

## MULTIGENERATIONAL NARRATIVES AS A GENEALOGICAL AND NARRATOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK IN LITERATURE

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**Abstract.** *This article examines multigenerational narratives as a complex literary form located at the intersection of genealogy, narratology, and cultural memory. It argues that such narratives function not only as representations of family continuity but as structural systems organizing temporality, identity, and historical experience. The study highlights how genealogical succession becomes narrative architecture and reveals tensions between continuity and rupture across generations.*

**Keywords:** *multigenerational narrative, genealogy, narratology, cultural memory, temporality.*

**Annotatsiya.** *Ushbu maqolada ko'p avlodli rivoyatlar genealogiya, narratologiya va madaniy xotira chorrahasida joylashgan murakkab adabiy shakl sifatida ko'rib chiqiladi. Uning ta'kidlashicha, bunday rivoyatlar nafaqat oilaviy davomiylikni ifodalash, balki vaqt, o'ziga xoslik va tarixiy tajribani tartibga soluvchi tarkibiy tizimlar sifatida ham ishlaydi. Tadqiqot genealogik vorislikning hikoya arxitekturasiga aylanishini ta'kidlaydi va avlodlar o'rtasidagi uzluksizlik hamda uzilish o'rtasidagi ziddiyatlarni ochib beradi.*

**Kalit so'zlar:** *ko'p avlodli hikoya, genealogiya, narratologiya, madaniy xotira, temporallik.*

**Аннотация.** *В данной статье рассматриваются многопоколенческие повествования как сложная литературная форма, находящаяся на стыке генеалогии, нарратологии и культурной памяти. Он утверждает, что такие нарративы функционируют не только как представления о семейной преемственности, но и как структурные системы, организующие временность, идентичность и исторический опыт. Исследование подчеркивает, как генеалогическая преемственность превращается в нарративную архитектуру, и раскрывает напряженность между преемственностью и разрывом поколений.*

**Ключевые слова:** *многопоколенческое повествование, генеалогия, нарратология, культурная память, временность.*

**Introduction.** Multigenerational narratives represent one of the most complex forms of literary expression, extending across multiple generations and organizing experience through genealogical continuity. Unlike traditional narratives, these texts structure time and identity through lineage, where the family becomes both subject and narrative framework.

Recent developments in literary theory emphasize narrative as a structured representation of events shaped by temporality and perspective. Within this framework, multigenerational narratives reveal how individual identity is deeply embedded in historical continuity and inherited experience. Such narratives demonstrate that the past is not merely background but an active force shaping present realities [12].

**Literature analysis.** The theoretical investigation of multigenerational narratives is grounded primarily in the interdisciplinary frameworks of narratology and memory studies, both of which provide essential tools for understanding how narratives operate across extended temporal and generational dimensions. Within narratology, the work of Gérard Genette is particularly foundational. Genette's distinction between *histoire* (story) and *discours* (discourse) foregrounds the idea that narrative does not simply reproduce chronological events but actively reorganizes them through various temporal manipulations [4]. His concept of narrative temporality—especially the categories of order, duration, and frequency—allows for a precise analysis of how time is structured in narrative texts. In the context of multigenerational narratives, these mechanisms are crucial, as such texts frequently employ anachrony (including analepsis and prolepsis) to juxtapose different temporal layers. This results in a complex temporal architecture in which past, present, and future are interwoven, reflecting the continuity and fragmentation inherent in generational experience.

A complementary theoretical perspective is offered by Paul Ricoeur, whose concept of *emplotment* provides a philosophical account of how narratives configure time into meaningful wholes [12]. Ricoeur argues that narrative mediates between lived time and historical time by transforming a series of disparate events into a coherent structure governed by causal and thematic relations. This process is particularly significant for multigenerational narratives, where the challenge lies in integrating multiple life stories, often separated by decades or even centuries, into a unified narrative form. Through emplotment, these narratives achieve coherence not through linear progression but through the establishment of meaningful connections across temporal discontinuities.

Memory studies further deepen this analytical framework by emphasizing the collective and mediated nature of memory. Maurice Halbwachs posits that memory is not an individual faculty but a socially constructed phenomenon shaped by group affiliations and cultural contexts [5]. This insight is crucial for understanding multigenerational narratives, in which memory is transmitted, reinterpreted, and sometimes contested across generations. Building on this foundation, Jan Assmann introduces a distinction between communicative memory—short-term, experience-based recollection—and cultural memory, which is institutionalized and preserved through symbolic forms such as texts, rituals, and traditions [1]. Multigenerational narratives often operate at the intersection of these two forms, transforming personal recollections into enduring cultural representations.

An especially important contribution to this field is the concept of *postmemory* developed by Marianne Hirsch [6]. Postmemory refers to the phenomenon whereby later generations inherit the memories of earlier ones, particularly in relation to traumatic historical events, not through direct experience but through mediated forms such as stories, images, and narratives. In multigenerational narratives, postmemory plays a central role in shaping character identity and narrative development, as descendants are influenced by

events they did not personally witness. This creates a layered structure of memory in which the past persists in indirect and often fragmented forms, reinforcing the idea that identity is constructed not only through lived experience but also through inherited narratives.

Taken together, these theoretical perspectives demonstrate that multigenerational narratives are not merely extended stories about families but highly complex narrative systems that organize temporality, memory, and identity across generations. They reveal how narrative structures mediate between individual and collective experience, transforming genealogical succession into a dynamic process of meaning-making.

**Research methodology.** This study employs a comparative and interdisciplinary research methodology grounded in narratology, genealogy, and memory studies. Using close textual analysis, the article examines selected English and Uzbek multigenerational narratives to identify the narrative mechanisms through which temporality, cultural memory, and generational continuity are constructed. The research also applies comparative literary analysis to reveal both universal and culture-specific features of genealogical narrative structures across different literary traditions.

### **Results and discussion.**

**1. English Tradition: The Forsyte Saga.** One of the most paradigmatic examples of the multigenerational narrative in English literature is *The Forsyte Saga*, a work that systematically traces the evolution of a bourgeois family across several generations within the socio-economic context of late Victorian and Edwardian England. The narrative is not merely concerned with the depiction of family life; rather, it constructs a complex genealogical system in which lineage functions as the central organizing principle of both narrative structure and thematic development.

At the core of the text lies the concept of property, which operates not only as an economic category but also as a symbolic marker of identity, power, and social legitimacy. The Forsyte family's obsession with ownership—of land, wealth, and even interpersonal relationships—reveals how material inheritance becomes intertwined with moral and psychological inheritance. Characters such as Soames Forsyte embody what may be described as “genealogical determinism,” wherein inherited values and social codes dictate individual behavior. This aligns with broader theoretical perspectives on how narrative encodes social structures within character formation [13].

From a narratological standpoint, the novel employs a sophisticated temporal architecture that reflects the dynamics of generational continuity and transformation. Although largely realist in style, the narrative frequently shifts between temporal layers, incorporating retrospective narration and subtle analeptic movements that reconnect present events to past conditions. These temporal strategies illustrate the persistence of inherited patterns while simultaneously revealing moments of rupture, where younger generations resist or reinterpret familial expectations.

Moreover, the repetition of motifs—particularly those related to possession, marriage, and social respectability—creates a cyclical narrative rhythm. This repetition does not imply static continuity but rather a process of variation, in which each generation re-enacts inherited conflicts in modified forms. Such a structure highlights the tension between determinism and agency, demonstrating that while individuals are shaped by genealogical forces, they are not entirely constrained by them.

**2. English Tradition: Middlemarch.** Although *Middlemarch* does not conform strictly to the formal conventions of the multigenerational saga, it represents a crucial transitional model that anticipates the development of fully realized genealogical narratives. The novel constructs a dense social network in which individual lives are interconnected through familial, economic, and historical relationships, thereby creating a proto-genealogical narrative structure.

The significance of *Middlemarch* lies in its emphasis on historical embeddedness. Characters are not presented as autonomous individuals but as products of inherited social conditions and moral frameworks. This reflects a key principle of multigenerational narratives: the idea that identity is shaped by forces extending beyond the immediate present. In this regard, the novel aligns with Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of polyphony, wherein multiple voices and perspectives coexist without being subordinated to a single authoritative narrative [2]. The resulting dialogic structure allows for the representation of social complexity and the coexistence of competing value systems.

Furthermore, *Middlemarch* introduces an important thematic dimension that becomes central in later multigenerational narratives: moral inheritance. The novel explores how ethical values, social expectations, and intellectual aspirations are transmitted across generations, shaping individual choices and life trajectories. Dorothea Brooke's struggle between idealism and social constraint, for instance, can be interpreted as a negotiation between inherited moral frameworks and personal agency.

In narratological terms, the novel employs a panoramic perspective that integrates individual stories into a broader social and historical context. This anticipates the structural logic of multigenerational narratives, where the family or community functions as a microcosm of society. Thus, while not explicitly genealogical, *Middlemarch* provides the formal and thematic groundwork for the development of multigenerational storytelling in English literature.

**3. Uzbek Tradition: “Ikki eshik orasi”.** In Uzbek literary tradition, multigenerational narratives are deeply embedded in cultural and historical contexts that differ significantly from those of Western literature. The novel “Ikki eshik orasi” exemplifies this tradition by presenting a family history that unfolds against the backdrop of social transformation and historical upheaval.

The narrative structure is organized around the continuity of family life, with particular emphasis on the transmission of cultural values, ethical norms, and social roles across

generations. Unlike Western narratives that often foreground individual autonomy, this text emphasizes collective identity, where the individual is understood primarily in relation to the family and community. This reflects the broader socio-cultural framework of Central Asian societies, where kinship and lineage play a central role in shaping identity.

At the same time, the novel does not present continuity as unproblematic. Generational conflict emerges as a key thematic element, reflecting tensions between tradition and modernity. Younger characters often find themselves negotiating between inherited values and new social realities, creating a dynamic interplay between preservation and transformation. This tension illustrates the dual function of genealogical narratives: they both sustain cultural continuity and provide a space for critical reflection on that continuity.

From the perspective of memory studies, the novel can be seen as a site of cultural memory, where past experiences are preserved and reinterpreted through narrative. The family history becomes a medium through which collective identity is constructed and transmitted, aligning with theoretical frameworks that emphasize the social nature of memory [5].

**4. Uzbek Tradition: “Ufq”.** The novel “Ufq” represents a further development of the multigenerational narrative form within Uzbek literature, particularly in its engagement with large-scale historical processes. The narrative traces the evolution of family structures under the influence of political and social transformations, highlighting the impact of historical events on generational relationships.

One of the defining features of the text is its integration of personal and historical narratives. Individual life stories are closely intertwined with broader socio-political changes, demonstrating how historical forces shape family dynamics and identity formation. This reflects the fundamental principle of multigenerational narratives: the inseparability of personal and collective history.

The genealogical structure of the novel functions as a framework for representing cultural memory. Past experiences are not simply recounted but actively shape the present, influencing characters’ decisions and perspectives. This aligns with the concept of postmemory, where the legacy of past events—particularly traumatic ones—continues to affect subsequent generations [6].

Furthermore, the narrative employs temporal layering to connect different generational experiences. Through shifts in perspective and time, the text creates a multidimensional representation of history, in which continuity and change coexist. This complexity underscores the role of narrative as a mediator between past and present.

The comparative analysis reveals both similarities and differences between English and Uzbek multigenerational narratives.

In English literature, these narratives often emphasize individual agency and social mobility, reflecting the development of bourgeois society [13]. In contrast, Uzbek narratives tend to emphasize continuity, tradition, and collective identity.

However, both traditions share a common structural principle: the transformation of genealogy into narrative architecture. This allows them to represent the relationship between individual lives and historical processes.

Multigenerational narratives thus function as mediating forms, bridging the gap between personal experience and collective history. They reveal how identity is constructed through both continuity and rupture.

**Conclusion.** Multigenerational narratives represent a highly sophisticated form of literary expression that integrates genealogy, narratology, and cultural memory. Their ability to structure time across generations makes them essential for understanding identity and historical continuity.

By combining theoretical analysis with textual examples, this study demonstrates that multigenerational narratives are not merely thematic representations of family life but complex formal systems that shape our understanding of human experience.

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