

CONCEPT OF IDENTITY IN "DAUGHTER OF THE LEGEND" BY J. STEWARD

O.X. Ganiyeva

PhD, Associate Professor

Bukhara State University

o.x.ganieva@buxdu.uz

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14556935>

Abstract: J. Steward strives to reflect her region and traditions in nearly all her stories. The places and cultural atmosphere depicted in her works introduce readers to the author's roots, historical heritage, and the unique aspects of the society she belongs to. This approach not only portrays the physical landscape but also vividly illustrates the lives, values, and daily routines of the people within it. In this article we analyze the concept of identity in her given novel.

Key words: living conditions, symbol, oppression, acquaintances, artistic expression, sense of peace.

In "Daughter of the Legend", the home plays an important role in portraying the protagonist's identity and connection to place.¹ The protagonist, standing against social contradictions and facing the oppression of indigenous people, is met with a similar fate. Dave, witnessing the change in his valley acquaintances and even his closest friend, remains unaffected and continues on his path. Living with the mountainous Melungeons as one tribe and family, Dave builds a home for them. This home fulfills several artistic functions in the novel.² Located in a beautiful spot with fertile land, a good spring, and enough wood for construction, their small house rises under Dave's skilled hands, turning into a sacred place for their love. When Deutsia passes away in this house, it becomes a symbolic shrine. J. Stewart particularly emphasizes the depiction of the household in both ages. The symbolic representation of the home is approached directly and indirectly in its artistic expression. In the direct approach, the external features of the home are described by Dave, while Deisia expresses her thoughts about their new home: "This is the prettiest place on this mountain, Dave," Deutsia said as she looked over the room where light and shadow played on the smooth walls. "I'm proud of our home."³ This depiction of the household reflects the idea that love and happiness can be found in simple living conditions. Although their new home is furnished modestly, it is filled with love and hard work, with the blankets and gathered dishes Deisia has made adding to the warmth and sincerity of the home.⁴ Descriptions like sitting by the stove and the play of light and shadow on the walls convey the comfort of the house and its symbolic role as a "home of love and affection." Deisia's words, "This is the prettiest place on this mountain," reflect her pride in her home and appreciation for her small but meaningful world. This passage embodies a sense of peace, contentment, and love.⁵

J. Stewart initially contrasts the sense of belonging to the Sanctuary Mountain with the separate attitude toward the home built by Dave for Deisia, as he shows great respect for it. Later, Stewart brings in Dave's indirect thoughts on the home, which are rich in symbolism.

¹Stuart J. Daughter of the Legend. – USA: McGraw-Hill Company, 1965. – P. 3.

² Stuart J. Daughter of the Legend. – USA: McGraw-Hill Company, 1965. – P. 3.

³Stuart J. Daughter of the Legend. – USA: McGraw-Hill Company, 1965. – P. 34.

⁴Stuart J. Daughter of the Legend. – USA: McGraw-Hill Company, 1965. – P. 54.

⁵ Stuart J. Daughter of the Legend. – USA: McGraw-Hill Company, 1965. – P. 54.

The phrase “A pretty cage for a pretty bird” is Dave’s internal feeling and one that he recalls several times since their marriage, thinking he needs to “build a nest for my little nightingale.”⁶ This phrase leads the reader to question: Is the “nest” for a beautiful and charming bird really a cage? Is this Dave’s thought, or is it Stewart’s inner feeling? Why did Deisia need a cage? ⁷Suddenly, the reader is caught in a swirl of questions. This phrase can be interpreted as a symbol of the contrast between external beauty and internal limitation, implying that while the “cage” may look attractive on the outside, it represents limiting conditions internally. A beautiful cage signifies the bird’s loss of its natural habitat, its separation from freedom and independence, and although the beauty of the cage may imply comfort or aesthetic value, it cannot replace inner freedom. This phrase expresses the deep symbolism of adapting to external conditions while failing to meet one’s internal freedom or true needs.⁸

Deisia becomes the captive of Sanctuary Mountain, the beautiful nature, and the wise people of her small world. No matter how much Dave tries, he cannot restore her inner peace and serenity. This peace can only come from the representatives of the degrading society in the valley, but Deisia, as a victim of these contradictions, is destroyed in her captivity. This home, with its happy moments, carefree days, and drunken moments with loved ones, becomes her “cage” — her final resting place.⁹The meaning of this phrase becomes clearer by the end of the novel. In fact, it becomes apparent that this phrase represents the author’s rhetoric. The author, who appears to be central to the novel, later retreats to the periphery, waiting for the conclusion. For the reader, the unexpected tragic ending evokes a painful feeling where a person, at certain moments, becomes paralyzed and frozen.

In conclusion, For J. Steward, the culture and traditions of her region are not merely a backdrop but an integral part of the narrative. These elements deeply influence the characters’ lives, their decisions, and the progression of events. Through each story, readers gain insights into the distinctive customs, folklore, and historical events of the region. In this way, J. Steward’s works transcend individual stories, offering a broader social and cultural context. Her writing style reveals not only the visible aspects of her homeland but also its profound spiritual and philosophical meanings. Through J. Steward’s works, readers embark on a unique journey—not only experiencing the events alongside the characters but also immersing themselves in the cultural and historical richness of the author’s homeland. As a result, her works provide literary enthusiasts with not only intellectual nourishment but also an opportunity to explore and appreciate new cultures and traditions.

References:

1. Stuart J. Foretaste of Glory. With an Introduction by Robert J. Higgs. – USA: The University Press of Kentucky, 1946. – P. VIII.
2. <https://books.google.co.uz/books?id=6wVSbw3FbXUC&q=Jesse+Stuart+foretaste&redir>

⁶ Stuart J. Daughter of the Legend. – USA: McGraw-Hill Company, 1965. – P. 13.

⁷Bevard. Samuel Lee. Character, Conflict, and Statement in Three Jesse Stuart novels: The Movement toward Hope and Salvation. // A Thesis presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School Morehead State University, 1976. // P. 104.

⁸Stuart J. Daughter of the Legend. – USA: McGraw-Hill Company, 1965. – P. 148.

⁹ Bevard. Samuel Lee. Character, Conflict, and Statement in Three Jesse Stuart novels: The Movement toward Hope and Salvation. // A Thesis presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School Morehead State University, 1976. // P. 111.

_esc=y#v=snippet&q=Jesse%20Stuart%20foretaste&f=false

3. Bevard. Samuel Lee. Character, Conflict, and Statement in Three Jesse Stuart novels: The Movement toward Hope and Salvation. // A Thesis presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School Morehead State University, 1976. // P. 120.
4. Spurlock, J. H. A Sociocultural and Rhetorical Analysis of Jesse Stuart's Fiction. // A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Louisville, 1985. // P. 183.
5. Bevard. Samuel Lee. Character, Conflict, and Statement in Three Jesse Stuart novels: The Movement toward Hope and Salvation. // A Thesis presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School Morehead State University, 1976. // P. 88.
6. Sadullayev F. B. Inner characterization of the main character in the novel "the wings of the dove" by henry james //Conferencea. – 2022. – C. 132-135.
7. Bakhtiyorovich S. F., Kabilovna S. D. The Literary Significance of "The Jolly Corner" in Henry James's Oeuvre //Miasto Przyszłości. – 2023. – T. 42. – C. 726-729.
8. Ganieva O. K., Sadullayev F. B. The Role Of Female Characters in the novel "The Grapes Of Wrath" by John Steinbeck //АКТУАЛЬНЫЕ ВОПРОСЫ СОВРЕМЕННОГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ. – 2020. – C. 5-8.
9. Ganieva O. K. DEPICTION OF RELATIONS BETWEEN A PERSON AND SOCIETY IN AMERICAN REALISTIC LITERATURE //Scientific Bulletin of Namangan State University. – 2020. – T. 2. – №. 8. – C. 215-220.