

# HUMAN LIFE-PROJECT IN EXISTENTIALISM



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## ON THE NON-STRANGER

(with affection to Albert Camus)

**N**ot without bias, this study considers the figure of Albert Camus, reflects on his ideas in framework of existential realism and tries to draw up a response.

The introduction discusses the methodology of a “co-reflection” genre. In this case emotional and dialectic attitude plays an essential role. Reflection, understood as a side view, is rejected here. It is argued that hermeneutics expand limits of reflection but do not overpass them, whereas mental comprehension, being only a part of overall comprehension, tends to exceed the scope of pure intelligibility. The author employs modernist stylistics with its prominent subjective approach and opposition to the objectivist paradigm, ceremonious classicism and unceremonious postmodernism. Contrary to them, modernism takes both the author and the sacral level of reality with genuine respect, characterizing them both with extreme contradictions and aesthetic emphasis.

In conjunction with the great inevitable, vicissitudes of love and the longing for rebellion the article focuses on such crucial existential problems as earthly and human, life and death, stranger and non-stranger. Camus` conceptions are regarded in correlation with the conceptual milestones of Russian culture and French intellectual tradition, mainly represented by Jean-Paul Sartre. The central place in the existential “nature-culture” nexus is given to the nature aspect. The viewpoint that reduces individual to atomic is declared inaccurate.

Nature and man are neither outsiders nor strangers to each other. It is true that sometimes nature rejects us after all, but no sooner than we give up and reject ourselves, tempted by the otherness. There is no hypocrisy in nature and no lament on our departure. This, however, does not mean that nature does not deplore it. Rather, it neither shows nor exposes its feelings. There is no need for nature to shun us. To shun our own nature or nature as such would be ridiculous of us. Freedom does not suffer from natural limits. It does not break with the natural cycles but integrates into them. Death is a natural obstacle that does not cross out freedom. The only true freedom is that of a dignified acceptance of death. According to the existential realist viewpoint, nature is at the same time the stronghold of the ensemble of values, the piece this ensemble arranges and the element of a value composition. On the foreseeable horizon of the modern period, the distrust of nature forebodes a Cartesian (mechanistic, deistic) estrangement from it. There is no way to escape a nihilistic finale.

A culture that did not lose touch with its natural roots appears as an unquiet memory. No wonder tectonic plates of paganism and Christianity play a significant role for those belonging to secular tradition. They replicate and fulfill pagan and Christian desires alternatively (though, perhaps, one-sidedly). That does not make them feel better, on the contrary – it is easier to comprise the faults of both religions, as any faults whatsoever, than to sum up their merits.

Existential philosophy, broadly understood, gives particular attention to the problem of estrangement, especially to the state and process of distortion that befalls human nature and essence. Estrangement, or losing a part of something that one either had initially or acquired or compiled at some moment, is not the worst woe. There is no integral entity that exists in us since the moment of our birth, and we are ready to endure this fragmentary incompleteness further. To lose something dear you have not had initially, but acquired accidentally, is even more tragic. And yet this is not the extreme point. You find yourself above the abyss when you do not lose something you have not had, but could have had. The Russian word for it would be not *estrangement*, but *was not meant to be* (no irony implied). In French it would be called *non-existence*, in Russian translation – *несуществование*.

We accept the world and at that same moment we reject its indifference to us. We reject it either in silence or complaining. Rebellion is a gesture, a way to express oneself. A cry of hope and a desperate scream both merge in one voice. It is really a fight for life and existence. Uprising for the sake of death and non-being is the caprice and the lot of gods. Human rebellion is a persistent demand for a true and better life, not for a life which is eternal and just present. Beyond the rebel *no* there is always a *yes*. They are bound together. A rebel is always a spontaneous natural dialectic. Here spontaneity is a mark of distinction, not of a void. It laughs good-naturedly over the sanctity of logic and all the uniformity of discourse and praxis. The excluded *yes* and the exclusive *no* indicate the decay of rebellion and its nihilistic end. They also signify the profoundly negative version of life and thought dialectics.

We accept the world and reject the inevitability of suicide, thus taking the entire world as it is, “with love and squalor”, upon our shoulders. Only earthly human love brings us back to ourselves. Love is far from necessity and close to inevitability, i.e. to something that did not happen to be avoided. However, the reverse is not true: inevitable is not always worth of love. It seems that love is without choice, but not without freedom, whereas freedom is closer to completeness than to choice.

**Keywords:** philosophy, Albert Camus, affection, earthly, human, stranger, non-stranger, rebellion, love, inevitable

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