

MODERN AND POSTMODERN TENDENCIES IN AMERICAN LITERATURE**Ochilova Dilnoza Sunatillo qizi**

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Abstract:Modern and postmodern literature in America reflects the evolution of thought and form in the twentieth century. Modernism focuses on fragmentation, alienation, and inner consciousness, while postmodernism embraces irony, intertextuality, and skepticism toward grand narratives. Writers such as Faulkner, Hemingway, and Pynchon represent this transition vividly in their artistic visions.

Keywords:Modernism, Postmodernism, Fragmentation, Irony, American Literature, Faulkner, Hemingway, Pynchon, Identity, Narrative.

Introduction

The twentieth century brought radical changes in American literature, marking a shift from modernism to postmodernism. These movements reflected the nation's cultural transformations after two world wars, technological progress, and growing social uncertainty. Modernism emerged as a response to the disillusionment of modern life, focusing on subjectivity, stream of consciousness, and the search for meaning in a fragmented world. Postmodernism, however, questioned the very existence of meaning. It replaced the modernist search for truth with playfulness, parody, and intertextual experimentation. While modernism aimed to reconstruct meaning from chaos, postmodernism embraced the chaos itself as an artistic principle.

Main Part**Modernism in American Literature**

American modernism flourished between the 1910s and the 1940s. Influenced by European art and psychology, it sought to break traditional narrative forms. Writers like William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, and F. Scott Fitzgerald experimented with language, time, and consciousness. Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* (1929) employs multiple narrators and non-linear time to represent psychological depth. Hemingway, in contrast, used minimalism and understatement, focusing on what he called the 'iceberg theory', where meaning lies beneath the surface. Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* revealed the spiritual emptiness of the American Dream, portraying the alienation of individuals in a materialistic society.

Modernism's central features include fragmentation, symbolism, alienation, and introspective narration. It reflected the collapse of old certainties in the face of industrialization, war, and urban modernity.

Postmodernism in American Literature

Postmodernism emerged in the aftermath of World War II, when faith in progress and rationality had been severely shaken. Unlike modernism, postmodernism denies universal truths and emphasizes relativity, irony, and play. Writers such as Thomas Pynchon, Don DeLillo, and Kurt Vonnegut explored the absurdities of modern life and mass culture. In Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*, narrative coherence collapses into a web of uncertainty and paranoia. Vonnegut's

Slaughterhouse-Five combines science fiction and historical trauma, using humor to expose the absurdity of war.

Postmodernism also introduced techniques like metafiction, pastiche, and temporal distortion, questioning the relationship between author, text, and reader. It blurred the boundary between high and popular culture, embracing the post-industrial reality of mass media.

From Modernism to Postmodernism

The transition from modernism to postmodernism was not abrupt but gradual. Both movements share the theme of fragmentation and loss of faith in traditional structures. However, modernists sought to restore order through art, while postmodernists celebrated the collapse of order as liberation. This shift mirrors the changing American worldview—from the existential angst of the early twentieth century to the ironic detachment of the postwar era.

Conclusion

Modernism and postmodernism together shaped the landscape of American literature. Modernists like Faulkner and Hemingway gave voice to the psychological and moral crises of the individual, while postmodernists like Pynchon and Vonnegut exposed the absurdity of systems and narratives themselves. In essence, postmodernism did not reject modernism completely but expanded its skepticism, transforming despair into creative freedom. The legacy of these movements continues to influence contemporary American writers who explore identity, fragmentation, and the quest for meaning in an increasingly complex world.

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