

## SOCIAL IDENTITY AND ITS IMPACTS ON YOZO OBA'S ALIENATION IN "NO LONGER HUMAN"

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### **Abstract**

This research is conducted to understand social identity development and its impacts on alienation experienced by Yozo Oba, the main character in Osamu Dazai's *No Longer Human* (1958). This study applies the Social Identity Theory (SIT) by Trepte & Loy (2017) and Fromm's theory of alienation (in Nadhiroh, 2015) to analyze how Yozo's experiences influence his social identity development and how it affects his actions throughout his life. This research uses a qualitative descriptive approach and a close-reading method to collect and analyze the data. The primary data is the English translation of the novel by Donald Keene (1958), and secondary data is collected from journals, articles, and books related to SIT and the theory of alienation. The analysis of Yozo Oba using the principles of Social Categorization, Social Identity, and Self-Esteem from SIT, and the concept of alienation from oneself, alienation from others, and alienation from society shows that Yozo Oba developed a dissatisfying social identity which affected his experience and behaviors, and led him to feel alienation from himself, others, and the society.

**Keywords:** *No Longer Human*, Yozo Oba, Social Identity, Alienation

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Individuals are social beings in need to socialize with others for both personal and communal purposes (Mawadha & Yulianti, 2023). Identity is crucial for these interactions, as it shapes how individuals see themselves and are perceived by others. Identity correlates with social identity, which concerns how individuals define themselves within their social groups, and to define others. The development of social identity is needed for individuals to understand themselves and others, to live as social beings.

Literary works are reflections of the reality (Davidsen, 2018), which means that social identity reflects in Yozo Oba, the main character in the Japanese novel *Ningen Shikkaku* (人間失格) written by

Osamu Dazai in 1948, which later translated into the English version by Donald Keene in 1958 as *No Longer Human*. Yozo was known as a funny child, full of clownery; "a mischievous little imp" (Dazai, 1958, p. 21). However, a jester is only a persona that he wears because he feels that he is different from people and does not belong to live with them. As a result, Yozo has difficulties to interact with people, and he feels alienated from others and the society. Furthermore, using his clown persona leads to the alienation from himself as he keeps concealing his true identity. Yozo's experience shows that individuals need a development of social identity to be able to socialize with others.

Yozo Oba's experience illustrates the possibility to analyze social identity and its impacts on literary works' characters. This study employs Social Identity Theory (SIT) by Trepte & Loy (2017) to analyze Yozo's social identity development, and Fromm's theory of alienation (in Nadhiroh, 2015) to determine its impacts on his alienation. This study tries to explain how Yozo's experiences influence his social identity development and how it affects his actions throughout his life. Through analyzing Yozo Oba, this study aims to enrich readers' understanding of social identity and alienation in literary characters, and potentially contributes to psychological and literary insights on these themes.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The development of social identity can be analyzed using Social Identity Theory (SIT). SIT proposed that individuals who identify with a social group—the “in-group”—may develop a sense of affiliation and emotional connection with its members. This social identity shapes behavior toward both in-group and “out-group” members (Tajfel & Turner, 2004). Trepte & Loy (2017) expanded SIT, outlining seven psychological principles in the development of social identity, i.e., 1) Social Categorization, 2) Saliency of Social Categories, 3) Social Comparison, 4) Positive Distinctiveness, 5) Social Identity, and 6) Self-Esteem which may lead to 7) Individual Mobility, Social Creativity, and/or Social Competition.

### 1. Social Categorization

Social Categorization refers to when individuals categorize themselves as similar to each other and are members of a social group from various categories, such as age, economic status, cultural

background, or others; to understand and interact with people (Trepte & Loy, 2017). Social Categorization also triggers a sense of salience for individuals as members of a group in a situation.

### 2. Saliency of Social Categories

Saliency of Social Categories is when individuals may become more aware about who they are as a part of a group in a situation (Trepte & Loy, 2017). As certain social categories may become salient in different contexts, the process of Social Comparison may be triggered.

### 3. Social Comparison

Social Comparison happens in two conditions: 1) when there are out-group members similar to in-group members, and 2) when individuals of a group compare their in-group with out-groups in order to evaluate or to seek positive distinctiveness of their own group (Trepte & Loy, 2017). In a Social Comparison between two groups, if either one of them is concluded as better than the other, the better one will perceive more positive distinctiveness regarding the group.

### 4. Positive Distinctiveness

Positive Distinctiveness is the result of emphasizing the positive evaluation of individuals' in-groups compared to the negative evaluation of out-groups (Trepte & Loy, 2017). The process of seeking Positive Distinctiveness is important for individuals' Social Identity as positive in-group qualities means that the individuals are associated with a better or more superior group in a social category.

### 5. Social Identity

Social Identity is the part of “self-concept” determined by social groups as

individuals' perception of their in-groups will affect the identification of themselves (Trepte & Loy, 2017). The Social Identity provided by social groups may boost or fail the individuals' "Self-Esteem"; depends on whether the image of the groups is positive or negative, as the groups represent the individuals' self-concept (Trepte & Loy, 2017).

#### 6. Self-Esteem

The concept of Positive Distinctiveness may result in positive "Self-Esteem" (Tajfel & Turner, 2004; Trepte & Loy, 2017). However, when the Self-Esteem is threatened, it may trigger various strategies that individuals will do to increase their Self-Esteem, e.g., "Individual Mobility," "Social Creativity," or "Social Competition" (Tajfel & Turner, 2004; Trepte & Loy, 2017). The strategies to fix individuals' Self-Esteem are considered as the seventh and the last principle of SIT.

#### 7. Individual Mobility, Social Creativity, and Social Competition

Trepte & Loy (2017) explained that (1) "Individual Mobility" is when an individual decides to leave their group to join the better group to protect their self-concept; (2) "Social Creativity" is the action of comparing the in-group with low-status out-group, and changing the negative value of the in-group; and (3) "Social Competition" aims to alter the low status of in-group into a higher status.

The social identity of a group's members may take a role as guides that can affect their motivation and behaviors (Brown, 2020; Kalin & Sambanis, 2018; Tajfel & Turner, 2004; Trepte & Loy, 2017). Moreover, the share of social identity amongst the members may also lead to the sharing of common perspective and understanding of the world, like stereotyping (Gray &

Stevenson, 2020). However, maintaining a group's social identity may also harm the members instead, such as preventing the members from seeking outer help when they are stuck with their group's identity (Kantar & Yalçın, 2023). If individuals feel they do not fit in a social group, they may experience alienation, either from themselves or others.

Using the perspective of psychology and sociology, Fromm expanded the definition of alienation as an experience of life when individuals feel estranged from themselves, cannot feel that they are the centers of their world, and cannot feel that they are the creators of their actions anymore (Nadhiroh, 2015). There are four factors that influence alienation according to Fromm (in Nadhiroh, 2015): 1) alienation from oneself, 2) alienation from others, 3) alienation from the society, and 4) alienation from the nature.

#### 1) Alienation from Oneself

Alienation from oneself is when individuals feel disconnected from their identities as they may have to suppress their true selves, desires, and feelings to meet societal expectations or engage in activities that do not align with their interests (Asatulloev, 2019; Bıçakcı, 2023; Mahbub, 2021).

#### 2) Alienation from others

Alienation from others may happen when individuals cannot feel emotional connection with others in interpersonal relationships which may lead to the inability to understand others (Asatulloev, 2019; Nadhiroh, 2015).

#### 3) Alienation from the society

Alienation from the society happens when individuals feel isolated or disconnected from the community

around them (Anshori, 2021; Mahbub, 2021).

4) Alienation from the nature

Alienation from the nature occurs when individuals do not realize that they are a part of the nature itself, become separated from the nature and the environment around them, and tend to be careless and harm the world (Bıçakcı, 2023; Nadhiroh, 2015).

Individuals may experience alienation differently (Anshori, 2021). Furthermore, experiencing alienation may affect the psychological condition of an individual, either positively or negatively (Nadhiroh, 2015; Wardani et al., 2022). The negative impacts of alienation may contribute to the development of feelings such as anxiety, depression, and/or existential crisis, as individuals struggle to find meaning and connection with other people.

There are previous studies regarding identity in novel characters. Ramin & Yadollahi (2014) discussed about how the concept of social identity shapes the main character and her destiny in Toni Morrison's *Sula*. Al-Marebi et al. (2022) studied the Yemeni migrants in Mohammed Abdul Wali's *They Die Strangers* from the perspective of SIT and focuses on its cognitive, evaluative, and emotional dimensions. As for studies regarding Yozo Oba, Pradana (2017) analyzed Yozo Oba's experience throughout his life and found how those experiences affected his personality. Yuwananto et al. (2022) also discussed about Yozo Oba's personality using Carl Jung's Persona and Shadow theory, and concluded how the society affects Yozo's behavior which leads into the split of his personality into Persona and Shadow.

These previous studies show that SIT and the theory of alienation can be

used to analyze characters in literary works. The character Yozo Oba in *No Longer Human* (Dazai, 1958) has also been analyzed for researches correlating with identity. However, the researchers find the necessity to analyze Yozo Oba using both SIT and the theory of alienation understandings because studies using this combination are still rare to find.

### 3. RESEARCH METHOD

A qualitative descriptive approach was applied in this study as it is suitable for analyzing text-based phenomena (Alase, 2017; Kim et al., 2017). Close-reading method was applied to examine primary and secondary data, to identify relevant issues (Ohrvik, 2024). The primary data was the English translation of Osamu Dazai's *No Longer Human* (1958) by Donald Keene, while the secondary data was collected from journals, articles, and books related to SIT (Trepte & Loy, 2017) and the theory of alienation (Fromm in Nadhiroh, 2015). The results were presented descriptively without any numerical elements.

Close-reading method was applied on the primary data to identify social identity and alienation issues in Yozo Oba's character, and on the secondary data which then supported the analysis of Yozo Oba and arguments in this study. Both the primary and secondary data were analyzed using the understanding of SIT and theory of alienation. The result of the analysis was presented descriptively detailing Yozo Oba's social identity development and experiences of alienation.

### 4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Individuals' social identity is developed through the seven psychological principles of SIT (Trepte & Loy, 2017). However, in the analysis

of Yozo Oba's social identity development, only three principles of SIT provided by Trepte & Loy (2017) become prominent: 1) Social Categorization and 2) Social Identity, which affects 3) Self-Esteem. Furthermore, Yozo experienced alienation as the impact of Self-Esteem principle that he received from his social identity development. According to Fromm (in Nadhiroh, 2015), there are four types of alienation; but Yozo only experienced three: 1) alienation from himself, 2) alienation from others, and 3) alienation from the society. The explanation of Yozo's social identity development and its impact on his alienation will be explained in the following paragraphs.

#### **4.1 Yozo Oba's Experience Which Influences His Social Identity**

Yozo Oba's social identity development is analyzed using the understanding of SIT by Trepte & Loy (2017). The analysis of Yozo's experience resulted in defining the Social Categorization and Social Identity on others and himself and identifying the impacts on his Self-Esteem.

##### **4.1.1 Yozo Oba's Recognition of People's Categorization and Social Identity**

Understanding Yozo's process of categorization and determining social identity on people is needed to understand the development of Yozo's social identity. Beginning early in his life, through careful observation, Yozo discovered that people around him shared a trait of horrifying, hidden "*true nature*" which emerged "*when anger makes them reveal in a flash human nature in all its horror*" (Dazai, 1958, p. 17-18). This quotation reflects Yozo's Social Categorization on other people where he identified that there were a

bunch of people who shared a similar trait to each other, and they might as well be categorized as members of a social group. In other words, Yozo categorized these people as a group based on a common trait that he found from observing them.

Yozo's thought that the trait "*might be one of the prerequisites for survival as a human being*" (Dazai, 1958, p. 18) shows that Yozo understood the trait was crucial for people to be categorized as in-group members of a social group consisted of people with this trait—the one he referred as "human beings." This means that those who did not possess the trait would be categorized as out-group members of "human beings" group and did not belong with them. In conclusion, Yozo's categorization on people has enabled him to select which one deserved to be an in-group member or an out-group member of "human beings."

Yozo's categorization is his attempt to understand people and their behaviors, because he felt that he "*had absolutely no notion of what others... might be suffering or what they were thinking*" (Dazai, 1958, p. 17). Yozo's categorization caused him to realize that there were people who possessed such trait and lived around him. Even though Yozo's understanding of others did not immediately increase, this finding enabled him to identify similar trait on new people that he would meet in the future. This is in line with findings by Rhodes & Baron (2019) and Trepte & Loy (2017) that social categorization benefits individuals by utilizing their knowledge about other people from various social categories to understand them. In other words, it is possible to gain understanding about other people and their behaviors through social categorization. By categorizing, Yozo was able to identify people's traits in various situations.



By identifying this common trait on people, Yozo was able to recognize their shared behaviors as well. Yozo noticed how people hid their similar “true nature,” or how they lived in “*mutual distrust*” and they were “*deceiving one another*” (Dazai, 1958, p. 22, 23). These behaviors made Yozo believe even more that they were supposed to be in the same group, i.e., “human beings” group. In other words, members would behave accordingly to the values that their in-group agreed. These behaviors reflect individuals’ social identity, i.e., their membership in the group. It is aligned with Rhodes & Baron (2019) that social identity can be established by generating a label for the group and determining norms for behaviors. This means that by labelling these people as “human beings” and recognizing their similar behaviors, Yozo had understand their social identity.

#### 4.1.2 Yozo Oba’s Social Identity Development

Yozo’s categorization and labelling people’s social identity showed that he understood the principles of social identity development judging by his ability to recognize people’s traits and behaviors, to categorize which group they belong to, and to determine their social identity. This understanding later triggered the development of Yozo’s social identity, by categorizing himself to determine whether he belong to the group of “human beings” or not. However, it turns out that Yozo claimed he did not possess similar trait, as he “*lacked the strength to act in accordance with this truth*” (Dazai, 1958, p. 17) This means that Yozo lacked the requirements to be categorized as an in-group member of “human beings,” i.e., possessing the horrifying, hidden “true nature.” As a result, he could not be categorized as an in-group member of “human beings”

because he did not belong with them. In other words, Yozo would be categorized as an out-group member of “human beings” group. Yozo’s categorization shows that the principle of Social Categorization is prominent in his social identity development.

Yozo would not sense a strong membership to “human beings” group since he was categorized as an out-group member, and his behavior was not determined by the group’s values because his social identity was not associated with the group. Yozo showed how he had “*no special interest in instances of mutual deception*” (Dazai, 1958, p. 23), which indicates that Yozo was unwilling to behave like the in-group members because he did not feel the importance to behave like that. This means that individuals’ memberships are important in the development of their social identity, which aligns with Demirden (2021) that a group’s importance creates bias favoring to individuals’ in-groups. In other words, individuals will most likely behave like in-group members only if they feel that their group is important for them and if they are satisfied with the social identity derived from the group. In conclusion, Yozo’s different behavior shows that he understood his identity was not related with “human beings,” and it reflects the principle of Social Identity.

Yozo’s thought that “*favoritism inevitably exist*” (Dazai, 1958, p. 22) in the group of “human beings” reflects that Yozo realized how members favor their in-group more than out-group. When Yozo heard that people talked about “*social outcasts. ... the miserable losers of the world, the vicious ones*” (Dazai, 1958, p. 39), it indicates that in-group members of “human beings” show a form of negative bias toward out-group members. Since Yozo lived among them even though he did not feel belong with

them, this means that Yozo grew up with the understanding that “human beings” group is more superior compared to other groups. This shows that living among a social group might lead individuals to share common perspective with the in-group members about others, as proven by Gray & Stevenson (2020). Therefore, since people around Yozo perceived any out-group as negative, Yozo’s social identity as an out-group member of “human beings” would also become negative.

Yozo should have felt dissatisfied with his negative social identity. However, Yozo did not fix nor change the state of his social identity as an out-group of “human beings” because he thought that “*it would have been useless to complain to human beings*” (Dazai, 1958, p. 22). By Yozo not fixing or changing the state of his social identity, he had shown a contradiction to findings by Tajfel & Turner (2004) and Trepte & Loy (2017) that individuals may perform various strategies to improve their self-esteem if it was threatened. It means people’s perspectives affected Yozo’s perspective so greatly that he thought there would be no benefit to change the state of his social identity. Yozo’s note how he “*seemed quite unable to renounce their society*” (Dazai, 1958, p. 17) is a nod that his life was affected by the group of “human beings” as he lived with them.

Living with people who lived the life as parts of “human beings” and found no discomfort from it, affects how Yozo behaved. Eventually, Yozo noticed the differences between him and others because he could not find similarities with “human beings.” Thinking that people might found that he was an impostor living among them had induced “*the assault of apprehension and terror*” in him (Dazai, 1958, p. 17). This fear caused Yozo to avoid interactions with

people. The inability to be confident in interactions is a sign of low self-esteem. A low self-esteem is marked by individuals’ lack of confidence in interacting with people and their negative perception of themselves (Johan et al., 2022). Yozo’s decision to invent a clown persona as a solution for his struggle in interactions indicates that Yozo’s negative social identity had lowered his self-esteem.

Another sign that Yozo’s self-esteem was affected by his negative social identity is seen from how he perceived himself. Since he could not be categorized as a part of them, and “human beings” members regarded out-group members as negative, the differences that he found between him and them led him to think that he “*might already have been disqualified from living among human beings.*” (Dazai, 1958, p. 17). Since he lived with people who perceived anything different as negative, Yozo had developed a negative perception about himself being different; which is a sign of Yozo’s lowered self-esteem. The result of Yozo’s self-esteem reflects the principle of Self-Esteem.

The development of Yozo’s social identity resulted in him obtaining a low self-esteem because his true social identity as an out-group member was perceived negatively by the social group’s members that he lived in, i.e., the “human beings.” However, Yozo did not fix nor change the state of his negative social identity, which resulted in him trying to survive living among “human beings” with negative perception about himself and lack of confidence to interact with people. Yozo’s attempt to live with “human beings” without changing or fixing the state of his social identity and self-esteem had caused him to experience alienation for the rest of his life.

## 4.2 The Impacts of Yozo Oba's Social Identity on His Alienation

The analysis of Yozo's social identity development shows that the negative state of his social identity affected his self-esteem to be negative as well, which caused him to experience alienation. By examining Yozo's alienation using the concepts of alienation by Fromm (in Nadhiroh, 2015), this study found that Yozo experienced alienation from himself, alienation from others, and alienation from the society.

### 4.2.1 Yozo Oba's Alienation from Himself

Yozo's decision to create a clown persona to cope with the fact that he struggled to interact with people illustrates the beginning of alienation from himself. Yozo created the persona because he thought it was the only way that enabled him to interact with people and being accepted by them. Yozo thought that using the clown persona was "*at the cost of excruciating efforts within*" (Dazai, 1958, p. 17), and later in his life he also realized that using his clown persona after all those years had resulted in him wearing himself out (Dazai, 1958, p. 60). It is in line with Kenklies (2022) that individuals need to risk losing themselves in order to connect with the world. This shows that Yozo's frequent use of his personal to interact with other people is indeed a form of alienation from himself.

Another form of alienation from himself that Yozo experienced is seen from how he often struggled to understand his own desire since he was younger. Yozo's father often travelled to Tokyo for business and he would ask what gifts would the children want when he came back. Yozo could not tell what he wanted as he thought "*nothing was going to make me happy.*" (Dazai, 1958,

p. 19). His father offered a lion mask, but Yozo still could not give an answer until his brother responded that a book would be fine for Yozo. Yozo realized that his inability to tell his desire had disappointed his father. Later that night, Yozo wrote in his father's notebook that he wanted the lion mask, which amused his father. Yozo's pretend that he really wanted the lion mask even though he actually did not want anything shows that Yozo also had psychological conflict within himself, similar to findings by Goh & Arianto (2019). Yozo's psychological conflict showed that Yozo had suppress his true desire. However, Yozo's thought that nothing would ever amuse him also showed that he did not know what he really wanted. Yozo's inability to recognize his desires, and then masking his unknown desires to meet people's expectations are signs that Yozo was alienated from himself, which aligns with Asatullojev (2019), Bıçakcı (2023), and Mahbub (2021).

### 4.2.2 Yozo Oba's Alienation from Others

Yozo's inability to have friendships demonstrates a form of disconnection from other people. Yozo realized that he had done many things to please people and to meet their expectations. He also became acquainted with several people as his attempt to survive living with "human beings." However, he had "*not once actually experienced friendship.*" (Dazai, 1958, p. 60). He also thought that "*It was hardly to be expected that someone like myself could ever develop any close friendships*" (Dazai, 1958, p. 60). Yozo's inability to see himself befriended people shows that he realized he could not feel emotional connection with others to develop interpersonal relationships, which aligns with Asatullojev (2019) and Nadhiroh (2015). This means that Yozo



experienced alienation from others in the form of unable to connect with people.

Yozo's avoidant behavior is also a sign that he experienced alienation from others. Yozo avoided interactions with people because he feared them and felt "*very timid about meeting people*" (Dazai, 1958, p. 47). This means that Yozo's fear and embarrassment were the cause for Yozo to limit his interactions with people. Yozo's behavior to avoid people most likely is the sign of social anxiety that he unknowingly had. Social anxiety refers to individuals' fear of interactions and difficulty to maintain conversations with other people, which may lead individuals to decrease their engagement with others (Jefferies & Ungar, 2020). Since Yozo limited his interactions with people, he could not develop understanding about others which might cause him to be unable to connect emotionally with others. This means that Yozo, indeed, experienced alienation from others.

#### **4.2.3 Yozo Oba's Alienation from the Society**

Alienation from the society is illustrated by how Yozo was categorized as an out-group member of "human beings." Since Yozo owned a social identity of an out-group, this means Yozo did not belong with "human beings," yet he had to survive living with them. As a result, Yozo felt that he did not know "*what it must be to live the life of a human being.*" (Dazai, 1958, p. 14). In other words, Yozo could not feel connected with people that he saw as the members of "human beings." Yozo's disconnection from the community around him is a sign that Yozo experienced alienation from the society, which aligns with Anshori (2021) and Mahbub (2021).

Yozo's disconnection from the society can also be seen from how he was

treated by people who he saw as members of "human beings." Since Yozo felt that he did not belong with "human beings," he lived an unhappy life and often masked his struggle with his clown persona. One time, he met a woman named Tsuneko who admitted that she was also unhappy with her life. Feeling that they shared the same despair, they agreed to commit double-suicide, but only Tsuneko succeeded while Yozo survived. Since then, Yozo had to live quite a dishonoring life. He was expelled from his college and lived with Flatfish—Yozo's father's trustworthy man, he became ignored most of the time by his father, and even Horiki—Yozo's only companion in his adult years—showed an act of despising him and sometimes called him as "*lady-killer*" (Dazai, 1958, p. 66). He was treated like a criminal, but Yozo did not find any discomfort from it (Dazai, 1958, p. 53). Yozo's reaction of accepting himself being treated as a criminal by people and the society showed that Yozo did not feel any connection with them. Yozo's disconnection and the discriminations that he experienced since he attempted this suicide are forms of alienation from the society.

Yozo's experience of being disconnected and discriminated by the people of the society shows impacts on his mental well-being. Since his first suicide attempt, Yozo sunk deeper into alcohol, but it decreased when Yozo married a sincere, innocent, young girl named Yoshiko. Both of them were happy in their marriage. However, one night after he was out with Horiki, Yozo found Yoshiki being raped but he felt that he was unable to move to save her. That incident brought major impacts on Yozo: he became alcoholic once again and even worse, he became addicted to sleeping pills, and, lastly, he became addicted to morphine when he was trying

to cut the amount of his alcohol. His escapism sunk him deeper with his emotions to the point that he became suicidal again and already planned an attempt if Flatfish and Horiki did not come to visit him. They brought him to a mental hospital, and that was when Yozo realized that people saw him as “no longer a criminal—I was a lunatic.” (Dazai, 1958, p. 93). This means that Yozo’s behaviors had gone beyond the normality of the society to the point that Yozo was mentally ill. Yozo also realized that he could not be seen as a normal person when he thought “I had now ceased utterly to be a human being.” (Dazai, 1958, p. 93). Yozo’s thought that people saw him as mentally ill and Yozo’s final thought that he had been “Disqualified as a human being” (Dazai, 1958, p. 93) are the most profound impacts of Yozo’s alienation from the society.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This research concludes that Social Identity Theory and the theory of alienation effectively analyze characters, as shown in Yozo Oba from Osamu Dazai’s *No Longer Human*. Yozo’s life experiences shape his social identity and lead to his alienation. The study demonstrates that individuals may and can identify themselves as out-group members within their own social groups, as how Yozo does not see himself as a “human being” despite living among them. Although dissatisfied with his social identity, he remains in the “human being” group, which contributes to his alienation from others, society, and himself. This alienation leads to increased mental distress, including psychological conflict and depression. Thus, social identity can contribute to alienation, as social structures and interactions significantly shape one’s sense of belonging.

While this research has implications for literary analysis, it also suggests that fostering positive social identities and connections within communities could reduce alienation and mental distress.

Acknowledging the study’s limitations, future research could investigate similar themes across contexts and theoretical frameworks to deepen understanding of social identity and alienation. Finally, this study highlights the importance of understanding human identity and belonging.

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