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The Individual-Society Conflict Between Modernism and Postmodernism (A Comparison of Oğuz Atay's *The Disconnected* and Aka Morchiladze's *Santa Esperanza*)

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the impact of modernism and postmodernism on the individual-society relationship and identity themes in Turkish and Georgian literature. Specifically, Oğuz Atay's *The Disconnected* (1972) and Aka Morchiladze's *Santa Esperanza* (2004) novels explore the individual's conflict with social structures and their search for identity while employing modernist and postmodernist narrative techniques in different cultural contexts. *The Disconnected* focuses on the internal conflict of the individual with the external world, particularly highlighting alienation, identity crises, and the struggle to fit into societal norms. On the other hand, *Santa Esperanza*, adopting the postmodern emphasis on multiple perspectives and ambiguity, presents the individual's search for identity in a more flexible and layered manner. Employing qualitative content analysis within a comparative literary framework, this study examines how modernist and postmodernist narrative strategies represent individual identity and social conflict in different cultural contexts. As a result, both novels question the individual's position in society, illustrating that modernist and postmodernist techniques serve different aesthetic and thematic functions, exploring the individual's quest for identity and the impact of societal structures on the individual from different angles. The role of modernism and postmodernism in this context becomes clearer through a deep analysis of the texts.

Keywords: *comparative literature, modernism and postmodernism, identity and alienation, individual and society, Oğuz Atay, Aka Morchiladze*

1. Introduction

Modernism, which emerged at the dawn of the 20th century, revolutionized literature and art, challenging the conventions of narrative forms and prioritizing the exploration of individual consciousness. In doing so, it became a vehicle for interrogating the complex realities of modern life and reflecting the disillusionment of an era characterized by rapid social and technological changes. Modernist literature sought to break free from the constraints of traditional storytelling, emphasizing subjective experience, inner turmoil, and the disintegration of established norms (Bradbury & McFarlane, 1991, p. 7). It was a direct

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response to the alienating effects of industrialization, urbanization, and the devastation wrought by global conflicts such as World War I. The movement questioned the stability of identity, portraying individuals as fragmented subjects in search of meaning in a world that no longer offered clear answers. As such, modernist works frequently depicted themes of alienation, crisis of identity, and existential questioning, reflecting the profound sense of fragmentation that defined the modern age.

In this context, modernist literature provided a unique platform for exploring the tensions between the individual and society. Writers embraced a variety of innovative techniques to capture the inner lives of their protagonists–stream of consciousness, fragmented narratives, unreliable narrators, and nonlinear temporal structures became hallmarks of the modernist aesthetic. The portrayal of the individual's struggle for authenticity in an increasingly mechanized and impersonal world became one of the defining concerns of modernist fiction.

In Turkish literature, Oğuz Atay is a pivotal figure whose work embodies the modernist ethos, especially in his landmark novel *The Disconnected*. Atay uses a multitude of experimental narrative techniques, such as stream of consciousness and internal monologues, to delve into the fragmented psyche of his protagonist, Selim Işık. The novel's disjointed structure, which resists a linear narrative, mirrors the protagonist's inner turmoil and his conflict with societal expectations, underscoring the modernist theme of alienation. Through this complex narrative, Atay critiques not only the individual's isolation but also the social pressures and expectations that exacerbate this disconnection (Apaydın, 2007, p. 51). Atay's ironic tone and the novel's interplay between absurdity and tragedy underscore the tension between the quest for personal identity and the weight of societal norms that seem unyielding and oppressive. The central themes of *The Disconnected* resonate with the existential dilemmas posed by modernism, making it a critical example of how Turkish literature grappled with the modern condition. The author uses many postmodern elements in this work, such as intertextuality, metafiction, parody, pastiche, collage, ambiguous meaning, pluralistic narrative, leitmotif, etc. Furthermore, the work also includes a 600-line poem written by Selim Işık (Karabulut, 2026, p. 158).

In Georgian literature, modernism and postmodernism arose in the wake of the profound political and cultural shifts following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Georgian writers were confronted with the task of addressing both personal and national identity in a post-Soviet context marked by disorientation and the collapse of long-standing ideological structures. It is within this context that Aka Morchiladze's *Santa Esperanza* (2004) exemplifies the postmodern techniques of fragmented storytelling and intertextuality, highlighting the complex interplay between the individual's quest for self-identity and the fluctuating societal norms of a newly independent Georgia. The novel's non-linear structure, alongside its frequent disruptions in narrative, mirrors the uncertainty and fragmentation of post-Soviet Georgian society (Schmitz-Emans, 2019, p. 205). Morchiladze's characters, in their search for meaning, struggle with the shifting boundaries between personal freedom and the collective influences of their historical and cultural heritage. His use of postmodern techniques invites readers to confront the multiplicities of identity and societal influence, forcing them to engage in a more active, interpretative reading process. This destabilization of traditional narrative structures serves not only as a critique of contemporary life but also as a reflection of the growing tension between personal freedom and collective identity in post-Soviet Georgia.

The distinct approaches of Atay and Morchiladze underscore the ways in which literature from two geographically and culturally distinct contexts – Turkiye and Georgia – grapples with similar concerns of individual alienation, identity crises, and the influence of societal structures. While both authors address the conflict between the individual and society, their treatments of this theme are shaped by their unique historical and cultural experiences. Atay's modernist approach in *The Disconnected* reflects the existential alienation of the individual within a rapidly modernizing Turkish society, while Morchiladze's postmodernist

exploration in *Santa Esperanza* reflects the disorientation and fragmentation of identity in the context of post-Soviet Georgia.

This comparative study seeks to illuminate how modernist and postmodernist expressions of the individual-society conflict are articulated in Turkish and Georgian literature, respectively. By examining Atay's *The Disconnected* and Morchiladze's *Santa Esperanza*, this article will explore how each novel employs innovative narrative techniques to address the complex dynamics between personal identity and societal forces. By examining these two novels comparatively, this article aims to reveal how modernist and postmodernist literary strategies represent changing forms of identity and social belonging. Ultimately, this comparative approach will deepen our understanding of how modernism and postmodernism continue to shape literary expressions of identity, individualism, and societal critique in diverse cultural contexts.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 The Concepts of Modernism and Postmodernism

Modernism is a literary and artistic movement that fundamentally redefined the trajectory of 20th-century cultural production. Emerging as a reaction to the disruptions caused by industrialization, war, and the decline of traditional social structures, modernism sought to capture the disorienting complexities of modern existence. According to Bradbury and McFarlane (1991, p. 10), modernism is not merely an aesthetic style but a profound shift in the way art and literature engage with reality, as it reflects the fractured nature of human consciousness in an increasingly mechanized world. This new literary ethos challenged conventions by embracing techniques that illuminated the subjective experience of individuals navigating a world in flux. Central to this transformation was the rejection of linear narratives and the exploration of time and identity as fragmented and fluid constructs. Modernist authors sought to expose the alienation felt by individuals, often by focusing on inner turmoil, memory, and consciousness rather than external events. Through such techniques as stream of consciousness, unreliable narration, and temporal dislocation, modernist works engaged in a deeper exploration of the psyche and its disconnection from traditional social norms.

In contrast, postmodernism emerges not as a simple negation of modernism, but as a complex engagement with its foundational ideas. Postmodern literature, while continuing many of the explorations initiated by modernism, interrogates the very assumptions that modernist writers took for granted. Where modernism was concerned with the internal complexity of the individual, postmodernism challenges the idea of a stable, coherent self altogether. As Hutcheon (1988, p. 15) argues, postmodernism is less about rejecting modernism outright and more about questioning its basic premises, especially the idea that art can represent reality in any objective or stable form. In a postmodern context, the focus shifts from individual consciousness to a broader critique of cultural narratives and ideologies, with a particular emphasis on deconstructing the boundaries that separate reality from fiction, self from other, and high culture from popular culture.

The techniques employed by postmodern writers further reinforce this destabilizing effect. For example, Morchiladze's *Santa Esperanza* utilizes fragmented narratives, shifting perspectives, and multiple layers of meaning to challenge the reader's engagement with the text. These techniques not only expose the constructed nature of reality but also reflect the fractured identities of the characters themselves, navigating a world in which societal and personal identities are in constant flux. Through his complex interweaving of various voices and perspectives, Morchiladze resists offering any singular interpretation, instead highlighting the multiplicity and ambiguity of human existence in the context of post-Soviet Georgia. Schmitz-Emans (2019, pp. 210-215) emphasizes that *Santa Esperanza* uses these postmodern tools to explore the cultural and historical contradictions that define the Georgian post-Soviet identity. The text reflects a society where

meaning itself is subject to constant negotiation and where the individual is forced to navigate the tension between personal freedom and collective history.

In the case of Atay's *The Disconnected*, the modernist exploration of identity is equally profound, though it employs different narrative techniques to do so. Atay's use of stream-of-consciousness and internal monologue mirrors the fragmented and disjointed inner world of the protagonist, Selim Işık, whose existential crisis stems from the inability to reconcile his inner desires with the expectations of the external world. Apaydın (2007, p. 51) observes that Atay's irony and use of metafictional elements create a space where the boundary between the protagonist's consciousness and the external social reality begins to dissolve, reflecting the profound alienation felt by modern individuals. Unlike postmodernism, which deconstructs narrative itself, modernism in *The Disconnected* intensifies the narrative experience by isolating the protagonist's psyche and reflecting his personal disconnection from the structures of society.

Both Atay and Morchiladze, through their respective works, challenge the stability of identity and social norms, yet they approach these concerns with distinct literary frameworks. Atay's modernist style in *The Disconnected* reveals the tension between the individual's search for meaning and the crushing weight of societal expectation through techniques that focus on subjective experience and the inner workings of the mind. In contrast, Morchiladze's postmodern style in *Santa Esperanza* reflects the erosion of stable identities in a world where cultural and historical forces collide. Through narrative fragmentation and the exploration of the multiplicity of voices, Morchiladze foregrounds the uncertainty of identity formation in the post-Soviet era, illustrating how personal and societal identities are constructed, contested, and constantly shifting.

This juxtaposition of modernist and postmodernist approaches underscores the evolving literary strategies used to address the same core thematic concerns: identity, alienation, and the conflict between the individual and society. While modernism emphasizes the isolation of the individual and the internal battle to make sense of an increasingly fragmented world, postmodernism shifts focus to the constructed nature of identity and the multiple, competing narratives that shape how individuals understand themselves and their place in society. By comparing *The Disconnected* and *Santa Esperanza*, it becomes clear that literature from these two movements offers profound insights into the human condition, each contributing uniquely to our understanding of the individual's relationship to society in a rapidly changing world.

2.2 Individual-Society Conflict and the Theme of Identity

The conflict between the individual and society is a central concern in both modernist and postmodernist literature, but the way it is addressed differs significantly in the two movements. In modernist literature, identity is often seen as a battleground for the individual, torn between personal desires and societal expectations. In Atay's *The Disconnected*, the tension between the individual and the societal norms is articulated through the protagonist's inner turmoil. The narrative techniques of internal monologues and stream-of-consciousness enable a profound exploration of Turgut's psychological state, revealing his profound alienation from the world around him (Kalpaklı Yeğin, 2023, p. 139). As he struggles to find a place for himself in a society that seems indifferent or even hostile to his existence, the fragmented narrative structure itself becomes a reflection of his fractured identity (Apaydın, 2007, p. 54). This disconnection is not just a personal crisis for Turgut but also a broader commentary on the isolation felt by modern individuals in a rapidly changing world. The fragmented form of the novel mirrors the protagonist's fractured sense of self, underscoring the alienation central to modernist depictions of identity.

This sense of isolation is further emphasized by Atay's use of irony and metafiction. As the protagonist's inner world unravels, the text refuses to offer clear answers or resolutions, leaving the reader to confront the fragmented nature of identity itself. Turgut's inability to reconcile his inner desires with the

societal roles imposed on him reflects the modernist critique of the alienating effects of modernity, where individuals often find themselves adrift, searching for meaning in a world that no longer provides fixed values or clear paths forward. The identity crisis portrayed in *The Disconnected* is not merely psychological but deeply social, as the protagonist's dislocation is an expression of the larger disillusionment felt by individuals within a modern, fragmented society.

In contrast, the approach to the individual-society conflict in Morchiladze's *Santa Esperanza* is more fluid and complex, reflecting the postmodern rejection of fixed identities. In *Santa Esperanza*, identity is presented as a continually evolving construct, shaped by the interplay of historical, cultural, and societal forces. Morchiladze employs a postmodern narrative structure that is both fragmented and multifaceted, using multiple perspectives and voices to illustrate how identities are constantly shifting in response to external influences. The text's reliance on intertextual references, where various cultural and literary allusions are interwoven into the narrative, reflects the postmodern belief that identity is not a singular or stable concept but rather a product of diverse, competing narratives (Schmitz-Emans, 2019, p. 212). This technique underscores the postmodern idea that meaning, including the meaning of the self, is constructed rather than inherent, and that personal identity is continually redefined through the stories individuals tell about themselves and the stories that society imposes upon them.

The characters in *Santa Esperanza* navigate a world in which societal norms are fluid and in constant flux. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the resulting socio-political upheavals in Georgia serve as a backdrop for the characters' existential struggles. As a result, their identities are continuously reshaped by the shifting narratives of their country, their families, and their own personal histories. This fluidity of identity, where personal and societal boundaries blur, highlights the postmodern perspective that identity is always in process and can never be fully stabilized or defined. In this way, Morchiladze's work provides a sharp contrast to modernist depictions of identity, emphasizing the multiple, fragmented facets of the self rather than a unified and coherent individual.

The theme of identity, therefore, plays a crucial role in both modernist and postmodernist literature, but it is conceptualized in fundamentally different ways. As Eagleton (2008, p. 56) argues, identity is inextricably tied to power dynamics within society, and the search for personal identity often mirrors larger social and cultural struggles. In modernist literature, identity is often presented as a source of conflict, as individuals grapple with their sense of self in a world that seems increasingly alienating. This sense of alienation is compounded by the breakdown of traditional social structures, leaving individuals in a state of existential crisis. On the other hand, postmodernist works depict identity as inherently fluid and unstable, shaped by a variety of competing cultural, social, and historical forces. The postmodern perspective moves away from the search for a singular, cohesive self, and instead emphasizes the multiplicity of identities and the ways in which they are constructed through discourse and narrative.

By comparing *The Disconnected* and *Santa Esperanza*, we gain a deeper understanding of how literature from different cultural and historical contexts grapples with the theme of identity. In both Turkish and Georgian literature, the exploration of identity is not only a personal quest but also a reflection of broader societal changes. In Atay's work, the crisis of identity is framed within the context of modern Turkish society, which, like many other modernizing nations, is caught between tradition and rapid transformation. In Morchiladze's novel, the search for identity is deeply intertwined with the historical shifts occurring in post-Soviet Georgia, where the collapse of the Soviet Union has left individuals to negotiate new forms of selfhood in a world marked by uncertainty and instability. The comparative study of these two works is essential for understanding the dynamic relationship between the individual and society in the context of both modern and postmodern narratives.

3. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative content analysis method within a comparative literary framework to examine the representation of individual-society conflict and identity formation in Oğuz Atay's *The Disconnected* (1972) and Aka Morchiladze's *Santa Esperanza* (2004). Rather than focusing solely on thematic similarities, the study investigates how different historical and cultural contexts shape literary responses to social transformation, identity crisis, and changing forms of individual belonging.

The selection of these two novels is based on their shared concern with the individual's struggle against changing social structures, despite belonging to different literary traditions and historical periods. Atay's *The Disconnected* represents Turkish modernist fiction emerging from the socio-political and cultural transformations of the 1960s and 1970s, particularly the tensions created by rapid modernization and the conflict between individual aspirations and established social expectations. In contrast, Morchiladze's *Santa Esperanza* reflects the postmodern condition of post-Soviet Georgia, where questions of personal and collective identity emerged within the context of political transition, historical rupture, and national redefinition.

The qualitative content analysis was conducted through three main stages. The first stage involved textual extraction, in which significant passages from both novels were identified according to their representation of modernist and postmodernist narrative strategies. Particular attention was given to formal and stylistic elements, including internal monologue, stream of consciousness, fragmented narrative structures, intertextual references, metafictional elements, and shifts in narrative perspective.

The second stage consisted of thematic coding. The extracted passages were categorized according to recurring themes related to individual-society relations, including character isolation, alienation, identity crisis, belonging, and conflicts between individual desires and social or institutional structures. In addition to thematic categories, linguistic markers and recurring narrative patterns were examined in order to determine how each author constructs representations of identity and social conflict through language and narrative organization.

The final stage involved comparative synthesis. In this stage, Atay's modernist formal techniques were compared with Morchiladze's postmodern narrative strategies in order to evaluate their respective aesthetic functions and thematic implications. The comparison was conducted through three main analytical dimensions: structural fragmentation, narrative perspective and voice, and the representation of individual and collective identity. Structural fragmentation refers to the ways in which both novels employ disrupted narrative structures to reflect psychological and social uncertainty. Narrative perspective and voice focus on techniques such as stream of consciousness, multiple viewpoints, and narrative instability. The final dimension examines how individual identity is constructed in relation to social expectations, historical memory, and collective belonging.

This study adopts a cross-cultural comparative literary approach to explore how Turkish modernism and Georgian post-Soviet postmodernism respond to experiences of social disruption through different narrative strategies. By placing these two works in dialogue, the research aims to demonstrate how literature from neighboring regional contexts represents changing relationships between individuals and societies under conditions of modernization, historical rupture, and cultural transformation.

4. Findings of the Study

4.1 Modernist Themes in Oğuz Atay's The Disconnected

Oğuz Atay's *The Disconnected* (1972) is a landmark work in Turkish modernist literature, intricately examining the individual's conflict with societal norms, identity crises, and existential isolation. Through his exploration of the complexities of the modern individual's position in a rapidly evolving world, Atay uses key modernist narrative techniques, such as stream of consciousness, irony, and societal critique. These techniques reflect the broader modernist concern with the disintegration of established identities and the alienation of the individual in a world marked by fragmentation and disorientation.

Atay's use of stream of consciousness offers readers direct access to the protagonist Turgut's inner turmoil. His thoughts, anxieties, and feelings of disconnection from those around him are rendered through a non-linear, fragmented narrative. This technique mirrors the disintegration of identity often found in modernist literature, where characters are depicted as confronting the chaos of their inner worlds. Menteşe Kıryaman (2023, pp. 1188-1189) utilizes the fractured narrative to emphasize the protagonist's alienation, making Turgut's psychological fragmentation a central theme of the novel.

Turgut's search for meaning, as well as his failure to reconcile his identity with societal expectations, highlights a key modernist concern: the individual's alienation from society. This theme of alienation is not only portrayed through Turgut's internal monologue but also through his struggles to fit within the boundaries imposed by modern Turkish society. The novel resists traditional narrative structure, in line with modernist experimentation, which emphasizes a fragmented, often disjointed portrayal of the protagonist's fractured identity. This form disrupts conventional storytelling, thus reflecting the deep existential disquiet experienced by the modern individual, as emphasized in modernist literature's critique of societal constraints.

In addition to stream of consciousness, Atay incorporates irony, often using it to critique societal expectations and norms. As the protagonist grapples with his personal struggles, the society around him becomes an unyielding force, furthering his sense of disconnection. Irony emerges as a tool through which Atay critiques the absurdity of modern life, offering a biting commentary on how societal norms often fail to address the inner needs and identities of individuals. According to Koçak (2023, p. 467), Atay's use of irony allows him to lay bare the contradictions in society, where the social fabric both constructs and alienates the individual.

The societal critique embedded in *The Disconnected* is not simply an abstract intellectual exercise but a direct confrontation with the lived experience of individuals. Atay's modernist approach aligns with what scholars in the article of Menteşe Kıryaman (2023, p. 1189) discusses in relation to the breakdown of traditional social structures in the face of rapid modernization. The novel, in this sense, serves as a critique of the modern world, with Atay using Turgut's internal strife as a reflection of the larger social disintegration occurring in Turkey during the 1960s and 1970s.

Furthermore, *The fragmented structure of Disconnected* speaks to the broader modernist exploration of identity fragmentation. As Pierre Bourdieu's field theory suggests, the social field exerts a profound influence on how identities are formed and perceived. In Atay's narrative, the protagonist's alienation from both his personal sense of self and the societal expectations that he is meant to adhere to creates a tension that encapsulates modernist themes. This is especially relevant in the context of the changes sweeping through Turkish society, where traditional values clash with the forces of modernization, leaving the individual stranded between competing ideologies.

Atay's novel, thus, exemplifies modernist themes of alienation, identity crisis, and the fractured self, using narrative techniques like stream of consciousness and irony to depict the complexity and chaos of modern existence. Through Turgut's journey, Atay provides a poignant critique of both individual and

societal breakdown, reflecting the modernist preoccupation with the loss of meaning and coherence in the modern world.

4.1.1 Social Class, Character Agency, and Alienation

In *The Disconnected*, Atay delves into the profound alienation of the modern individual, exploring the protagonist Turgut Özben's emotional and intellectual isolation after the suicide of his close friend, Selim Işık. Turgut embarks on a journey to understand Selim's world, only to be confronted with a deeper existential crisis of his own. As Apaydın (2007, p. 54) insightfully notes, *The Disconnected* illustrates the alienation of the modern individual within the social structure and the lack of belonging through an ironic narrative. Atay's portrayal of Turgut's internal conflict with societal expectations reveals the modernist preoccupation with the individual's internal struggle against an indifferent or even hostile social structure. Turgut's alienation is not just a personal crisis but a reflection of the larger disillusionment of the modern era, where the individual is often cast adrift in the face of a rapidly changing world that no longer offers clear answers.

Turgut's quest for meaning is marked by a series of internal monologues that serve as windows into his fractured sense of self. These monologues reflect the deep isolation he feels, not just from society, but also from himself. His attempts to understand Selim's suicide and, in turn, his own life, reveal his profound inability to reconcile his identity with societal expectations. As Ertuğrul (2009, p. 638) notes that Turgut's fragmented sense of self and his inability to fit within conventional societal norms are clear manifestations of the modernist concern with the disintegration of identity. Atay's use of fragmented narrative techniques, such as stream of consciousness and non-linear storytelling, mirrors Turgut's psychological fragmentation, which is characteristic of modernist literature's representation of the modern condition.

The fragmented narrative structure in *The Disconnected* serves not only as a formal expression of Turgut's psychological state but also as a reflection of the disjointed, alienating nature of modern existence. Modernism frequently challenges traditional narrative forms to better capture the complexities and disjunctions of the individual's inner world. The novel's structure, which shifts between the present and the past, and between Turgut's internal monologues and external events, amplifies the sense of alienation that defines his existence. Menteşe Kıryaman argues that the fractured narrative mirrors the alienation experienced by the protagonist, echoing the deep disconnection from the social fabric that modernist authors sought to depict (2023, p. 1193).

Furthermore, the narrative techniques Atay employs reflect the central tenets of modernism: irony, disillusionment, and the exploration of the unconscious. The use of irony in Turgut's interactions with society is particularly striking. While he desperately tries to understand and make sense of his own life, the irony embedded in his experiences highlights the absurdity and meaninglessness of the societal structures that seem to demand conformity. In line with modernist critique, Atay illustrates how societal norms impose artificial constraints on personal identity, forcing individuals like Turgut to navigate a world that offers little support for genuine self-expression or understanding. As Koçak (2023, p. 468) suggests, Atay's irony serves as a means to unveil the contradictions within society, pushing readers to recognize the absurdities that underpin the social order and, by extension, the individual's struggle for meaning in the modern world.

Ultimately, Atay's *The Disconnected* is a powerful exploration of the modernist themes of alienation, identity crisis, and social conflict. Through the character of Turgut, Atay delves into the depths of the individual's inner world, using modernist narrative techniques to capture the psychological fragmentation that characterizes the experience of modernity. The novel's fragmented structure and its exploration of the protagonist's existential crisis make it a quintessential modernist work, reflecting the disorienting, alienating effects of living in a rapidly changing and indifferent world.

4.1.2 Fragmented Narrative, Stream of Consciousness, and Metafiction

In *The Disconnected*, Atay employs key modernist narrative techniques to explore the protagonist Turgut Özben's inner world, particularly stream of consciousness and irony, which serve as powerful vehicles for depicting the complexities of human consciousness and societal critique.

The stream-of-consciousness technique, which is central to Atay's narrative style, provides readers with direct access to Turgut's fragmented psyche. This technique allows the narrative to move fluidly between thoughts, memories, and emotions, reflecting the chaotic and disoriented mental state of the protagonist. Turgut's musings on the suicide of his friend Selim are portrayed in an unbroken flow of consciousness, highlighting his confusion and existential turmoil. As Apaydın (2007, p. 58) notes through the use of stream of consciousness, Atay gives us direct access to the protagonist's internal world, making the reader a participant in their mental journey. This uninterrupted flow mirrors the fragmented nature of modern existence, wherein individuals often struggle to make sense of their surroundings and their own identities.

For example, Turgut's attempts to make sense of Selim's suicide are conveyed through a disjointed and highly emotional stream of thoughts: "Why did Selim do this? Why did he hide it from us? Why was he always distant, always alone..." (Atay, 1972, p. 112). This narrative technique immerses the reader in Turgut's confusion, creating an immediate emotional connection to his inner turmoil. As it highlighted for authors, Atay's use of stream of consciousness engages the reader in a unique narrative experience, where time and structure break down, much like the protagonist's mental state.

Irony is another central narrative tool used by Atay to critique societal norms and highlight the absurdities of modern life. Through Turgut's reflections, the narrative offers a satirical commentary on societal pressures that lead individuals like Selim to despair and ultimately self-destruction. For instance, Atay writes: "People see their own unhappiness as someone else's responsibility; Selim knew this, we didn't" (Atay, 1972, p. 145). This passage illustrates how the disjointed syntax mirrors Turgut's inner chaos and estrangement from social norms (Apaydın, 2007, p.58). This ironic statement exposes the false consciousness that pervades society, where individuals are often unable or unwilling to confront their own struggles, instead projecting them onto others.

The book further emphasizes that irony in *The Disconnected* is not merely a stylistic choice but serves to deepen the novel's critique of both individual identity and societal expectations. Atay's irony illuminates the contradictions within both the characters and the society in which they live. In the modernist tradition, these contradictions are not resolved, leaving the reader with a sense of unresolved tension, much like Turgut's inability to find a sense of belonging or clarity in his life.

The interplay of stream of consciousness and irony in *The Disconnected* makes the novel a profound exploration of the modern condition. Turgut's journey through his own psyche, coupled with Atay's satirical critique of societal structures, reflects the disillusionment and alienation central to modernist literature. Atay uses these techniques not only to critique individual struggles but also to challenge the social order that exacerbates them.

Atay's narrative techniques in *The Disconnected* – stream of consciousness and irony – serve as effective tools for exploring the protagonist's alienation and the broader existential crisis of the modern individual. These techniques allow Atay to offer a sharp critique of both personal identity and societal expectations, making *The Disconnected* a quintessential modernist work that resonates with the themes of fragmentation, disillusionment, and societal critique that characterize the modernist tradition.

4.1.3 Identity Crisis and Resistance to Social Expectations

Atay's *The Disconnected* presents a profound modernist exploration of identity through the lens of social critique. The central conflict between the protagonist and society is represented through Turgut and Selim, who embody the tensions between individual aspirations and societal demands. Ertuğrul (2009, p. 640) interprets this conflict as follows:

"Atay combines the loneliness and identity crisis of the modern individual with humor and irony, creating one of the most distinctive examples of Turkish modernist fiction."

The novel underscores the alienation of the individual from society and the resulting existential crisis that arises from this disconnect. Turgut's search for meaning, both in his own life and in the world around him, becomes a journey to reclaim a sense of identity within the confines of a society that fails to understand or support him. Atay presents identity as something fluid and malleable, constantly shaped by external forces, making it a central theme throughout the narrative. The conflict between personal identity and societal expectations is not presented as a mere intellectual concern but as a visceral, emotional struggle that defines the characters' lives.

Atay's *The Disconnected* represents a key work in the Turkish modernist tradition, illustrating the complexities of the individual's struggle within societal structures. Through narrative techniques such as stream of consciousness, irony, and social critique, Atay explores the alienation and identity crisis faced by the modern individual. The novel's use of modernist elements, including its fragmented structure and introspective focus, makes it a unique and compelling examination of the individual's place in a rapidly changing world. Atay's work not only challenges traditional narrative forms but also provides a deep and critical reflection on the nature of identity, belonging, and the existential struggles that define modern life. In this way, *The Disconnected* stands as a pioneering example of modernist literature within Turkish literary history.

4.2 Postmodern Themes in Aka Morchiladze's Santa Esperanza

Aka Morchiladze's *Santa Esperanza* (2004) stands as a profound example of postmodern narrative in Georgian literature, engaging with the complexities of identity, societal structures, and the individual's search for self-knowledge. Morchiladze masterfully employs postmodern narrative techniques such as multi-layered character development, intertextuality, and a playful approach to storytelling, creating a novel that invites readers to navigate the intricacies of both individual and collective identities. As Schmitz-Emans (2019) notes, *Santa Esperanza* encourages a dynamic interaction between the reader and the text, urging them to question not only the nature of individual identity but also the larger cultural and historical forces that shape it (p. 205).

One of the key postmodern strategies Morchiladze uses is intertextuality, which weaves multiple references to literature, history, and culture throughout the novel. This technique allows for a complex, multi-dimensional exploration of identity, where individual characters and societal forces intertwine, reflecting the postmodern concern with the fragmented and shifting nature of selfhood. Giorgi, the protagonist of *Santa Esperanza*, epitomizes the postmodern search for identity in a world that is in constant flux. His journey reveals how personal desires and societal expectations continuously shape and reshape the individual.

Morchiladze's portrayal of Giorgi's identity crisis speaks to the larger postmodern themes of ambiguity, multiplicity, and the dissolution of fixed identities. This is particularly evident in the novel's structure, which eschews linearity in favor of a fragmented, non-traditional narrative. *Santa Esperanza* draws on elements from various genres, offering a kaleidoscopic view of the world that resists simple interpretation. This narrative approach mirrors the postmodern condition, where the boundaries between reality and fiction, self and other, are often blurred. As explored in *Contemporary Georgian Fiction*

(Heighway, 2012), Morchiladze's technique of multi-layered storytelling reflects a desire to "fragment" reality in a way that invites the reader to explore multiple interpretations of identity.

Furthermore, the novel's playful approach to storytelling underscores Morchiladze's postmodern sensibilities. Rather than offering a singular, authoritative interpretation, *Santa Esperanza* incorporates humor, absurdity, and irony, inviting readers to consider the constructed nature of reality and the narratives that shape it. This playful tone disrupts traditional forms of storytelling and challenges readers to question the legitimacy of the cultural and social norms that define their understanding of the world. The text itself, much like the protagonist Giorgi, is in constant dialogue with its own structure and themes, reinforcing the postmodern critique of fixed meanings and stable identities.

The setting of *Santa Esperanza*, often shifting between personal memories and the larger historical backdrop of post-Soviet Georgia, serves as a metaphor for the fluidity of identity. As *History, Art, Literature and Culture in Black Sea Region* (2016) notes, Georgia's transition from Soviet rule to independence is mirrored in the characters' experiences of personal and cultural upheaval. In this context, Morchiladze's characters are caught between competing identities, shaped by both personal desires and the larger societal forces at play. Giorgi's search for identity is not just an individual quest but a reflection of the collective struggle for self-definition in a nation experiencing dramatic political and cultural changes.

Morchiladze's use of intertextual references, ranging from historical events to literary figures, adds another layer of complexity to the narrative. For example, the frequent references to Georgian cultural icons and historical figures draw attention to the role of national identity in shaping the characters' lives. These allusions not only enrich the story but also highlight the interplay between personal and collective memory. The characters in *Santa Esperanza* are constantly negotiating their individual identities in relation to the larger cultural narratives that surround them, a reflection of the postmodern belief that identity is never purely personal but always embedded within social and historical contexts.

Santa Esperanza exemplifies the postmodern exploration of identity, societal expectations, and the complex interplay between the individual and the collective. Through techniques such as intertextuality, multi-layered storytelling, and a playful approach to narrative, Morchiladze creates a text that invites readers to question the fluid and constructed nature of identity. Giorgi's search for meaning in a shifting world serves as a poignant reflection of the postmodern condition, where personal desires and societal pressures are in constant negotiation. Morchiladze's novel encourages readers to embrace the ambiguity and multiplicity of identity, offering a sophisticated and layered exploration of the self in a post-Soviet context.

4.2.1 Social Structure and Fragmented Character Identity

In *Santa Esperanza*, Morchiladze constructs a narrative that is both intricate and multi-layered, with various characters representing different social strata and personal conflicts. This approach reflects the postmodern belief that identities are not singular or fixed, but rather fluid and constantly shaped by intersecting forces – both personal and societal. As Schmitz-Emans (2019, p. 207) notes, "Morchiladze constructs a labyrinthine narrative, where multiple perspectives intertwine, reflecting the complexity of social and individual identities in post-Soviet Georgia". The novel's complex structure mirrors the fragmented nature of identity, as characters grapple with shifting social, cultural, and historical contexts.

The characters in *Santa Esperanza* are not isolated, static figures; they are dynamic and interconnected, with their lives overlapping in complex ways. Giorgi's conflicting emotions in Tbilisi – Giorgi felt the streets of Tbilisi as both home and prison… This exemplifies postmodern multiplicity and fluid identity. His oscillation between personal desire and societal expectation reflects the post-Soviet destabilization of both individual and collective identities (Suny, 1993, p. 547). This tension between his internal sense of self and the societal forces shaping his existence demonstrates how Morchiladze's

postmodern narrative emphasizes the interplay between personal aspirations and broader social pressures. By portraying Giorgi in this way, the novel illustrates the fluid, fragmented, and negotiated nature of identity in post-Soviet Georgia.

The multi-layered narrative structure of *Santa Esperanza* underscores the postmodern notion that identity is not a stable, fixed entity but rather a fluid construct shaped by ongoing social and historical processes, particularly in the wake of the Soviet collapse, which dismantled centralized meta-narratives and left individuals navigating a fluid socio-political landscape (Suny, 1993, p. 547). This historical backdrop intensifies the postmodern fragmentation in Morchiladze's narrative, as characters are compelled to renegotiate identity in a context where previous certainties have dissolved. This structure, with its shifting perspectives and fragmented storytelling, reflects the complex reality of living in post-Soviet Georgia, where individuals must navigate the legacy of Soviet rule while forging new identities in a newly independent state. As discussed in *History, Art, Literature and Culture in the Black Sea Region* (2016), this societal transformation is mirrored in the characters' struggles to find their place in a rapidly changing world.

Furthermore, Morchiladze's treatment of social structure highlights the ways in which individuals are often caught between competing cultural and historical narratives. The characters in *Santa Esperanza* are not just individuals trying to assert their identities; they are deeply affected by the larger historical and societal forces at play. Giorgi, for instance, is shaped by the legacies of both the Soviet past and the new Georgian national identity that emerged in the post-Soviet era. His oscillation between past and present illustrates the internal conflict faced by many individuals in post-Soviet countries, where the process of redefining personal and national identities is fraught with tension and uncertainty. The novel thus reflects the broader social struggle for self-determination in a time of cultural and political upheaval, as explored in *Contemporary Georgian Fiction* (Heighway, 2012), which highlights the importance of literature in navigating post-Soviet identity formation.

In addition to Giorgi's journey, other characters in *Santa Esperanza* serve as mirrors to the various social strata within post-Soviet Georgia. Each character's perspective offers a glimpse into different facets of Georgian society, from the urban elite to the marginalized, reflecting the unequal access to power and resources in the new post-Soviet context. Morchiladze's use of multi-layered storytelling allows readers to see how these characters' lives intersect and influence one another, underscoring the interconnectedness of personal and collective identities. As noted by Schmitz-Emans (2019), these characters' struggles are not isolated but are emblematic of broader social issues, such as the tension between tradition and modernity, the remnants of Soviet influence, and the shifting dynamics of national identity in post-Soviet Georgia.

The novel's structure - constantly shifting between different perspectives, voices, and temporalities- mimics the complexity of social identity itself, which is never singular or fixed but rather is shaped by multiple forces, both internal and external. This formal fragmentation is mirrored in the novel's physical publication as a set of booklets or cards, which reinforces the reader's experience of disjointed narrative layers and the instability of post-Soviet identity (Morchiladze, 2004; Schmitz-Emans, 2019, p. 208). In this way, *Santa Esperanza* offers a narrative about the individual's quest for self-knowledge and serves as a critique of the social and cultural structures that attempt to define and constrain individual identity.

In conclusion, *Santa Esperanza* presents a sophisticated exploration of identity and social structure in post-Soviet Georgia. Through its multi-layered characters and complex narrative structure, Morchiladze illustrates the fluid, fragmented nature of identity in a society undergoing profound change. The characters' personal struggles and societal conflicts are intricately woven together, highlighting the interconnectedness of individual lives and collective histories. The novel's postmodern approach challenges readers to question the stability of identity and the role of social structures in shaping it, reflecting the ongoing struggle for self-definition in a rapidly transforming world.

4.2.2 Book Design, Intertextuality, and Metafictional Play

Morchiladze's *Santa Esperanza* is an exemplary work of postmodern narrative, rich in intertextual references that span cultural, historical, and literary texts. These references are not simply ornamental but serve to deepen the meaning of the story, creating a layered narrative that challenges the reader's understanding of reality. The fragmented structure of the novel, presented through multiple viewpoints, allows for various interpretations of the same events, a hallmark of postmodern storytelling. As Schmitz-Emans (2019, p. 211) aptly notes, "By allowing the narrative to be read in multiple sequences, Morchiladze challenges the reader to actively construct meaning, emphasizing the instability of reality and identity." This approach highlights the fluidity and impermanence of meaning, underscoring the postmodern critique of fixed, stable truths.

Intertextuality plays a crucial role in this narrative structure, weaving references to a wide array of cultural, historical, and literary sources throughout the text. By drawing on a rich tapestry of Georgian, Soviet, and Western cultural icons, Morchiladze situates his characters and events within a broader historical and cultural context. This technique allows for a more nuanced exploration of identity, particularly in the post-Soviet Georgian context, where old cultural values and national identities are in flux. The interplay of these multiple texts within *Santa Esperanza* invites the reader to engage with the novel on multiple levels, recognizing how personal and national identities are shaped by the convergence of various cultural narratives. This layering of texts forces the reader to confront the constructed nature of identity, making the search for meaning in the novel as fragmented as the characters' own quests for self-understanding.

The novel's fragmented structure mirrors the societal upheaval experienced in post-Soviet Georgia, where long-held beliefs about national identity, social roles, and cultural values have been destabilized. The shifting perspectives and disjointed narrative reflect the uncertainty and instability of a society in transition. As discussed, post-Soviet Georgia represents a nation struggling to reconcile its Soviet past with its newly independent future, and this tension is mirrored in the characters' own struggles with personal and collective identity. In *Santa Esperanza*, Morchiladze uses the fragmented narrative to explore this social instability, allowing the reader to experience the constant reconfiguration of reality as the characters navigate a world in flux.

Moreover, the playful nature of the narrative further emphasizes the postmodern concern with the instability of meaning. Morchiladze's use of humor, irony, and absurdity allows him to subvert traditional storytelling conventions, offering a critique of both the literary form and the social order. The reader is invited to actively participate in the construction of meaning, as the text refuses to provide a singular, authoritative interpretation. This playfulness is a key feature of the postmodern condition, where meaning is always contingent on context, perspective, and interpretation. The novel's structure, which challenges readers to make sense of a non-linear, multi-perspective narrative, reflects the postmodern belief that meaning is not inherent but always contingent on the reader's active engagement with the text.

As noted in *Contemporary Georgian Fiction* (Heighway, 2012), Morchiladze's playful approach also speaks to the larger cultural shift in post-Soviet Georgia, where the collapse of the Soviet regime and the search for a new national identity have created a space for experimentation and the questioning of established norms. In *Santa Esperanza*, this cultural play is reflected in the characters' own search for identity, where personal desires, societal expectations, and historical legacies collide in unpredictable and often absurd ways. The intertextuality and fragmented structure of the novel mirror the societal fragmentation of post-Soviet Georgia, where old certainties are being reexamined, and new meanings are being constructed.

Santa Esperanza employs intertextuality and a playful narrative structure to engage with postmodern themes of fragmented identity and shifting meaning. Through its multi-layered storytelling and references to

a wide range of cultural and historical texts, the novel challenges the reader to actively construct meaning, emphasizing the instability of identity and reality. This narrative playfulness reflects the postmodern view that meaning is contingent on context, perspective, and interpretation, offering a sophisticated exploration of identity in a society undergoing profound transformation.

4.2.3 Tbilisi as Home, Exile, and Post-Soviet Space

At the heart of *Santa Esperanza* is the exploration of identity and the search for belonging, themes that resonate deeply both on a personal and a national level. The protagonists of the novel navigate a complex landscape where their individual identities collide with the collective forces of society, culture, and history. As Schmitz-Emans (2019, p. 212) states, "The protagonists' struggle for personal identity against societal pressures mirrors the post-Soviet quest for national and cultural self-definition." In this way, Morchiladze's characters reflect the broader existential challenges faced by a nation in transition, echoing the struggles of post-Soviet Georgia to redefine itself in the aftermath of the Soviet Union's collapse.

The personal journeys of the characters in *Santa Esperanza* are intricately tied to the larger societal shifts taking place in Georgia during the period of post-Soviet transformation. The characters' identity crises are not merely internal battles but are deeply entwined with the political, cultural, and historical upheavals of the time. This dual struggle – between personal desires and societal expectations – mirrors the tension within Georgian society itself, as it attempts to negotiate its place in a rapidly modernizing world while attempting to reclaim a sense of cultural heritage. This is particularly evident in the novel's portrayal of Tbilisi, which acts as both a symbol of home and exile. The city represents the complexities of post-Soviet Georgia, where the desire for modernization often clashes with the reverence for traditional values.

Morchiladze's use of Tbilisi as a character in its own right underscores the theme of belonging. The city is portrayed as a place that is both a refuge and a prison for the characters, symbolizing the broader societal conflict that shapes their identities. Giorgi, the central character, is constantly caught between his attachment to Tbilisi - his home- and the alienation he feels as he tries to reconcile his personal identity with the shifting social landscape around him. The city's dual role as both a space of belonging and exile emphasizes the postmodern view that identity is never fixed; rather, it is continuously reshaped by external forces. This tension between belonging and alienation mirrors the post-Soviet struggle for national identity in Georgia, where the country is torn between its Soviet past and its aspirations for independence and self-definition.

As Morchiladze explores in *Santa Esperanza*, identity is presented not as a static or singular construct but as something that is constantly being renegotiated in response to changing circumstances. This dynamic view of identity reflects postmodern concerns with fluidity, ambiguity, and the instability of meaning. The characters' personal experiences are constantly influenced by the larger socio-political environment in which they exist, suggesting that identity is always a process rather than a fixed state. This view is further reinforced by the fragmented narrative structure of the novel, which reflects the fragmented nature of the characters' lives and the society around them.

Morchiladze's use of multi-layered character development and fragmented storytelling mirrors the broader postmodern experience of identity in a world where multiple, often contradictory narratives coexist. As explored in books this narrative structure reflects the larger historical and cultural transformations that post-Soviet Georgia has undergone. The characters in *Santa Esperanza* are not just individuals struggling to assert their identities; they are products of a society undergoing dramatic changes. Their identities are constantly shaped by the complex interplay of personal desires, historical legacies, and cultural expectations, making the quest for self-definition both a deeply personal and a collective endeavor.

Ultimately, *Santa Esperanza* offers a profound meditation on the theme of identity and belonging in the context of post-Soviet Georgia. The novel's fragmented, multi-layered structure, combined with its playful approach to storytelling, underscores the postmodern notion that identity is fluid, unstable, and always in flux. By presenting the story through multiple perspectives, Morchiladze invites the reader to engage with the text in a variety of ways, challenging them to question the very nature of meaning, reality, and identity. *Santa Esperanza* captures the essence of the postmodern condition, where personal identity is shaped by larger cultural and historical shifts, and where meaning is always shifting, contingent on context, and open to reinterpretation.

4.3 Comparative Findings

The comparison of modernist and postmodernist narratives in Turkish and Georgian literature reveals how the relationships between the individual and society, as well as the search for identity, are explored using different aesthetic and technical approaches. The novels *The Disconnected* by Oğuz Atay and *Santa Esperanza* by Aka Morchiladze serve as particularly compelling examples in this context.

4.3.1 Comparison of Narrative Techniques

In *The Disconnected,* Atay employs modernist techniques such as stream of consciousness and irony to convey the inner worlds of his characters and their alienation from society (Apaydın, 2007, p. 58). Through Turgut's attempt to understand Selim's suicide, Atay presents individual consciousness as a fragmented and unstable experience, reflecting the modernist representation of alienation and psychological uncertainty. As demonstrated in the previous analysis, the novel's introspective narrative technique foregrounds the tension between individual subjectivity and the pressures of social conformity. In comparison with Morchiladze's postmodern approach, Atay's narrative remains primarily focused on the internal struggles of the individual, emphasizing personal disconnection rather than the multiplicity of collective identities.

In contrast, *Santa Esperanza* employs postmodern narrative techniques, such as intertextuality and multiple viewpoints, to explore the individual's identity and their relationship with societal structures (Schmitz-Emans, 2019, p. 210). Morchiladze's use of intertextual references and multi-layered perspectives invites readers to actively engage with the text, constructing meaning in a non-linear fashion. The novel's fragmented structure allows for different interpretations of events, offering the reader multiple readings of the same situation: "Giorgi felt the streets of Tbilisi as both home and prison, a paradox of belonging he could never reconcile" (Morchiladze, 2004, p. 112). By shifting between different character perspectives and temporal layers, Morchiladze's narrative destabilizes fixed meanings and highlights the postmodern belief in the fluidity of truth and identity. Atay, on the other hand, focuses on a more individualized, introspective approach, allowing readers to experience the protagonist's isolation in an intimate, personal manner.

While Atay concentrates on the individual's internal struggles with societal alienation, Morchiladze foregrounds the complexities of social and historical contexts, using postmodern techniques to reflect the interconnectedness of individual lives and collective identity. Both authors use different narrative structures to address the conflict between the individual and society, but each adopts distinct aesthetic strategies shaped by their respective literary movements.

4.3.2 Individual-Society Conflict

In *The Disconnected*, the individual-society conflict is primarily conveyed through the characters' alienation and inability to conform to societal norms (Ertuğrul, 2009, p. 638). Turgut and Selim's struggles with societal expectations highlight a deeper sense of disconnection. The novel illustrates how the societal

structures fail to address the psychological needs of the individual, leaving them in a state of alienation. Through Turgut's existential crises and his attempts to understand Selim's actions, Atay explores the devastating effects of a society that values conformity over individuality.

Morchiladze, however, presents the individual-society conflict through a more complex, multi-character approach. In *Santa Esperanza*, the tension between personal identity and societal expectations is portrayed through a diverse array of characters, each negotiating their own sense of self within a post-Soviet society. The interwoven stories of these characters reflect the broader conflict between tradition, modernity, and the evolving national identity of Georgia. In Morchiladze's work, society is not merely a backdrop against which the individual struggles; it is a dynamic and transformative force that shapes and reshapes the characters' identities. This contrasts with Atay's more focused exploration of individual isolation and existentialism.

Thus, while Atay adopts a more introspective, modernist approach to the individual-society conflict, Morchiladze provides a postmodern perspective that emphasizes the fluidity of identity within shifting social and historical contexts.

4.3.3 Comparison of Identity and Belonging Themes

In *The Disconnected*, identity and belonging are explored through the protagonist's internal conflict and his struggle with societal norms. Turgut's attempts to understand Selim's life and death reflect a deeper quest for self-definition and an exploration of his place within society. As Apaydın (2007, p. 54) notes, Turgut's search for meaning in his relationship with Selim is a metaphor for the larger struggle for identity in a society that imposes rigid expectations on the individual.

In *Santa Esperanza*, the themes of identity and belonging are addressed through a postmodern lens, where the search for identity is not confined to a single character but is shared by multiple protagonists, each grappling with their relationship to history, culture, and society. The characters' identities are fluid and contingent, constantly evolving in response to their changing social environments. As Schmitz-Emans (2019, p. 212) explains, the protagonists' personal struggles with identity are intertwined with the larger national struggle for self-definition in post-Soviet Georgia: "The protagonists' struggle for personal identity against societal pressures mirrors the post-Soviet quest for national and cultural self-definition."

In this way, *Santa Esperanza* emphasizes the interconnectedness of individual and collective identity, portraying how personal selfhood is shaped by historical, cultural, and political forces.

Both novels explore the tension between the individual and society, but while Atay focuses on the individual's existential search for meaning within a rigid social structure, Morchiladze emphasizes the interplay between personal and collective identity, reflecting the complexities of a post-Soviet cultural landscape.

The comparative analysis of *The Disconnected* and *Santa Esperanza* reveals how modernist and postmodernist narratives in Turkish and Georgian literature reflect the conflicts between the individual and society, as well as the search for identity, through distinct aesthetic and technical approaches:

- Atay's use of modernist techniques, such as stream of consciousness and irony, emphasizes the alienation and existential crises of the individual within societal constraints.
- Morchiladze's postmodern techniques, including intertextuality and multiple perspectives, present a more complex and layered exploration of identity, connecting personal struggles with broader cultural and historical transformations.
- While both authors explore the individual-society conflict, Atay's focus is more on internal, individualized struggles, while Morchiladze highlights the social and historical context in which these struggles unfold.

This comparison illustrates the different ways in which modernist and postmodernist literature engage with themes of identity, belonging, and the individual's place in society. Through these two works, we gain a deeper understanding of the aesthetic, thematic, and theoretical implications of these literary movements in Turkish and Georgian contexts.

5. Discussion

The findings of the study indicate that the conflict between the individual and society assumes different forms in Oğuz Atay's *The Disconnected* and Aka Morchiladze's *Santa Esperanza*, although both novels place the problem of individual identity at the centre of their narratives. The distinction is closely related to the historical and cultural contexts in which the two works were produced. Atay's novel approaches the individual from within the experience of modernity, emphasizing the tension between personal aspirations and the social structures that regulate everyday life. Morchiladze's novel, by contrast, presents a fragmented social and cultural environment in which identity is shaped through competing memories, narratives, places, and historical references. The difference suggests that individual-society conflict cannot be understood as a fixed literary pattern; its representation changes according to the forms of social transformation experienced by the individual.

In *The Disconnected*, the individual's estrangement is largely associated with the inability to establish a meaningful relationship with the surrounding social order. Turgut Özben's movement away from the familiar structures of his life reflects a crisis of values rather than a simple rejection of society. His encounter with Selim Işık's life and writings gradually exposes the limitations of an existence organized around established expectations. The novel therefore treats alienation as an inward process through which the individual becomes increasingly conscious of the distance between the self and the roles imposed by society. The fragmentation of consciousness and the movement between different narrative voices reinforce this condition. Modernity appears in the novel as an environment that promises individual autonomy while generating uncertainty about how such autonomy can be achieved.

This aspect of Atay's novel can be interpreted through the relationship between modernity and identity. The modern individual is expected to construct the self as an autonomous subject, yet the social environment continues to define acceptable forms of behaviour, success, and belonging. The resulting tension produces a divided subject who is unable either to return completely to traditional patterns or to establish a stable alternative identity. Selim's experience represents the most radical form of this contradiction, while Turgut's transformation demonstrates the possibility of confronting it through a search for self-knowledge. Consequently, alienation in *The Disconnected* functions not merely as a consequence of social exclusion but as a form of critical awareness. The individual becomes alienated precisely because he begins to perceive the contradictions embedded in the social order.

The situation in *Santa Esperanza* differs in an important respect. Here, fragmentation is not confined primarily to the psychological experience of an individual character. It is incorporated into the structure of the fictional world itself. The novel's representation of Tbilisi, its historical references, its multiple voices, and its intertextual relations create a narrative space in which the boundaries between personal memory, collective history, and fictional construction become unstable. The individual is consequently situated within a field of competing narratives rather than confronted with a single, clearly defined social order. Identity emerges as something continuously reconstructed through encounters with different versions of the past and present.

This difference is particularly significant when the two novels are considered in relation to modernism and postmodernism. Atay's fragmented narrative reflects the modernist concern with the divided consciousness of the individual. Fragmentation becomes a way of representing the difficulty of finding

coherence in a rapidly changing social environment. In Morchiladze's novel, fragmentation operates on a broader textual and historical level. The instability of identity is accompanied by the instability of the narratives through which history and social reality are represented. Intertextuality, metafictional strategies, and the deliberate disruption of conventional narrative expectations weaken the possibility of a single authoritative interpretation. The individual's uncertainty therefore corresponds to a wider uncertainty concerning history, place, and cultural belonging.

The two novels also differ in their treatment of the relationship between the individual and social space. In *The Disconnected*, social space is primarily experienced as a system of expectations against which the individual measures his own existence. The tension is therefore strongly connected with questions of conformity, social roles, and personal authenticity. In *Santa Esperanza*, space acquires a more complex function. Tbilisi is not simply the setting in which the characters act; it becomes a repository of historical layers and cultural memories. The relationship between individual identity and place consequently involves questions of belonging, displacement, memory, and the reconstruction of the past. The city participates in the formation of identity by providing competing narratives through which the individual attempts to locate himself.

Another important point emerging from the comparison concerns the function of resistance. Neither novel presents resistance as a straightforward liberation from society. In Atay's work, the rejection of established norms generates a new awareness but does not guarantee a stable alternative. The individual remains caught between the desire for authenticity and the need for social belonging. Morchiladze's narrative similarly avoids presenting identity as something that can be completely separated from inherited cultural and historical narratives. Resistance takes the form of questioning established representations and exposing their instability. The postmodern subject is therefore not simply opposed to society; he is formed through the very cultural narratives that he questions.

From this perspective, the two novels reveal a significant transformation in the literary representation of the individual. Atay's modernist framework places greater emphasis on the individual's struggle to achieve an authentic and coherent self in the face of social pressures. Morchiladze's postmodern framework complicates the possibility of such coherence by questioning the stability of the narratives from which identity is constructed. The movement from one novel to the other can therefore be understood as a shift from the crisis of the individual subject toward the crisis of the structures that define and represent that subject.

The comparison further demonstrates that alienation has different conceptual dimensions in the two works. In *The Disconnected*, alienation is closely related to the individual's inability to reconcile inner aspirations with social reality. It is experienced as a personal and existential crisis. In *Santa Esperanza*, alienation extends into the cultural and historical sphere. The instability of belonging is connected with fragmented memories, competing representations of the past, and the difficulty of establishing a unified cultural narrative. Alienation consequently moves from the psychological sphere toward a broader condition involving language, history, space, and cultural identity.

Taken together, these observations suggest that the individual-society conflict represented in the two novels reflects two different stages of cultural transformation. Atay's novel foregrounds the modern individual's search for meaning and authenticity within a society undergoing profound change.

Morchiladze's novel approaches a social world in which established meanings have already become fragmented and where identity must be negotiated among multiple cultural and historical narratives. The comparison therefore extends beyond identifying modernist and postmodernist techniques. It demonstrates how literary form, individual psychology, social structure, and historical consciousness interact in the representation of changing notions of the self.

6. Conclusion

This study examined the individual-society conflict in Oğuz Atay's *The Disconnected* and Aka Morchiladze's *Santa Esperanza* by considering the ways in which modernist and postmodernist literary perspectives shape the representation of individual identity. The comparative analysis demonstrates that both novels portray the individual as being confronted with social, cultural, and historical forces that complicate the formation of a stable sense of self. Their approaches to this conflict, however, differ according to the distinct aesthetic and historical contexts in which the novels emerge.

In *The Disconnected*, the individual's crisis is primarily connected with the tension between inner aspirations and established social expectations. The novel presents alienation as an existential condition through which the individual becomes conscious of the distance between personal authenticity and socially prescribed roles. Fragmented consciousness, multiple narrative perspectives, and the disruption of conventional forms contribute to the representation of this crisis. The novel's modernist orientation therefore places the individual subject and his search for meaning at the centre of the conflict.

Santa Esperanza approaches the problem from a different perspective. The fragmentation found in the novel extends beyond individual psychology and becomes part of its narrative, historical, and spatial organization. Multiple voices, intertextual references, metafictional strategies, and the representation of Tbilisi as a multilayered cultural space challenge the possibility of a unified account of identity and history. The individual is consequently positioned within a network of competing narratives through which belonging and cultural identity are continually negotiated.

The comparison reveals that the movement from modernist to postmodernist modes of representation involves a significant transformation in the understanding of individual-society relations. Atay's novel emphasizes the individual's struggle to construct an authentic self within a changing social order, whereas Morchiladze's novel questions the stability of the narratives through which the self, society, history, and cultural belonging are defined. Fragmentation thus acquires different functions in the two works: it primarily represents the divided consciousness of the modern individual in Atay, while it becomes a structural principle through which the instability of meaning is articulated in Morchiladze.

The study also demonstrates that alienation cannot be reduced to a single literary or psychological category. In *The Disconnected*, it is closely associated with existential dissatisfaction and the individual's confrontation with social norms. In *Santa Esperanza*, alienation acquires a broader cultural and historical dimension, involving questions of memory, place, belonging, and the representation of the past. This difference reflects the changing relationship between the individual and the social world across the modernist and postmodernist contexts examined in the study.

From a comparative literary perspective, the significance of these findings lies in demonstrating that Turkish and Georgian fiction can be read through shared questions of modernization, identity, fragmentation, and social transformation while retaining distinctive historical and cultural characteristics. The comparison of Atay and Morchiladze shows that individual-society conflict constitutes a productive point of intersection between the two literary traditions. It also indicates that modernist and postmodernist literary forms provide different ways of representing the uncertainty experienced by individuals living within periods of social and cultural change.

The study is limited to two novels and focuses primarily on the representation of individual-society conflict through the frameworks of modernism and postmodernism. A broader corpus involving additional Turkish and Georgian authors could provide further insight into the development of these themes across different historical periods. Future comparative studies may also examine gender, memory, migration, urban identity, or national belonging in order to expand the discussion of how individual identity is constructed and transformed in Turkish and Georgian literatures.

In conclusion, *The Disconnected* and *Santa Esperanza* present two distinct literary responses to the problem of individual identity in changing societies. Atay's novel foregrounds the modern individual's struggle for coherence and authenticity, while Morchiladze's work reveals a postmodern condition in which coherence itself becomes problematic. Their comparison demonstrates how literary representations of the individual evolve in response to changing social structures, historical experiences, and conceptions of reality, making the individual-society conflict a significant comparative field between Turkish and Georgian literature.

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