

TRAUMA, MEMORY, AND IDENTITY IN POST-WAR ENGLISH LITERATURE

Xamidova Sevinch Rashid qizi

Chirchik State Pedagogical University, Faculty of Tourism

Foreign Languages and Literature (XTA)

shamidova005@gmail.com

Akmalxonov Saidfozil

Annotation: This paper explores how trauma, memory, and identity are represented in post-war English literature. After the devastation of World War II, English writers began to focus on the psychological wounds left on individuals and society. By examining selected literary works, this paper reveals how language and narrative techniques are used to express inner pain, reconstruct fragmented identities, and preserve collective memory. The study highlights that literature not only reflects trauma but also becomes a means of healing and understanding human resilience.

Keywords: trauma, memory, identity, post-war, English literature, psychological realism.

Аннотация: В данной статье рассматриваются особенности отражения травмы, памяти и идентичности в английской литературе послевоенного периода. После разрушений Второй мировой войны английские писатели начали уделять внимание психологическим ранам, оставшимся в сознании людей и общества. На основе анализа отдельных литературных произведений показано, как язык и повествовательные приемы помогают передать внутреннюю боль, восстановить разрушенную идентичность и сохранить коллективную память. Исследование подчеркивает, что литература не только отражает травму, но и становится средством исцеления и осмысления человеческой устойчивости.

Ключевые слова: травма, память, идентичность, послевоенная литература, английская литература, психологический реализм.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada urushdan keyingi ingliz adabiyotida travma, хотира va shaxsiyat masalalarining aks etishi tahlil qilinadi. Ikkinchi jahon urushidan keyingi davrda ingliz yozuvchilari inson va jamiyat ruhiyatida qolgan jarohatlarga e'tibor qaratdilar. Maqolada tanlab olingan badiiy asarlar asosida til va hikoya uslublari orqali ichki og'riq, buzilgan shaxsiyatni tiklash va jamoaviy хотирани saqlash jarayoni yoritiladi. Tadqiqot shuni ko'rsatadiki, adabiyot nafaqat travmani aks ettiradi, balki inson ruhiyati tiklanishining manbaiga ham aylanadi.

Kalit so'zlar: travma, хотира, shaxsiyat, urushdan keyingi davr, ingliz adabiyoti, psixologik realizm.

INTRODUCTION

The aftermath of war leaves more than physical destruction; it deeply affects the human psyche. Post-war English literature captures this invisible wound through complex portrayals of trauma, memory, and the search for identity. After World War

II, British authors began to question human morality, social stability, and the meaning of self in a world that had lost its innocence. Through their works, they depicted the struggle of individuals trying to rebuild themselves amid chaos and guilt. Representation of Trauma Trauma in post-war literature is often portrayed through fragmented narratives, unreliable narrators, and silence. Writers such as Graham Greene, William Golding, and Ian McEwan show how war shatters not only nations but also the human mind. For instance, in McEwan's *Atonement* (2001), the trauma of guilt and war intertwines. The novel demonstrates how a single act of misunderstanding leads to lifelong emotional scars. Similarly, in Golding's *Lord of the Flies* (1954), trauma is expressed through the breakdown of innocence and moral order among children — a symbolic reflection of the world's descent into savagery after war. These works prove that trauma does not end with the war; it continues to shape human behavior, memory, and relationships. The Role of Memory Memory is central to post-war narratives. It connects the past and present, forcing characters to confront their guilt, loss, and pain. Writers often use flashbacks and fragmented timelines to mirror the instability of the human mind. For example, in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), the character Septimus Warren Smith, a veteran suffering from shell shock, represents the unhealed memory of war. His hallucinations and suicidal thoughts are direct results of trauma. Woolf portrays memory as both a curse and a bridge — it traps the characters in the past but also reminds them of their humanity. Through memory, post-war authors show that the past cannot simply be erased; it must be acknowledged to move forward.

Identity reconstruction

The search for identity becomes a major theme in post-war English literature. The trauma of war leads to self-alienation and confusion. Characters struggle to define who they are in a world stripped of moral certainty. For instance, in George Orwell's *1984* (1949), identity is manipulated by external powers, showing how trauma and political oppression destroy individuality. Meanwhile, McEwan's and Greene's characters attempt to rebuild identity through love, confession, and moral responsibility. Thus, identity in post-war literature is fluid — constantly reshaped by memory, loss, and the desire for redemption.

The language of pain

Post-war writers often used modernist and psychological realism techniques to depict the inner world of trauma. Stream of consciousness, symbolic imagery, and silence became powerful tools to express pain. The use of fragmented narrative structures mirrors the fractured consciousness of those affected by war. Language becomes both a burden and a healing force — it fails to capture the totality of pain, yet it allows expression and recovery.

Conclusion

Post-war English literature serves as a mirror of human suffering and resilience. The exploration of trauma, memory, and identity reveals how writers transform pain into art. These themes remain relevant today, as the modern world continues to face psychological and social conflicts. By giving voice to the wounded, post-war authors

remind us that healing begins with remembrance and self-understanding.

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