

INVESTIGATING THE EXISTENTIALIST-MARXIST ASPECTS OF SADEGH HEDAYAT'S "Tomorrow"

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ABSTRACT

Sadegh Hedayat is a well-known author whose reputation is mostly due to the modern stories and innovations in their content and themes. The short story of "Tomorrow" is one of his writings that has been underestimated. This story, which is considered a Proletarian literature, has a Marxist attitude in addition to the existentialist aspects. A study of the intersection of these two perspectives in this story helps identify the Marxist thoughts of Sartre as one of the existentialist thinkers. Sartre, who endorses and strengthens Marxism in some of his works, confirms the purposefulness of the world, which Marx believes in, while the existentialism considers the world absurd and meaningless. In this research, while introducing shortly Sartre's thoughts and his Marxist orientations, we investigate the story of "Tomorrow" from this perspective.

Keywords: Hedayat, Marxist, Sartre, Existentialist

INTRODUCTION

Existentialism, that Jean-Paul Sartre is known as its first and foremost thinker, is based on the principle of humanism. In this school, the mankind is introduced as a being that "leaps more than anything else toward future and a being that is aware of the leap toward the future".

Existentialism also considers the world to be absurd, and believes that whatever happens in the world good or bad is an outcome of human action. The world is absurd in itself. It is also because it does not know any way to human happiness. Existentialism is a philosophy of hopelessness (Ahmadi, 2015: 364).

Existentialism is in fact against any philosophy that believes in the existence of a predetermined plan and providence for the human beings, whether religious or rational philosophy (Bashirieh, 2014: 240). Therefore, this school of thought considers the mankind more than any other school to be free, and it is the power and freedom of choice that captures in fear and insecurity. So, insecurity and fear are signs of power of choice and freedom. "From an existentialist point of view, nevertheless, the human condition of freedom is painful and of responsibility, since man must make decisions without pre-existing principles or predetermined patterns, ie without regard to the essence. The anxiety and fear of the existence and freedom are the result of this very condition" (Ibid. 242).

Based on Sartre's writings, at any moment, man has to move toward future with the choice from among all the alternatives ahead of him. The choice of the projects and options of everyday life is the human free action. Man has no way but these choices and is "condemned to freedom" (Ahmadi, 2015: 225).

Most of Sartre's reputation is due to his philosophical stories and plays. The characters in these works are exposed to the existential anxieties and emotions, and confront the world of dark and blurred otherness. In the cover of story, Sartre rejects any kind of an essential and predetermined plan, idealistic or structural (Bashirieh, 2014: 244).

Sartre says: "This is I who gives meaning by his/her plans to what's around he/she and to the happenings that affect his/her projects: I create the position and I am responsible for it, and it is in such a situation that I am free" (Blackham, 2014: 207).

In the existentialism after Sartre, Albert Camus proposed the question of the absurdity of human life in this world. He believed that human life was situated between the two poles of death and birth, and it lacked any rational meaning, and the human encounter with this world of absurdity and his immunity in this world give meaning to life (Mehdadi, 2014: 85).

Therefore, the freedom proposed in the ideas of existentialism gives humans a heavy burden of responsibility. "Human freedom is a damn necklace that is put on its neck, but this curse is the origin of his honor". in Sartre's writings, the Freedom is so valuable that he strongly disagrees with everything that is detrimental to this freedom. He writes: "Hell is the same as others - not because they are evil, but because they can take away my sense of freedom from me" (Autowit, 2013: 103).

In the philosophy of existentialism, Sartre believes that everything emanates from the special humanism. Therefore, there is no creator beyond human and what it creates. Sartre says, "The special humanism is nothing but an attempt to extract the coherent results of atheism" (Navayi, 2000: 201).

Marxism

In sociology, Marx states the basis of his work in the framework of three themes of capitalism: class relations, class struggle, relative independence of the state in class societies (Stones, 2013: 40).

In Marx's theory, the socialism is an essential step of history. He believes that the socialism will not be existed based on the philanthropic theories and goals, but it will be created by the historical necessity. But after Marx, the changes that occurred in societies, including the events of Bolshevik in Russia, and the defeat and disintegration of the working class movement in Europe in the last decade of the nineteenth century, led some of the followers of Marx's theory to reviewing it. Among other things, some criticisms came from a group of Marxists who are known as revisionists. They categorized their critiques as follows: 1. The collapse of the capitalist system, with the acceleration that Marx anticipated, would not be happened. 2. The class struggle, as Marx said, has not spread, and the middle class has not only not been lost, but has also grown. 3. The industry and capital have been concentrated slower than what Marx said. 4. Societies are reducing the exploitation of the working class and thus the pressure on this class. 5. What more contributes to success is peace, struggle, and human alteration, not violence and the sudden change that Marx wants (Ashouri, 2014: 58).

In addition to the revisionists, some moderate Marxists who were dissatisfied with the results of Marx's thoughts reanalyzed his ideas and tried to adapt them to the current conditions of



societies. The existence of social classes and the study of their relationship with the types of classes in a society are some of the most important issues that have been discussed in particular in Marx's works. Although he never wrote a specific book on the class and class relations, and did not provide a specific explanation or definition of the class, but he considers the emergence of social classes to be related only to the certain historical periods in the production transformations. He believes that the formation and the boundary between classes is determined only in the capitalist system. Marx believes that by creating social classes in the stages of production, and even in all spheres of society, including family and political and religious ties, the system of capitalism eliminates traditional social ties among members of society, and therefore all social relations in capitalist societies are shaped by the relationship of capital, labor, and the dynamics of capital accumulation (Stones, 2013: 47/46).

Marx says that the history of all societies has been the history of class struggles: the free and the slave, the aristocrat and the popular, the owner and the peasant, the employer and the worker, in a word the oppressor and the oppressed, constantly rise in opposition, constant battle, a battle that has either ended in a revolutionary reconstruction of society in a whole, or has led to the collapse of hostile classes (Marx, 1968: 36/35).

Marx divides the society into three great classes: workers, capitalists and landowners. From the point of view of Marx, the class of landowners was the most important class in the industrialization period (Cripe, 2016: 174-173).

Marx's social classes are then divided into two main classes of the bourgeois and the proletariat. Bourgeois is the class that is considered the middle class in France. But in the works of Marx and in his classifications, this class is the owners of the capital. The proletariat is the class of workers who can live only if they find and do things. According to Marx, with the passage of time and the extent of machinery, and because of the division of labor, this class has lost its personal belongings and, as a result, its attractiveness for the worker, and the worker has actually been attached to the machine (Marx, 2014: 35).

In his thoughts, Marx believes in a sort of historical enigma and its solution, in which the communist society, whose core is workers, will overcome all the different dimensions of alienation and contradiction created by capitalist ownership (Stones, 2013: 290-91).

DISCUSSION

After the First World War, with Marx's theory being weakened and the frustration of the younger generation from the legacy of the past and the wave of dissatisfaction with Marxism, the intellectuals paved the way of Marxism to be adapted to some other philosophies, including the philosophy of existentialism (Bashirieh, 2014: 239).

Hyperactive Sartre also wrote a book entitled *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, in which he described the relationship between Marxism and Existentialism. He wrote this book at the request of a protest academic journal in Warsaw. Sartre attempts to create a new kind of Marxism in this book and give it a new life through the humanism. Of course, he does not want to say that the existentialism is amortized fully in the socialism, but the day when efforts of the Proponents of Marxism dominate the human world, the existentialism loses its causality. Sartre believes that, until the arrival of that promised day, the fusion of the existentialism with the Marxism will achieve that renewal that the latter needs (Khazael, 2005: 4725).



Of course, by his tendency to Marxism, Sartre advocated illicitly the Soviet regime. Because he supposed that the Kremlin's leaders did not want World War II, and had trusted the communist propaganda about the Soviet peacekeeping. He and the Communists said, "America and the West want a nuclear war." In his defense of the Soviet Union, he condemned the opponents of Communism and wrote several articles on the support of Soviet peacefulness (Ahmadi 2015: 55/56).

Sartre received the Nobel Prize in 1954, in the 1970s, and later he participated in the Left Forces demonstration against capitalism, and publicized politically in support of workers (ibid: 66).

But the proximity of Existentialism and Marxism comes from the fact that the man appears in the sphere of history as a "subject" or a creative agent. In this stage of history, the man finds a great responsibility and excellent position. As more emphasis is placed on this humanistic and philosophical tendency in the thought of Marxism, we are closer to the existentialism. In this case, the man is not an "object" or a product of biological, historical or objective mechanical rules. Rather, it is the principle itself and creates objectivity (Bashirieh, 2014: 249).

For the sake of familiarity with Marx's writings, Sartre finds the human freedom in the works of the philosopher. He believes that Marx is the same thinker who declares that the man is ultimately the constructive and determining element of history. This emphasis on the humankind and the human action and praxis is consistent with existentialist projects (Ahmadi, 2015: 303).

Sartre's intense orientation toward Marxism went so far as to unify Marxism and existentialism in the *critique of dialectical reason*. "In this book, contrary to *being and nothing*, instead of reason, the social group and collective relations are in the focus of study. Sartre's purpose in this book is to unify Marxism and Existentialism, and he even sees existentialism as a secondary branch of Marxism" (Bashiria, 2014: 252).

But, despite all the proximity between Marxism and Existentialism, some fundamental differences can be found between them. These differences come from the point where existentialism is a frustrated philosophy that does not provide a way for human happiness, and in fact does not believe in any way. But Marxism believes in a utopia and a non-class society. Marx believes that the mass will ultimately achieve a kind of anarchism (Ahmadi, 2015: 364/365).

Sadegh Hedayat

Hedayat was born in 1902 in an aristocratic family in Tehran. In his youth, he went to France and became fluent in the French language and literature. He who has not any shelter in the critical society of that time, took refuge in love, but he was defeated again. Due to his irreconcilable and restless spirit, he repeatedly changed his job. He worked at the National Bank, the Music Department and the Faculty of Fine Arts. In India Hedayat got acquainted with Pahlavi language and returned to Iran in 1945. Before that, in 1918, along with Alavi, Massoud Farzad and Mojtaba Minavi, he formed a group called "Rabaa". Hedayat committed suicide for the second time in 1951, which succeeded this time (Taslimi, 2014, 48 & 49).

Hedayat is popular in Iran and abroad, and his works have been translated into many eastern and western languages. "He represents several characteristics of the spirit of the progressive class of Iran during his time, and those characteristics can be found in all his works (Shafie Kadkani, 1999: 106).



Among the contemporary authors, Nima is more devoted to Hedayat. Though he sees his works far from realism and more closely to idealism and fantasy, he criticizes him for this reason. But at least until the twenties, he believes that Hedayat in the prose did what he himself did in poetry. He explains this in his detailed letter, which he wrote to Hedayat (Ettehad, 2011: 237). Nevertheless, Nima knows Hedayat's reputation due to the Tudeh Party and thinks Nowshin, Tabari, Alawi and others have conspired to magnify Hedayat and belittle him (ibid: 238). Some found the importance of Hedayat in his philosophical writings, not the social steps he had taken; thus they tried to confront him, including Ilika and his loneliness (Taghi Modarresi), the kingdom of heaven (Bahram Sadeqi), misery (Amir Golar), and the patient stone (Sadegh Chubak) (Dastgheib, 1971: 16).

Khanlari believes that in the aftermath of September, all the authors accompanied the trend of the day, and due to this accompany created some works that they seem today both weak in terms of literary value and in terms of political value dead and useless, even Hedayat was not able to escape this evolution (Ettehad, 2008: 776).

However, Bozorg Alawi believes that, however, Hedayat did not participate at all in a party and cronyism, and he hated any restrictions and thus never entered a group or a population (2008: 318). Therefore, the membership and the activity of Hedayat in the Tudeh Party, as Nima claims, does not look right. But his fame and his success in fiction is due to his art. "Hedayat's art is that he lives with his heroes, is so familiar with them as if he had lived with each one for many years ... Indeed, in most of Hedayat's stories the reader cannot be neutral and far from the event (Yousefi, 1997: 332).

Nevertheless, the period of 1941 onwards coincides with the dramatic events of history such as World War II, the struggle of the free nations of the world with fascism, the growth and advancement of the liberation movements of the entire world, all of which inevitably has also been effective in Hedayat's thought and writing (Arianpour, 1997: 402). As it was said in the case of Russian literature and writers at the height of communist activity, all of the works written in some way were influenced by the Communism, and as Rule says: "there is less writer in our era who has not been affected by the communism in one of the stages of life and artistic activity" (Rule, 2017: 9, introduction).

Among the works that have been affected directly and undeniably by these historical situations, is the short story of "*Tomorrow*".

Tomorrow's story formation

Chubak remembers in his memoirs that one day Hedayat tells him that I have struggled with you, and then he recommends him reading the story of *tomorrow*, based on the technical copy of *afternoon of the late autumn*. The story of *afternoon of the late autumn* was the first step in the real stories that the narrator saw and quoted from inside the stories. Chubak says: Hedayat, in *tomorrow*, had shaped the worker of the printing house in such a way. Chubak thinks *tomorrow* is a poor story, and he considers him defeated in the war. But some writers of fictional literature, however, regard this story like other works of Hedayat as an example for a group of writers. Dowlatabadi believes that the story of *tomorrow* was an example for Nasim Khaksar and less than her, Ahmad Mahmoud (Ettehad, 2008: 104).

Story summary:

Mahdi Rezvani, known as Mehdi the magpie, is a worker who decided to travel because of hardships and low pay and living conditions. He leaves the work at the printing house in



Tehran and goes to Isfahan to work with his aunt's son, who went there two years ago. But after traveling, he participated in the workers' struggles and activities, after a while, he was killed by the security forces in a demonstration, and now the print workers are reading the news of his death and funeral in the newspaper (Hedayat, 2004).

The story of "*tomorrow*" is an existentialist story. This story, published for the first time in the New Message in 1946 (New Message: 1946 June and July), has been written in two episodes, the first episode is the monolog of a worker, called Mehdi Rezvani, known as Mehdi the magpie. He was a printing house worker, but decided to leave his job due to his inadequate payroll situation and travel to Isfahan; at night he lied lonely in his not so good bed and is analyzing his remembers. In these monologs, the full-length existentialist signs are evident. Where he asks "me" of himself and does not know him correctly: "But what am I before oblivion, when I do not know who I am? I do not know ... it's all I ... I! This condemned I!" (Hedayat, 2004: 220).

The character of the story believes that the life in any part of the world depends in any way on his will. "I am alive. The life I can do here, I can do it in the other part of the world, and in another city. How big and spectacular must be the world" (ibid).

All these monologs are a clear indication of the existentialist ideas of the character of the story. On the other hand, the absurdity of existentialism is manifested through the story. In the same first episode of the story, Mahdi the magpie often remembers the past memories and moans about the absurdity of everything. "What happen let's be so, but every time this cold comes, with a curved back, I have to bear the load of this body. I should go till the end of the road; why? For what? because I should bring my load home! ... (ibid, the same page). Or in the other part of the story, he considers all the efforts and hopes to be absurd: "I knew all my friends and relatives in a disturbed sleep. It's like that long hours one passes through a desert, hoping that one person will follow him. But when he returns to get his hands he sees nobody, then he slips into a pit he has not seen before. The life is a long frozen hallway ..." (ibid: 225) Mehdi is pessimistic about everything and is afraid of everyone and everything. To such an extent that even at bedtime, he has put a bronze fist under his pillow and constantly thinks about how in time to use it: "What's this down to my shoulder? Ye it's bronze fist. Why did I push this fist in my hand tonight; as if someone followed me. I thought I was struggling with someone. Now why did I put it under my pillow? Is there anyone come to rob me?" (Ibid: 223) These sentences represent the fear and the anxiety that is proposed in existentialism, for the sake of freedom and will and power, and has already been expressed.

In Episode II, where the monologs are expressed by Ghulam is also the discussion of absurdity. This time, the absurdity exceeds its worldly limits, and Ghulam thinks his death and after death: "As if one poured lead in my neck: confused and mongo ... well, it's better ... What's a sheet of muslin! This is shroud ... now I died ... now I am under earth ... the animals came to me "(ibid: 227)

In addition to the internal monologues that constitute the whole story, in other words, the narrative method, the spaces created are also existentialistic. The vane and misery world, which Hedayat refers to in the entire story occasionally, the smell of the oil burner, Abbas's grumbling, the smoked room, the blackness that adheres to one's hand, the car's knock, the dugout water not frozen due to the dirt, have made a world of darkness, desperation and disgust. A muddy emetic home, crooked chopsticks, short barrel vaults, tumult of children,



cattle, and sheep, and chicken and cock, who live together "(ibid, 221). It depicts a misery and repetitive life.

In the story of *tomorrow*, in addition to what has been said on the existentialism, we can find some signs of the Marxist system. These signs, which are relevant to the ideas of Sartre the Marxist, have shaped the story as a Proletarian story. So, we examine it as an Iranian Proletarian story. Here are some examples of these signs:

The first Marxist sign in the story is the name "*Tomorrow*", with which the story has been named. For a worker who has left his workplace with a view to achieving a better life and is waiting for a new day to improve his life by finding a job that is of high income, the name "tomorrow" is promising. The worker's tomorrow is the promise of the class victory that Marx promised and was mentioned earlier.

In both episodes, the story characters are spending their night in hope of reaching tomorrow. But their tomorrows are different. The tomorrow of the first episode's character is accompanied by hope and at the same time anxiety. He does not regret his choice, and he has the full hope that he will have a bright future: "I do not know whether I am excited or I fear. From what I fear? What is that I am spending?" (ibid: 220).

He will spend the night with tomorrow and the hope of tomorrow, and believes that tomorrow with his trip to Isfahan, he can change the path of his life of frustration and blackness. Although he does not know the name of the garage and does not have clock to ride the car, with hearing the sound of a rust coming from afar, he hopes for the future and tomorrow. "It's like the tip of air is broken... the alarm sounds from afar. It must be too late. Tomorrow morning soon... Garage... I do not have clock... What Garage he said? ... Tomorrow ... Tomorrow ..." (ibid: 226).

This tomorrow is a perfectly Marxist tomorrow for someone who knows both dividends and becoming shareholder of some workers at the workshop, and understands the oppression and inequality of the capitalist owners in front of the worker. A tomorrow in which dominates hoping to improve the situation. "They made this life ... for us to vomit blood and they dance and bag, each at a night gamble and lose a great deal ... Everything in the world need to be lucky." Assad Allah's sister said: "If we go to gather sheep dung, the ass dungs on the water!" (ibid: 226).

But that Mehdi the magpie does not know exactly what kind of garage to go tomorrow and forgets the name of the garage, shows that with all the will to make a promising and brilliant tomorrow, it is still not clear where is the destination of the efforts and journeys? In fact, Mahdi in this story is a symbol of a worker who, in the twentieth century, thinks of what Marx has been saying and seeks to reach a utopian world without class life, yet he has not yet reached the level of knowledge and awareness that he can recognize the way out of these hardships and the way out of capitalism.

But in the second episode of the story, Ghulam is also waiting for the coming of tomorrow. With the difference that tomorrow there is no hope. Today, in the newspaper, the news of the death and deceit of the body of three militant workers has been printed, which tomorrow is supposed Ghulam reads to make sure. In the second part of the story, the spaces associate all absurdity and futility. The one who helped others is no longer, and Ghulam is looking for a black shirt for his own tomorrow.



"... I wear my black shirt ... Tomorrow the newspaper ... The black shirt ... tomorrow ..." (ibid: 234).

But in this part of the story, even though Ghulam does not anticipate any hope for tomorrow, there are some indications of Marxist thoughts. That now the worker's room became great and respectable, it may be a perspective of the promised day, which Marx promised, and at that time the victory and success will be for those workers and the class of the proletariat.

"It's a pity that there is not the magpie to see that now our room is large and respectful! Perhaps if we had this room, he would stay with us and would not go to Isfahan for no good reason." (ibid: 229)

The above sentences also confirm the belief that the struggle between the worker and the employer is always about wages and minimum welfare. "The battle over the pay is a permanent conflict between the worker and the employer in the capitalist system" (Darvishian, 2014: 248).

At the end of the story, Mehdi the magpie, the main character of the story, has been killed without happening any change in his own life or that of others. No victory has come to the proletarian class, nor the bourgeoisie has been eliminated, nor the rest of the workers have joined the fighters. Everyone is working in the printing house as in the past, and, with the exception of the workers' room, nothing has changed in the printing house. This, ultimately, confirms Sartre's existentialist ideas. The same ideas that have been presented similarly in Hedayat's other stories. Introspection and death obsession, which in most of the works of Hedayat is one of the main motives, "what he wrote in the Iranshahr Magazine in the praise of the death as an emancipator from suffering, later became one of the most important motives of his stories" (Mir Abedini, 2008, 91).

What has been said is an example of the clues that Hedayat has mentioned in his story. More detailed samples can be obtained.

CONCLUSION

The following results can be obtained by examining the short story of *tomorrow* in this research:

The short story of *tomorrow* has been written in the historical conditions, following the impact of historical events and the emergence of party and labor movements in Iran. Although Hedayat did not participate in any party and any particular political activity, he has written this story for the sake of the existence of a struggle atmosphere ruling society and writers.

The story *tomorrow*, with the existentialist features found in most of Hedayat's writings, also has some signs of anti-capitalist ideas of Marxism. This story, with all its existentialist clues, also has the Marxist hope, optimism and purposefulness to achieve life without classes. The dual characters created in the story manifest well two opposite dimensions, absurdity and purposefulness, and this creates a mixture of existentialism and Marxism.

The story *tomorrow* although has not so much of the power of fiction writing of Hedayat and is considered as a moderate story, but, in its inner layers, it has some considerable points.



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