

THEORY AND PERSPECTIVES OF PHILOLOGY

DOI <https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2024-1-28>

PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER INDENTITY IN MODERN BRITISH AND AZERBAIJANI LITERATURE

Vusala Aghabayli,

*Ph.D. in Philology, Associate Professor, Azerbaijan University of Languages,
Postdoctoral Researcher, National Museum of Azerbaijan Literature
named after Nizami Ganjavi (Baku, Azerbaijan)*

ORCID ID: 0000-0003-1560-028X

aghabeyli.vusala@adu.edu.az, vusale.agabeyli@gmail.com

Abstract. This research article explores the evolving portrayals of gender identity in 21st-century British and Azerbaijani literature, shedding light on the diverse perspectives and narratives that reflect the changing socio-cultural landscapes of these two distinct regions. Through an analysis of selected literary works, the study aims to examine how authors like Ali Smith's, Jeanette Winterson's, Zadie Smith, Alan Hollinghurst, etc. from UK and Jafar Jabbarli, Yusif Vazir Chamanzaminli, Afag Masud, etc. from Azerbaijan engage with and represent gender identity, challenging traditional norms and contributing to the ongoing discourse on gender equality and diversity. British literature explores diverse gender expressions, delving into fluid identities and the intersectionality of gender with other facets of diversity. Simultaneously, Azerbaijani literature grapples with the complexities of modernity, offering insights into how societal shifts impact perceptions of gender roles and individual identity.

Key words: gender identity, British writers, Azerbaijani writers, social norms, woman, literary context.

Introduction. The 21st century has witnessed a significant transformation in societal attitudes towards gender identity, prompting authors worldwide to incorporate diverse and nuanced representations of gender in their literary works. This research focuses on the literary landscapes of both Britain and Azerbaijan, two countries with distinct cultural histories, to provide a comparative analysis of the ways in which gender identity is explored in their respective literatures. By comparing these perspectives, the article aims to uncover commonalities and distinctions, providing a comprehensive exploration of the evolving discourse on gender identity within the literary contexts of two distinct cultures. This analysis contributes to a broader understanding of contemporary societal attitudes towards gender, reflecting the ongoing dialogue surrounding identity in the literary realm.

Literature Review. Scholars have extensively explored gender identity in literature, emphasizing the importance of diverse narratives that challenge binary constructions. While British literature has a rich tradition of addressing gender issues, Azerbaijani literature, influenced by its cultural and historical context, has recently seen an emergence of voices addressing gender-related themes. The literature review contextualizes the current study within the broader scholarly conversation on gender identity in literature.

Methodology. This research employs a qualitative approach, analyzing a selection of contemporary literary works from both British and Azerbaijani authors. The chosen texts span various genres, including novels, short stories, and poetry, to capture the diverse ways in which gender identity is explored. The analysis will consider narrative techniques, character development, and thematic elements to uncover the underlying perspectives on gender identity in each literature.

Objective. The main objective of this research is to analyze and compare the representations of gender identity in 21st-century British and Azerbaijani literature. By examining selected literary works from both regions, the research aims to uncover the diverse perspectives and narrative strategies employed by authors to address and challenge traditional gender norms.

Discussion

The exploration of gender identity in 21st-century British literature. Modern British literature has been marked by a significant shift towards diverse and nuanced representations. Authors have increasingly challenged traditional gender norms, contributing to a rich tapestry of narratives that reflect the evolving socio-cultural landscape. A notable trend in contemporary British literature is the exploration of gender fluidity and non-binary identities. Works such as Ali Smith's "How to Be Both" and Jeanette Winterson's "Frankissstein" have introduced characters who defy conventional gender categories, prompting readers to reconsider established norms. Both Ali Smith's "How to Be Both" and Jeanette Winterson's "Frankissstein" engage with the themes of gender fluidity and non-binary identities, exploring these concepts through innovative storytelling and complex characters. While each novel has its unique approach, both contribute to the broader literary discourse on the evolving nature of gender identities in the 21st century. In "How to Be Both" Ali Smith introduces the character of George, a 16th-century Italian artist who challenges traditional gender norms. George is revealed to be a woman living as a man, disrupting conventional expectations and prompting readers to reconsider preconceived notions about gender identity. The novel's distinctive structure, with two interconnected parts that can be read in different orders, mirrors the fluidity of gender and time. The intertwining of past and present in the narrative reinforces the idea that gender identity, like time, is not fixed. The novel suggests that historical and contemporary notions of gender are interconnected and subject to reinterpretation. In Ali Smith's novel "How to Be Both," the character of George stands as a central figure representing gender fluidity and challenging conventional notions of identity.

George is introduced as a 16th-century Italian artist, initially perceived as a male figure by the characters and the reader. However, as the narrative unfolds, it is revealed that George is a woman living as a man (Smith, 2014, p. 37). This historical ambiguity surrounding George's gender identity serves as a central theme, prompting readers to question assumptions based on appearances and historical expectations. George's character embodies the fluidity of both gender identity and artistic expression. As a woman posing as a man, George challenges the societal expectations of the time, highlighting the flexibility and malleability of identity. The fluidity extends beyond gender to encompass the broader concept of how individuals express themselves, particularly through creative pursuits. George's character intersects with multiple aspects of identity, including gender, class, and artistic identity. By living as a man and pursuing a career in the arts during a period when women faced significant limitations, George challenges societal norms and expectations (Smith, 2014, p. 93). The character's resilience and determination highlight the transformative power of individual agency in navigating and subverting gender norms.

In "How to Be Both," Ali Smith's portrayal of George contributes to a broader conversation about the fluidity of gender and the significance of individual agency in shaping identity. George's character challenges readers to reevaluate assumptions, fostering a greater understanding of the complexities inherent in the experiences of those who exist beyond traditional gender categories.

"Frankissstein" by Jeanette Winterson introduces a character named Ry Shelley, a non-binary transgender doctor. Ry's character challenges traditional gender categories and contributes to the novel's exploration of contemporary issues related to identity and embodiment. Winterson's novel delves into the concept of transhumanism, exploring the intersection of technology and identity. The narrative contemplates the possibilities of transcending traditional notions of gender through technological advancements, raising questions about the malleability of identity in the face of scientific progress (Winterson, 2019). "Frankissstein" weaves together multiple narratives, including the story of Mary Shelley writing "Frankenstein" and the contemporary storyline featuring Ry Shelley. This intersection of narratives allows the novel to examine the historical roots of discussions about identity and gender, drawing parallels between the past and present.

“How to Be Both” and “Frankissstein” contribute to the contemporary literary landscape by offering nuanced explorations of gender fluidity and non-binary identities. Through their innovative narratives and complex characters, both novels encourage readers to reconsider societal norms surrounding gender while fostering empathy and understanding for diverse experiences of identity.

“Swing Time” by Zadie Smith (2016) delves into the complexities of female friendship, race, and identity. While primarily exploring themes of race and class, the narrative also touches upon the expectations placed on women, contributing to a broader discussion on gender roles and identity in contemporary society. In Zadie Smith's novel “Swing Time” feminist perspectives are woven into the narrative, exploring the complexities of female identity, friendship, and societal expectations. The novel delves into the experiences of its female protagonists, providing a nuanced exploration of feminist themes. The central relationship between the unnamed narrator and her childhood friend Tracy spans from their early years in a dance class to their divergent paths in adulthood (Smith, 2016, p. 53). The exploration of this friendship allows Smith to delve into the complexities, support systems, and challenges that women face in their relationships with each other. The protagonists navigate their identities as women of color, highlighting the unique challenges they face within the broader feminist discourse. The novel underscores the importance of recognizing the diverse experiences of women and the intersections of multiple identity markers. The novel explores the aspirations and challenges of the female protagonists in their careers. The unnamed narrator, who works as a personal assistant to a pop star, and Tracy, who pursues a career in dance, grapple with societal expectations, gendered dynamics in the workplace, and the sacrifices women often make to pursue their ambitions (Smith, 2016, p. 79). The exploration of their professional lives reflects broader feminist discussions about work, ambition, and gender equality. “Swing Time” delves into the complex relationships between mothers and daughters. The characters navigate the expectations and pressures placed on them by their mothers, highlighting generational differences in feminist perspectives. The exploration of motherhood adds depth to the novel's feminist themes, examining how women's roles and expectations change across different eras. The novel addresses the importance of representation and visibility for women of color. “Swing Time” critiques patriarchal structures and societal expectations that limit women's agency and perpetuate inequality (Smith, 2016, p. 239). The novel prompts readers to reflect on the ways in which traditional gender roles, expectations, and power dynamics impact women's lives, choices, and opportunities. The novel explores the protagonists' journeys of self-discovery and identity formation. The female characters grapple with defining themselves outside of societal expectations and cultural norms. This theme aligns with feminist perspectives that emphasize the importance of women defining their identities on their own terms.

In “Swing Time” Zadie Smith weaves together these feminist perspectives to create a narrative that not only explores the individual lives of its female characters but also contributes to broader discussions about gender, race, and identity within the feminist framework. The novel challenges readers to critically engage with the complexities of women's experiences in a world shaped by intersecting social forces.

Diverse Spectrum of Gender and Sexual Orientations: Queer Narratives. In 21st-century British literature, there has been a notable increase in the representation of queer narratives, contributing to a more diverse and inclusive portrayal of gender and sexual orientations. Authors have explored a wide spectrum of experiences, identities, and relationships, challenging traditional norms and fostering a greater understanding of the LGBTQ+ community. “The Line of Beauty” by Alan Hollinghurst (2004) explores the life of Nick Guest, a young gay man, against the backdrop of 1980s Britain. The narrative delves into issues of identity, desire, and societal expectations, providing a nuanced portrayal of the complexities of queer life. Alan Hollinghurst's novel "The Line of Beauty" explores various gender perspectives against the backdrop of 1980s Britain, particularly within the context of the LGBTQ+ community.

The novel primarily revolves around the protagonist, Nick Guest, a young gay man. Hollinghurst delves into Nick's experiences as he navigates his sexuality in a society where being gay was still stigmatized. The narrative explores Nick's relationships, desires, and the complexities of being a gay man during a period marked by the HIV/AIDS crisis (Hollinghurst, 2004, p. 163). "The Line of Beauty" critically examines traditional notions of masculinity, particularly through the character of Nick and other male figures. The novel challenges stereotypes associated with masculinity and presents a diverse range of male identities within the LGBTQ+ community, contributing to a broader conversation about the fluidity of gender roles. The novel delves into sexual politics and power dynamics within relationships, exploring how societal expectations and power imbalances impact intimate connections. The characters' interactions reflect broader discussions about consent, agency, and the negotiation of power within sexual relationships. Set against the backdrop of the HIV/AIDS crisis in the 1980s, the novel portrays the impact of the epidemic on the gay community. The narrative sheds light on the challenges faced by gay men during this tumultuous period, emphasizing the vulnerability and resilience of individuals within the LGBTQ+ spectrum. While the novel primarily focuses on the experiences of gay men, it also touches on intersectionality by addressing the overlapping identities of characters. The intersections of gender, sexuality, and social class contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the characters' lives and challenges.

Hollinghurst explores how social expectations and stigma surrounding homosexuality affect the characters' self-perception and interactions. The novel provides insights into the societal attitudes of the time and how these attitudes shape the characters' experiences of gender and sexuality. The title, "The Line of Beauty" suggests a theme of aesthetic beauty, and the novel reflects on how beauty intersects with identity (Hollinghurst, 2004, p. 375). The characters grapple with societal standards of beauty, which are often tied to gender norms, and how these standards impact their self-worth and relationships. The novel portrays characters asserting their agency and autonomy in defining their gender identities and sexual orientations.

"Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit" by Jeanette Winterson (1985): While published in the late 20th century, Jeanette Winterson's novel continues to have a significant impact on contemporary discussions of queer identity. The semi-autobiographical work narrates the coming-of-age story of a lesbian protagonist, challenging societal norms and exploring the intersections of sexuality and religion. "Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit" by Jeanette Winterson is a semi-autobiographical novel that intricately explores gender perspectives, sexuality, and the impact of religious and societal expectations on individual identity. The novel is a coming-of-age story that follows the protagonist, Jeanette, as she navigates her identity as a young woman (Winterson, 1985, p. 57). Jeanette grapples with societal expectations, particularly those imposed by her religious community, as she becomes aware of her non-heteronormative desires. The narrative delves into the strict gender roles and expectations within the Pentecostal community in which Jeanette is raised. The novel explores how religious beliefs shape and limit the roles available to women, reinforcing traditional gender norms and restricting expressions of individuality. The novel portrays Jeanette's realization of her lesbian identity and her attraction to women. Winterson addresses the challenges and conflicts that arise when one's sexual orientation deviates from societal norms, especially within the context of a religious and conservative community. The relationship between Jeanette and her adoptive mother is a central theme. The mother's attempts to mold Jeanette into a conforming member of the church reflect the tension between individual identity and societal expectations, particularly in terms of gender roles (Winterson, 1985, p. 73). Jeanette's journey can be seen as an act of resistance against prescribed gender roles and expectations. Her refusal to conform to societal norms and her determination to live authentically challenge the traditional roles assigned to women in her community. The novel uses oranges as a recurring symbol, representing not only forbidden desires but also a form of rebellion against societal norms. The oranges serve as a metaphor for Jeanette's non-conforming identity and her quest for per-

sonal freedom outside the constraints of traditional gender roles. While the primary focus is on gender and sexuality, the novel touches on the intersectionality of identity by examining how Jeanette's experiences are shaped by factors such as religion, class, and the rural setting. These elements contribute to a nuanced understanding of the challenges individuals face when navigating multiple aspects of their identity.

Emerging Perspectives on Gender Identity within Contemporary Azerbaijani Literature.

While Azerbaijani literature has traditionally been characterized by a more conservative approach to gender roles, the 21st century has witnessed a gradual opening up to discussions on gender identity, albeit within a unique cultural context. Many Azerbaijani authors like Mirza Fatali Ahunzadeh, Jalil Mammadguluzadeh, Jafar Jabbarli, Yusif Vazir Chamanzaminli and others navigated the tension between traditional values and the impact of modernity on gender roles.

According to Chamanzaminli, just as the sun gives light and warmth and gives life, so does woman serves humanity. It means that the Azerbaijani people respect women, and that the Azerbaijanis raise their women to the level of gods. However, he writes that there are Azerbaijani men who want to hide this divinity and light of a woman like a black cloud, and explains their purpose as follows: *“Arvadlar üçün çarşablar, qifillar, uca divarlar icad edirlər. Elmdən uzaqlaşdırıb fikirlərini, zehinlərini qaranlıqlar ilə əhatə edirlər”*. – *“They invent sheets, locks, high walls for wives. They distance themselves from science and surround their thoughts and minds with darkness.”* (Chamanzaminli, 2005, p. 157).

Yusuf Vazir's articles about women have a common spirit: woman is holy, she has the character of divinity, it is a sin to hurt her. Beating a woman is unfair, beating a woman is unacceptable in the age of progress, beating a woman is against the civilized human condition. If women are standing on a tram or train, men should give them space, if they meet on the street, men should step aside respectfully. In his article “A wife is a dear creature”, he lists the sufferings of a woman during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period, and as a result, he writes that motherhood is so high that we men are not worthy to achieve it. He says that the role of his mother in the upbringing of many great personalities of Europe is great, and he shows Schiller, Chény, and Lamarty as examples. He writes that his mother Elizabeth played a role in Schiller's rise to fame in literature, and says that the fact that Schiller and Goethe's mothers read stories to them and memorized poems will ultimately lead to the development of the future personality. According to Chemanzeminli, the polemic of men being considered superior to women in Europe ended when talented writers, artists, sculptors, professors, and doctors grew up among women. Yusif Vazir, who wrote that it is unnecessary to open a debate about the superiority of men over women, says that if there are schools for women, the power of women will be seen. As an example of a woman, Yusif Vazir points to Hamida Javanshir, the wife of Mirza Jalil, a descendant of the Karabakh khans: “Nowadays, we have several ladies in the Caucasus who, thanks to their talent and knowledge, are erasing the stain of “imperfection” from the name of wives. Honorable Mrs. Hamida Javanshir does not lag behind our non-zamindar gentlemen in maintaining and improving her property.” (Chamanzaminli, 2017, p. 5).

Another lady whom Chamanzaminli shows as an example is Hanifa Malikova. He mentions that Hanifa educates girls, she is a hope for uneducated women, is a person who will give them advice, and supports women with their problems: *“If women are ignorant and how did women like Hanifa khanim come about? They can teach wisdom to a thousand men”* (Chamanzaminli, 2017, p. 7). Chamanzaminli also points to the example of doctor Amina Baradarshah, who studied in Petersburg and treated thousands of men and women in Baku, and says that women are equally talented as men.

True mother according to Yusuf Vazir who is – Aware of the press; Reading newspapers and magazines; buys and reads published books; Informing their children about age-appropriate news; The one who teaches his children the names of writers who work in the way of the people, introduces them to their works (Chamanzaminli, 2005, p. 417).

In the first decades of the 20th century, one of the Azerbaijani writers who raised the issue of women's freedom most seriously was Jafar Jabbarli, a great writer – playwright, poet, prose writer, theater critic, film critic (his titles are as numerous as his services). J. Jabbarli, in the play “Ogtay Eloğlu”, reflected the tragedy of the Firengiz, who trampled on his rights, who was full of passion to live and create. J. Jabbarli, who worked for the progress of Azerbaijani culture and theater and wished for the active participation of Azerbaijani women in the theater scene, highly appreciated the role played by women in the history of art during 1918-1920. Before the Republic – during the years of Soviet rule, old-fashioned people did not allow women on the stage of the theater and did not look well at women who went to the theater (this trend existed during the Republic and after – in the early days of the Soviet era, but the mentioned trend was stronger during the years when Azerbaijan was under the rule of Tsarist Russia). In such an environment, only the educated members of the highest, wives and sisters of officials would go to the theater. Firengiz, who is a typical representative of these ladies, gets acquainted with the Russian culture by studying at the suggestion and insistence of her brother Aslan, and later learns the rules of noble and aristocratic behavior characteristic from her tutor Nadia.

Innocent and shy, Firengiz has a romantic, slightly incomprehensible, sentimental attitude to life and people. Firengiz, who fell in love with Ogtay, is within the framework of dry and strict moral rules. It was her father and brother who determined the path of destiny, not herself, and deprived of the rights of humanity and femininity, Firengiz in real life she could not make it happen. Firengiz actually confirms that she loves not only Ogtay, but in his face she loves her ideals. If it were not so, an open-minded and well-educated girl would not have consciously refused the love letters she wrote to Ogtay at the insistence of her brother. Firengiz, the first swallow, gets the happiness she wished for: “Oh, Ogtay, how I wish I could be your favorite and play the role of Amalia! They also applauded me. But my father! Not even my brother would agree. I love Amalia's death. A person is innocently killed by her lover” (Jabbarli, 2005, p. 278).

In the play “Ogtay Eloğlu”, J. Jabbarli reflected the role played not only by men but also by women in the development of Azerbaijani theater art. In those days, there were many actors who were constantly ridiculed, persecuted, and even killed by ignorant people. In such circumstances, the arrival of a woman on the stage was a great revolution. This revolution took place thanks to the courage and bravery of Azerbaijani women who were threatened with being killed in the family.

It can be seen not only from his plays, but also from the stories he wrote in the 1920s and 30s that the struggle against those who enslave women and tramples on women's rights occupies one of the central places in J. Jabbarli's work. In the stories “Gulzar”, “Dilbar”, “Dilara” women's problems and women's motive are in the foreground.

In the story “Gulzar”, which he wrote in 1924, J. Jabbarli created a typical image of girls made miserable by superstition. The writer, who named his stories after his heroes, attributed the disaster that befell Gulzar to her innocence and the brutality and depravity of the people of that time. Gulzar, who is the epitome of high honor in the village, has to live through a terribly disastrous night – the night when her honor was violated, she was raped. All of Gulzar's hopes and shelter are in vain, Mansur was afraid of to accept her as a wife. She had to be a virgin, according to the social norms and man's honor he couldn't take her as a wife. In “Gulzar”, the deception caused by trust, the miseries caused by orphanhood and deprivation for women are brought to the fore (Jabbarli, 2005, p. 258).

The story “Dilbar” tells about the tragedy of the father (Hasan) who gave his educated daughter to the creditor because he could not repay the debt. It is also the tragedy of the girl herself (Dilbar) and, of course, the tragedy of society as a whole, of the time. Although he made it a condition for her to get an education while giving Dilbar, poverty does not allow Hasan to defend his daughter's right. Dilbar's lifestyle is the clearest example of the hardships of Azerbaijani women: “Dilbar's day was spent studying religious verses on Thursday evenings, and reading the Koran. Washing clothes, preparing food, and similar tasks fell on Dilbar like a heavy burden, not allowing her to live properly.

She had to come meet and welcome him with courtesy and formality, smile and laugh. Otherwise punches and kicks were inevitable and merciless. Dilbar was buried in a black grave while she was alive” (Jabbarli, 2005, p. 275).

The abyss into which Azerbaijani women fell, the swamp in which they were surrounded, was so deep and dark. J. Jabbarli's female heroes – Gultekin, Firangiz, Gulzar, Dilbar were passengers of this miserable life. The dream of women's emancipation, which constantly worries J. Jabbarli and runs through his creativity, found its artistic expression in his work “Seville”. This work, written in 1928 and staged in the same year, caused great resonance. Critics called this work a “symbol of freedom” of an Azerbaijani woman. Indeed, J. Jabbarli is a great man of words and ideas who created this symbol in Azerbaijani literature and culture.

In Sena Dohan's study, Afag Masud evaluated the sorrows of female protagonists as the sorrows of a woman whose rights have been trampled on – an Eastern woman (12). She thinks that in the country where she was born and grew up, as well as in Europe itself, “it was extremely difficult for a woman to realize herself as a creative individual. Because a woman's life is multifaceted!.. She is both a mother, a wife, a child, and an office worker... Moreover, unlike men, a woman is selfless.” Afag Masud, who created her own prototype in “Sparrow”, “Idle”, “She” and other stories, as well as in her essays, observes people, life and society from the most hidden, inner corner of her soul, passes her accurate observations through the filter of her soul and transfers them to white sheets. In one of her interviews, the author, who brought up the situation of Azerbaijani women after our country gained independence, exhibits not a feminist position, but an objective approach: “Even though many things have changed in society in general, it can be said that very little has changed for women. This change happened mainly in the social life of women. In a big sense, nothing has changed. After independence, as I said earlier, things in the society have changed for the better, but family life and intra-family relations have, on the contrary, been spoiled. Since life has become materialized, the relations between men and women and husbands have moved to this destructive level and lost their national-aesthetic value in a certain sense. By the way, many people think (I mean mainly Europeans and I have had many arguments about this) that Azerbaijan was a backward eastern country where women were exploited. Many foreign magazines sometimes present the Azerbaijani woman in the image of a shopkeeper selling fruit in the market with a floral shawl around her waist, or in the kitchen with her head tied and wrapped in a scarf. I tried to make them understand many times that women are not exploited by anyone in our country, no woman's rights are violated. Not only now, but since the time of the Soviets, which we still do not like. This was our attitude towards women. I am constantly asked about the problems of women in Azerbaijan. Of course, it goes without saying that when we say “Azerbaijani woman”, first of all, the group to which she belongs should be taken into account. In Azerbaijan, as in the whole world, there are women who work as sellers, sweepers, laundresses, and other hard workers. However, “Azerbaijani women” are not the only poor people. We also have a separate army of poor women who represent the wealthy class and spend their lives in luxury and beauty contests, and these women are not typical Azerbaijani women either. There are other groups of women in Azerbaijan. These are sane women who have gained their individual independence, are confident in their strength and abilities. However, their life is not completely without problems, and this is natural. And so there are many women's clans in Azerbaijan. Housewives, businesswomen, creative women, businesswomen and so on and so forth. Independence has not fundamentally changed anything in the lives of these women.” (Masud, 2012, p. 151).

We can compare the works of the famous English writer Virginia Woolf and the well-known figure of Azerbaijani literature Afag Masud due to the analogical and psychological similarities. Virginia Woolf and Afag Masud are both representatives of psychological-modernist prose. In the works of both writers, human alienation, duality, existential loneliness, and the revelation of subconscious secrets are brought to the fore. In this regard, during the comparative analysis of Afag Masud's “He

Loves Me” and Virginia Woolf’s “Mrs. Dalloway”, it is noticeable that the image of a woman, a mother, is taken deeper and more alive in the works of the first author. In “He Loves Me”, the mother manages to express her love even though she is irritated by her child's attitude. Since mother-child love is treated in the divine layer in the work, the deepest nature of these relationships is revealed. In Virginia Woolf, the mother-child relationship is not revealed until the end, where the nature of the mother-child relationship remains abstract because the mother cannot devote time to her child (Woolf, 2003). The author wrote this work from her own life. In contrast to “He Loves Me”, in “Mrs. Dalloway” you can feel the child's sarcastic attitude towards the mother along with the incomplete love of the mother. Afag Masud proves that, in addition to what I have listed, Azerbaijani women are also capable of writing high-level works that will be valued worldwide. Afag Masud's work focuses on the existential loneliness of a woman, the process of spiritual evolution of a person, and the flow of consciousness.

Approbation of research results. The key points of the article are encapsulated in the author's presentations at scientific conferences both within Azerbaijan and internationally, as well as in scholarly articles published in diverse journals, both domestic and international. The innovative comparative approach has been commended for its contribution to the understanding of how gender is portrayed, negotiated, and culturally constructed in distinct literary traditions. The positive reception during presentations at academic conferences underscores the significance of this research in bridging cultural and literary studies. Overall, the approbation reflects the scholarly merit and relevance of the study in expanding our insights into gender dynamics in literature.

Conclusions. Critics have acknowledged the progressive strides made in both British and Azerbaijani literature concerning gender identity. While British literature has been lauded for its bold exploration of diverse identities, Azerbaijani literature is recognized for challenging traditional norms despite facing societal resistance. However, some critics argue that both literary traditions can benefit from further intersectional perspectives and increased representation of marginalized voices.

In conclusion, the literature review reveals a dynamic and evolving landscape of gender identity representation in both British and Azerbaijani literature. While British literature showcases a broad spectrum of identities and perspectives, Azerbaijani literature, influenced by its cultural context, is undergoing a transformation, with authors gradually pushing the boundaries to address diverse gender identities. The critical perspectives highlight the need for ongoing exploration and dialogue in both literary traditions to foster a more inclusive representation of gender identity.

References:

1. Chamanzaminli Y.V., (2005). His Works. Three volumes, 1st Vol. Baku, EuroAsia Press, 360 p.
2. Chamanzaminli Y.V., (2005). His Works. Three volumes, 3rd Vol. Baku, EuroAsia Press, 440 p.
3. Hollinghurst A., (2004). The Line of Beauty, Bloomsbury, 438 p.
4. Jabbarli J., (2005). His Works, Four Volumes, 2nd Vol. Baku, East-West, 360 p.
5. Jabbarli J., (2005). His Works, Four Volumes, 1st Vol. Baku, East-West, 328 p.
6. Masud A., (2012). Selected Works, Two Volumes, 1st Vol. Baku, Science and Education, 238 p.
7. Smith A., (2014). How to be Both, London, Kindle Edition, 376 p.
8. Smith Z., (2016). Swing Time, UK: Hamish Hamilton, 453 p.
9. Winterson J., (2019). Frankissstein: A Love Story, London, Vintage Digital, 344 p.
10. Winterson J., (1985). Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit, Grove Press, 176 p.
11. Woolf V., (2003). Mrs. Dalloway, London, Wordsworth Edition Limited, 148 p.
12. Afag Masud. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Afag_Masud