

Analyzing the Opposition of Existentialist Ideas in the Works of Bentalhoda Sadr and Sadegh Hedayat

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Introduction

Existentialism in philosophy, in a general sense, is a tendency that gives the most importance to the existence of a person and his essential qualities. In the middle of the 20th century, this term was applied to a philosophical theory that Jean-Paul Sartre called in his book “Being and Nothingness” (1943 AD), which is based on the belief that absolute existence or the state of emptiness precedes the essence and current existence (Wahbe and Al-Muhandis, 1984: 430). The literal meaning of existentialism, which is derived from the Latin verbs *existo* and *existee*, is to come out, become visible, stand out and emerge. Although it is difficult to provide a single definition of the school of existentialism, the only common concept is the emphasis on human existence; That is, if a person wants to understand the universe correctly, he must correctly answer the question of what is a person, who is a person, where is humanity, and where does humanity live. Existentialists are divided into three groups of believers, atheists, and neutrals in terms of their desire and inclination towards God and belief in the divine essence and lack of inclination towards this category (See: Sartre, 2001: 20; Akhbari, 2016: 24-25) In the contemporary era, a deep link has been established between literature and philosophy, especially existentialist philosophy, and therefore, in recent decades, we have witnessed the writing of many literary works with an existentialist approach. Bentalhoda Sadr and Sadegh Hedayat are among the writers who, with a different approach, used literature and especially fiction as a means to express their thoughts and have influenced a wide range of readers. The readers of the works of these two authors, in the midst of the events of the story and from the words of different characters, face many existential questions and concerns that make their minds and thoughts struggle. In the present article, an attempt has been made to analyze some existentialist ideas such as choice and free will, woman, and death in the works of Bentalhoda Sadr and Sadegh Hedayat in a two-way descriptive-analytical way.

Methodology

The method considered for research in this field is the method of analyzing the theme in a comparative and critical way, which has a rational and philosophical basis. The considered method is that based on the components proposed among the existentialist thinkers, the works of two Persian and

Arabic writers, Sadegh Hedayat and Bentalhoda Sadr, have been compared and reviewed by considering the mentioned components. After studying the works of these two people, a part of the materials that can depict their type of view on existentialism in both dimensions, whether it is atheism or faith, has been analyzed, described and investigated.

Results and Discussion

In this article, three themes: freedom, women and death were analyzed in the intellectual system of Bentalhoda Sadr and Sadegh Hedayat through exploring their stories. Regarding the first component, it should be said that the criterion in the thought of Bentalhoda Sadr, unlike the existentialist thought of Hedayat, whose approach is the freedom of man and his choice, is the components of faith found in the Qur'an and the hadiths of Ahl al-Bayt (AS) (for example, see: Sadr, 1999: 240). Sadegh Hedayat believes that whatever he chooses is the source of value and whatever is chosen for him is anti-value. In fact, he gives originality and value to choice. In his view, values depend on the decisions and choices of humans; therefore, it is not stable but relative (See: Hedayat, 2017: 12). Regarding women, it is worth mentioning that in Hedayat's intellectual system, a traditional woman, especially of a religious type, is complacent, superstitious and satisfied with the status quo, and her religious and traditional beliefs are in place. Her stories are ridiculed and, during the narration of the incidents and dialogues of these women, the traditional beliefs attributed to religion are depicted as the cause of their intellectual degeneration (Hedayat, 2017: 450). But, in Bentalhoda's existential view, tradition is not the cause of women's backwardness, but believing in correct religious (Islamic) values and returning to the Qur'an empowers women to have an effective role in building the fate of oneself and the society and changing the dysfunctional platform into a constructive and motivating atmosphere (See: Sadr, 1999: 547). Regarding death, it should be said that the honest development of guidance in an environment full of atheistic existentialist ideas is such that it redefines human existence in an irreversible curve towards preserving free will in the direction of destruction and choosing death. In many of Hedayat's stories, the plot ends in suicide in a heterogeneous tragedy. From the honest point of view of Hedayat, the category of death is a gift that leads a person to originality (Hedayat, 2017: 278), while from the point of view of Bentalhoda Sadr, death is a means of freedom from attachment and a way to a life of faith (Sadr, 1999: 165 and 420).

Conclusion

In a general view and by analyzing the stories that talk about these components, it can be said that there is a fundamental difference in the views of the two authors on the mentioned subjects. Bentalhoda adopts the criterion of choice from holy texts and Shariah orders, but sees human guidance in free choice. Hedayat believes that a traditional and especially religious woman is

superstitious and satisfied with the status quo, but Bentalhoda considers religious beliefs as a factor in women's empowerment and dynamism. From Sadegh Hedayat's point of view, the essence of death is the guidance and a gift that leads a person to originality, while from Bentalhoda's point of view, death is a means of freedom from attachment and a path to a life of faith.

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