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Original Research Article

Analysis of Jean Dubuffet's Paintings Based on the Elements of Sartre's Existentialism

Mansour Hesami Kermani[1]; **Mahila Hesami**[2]

1. Corresponding Author, Associate Professor, Department of Painting, Faculty of Art, Alzahra University, Tehran, Iran.
E-mail: m.hessami@alzahra.ac.ir
2. Master's in Painting, Faculty of Art, Alzahra University, Tehran, Iran.

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Abstract

Introduction: Existentialism is one of the most significant trends in Western philosophy, with Jean-Paul Sartre playing a pivotal role in its development, focusing on human identity, freedom, loneliness, and anxiety. The post-World War II period, marked by widespread despair, was a time when art and philosophy significantly influenced each other. Studying artworks created during this era showcases the reflection of philosophy in art. The thoughts, ideas, and works of Sartre and Jean Dubuffet are the result of years intertwined with war, and the influence of Sartre's philosophy on Dubuffet's art is worthy of examination and study. The main question is, «How can Jean Dubuffet's paintings be studied based on Sartre's existential philosophy?»

Research Method: This qualitative study used a descriptive-analytical and comparative method, with data collection based on library resources.

Findings: The study of key elements of existentialism, such as the precedence of existence over essence, individual responsibility, the absurdity of the world, and loneliness, in Dubuffet's paintings reveals that these concepts are widely reflected in his works. Dubuffet is one of the important painters after World War II who preferred self-learning over the academic rules of art.

Conclusion: By employing his unique techniques, Dubuffet has clearly reflected existentialist concepts in his works, and a close connection exists between Sartre's philosophy and his paintings.

Keywords

Philosophy, Painting, Existentialism, Jean-Paul Sartre, Jean Dubuffet

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Introduction and Problem Definition

In the early years following World War I, the term «Existentialism» emerged as a philosophical trend, introduced by a group of philosophers in this field, including Heidegger, Kierkegaard, and Sartre, in Europe. This thought not only spread in cultural and academic circles after World War II but also permeated the entire cultural atmosphere of society. The philosophy of existentialism begins with man and arose in contrast to previous philosophical schools that believed in «the destiny of nature over existence». Jean-Paul Sartre, a philosopher, novelist, playwright, political activist, and literary and artistic critic, is a key figure in existentialism. He believes that humans are the foundation of the world, and without humans, the world would not exist. According to Jean-Paul Sartre, existence precedes essence, meaning a person exists before being defined by any concept. Sartre's existentialism places special emphasis on human freedom, considering it a free choice, and from this freedom of choice comes responsibility. Existentialism posits that humanity's current challenge is that it has forgotten the value and meaning of its own life. A review of the titles of artistic works created in recent years reveals the influence of contemporary philosophy and psychology on art. Jean Dubuffet was one of the important painters of the post-World War II era who preferred spontaneous rawness over adherence to traditional academic artistic rules. At a time when Sartre's existentialism was influential in art, this influence is clearly observable in Jean Dubuffet's works. From this perspective, the primary objective of this research is to explain Jean Dubuffet's paintings in relation to Sartre's philosophy of existentialism. Therefore, the authors, relying on library resources and employing descriptive-analytical and comparative methods, aim to explore how Jean Dubuffet's paintings can be studied in light of Sartre's philosophy of existentialism. In his works, Dubuffet focused on moments that depicted feelings of isolation and the meaningfulness of life, as well as showcasing existential anxiety, nothingness, and freedom, which are key elements of Sartre's existentialism. He was able to create a raw sense and an open, unpretentious, clear, and bold expression that directly penetrated the viewer's existence with the courage and childlike quality of his works, representing the ideas of existentialism in his art.

Research Method

Heidegger says: «Comparison and contrast is a method and approach for identification that ultimately leads to judgment and makes analysis and evaluation easier» (Heidegger, 2005, 57). Comparison and contrast, as a research method in today's world, is essential because comparative studies are often more open and enlightening than other types of studies. For this reason, the present research employs a qualitative, descriptive-analytical, and comparative research method. The method of gathering data about Sartre's thoughts is through library resources and articles, while the method of gathering the artist's paintings is from reputable museums worldwide. With these methods, the aim is to analyze the paintings of Jean Dubuffet and compare them with the ideas of Jean-Paul Sartre. The article's structure is such that it first examines Sartre's biography and his ideas and theories on existentialism. Then, the life and activities of Jean Dubuffet are studied, and finally, several paintings from Dubuffet's works are analyzed in light of the components of existentialism. Among Dubuffet's notable paintings, most of which contain Sartre's existential components, three works were randomly selected.

Research Background

The most comprehensive book about Jean-Paul Sartre was published by «Ahmadi» (2021) entitled «Sartre, Who Wrote», on the centenary of Sartre's birth. In this book, drawing on Sartre's French works and, of course, the writings by English-speaking authors about Sartre's works, the author elaborates on Sartre's theories and views, providing detailed explanations of Sartre's life and representing his works. Another significant work by «Sartre» (1976), is the book «Existentialism and Humanism», which was written in 1946. This book offers a comprehensive and complete summary of Sartre's philosophy. This text is a simple book prepared for public use, containing examples of critiques of this type of philosophy. Another important work by «Sartre» (2021) is the book «Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology». This book is referred to as the «Bible of Existentialism». The book «Existential Psychoanalysis», is also part of the book «Being and Nothingness». In this book, Sartre presents a philosophical narrative that, from his perspective on existentialism, addresses topics such as consciousness, perception, social philosophy, self-deception, the existence of «being», psychoanalysis, and the issue of will . Among the articles written on existentialism, one can refer to «The Foundations of Existentialism» by «Mardani Nokandeh» (2002), which briefly outlines the main principles of existentialist philosophy in four pages. Of other studies conducted that refer to the relationship between paintings and Sartre's existentialism, one can mention the article entitled "The Manifestation of Human Freedom in Jean-Paul Sartre's Works in Edward Hopper's Paintings" by "MohaMmadshahi" (2020). The author concludes that all the elements used in Hopper's works contribute to conveying the concept of existentialism and depict human loneliness in the contemporary era. On the other hand, not much research has been conducted on Jean Dubuffet; the only instances we found are "Ahmadi maleki" (2000), in his article entitled "Jean Dubuffet in Pursuit of Unpretentious Expression," which describes and explains several of Dubuffet's works. Additionally, "Ardalani and Rahbar" (2018), in an article entitled "Revisiting the Concept of Deleuzian Body Without Organs in Three Works by Jean Dubuffet", examine the French philosopher's philosophical perspective through the artist's works. In Deleuze's rhizomatic thought, organization is considered akin to a body without organs or a specific body, and accordingly, the authors believe that Dubuffet's works, which lack the usual organ-like characteristics, can be interpreted. Finally, it should be noted that the distinguishing feature of the present research compared to the mentioned studies is that Dubuffet's works have not yet been analyzed and interpreted in detail in relation to Sartre's existentialism.

Jean-Paul Sartre

«Jean-Paul Sartre» (1905-1980) was a French philosopher, novelist, playwright, and political activist. In his article entitled «A Detailed Bibliography of Jean-Paul Sartre in Persian», «Hamidi» wrote that the first book by Sartre published in Iran was the play «The Wall» in 1941, translated by «Sadegh Hedayat». He noted that fifty-five of Sartre's works have been translated into Persian from various languages in Iran (Hamidi, 2017), indicating Sartre's fame and popularity in the country. Sartre received various literary awards, including the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1964 for his novel «Nausea», but he declined it because he believed that a writer should not be elevated to an official status. He is considered the intellectual and theoretical founder of existentialism, deriving his existential

ideas from «Heidegger» and influenced by «Hegel» and «Husserl»; however, unlike Heidegger, Sartre articulated existence in simple language and through stories and plays for the general public. The foundation of Sartre's philosophy of human authenticity is rooted in Aristotle's theory of «potentiality and actuality» (Sartre, 2004, 95). In Sartre's major works, objectification is emphasized in the fundamental realm of ontology. In many cases, Sartre's view resembles Hegelian phenomenology, which assumes a lack of part of human consciousness and human existence. In this work, Sartre asserts that one must distance oneself from the past and everything related to it, and plan for the future. Freedom is one of the main concepts of existentialism, so that people can recognize and utilize the concept of freedom (Kaka Soltani et al., 2019).

What Is Existentialism?

Existentialism is one of the most important philosophical and literary schools in the world, where the conscious actor is considered and directly confronts the truth of existence in the experience and meaning of existence, realizing the absurdity of their life. Ontology or existentialism speaks of humanity and its authenticity, emphasizing the priority of existence over essence and the absolute knowledge of the human being. Additionally, examples such as human responsibility, individuality, the meaninglessness of the world, fear and anxiety, freedom, loneliness, isolation, and existential conditions are prominent manifestations of the existentialist philosophical school (Pasban Zoghi et al., 2022). Existentialism gained prominence and attention with the publication of two famous books: One entitled «Being and Time» by Heidegger in 1927, and the other titled «Being and Nothingness» by Sartre in 1943. We will not delve into the history of the school of thought in question in this writing, as it would prolong the discussion. From Jean-Paul Sartre's perspective, existentialism has specific components. «The precedence of existence over essence» is the first component he considers. Sartre believes that «the existence of the existent means that existence cannot be derived from a possible being nor reduced to a necessary being». Necessity refers to the relationship between conceptual propositions, not to the relationship between phenomenal beings. One can never derive one entity from another in the sense that it exists. This is what we refer to as the unnecessary possibility of existence. Moreover, existence itself cannot arise from possible existence; the possible is the structure of the self. Existence in itself is never possible or impossible (Sartre, 2003, 22, quoted in Pasban Zoghi et al., 2022, 56). The reason that humans, as existential philosophers say, are indefinable is that they were nothing at first and will be nothing unless they become something later. At that time, they will become what they make of themselves (Macquarrie, 1998, 8). The second existential component is «commitment and responsibility». Sartre states that humans are thrown into the world, and there is no leader or coercive force to help them and share the burden of these decisions. We only know that we must do something; however, we don't even know exactly what that is. We must inevitably decide and choose, and only accept the responsibility for our decisions, with no guarantee that human decisions are correct; therefore, error, mistake, and evil are inherent to human existence. Sartre's view as an atheist is based on the perspective that there is no meaning or purpose to life outside of human will and power. Humans are such that they must be the sole creators of their own values and meanings of life. This is about a lonely human who has passed through many responsibilities and options in the world. This individual determines their own destiny and

creates their own nature throughout life. Sartre believes that through their choices, individuals make everyone responsible, meaning that through choice, humans create their own nature and commit themselves to others, with the primary responsibility in choice stemming from the commitment to others. Their choice gives meaning to themselves; therefore, in reality, they are not formed by action alone, and freedom is rooted in choice and action, which is the only factor that determines their condition (Ahmadi, 2008, 123). The next element is «individuality». Existentialists did not interpret individualism as mere solitude in human life; instead, they considered the interpretation of one's situation to be the most essential factor in the development of individuality. The existentialist school focuses on the individual, viewing them as a free human being who can be themselves. In this school, one must refrain from following others and prioritize one's inner desires over external influences. Each individual has needs and characteristics in common with others and can therefore be classified into human groups; however, the individual possesses unique personal characteristics that distinguish them from others. Individuality in human existence leads one to rely more on one's subjectivity than on common sense and to view the world through one's own perspective, will, and freedom. Conscious existence means being aware of the gap between one's consciousness and objects, as well as recognizing that the world's compulsion does not determine a single phenomenon, but rather is a phenomenon of the self. This understanding of the distance between the self and objects is a gap that separates the self from the realm of things. The aware resident is a realm of existence that has the power to separate itself from the world of objects; it questions possibilities, doubts, and pays attention to absences and what is not (Arjmand, 2013, 22). The next element is «the absurdity of the world and human life». Sartre's views and works suggest that he does not perceive life as having a function, purpose, or value; in other words, he rejects the significant synonyms associated with life, thereby rendering life meaningless. He defines meaning as useful, stating that the human condition is like that of a person who is abandoned, alone, and fearful. Amid all this terror and misery, there is no god to protect and guide you. Because there is no god at all. In fact, this life is meaningless. However, as long as we live in this world, we will certainly find meaning in our lives (Tabatabaei Dana et al., 2023). One of the most important existential components is «death». Sartre considers death and the finitude of humans as a «necessary condition» for human freedom. In his book «Being and Nothingness», Sartre enumerates the characteristics of death and writes: Death is the ultimate boundary of life. It has a unique characteristic. This means that my death is mine, and no one can die in my place. Death becomes individualized through internalization, and I am responsible for my death. Another characteristic of death is that one cannot await death, and death cannot be predicted for any specific date. Absurdity is another feature of death. Death does not allow for the realization of a presence in the world; rather, it is an ever-possible non-being of my possibilities that lies outside my capabilities, which signifies the end of all expectations. Another characteristic of death is the negation of the meaning of life, which can completely erase meaning from our existence. If there were no others, we would never know death, and it is with the death of the other that we have come to know death (Safavi Moghadam, 2013). «Freedom» is the next important element that forms the basis of existentialism. «Existentialist freedom is not abstract freedom; it is real freedom in transforming the existing situation» (Sartre, 2021, 19). In Sartre's concept, freedom means that individuals can choose a purpose for their lives using the knowledge they acquire about it. He relies on purpose to realize his essence.

Accordingly, humans can create the meaning of their lives and a meaningful world rooted in their freedom (Ahmadi, 2021, 225-227). Elsewhere, Sartre writes, «Man is freedom» and «Man is condemned to be free» (Sartre, 2021, 46). In Sartre's existentialist view, anxiety is presented as an essential aspect of human existence. Confronting the void and nothingness in the world creates dread and anxiety, which leads humans to seek meaning, value in life, and freedom. Anxiety is a common and constant feeling for an existentialist. Anxiety and dread arise from within a person and are different from the feeling of fear. The difference between the two is that fear arises in the face of reality, creatures, and real problems; however, anxiety and dread are factors that individuals feel when confronted with a problem that does not exist in the outside world. «Sartre» also believes about anxiety: «Anxiety is the constant possibility of confronting nothingness and discovering it as a phenomenon. In fact, it is an emergence of human reality in nothingness. Only in nothingness can being transcend. At the same time, from a perspective beyond the world, existence within the world is organized, which means, on the one hand, that human reality emerges as the manifestation of existence in non-existence, and on the other hand, it means that the world is suspended in non-existence. Anxiety is the discovery of this duality; eternal nothingness» (Sartre, 2003, 18, quoted in Pasban Zoghi et al., 2022). In his book «Existentialism and Humanism», Sartre refers to abandonment as a specific term of Heidegger and says that the meaning of this word is to say that there is no necessary being and all its implications must be accepted: «God does not exist, and we must adhere to all the consequences of atheism. When a person has neither an external nor an internal support, they are abandoned, helpless, and simply human». According to Sartre, it can be said that humanity does not have a predetermined destiny. Humans are alone and condemned to be free. Of course, Sartre believes in the existence of God, as evidenced by his later discussions on ethics. Sartre reminds us that «when we speak of abandonment, we mean only that God does not exist» (Sartre, 1976, 32). «Loneliness, as the third existentialist assumption, refers to the distance between oneself and others. A distance that exists even in intense relationships. Humans not only separate themselves from others and create their own world, but also create their own world from the universe. This type of loneliness is different from the other two types of loneliness, namely interpersonal and intrapersonal loneliness» (Yalom, 2007, 8). The components studied in this research delve into the depth of the human experience of loneliness, anxiety, and abandonment, placing these feelings within the context of freedom, choice, and the inherent absurdity of existence. In Sartre's philosophy, loneliness transcends a physical state; it is a profound existential condition. This feeling arises from the understanding that individuals are fundamentally isolated in their consciousness. Sartre believes that each person experiences life from their subjective perspective, leading to a sense of isolation or separation, where the individual becomes detached from others and experiences solitude or disconnection. Loneliness can also stem from the pursuit of authenticity. In a world where norms and social expectations compel individuals to conform, the pursuit of genuine self-expression can lead to a sense of alienation from oneself and others. This search for authenticity often leaves individuals alone as they navigate their unique paths. In a world dominated by norms and social expectations, individuals are often pressured to conform to these standards. This pressure can lead to a sense of alienation and a feeling of distance from one's true self. The feeling of loneliness can induce anxiety; as we have described, anxiety in Sartre's existentialism is a fundamental aspect of the human condition that arises from an individual's awareness of their freedom

and the weight of responsibility that accompanies it. Sartre describes anxiety as the recognition of the inherent uncertainty and absurdity of existence. In Sartre's existentialism, loneliness, anxiety, and abandonment are interrelated experiences that encapsulate the human condition. They reflect the struggle for authenticity in a world characterized by freedom and uncertainty. Sartre encourages individuals to confront these feelings, embrace their freedom, and take responsibility for their choices. Through this confrontation, one can create a meaningful existence amidst the inherent absurdity of life.

Jean Dubuffet

«Jean Dubuffet» (1901-1985), a French painter and sculptor, was one of the most diligent and outstanding artists of the 20th century, especially in the post-World War II era. As a teenager, he entered the «Julian Academy», which was governed by classical art standards; however, he soon realized that academic principles did not align with his spirit. He left and spent twenty-five years studying folk art, mural painting, and the works of various social classes, especially children and individuals with mental disorders. The book «Hans Prinzhorn», entitled «The Sculptures of the Insane», which explored the art of the mentally ill, played a significant role in helping Dubuffet discover his ultimate goal (Ahmadi Maleki, 2000, 98). Jean Dubuffet, who held his first solo exhibition in 1944, set aside painting for over a decade. From then on, he quickly became famous due to the revealing nature of his works. He had a special interest and attention towards the art of children, amateurs, the insane, and the mentally disturbed, and all those who did not consider themselves artists. He collected a large number of these works, referring to them as «true examples of human creation», and exhibited them. He referred to them as «raw art» and reflected aspects of this art in his own artistic creations without any conditions. Occasionally, he drew inspiration from the graffiti of Paris in his work. Among his collections were «The Ladies' Bodies», reminiscent of graffiti inside public toilets, created by scratching thick paint, and his other collections, «The Cows», «The Bearded Men», and «The Ground», were easily mistaken for abstract works. Another of his collections was «The Bustling Scenes of Paris» in 1959. From this time onward, his paintings became noteworthy for three reasons: First, due to their themes of the downtrodden, and second, because of their strong imagery and beautiful coloring. His illustrations are rough and devoid of finesse, utilizing materials and dense textures more commonly associated with abstract painting, and they are figurative (Lynton, 2014, 319-323). Jensen also writes about him in the book «History of World Art»: «The distinction between «normal» and «abnormal» struck him as no less justifiable than official opinions on «beauty» and «ugliness». Since the time of «Marcel Duchamp», no other artist has engaged in such a fundamental critique (Janson et al., 2015, 985). Jean Dubuffet is one of the artists who strive to explore all the possibilities provided by the tools and surfaces of the post-war period, following World War II (Al-kizwini et al., 2020). Dubuffet knows how to control the tools he uses and adapt them to his ideas. He writes about these materials: I have always liked to use materials in my productions that at first glance no one thinks of, because these materials are so common and close to us that they seem unsuitable for anything. I am pleased to announce that my art is an effort to reclaim values that have been previously criticized. The dust of the soul attracts me more than flowers, women, or horses, because I have a strange feeling (Al-kizwini et al, 2020). Imagination plays an essential role in the scenes of his paintings.

The Manifestation of Existentialism Components in Dubuffet's Works

There are two general approaches to the aesthetic understanding of a work of art. First, it presents the work of art as comprehensible solely by referring to sensory perception or by referring to semiotic conventions. From this perspective, understanding the work has no connection to its historical contexts, or these contexts are written off as irrelevant; thus, the work of art offers the possibility of transhistorical communication. This approach pertains only to the material-experiential characteristic of human perception when confronted with the work. This confrontation is considered either as the cognitive function of the human mind, which is timeless or transcendent, or as semiotic knowledge that transcends the historical perspective. In the second approach, the work is always defined, understood, and interpreted in terms of the historical context of its creation and the audience's reception. Obviously, this approach is interpretative, considering the distance and gap between the historical horizon of the work's discovery and the historical horizon of its reception as significant, while also being grounded in social distinctions and differences in interpretation (Ahmadi, 2015, 388-390). Sartre also believes that an artwork does not exist unless it is viewed from another perspective. The most crucial feature of existentialist thought is individuality. Jean Dubuffet's paintings underwent numerous formal changes. Formal changes refer to alterations in the structure or shape of an object or idea. His works often feature deformed shapes and figures, blended with intense and vivid colors and strokes of contrasting hues. Many of his works are characterized by being confined to a very tight space, which has a profound psychological impact on the audience. For example, Fig 1, created by him in 1947, depicts a person's face that occupies most of the painting's space. The facial form is simplified through abstraction and simple lines. The face is painted with a combination of yellow and golden tonalities, featuring a substantial amount of color and a volumetric texture, reminiscent of the initial form of a human skull. The thick yellow part is painted on a black background, seemingly created by mixing multiple colors, then scratched with a sharp yellow object from the black background, revealing the facial lines. It seems that the painter intended to depict the passage of time or aging by placing horizontal lines on the forehead, frown lines, and deep smile lines on the face. Even the round glasses on the small, closely set eyes lend support to this claim. The figure's face is outlined with quick, thin brush strokes in yellow and orange, and the figure's hair is depicted with several small spiral forms on the face, several curved lines scattered on both sides of the head in parallel, and a few short vertical lines above the head. The bright color of the face contrasts with the black background of the painting, symbolizing the dichotomy between life and death. The figure's head is proportionally larger than the body, and the body features a very simple and childlike male collar and tie. The round, yellow eyes surrounding the pupils, along with the figure's floating hair, convey a sense of anxiety and restlessness. The skull-like and bony form of the face, along with the two intersecting orange lines on the neck, evokes a sense of death. The texture of the face conveys the feeling of facial flesh decomposing within the black background, with scattered brown dots that represent soil and a grave. Dubuffet, using simple lines and abstract forms, distances himself from reality and focuses on depicting the character's emotions and psychological state. This choice may indicate the character's isolation and disconnection from the surrounding world. The unconventional proportions and the larger head compared to the body symbolize contemplation and introspection. This disproportion can hint at a sense of imbalance and identity crisis. The use of warm and cool colors, such as yellow and gold, which symbolize

life and energy, contrasts with the black background, representing death and absence. This contrast gives the viewer the feeling that the character is on the border between life and death; additionally, the volumetric texture and the use of rich colors enhance the tangible and physical quality of the face. This feature can refer to the visualization of deep emotions and human experiences. The work aligns well with the concepts of existentialism. The character seems to be searching for identity and meaning in a meaningless world. This feeling of search and loneliness is particularly evident in his face and expression. The duality between life and death is effectively conveyed through the use of color and form. This theme can lead to reflection on the value of life and human experiences. The state of anxiety and apprehension visible on the character's face may point to their deep emotional and psychological experiences. These emotions can stem from social pressures, expectations, and personal failures. Eyes can be considered the mirror of the soul. The character's round and yellow eyes not only indicate a state of anxiety but can also symbolize a quest for truth and self-discovery. These features give the viewer the feeling that the character is struggling with their inner self. The black background acts as a symbol of non-existence and death. This background not only highlights the face but also reinforces the feeling of loneliness and isolation. This contrast conveys to the audience the feeling that the character lives in a dark and ruthless world. The work «Grand Maitre of the Outsider» deeply explores the human and psychological dimensions. Dubuffet, using abstract forms, contrasting colors, and rich textures, depicts complex emotions that allow the viewer to immerse themselves in the character's inner world. This work is not just a portrait of a solitary individual; it also represents the human challenges of searching for meaning and identity in the modern world. The subject of the painting is a solitary individual who stares at the viewer with an anxious expression. The use of simple and abstract forms in the depiction of the face indicates Dubuffet's desire to distance art from natural realities and to approach the mental and emotional dimensions. This approach can contribute to a deeper understanding of human character and psychology.

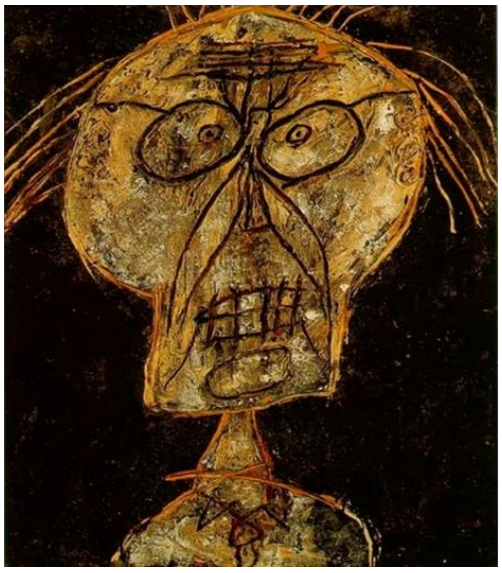


Fig 1. Title: «Grand Maitre of the Outsider» Date: 1947. Style: Naïve art. Material: Oil paint, emulsion on canvas, size: 116×89.
Source: Wikiart, 2012.

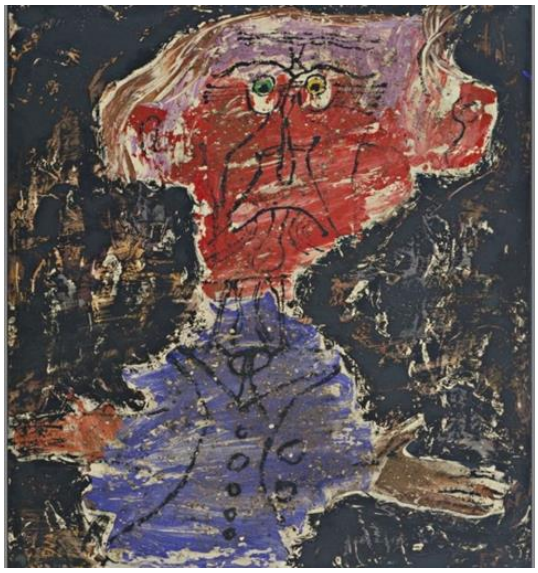


Fig 2. Title: «Redskin- Sorcerer». Technique: Oil paint with sand and pebbles on canvas, Date: November 1946, Size: 92.1×73cm.
Source: Moma, 1985.

The second artwork under study by this artist is titled «Redskin Sorcerer» (Fig 2), created in 1946. Its technique is oil on canvas with pebbles and sand. This piece depicts a human with red skin, which occupies most of the work. The background color contrasts significantly with the figure. The face is red, with facial features drawn in black lines. The eyes are small, surrounded by white around the pupils. In the white areas, red spots can be seen, evoking a sense of anxiety and sorrow in the viewer, as if the figure has cried so much that the whites of their eyes have turned red. The figure's right eye is yellow, and its left eye is green. The eyebrows are depicted with two connected lines. Around the eyes, parallel horizontal black lines are drawn, and these lines are repeated on the forehead, suggesting that the model was an elderly person, as if the artist aimed to depict the passage of time. The figure's hair is shown in white and light brown, which can be considered the most delicate part of the painting. Deep wrinkles around the lips and mouth are drawn. The figure's mouth is depicted with a curved line that conveys a sense of sadness. The color of the figure's forehead differs from the rest of its face and is pink. The ears are the most prominent feature of the face. The body of the figure is depicted in a deformed shape, colored purple, with black lines outlining the form of a tie and jacket. The figure's hands express helplessness and despair, as if asking the audience, «What should I do?» The overall state of the figure is distressed. The background color is dark blue, with abstract lines drawn on it using sand and pebbles. Pebbles and sand cover the entire head of the figure. In general, Sartre's elements of anxiety due to the facial expression and eye state, loneliness and individuality, the absurdity of the world and human life, abandonment, commitment, and responsibility are displayed. Sartre believes that humans shape their essence through their actions and choices. Dubuffet's works vividly illustrate this concept by depicting raw and immature forms that challenge traditional artistic norms. In this context, «Redskin Sorcerer»

can symbolize the individual's freedom to express their identity and existence without conforming to social expectations. Sartre also emphasizes the importance of authenticity, which involves living by one's true self. Dubuffet's art, renowned for its simplicity and childlike qualities, challenges the concept of high art and invites viewers to reevaluate their understanding of authenticity. The character of the sorcerer may represent authenticity, embracing a unique identity against social norms. In the world of existentialism, absurdity is a key theme. Absurdity refers to the meaninglessness or discord between the human quest for meaning and order in life and the meaningless and chaotic realities one faces. Absurdity reflects the contradiction that humans experience in their struggle to find meaning in a world that seems meaningless and indifferent. In this context, humans must come to terms with the reality that life may have no inherent purpose or meaning and must therefore create their own meaning. The whimsical and fanciful elements in «Redskin Sorcerer» can symbolize the absurd nature of existence. This character may represent the struggle to find meaning in a chaotic world, an idea that aligns with Sartre's notion that individuals must create meaning in the face of the absurdity surrounding them. Sartre also examines the concept of alienation as a consequence of freedom. The unconventional imagery of this work can evoke a sense of alienation both in the character and the audience. This alienation highlights the freedom of existence outside social norms and shows that true freedom comes with the burden of choice and the possibility of isolation. Sartre's concept of «look» also explores how others objectify individuals. In Dubuffet's works, the vibrant and exaggerated features of the witch can challenge viewers' perceptions and prompt them to reflect on their own objectification and the nature of perception. This interaction between the viewer and the artwork exemplifies the existential struggle to define oneself. Ultimately, «Redskin Sorcerer» serves as a rich work for examining Sartre's existentialism. With themes such as authenticity, absurdity, and the quest for meaning, Dubuffet's works depict a profound reflection on individual freedom and the complex nature of existence. The sorcerer, as a symbol of this existential journey, embodies the struggle to create one's essence amidst the chaos of life. The next painting under review (Fig 3), entitled «Head of a Girl from the Assemblages d'empreintes series», was created in 1954. Its technique is oil on canvas, and according to the title, it depicts the head of a girl without any distinguishing features that could indicate the figure's gender. The girl's face appears to be mummified or covered with a bright substance. The color and texture of the face and body differ from the color around the eyes, nose, and mouth. Dubuffet explores the relationship between body and soul. The face depicted in this painting could represent the tension between physical existence and inner experiences. The portrait is positioned in the central part of the canvas, and its colors create a stark contrast with the black background. The eyes are drawn with two black spots amidst yellowish circles, as if they are bulging out of their sockets, evoking a sense of fear and anxiety in the viewer. The girl conveys loneliness, isolation, and separation, which can be seen as a reflection of the human experience in the modern world. Sartre says: «We are alone, without a pretext to excuse us. This is the same meaning I express with the phrase 'man is condemned to be free.' Man is condemned because he did not create himself and yet is free; because once he is thrown into the world, he is responsible for everything he does» (Sartre, 1976, 36). Existence and identity are among the components studied in this work.



Fig 3. Title: «Head of a Girl from the Assemblages d'empreintes series» Technique: Oil paint on canvas. Size: 24.1×28.6 Date: 1954, Access number: 630.1994. Source: Moma, 1985.

Dubuffet explores human identity in this painting. The girl's face is depicted, and the attention to detail, such as the fingerprint-like patterns, may symbolize an individual's search for self-understanding and their place in the world. In Dubuffet's works, the uncertainty and meaninglessness of life are clearly felt. This painting may represent an individual's struggle to find meaning in a world that seems aimless and devoid of purpose. The contrast between the figure and the background in this piece, like in other examined works, is intense, and it appears that Dubuffet seeks to depict the conflict between existence and non-existence or life and death. The nose is at the center of the image and is marked with two dots. The mouth is drawn with a zigzag or broken line, evoking a sense of excitement, confusion, and tension. The thin line of the mouth and the small dots of the eyes and nose in the face, compared to the previous two works, indicate the fragility and delicacy of the figure, perhaps to convey a sense of feminine identity. Brown and red spots are seen above the figure's head, evoking a sense of bloodlessness. As an artistic piece, this work explores the key concepts of Sartrean existentialism and depicts deep dimensions of human existence; it can also be seen as a manifestation of inner tensions and the search for meaning in the modern world. Sartre believes that «existence precedes essence», meaning that humans first exist and then shape their identity and essence through their choices and actions. In «Head of a Girl», the absence of clear gender signs suggests that human identity extends beyond physical characteristics and is shaped by individual choices and experiences. This work reminds us that each person is responsible for creating their own identity, and this responsibility can be a heavy burden. Sartre emphasizes the solitude of humans in the modern world, noting that in their quest for meaning, they frequently experience feelings of isolation and alienation. The girl's face in the painting, with exaggerated and frightening features, conveys a sense of loneliness and anxiety to the viewer. Dubuffet's painting, with its unconventional colors and textures, can symbolize this absurdity. The girl's face is designed to depict a sense of uncertainty and meaninglessness. This work illustrates the individual's struggle to find meaning in a world that seems aimless

and meaningless, and with its delicate and fragile features, it highlights the vulnerability of humans in the face of existential challenges. These features may suggest a feminine gender; however, they can also represent human weakness and fragility in the face of life's pressures, with the red and brown spots symbolizing that humans are always at risk and vulnerable in their pursuit of meaning. Ultimately, «Head of a Girl» is not just a portrait, but a profound exploration of human conditions and the search for existence, reminding us that in a purposeless and meaningless world, humans are responsible for creating their own identity and meaning. In summary, and to reflect Sartre's existential philosophy in Dubuffet's paintings, one can refer to Table 1.

Table 1. Comparison of Sartre's existentialism components with the works studied by Jean Dubuffet. Source: Authors.

The works of Jean Dubuffet	The Components of Sartre's Existentialism		
	Anxiety and Apprehension	**Thrownness**	**Loneliness**
Fig 1	The passage of time → the absurdity of the world and the conflict between life and death Individuality, commitment, and responsibility, loneliness, reflection on the value of life Alienation of the self from the surrounding world Anxiety and restlessness, being thrown into a world without any refuge.		
Fig 2	The passage of time and aging → death and nothingness, the duality between life and death. Individuality, commitment, and responsibility, loneliness, the struggle to find meaning in a chaotic world. Anxiety, thrownness, the absurdity of the world.		
Fig 3	The conflict between life and death, human vulnerability in the face of existential challenges, and the struggle to find meaning in a absurd world. The feeling of alienation in the character and the audience, the conflict with social norms and societal expectations. Individuality, commitment, and responsibility, loneliness. Anxiety and apprehension. Existence and identity, the struggle to understand oneself and one's place in the world. The relationship between body and soul.		

Conclusion

Based on the study of three randomly selected works by Jean Dubuffet and the extraction of components, it was concluded that Sartre's existentialist viewpoint is evident in most of Dubuffet's works. Among the principles of existentialism, Sartre's primary concern is the subject of human freedom, and Dubuffet, through the expansion of «raw art», exemplifies one aspect of human freedom. The emphasis on humanity reaches its peak for Sartre, who considers freedom to be the most fundamental characteristic of humans. Freedom that creates responsibility and commitment, and for this reason, induces anxiety in humans. In most of Dubuffet's works, due to their singular and figurative nature, the state of the eyes, the dominant colors, the connection and proximity to the worlds of children and madmen,

and the adherence to raw art convey feelings of anxiety, isolation, loneliness, individuality, commitment, responsibility, and freedom. Through the study of the art of children and the mentally ill, Jean Dubuffet has well understood human anxiety, loneliness, and other components, knows how to convey them in his works correctly, and effectively transmits a world full of anxiety and loneliness. Figures in most of his works are either suspended in space or staring at the audience with concern, which could indicate the alienation of humans and their being thrown into the world without any refuge. Accordingly, it can be concluded that the thoughts of Sartre and Dubuffet begin with human conditions and ultimately return to human conditions. The main characters in Dubuffet's works have vulnerable identities, which could be a manifestation of Sartre's existential alienation. It seems they are characters searching for the experience of life and self-knowledge in a dark and absurd world. In Sartre's existentialism, the outlook on life is more positive than in Dubuffet's paintings. In Dubuffet's paintings, all characters are depicted as people in a dark and bleak world. This research suggests that future studies should focus more on the works of Jean Dubuffet, considering the time of creation, and further investigate the works of children, the mentally ill, and patients hospitalized in the country's psychiatric hospitals, comparing his works with these. Additionally, some of his later works can be compared with those of contemporary artists.

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