



**POSTMODERN, ABSURD AND EXISTENSIAL ELEMENTS IN NAZAR  
ESHONKUL’S WORKS (BASED ON THE NOVEL GURUGLI(GO’RO’G’LI))**

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**Annotatsiya.** Ushbu maqolada Nazar Eshonqulning Go‘ro‘g‘li romanidagi postmodern, absurd va ekzistensial unsurlar tahlil qilindi. Tadqiqot postmodern hikoyalash usullari, intertekstuality, fragmentatsiya va dekonstruksiya kabi tushunchalarni roman misolida o‘rganishga bag‘ishlangan. Bundan tashqari, maqolada inson va haqiqat o‘rtasidagi ziddiyat, qahramonning ekzistensial izlanishlari, hayotning ma‘nosizligi muammosi va o‘z taqdirini anglash

jarayoni falsafiy nuqtai nazardan tahlil qilinadi. Shuningdek, Ernest Hemingwayning “Chol va dengiz” asari bilan qiyosiy tahlil o‘tkazilib, har ikkala asarda insonning ma‘nosizlikka qarshi kurashi, iroda sinovlari va ekzistensial tajribalari qanday aks etgani o‘rganiladi. Maqolada absurdizm (Kamyu), ekzistensializm (Sartr, Xaydegger) va postmodernizm (Liotar, Fuko, Derrida) kabi yetakchi falsafiy oqimlarning zamonaviy o‘zbek adabiyotiga ta‘siri tahlil qilinadi.

**Kalit so‘zlar.** Postmodernizm, absurdizm, ekzistensializm, fragmentatsiya, dekonstruksiya, qiyosiy tahlil, ramz, mifologiya, o‘zbek adabiyoti.

**Аннотация.** В данной статье анализируются постмодернистские, абсурдистские и экзистенциальные элементы в романе Назара Эшонкула “Гуругли”. Исследование посвящено изучению таких постмодернистских повествовательных методов, как интертекстуальность, фрагментация и деконструкция, на примере данного романа. Кроме того, в статье рассматриваются противоречия между человеком и реальностью, экзистенциальные поиски главного героя, проблема бессмысленности жизни и процесс осознания собственной судьбы с философской точки зрения. Также проводится сравнительный анализ с произведением Эрнеста Хемингуэя “Старик и море”, в котором исследуется, как в обоих произведениях отражена борьба человека с абсурдностью бытия, испытания воли и экзистенциальный опыт. В статье анализируется влияние ведущих философских направлений, таких как абсурдизм (Камю), экзистенциализм

(Сартр, Хайдеггер) и постмодернизм (Лиотар, Фуко, Деррида), на современную узбекскую литературу.

**Ключевые слова:** постмодернизм, абсурдизм, экзистенциализм, фрагментация, деконструкция, сравнительный анализ, символ, мифология, узбекская литература.

**Annotation.** This article analyzes the postmodern, absurd, and existential elements in Nazar Eshonqul’s novel *Gurugli* (Go‘ro‘g‘li). The research is dedicated to examining postmodern narrative techniques such as fragmentation, and deconstruction within the framework of the novel. Furthermore, the article explores the conflict between humans and reality, the protagonist’s existential quest, the issue of life’s meaninglessness, and the process of understanding one’s destiny from a philosophical perspective. A comparative analysis with Ernest Hemingway’s *The Old Man and the Sea* is conducted to investigate how both works depict the struggle against meaninglessness, tests of will, and existential experiences. Additionally, the article examines the influence of key philosophical movements—absurdism (Camus), existentialism (Sartre, Heidegger), and postmodernism (Lyotard, Foucault, Derrida)—on contemporary Uzbek literature.

**Keywords:** postmodernism, absurdism, existentialism, fragmentation, deconstruction, comparative analysis, symbolism, mythology, Uzbek literature.

**Introduction.** Absurd literature is a literary movement that explores the conflict between human beings search for meaning and the inherent meaninglessness of the universe [1]. “Though existensialism and absurdism are closely related, existentialists (like Sartre) believe meaning can be created while absurdist (like Camus) argue that meaning is ultimately unattainable” [2].

Nazar Eshonkul is one of the modernist writer in the XX century. He is famous for his unique narrative style that blends Eastern and Western elements in literary traditions. His works often deepen the human mind and examine the themes of existentialism and spirituality. His novel *Gurugli* (Go‘ro‘g‘li) is a prominent work in modern Uzbek literature. It offers a unique interpretation of the traditional epic hero *Gurugli* (Go‘ro‘g‘li). In this novel, author delves into the protagonist’s personal tragedy and psychological difficulties, and providing a fresh perspective on the classic story. The novel is distinguished by the quest for artistic psychology, the technique Eshonkul uses to represent the inner world of his character. This approach allows reader to be deeply involved in the hero’s experiences and emotions, and to emphasize the human aspects of the legendary figure.

The end of the 20<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century were times of rapid change that not only changed human life and social dynamics, but also influenced a variety of fields, including literature. A shift in focus from artistic expression to ideological problems, psychological introspection, the nature and determination of their active life position became characteristic features of many modern works. This current trend in literature is known as postmodernism. Uzbek literary scholar professor D.Quronov defines the word “postmodernism” as follows: Postmodernism (French: Postmodernisme – “after modernism”)

– a movement and creative method that emerged in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in literature, art, and humanities [3].

Existentialism, as a philosophical and literary movement, explores the themes of individual freedom, alienation, absurdity and the search for meaning in an indifferent universe. In Gurugli (Go‘ro‘g‘li), Nazar Eshonkul integrates these concerns, depicting characters who fight with destiny, identity and their goal in life.

Gurugli (Go‘ro‘g‘li) by Nazar Eshonkul is deeply filled with existential subjects and represents the heroes leading an absurd, isolated, indefinite world. Unlike traditional Uzbek folklore, which often gives clear moral lessons, Eshonkul contradicts readers of philosophical ambiguity, making Gurugli (Go‘ro‘g‘li) a modern existentialist and rethinks old legends.

**Literature review:** During the independence period, numerous rare works of Uzbek literature have been extensively studied, analyzed, and researched by various scholars and young researchers. Nazar Eshonqul’s novel Go‘ro‘g‘li is no exception to this trend. For example, the young researcher Dilnoza Artiqova, in her article, attempts to analyze the concept of absurdity in the novel. She argues that the ideas of absurdism are not entirely foreign to Eastern philosophy; on the contrary, some aspects of it are closely aligned with the principles of Islamic teachings. She provides specific evidence to support her claim as follows:

“First, absurdism, just like our religion, strongly condemns suicide. Second, a person who has come into this world should not live in despair. Therefore, **hope is an inherent companion of absurdism**. However, the expected hope does not materialize. The reason for this should be sought in the contradictions of human interests within a meaningless existence. Third, rebellion, freedom, and aspirations are essential phenomena for human existence and striving in life.” [4].

Another young researcher, Khurshid Abdurashid, in his article “The Alchemist of Uzbek Literature”, dedicated to the works of the writer Nazar Eshonqul, describes Eshonqul as “the alchemist of Uzbek literature. He is never afraid of experimenting. He is a writer whose entire creative life is spent conducting experiments. Studying his laboratory will undoubtedly serve as a great literary and scientific school for future generations.”

Regarding the novel Gurugli (Go‘ro‘g‘li), he presents the following thoughts: “The frequent use of “dead” and “death” imagery traces back to myths. Its roots are connected to one of the greatest heroes of oral folklore, Gurugli (Go‘ro‘g‘li). As we know, Gurugli (Go‘ro‘g‘li) was also born in a grave. Developing the images of “dead” and “death” in his short stories, the writer later created an extraordinary protagonist in Gurugli (Go‘ro‘g‘li), who cannot prove that he is not dead.” [5]

Another young scholar, Gulrukh Ulug‘bekova, has conducted a theoretical and artistic analysis of the novel Gurugli (Go‘ro‘g‘li), examining the author's creative individuality, artistic mastery, stylistic and formal explorations, as well as the unique characteristics of its symbolic and allegorical imagery. Additionally, she provides a comparative analysis of the work as follows:

“Even today, numerous problematic and controversial debates surround this novel. Many consider it an imitation of Kafka’s *Metamorphosis*. There are certain factors that should be taken into account when comparing these two works. Specifically, most of Kafka’s protagonists constantly feel guilty, yet neither they nor the reader fully understand the nature or cause of their guilt and fear.

Kafka was a skeptic who wished to believe in God, yet he struggled to intellectually reconcile the concept of His existence. As a result, he was unable to truly love human beings, who are considered the most honored creation of God, nor did he believe in their inherent goodness. While he cared for and sympathized with individual human beings, he harbored deep mistrust and resentment towards humanity as a whole, as well as the societal norms established by people, believing that they could bring only harm. He suffered from this inner conflict throughout his life, and he projected his existential anguish onto his literary characters.” [6]

**Fragmentation and deconstruction.** “No text is an island; every text is interwoven with past and contemporary texts.” [7] While inspired by Uzbek folklore, Gurugli does not simply retell the epic but deconstructs its heroic ideals. The main character is not a warrior who protects his land, but a lost person who fights his own personality. The uncertainty of the affirmation concerning its existence and its isolation of society resembles the main characters of Kafka. His search for value among the absurd is similar to the existential themes of Camus.

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For example, in the “*Stranger*”, Merso is suitable for its indifference, just like Gurugli alienated by its environment.

The two novels reflect existential subjects. In Gurugli alone, the protagonist struggles to find meaning in an incomprehensible, indifferent world that is very similar to Kafka's existential science fiction character. He is looking for a goal, but is only faced with ambiguity and absurdity. Similarly, Santiago Hemingway faces existential insulation. His struggle with Merlin is not just a physical test, but a quest for value in an indifferent universe. His perseverance reflects the concept of the absurdity of Camus, where a person should continue his struggle, despite the confidence in defeat - as Sisyphus wiring infinitely in his rocker up.

“Deconstruction is not the dismantling of a structure but an inquiry into the limits of that structure.” [8] In traditional epic literature, the hero is portrayed as an invincible figure destined for triumph. However, in Gurugli, Nazar Eshonqul subverts this notion. The protagonist is not a fearless warrior but a conflicted and uncertain individual who questions his identity and purpose.

Similarly, *The Old Man and the Sea* challenges the classical heroic narrative. Santiago, the old fisherman, embarks on a battle against nature, not as an all-powerful hero but as a fragile, aging man whose strength is fading. Although he catches the marlin, the sea ultimately takes it away, symbolizing the inevitability of loss and the limits of human effort.

“Postmodern narratives often employ fragmentation to disrupt traditional storytelling.” [9] In Gurugli, the nonlinear storytelling reflects the protagonist’s inner turmoil. Events do not

unfold in a clear chronological order but rather as fragmented memories and shifting perspectives, reinforcing the theme of uncertainty.

Hemingway, though not a postmodernist, also uses minimalist storytelling. His “Iceberg Theory” suggests that much of the narrative remains beneath the surface, requiring the reader to infer deeper meaning.

In *The Old Man and the Sea*, the lack of excessive detail mirrors Santiago’s solitary and introspective journey.

In *Go‘ro‘g‘li*, the deliberate gaps in storytelling force the reader to reconstruct meaning, a technique commonly associated with postmodernism.

**The influence of absurdism, existentialism, and postmodernism on contemporary Uzbek literature.** The evolution of modern Uzbek literature has been largely shaped by Western philosophical movements such as absurdity, existentialism, and postmodernism. These ideologies are based on the works of Jean Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, Franz Kafka and Jacques Derrida have influenced contemporary Uzbek authors in their exploration of identity existential crisis, deconstruction of traditional narratives, and exploring meaning in an increasingly fragmented world.

“The absurd is born of this confrontation between the human need and the unreasonable silence of the world.[10] The absurdity formulated by Camus and Kafka resolves around the conflict between human desire for meaning and meaningless nature of the universe. This theme has resonated deeply with contemporary Uzbek writers who portray the alienation, irrationality and futility of human struggle. For example, In *Gurugli*, the traditional heroic figure is deconstructed, and *Gurugli* is portrayed as a lost, confused character struggling with existential uncertainty. Similar to Kafka’s *Gregor Samsa (Metamorphosis)*, *Gurugli* finds himself trapped in a reality where he has no control, reflecting the absurd nature of existence. The open structure of the novel and the lack of clear resolutions reinforce the absurd idea that life offers no ultimate response.

“Man is condemned to be free; because once thrown into the world, he is responsible for everything he does.” [11]

Existentialist writers focus on the freedom, responsibility and anxiety of individual existence. Many Uzbek authors include existential dilemma of Sartrean and Camusian in their protagonist stories facing moral and psychological crises in an indifferent world. For example, In *O‘tkir Hoshimov’s “Dunyoning ishlari”*, the main character, like Sartre’s *Rouentin (Nausea)* is the subject of intensive self-reflection compared to morality and existence. The novel examines the absurdity of life’s unpredictability and shows that people should create their own meaning in a chaotic world. *Tog‘ay Murod’s “Otamdan qolgan dalalar”* reflects existential loneliness and the struggle for self-determination against the background of historical and public oppression. Much like *Mersault* in “*The stranger*”, the main character feels a sense of emotional separation from the world, enhancing existential topics.

“Postmodernism is characterized by self-referentiality, playfulness, and a questioning of grand narratives.”[12] The influence of postmodernism in Uzbek literature manifests in fragmented storytelling, intertextuality and metafiction, parody and irony. Nazar Eshonkul’s *Gurugli* rejects the linear history of the story, covers the story, and forces readers to question the credibility of the story itself. It plays multiple perspectives, making it impossible to determine truths, similar to postmodernist works by Borges and Pynchon. In another writer of the modernist period Isajon Sulton’s “Boqiy dalalar”, it can be seen that the combination of historical fiction with metafiction, drawing attention to the act of storytelling itself. This follows the idea of Umberto Eco on intertextuality, including several literary references and philosophical discourses.

**Conclusion and recommendation.** To conclude, the influence of absurdity, existentialism and postmodernism on modern Uzbek literature reflects the dynamic interaction between global philosophical movements and local literary traditions. Through a comparative analysis of “*Gurugli*” and “*The Old man and the sea*” as well as other Uzbek works, it is clear that Uzbek writers not only embrace Western literary tendencies, but also actively make decisions to reflect their own historical, cultural and philosophical implementations. Absurdity and existentialism in Western literature often follow from modern alienation while Uzbek writers integrate these ideas with national identity and folklore. For instances, *Gurugli* serves both a deconstruction of heroic stories and existential studies of fate and human condition. The novel reflects a postmodern tendency to question grand stories. This is a concept that has been deeply explored in Western literary theory by Lyotard and Derrida.

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