

PHILOSOPHY IN LITERARY FORMS

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Abstract. *This paper looks into the literary forms of expressing philosophemes. Starting from the difference between scientific and literary forms of presenting philosophical ideas, we focus on discussing various literary forms that are present in philosophy. Philosophical works of poetry, prose, and drama are differentiated and considered, beginning with antiquity up to contemporary philosophy. Within this topic, we analyse the fundamental thematic orientation of representatives of the Enlightenment and existentialist philosophy, as well as the relationship between form and content in their works. The objective of this paper is to emphasize and expound on the thesis about the close correlation between literary forms and certain philosophical content, especially the correlation between literature and the philosophy of existentialism. The conclusion reached in the end is that literary works can be interpreted philosophically, but above all, that philosophical texts can be shaped in a literary fashion. Furthermore, it transpires that, in one historical period, philosophy adopts some literary forms, and in another period, it borrows certain forms from literature.*

Key words: *philosophy, literature, novel, essay, dialogue, poem*

1. ON THE FORM OF ARTICULATING PHILOSOPHICAL WORKS

Philosophy, as a realm of mind, is characterised by a specific methodic approach to the subject matter. Unlike particular scientific disciplines, it does not come across the object of its study as a finished and completed object in nature, but establishes it by the very manner of examining it. Establishing a philosophical approach in the sphere of a specific cognitive way of addressing a topic still leaves room for choosing an approach on the level of the exposition of the content through language.

Philosophical methods include various ways of contemplating and reflecting upon the subject of study, by which it is established as a philosophical topic or a problem area. The need for teaching, transmission and dissemination of knowledge in philosophy, as well as for

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publishing the results of research, on the level of phrasing and giving shape to the content seeks an adequate form of exposition. For determining a philosophical approach to the topic, both the manner of handling the object of consideration and the form of expounding philosophical content and knowledge are of importance. In that sense, we distinguish between philosophical methods of thinking and philosophical methods of exposition.

Philosophers select the form of clarifying philosophical content so that it corresponds to the steps made in the thinking process of discussing a particular question or problem. Choosing an adequate form to express philosophical content is important because of the need to teach and transmit knowledge. Hence, the manner of expounding philosophical content, through its clarity and precision, has to enable the listeners or readers to understand and assimilate knowledge as appropriately as possible.

From the perspective of the history of philosophy, we can observe a great number of different philosophical-scientific and literary forms of exposition and presentation of philosophical content. Philosophers opt for certain forms of expressing philosophical content so as to correspond to the subject matter that they endeavour to discuss and present, as well as to the aim the author wants to achieve.

Philosophical texts are written in strict, concise, precise, conceptually clear and articulate discursive language. In the philosophical literature, we can also encounter poetical rather than conceptual ways of presenting philosophical content, in which literary devices for capturing and presenting ideas and positions are dominant. In an effort to find an adequate form of expressing their teaching, philosophers often employ literary forms, as it may be easier to present a specific existential situation or a certain idea and a notion in that manner. Philosophy makes use of forms characteristic of literature, such as an essay, a dialogue, a poem, a play, a story, or a novel. Therefore, because they employ poetic, dramatic, and novelistic forms, some philosophical writings are often classified as literary works, as well. In this paper, we start from the fundamental difference between scientific-theoretical and literary forms of expressing philosophical content. We only explore the literary forms of expressing philosophical ideas. Our objective is to answer the question of what motivates philosophers to choose certain literary forms. Furthermore, we indicate favourable social circumstances which gave the impetus for the use of literary forms in philosophy in particular epochs. The emphasis in the analysis will be placed on the use of literary forms in the classical period, the Enlightenment, and existentialism.

2. LITERARY FORMS OF PHILOSOPHICAL WORKS

Beginning from antiquity until the modern age, all literary forms of presenting philosophical teachings are present in the history of philosophy. One can come across philosophical works both of prose and poetry, as well as of drama. Among the poetic ones, long and short poems are predominant, and among the works of prose novels, stories, essays, and aphorisms dominate. In dramatic philosophical works, the dialogues form is used. As early as the first centuries of the advent of philosophy, due to the dominance of the poetical manner of thematizing phenomena of the origin and ordering of the world, philosophical ideas have been expressed through verse. In addition to poetic works, philosophical thought in ancient Greece used dramatic form, whereas philosophical-literary works of prose fully flourished in the Enlightenment and within existentialist philosophy. In the paper we will be considering the following question: What makes literary forms suitable for expressing certain philosophical content?

2.1. Poetic Forms of Philosophical Works

Philosophy in its rational and discursive form, as pure thought cleared of mythological and religious conceptions, is found for the first time among the ancient Greeks. However, certain philosophical ideas appear even earlier, in cosmogonies and theogonies of ancient civilisations. Thus, the first form in which philosophical ideas appeared, admittedly fused with mythological and religious conceptions, was in verse. The initial inclination towards a poetic way of storytelling was still present even with later philosophers. To be precise, some classical philosophers expressed their thoughts through verse. Philosophical content takes the poetic form, by which a particular teaching or the whole philosophical system is expounded. In view of the fact that philosophical content is expressed through poetic devices, the philosophical poem falls into the categories both of philosophical and of literary works.

Parmenides, the founder of Eleatic school, wrote his major work *On Nature* in the form of a poem. Moreover, poems of the same title were written by Xenophanes and Empedocles. Unfortunately, only fragments of their writings are preserved. An Epicurean, Titus Lucretius Carus, presented the Epicurean philosophical doctrine through the poem *On the Nature of Things*, which is preserved in its entirety (Carus 1945). As is evidenced by doxographical sources, Xenophanes wrote certain Silloi or satirical poems, as well as long poems and elegies, of which only scant fragments remain. His philosophical doctrine is expressed through literary forms and therefore doxographical sources categorize him both as a rhapsode and a philosopher.

Given the status enjoyed by poets in ancient times, it may seem odd that philosophers, in an effort to express their teachings, resort to poetic forms. However, it is precisely through poetic forms that another point is emphasized. The teaching that is communicated through poetry is not a conception of the world that the author himself conceives and constructs, but it is the truth that gods (or a goddess¹) impart to people. In this manner, the value and special quality of what is being recounted are underlined. Namely, the source of the knowledge about the true essence of the world does not reside in the sphere of sensual perception. Such well-rounded truth, as a complete insight, can only be revealed to people by gods. In this way, the intention is to point out that the knowledge of the true nature of reality is what belongs to a higher order of insight, and in order to discover it, contemplation and reflection are required.

In later centuries of philosophy's continuance, shorter poetic forms prevail, and the preference for philosophical poems is replaced by the inclination for writing shorter philosophical poems and aphoristic verses. An example of such use of poetic forms are the poems in Nietzsche's work of prose *Thus Spake Zarathustra/Also sprach Zarathustra* (Nietzsche 2008). Even though some of the greatest contemporary philosophers, such as Heidegger, turn to writing poetry, a more significant literary value and praise cannot be bestowed on those works, but, owing to the interwoven philosophical stances, as well as to the entire opus of the author, this segment of creative work deserves attention and analysis.

¹ In his poem *On Nature*, Parmenides points out that the teaching he expounds is the truth that the goddess herself imparted to him. Differentiating between the way of truth and the way of opinion, she tells him that the true essence of the world is grasped by the mind, not by the senses. Since the truth about the true nature of the world is not immediately obvious, the mediatedness of the truth by thinking is stressed through the personage of the goddess (Parmenides. 2003).

2.2. Dramatic Forms of Philosophical Works

Philosophical discussions are sometimes put into the form of a dialogue in which the given topic is considered from different theoretical positions. Philosophical dialogues state their thematic preoccupations in a literary form of a conversation between two or more people. In philosophical dialogues, representatives of different philosophical orientations and schools of thought test the strength of their arguments, and discussed questions are exhausted in alternative forms of interpretation. Participants in the conversation exchange opinions, confront their views, defend their interpretive position or attack opposite theoretical positions. In the dialogue form, a relation to a different theoretical standpoint is established. Furthermore, a standpoint different from the one held by the author can also be represented in a discussion through the assumed opposing theoretical position, the arguments of which are debated in a fictitious dialogue. In this manner, the strength of one's own convictions is put to the test, and the scope of their possible interpretive consequences is measured, as well. Argumentation is developed to the limits and the positions are checked for their demonstrative power. The heated polemical note, the contentious tone, eristic methods of demonstration, strained and confronted theoretical positions, and exclusivism of stances, bring thematic dialogues closer to the philosophical polemic as a genre.

While Pythagoras expounded his teaching to the listeners (who could not even see him in the beginning) as a monologue, Socrates was the first to use conversation as a method of philosophizing. Socrates' disciple Plato developed the Socratic colloquy into the method of expounding philosophy in written form. Nearly all of Plato's writings are dialogues. The dialogues were written with the intention to familiarise a wider reading audience with certain philosophical subjects, as well as to popularise philosophy. In the dialogues, the attention of the participants in the conversation is always directed towards a particular topic over which differing viewpoints and arguments are confronted. With the exception of the dialogue *Laws*, Socrates is a participant in the conversation in all other Plato's dialogues. At times, he has other philosophers as interlocutors, and sometimes he instructs the youths of Athens as to how to arrive at an adequate definition of a concept or how to realise their misconceptions and ignorance.

Plato's exoteric writings, which he wrote in a dialogue form, have an exceptional literary-dramatic value. Searching for a suitable manner to express the exchange of arguments in philosophy, as well as the weighing of different theoretical positions against the common question, Plato decided on dramatic-dialogue form, as it can present the dialectical nature of philosophical questioning to the fullest extent. Doxographical sources mention that Aristotle, also, following the example of Plato, while he was at the Academy, wrote popular philosophical writings – dialogues for a wider reading audience. However, Aristotle's popular writings have not survived, only his esoteric lectures within the Lyceum have been preserved. The opposite is the case with Plato. Dialogues that are preserved constitute that part of the teaching which was actually intended for a wider reading audience, while his esoteric lectures for the students within the Academy (termed Plato's unwritten doctrines) have not been preserved.

Dialogue form had its time of expansion in the classical period of philosophy's development. Diogenes Laertius states that the first dialogues were written by Zeno of Elea, which unfortunately have not survived (Laertius 2018, book III 48). Apart from Plato and Aristotle, dialogue form was also used by Xenophon (*Memorabilia*, *Symposium*, *Oeconomicus*, etc), and Plutarch (*Odysseus and Gryllus*).

Aurelius Augustinus, who lived in the time of transition from antiquity to the Middle Ages, wrote his early work *Soliloquia (Soliloquies)* in 386 AD as a dialogue (conversation) between himself and Reason (Saint Augustine 2008). During his imprisonment, Boethius wrote his work *The Consolation of Philosophy (De consolazione philosophiae)*, in which he determines the purpose and the task of philosophy through its ability to give support and consolation to man in this world. In this work, Boethius, like Augustinus, does not have an actual person as his interlocutor, but Philosophy personified as a lady from whom, as a disciple, seeks certain answers and explanations. This work is written in a combination of two literary forms – in prose dialogues and through the verses of thirty eight poems. Due to his precise and succinct phrasing, as well as the beauty of the verse, this work of Boethius has a significant artistic value, in addition to the philosophical relevance of its content (Boethius 1978).

During the Middle Ages, the need for dialogue did not decrease. However, the dialogue form of expounding philosophy was no longer associated with the dialectical method but with religious practice and form of teaching. Unlike Augustinus and Boethius, who used personified phenomena, the medieval dialogue writers mostly entered into conversation with fictional persons. The major work of John Scotus Eriugena *The Division of Nature (De divisione naturae)*, from 867 AD, was written in the form of a dialogue between a teacher and his pupil. It appears that this form of conversation between a pupil and a teacher was common in the Middle Ages, in the West (Sweeney, 2019). Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) wrote four philosophical dialogues: *Dialogue on literacy and the Literate (De grammatico, 1059/60)*, *On Truth (De veritate)*, *On Free Will (De libertate arbitrii)*, and *On the Fall of the Devil (De casu diaboli, 1080/81)*. The dialogues were also written in the form of a conversation between a teacher and a student (Anselm of Canterbury 1998, 123-232). A considerable number of dialogues were written by William of Ockham, in the form of a conversation between a teacher and a pupil in which the teacher answers the questions posed by the pupil.

A certain number of philosophers in the Middle Ages used a dialogue form in order to present and challenge the arguments of representatives of different religions through a conversation between several participants (Sweeney, 2019). For instance, Pierre Abélard wrote *Dialogus inter Philosophum, Judaeum et Christianum – Dialogue Between a Philosopher, a Jew, and a Christian* (1141/1142) in which the opinions of three scholars of different theoretical (religious and philosophical) positions are confronted (Abelard 2001). It is debatable whether medieval philosophical dialogues were written with the aim of testing the strength of different theoretical standpoints. Some theoreticians believe that the dialogue form was used to put a greater emphasis on the arguments of Christian philosophers as opposed to the arguments of other theoreticians.

In the Renaissance and the modern era, dialogues were also written by Galileo Galilei (*Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems/Dialogo sopra i due massimi sistemi del mondo*), George Berkeley (*Three Dialogues between Hylas and Phylonus*), David Hume (*Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*), Friedrich W. J. Schelling (*Bruno, or on the Natural and the Divine Principle of Things/Bruno oder über das göttliche und natürliche Prinzip der Dinge*), Martin Heidegger (*Evening Conversation in a Prisoner of War Camp in Russia/Abendgespräch in einem Kriegsgefangenenlager in Rußland zwischen einem Jüngeren und einem Älteren*) and others. Using this form of exposition and presentation of philosophical teaching, authors sought to discuss certain issues from different or even opposing theoretical positions. After the classical period and the Middle Ages, this form

of exposition has not completely gone out of use, but a decreasing number of authors has utilized the dialogue form to express philosophical content. The modern age, more and more, turns to monologue, analytical and narrative forms of expounding philosophy.

2.3. Prose Forms of Philosophical Works

2.3.1. *Philosophical letters and epistles*

Philosophical works can be divided according to the criterion of purpose, as well, since, in some texts, it is clearly indicated for which audience the reading material was written. Sometimes, philosophical works were written only for a small circle of philosophically educated people, and, at times, the texts are addressed to a larger circle of readers. They can be set forth in the shape of advice, letters, epistles and instructions, in which the author addresses another person, whether it is an individual, a wider reading audience or the whole community. The letter and epistle forms are most often used when it is required to give moral advice to a certain group of people on how to make decisions and how to take a stand in important life situations. If the subject matter is not of ethical nature, the epistle form is used in order to point out the attitude of teaching or an effort to give instructions regarding some secret or important knowledge. Philosophical letters and epistles as a genre were used by Epicurus, Paul the Apostle, Francois M. A. Voltaire, Pyotr Chaadayev, and others. The personal correspondence of a philosopher can also be an important source for the study and interpretation of his teaching.

Epicurus expounded his teaching in numerous writings, but few of them survive. Diogenes Laertius, in the work *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, presents Epicurus' doctrine and his writing opus, and, of the texts, quotes three of his epistles: *Letter to Herodotus* (in which Epicurus explicates the essence of physics), *Letter to Pythocles* (where he discusses celestial phenomena), and *Letter to Menoeceus* (where he put forth his views on life), as well as forty three maxims, that is, his principal thoughts (*Kyriai doxai*) expressed in the form of aphorisms (Laertius 2018, 357-391).

A considerable part of the *New Testament* consists of epistles (that is, letters) of Paul the Apostle. He is attributed with fourteen epistles to various Christian communities, where he expounds in detail his understanding of the essence of Christianity, points out the fundamental principles of Christian doctrine and explicates the relation of religion towards philosophy (New Testament 1950). The epistle form is suitable for the purpose of moral instruction and religious edification. Furthermore, through the epistle form the addressee is stressed and singled out, so this form is intended to emphasize the identity and peculiarity of the community that Paul the Apostle addresses.

The oldest surviving philosophical letters are Plato's. Thirteen of Plato's letters survive from his private correspondence, which constitute an important source of data for the study of his philosophy and life. However, their authenticity was being called into question for quite some time. After comprehensive philological-philosophical analyses, today, nevertheless, all the letters except the first one are considered to be his indeed. To understand Plato's philosophy, of special significance is his *Seventh Letter*, in which he expressed his stances on whether philosophical truths should be disclosed and presented, how to transmit knowledge and what is the way to obtain the deepest philosophical insights (Plato 1997, 1634-1676).

In the philosophical legacy of Gottfried W. Leibniz, there is a great number of letters from his personal correspondence with renowned personalities of that time. This correspondence

brings important evidence and constitutes a significant source of knowledge for studying both the spirit of the age and Leibniz's philosophical-scientific conceptions. In this day and age, the correspondence of Martin Heidegger is certainly the most extensive, comprising ten thousand letters, out of which fifteen volumes have been published so far. As for Serbian philosophers, the correspondence of Branislav Petronijević has been published.

2.3.2. *Philosophical Essays*

French thinker Michel de Montaigne established the essay form as a separate philosophical and literary-scientific category. He wrote three books of essays: publishing the first one in 1580, the second in 1588, and the third was published posthumously in 1595. In his works, he expresses his thoughts, impressions and stances on various issues concerning human nature and life. Owing to Montaigne, the essay, as a form of writing and exposition, was carried over into literature, as well, therefore his essay works are studied both in philosophy and in literature (Montaigne 2003).

Philosophical essays make an impression with their precise and stylistically shaped exposition, interesting and peculiar observations, elegant and understandable formulations, clear and unambiguous statements, and the ease of argumentative discourse. This form of philosophical expression is associated with a subjective approach, which aims rather at a harmonious exposition than at a demonstration of stances. A freer choice of topic, relative brevity of the text, and a more artistic style of expression are characteristic features of an essay.

Influenced by Montaigne, Francis Bacon wrote philosophical essays. The first edition of his essays from 1597 comprised ten essays, a considerably enlarged second edition appeared in 1612 with thirty eight, and the third one, entitled *Essays and Counsels, Civil and Morall*, was published in 1625 with fifty eight essays. In the later tradition, many philosophers titled their works as essays: John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*; Leibniz, *New Essays on Human Understanding*; George Berkeley, *An Essay Towards a New Theory of Vision*; David Hume, *Essays, Moral and Political*. In contemporary philosophy, essays were written by many philosophers. The founder of the genre of philosophical essay in our tradition is considered to be Milan Kujundžić with his book *Ide li svet nabolje ili nagore (Is the World Going for the Better or for the Worse)?* (1870).

2.4. **Literary-Philosophical Genres of the Enlightenment**

In the period of Humanism and the struggle for the freedom of thought, the man was regarded as an active agent who shapes and creates society, history, and culture. The process of separating philosophy from religion, initiated at the time of the Renaissance, culminated during the Enlightenment, in which only the judgement of reason was acknowledged as the chief authority. The Enlightenment period was dominated by genres with the predominant aim of education, dissemination, and systematisation of knowledge, as well as teaching the people at large. Furthermore, works which criticise the political system and ridicule the phenomena and the tendencies in the society were published. For that reason, new prose philosophical genres arose, such as the philosophical dictionary and an epistolary novel. Satirical stories, plays, and pamphlets were also written.

In the time of Enlightenment and the birth of an encyclopedic approach to knowledge, Pierre Bayle published his *Historical and Critical Dictionary* which covered the basic

knowledge of the epoch, and Voltaire published his work *Philosophical Dictionary*². Along the lines of the undertaking of creating systematic collections and overviews of knowledge in the Enlightenment period, philosophy also, through dictionary form, followed this trend. In the Age of Enlightenment, the authors started the project of the *Encyclopedia, or a Systematic Dictionary of the Sciences, Arts, and Crafts* (*Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*) wrote philosophical dramas (Denis Diderot – *The Natural Son/Le Fils naturel*, 1757, *The Father of the Family/Le Père de famille*, 1758), philosophical novels (D. Diderot - *Jacques the Fatalist and his Master/Jacques le fataliste et son maître* 1773; Jean-Jacques Rousseau - *Emile, or On Education/Emile, ou De l'éducation*, 1762) and epistolary novels (Charles Montesquieu – *Persian Letters/Lettres persanes*, 1721) in an effort to familiarise the general public with philosophy, as well as to popularise its topics and teachings.

A notable mark on the literary creativity of Enlightenment was made by Voltaire. He is one of the most famous and most significant French authors of the 18th century. He produced philosophical works in prose through stories, novellas, essays, novels, and plays. In addition, he wrote epic poems, pamphlets, letters, and historical works. He was a virtuoso of expression through language, precise in his formulations, and an incisive pen, known for his witty and ironic sentences.³

In the Enlightenment period, socially committed and politically active thinkers and philosophers used the convenience of literary forms to popularize philosophical ideas, spread the influence of their critiques of society and institutions, as well as to establish Enlightenment ideas and views. Philosophical-literary works of prose, published in that period, were of great importance for raising critical awareness of people about negative phenomena and tendencies in the community, and advocated teaching literacy to the masses on an as comprehensive level as possible. Major works of the Enlightenment era instituted belief in natural light and the power of human reason, thus enabling the development and expansion of knowledge in all fields.

2.5. Literary Forms of Existentialism

2.5.1. On Existentialism

A philosophical treatise is often not an adequate form of expression to critically examine the situation of an individual and offer an answer to life's questions, crises, and quandaries. It turns out that a purely literary expression is particularly suitable for considering problems of an individual's life, which is evident precisely in existentialist philosophy. This is the reason for the frequent use of the novel form in existential philosophy. The very fact that certain philosophers of existence were also important authors affected the diffusion and popularity of this movement. In the process of its expansion and development, the philosophy of existence, having gathered a greater momentum and elan, is called existentialism. Major representatives of existentialism in philosophy are Søren Kierkegaard, Karl Jaspers, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Albert Camus.

As a philosophical movement, existentialism emerged in the early 20th century, although the roots of this teaching can be traced back even earlier. Existential philosophy gained a

² Through alphabetically ordered entries, Voltaire presents his critique of the church and different religions and beliefs (Voltaire 1971).

³ Voltaire's critical comments sometimes turn into satirical mockery and ridicule, as in the novel *Candide* where he attacks Leibniz's optimism regarding the way in which the world is ordered and its nature (Voltaire 2005).

significant impetus in its development in the period between the two World Wars. However, the full flourishing of existentialist ideas occurred after World War II, when this theoretical orientation became dominant. The subject matter considered in existentialist philosophy corresponds to the needs and problems of modern man and represents a response to the crisis the world fell into. In light of that, it imposes itself and is felt as urgent at the time of its emergence. After the ravages of war, tribulations and suffering, the individual faces the challenge of finding the meaning again. States of apathy, hopelessness, and fear permeate the life of the individual. The crisis of meaning pervades the whole epoch, after the huge world turmoil in which man is not a participant or the leader of events, but an individual who has to suffer their consequences. Therefore, existentialists undertook the task of giving an answer, in their criticism of contemporary society and the man's awareness, to the spiritual crisis the world fell into, and of reflecting upon the problems of fear, absurdity, death, and worry.

One should bear in mind that existentialism as a movement arises after the classical German idealism, within which the sphere of ideal essences is separate from the realm of individual being, which is reduced to mere existence. Henceforth, the reason why existentialist philosophers reach for literary forms lies, for one, in the choice not to present the so-called objective truth, but to aim for revealing and presenting the particular and the unrepeatable. In that sense, literature, through the novel and novella forms, provides the best foundation for presenting a specific life context in which an individual faces certain problems, crises, and dilemmas. Existentialists, first and foremost, are interested in the personal point of view, and the personal perspective of experiencing and solving particular challenges and situations in life. Since the human being and his or her existence are in the focus of interest, that is, the mode of his or her existence, as well as the basic phenomena that determine him or her (temporality, the awareness of death, the search for meaning, the relationship toward freedom, creativity, one's profession, and the like), this teaching is also called the philosophy of man.

Contrary to rationalism, in which essence had precedence over existence, this relation is reversed with existentialists, and the category of being, that is existence, is brought to the foreground. In this regard, when we talk about existence, then it is not simply existence, but it stands for the human mode of being. The consideration of the unrepeatable human existence is more difficult to capture in the conceptual speculative language of philosophy, than through purely literary expression, through which one can, in a natural way, describe situations and problems an individual meets on their life journey. Søren Kierkegaard realised that and earned literary fame (albeit posthumous), and Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, Miguel de Unamuno, and many others, followed in his footsteps.

2.5.2. *Undefined Genre*

On account of the combination of several philosophical and literary genres, the works of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Heidegger are not defined according to the existing pure and separate forms, but we opt to categorize their opus as the form we termed an undefined genre, the characteristic of which is a literary-philosophical eclecticism of styles and forms.

Until Søren Kierkegaard, individual human existence was marginalised as a topic in philosophical discussions. It is exactly in his works that the relation between general principles and particular events in life is thematised. His philosophical position is based on personal experience, and therefore the domain of philosophical stances and ideas is

inseparable from a standpoint in life based on concrete situations and moments in his life. Considering certain life's questions, Kierkegaard, in his works (*Either/Or/Enten-Eller, Fear and Trembling/Frygt og Bæven, The Concept of Anxiety/Begrebet Angest, Philosophical Crumbs/Philosophiske Smuler eller En Smule Philosophi, The Sickness unto Death/Sygdommen til Døden*), liberated himself from existential questioning of one's own decisions. Kierkegaard strives to represent the totality and the drama of his existential position in a literary fashion through the prose form. Kierkegaard's works, as well as the works of Nietzsche, belong both to literature and philosophy.

Friedrich Nietzsche is regarded as a forerunner of existentialism and a representative of the philosophy of life. He cultivated and favoured metaphorical, poetical, and aphoristic expressions. In his works, he used metaphors and combined prose and poetry. His writing *Thus Spake Zarathustra (Also sprach Zarathustra)* cannot be classified into the known literary genres, but is rather a mixture of them. Nietzsche himself said that it was not a collection of aphorisms but an epic, and at another time he wrote that the book, in terms of its genre, is "something for which there is no name yet" (Nietzsche 2008).

In contrast to Kierkegaard, who regarded man as a finite being in whom eternity is manifested, Martin Heidegger saw man as a temporal being that is determined by its finitude. Heidegger sought alternative linguistic constructions which depart from the standard ones, in order to express the existential position of man. For that purpose, he introduced a whole series of new concepts, expressions, and terms. Human Being – *being there/Dasein* – can be understood only via existentials: being-in-the-world, understanding, care, guilt, being-with-others, being thrown, being-towards-death, and the like (Heidegger 1996).⁴ In Heidegger, perhaps the most interesting one is the second phase of his work (speaking with reservations: mythological) where he abandoned the language in which he wrote the work *Being and Time (Sein und Zeit)* and turned to an idiom that is, in terms of language, closer to myth and poetry. In an effort to develop a new language, Heidegger took poetry as a model, and considered thinking and creating poetry to be akin to one another, and that poetry is a privileged way of revealing the world.⁵

2.5.3. A Novel and a Novella

We have seen that a philosophical novel appeared as far back as the Age of Enlightenment (Diderot, Voltaire), being cultivated afterwards in the next century, as well (e.g. *The Brothers Karamazov/Братья Карамазовы* by Fyodor Dostoevsky), and it became especially prominent among the existentialists in the 20th century.

Philosophers of existentialism strongly influenced contemporary writers such as Samuel Beckett and Franz Kafka, for example, although, conversely, one can observe the influence of Russian classics by Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky and Leo Nikolayevich Tolstoy on the representatives of the philosophy of existence. The convergence of philosophical ideas and literary forms within existentialism culminated in the fact that some philosophers turned literary authors. This is the case with Sartre and Camus.

⁴ Theodor Adorno writes about the language and the phraseology in Heidegger's works in his book *The Jargon of Authenticity*. He criticizes Heidegger's jargon use of language, revealing that at its root lies an unambiguous political orientation (Adorno 2009).

⁵ Heidegger wrote a paper *Hölderlin and the Essence of Poetry* (1936) where he discusses Hölderlin's creative work, via whose work he seeks to show the essence of poetry (Heidegger 2000).

Sartre was given the Nobel Prize for literature in 1964 for his complete literary work. He did not wish to receive it, choosing to avoid official honours and awards. He believed that literary forms describing man's choices and life decisions are of value, as well as philosophical works that advocate an abstract theoretical explanation of a phenomenon. Hence, in addition to strictly philosophical writings (*Imagination: A Psychological Critique/L'imagination, Being and Nothingness/L'être et le néant, Critique of Dialectical Reason/Critique de la raison dialectique*), he also wrote philosophical novels, novellas, dramas, essays, critiques, and stories. When discussing the most general ontological categories, Sartre turned to the discursive language of philosophy and purely philosophical forms of presenting reflective content. However, when it was required to represent the essence of human nature or to depict the inevitability of man's fate, he turned to literary forms. The most well-known works of Sartre which belong both to philosophy and literature are: the novel *Nausea/La nausée*, the trilogy *The Roads to Freedom/Les chemins de la liberté*, dramas (plays) *Flies/Les mouches, Dirty Hands/Les mains sales, Behind Closed Doors/Huis clos, The Devil and the Good Lord/Le diable et le bon dieu*, the collection of short stories *The Wall/Le mur*, autobiographical prose *The Words/Les mots*, essays *Baudelaire, Saint Genet, Actor and Martyr/S.G., comédien et martyr* (about the poet Jean Genet) and the unfinished work on Flaubert *The Family Idiot/L'idiot de la famille*.

Both Sartre and Camus tended to show the issues of human suffering and the absurdity of life through literary forms, except that Albert Camus, when it comes to the problem of presenting philosophical content in his philosophical work, after his graduation thesis "The Relationships between Hellenism and Christianity in the Works of Plotinus and Saint Augustine" (1936) published posthumously as *Métaphysique chrétienne et Néoplatonisme/Christian Metaphysics and Neoplatonism* (1965), entirely turned to literary forms. He wrote dramas, essays, and novels. For his literary production inspired by the issues of human conscience, in 1957, as the second youngest laureate, he received the Nobel Prize for literature. Although many theoreticians place him among the existentialists, he refused to accept that he belongs to this orientation, as well as to any ideology and trend in thinking. Camus' most well-known works are novels *The Stranger/L'Étranger, The Plague/La Peste* and essays *The Myth of Sisyphus/Le Mythe de Sisyphe* and *The Rebel/L'Homme révolté*. Given the topics that his works deal with, as well as the need to speak about the topical issues of human existence and the absurdity of life using widely accepted forms of narration, a philosopher and a writer Albert Camus opted for expounding his philosophical ideas entirely through literary prose. The use of literary forms in philosophy reached its climax in the time of existentialism's dominance. Within this movement, literary forms supplanted the philosophical-scientific ones.

3. CONCLUDING WORD

In this paper, we have tried to show the suitability of literary forms for presenting certain philosophical themes and ideas. We began with the analysis of works in the classical period, and ended with existentialism. Within existentialism, the convergence of philosophy and literature is the most conspicuous, as well as in the Age of Enlightenment. We could observe that philosophers, in their efforts to express their teaching, often rely on literary forms, as well as that almost all literary genres are present in the history of philosophy. No matter whether we are talking about philosophical poems, short poems, plays or

novels, the reason why we judge them esthetically is the employment of literary forms when expressing the content.

Based on everything that has been presented, we can conclude that the reasons for adopting literary forms of expression in philosophy are twofold. First of all, first philosophical works emerged in a time when poetic and dramatic literary forms dominated and, therefore, in an effort to develop its teaching, philosophy turned to already existing, tried and tested, and also popular literary genres. In antiquity, philosophy adopted literary genres for lack of its own specific forms of expression. From the position of philosophy, these reasons are external.

Other reasons can be inherently philosophical. Namely, it is deemed that certain forms of expounding philosophy, taken from literature, best represent and express the nature of philosophical approach. For instance, the dialectical method is best presented through dialogue form, which is attested by Plato's dialogues. Furthermore, a particular form of expounding philosophical content clearly demonstrates the idea of appropriate ways of teaching, disseminating and imparting philosophical knowledge. This is evident in philosophical letters and epistles of ethical and religious subject matter. Moreover, certain ideas of the Enlightenment, as well as existentialist topics, find their proper and adequate expression in widespread literary genres.

On the basis of previous analyses, we can conclude that philosophy, in the period of its formation, adopted literary genres for want of its own forms of expression, but also that this has occurred even after the constitution of strictly philosophical forms of presenting the content. In existentialism, philosophy turned to literary forms, although it has already considerably developed specific and independent philosophical-scientific forms of setting forth the content, such as thematic discussions or treatises. Hence, literary forms represented in existentialist philosophy can be called borrowed forms. Therefore, it is more precise to say that, during its history, philosophy has adopted some forms of presenting philosophemes, and some have been borrowed from literature.

On the other hand, when it comes to the relationship between philosophy and literature, one can also talk of the literary value of certain philosophical writings, on account of their style of writing and the beauty of the language. In that case, philosophical works have many characteristics of artistic ones. Since philosophical content is stylistically fashioned, their artistic value, as in literature, is based on an elegant manner of expression, skillful formulations and harmonious shaping of the whole. A great stylist of language was Schopenhauer, and the works of Plato, Lucretius, and Nietzsche are attributed with significant artistic value. During our time, as many as two philosophers received the Nobel Prize for literature for their literary successfully formulated philosophical papers – Henri Bergson and Bertrand Russell.

It is not seldom that we interpret certain literary works from the philosophical point of view, finding in them grounds for detecting a particular theoretical position, interesting and inspiring ideas, brought to life and artistically shaped thoughts, etc. However, based on all that was considered and presented, it is evident that not only can literary works be philosophically interpreted, but philosophical texts can be composed in a literary manner, as well. Philosophical thought is not just what is set forth and demonstrated with precision in scientific papers, as is most often considered to be the case by the representatives of analytical philosophy, but also those ideas and conceptions that we fashion into literary forms and expressions. It is not true that philosophical treatises are the only proper philosophy, and philosophical novels, for example, are not sufficiently serious texts. Literary forms in

philosophy are not a second-rate manner of expression. On the contrary, literary forms are legitimate forms of exposition in philosophy. Such works, in addition to reflectively valuable content, possess artistic value, as well. The works of the most eminent philosophers, such as Parmenides, Plato, Pascal, Nietzsche, Sartre, and others, bear witness to that.

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FILOZOFIJA U KNJIŽEVNIM FORMAMA

U ovom radu se razmatraju književne forme izražavanja filozofema. Polazimo od razlike između naučnih i književnih vidova prezentovanja filozofskih ideja i usmeravamo se na razmatranje različitih književnih formi koje su prisutne u filozofiji. Razlikujemo i obrađujemo: poetska, prozna i dramska filozofska dela, počev od antike pa do savremene filozofije. U sklopu ove tematike analiziramo osnovna tematska usmerenja predstavnika prosvetiteljstva i filozofije egzistencijalizma kao i odnos forme i sadržaja u njihovim delima. Krajnji cilj ovog rada jeste da istakne i obrazloži tezu o bliskoj povezanosti književnih formi i određenih filozofskih sadržaja, posebno povezanost književnosti i filozofije egzistencijalizma. Zaključak koji se na kraju izvodi jeste da se književna dela mogu filozofski tumačiti, ali pre svega, filozofski tekstovi se mogu književno oblikovati. Takođe, pokazuje se da u jednom istorijskom periodu filozofija neke književne forme preuzima, a u drugom periodu određene forme pozajmljuje iz književnosti.

Ključne reči: *filozofija, književnost, roman, esej, dijalog, poema*