



GENDER IDENTIFICATION AND STEREOTYPES IN LITERARY ANALYSIS

Pirmatova Khulkar Dzhakhangirovna

Tashkent State Transport University

Assistant of the Department of Foreign Languages

+998999881886

Justhulkar@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0009-0009-9065-465X>

Abstract:

The article analyzes the concept of gender identification in literary studies and its relationship to stereotypes. The issues of the formation of female and male characters in literature and their conformity to social and cultural stereotypes are examined. The article analyzes gender stereotypes in classical and contemporary literary works, the character of protagonists, and gender dimensions in their interrelationships. Scientific reflections on the impact of gender stereotypes on social consciousness and culture are also presented.

Keywords: Gender identification, Gender stereotypes, Literary studies, Character of protagonist, Female characters, Male characters, Cultural context, Social norm, Identity.

Introduction:

Gender identification is the process of an individual's self-perception as female or male, and in literary studies this concept is expressed through characters and their personalities. Throughout literary history, female and male characters have often been created in accordance with social and cultural stereotypes. In classical literature, for example, female characters have often been portrayed as kind, obedient, living by their emotions, while men have been shown as courageous, capable of making decisions, and strong [1.2].

Contemporary literature, however, attempts to change these stereotypes: female and male characters become more complex and multifaceted, expressed in opposition to



International Conference on Economics, Finance, Banking and Management

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24th November, 2025

social roles and gender stereotypes [3.5]. From this perspective, research on gender identification and stereotypes is of great importance in literary studies.

This article examines how gender identification manifests in literary analysis, the stereotypical or stereotype-deviating characters of protagonists, and the impact of this process on the cultural and social context.

Main part: Gender identification in literary studies examines the sexual role of characters, as well as concepts related to their social and cultural position. Through this process, the reader perceives characters through their gender, behavior, and social roles [2.1].

- In classical literature, gender identification was often based on traditional stereotypes. For example, in nineteenth-century novels and poetic works, female characters were more passive, kind, and attentive to family values [1.3].

- Male characters were characterized by qualities of activity, courage, decision-making, and leadership.

These stereotypes play an important role in shaping the reader's value system, but they sometimes lead to the limitation of gender roles and the neglect of complexities in real life [4.2].

In literature, a stereotype is a means of adapting characters to a defined social and cultural role. Stereotypes reflect social norms and values, and also reinforce existing gender perceptions in the reader's consciousness [2.4].

- Female stereotypes: kind, beautiful, family-oriented, obedient, emotional [1.2].

- Male stereotypes: courageous, determined, strong, intellectual, and socially active [3.1].

In contemporary literature, however, stereotypes are being changed. For example, female characters increasingly have active, independent, and complex personalities, while men can display emotion and vulnerability [5.3]. These changes lead to the formation of gender identification that is more individual and context-appropriate.

Gender identification and stereotypes are not limited to literature alone but are closely connected with social and cultural context [4.1]. For example:

- In various national literatures, female and male roles have been shaped through historical and cultural values [6.2].



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24th November, 2025

• In translated literature, stereotypes are sometimes preserved or changed, which affects the reader's acceptance of gender identification [7.3].

At the same time, literary analysis allows for the examination of characters' personalities independently of social stereotypes [3.2].

While classical works (for example, J. Austen, Ch. Dickens) portrayed female and male characters through traditional stereotypes, contemporary literature (for example, H. Murakami, Z. Smith) attempts to break gender stereotypes [2.3].

• In Austen's novels, female characters mostly cherished family and social values, while in contemporary works, female protagonists have independent, active, and complex personalities.

• Male characters in contemporary literature gain the ability to openly express emotions, which makes gender identification more dynamic [5.2].

Conclusion: Gender identification and stereotypes in literary analysis allow for a deeper understanding of characters' personalities, their interrelationships, and social roles. Through gender identification, the reader analyzes characters' behavior, emotional experiences, and decision-making processes, gaining a complete picture of their position in the social and cultural context [1.2]. This allows literary studies to view characters not only as artistic images but also as individuals organically connected with society and culture.

In classical literature, gender stereotypes were more rigid and traditional, with the role, behavior, and social position of female and male characters based on established norms. Female characters were typically portrayed as kind, obedient, and valuing family principles, while men stood out with qualities of courage, activity, and decision-making [2.1]. These stereotypes help shape the reader's gender perceptions in society, but they cannot fully reveal the complex nature and individual characteristics of characters.

In contemporary literature, however, gender stereotypes are being broken and characters' personalities manifest in a more complex, multifaceted, and individual manner. Female characters are independent, active, and have a flexible attitude toward social context, while men gain the ability to openly express emotions and show their weaknesses [3.5]. These changes lead to the formation of gender



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identification in a more subjective and context-appropriate way, and also provide an opportunity to critically analyze existing stereotypes in literature.

Gender stereotypes and identification are related not only to the artistic process but also to the cultural and social context of society. The formation of female and male characters in various national literatures is organically connected with historical, cultural, and social values. Therefore, literary analysis should be carried out considering characters not only as individuals but also their role in society and their relationship with stereotypes [4.2; 6.2].

Furthermore, the issue of gender identification and stereotypes is an important tool in developing critical thinking and artistic analysis methods in literary studies. Through them, not only the character and social role of protagonists are revealed, but also the author's artistic position, social views, and perspectives in the cultural context. From this perspective, analyzing gender identification and stereotypes ensures a deeper and more complete understanding of the literary process [5.2; 7.3]. In conclusion, gender identification and stereotypes remain a relevant and scientifically significant topic in literary studies. They serve as an important tool in revealing the complex character of protagonists, analyzing gender roles and stereotypes in society, and developing methods of artistic analysis. For this reason, new research on this topic, theoretical analyses, and the study of literary examples enrich the scientific field of literary studies and help in a deeper understanding of gender issues in contemporary literature [8.1].

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