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METHODOLOGICAL JOURNAL**<http://mentaljournal-jspu.uz/index.php/mesmj/index>**PROBLEMS OF SELF-IDENTIFICATION AND SELF-IDENTITY CRISIS IN
WORLD LITERATURE*****Gulhoyo Zilolova****Senior teacher**PhD researcher**Karakalpak state university**Department of Pedagogy and Languages**Institute of Social and Political sciences**Tashkent, Uzbekistan***ABOUT ARTICLE**

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Abstract: This article examines the evolution of personal self-identification in literary discourse from classical realism to postmodernism, focusing on the transformation of identity models under the influence of historical, sociocultural, and philosophical shifts. The study analyzes the representation of identity crisis in nineteenth-century realism, the modernist rejection of fixed selfhood, the existential search for authentic being, and the postmodern fragmentation of subjectivity.

Introduction. The emergence of personal selfhood and the crisis of self-identification in nineteenth-century literature was first fully articulated by Romanticism. This development was closely linked to the dissolution of traditional social structures, the anticipation of mass culture, and the increasing valorization of individual subjectivity. The literature of the Enlightenment, having abandoned the religious determinism characteristic of earlier periods, nevertheless preserved the socially predetermined nature of identity. Literary protagonists became partially differentiated from the collective “we,” yet did not achieve complete separation from communal frameworks of meaning. Literature consequently became a privileged domain for the exploration and construction of identity, with its central aesthetic orientation shifting toward

the expression of the individual self through poetic form. This transformation reflected a broader epistemological rupture in nineteenth-century artistic consciousness: the transition from traditionalist poetics, grounded in genre and stylistic conventions, to an individual-creative paradigm centered on authorial subjectivity and unique artistic vision.

Reader self-identification in the process of reading and interpreting literary texts remains a comparatively underexplored phenomenon within contemporary literary theory. It is evident that the most significant forms of readerly self-identification emerge, first, through identification with the narrator and/or literary character who embodies a particular perspective within the fictional world—a process that Mikhail Bakhtin conceptualizes as empathetic immersion or “living into” the represented consciousness as part of aesthetic activity. Second, self-identification occurs through engagement with the authorial consciousness that completes and frames artistic reality, a process Bakhtin defines as consummation. It is within this dialogic encounter between authorial and readerly consciousness that the literary work ultimately acquires its full aesthetic realization. The issue of readers’ imitation of literary characters or the enactment of literary behavior in real-life contexts as a form of self-identification lies beyond the scope of the present discussion.

A diachronic examination of literary history demonstrates how approaches to representing human subjectivity, the conceptualization of character self-identity, and the relationship between selfhood and character—defined by Valentin Tyupa as identity-for-others—have evolved across literary epochs.

Folklore and pre-medieval literature primarily sought to establish the external boundaries of the human self and distinguish it from others. The folkloric hero functions primarily as a bearer of narrative action, whose self-identity is externally validated through collective cultural experience rather than internally constituted. In classical antiquity, literary characters acquired recognizable social and ethical characteristics—that is, identity-for-others—yet lacked autonomous selfhood, remaining fundamentally stable and internally undifferentiated.

Methods. Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque literature shifted attention toward defining human identity through the individual’s relationship with God, sin, and virtue. These literary traditions constructed the image of the divided self, whose identity was determined through the tension between earthly existence and transcendent reality. Within this historical trajectory, William Shakespeare emerges as one of the earliest authors to create characters irreducible to externally defined character types [1]; [2]. His protagonists, particularly Hamlet,

function as subjects of autonomous self-narration whose self-perception frequently diverges from the evaluations imposed by others.

According to Tyupa's theoretical perspective, the evolution of the classicist hero reflects transformations in character understood as social identity-for-others, rather than in authentic selfhood. O. A. Kovalev emphasizes that in nineteenth-century Russian literature, the crisis of personal self-identification and the search for identity are intrinsically linked to the crisis of national identity, particularly to reflections on Russia, its historical destiny, and its cultural mission. In this context, the literary archetype of the "superfluous man" represents an embodiment of disrupted identity—a figure unable to identify with any established social role or coherent self-image [7]. V. I. Tyupa identifies a distinctive feature of self-identification in Russian classical realism, arguing that any discrepancy between an individual's inner selfhood and externally manifested character is perceived as an anomaly. The individuality of the character functions as an analogue to national uniqueness and is frequently grounded in the protagonist's national, and partially religious, identity [7]. The absence of an internal connection between the individual and the broader social collective often results in what may be interpreted as sociocultural alienation. Realist novels, therefore, reconstruct typical characters while simultaneously endowing them with distinct individual psychological depth. In contrast, in Anton Chekhov's prose, the degree of personal identity is determined by the tension between the external and internal dimensions of existence.

Results. The issues of identity crisis and personal self-identification became particularly acute during the first third of the twentieth century, coinciding with the emergence of modernism. This intensification was described as transformations in the worldview and changing conceptions of human existence, influenced by scientific discoveries, new philosophical doctrines, the rise of mass society, social cataclysms, historical trauma, and the individual's estrangement from traditional external foundations of identity, including religion, culture, the state, and stable social institutions.

A defining characteristic of twentieth-century modernist (post-classical) artistic consciousness was its principled rejection of finality—that is, the refusal of fixed and completed forms of self-identification, cultural consciousness, and artistic practice, as well as universal explanatory frameworks. Within the context of the "revolt of the masses," both modernist authors and protagonists sought non-identification with the collective, striving instead for alterity, self-mythologization, and the construction of individualized mythological worldviews. The alienated modernist protagonist lacks external supports beyond the boundaries of subjective consciousness, yet may seek self-identification through alignment with culturally

significant myths relevant to a particular epoch or environment. Twentieth-century literature thus increasingly explored the ways in which social others participate in, shape, or even deprive the individual of selfhood [1]; [2].

Existentialism, as both a philosophical doctrine and a literary movement represented by figures such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus, emerged in response to the collapse of grand narratives and asserted that responsibility for constructing one's existence rests entirely upon the individual. Existential consciousness may be identified not only in explicitly modernist literature but also within realist aesthetics. The existential protagonist embodies awareness of abandonment, finitude, and the uniqueness of individual existence, rejecting socially imposed identities in favor of constructing the self according to internally defined value systems [5]; [6].

The existential individual differs fundamentally from the ideological hero, as such a figure does not possess absolute truth but exists in a continual process of negotiating unstable being and fluid selfhood. Opposed to this figure is the mass individual (man), who uncritically accepts sociocultural myths and externally imposed identity structures.

Discussion. According to V. I. Tyupa, post-revolutionary Russian literature shifted the determinants of character formation away from the circumstances of private biography toward the broader context of national catastrophe. Categories such as émigré, victor, or fellow traveler became primary frameworks for characterization, while personal identity increasingly became shaped by historically rooted mental trauma. A weakening of this traumatic dimension often resulted in a diminished sense of selfhood, compensated for by the vivid external delineation of character. The heightened awareness of selfhood resulting from historical trauma was particularly reflected in émigré literature, as exemplified by the works of Vladimir Nabokov and Gaito Gazdanov, as well as in Soviet literature that transcended the confines of socialist realism, including the writings of Mikhail Bulgakov, Boris Pasternak, Mikhail Sholokhov, and Vasily Grossman. In contrast, during the Stalinist period of Soviet literature, personal selfhood largely lost its significance and virtually disappeared, reducing literary protagonists to mere functional character types [7].

Beginning with the Khrushchev Thaw, post-totalitarian Soviet literature witnessed the restoration of implicit autonarrativity and, consequently, the re-emergence of personal identity in youth prose, war prose, and works continuing the traditions of critical realism, including those of Yury Trifonov, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Vasily Shukshin, and the village prose writers. This period was marked by a tendency toward reconstructing the classical unity between character and personality. In post-Soviet literature, Tyupa identifies both the continued determination of selfhood by historical trauma, as illustrated in Eugene Vodolazkin's *Aviator*,

and the final dissolution of the unity between selfhood and character in prose oriented toward textual denarrativization, such as the novels of Mikhail Shishkin [7].

Conclusion. Thus, scholars of postmodern culture observe the transformation of the integral human individual into a fragmented individual, a subject divisible into autonomous components that themselves remain subject to further fragmentation. The postmodern individual, as a bearer of multiple identities, is characterized as a discontinuously evolving and cumulatively disconnected being. Its self-identification reaches a stage of unrestricted experimentation with identity masks, extending even to skepticism regarding the existence of any authentic self behind these constructed roles. Within postmodern literature, which proclaims the disappearance of objective reality and coherent personality and their replacement by cultural models—conceptualized through notions such as “the world as text” and “the human being as text”—scholars identify both playful forms of self-identification, enabling the construction and replacement of any identity, and the simultaneous exposure of the falsity, emptiness, and inauthenticity of all possible modes of selfhood, as exemplified in the novels of Viktor Pelevin.

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