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## THE INFLUENCE OF J.-P. SARTRE'S PHILOSOPHY ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ENGLISH EXISTENTIAL NOVEL

*The article attempts to study English existentialism in the light of J.-P. Sartre's philosophy. J.-P. Sartre is considered a theorist of existentialism as a literary trend. Existential motives characteristic of the 20th century European literature are used in the works of the prominent representatives of the English literature, such as A. Murdoch, W. Golding, C. Wilson, and M. Spark. Existentialism as a philosophical trend has played an important role in finding a way out of crisis and forming a new social worldview. English existentialist writers broke the norms of the view on human relations with society. In their works they focused on the concept of man, their essence and inner world, determined their place, both in philosophy and in literature. The named scholars showed that history brings to the political forefront a person who is doomed to freedom with their whole being and repeatedly transgresses various forms of social existence. This is also the main philosophical platform of the European existential literature. Through the prism of accepting such a position, the main credo of Sartre's entire life activity is justified: realizing and justifying his spiritual, moral and value choice, a person thereby assumes responsibility for the fate of the whole world. Sartre's main works turned out to be free from serious shortcomings. On the contrary, the synthesis of democratic and individualistic tendencies appeared complex, contradictory, and therefore gave rise to further discussions in the world literature. However, the main theoretical positions of the thinker had a significant impact on the existential literature of Europe, in particular, on the English literature.*

**Key words:** philosophy, existentialism, creativity, personality, English literature, novel, J.-P. Sartre.

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## ВПЛИВ ФІЛОСОФІЇ Ж.-П. САРТРА НА РОЗВИТОК АНГЛІЙСЬКОГО ЕКЗИСТЕНЦІЙНОГО РОМАНУ

*У статті пропонується дослідження впливу філософії Ж.-П. Сартра на розвиток англійського екзистенційного роману. Ж.-П. Сартр вважається теоретиком екзистенціалізму як літературного напрямку. У творах яскравих представників англійської літератури А. Мердок, В. Голдінга, К. Вілсона, М. Спарк використовуються екзистенційні мотиви, характерні для всієї європейської літератури ХХ століття. Екзистенціалізм як філософський напрям мав важливе значення в пошуку виходу з кризових ситуацій та формуванні нового суспільного світогляду. Англійські письменники-екзистенціалісти руйнували звичні норми світобачення зв'язків людини із суспільством. Вони приділяли у своїх творах основну увагу людині, її сутності та внутрішньому світу, визначали її місце як у філософії, так і в літературі. У працях названих постатей докладно показано, що історія висуває на політичну авансцену людину, яка всім своїм єством приречена до свободи і неодноразово порушує різноманітні форми соціального буття. Відповідну філософську платформу європейської екзистенційної літератури вважаємо основною, крізь призму прийняття якої обґрунтовується головне кредо всієї життєдіяльності Сартра: усвідомлюючи і виправдовуючи свій духовно-моральний і ціннісний вибір, людина таким чином бере на себе відповідальність за долі всього світу. В основних працях Сартра важко помітити серйозні недоліки. Навпаки, синтез демократичних та індивідуалістичних тенденцій виявився складним, суперечливим, а тому зумовив подальші дискусії у світовій літературі. Проте основні теоретичні положення мислителя суттєво вплинули на екзистенційну літературу Європи, зокрема й на англійський роман.*

**Ключові слова:** філософія, екзистенціалізм, творчість, особистість, англійська література, роман, Ж.-П. Сартр.

**Problem statement.** Works and creative works of I. Kant, Hegel, Schelling, S. Kierkegaard, M. Heidegger, J.-P. Sartre, A. Camus and some other European writers have long attracted the attention of many researchers. In recent decades, it has become obvious that these philosophers of different eras and generations, despite tangible discrepancies, were primarily united by a predilection for a single direction – existentialism. Their works were not free from visible flaws, contradictions, but the originality of thinking and the acuteness of the problems posed attracts modern scientists.

The belittling of the “human factor” and moral stagnation posed a dilemma: to isolate oneself from the search for acceptable solutions to urgent problems or to actively intervene in them. According to the philosophy of J.-P. Sartre man, defending his spiritual independence, at the same time resists his physiology. Being in motion, he finds himself thinking all the time that he is threatened not so much by physical destruction as by dissolution into the formless and impersonal element of his natural, that is, biological existence. Hence Sartre’s postulate: life is a constant and continuous escape from the everyday life with the maximum delay of death (Caprp, 1989). And being, in turn, opposes man with its hostility. Perhaps it is not so much death itself that is terrible, as an empty life that does not bring elementary satisfaction.

**The purpose of the work** is a study of English existentialism in the light of the philosophy of J.-P. Sartre.

**Presentation of the main material.** English existentialist writers picked up his idea of the absurdity of existence, equally embedded in both death and birth. In addition, it was a kind of signal for them to escape from reality. Apparently, it is easier, having lost faith in the possibility of useful activities, to lock yourself in a narrow circle of like-minded people, “withdraw into yourself” (in Sartre, to escape from problems). They most often understood public freedom as personal. Therefore, even the appeals of decadents were brought by them under a rational calculation, meant, first of all, the choice of the philosophy of freedom according to which you live, which means that you exist and are no longer bound by any ties with the surrounding world.

However, here we consider it appropriate to give a little explanation. Sartre talks about life and death from purely theoretical positions. Therefore, his main philosophical works mainly present a purely functional, calculating approach to this antinomy. However, over time, this approach, taken from Sartre, expanded

and soon it penetrates into the field of feelings, emotions. There is no need to remind once again to what extent the emotive space of the text, which includes the whole range of feelings and emotions, is important for fiction. It also becomes a cornerstone in the description of certain events, characters and in the English existential novel. Let’s be more specific: according to Sartre, a person is needed mostly for mechanical operations, and not for performing practical tasks in the socio-industrial sphere or within the framework of family and personal relationships. The reason, as the philosopher believed, is very simple: he has no time or desire for the latter. This postulate later also became the starting point for the English existential novel. Close people understand each other more and more difficult and less often, they feel mutual alienation more and more acutely, conflicts caused by a violation of mental and spiritual contacts break out more and more often. The connections between personalities turn out to be very superficial, fragile and easily torn.

The origins of this deafness, according to our assumption, can be deciphered as follows. Most often, in situations in which heroes find themselves, full-blooded communication turns out to be almost unattainable. They are immersed in the experience of an internal drama, insignificant in reality, but significant in their subjective representation. Looking back, they timidly predict a sad future. The present remains outside their sphere of attention. A sharp aggravation of lack of communication becomes the norm and seriously hurts people’s souls.

Sartre was well aware that in the post-war period, discontent was gradually accumulating in his native French and, more broadly, European society, taking a variety of, sometimes bizarre forms, especially among young people. The war ended, but serious problems and contradictions in the lives of many people remained. The existential literature of the 1950s and 1970s absorbed and sublimated in a special way these moods of universal dissatisfaction. As follows from all the above, these moods were also transmitted to the characters of English literature. In the spirit of existentialism, they are not only deprived of any ideological and moral supports and hopeful ideals of a happy future, but they feel their social loneliness with particular acuteness in a world where living human ties have been severed, functional rationalism and cold calculation reign.

And, mainly for this reason, strictly defined and constant concepts have been firmly established and firmly entered into the practice of artistic mastery in

the register of almost all English writers of the studied direction. These are: fear, boredom, sadness, bitterness of loss, fading of hope and dreams, fatal expectation, accidental coincidence, anxiety, confusion, depression, loss of roots, mass disappointment in former ideals and, finally, death.

We have already cited Sartre's opinion on the latter. The excesses in the work of some English writers, as it seems to us, consisted in the fact that they so much poetized death that they left no room for it for an antonymic alternative – life. The journalist Murdoch ("Under the net"), Katerina prays for death ("The Bell"). In most of K. Wilson's novels, brain parasites in the form of bacteria carry death. The thug boys from Golding's "Lord of the Flies" are sowing death, etc. Moreover, it was noticed that these attitudes turned out to be persistent, archetypal, as if transitioning from one existential work to another. We use the latter not as the termination of biological existence, but sometimes as a happy moment of eternity, to which, with the collapse of the foundations of Western civilization, a person voluntarily or involuntarily approaches. Such are the sad relapses of the psychology of English writers of the desired direction, the foundations of which were laid by Sartre.

However, writers are not limited to depicting the misfortunes and troubles that their characters are experiencing. The named artists of the word, struggling in the grip of contradictions, reveal the significance and depth of human feelings. Thus, according to Sartre, the true measure of man is restored, where it is obvious that no matter how much the significance of the human principle is diminished in modern reality, man was and remains a great, enduring value.

This idea of the French scientist was picked up and organically developed by English existentialist writers. Namely, they argued that each person carries a whole world of spiritual, psychological, and emotional wealth. It is unique in its essence, irreplaceable, and its loss is irreplaceable. Therefore, the misfortunes and troubles of a person, even in a purely personal, intimate sphere, acquire a deep tragic meaning. In order to more clearly express the tragic fate of their characters, writers strive to show their psychological state as fully and expressively as possible at the time of a crisis-extreme situation, when emotions are especially acute.

But the heroes are always in a state of "freedom of choice". Sartre's concept, put forward by him in the philosophical essay "Existentialism is humanism" (Caprп, 1989), finds a clear justification here. According to the main idea of this work, a person during his stay

on earth can find his true essence only through his own actions in very specific situations that require immediate decision-making. There is only freedom and will in man, which are reflected in his action, and man is doomed to an inevitable activity that he chooses by free will, and thus through this choice and action he defines himself as an entity.

Let's try to briefly show that some existential works, in particular the novels of William Golding and Colin Wilson, are subordinated to these central ideas of Sartre. First of all, we emphasize that any major trend in world art has a philosophical background. English existentialism is associated with the names of A. Camus, S. Kierkegaard, M. Heidegger, F. Nietzsche, N. Berdyaev and some others. However, first of all, it is Sartre's influence that is undeniable, although, for obvious reasons, the general foundations of his worldview have nevertheless been absorbed by French existential literature.

However, nowadays one can only marvel at the obvious fact how much the power of this influence has been vulgarized, and the philosophical positions are one-sided, biased. And what critics did not accuse the existentialist writers who followed in the footsteps of his theory of freedom. Ideological officials were frankly scared off by the tone of his philosophical and critical statements.

In them, as a philosopher and an artist in one person, he was invariably presented as too "dangerous", "left-wing" and unpredictable in the worst sense of the word. Thus, F. Newby, indirectly denigrating Sartre and existentialism as a direction, assured: "The artists themselves are trying to stay in the shadows, hide behind other people's backs (that is, not to express their opinions directly about the subject of the image). And this happens mainly because they do not have certain firm principles that would allow them to speak to the reader and express their thoughts to him". But William Golding, Colin Wilson, Iris Murdoch and others who made a significant contribution to the world of art did not hide behind other people's backs.

After half a century, the synthesis of Sartre's innovative ideas and the impact on existential literature is being radically revised. For example, A. Lavrov, S. Zenkin, V. Khalipov, T. Tuzova and many other modern philologists and historians write about him as an extraordinary personality of a writer and thinker, a man who has always been cramped within the framework of academic philosophy; therefore, at the same time he was drawn to fine literature, journalism and socio-political activity.

Let's say more than that, Sartre sagaciously noted that "existentialism gives possession to each person of his being and imposes on him at the same time responsibility for existence. But when it is said that a person is responsible, it means not only responsibility for his individuality, but also responsibility for all people". Thus, the great writer and philosopher actually led readers and narrow specialists in literature to the idea that this is an important milestone in the history of French literature and at the same time an approach to other philosophical directions in subsequent years. It is obvious that the British, representatives of the direction under study, were not slow to adopt this Sartre slogan.

We will continue to consider the raised issue in terms of identifying the degree of influence of J.-P. Sartre on English existential literature, partly relying on the work of W. Golding and K. Wilson, in whose works it is, at our discretion, most noticeable. First of all, we will point out the parallels and at the same time some ideological "inconsistencies" in the aspect of developing the concept of freedom, which is the "rational grain" of Sartre's entire philosophical system.

By the mid-1950s, the existentialist critics Jean Val and Frederic Jeanson consistently and thoroughly proved that the Sartre concept of freedom is decidedly different from the idealistic "freedom of the spirit" in its extremely simplified and utilitarian form, in which it was developed by Western European philosophers and historians before K. Marx (ЖАНСОН, ЖАНСОН, 1957).

Indeed, J.-P. Sartre tried to remove freedom from the so-called "ontological sky", to ground this vast concept, to connect it with the practice of life and daily human activity. Therefore, in his expanded historical, literary and philosophical project, in parallel with the concept of "freedom of choice", "freedom of the spirit", the ontological primacy of the subjective over the objective and the reference triad ("being in general", "being in itself" and "being for oneself"), such important lexemes as "action" appear, "work", "activity", etc. It is not difficult to see how the first concepts do not fit in at all with the second.

According to Sartre and the whole existential theory in general, being in the world directly for literary heroes is synonymous with the concept of freedom, which is primarily freedom from everything extrapersonal (or transpersonal). In early and adolescence, he absorbs only biological instincts, and then becomes what he forged out of himself on his own. A person as a self-sufficient and accentuated personality begins his true existence on earth and the realization of the impulses inherent

in him with a rethinking of his deeds, actions, that is, with a reorientation of himself. Hence the important philosophical principle of Sartre: "A person is what he will make of himself" (Caprp, 1989).

But, we note, this is also the fundamental principle of English existential literature, which these writers, having extended to the sphere of national culture and art as a whole (one of the branches of the well-known problem of Englishness, which arose with particular acuteness in the post-war years), called "The human predicament" (human condition, or human share). The recognition of freedom, as Sartre liked to say, is essentially a "sentence" to it. We can also say this: objectively, a person is free for the simple and natural reason that he has a constant opportunity for denial. So the rejection of freedom at the same time means the absorption of the personal principle by the impersonal. Thus, the authenticity of human existence itself is leveled.

We believe that W. Golding actually came close to this idea in the well-known novel "Lord of the Flies". The children are gradually only engaged here in self-denial of the seemingly wide freedom of movement and action provided to them on the island. The received upbringing is not able to keep them in line with the traditional spiritual upbringing, that is, from slipping into savagery. Here Sartre's absorption of the personal principle by the impersonal is projected by W. Golding in the form of the extinction of reason.

The logic of the events in this parable, it would seem, boils down to a system of prohibitions in line with the normative morality of secular British society. But in fact, this is a worthless defense against gradual savagery. The "sentence" to freedom (according to Sartre) in the interpretation of W. Golding turns into an outrage. Yes, we see that the children received the coveted freedom on the island ("Do what you want – you are the master on this desert land"), but how did it end for them?

Normal, seemingly, children from secular English society turned into savages. The philosopher's principle of personal and undivided disposal of his freedom remains (in the novel: live as you want and get out as you can), but moral norms are collapsing at the same time. Some of them appeal to the rules of morality in the course of the plot, but they are "not considered". Freedom is thus realized in opposition to the "sparkling world" – "evil rampage", and the "free world" – "perplexed reason". So, according to the plot of Golding's novel, but in essence the logic of Sartre. In these antonymic phrases, according to the author's

idea, there is undoubtedly the realization of freedom, as it is understood by teenage heroes. It is not difficult to see that the system of such conceptual oppositions is “woven” from Sartre’s thesis about the potential of a person to deny one action or phenomenon to another in order to feel truly free.

In our opinion, parallels are easily found at the level of comparison of some of Sartre’s judgments, directly drawn from his writings. So, it is noticeable that in the works of English existentialist writers, moral and ethical precepts, the social behavior of characters, and the human essence itself are formed only in the sphere of being, more precisely, it develops in the Sartre triad (“being in general”, “being in itself” and “being for oneself”). This is his well-known philosophical position. A person in this triple plexus is “abandoned” by difficult life circumstances. He tries to realize the meaning of a new existence on earth, however, most often his rationalistic or sensual attempts are unsuccessful.

But the scientist does not stop there at all. From the “abstract and isolationist”, as Sartre himself later called it, point of view on man and his freedom, developed in “Being and Nothing”, the philosopher, for example, in the “Critique of Dialectical Reason” proceeds to consider the movement of individual activity in the structures of the social mechanism, the fate of individual freedom of a person associated with the world of alienation, violence, oppression and need. (The scientist called it a lack of funds to meet natural needs). As a born philosopher, he reflects here on the nature and status of historical necessity, its relationship with freedom and randomness in history, the emergence of human alienation, the forms of his understanding and experience by man himself, the possibilities and ways to overcome it. He developed these thoughts in his work (“Being and Nothing”), and then smoothly replaced them with the concept of “primacy of History”, and translated the antinomy “freedom – chance” into the aspect “freedom – necessity”. [The children in “Lord of the Flies” were thrown to earth by fate, that is, they got here by accident, but they will have to survive out of necessity].

Of course, this was a bit of an inflection in Sartre’s philosophy. He came to the assumption that all the specifics of human life in the materialistic sense

are reduced to chance. And this is deeply mistaken. Golding’s novel, in particular, proved this. Therefore, the combination of existentialism, the starting point of which is subjectivity, with “concreteness”, will, in his opinion, introduce into the universal knowledge of history the irreducible originality of human adventure.

This adventure is literally permeated by K. Wilson’s novel “Necessary Doubt”, in which the main character constantly kills for the sake of experiments and testing his philosophical idea. The crimes of Gustav Nieman should be viewed as an experiment in the spirit of the same philosophy of Sartre. It was in the Critique of Dialectical Reason that he considered the harmful practice of human actions and its result simultaneously from the point of view of objectification (a person acting on matter) and objectivity (the so-called “totalized matter”, in the author’s interpretation, which affects a person). Theory is tested by practice. It is for this reason that another person in the novel listens to the actions of the criminal, realizes their need to clash with the freedom of action that has untied the hands of the killer.

Let us recall the constant Sartre opposition of the objective and the subjective, the philosophical categories of freedom and necessity, etc. Thus, under the artistic bias, Wilson is essentially working out a general scheme for analyzing the situation and the specificity of the human act. And this, in turn, is the main link in these works of Sartre, defining practice as negativity in relation to the committed act.

**Conclusions.** Thus, we come to the conclusion that all of the above is based on the time-tested theoretical positions of Sartre. But when a major and influential philosopher is also the author of short stories, novels and dramas, it is tempting to see in them an elementary “artistic arrangement” of metaphysical treatises. However, it will probably be clear to an unbiased reader of English existential novels that Sartre’s prose and drama, in addition to all that has been said, is real and full-fledged fiction, and not just a pale illustration and popularization of abstract philosophical categories. In the works of Sartre as an artist, there is only a certain hint of philosophical content, because literature and philosophy are objectively expressed differently because each interprets its own, but bear its own individual imprint.

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