

One of the major themes in the history of literature is looking for ways of solving the existential questions. The work is concerned with the ways of depicting madness in literary works at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the reasons of such a common usage of the motif of madness in Russian literature and the goals that are consequently achieved by the authors. The thesis is mainly focused on the works of the major writers of Russian literature of that period, such as Sologub, Garshin, Andreyev and Chekhov.

The thesis is divided into five chapters; in some cases further subdivision is used. The aim of the first chapter is mainly to discuss the ways of showing madness and "otherness" in solving the existential issues. The author of the thesis comments on the types of "madness" in literary works, the means of its depicting, its reasons and consequences.

In the second chapter the roots and historical overview of the ways of using the theme of madness are presented and discussed with reference to some literary works. It is proved that there existed a specific type of a hero, who confronted not only the whole world, but also himself.

The third chapter is devoted to presenting and analyzing the major works of the

18 - 19 century, where a motif of madness, after its unfolding from religious and social to pure existential issues, gained other ways of expressing and different ways of its interpretation.

In the main chapter the author analyzes the key literary works of the 19th -

20 century. The chapter is further subdivided into several parts. Each of them describes a diffe