of textual entrapment underscore the psychological and metafictional dimensions of her character. These features not only deepen the reader’s understanding of Caroline’s interior world but also highlight Spark’s thematic interest in madness, autonomy, and the elusive nature of truth.

M. Spark’s literary method invites readers to engage with her texts on both emotional and intellectual levels. Rather than seeking simple identification, she challenges readers to think critically about narrative structure, character development, and moral ambiguity. Through irony and wit, she destabilizes traditional notions of good and evil, often portraying darkness with a deceptively light touch. Her exploration of metaphysical themes and psychological states transforms female characters into rich, enigmatic figures—rooted in reality yet tinged with the fantastical.

CONCLUSION

Muriel Spark's fiction provides a compelling example of how postmodern literature can reconfigure the representation of women, offering a nuanced critique of societal expectations and cultural norms. In narrator's works, female characters are liberated from traditional, often reductive, roles. They are depicted not as passive or one-dimensional figures, but as psychologically complex, evolving individuals with autonomy and agency. This shift is particularly evident in her use of narrative techniques such as metafiction, irony, and structural fragmentation, which disrupt linear storytelling and mirror the fragmented nature of female subjectivity in a postmodern world.

M. Spark's integration of psychological realism allows her characters to engage in self-reflection and struggle with their own identities within an ever-changing social landscape. These women, unlike their predecessors in more conventional narratives, are active participants in their stories, constructing their own truths and facing moral dilemmas with agency and thoughtfulness.

The innovative narrative form M. Spark employs reflects her broader critique of gender, identity, and societal norms, positioning her female characters as integral to the broader postmodern feminist discourse. By destabilizing the traditional portrayal of women, writer's fiction invites readers to reconsider both the limitations and possibilities of the female experience, thus expanding the scope of postmodern literature itself.

REFERENCES:

1. Atwood, M (1998) *The Handmaid's Tale*. USA, Vintage Press, P. 311
2. Morrison, T (2004) *Beloved*. USA, Vintage Press, P.321
3. Winterson, J (1992) *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*. Vintage
4. Ganesh. K.S (2021) *The Characters of Muriel Spark and their Universal Experiences*. The Creative launcher, vol. 6, no. 5, <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=703873561012>. P. 101
5. Poe-Slade, Tess, (2023) "The Generic Flamboyance of Muriel Spark". Honors Theses. 417. https://ecommons.udayton.edu/uhp_theses/417, P.49
6. Джалалдинова, М. (2022). М. СПАРК АСАРЛАРИДА ПОСТМОДЕРНИЗМ АДАБИЙ ҒОЯЛАРИНИНГ ИФОДА ЭТИЛИШИ. *Инновационные исследования в науке*, 1(15), 44-46.
7. Djalaldinova, M. Z. (2023). EXPRESSION OF POSTMODERN IDEAS IN THE WORKS OF MURIEL SPARK. *International journal of advanced research in education, technology and management*, 2(11).

8. Джалалдинова, М. З. (2020). REFLECTION OF PERSONALITY IN THE EARLY WORKS OF MURIEL SPARK. *МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ ЖУРНАЛ ИСКУССТВО СЛОВА*, 3(4).
9. Djalaldinova, M. (2024). COMPREHENDING THE MYSTERIES OF POSTMODERN LITERATURE: THE ART OF THE WORD BY MURIEL SPARK. *Farg'ona davlat universiteti*, (2), 81-81.
10. Djalaldinova, M. Z. (2024). MURIEL SPARK BADIY NUTQINING O 'ZIGA XOS XUSUSIYATLARI. *XALQARO ILMIY-AMALIY KONFERENSIYALAR*, 1(1), 203-205.