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## NIGHT AND HUMAN LONELINESS: EXISTENTIAL MOTIFS IN EASTERN AND WESTERN LITERARY THOUGHT

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### Abstract

This article comparatively analyzes the image of night in Eastern and Western literature as well as its interpretations connected with human psychology, loneliness, inner suffering, and existential experiences. During the research, the symbolic-aesthetic, philosophical, and psychological functions of the night motif are revealed. In Eastern literature, night is mainly interpreted as a space of divine contemplation, spiritual purification, and inner reflection, whereas in Western literature it is associated with absurdity, spiritual emptiness, and the ontological loneliness of the individual. Based on the theory of existentialism and the methods of comparative literary studies, the article highlights the artistic and philosophical essence of the image of night.

**Keywords:** Image of night, existentialism, loneliness, Eastern literature, Western literature, artistic thinking, symbol, ontological suffering, absurdity, poetic interpretation.

### Introduction

The image of night in world literary consciousness is considered one of the universal poetic concepts formed in connection with the archetypal perceptions of humanity. In ancient mythological thinking, night was interpreted as a symbol of mystery, the unknown space, cosmic silence, and spiritual transformation. Throughout the historical development of literature, this image acquired new semantic layers within different aesthetic paradigms. Especially during the periods of modernism and existentialism,



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night became a central aesthetic category expressing the inner self of a human being, ontological suffering, and spiritual loneliness.

In existential philosophy, the problems of human existence, the meaning of life, freedom, and loneliness are interpreted as major ontological categories. From this perspective, the image of night functions in existential discourse as a poetic model reflecting the inner emptiness and spiritual suffering of an individual. The semantics of darkness, silence, and infinity associated with night serve to reveal the metaphysical loneliness of the individual more profoundly.

### **Literature Review**

The image of night is regarded as one of the ancient archetypes formed in the collective consciousness of humanity. According to archetypal theory, night creates a semantic field connected with subconscious fears, inner conflicts, and the feeling of uncertainty. Therefore, the motif of night appears in many literary texts as an aesthetic unit carrying psychological and metaphysical meanings.

In mythopoetic thinking, night is depicted as a liminal space between chaos and cosmos. On the one hand, it symbolizes darkness and ambiguity; on the other hand, it signifies spiritual renewal and inner transformation. This dual semantics enabled the image of night to gain broad poetic possibilities in both Eastern and Western literature.

In existential poetics, the phenomenon of night is interpreted as a metaphorical construct expressing the “boundary situation” of human existence. Night separates the individual from the external social world and confronts them with their inner self. Thus, in literary discourse, night functions as a space of introspective reflection and ontological self-awareness.

### **Analysis and Results**

The poetic function of the motif of night differs significantly in Eastern and Western literature. In Eastern artistic thought, night is mainly associated with spiritual contemplation, mystical cognition of divine truth, and Sufi perfection. In contrast, in Western modernist literature, night becomes a symbol of absurd existence, existential fear, and ontological alienation. Therefore, the comparative study of the image of night is of great scientific importance in revealing the concepts of humanity in Eastern and Western thought as well as the differences in their philosophical and artistic worldviews.



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In classical Eastern literature, the image of night developed in close connection with Sufi-aesthetic thought. In Sufi poetics, night symbolizes the spiritual journey of the human soul toward divine truth. Particularly in the works of Alisher Navoi and Jalaluddin Rumi, night is deeply connected with divine love, spiritual purification, and metaphysical contemplation.

In Navoi's ghazals, night appears as a poetic background aestheticizing the lover's feelings of separation and suffering. However, this suffering is not interpreted as a purely existential emptiness, but rather as a stage of spiritual maturation leading toward divine union. The semantics of silence and darkness associated with night in Sufi thought express the state of inner contemplation of the soul.

The concept of loneliness in Eastern poetics differs from Western existentialism because it is connected with the aspiration for metaphysical unity. Through night, the individual enters into an inner dialogue with the Creator. Consequently, in Eastern literature, night often appears as a poetic model of spiritual perfection and enlightenment.

In Western modernist and existential literature, the image of night becomes one of the central poetic symbols expressing spiritual crisis and ontological loneliness. Especially in twentieth-century literature, industrial civilization, wars, and the collapse of spiritual values intensified the inner emptiness of the individual. As a result, night evolved into an aesthetic category reflecting absurd existence and the psychological fragmentation of the individual.

In the works of Franz Kafka, night functions as a semantic space deepening existential fear and alienation. The characters are frequently portrayed in dark, ambiguous, and enclosed spaces. In this context, night becomes not merely an external setting but a poetic metaphor for the inner darkness of human consciousness.

In the works of Albert Camus, night appears as an aesthetic model of absurd philosophy. According to Camus's concept, the individual remains alone before the silence of existence. The semantics of infinity and silence associated with night intensify the meaninglessness of existence in a dramatic manner.

In the novels of Fyodor Dostoevsky, night creates the psychological atmosphere of spiritual tension and guilty conscience. It deepens the inner monologues and psychological conflicts of the characters, thereby strengthening their ontological crisis from a poetic perspective.



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From a linguopoetic perspective, the image of night also represents a complex semantic structure. In literary texts, existential semantics are formed through lexical units associated with night, such as darkness, silence, shadows, stillness, and infinity. These elements intensify the emotional and expressive layers of the text and help to reveal the inner psychological state of the individual.

While Eastern poetics tends to employ night metaphorically and symbolically, Western literature emphasizes its psychological and ontological functions. Therefore, the image of night appears in both cultures as an artistic concept formed on the basis of different linguocultural codes. The discursive function of the motif of night is also significant. It transforms the categories of time and space in literary texts and reveals the stream of consciousness of the character. As a result, night functions in poetic discourse as a conceptual unit aestheticizing philosophical questions related to human existence.

### **Conclusion**

The image of night in Eastern and Western literature is a universal poetic concept revealing the philosophical and psychological essence of human existence. It is closely connected with existential categories such as loneliness, inner suffering, spiritual contemplation, and ontological fear. In Eastern artistic thought, night appears as a space of metaphysical reflection, spiritual purification, and aspiration toward divine truth, whereas in Western literature it transforms into an aesthetic model expressing absurdity, alienation, and the meaninglessness of existence. These differences can be explained through the philosophical views of the East and the West regarding humanity and existence.

The comparative study of the motif of night is of considerable scientific importance for identifying the national and cultural features of existential semantics in literary discourse and for revealing the poetic mechanisms used to express the concept of humanity.

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