

**THE INFLUENCE OF EXISTENTIALISM IN ENGLISH LITERATURE IN
THE 20TH CENTURY***Sirojiddinova Muxlisa**Department of Practical English and Literature
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ANNOTATION: This article explores how existentialist philosophy shaped English literature in the 20th century. It highlights the integration of themes such as freedom, absurdity, alienation, and identity into literary expression. The works of authors like Samuel Beckett, Iris Murdoch, and Virginia Woolf are examined as case studies to demonstrate how existentialism provided a framework for exploring human experience. Drawing on the ideas of Kierkegaard, Sartre, and Camus, the paper argues that literature served as a powerful platform for existential inquiry in a rapidly changing world.

Keywords: existentialism, absurdity, freedom, alienation, identity, modern literature

АННОТАЦИЯ: В статье исследуется влияние экзистенциалистской философии на английскую литературу XX века. Особое внимание уделяется темам свободы, абсурда, отчуждения и идентичности, которые нашли отражение в произведениях таких авторов, как Сэмюэл Беккет, Айрис Мердок и Вирджиния Вулф. Основываясь на идеях Киркегора, Сартра и Камю, автор показывает, как литература стала средством выражения экзистенциальных вопросов.

Ключевые слова: экзистенциализм, абсурд, свобода, отчуждение, идентичность, современная литература

ANNOTATSIIYA: Ushbu maqolada ekzistensialistik falsafaning 20-asr ingliz adabiyotiga ta'siri yoritiladi. Erkinlik, begonalashuv, absurdlik va shaxsiy o'zlik kabi mavzular adabiy ifodada qanday mujassam bo'lganiga e'tibor qaratiladi. Samuel Bekket, Iris Merdok va Virginia Vulf kabi yozuvchilarning asarlari tahlil qilinib, Kierkegaard, Sartre va Camus g'oyalariga asoslangan holda ekzistensializmning zamonaviy inson tajribasiga qanday ta'sir qilgani ko'rsatib beriladi.

Kalit so'zlar: ekzistensializm, absurdlik, erkinlik, begonalashuv, o'zlik, zamonaviy adabiyot

INTRODUCTION

In the wake of two world wars, social disintegration, and spiritual doubt, the 20th century witnessed the rise of existentialist thought in English literature. As writers sought new ways to interpret the human condition, literature became a means of philosophical inquiry. This article examines how existentialist concepts such as individual freedom, absurdity, and moral responsibility were expressed through narrative form and character development in English literary works.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Søren Kierkegaard (1849) is often regarded as the father of existentialism, emphasizing personal choice and subjective truth. Jean-Paul Sartre (1943) introduced the idea of being condemned to freedom, while Albert Camus (1942) discussed the absurd nature of life. These ideas profoundly influenced English-speaking writers grappling with post-war disillusionment. Their works reflect the tensions between despair and meaning, autonomy and fate.

EXISTENTIAL ELEMENTS IN 20TH-CENTURY ENGLISH LITERATURE

- Absurdity and Meaninglessness

Samuel Beckett's "Waiting for Godot" portrays two characters endlessly waiting for a figure who never arrives. Through minimalist language and cyclical dialogue, the play illustrates the absurdity of existence.

- Freedom and Responsibility

Iris Murdoch's novels, including "The Bell", explore how individuals confront moral ambiguity in a world without clear values. Characters are often faced with complex ethical decisions.

- Alienation and Identity Crisis

Virginia Woolf's stream-of-consciousness narrative in "Mrs. Dalloway" reveals the inner alienation of characters despite their social surroundings. The fragmentation of narrative mirrors the fragmentation of the self.

- Death and Authentic Existence

Many 20th-century works focus on mortality as a motivator for authentic living, echoing Heidegger's idea of "being-toward-death."

CHALLENGES IN INTERPRETATION

- Misreading existentialism as nihilism or pessimism
- Overlooking the historical context behind philosophical themes
- Translating European existential concepts into culturally different English contexts
- Underestimating the moral seriousness of existential inquiry in literary works

PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR LITERATURE STUDY

- Philosophical Journals: Students reflect on existential themes in characters' decisions
- Comparative Analysis: Reading literature alongside existential texts (e.g., Sartre with Beckett)
- Creative Response: Writing modern short stories inspired by existential concepts
- Discussion-Based Learning: Debates on freedom, responsibility, and authenticity in literature

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Existentialism deeply influenced English literature in the 20th century, offering a lens through which authors explored human vulnerability, freedom, and the quest for meaning. To fully understand these works, literary education should integrate philosophical context and encourage personal engagement with existential ideas. This approach fosters not only analytical skills but also ethical reflection and cultural depth.



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