



Existential Echoes: Unearthing the Parallel Realms of Ernest Hemingway and Jibanananda Das

Adnan Shakur¹; Jannatul Tajri²

¹ Lecturer and Co-chairman, Department of English, University of Global Village (UGV), Barishal, Bangladesh

² Lecturer, Department of English, University of Global Village (UGV), Barishal, Bangladesh

E-mail: adnanshakursun@gmail.com, jannatulj95@gmail.com

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Abstract

Amidst the grand tapestry of existence, our Homo sapiens nature drives us to chase our dreams with fervor. Yet, amidst the tangled web of challenges and setbacks, our once-vibrant aspirations often wane, leaving us adrift on the journey of life. The struggle to accept our circumstances breeds stress, planting the seeds of despair that sprout into the depths of depression. In this perilous realm, where self-awareness and the essence of being falter, a haunting specter emerges: the dark nexus of depression and the tragic allure of suicide. This research paper delves into the captivating realm of existentialism by examining the profound insights embedded within the writings of two extraordinary literary figures, Ernest Hemingway and Jibanananda Das. Drawing from the philosophical foundations of existentialism, this study unravels the nuanced existential themes present in selected works by both authors. By juxtaposing Hemingway's celebrated modernist prose and Das' evocative Bengali poetry, we uncover their shared contemplations on the human condition, selfhood, freedom, and the relentless pursuit of meaning. Through meticulous analysis, we explore the divergent manifestations of existentialist thought in their respective cultural and historical contexts. This interdisciplinary exploration not only offers a fresh perspective on Hemingway's profound insights into human existence but also sheds light on the lesser-known yet equally potent existentialist undercurrents in Das' timeless compositions. By intertwining the literary and philosophical dimensions, this research paper aims to enrich our understanding of existentialism and its transformative influence on these renowned writers, ultimately emphasizing the enduring relevance of existential philosophy in contemporary literature and human experience.

Keywords: *Existence; Essence; Nihilism; Absurdism, Individuality; Suicide*

I. Introduction

Two cohort-mates, born in the same year yet at opposite poles of the earth, bore witness to the harrowing devastation of world wars. United by their experiences, they both embarked on a literary journey to guide humanity towards a renewed sense of purpose in a world ravaged by conflict. It was quite intriguing that they had the same life narrative in addition to the same birth year.

They both experienced a heartbreaking love story. The relationship between Hemingway and Agnes von Kurowsky, an attractive, tall, and dark-haired nurse whom he met while serving as an American Red Cross volunteer after being injured on the Italian front, is well known. Despite a seven-year age difference, Hemingway aspired to marry Von Kurowsky. Hemingway was devastated when his first love rejected him after the war, addressing him as a "kid" in a Dear John letter and saying she was fond of him "more as a mother than a sweetheart." (Diliberto, 1997). But in fact, what happened is less important than the emotional aftermath of the experience for Hemingway — the effect it had on his relationships with women and the portrayal of women in his fiction. Hemingway's memories of this romance with Kurowsky remained indelible, and she would later serve as a significant inspiration for the protagonist in his World War I novel, "A Farewell to Arms." He married four times in his life to seek refuge in a caring heart like Kurowsky.

Likewise, Young Jibanananda developed deep feelings for Shovona, the daughter of his uncle Atulchandra Das, who resided in the nearby vicinity. In his initial collection of poems, he dedicated it to Shovona, though he refrained from explicitly mentioning her name. Due to societal disapproval of cousin marriages, Jibanananda did not pursue a union with Shovona. Nevertheless, his affection for her never waned. Following his wedding to Labanyaprabha Das in 1930, conflicts arose between their personalities, leaving Jibanananda without hope for a contented married life. The distance between him and his wife grew over time. When Jibanananda tragically faced his own mortality after a tram accident on October 14, 1954, Labanyaprabha's visits to his deathbed were scarce, as she was preoccupied with her involvement in filmmaking in Tollyganj.

Again, in their professional lives, both of the literary maestros faced numerous challenges and struggled to find success. Das was dismissed from his initial job at Calcutta City College due to allegations of obscenity in his poem "Campe" (Basu, as cited in Syed, 2009). His tenure at Bagerhat College, Khulna, lasted only five months in 1929, after which he joined Ramjas College in Delhi. However, his employment there was short-lived, as he left in 1930 following his marriage. Subsequently, he experienced a prolonged period of unemployment, making unsuccessful attempts in the insurance industry and engaging in various small-scale businesses. His fortunes changed when he secured a position at Brojmohun College, Barishal in 1935, where he worked until his migration in 1946. Unfortunately, he was once again dismissed from a newspaper job in 1947. He briefly held a position at Kharagpur College in 1950 but resigned in 1951. After a hiatus, he obtained a job at Bodisha College but was dismissed after only four months. Finally, he found stability as the head of the English department at Howrah Girls' College for a little over a year. It was during this time that he found solace, tranquility, and affection that had eluded him throughout his life (Syed, 2009).

Das' relentless search for a teaching profession demonstrates his deep fondness for teaching. However, fate dealt him an ironic hand as he struggled to find the perfect opportunity to satisfy his passion for imparting knowledge.

Similarly, Hemingway harbored a strong passion for military life. Born in 1899, he spent his formative years in the suburbs of Chicago, where he developed a love for competition and the great outdoors. His father instilled in him the skills of hunting and fishing during family trips to Northern Michigan. Throughout his teenage years, Hemingway excelled in both boxing and football. In 1917, when the United States joined World War I, Hemingway attempted to enlist in the Army but was repeatedly

rejected due to his poor eyesight. Determined to pursue his adventurous spirit, he decided to volunteer with the Red Cross. In the spring of 1918, Hemingway was dispatched to Europe as an ambulance driver. Initially stationed in France, he was later transferred to the Italian front, where he was immediately confronted with the harsh realities of war. On his very first day in Italy, he played a role in retrieving the remains of civilians killed in an explosion at an ammunition factory. Shortly after, while delivering supplies to soldiers in the trenches, Hemingway was injured by an Austrian mortar, rendering him unconscious and causing shrapnel wounds in his legs. Upon regaining consciousness, he sustained further injuries from machine-gun fire while carrying a severely wounded Italian soldier to an aid station. Consequently, Hemingway lost his sense of purpose in life again.

Hemingway and Das embarked on a shared journey influenced by Albert Camus' concept of philosophical suicide, marking another chapter in their lives. On October 14, 1954, at the age of 55, Das, a highly reclusive individual, was hit by a tram while crossing a road near Deshapriya Park in Calcutta. This incident occurred as he was returning home after his evening walk. Eight days later, on October 22, 1954, Das passed away in the hospital. He is survived by his wife, son, and daughter. In the days preceding his death, Das displayed unusual behavior and expressed concerns regarding poet Premendra Mitra. On the day of the accident, he visited his sister's house and inquired if anyone had been involved in an accident (Syed, 2009, p. 11-24).

Das' cause of death is a subject of debate because some claim that his premature demise was the result of suicide. Many believe the poet's death was an unfortunate accident. Guha referred to the circumstances and argued that Das' death was a suicide. *"In the history of Kolkata, Das is the only human being who died following a collision with the tram. Writings in his journals suggest that he was totally obsessed with death,"* (Mahmud, 2009) the late poet's friend, the Kolkata-based poet-physician, Bhumendra Ghuho claimed at a program held at Bengal Shilpalay, Dhanmondi on April 20, 2023.

On July 2, 1961, Ernest Hemingway passed away at his residence in Ketchum, Idaho. According to *The New York Times*, it was reported that his death was the result of an accidental self-inflicted gunshot wound. Initially, Blaine County Sheriff Frank Hewitt stated that no evidence of foul play had been found. However, speculation arose due to Hemingway's recent release from the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, where he had received treatment for depression and other mental health issues. Subsequently, questions were raised regarding the true nature of the acclaimed author's demise. Following the incident, Mary Hemingway, the author's fourth wife, whom he married in 1946, informed the press that *"Mr. Hemingway accidentally killed himself while cleaning a gun this morning at 7:30 A.M. No time has been set for the funeral services, which will be private."* (The New York Times, 1961)

Both literary figures personally experienced the devastating impact of war and stumbled on the way to find the essence of life which left lasting scars on their minds. These experiences not only profoundly affected their lives but also influenced the themes and direction of their writings. Their personal crisis and the shocking events, the aftermath of war, disillusionment, frustration, despair, and defeatism of their era shaped their perspectives and drove them to explore a definitive tragic narrative. Amidst the tumultuous backdrop of their respective times, Hemingway and Das focused their literary endeavors on mankind's fundamental issue: the problem of existence. Seeking solace and resolution, they turned to nature as a means to address and reconcile the myriad challenges faced by humanity.

II. Existentialism and Absurdism: Navigating the Meaning of Life

The In the 19th and 20th centuries, as modernity reached its pinnacle, the foundations of the religious worldview began to crumble, leading to a profound crisis of meaning known as Nihilism. The profound impact of World Wars and the historical occurrences of totalitarianism during the first half of the 20th century triggered a significant utilization of nihilism as a morally and politically charged

concept. The rise of Nihilism compelled philosophers to once again explore the timeless philosophical question: What is the purpose of life?

This renewed quest for meaning gave birth to three distinct intellectual trends. Firstly, Nihilism itself emerged as the core issue, highlighting the realization that there is no inherent objective meaning to our existence. In response to this predicament, two philosophical approaches gained prominence: Existentialism and Absurdism.

The religious perspective asserts that life holds an inherent purpose for those who adhere to it. In the context of Judaeo-Christian traditions, the narrative of the world's history extends from God's act of creation to the ultimate culmination on Judgement Day, where Heaven and Hell play significant roles. Conversely, for adherents of Buddhism and Hinduism, the concept of karma and its perpetual cycle of birth and rebirth permeates their belief systems. The ultimate objective within these traditions does not revolve around a dichotomy of Heaven and Hell but rather focuses on achieving liberation, known as *Moksha* in Hinduism and *Nirvana* in Buddhism.

In the 1830s, David Strauss caused a significant impact with the publication of his work titled "Life of Jesus," which sparked intense controversy and became a literary sensation. This book rapidly undermined the perception of the Bible as a reliable historical text. Subsequently, in 1841, Ludwig Feuerbach published "The Essence of Christianity," a seminal work that delved into the concept of God as a psychological projection created by humanity. The release of Charles Darwin's "On the Origin of Species" ignited and intensified the ongoing debate. The efficacy of material explanations for the external world overshadowed religious narratives, leading to the relegation of these religious stories to obscurity.

The emergence of Existentialism and Absurdism can be attributed to the profound influence of these ideas. Existentialism and absurdism differ in their approaches to finding meaning in life, despite both recognizing the inherent meaninglessness of the universe. According to existentialism, individuals have the responsibility to create their own meaning. The essence of existentialist thought, particularly in the Sartrean variety, lies in the belief that existence precedes essence. In other words, human beings are born, exist, and must actively choose to shape their own purpose and essence.

On the other hand, absurdism centers around the tension between a universe devoid of meaning and our perpetual quest to find meaning. This tension gives rise to the concept of the Absurd. Albert Camus argued that we all find ourselves immersed in this tension and are presented with three options: we can end our own lives, we can deny the absurdity by seeking solace in myths and religion, or we can embrace the absurdity. Embracing the Absurd means acknowledging the inherent meaninglessness of existence and persevering, living life to its fullest. Camus famously depicted this idea through the image of Sisyphus, forever condemned to push a boulder uphill. Sisyphus can either succumb to the futility of his task or accept his fate and derive happiness from it. Camus proclaimed,

"I leave Sisyphus at the foot of the mountain! One always finds one's burden again. But Sisyphus teaches the higher fidelity that negates the gods and raises rocks. He too concludes that all is well. This universe henceforth without a master seems to him neither sterile nor futile. Each atom of that stone, each mineral flake of that night-filled mountain, in itself forms a world. The struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man's heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy". (Camus, 2018)

While there exist additional distinctions and variations within these philosophical schools, both existentialism and absurdism share a profound concern with how to live and confront the weight of a potentially indifferent and purposeless universe.

2.1 Existence Precedes Essence

The concept of "existence precedes essence" was initially presented by Jean-Paul Sartre during a public lecture in 1945. This lecture was subsequently published in 1946 under the title "Existentialism Is a Humanism." In this work, Sartre aimed to establish and elucidate what he believed to be the foundational principles of existentialism.

In *Existentialism Is a Humanism*, Sartre says that, "Man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself. That is the first principle of existentialism." (Sartre, 1984) This concept implies that human beings define and shape themselves through their choices, actions, thoughts, and decisions while existing in the world. In other words, humans exist first and then determine and construct their own identities. There is no external force, such as a divine being, that predefines or fixes our nature, soul, essence, or self, molding us in a specific manner. Instead, we possess the freedom to continually and completely decide and shape ourselves. There are no external constraints that oblige, control, or define us. It is solely within our power to assign any essence we choose to our existence.

To explain the notion of "existence precedes essence," Sartre illustrates how objects like triangles and pens possess predetermined, unchanging essences or forms that precede their concrete existence. For example, a triangle must possess a specific, necessary, universal, and unchanging form to be recognized as a triangle. It must have three corners and the sum of its angles must be 180 degrees. The universality, fixity, or essentiality of this form defines a triangle as what it is.

In order for an object to be classified as a pen, it must possess an inherent and unchanging essence that enables it to fulfill the function of writing. This essence provides the necessary conditions for writing to occur and is a fundamental characteristic of pens. Unlike triangles and pens, human beings, according to Sartre, have a distinct mode of existence in the world. Our existence precedes the determination and choice of our essence. We first exist in the world, and it is through our individual and unique way of existing that we shape and define our essence.

This concept challenges the notion that there is a universal human nature or essence that applies to all individuals. Instead, it highlights the subjective and individualistic nature of human existence, emphasizing personal freedom, responsibility, and the need to make meaningful choices in a world without inherent meaning.

Sartre's formulation serves as a response to the conventional philosophical distinction between essence and existence, which pertains to the inherent nature of a thing versus its mere existence. In traditional philosophy, the essence represents the unchanging and universal characteristics, type, form, or category of a thing. It is the underlying, unchanging nature that defines the existence of that thing.

Typically, essences are contrasted with existences as they embody the necessary, universal, and unchanging aspects of reality. Conversely, existence is seen as transient, accidental, and contingent.

Contrary to Plato and the entirety of Western metaphysical thought, Sartre argues against the existence of a fixed, pre-established, or universal essence, self, or soul that precedes and determines human beings' existence in the world.

Therefore, Sartre's formulation aims to challenge the conventional dichotomy between essences and existences, as he asserts that human beings lack a predetermined or universal essence that can be opposed to their existence. In other words, there is no predefined nature or purpose that governs and controls human beings. Instead, we possess the freedom to choose, shape, and continuously transform ourselves.

Given the absence of a pre-existing or predetermined self, nature, or essence, and the absence of any divine entity shaping our essence, Sartre argues that human existence is characterized by absolute and profound freedom. According to him, we have the complete liberty to define, construct, and continually reinvent ourselves in an ongoing and boundless manner. Unlike in essentialist or religious views where there may be a belief in a predetermined nature or purpose for individuals, existentialists emphasize the freedom and responsibility of individuals to create their own meaning and define themselves through their choices and actions.

III. An Existential Odyssey in the Writings of Jibanananda Das and Ernest Hemingway

As previously mentioned, Hemingway and Das, who were cohort-mates, leave an echoing mark on the canvas of literature. Despite belonging to different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, Hemingway and Das share striking similarities in their exploration of human existence, loneliness, identity, and the complexities of the human condition. By delving into their respective literary masterpieces, this article aims to highlight the thematic connections and shed light on the universal aspects of human experience that transcend geographical and cultural boundaries.

3.1 Existentialism in *The Old Man and the Sea*

Ernest Hemingway has made significant contributions to literature through his extensive production of novels and short stories. However, his novel "The Old Man and the Sea" stands out as his most influential work, widely recognized and read across the globe. This novel serves as a remarkable embodiment of Existentialism, exploring the underlying aspects of individualism and providing insights into the individualist's perception of Liberty.

Ernest Hemingway, born on July 21, 1899, in Chicago, hailed from a family with a physician father and a mother who was a musician. He faced personal struggles due to his mother's insistence on dressing him as a girl and learning to play the cello. For this, in his novels, Hemingway explores themes of violence, individuality, and death, using them as central motifs that symbolize the essence of life. His writings strongly reflect the influence of Existentialism, particularly evident in his short stories and novels that consistently embody this philosophical ideology. Many literary scholars consider "The Old Man and the Sea" as one of the most successful existential novels. The story exemplifies the principles of Existentialism through Santiago's unwavering decision to secure his existence and triumph over the sharks by catching the fish, thus ensuring Manolin's belief in him. This narrative encourages individuals to persevere with courage in the face of life's challenges until their aspirations are fulfilled, ultimately portraying the various struggles of humanity and its ability to overcome obstacles hindering the pursuit of goals. The novel highlights the intertwined dreams of freedom and self-awareness, which ultimately lead to the fulfillment of one's authentic existence. Sartre holds that "*Authenticity is form of a story about self-shaping. It contains fact and consciousness*" (Heter, 2006)

Santiago, the protagonist in the novel, epitomizes the concept of human authenticity through his willingness to confront life's challenges, demonstrating his existence and essence. His resilient nature is exemplified in his triumphant journey as a fisherman. Despite enduring 84 days at sea without a catch, Santiago's unwavering determination reflects his very being. His profound connection with nature inspires his dreams and fuels his indomitable spirit. The essence of existentialism is evident in the external conflicts Santiago faces with fellow fishermen and in his struggle against the fish. This struggle holds both literal and metaphorical significance, highlighting the fundamental aspects of Santiago's journey. Each day, he persists in his quest to catch a fish, undeterred by the frustration of his companions. Motivated by the freedom of choice, Santiago's internal conflict drives him forward. While the sea may be perceived as a harsh and isolating environment, he steadfastly refuses to succumb to nature's cruelty. His resilience and imagination become his primary tools, transcending any circumstance he faces. His clashes with both the fishermen and the fish elevate him to the status of a hero in the eyes of Manolin.

Despite encountering adversity, Santiago's unwavering charisma shields him from negative influences, reinforcing his authenticity and determination. The author has emphasized Santiago's resilience by saying:

"Now is no time to think of what you do not have. Think of what you can do with what there is."
(Hemingway,110)

Individualism plays a pivotal role in Santiago and Manolin's lives, as it highlights the importance of realizing one's own potential. The story begins with the word "salao," the epitome of misfortune. This causes Manolin's parents to forbid him from working with the old man, while Santiago's streak of bad luck prevents him from catching a fish. Despite these setbacks, Santiago remains steadfast in his pursuit of his dreams. His aspirations embody the subconscious, according to Freud. The appearance of lions ignites his will to live and serves as a symbol of the human spirit. The struggle for individuality is exemplified in his fight against a shark, using meager tools such as an oar, spear, and knife, despite his parched throat and numerous wounds. The novel reaches its climax when sharks devour Santiago's prized fish, prompting him to fight with unwavering resolve and dignity, refusing to give in.

"But man is not made for defeat," he said. "A man can be destroyed but not defeated."
(Heminway,38)

Santiago, the protagonist in "The Old Man and the Sea," is undefeated psychologically but physically broken. Inspired by his journey and guided by his belief in Christ, Santiago rests before shouldering his tools, nest, mast, and spear. This parallels the story of crucifixion. Existentialism, particularly in Kierkegaard's religious existentialism, can incorporate theistic viewpoints. It provides room for individuals to seek meaning through a connection with God, emphasizing personal responsibility and autonomy. In contrast, Absurdism posits that belief in a higher power is a form of philosophical self-deception, whereas an Existentialist may derive meaning from their faith and the choices they make in accordance with their spiritual journey. The narrative commences with the sea, symbolizing life and the universe. Santiago feels isolated and finds solace in the Spanish term "La mar," which portrays the sea as a nurturing mother carrying sustenance for all creatures. While some fishermen view the sea as a male and an adversary, Santiago's romantic perception identifies it as a female provider.

The true struggle begins when Santiago hooks a powerful Marlin, representing strength and resilience. The marlin reflects the old man's own image of himself. The battle spans three days, with Santiago initially expressing empathy for the fish, seeing it as a brother. However, he recognizes that he must kill it to survive, symbolizing his individuality. The encounter with the Marlin also signifies Santiago's struggle against the forces of evil, represented by the sharks. Although they destroy the marlin's meat, they cannot consume its skeleton or Santiago's victory. Armed with simple tools, Santiago perseveres against the sharks, fueled by his pride and contrasting himself with the baseball player Dimaggio. Hemingway's story demonstrates that man is not meant to be defeated and Santiago embodies this ethos as he fights to the end, despite his physical exhaustion and injuries, ultimately achieving his goal.

3.2 Existentialism in *A Day Eight Years Ago*

In contemporary times, individuals often harbor ambitions to achieve their goals. However, they may encounter various challenges and obstacles along the way, leading them to lose their path in the midst of their life's journey. Difficulty in accepting these circumstances can induce stress and eventually lead to depression. Regrettably, depression has emerged as a significant factor contributing to suicidal tendencies. This phenomenon can be attributed to a diminishing sense of self-awareness and the erosion of human existence. According to the perspective put forth by Albert Camus, when individuals acknowledge the absence of inherent meaning in life, they tend to respond in three primary manners. The first is philosophical suicide, wherein one fully embraces a religious or spiritual framework, as the

absence of meaning appears too challenging or saddening to endure. The second is physical suicide, which arises from the belief that life lacks ultimate meaning and becomes either too monotonous or excessively painful to continue. The third reaction is acceptance, wherein individuals choose to persist despite understanding that ultimate meaning is unattainable.

In the tenth poem of Jibanananda's *Mahaprithibi*, a narrative unfolds about an individual who, despite possessing everything in life, tragically took their own life by hanging from a tree eight years prior. The story is presented in a retrospective manner, with the initial scene depicting the man being taken to the morgue, where he appears undisturbed, resembling a deep slumber on the dissection table, from which he will never awaken. The poet proceeds to provide details regarding the temporal and spatial context surrounding the man's suicide. It occurred on a moonlit night during the delightful month of Falgun, a season synonymous with spring. Interestingly, the man's wife was lying beside him at that time, suggesting an erotic undertone to the scene. Despite the presence of such romantic elements, the man experienced a profound sense of alienation, prompting an intense impulse to venture outside and end his life through hanging. The overwhelming feeling of emptiness consumed the man, leaving him with no perceived options other than taking his own life. With life appearing devoid of meaning, he felt compelled to end his existence. Following his suicide, he peacefully entered a perpetual state of deep slumber, resting with his neck slackened on the dissection table, resembling a distressed rat with traces of blood frothing from his mouth. As the poet asserted:

“Never again will you wake

Never again will you know

The unremitting, unrelenting grievous

Pain of waking”

The man attempted to escape the absurdity of life and free himself from the burdensome pain of existence. According to the philosopher Camus, suicide is not a recommended course of action. He argues that taking one's own life only exacerbates the absurdity of existence and terminates a life that is inherently remarkable. Instead, Camus suggests embracing the absurd and recognizing our inherent freedom. By doing so, we have the liberty to pursue our desires and fully embrace the opportunities that life presents to us. Das shares a similar perspective to Camus, observing the existential essence inherent in nature. He highlights an instance where a decaying frog on the brink of death desperately pleads for a brief extension of its existence. The poet expresses admiration for various species such as owls, mosquitoes, grasshoppers, and Doyel birds, commending their resilience in the face of the struggle for survival on this planet. The poet highlights the significance of an ancient owl's ability to catch mice as a means to sustain itself in a seemingly purposeless world. Additionally, despite the transient nature of their existence, grasshoppers valiantly fight for their lives, even when faced with the threat of being captured by a mischievous child. Furthermore, the poet notes that mosquitoes, despite being aware of the presence of a mosquito net, persist in attempting to penetrate the barrier in order to fulfill their innate drive for life.

“I sense all around me the unforgiving opposition Of my mosquito net, invisible in the swarming darkness. The mosquito stays awake within his blackened monastery, in love with life's flow.”

Amidst the extraordinary diversity of life on our planet, we humans often find ourselves weary and disheartened by the relentless struggle of existence. As escape artists, we yearn to evade these challenges rather than learn from the resilience exhibited by other species. The poet's tributes to nature highlights the remarkable examples of survival found in various species. Owls, with their nocturnal prowess and stealthy flights, demonstrate a mastery of hunting in the darkness. Mosquitoes, typically seen as bothersome, reveal an impressive adaptability, thriving in diverse environments despite efforts to

control them. Grasshoppers, with their agile leaps and rapid reproductive cycles, continuously prove their resilience within various ecosystems. Moreover, the Doyel birds, renowned for their enchanting melodies and colorful plumage, endure habitat changes and human impact, unwavering in their determination to coexist with us. Even a decrepit frog pleads for a few more precious moments to live, hoping to bask in the warmth of anticipated affection from another dawn. Each of these species stands as a testament to the strength and adaptability required to thrive in the face of life's challenges, leaving us humbled and inspired by the beauty they bring to our world. This is the reason the poet remarked: “*The grasshopper's life, or the Doyel bird's, never meets with that of man.*”

Conclusion

Both Ernest Hemingway and Jibanananda Das grappled with the existential and absurd nature of human existence in their literary works. Their experiences of war, personal relationships, and struggles with finding meaning in life greatly influenced their exploration of these philosophical concepts.

Hemingway, through his writings, embodies the essence of existentialism. He portrays characters who must confront the inherent meaninglessness of the universe and create their own purpose in life. His protagonist Santiago in "The Old Man and the Sea" faces disillusionment, despair, and loss, yet he persists in his pursuit of personal freedom and authenticity. He embraces a life of action, pursuing his desires and passions despite the inevitable hardships and tragedies he encounters. Similarly, Jibanananda Das, in his poetry, delves into the absurdity of human existence. His verses often reflect a sense of disillusionment, frustration, and a search for meaning in a chaotic and indifferent world. Das' poems, such as "A Day Eight Years Ago," captures the fleeting nature of human life, the insignificance of individual existence, and the perpetual quest for something greater. Like Camus' concept of the absurd, Das acknowledges the absurdity of the universe but chooses to persevere and find beauty and meaning within it.

Both Hemingway and Das also emphasize the importance of embracing the present moment and finding solace in nature, even if they reportedly chose the path of suicide. Hemingway's love for the outdoors and his vivid descriptions of nature in his works highlight the connection between human existence and the natural world. Similarly, Das frequently draws inspiration from nature in his poetry, finding solace, tranquility, and a sense of belonging in its beauty.

While Hemingway's characters often exhibit a sense of agency and control over their own destinies, Das' poetry reflects a more contemplative and introspective approach to grappling with the existential questions of life. Both writers, however, demonstrate a deep awareness of the challenges, uncertainties, and inherent meaninglessness of existence, urging readers to confront these realities and find their own paths to meaning and fulfillment.

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