

The Liar is one of the Danish writer Martin A. Hansen's best known and popular novels. The Liar is influenced by existentialism, one can call it a work of Christian existentialism. In my thesis I demonstrate which main features of Christian existentialism are present in the novel.

In the first part I describe existentialism as philosophy. Existentialism came from France to Denmark. It is

a philosophy that focuses on the concrete individual. People must create their own existence by accepting responsibility for their action. The important concepts are freedom, choice and responsibility. They denote the authentic existence. People in the inauthentic existence are passive, they don't act and don't accept responsibility. Existentialism takes up the question of freedom, too. But one is condemned to freedom and can't escape. That's why the world is absurd and incomprehensible.

One can find most of the existentialist elements in The Liar. The protagonist Johannes Vig lives an inauthentic existence. He likes to lie to the people. He is passive, he doesn't act. In the middle of the novel he understands that he didn't live right and tries to find a better way of living. It is not easy, Johannes has lost the fight about Annemari (the girl he loves) and slept with Rigmor (the woman who loves him). But now he has decided to live in a responsible way. He starts to write a topographic book about the island. One may think that the novel ends with a happy ending. But as the title of the novel indicates, Johannes is a liar, therefore the reader cannot trust him.

Christianity is very important in the novel. Johannes gradually finds the way to God. That's why it's correct to call the novel a work of Christian existentialism. The Christian symbols in Hansen's novel reinforce this. The author uses the symbols to make the text richer. The symbols anticipate the action, too. Last but not least, the Christian symbols correspond with the existentialist dimension of the novel.