

KONFERENSIYALAR.COM

ANJUMANLAR PLATFORMASI

**XIX RESPUBLIKA ILMIY-
AMALIY KONFERENSIYASI**

**YANGI DAVR ILM-
FANI: INSON UCHUN
INNOVATSION G'OYA
VA YECHIMLAR**

OKTYABR, 2026

ISSN 3093-8791

ELEKTRON NASHR:

<https://konferensiyalar.com>



Yangi davr ilm-fani: inson uchun innovatsion g'oya va yechimlar.
XIX Respublika ilmiy-amaliy konferensiyasi materiallari to'plami.
2-jild, 19-son (13-oktyabr, 2026-yil).– 191 bet.

Mazkur nashr ommaviy axborot vositasi sifatida 2025-yil, 8-iyulda
C-5669862 son bilan rasman davlat ro'yaxatidan o'tkazilgan.

Elektron nashr: <https://konferensiyalar.com>

ISSN: 3093-8791 (onlayn)

Konferensiya tashkilotchisi: "Scienceproblems Team" MChJ

Konferensiya o'tkazilgan sana: 2026-yil, 9-oktyabr

Mas'ul muharrir:

Isanova Feruza Tulqinovna

Annotatsiya

Mazkur to'plamda "Yangi davr ilm-fani: inson uchun innovatsion g'oya va yechimlar" mavzusidagi XIX Respublika ilmiy-amaliy konferensiyasi materiallari jamlangan. Nashrda respublikaning turli oliy ta'lim muassasalari, ilmiy markazlari va amaliyotchi mutaxassislari tomonidan tayyorlangan maqolalar o'rin olgan bo'lib, ular ijtimoiy-gumanitar, tabiiy, texnik va yuridik fanlarning dolzarb muammolari va ularning innovatsion yechimlariga bag'ishlangan.

Ushbu nashr ilmiy izlanuvchilar, oliy ta'lim o'qituvchilari, doktorantlar va soha mutaxassislari uchun foydali qo'llanma bo'lib xizmat qiladi.

Kalit so'zlar: ilmiy-amaliy konferensiya, innovatsion yondashuv, zamonaviy fan, fanlararo integratsiya, ilmiy-tadqiqot, nazariya va amaliyot, ilmiy hamkorlik.

Barcha huquqlar himoyalangan.

© Scienceproblems team, 2026-yil

© Mualliflar jamoasi, 2026-yil

THE MATERNAL FIGURE IN MODERN ENGLISH LITERATURE LITERARY CONTINUITY AND THEORETICAL APPROACHES

Xidirova Sarvinoz Mahmudjon qizi

PhD student, Namangan State University
Namangan, Uzbekistan

Annotation. This article develops a theoretical framework for examining the maternal figure in modern English literature, with illustrative reference to Maggie O'Farrell's *Hamnet* and *The Hand That First Held Mine*. It connects the historical continuity of maternal conventions with the representation of maternal subjectivity and the narrative organisation of voice, embodiment and memory. The study synthesises selected approaches from feminist literary criticism, motherhood studies, narratology and memory studies. It argues that maternal characterisation cannot be evaluated through thematic presence or ideals of sacrifice alone: its significance depends on the distribution of perception, knowledge and narrative authority. The resulting comparative procedure begins with a textual situation, identifies the formal means through which maternal experience is organised and relates those means to the relevant theoretical category. Its contribution is a coherent methodological basis for further analysis, without assuming a universal trajectory from traditional maternal ideals to emancipated contemporary subjects across periods and settings.

Keywords: maternal figure; maternal poetics; modern English literature; maternal subjectivity; narrative authority; cultural memory; Maggie O'Farrell.

ZAMONAVIY INGLIZ ADABIYOTIDA ONA OBRAZI ADABIY DAVOMIYLIK VA NAZARIY YONDASHUVLAR

Xidirova Sarvinoz Mahmudjon qizi

Namangan davlat universiteti tayanch doktoranti
Namangan, O'zbekiston

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada zamonaviy ingliz adabiyotida ona obrazini o'rganishning nazariy asoslari Maggie O'Farrellning *Hamnet* va *The Hand That First Held Mine* romanlariga murojaat orqali yoritiladi. Tadqiqot ona haqidagi adabiy tasavvurlarning tarixiy davomiyligini maternal subyektivlik hamda ovoz, tanaviy tajriba va xotiraning narrativ tashkil etilishi bilan bog'laydi. Maqolada feministik adabiyotshunoslik, onalik tadqiqotlari, narratologiya va xotira nazariyasining tanlangan yondashuvlari umumlashtiriladi. Ona obrazining badiiy ahamiyatini faqat mavzudagi ishtiroki yoki fidoyilik ideali bilan baholash yetarli emasligi asoslanadi. Uning poetik maqomi idrok, bilim va hikoya qilish vakolatining matnda qanday taqsimlanishiga bog'liq. Taklif etilayotgan qiyosiy tahlil avval muayyan matniy vaziyatni belgilaydi, keyin maternal tajribani shakllantiruvchi badiiy vositalarni aniqlaydi va ularni tegishli nazariy tushunchalar bilan izohlaydi. Tarixiy ona ideallaridan zamonaviy mustaqil subyektga o'tish asarlarga xos yagona rivojlanish yo'li sifatida qabul qilinmaydi. Tadqiqotning natijasi ona obrazining tarixiy, ijtimoiy va narrativ sathlarini o'zaro bog'laydigan metodologik asosni ishlab chiqishdan iborat. Ushbu asos keyingi boblarda romanlarni bir xil mezonlar orqali qiyoslashga xizmat qiladi.

Kalit so'zlar: ona obrazi; onalik poetikasi; zamonaviy ingliz adabiyoti; maternal subyektivlik; narrativ vakolat; madaniy xotira; Maggie O'Farrell.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47390/ymdif-y2026v2i19/n27>

Introduction

The maternal figure is a persistent presence in literary culture, yet persistence does not imply an unchanging meaning. A mother may embody continuity, organise domestic relationships, preserve a family's past or become the subject of another character's recollection. These functions do not necessarily give her an independent perspective. The critical problem is therefore not simply whether a mother appears in a narrative, but how the narrative

distributes knowledge, speech and attention around her. This article argues that maternal poetics should be examined through the relationship between cultural expectations of motherhood and the formal organisation of maternal experience.

The distinction between motherhood as lived experience and motherhood as an institution, developed by Adrienne Rich, provides a starting point for this enquiry. It makes possible a reading that separates a character's particular relationships and feelings from the expectations attached to her maternal role. [11; p. 13] Such a distinction does not diminish care or responsibility. It asks how these values become obligations, how characters negotiate them and whether the narrative recognises an identity extending beyond the performance of motherhood.

The article brings together three connected levels of enquiry: the historical persistence of maternal conventions, the representation of maternal subjectivity in modern English-language fiction and the methods required to analyse that representation. Maggie O'Farrell's *Hamnet* and *The Hand That First Held Mine* serve as illustrative points of application. The contribution is a conceptual synthesis for comparative reading, rather than a claim to exhaust the history of motherhood in English literature or to supply a complete interpretation of either novel.

Materials and methods

The study uses a historical and theoretical approach supported by feminist literary criticism, motherhood studies, narratology and memory studies. Its materials comprise selected foundational theoretical works, two O'Farrell novels and published scholarly research on those novels. Historical comparison concerns the continuity and revision of representational conventions; it does not assume that all earlier texts suppress mothers or that all contemporary texts emancipate them. The term modern is used here as a broad literary context culminating in contemporary fiction, rather than as a synonym for the modernist movement.

The analysis proceeds from a distinction between a maternal role, a maternal relationship and maternal subjectivity. The first concerns a culturally recognisable position; the second concerns interactions of care, dependence and obligation; the third concerns the mother's capacity to function as a source of perception and evaluation within the text. These categories can overlap without coinciding. The method identifies the category at issue, examines its narrative organisation and only then connects the observation to a theoretical explanation. Published abstracts are used to establish the focus of existing scholarship, without attributing detailed arguments to unavailable full texts.

Historical continuity and the problem of maternal subjectivity

A historical account of the maternal figure requires more than a succession of character types. Ideals of nurturing, sacrifice and family continuity can coexist with maternal authority, conflict or absence within the same literary period. Accordingly, the relevant historical question is how a convention is retained, challenged or redistributed in a particular work. A narrative may preserve the language of maternal devotion while allowing a mother to question its demands. Alternatively, an apparently unconventional maternal character may still be judged through an inflexible moral standard.

Marianne Hirsch's *The Mother/Daughter Plot* draws attention to maternal relationships and the mother's position in narrative and psychoanalytic frameworks. [5] For literary analysis, this makes the difference between being necessary to another person's development and

possessing a story of one's own especially significant. A mother can be indispensable to a daughter's identity while her own desires and previous history remain inaccessible. Maternal absence is therefore not only a plot event: it can describe a distribution of narrative attention that renders a present mother insufficiently known.

This distinction also qualifies the idea of literary evolution. Change cannot be measured only by an increase in the number of speaking mothers. Dialogue may repeat an expected role, whereas third-person narration may disclose complex maternal perception. The transition from a conventional maternal image to a more differentiated character should therefore be demonstrated through specific formal changes. Relevant evidence includes access to interior thought, the organisation of personal history and the mother's influence on the interpretation of events.

Sara Ruddick's account of maternal thinking shifts attention towards the practical demands of caring for children. [12] Its significance here lies in treating maternal activity as a field of judgement rather than as an automatic expression of instinct. In a literary text, a protective decision can involve incomplete knowledge, limited resources or competing responsibilities. This perspective enables the critic to ask how a narrative represents the labour of care and the limits of a mother's power, instead of evaluating her solely against an ideal of successful protection.

Voice embodiment and memory in modern maternal representation

Maternal subjectivity becomes legible through the organisation of narrative voice. Susan Sniader Lanser's feminist narratology links narrative strategies to questions of authority and social power. [6; pp. 6–7] Applied to motherhood, this approach asks whose interpretation of an event becomes authoritative. A mother may describe her experience, yet other characters or the narrator may repeatedly invalidate her account. Conversely, a narrative can grant substantial authority to her perception without making her its first-person narrator. Formal access to speech and the recognition of knowledge must therefore be examined separately.

Gérard Genette's distinction between narrative voice and the regulation of perspective provides a complementary analytical tool. [3; p. 186] A third-person account can restrict information to a mother's perceptions, while a maternal speaker can remain unable to explain events beyond her knowledge. The question of who speaks is thus connected to, but different from, the question of who perceives. Maternal poetics involves both the verbal presentation of experience and the limits through which readers encounter it.

Embodiment gives this enquiry a further dimension. Pregnancy, birth, exhaustion and illness may be represented as externally observable events or as experiences organised through sensation and attention. These modes create different relations between the maternal body and the maternal self. The critic should examine the language of bodily perception, its narrative duration and its relation to the character's agency. Neither biological motherhood nor an explicit account of childbirth automatically establishes a mother's independent subjectivity.

Memory likewise concerns form as well as theme. Astrid Erll's account of literature as a medium of cultural memory supports an enquiry into the ways narratives select, organise and transmit the past. [2] In maternal narratives, the mother may remember a child, transmit family history or become the object of a child's reconstruction. The remembering subject changes across these situations. A comparative reading must therefore distinguish a mother's memory from a later account of her life, even when both concern the same family relationship.

Loss can intensify these differences without making every interruption of memory a sign of trauma. Cathy Caruth's work raises questions about the relationship between difficult experience, knowledge and its subsequent narration. [1] The concept is useful when a text makes that relationship problematic, but it should not replace the examination of narrative evidence. Grief, forgetfulness and disrupted chronology require interpretation in context. Literary criticism analyses their representation; it does not diagnose fictional mothers or reduce their identities to suffering.

The relevance of the framework to O'Farrell's fiction

Existing scholarship demonstrates that O'Farrell's maternal representations are already part of a substantial critical conversation. In the published abstract of his article on *Hamnet*, Stephen O'Neill identifies maternalised networks of remembrance and connects motherhood studies with memory studies and Shakespeare adaptation. [10; p. 210] His research focus establishes that Agnes's position can be examined through the redistribution of literary memory, rather than solely through her relation to a famous husband. The present framework builds on that connection by asking how maternal knowledge and narrative attention can be compared across different fictional settings.

Ruth Gilligan's published abstract on *The Hand That First Held Mine* connects the layered identities of Lexie and Elina with the layered history of London through the concept of the palimpsest. [4] This perspective supplies a complementary spatial and temporal axis. Taken together, the two research directions suggest that maternal representation cannot be isolated from the organisation of remembered places and historical relationships. They also caution against presenting O'Farrell's work as an unstudied field or identifying thematic resemblance as sufficient evidence of a new contribution.

In *Hamnet*, the fictional Agnes's family relationships and bereavement make care and remembrance interdependent. [7] Her significance is not exhausted by the label of grieving mother. The theoretical framework asks how her knowledge, perceptions and relationships establish a centre of experience within the narrative. Her maternal role can then be analysed in relation to the novel's selection of what deserves to be remembered. This approach treats Agnes as a fictional construction whose interpretation depends on narrative organisation, rather than as transparent evidence of the historical Anne Hathaway's private thoughts.

The Hand That First Held Mine places motherhood within intersecting lives and different temporal settings. [9] Its organisation invites attention to the relation between present experience and an incompletely understood past. The relevant comparison with *Hamnet* is therefore not that the mothers possess identical feelings. It concerns how maternal identity becomes knowable through bodily experience, relationships and the arrangement of information. The same analytical questions can produce different answers because the novels construct different conditions of knowledge and remembrance.

O'Farrell's Folger Shakespeare Library interview offers contextual evidence about the imaginative project behind *Hamnet*. [8] An author's account can clarify an interest in historical silence and neglected family experience, but it cannot verify every fictional episode as historical fact. The distinction between documentary knowledge, authorial explanation and narrative interpretation is consequently essential. Preserving it allows the maternal figure to be studied as a literary means of approaching an incomplete past without confusing imaginative reconstruction with historical recovery.

Discussion and comparative implications

The synthesis yields an analytical sequence rather than a fixed maternal type. A comparative reading first identifies the cultural expectation attached to motherhood in an episode. It then establishes whose perspective organises the episode, how the mother's knowledge is presented and whether bodily experience or recollection modifies that knowledge. Finally, it examines the episode's relation to the wider narrative. The order matters: theoretical categories explain an observed textual relationship instead of predetermining what the character must represent.

This sequence makes comparison more consistent. Maternal characters should be examined through comparable questions concerning voice, care, embodiment, time and memory. Consistency does not require identical prominence for each category. A novel may organise maternal subjectivity primarily through recollection, while another places greater emphasis on bodily uncertainty or spatial movement. Such differences are findings to explain, rather than obstacles to eliminate. A framework is useful when it makes formal variation visible.

The account also has limits. Its selected theoretical materials do not represent every tradition of motherhood studies, and its two illustrative novels cannot stand for all modern English-language literature. Nor does a theoretical synthesis establish direct influence between critics and novelist. Its defensible contribution is the connection of historical convention, maternal subjectivity and narrative form within a single comparative procedure. Detailed scene-based analysis remains necessary to test the procedure and establish the distinctive poetics of each novel.

Conclusion

The maternal figure should be studied through the interaction of inherited cultural meanings and the specific narrative arrangements that make maternal experience accessible. Historical continuity supplies the conventions surrounding care and responsibility; feminist and maternal theory distinguish those conventions from lived subjectivity; narratology and memory studies explain how a text organises perception, time and remembrance. These levels form a connected method rather than separate thematic inventories.

For the study of O'Farrell, the central implication is that motherhood acquires literary meaning through who perceives, who remembers and whose knowledge receives narrative authority. *Hamnet* and *The Hand That First Held Mine* offer different settings in which to investigate these questions. Their comparison should preserve the distinctions between historical imagination and contemporary experience, between remembering a child and reconstructing a mother, and between thematic similarity and formal achievement. This provides a coherent theoretical basis for subsequent analysis of maternal poetics.

Adabiyotlar/Literatura/References:

1. Caruth C. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. — Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996.
2. Erll A. *Memory in Culture* / translated by S. B. Young. — London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. — DOI: 10.1057/9780230321670.
3. Genette G. *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* / translated by J. E. Lewin. — Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980.

4. Gilligan R. "The Women We Become After Children": Palimpsests of the City and the Self in Maggie O'Farrell's *The Hand That First Held Mine* // Maggie O'Farrell: Contemporary Critical Perspectives / edited by E. Canning. — London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2024. — P. 31–45. — Abstract available at: <https://research.birmingham.ac.uk/en/publications/the-women-we-become-after-children-palimpsests-of-the-city-and-th/> (accessed 8 October 2026).
5. Hirsch M. *The Mother/Daughter Plot: Narrative, Psychoanalysis, Feminism*. — Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989.
6. Lanser S. S. *Fictions of Authority: Women Writers and Narrative Voice*. — Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992. — DOI: 10.7298/t960-ht64.
7. O'Farrell M. *Hamnet*. — New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2020.
8. O'Farrell M. Maggie O'Farrell on *Hamnet* / interview by B. Bogaev // *Shakespeare Unlimited*. — Episode 150. — Folger Shakespeare Library, 31 July 2020. — URL: <https://www.folger.edu/podcasts/shakespeare-unlimited/maggie-ofarrell-hamnet/> (accessed 8 October 2026).
9. O'Farrell M. *The Hand That First Held Mine*. — London: Headline, 2010.
10. O'Neill S. "And Who Will Write Me?": Maternalizing Networks of Remembrance in Maggie O'Farrell's *Hamnet* // *Shakespeare*. — 2021. — Vol. 17, No. 2. — P. 210–229. — DOI: 10.1080/17450918.2020.1867627.
11. Rich A. *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution*. — New York: W. W. Norton, 1986.
12. Ruddick S. *Maternal Thinking: Toward a Politics of Peace*. — Boston: Beacon Press, 1989.

YANGI DAVR ILM-FANI: INSON UCHUN INNOVATSION G'OYA VA YECHIMLAR

**XIX RESPUBLIKA ILMIY-AMALIY KONFERENSIYASI
MATERIALLARI**
2026-yil, oktyabr

Mas'ul muharrir: *F.T.Isanova*
Texnik muharrir: *N.Bahodirova*
Diszayner: *I.Abdihakimov*

Yangi davr ilm-fani: inson uchun innovatsion g'oya va yechimlar.
XIX Respublika ilmiy-amaliy konferensiyasi materiallari to'plami.
2-jild, 19-son (13-oktyabr, 2026-yil). – 191 bet.

Mazkur nashr ommaviy axborot vositasi sifatida 2025-yil, 8-iyulda
C-5669862 son bilan rasman davlat ro'yaxatidan o'tkazilgan.

ISSN: 3093-8791 (onlayn)

Elektron nashr: <https://konferensiyalar.com>

Konferensiya tashkilotchisi: "Scienceproblems Team" MChJ

Konferensiya o'tkazilgan sana: 2026-yil, 9-oktyabr.

Barcha huquqlar himoyalangan.
© Science problems team, 2026-yil.
© Mualliflar jamoasi, 2026-yil.