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***IDENTIFICATION AND ALIENATION: SUBJECTIVITY, OBJECTIVITY  
AND REFLECTIVITY IN PAUL BOWLES' THE SHELTERING SKY***

***Abstract:*** *In this paper I shall discuss the way that Paul Bowles presents the consciousness of the two principal characters in his novel, The Sheltering Sky, and the transformations they undergo during a journey in the course of which they are exposed to an unfamiliar environment and culture. The two characters are an American married couple who travel to Morocco. I shall show how Bowles explores the way that both characters have difficulty in identifying fully with the outside world, although each to a different extent, a difficulty which leads the self to identify with objects rather than experience. The characters' geographical displacement during their journey exposes the vulnerability of their isolated selves, and changes ensue, the outcomes varying dependent on the exact diagnosis of the maladjustment in each case. One of the characters (the wife) identifies herself with her own personal objects, not with the wider world or experience, whereas the husband, more radically alienated, sees even his self as an object, so even the limited field of subjective identification with the outside world available to his wife is unavailable to him.*

*As well as exploring exactly what kind of alienation Bowles portrays in the case of each character, I discuss some philosophical notions which are congruent with and illuminate the kind of world-view which Bowles is working with, and I shall trace how he uses various kinds of objects in the novels, and the characters' relations to these objects, as devices to trace their the characters' inner development. I shall finally consider what kind of critique Bowles may be intending to make of the modern Western consciousness.*