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**CONFERENCE ARTICLE****TWO MODELS OF EXISTENTIAL REBELLION: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF E. HEMINGWAY'S THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA AND KH. DO'STMUHAMMAD'S THE WISE SISYPHUS****Rizayeva Shaxnozabonu**

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**ABSTRACT**

This article presents a comparative typological analysis of Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* and Khurshid Do'stmuhammad's *The Wise Sisyphus* from the perspectives of existentialism and the philosophy of the absurd. The main aim of the study is to highlight two different models of overcoming an absurd situation: the Western literary model of "pragmatic action" (Santiago) and the Uzbek modern literary model of "intellectual contemplation" (Sisyphus). The results of the analysis show that Hemingway's protagonist affirms his existence through physical struggle and professionalism, whereas Do'stmuhammad's protagonist achieves this through conscious endurance and deep reflection. This demonstrates a transformation of existentialist philosophy shaped by national mentality and distinctive modes of artistic thinking.

**KEYWORDS**

Existentialism, absurd, pragmatic rebellion, intellectual endurance, Hemingway, Kh. Do'stmuhammad, Sisyphus, Santiago.

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**INTRODUCTION**

In twentieth-century world literature, the themes of human loneliness, the meaninglessness of the world, and the concept of the absurd assumed a central place. The philosophical movement of existentialism, theoretically grounded by Albert Camus and Jean-Paul Sartre, exerted a strong influence not only on Western but also on Eastern literature, including Uzbek literature in particular. In Uzbek literary studies during the years of independence, issues of modernism and the absurd have been thoroughly investigated by scholars such as U. Normatov, Q. Yo'ldoshev, and D. Quronov. In particular, Khurshid Do'stmuhammad's *The Wise Sisyphus* has been studied primarily through the lenses of the "stream of consciousness" technique, psychological analysis, and national self-awareness. However, the typological connections of this work with "code-heroes" in world literature—especially with Santiago from Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*—have not been sufficiently revealed.

In existing research, the concept of the "absurd" is often interpreted as a sign of tragedy or hopelessness. Yet, according to our theoretical position, the absurd is a force that sets the protagonist in motion and tests their genuine humanity. The relevance and scientific novelty of this article lie in the fact that, for the first time, Hemingway's Santiago is compared with Do'stmuhammad's Sisyphus as two contrasting types: the "Man of Action" (*Homo Faber*) and the "Man of Thought" (*Homo Sapiens*). Unlike earlier studies, our approach aims to demonstrate that there is no single path to overcoming the absurd; rather, in the West it is experienced through "external physical struggle," whereas in the Uzbek modern literary model it unfolds through "internal intellectual comprehension."

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

The main materials of the study are Ernest Hemingway's novella

*The Old Man and the Sea* and Khurshid Do'stmuhammad's work *The Wise Sisyphus*. The analysis employs comparative-typological and hermeneutic methods. The comparative method made it possible to examine the "human versus fate" conflict in works created in two different cultural spaces (the United States and Uzbekistan). The hermeneutic approach served to decipher the existential meanings of underlying symbols—such as the sea, the fish, the stone, and the mountain. In addition, intertextual analysis was used to explore how Albert Camus's *The Myth of Sisyphus* is transformed in the creative worlds of both writers.

**RESULTS**

The analysis identified two fundamentally different yet outcome-equivalent models of existential rebellion in the two works. In Hemingway's text, the absurd is expressed as nature's ruthless indifference. The eighty-four days without catching a fish, and the ultimate destruction of the enormous catch by sharks, constitutes a classic absurd situation. For Santiago, existence (existence-as-being) is manifested only through action. His famous words—"Man is not made for defeat. A man can be destroyed but not defeated"—are not mere rhetoric, but an expression of pragmatic rebellion. The calluses on his hands and his physically painful effort to keep pulling the rope are proof of his existence. In Hemingway's model, the protagonist understands his essence not through reflection, but through "capability," through what he can do.

In contrast, in Do'stmuhammad's *The Wise Sisyphus*, the arena of struggle shifts from the external world into the inner world of the human being. In the Uzbek writer's interpretation, the "stone" for Sisyphus is not merely a physical burden but the anguish of understanding and moral responsibility. The protagonist knows in advance that pushing the stone uphill is futile and that it will inevitably roll down again. Yet he does not stop the process. His rebellion is endurance and contemplation.

If Santiago tries to kill the sharks (eliminate an external enemy), Do'stmuhammad's hero "appropriates" his fate. He does not focus on changing the situation; he emphasizes changing his attitude toward it. This condition may be termed "intellectual existentialism."

The finales of both works end with the paradox of apparent fruitlessness: Santiago returns to shore with only the fish's skeleton, and Sisyphus's stone rolls back down once more. However, our study shows that this is not defeat. For Santiago, victory is revealed in the fact that he was able to fight; for Sisyphus, victory is revealed in understanding the meaning of his punishment. In the first case, physical action temporarily overcomes the absurd, while in the second, intellect establishes enduring dominance over the absurd.

## **DISCUSSION**

These results suggest that viewpoints previously established in Uzbek literary scholarship are valid, including Q. Yo'ldoshev's interpretation of *The Wise Sisyphus* as a symbol of national self-awareness or U. Normatov's emphasis on stylistic exploration. Yet the issue does not end there. Our study demonstrates that Do'stmuhammad's hero differs from Camus's "happy Sisyphus" and, in spiritual terms, draws closer to Hemingway's "indefeatable" human being. Only the weapon changes: instead of a harpoon—reflection; instead of the sea—consciousness.

In our earlier works, we tended to present the absurd more as a general human tragedy, whereas this comparative analysis reveals its "geographical" and "mental" characteristics. The Western model (Santiago) affirms itself by attempting to change the external world (active rebellion), while the Eastern—or Uzbek—model (Sisyphus) seeks to surpass the absurdity of the external world by perfecting the inner world (passive-intellectual rebellion). This distinction means that Uzbek modern literature did not blindly copy Western existentialism; rather, it refracted it through the prism of national thinking and replaced "action" with "wisdom," that is, with a mode of thoughtful insight.

## **CONCLUSION**

A comparative study of Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* and Khurshid Do'stmuhammad's *The Wise Sisyphus* leads to the following conclusions. First, in both works the meaninglessness of life (the absurd) is the central problem, but the reaction to it differs. Second, Santiago is a "practical Sisyphus" who overcomes the absurd through physical determination, endurance, and professional mastery. Third, Do'stmuhammad's Sisyphus is a "theoretical sage" who achieves victory over the absurd through the supremacy of intellect and reflection.

The scientific novelty of this article lies in demonstrating, with clear evidence, the difference between "American pragmatism" and "Uzbek contemplativeness" within existentialism. This, in turn, shows how universal themes of world literature can receive an original interpretation in national literature.

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