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### **Sources of forming the author's position in Benjamin Franklin's «The Silence Dogood Letters» essay**

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**Temchur K. Sources of forming the author's position in Benjamin Franklin's «The Silence Dogood Letters» essay.** The article analyzes peculiarities of Benjamin Franklin's publishing and journalistic work, based on the essay «The Silence Dogood Letters». Here we establish different sources of the written work and the reflection of the author's political and life views into it. Using the scientific and periodical data, background and information sources, we find the origins of the author's position in «The Letters», which we conditionally divide into the following thematic groups: 1) descent and family relations; 2) parenting and life stories; 3) personal experience; 4) literary preferences of the author. The main features of the work we define as: unobtrusive statement of ideas in conjunction with a clear author's position; the religious and at the same time democratic nature of the author's ideological beliefs; respect for knowledge and scientific research. According to the results of the comparative analysis of the work «The Silence Dogood Letters» and the established primary literary sources, it was concluded that the correlations between their contents (in particular, the plot) and the forms existed. It can be explained through a wide use of popular editions by a young autor as a literary ground for his text, besides they influenced the most on forming his personality. Among them, the English magazine «The Spectator» of Addison and Steele and an allegorical novel of the puritan writer John Bunyan «The Pilgrim's Progress from This World to That Which Is to Come». The work of the latter, in our opinion, had the greatest influence on the

formation of the author's position and the architectonics of «The Letters», and an essay from the magazine «The Spectator» – on the choice of form and individual fragments of the analyzed work.

**Keywords:** *USA journalism, history of American literature, XVIII century.*

**Темчур К. О. Джерела формування авторської позиції в есе Бенджаміна Франкліна «Листи Сайленс Дугут».** У статті проаналізовано особливості видавничої та журналістської діяльності Бенджаміна Франкліна на прикладі есе «Листи Сайленс Дугуд». Встановлено джерела написання твору та відбиття в ньому політичних та життєвих поглядів автора. На підставі даних наукових праць та періодичних, довідкових, інформаційних джерел визначено джерела формування авторської позиції в «Листах», які умовно поділено на такі тематичні групи: 1) походження та родинні зв'язки; 2) виховання та життєві погляди; 3) особистий досвід; 4) літературні вподобання автора. Характерними ознаками твору визначено: ненав'язливий виклад ідей у поєднанні з чіткою авторською позицією; релігійний та водночас демократичний характер ідейних переконань автора; повага до знань та наукових пошуків. За результатами порівняльного аналізу твору «Листи Сайленс Дугуд» та встановлених літературних першоджерел зроблено висновок про кореляцію їх змістів (зокрема фабул) та форм. Це пояснюється тим, що молодий письменник використовував популярні видання як базу для написання власного твору, до того ж саме вони справили визначальний вплив на формування його особистості. Серед них особливе значення мали англійський журнал «Глядач» Аддісона та Стіла та алегоричний роман пуританського письменника Джона Баньяна «Шлях пілігрима». Твір останнього, на наш погляд, мав найбільший вплив на формування авторської позиції та архітектонику «Листів», а есе з журналу «Глядач» – на вибір форми та окремих фрагментів аналізованого твору.

**Ключові слова:** *журналістика США, історія американської літератури, XVIII століття.*

**Темчур К. О. Источники формирования авторской позиции в эссе Бенджамина Франклина «Письма Сайленс Дугут».** В статье проанализированы особенности издательской и журналистской деятельности Бенджамина Франклина на примере эссе «Письма Сайленс Дугут». Установлены источники написания произведения и отражения в нём политических и жизненных взглядов автора. На основании данных научных трудов и периодических, справочных, информационных источников определены источники формирования авторской позиции в «Письмах», которые условно разделены на такие тематические группы: 1) происхождение и семейные связи; 2) воспитание и жизненные взгляды; 3) личный опыт; 4) литературные предпочтения автора. Характерными чертами произведения определены: ненавязчивое изложение идей в сочетании с чёткой авторской позицией; религиозный и одновременно демократический характер идейных убеждений автора; уважение к знаниям и научным поискам. По результатам сравнительного анализа произведения «Письма Сайленс Дугут» и установленных литературных первоисточников сделан вывод о корреляции их содержания (в частности, фабул) и форм. Это объясняется тем, что молодой писатель использовал популярные издания как базу для написания собственного произведения, к тому же именно они оказали определяющее влияние на формирование его личности. Среди них особое значение имели английский журнал «Зритель» Аддисона и Стіла и аллегорический роман пуританского писателя Джона Баньяна «Путь пилигрима». Произведение последнего, на наш взгляд, имело наибольшее влияние на формирование авторской позиции и архитектонику «Писем», а эссе из журнала «Зритель» – на выбор формы и отдельных фрагментов анализируемого текста.

**Ключевые слова:** *журналистика США, история американской литературы, XVIII век.*

Biography and intellectual activity of the prominent educator, philosopher, writer, publisher, scholar, public and political figure, diplomat, one of the authors of the Declaration of Independence (1776) and the Constitution of the United States of America (1787) Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) have always been the subject of the interest of a large number of researchers in various fields of knowledge. Articles about him can be found in the Encyclopedic Dictionary by Brockhaus and Efron [13], the multivolume edition of «World History of Economic Thought» [9], in a series of publications «The Life of Remarkable People» [5]. They became the subject of scientific works: such as, for example, the full research work of Ya. V. Abramov «Benjamin Franklin, his life, social and scientific activity: a biographical profile» [1], the first biographical essay about Franklin in Russian by Andrei Turgenev [11] and even modern printed publications [2, 7, 8, 15].

Therefore, one can assure that personality of Benjamin Franklin was interesting not only to his contemporaries. However, Franklin's political, scientific, and social activities were the subject of

a detailed analysis of these works at first. Scientists are most interested in the personality of Franklin as the author of the theory of atmosphere electricity, the inventor of Thunderbolt, the forerunner of labor ethics and the economic theory of labor value. It can be stated that now there is no thorough scientific research devoted to the study of Benjamin Franklin's publishing and journalistic work, which constituted the greatest part of his interests. This work aims to fill this gap partially.

And today, researchers have a fertile ground for analyzing information on Benjamin Franklin's life and work. So, in 2006, an international conference, devoted to the Franklin's 300th anniversary, was held, in which such prominent scholars as Academician A. A. Fursenko, S. E. Prince, the director of the Museum of the American Philosophical Society, created by Franklin, and researchers from London, the USA, the Netherlands took part. Therefore, one can state that the study of the life, social and professional activities of B. Franklin will remain relevant in the future.

This work belongs to a few scholarly works, devoted explicitly to Benjamin Franklin's publishing and journalistic work.

For the first time, «The Silence Dogood Letters» is analyzed from the point of view of the principles, which formed the author's position, and also we make a scientifically substantiated selection of its sources and factors of intertextual influence.

On the basis of it we propose our own classification of these sources.

The subject of the work is the peculiarity of Benjamin Franklin's publishing and journalistic work. We are to investigate specific features of his publishing and creative manner.

The object is the cycle of the essay by B. Franklin, known as the «The Silence Dogood Letters», which was published on the pages of «The New England Courant» in 1722.

The purpose of this work is to determine the peculiarities of B. Franklin's publishing and journalistic work, based on the analysis of artistic texts and scientific sources on the subject. In particular, we tend to draw a conclusion on the sources of writing the work «The Silence Dogood Letters» and the reflection of the author's political and life views.

The tasks of the article:

- definition of the ground for the emergence of a certain author's point of view in «The Silence Dogood Letters»;

- comparative analysis of the content of «The Silence Dogood Letters» to the content of literary sources, which formed the thought of the lyrical hero of the work.

In 1718, Benjamin enters the printing house of a brother as an apprentice of a printing house worker. Benjamin mastered quickly the skills of a printer, simple at the time, and began to perform a variety of functions at the company, including moulding of print and machine adjusting.

His first literary attempts refer to these years. At the age of 13, he wrote two ballads concerning the news of the day about a sea bastard and a shipwreck. These ballads were approved by an influential client of the printing house, who took care of Benjamin, and printed. Benjamin personally distributed the brochures that were in high demand, so the brother ordered them to Benjamin one by one [1, p. 233].

In 1721, when Benjamin was 15 years old, his brother James began publishing one of the first American periodicals, «The New England Courant». Benjamin set up and typed the issues of the newspaper, and then delivered them to

signers. Here appeared his first work in prose, signed by the pseudonym Silence Dogood.

The first publication, which took place on April 2, 1722, received good approvals not only by readers and authors of the newspaper, but by the editor himself. 13 more publications followed. The author on behalf of the widow Dogood spoke about moral, ethical and socio-political issues, showing his thoughts in the form of memoirs of an imaginary heroine. Written in a light style, these letters showed Franklin as a young man of greatest erudition, who was well aware of women's psychology [6, p. 390]. Wishing fame, Franklin revealed himself causing respect of his friends and anger of his brother and father. Since then their relationship became worse [12, p. 418].

The sources of author's position in «The Silence Dogood Letter» can be divided into the following thematic groups: 1) origin and family ties; 2) parenting and life stories; 3) personal experience; 4) literary preferences of the author.

The first category of sources is related to the origin of Franklin from the environment of English immigrants – in the vast majority of educated and talented people. Hiding from persecution for religious beliefs, they developed a system of democratic foundations of coexistence on new lands. Franklin's ancestors were engaged in active social and political life.

The second category reflects the Puritan education of Benjamin Franklin (connected with the first one) as well as the formation of rigorous religious and ethical norms and principles of life.

The third category reflects the tremendous importance of personal life experiences for the newcomer writers, whose first works are almost entirely built on the basis of real events. So, specific cases of Franklin's life have become elements of «The Silence Dogood Letters».

The fourth category is closely linked to the previous ones, because another source of the first literary attempts – the works of the developed writers. This category can take place, because Franklin had learned to read early («as if he was born with a book in his hands», as his father had said) and was marked by an incredible thirst for reading. And since the father's little library consisted mainly of religious-polemical works, their ideas reflected on the linguistic and meaningful canvas of «The Letters».

The primary factor in the formation of Benjamin Franklin's position as an author was, in our opinion, his origin from the environment of settlers. Emigrants understood religion as a way to knowledge, and the observance of divine laws,

according to their convictions, led to civil liberty. As Alexis Torville noted [14, p. 34], American civilization unbelievably combined «the religious spirit and the spirit of freedom».

Hence, there are the following views of Benjamin Franklin: 1) advocating the need for training (Letter 5 on the need for women's education); 2) understanding of knowledge as an ultimate goal, to which the thorny path lies (Letter 4 on the dream of the widow); 3) conviction of the need to adhere to the democratic principles of state and society (considerations regarding the service to the state in Letter 3).

Numerous troubles, that followed the Franklins as adherents of religious beliefs persecuted in England, have developed a tendency to research and firmness in defending the convictions.

Franklin's eldest uncle on the paternal line was the initiator of all social affairs in his hometown. The second uncle carefully investigated the state of modern political system. Franklin's father was the least educated among the brothers, but valued education highly and instilled respect to it from his children. Franklin's grandfather on his mother's side, Peter Folger, was among the first colonizers and the author of a number of brochures, one of which was printed. It was devoted to freedom of conscience and was directed against the oppression of the apostates of the Anglican Church. From him, Franklin inherited the principles of tolerance [1, p. 226]. These factors contributed to the development of the following features in the style of «The Silence Dogood Letters»:

- unobtrusive statement of ideas in conjunction with a clear position of the other;
- religious and democratic character of the author's ideological beliefs;
- respect for knowledge and scientific research.

Let's turn from determining the origins of semantic ambiguities of the work to the analysis of its vital basis. Everything that happened to Franklin during the period, as he remembered himself, came into the piggy bank, from which he drew the plot base of his first work in prose. In particular, such a detail is vivid: the Franklins lived at the seaside. It is possible that from the environment of migrants, who came to America by the sea, someone could tell the boy life stories related to the trip, whether the boy himself could have witnessed some kind of marine adventure. These stories came later to the text of the «Letters» as a description of the voyage of Mrs. Dogood's parents, which final point – New England – also coincides with the final point of the trip of Franklin's parents.

All free time in printing house Benjamin spent reading, even at night. He read everything that was in the small library of his father, and that he was able to get at his friends and acquaintances. Among Franklin's favorite works were Plutarch's "Life Notes", Defoe's «Experience of Projects», and «The Means to Do Good» by the puritan preacher Mater. One of the visitors of the printing house, a wealthy merchant, noticed a talented boy and allowed him to use his library [16, p. 27]. This event played a great role in Franklin's life, not only having made it possible to get acquainted with many classical works, but also entered the text of «The Letters» as part of the portrait of the church teacher of the author.

According to Y. V. Abramov [1, p. 233], the reason for writing «The Letters» was the dispute between Benjamin and a boy named Colins, who also liked to read about the need of women's education. Sharing the scholar's opinion, we add that in our opinion there were two other factors: 1) the content of Defoe's «Experience of Projects», in which the author substantiated the necessity of all kinds of social initiatives, including women's education; 2) Franklin's awareness of his ability to write not worse than the writers of the brother's newspaper «The New England Courant», made on hearing their talks. The controversy with Colins really did influenced the letters' writing. First, giving a theme to one of them; and, secondly, to some extent conditioned the very form – letters, because, feeling unable to defend their thoughts orally, Franklin decided to put them on paper; thus, the correspondence began.

Another important consequence of the controversy with Collins was the development of Franklin's peculiar manner of writing. The correspondence of the guys accidentally fell into the hands of Franklin's father, and the man made his son comments as to the literacy and style. At that time, the editors of «The Spectator» Addison and Steele enjoyed great popularity in British colonies. The style of this magazine was considered a model, and Benjamin began to sharpen the skill of writing on his model. In particular, he tried to reproduce the text of the journal independently and did so until he had achieved satisfactory results. No wonder, the young author borrowed from the magazine not only an indomitable style without imperative moralization, the opponent of which Franklin had already become, but also the plot and the form. The form of letters suited the Franklin's brother newspaper perfectly, which contained essays on

various issues that were published under pseudonyms [6, p. 391].

Why did Franklin use the very Silence Dogood as a pseudonym? Here it is worth pointing out the reasons for the use of the «mask»: 1) fear of dissatisfaction of his father, who believed: «All the poets sooner or later become slaves and tramps» [9, p. 195]; 2) the fear that the works will be taken for children's play and will not even be read. In an invaluable source of information about Franklin «Autobiography», he wrote that in his youth he had developed a method of moral improvement, which should also be related to the consequences of the Puritan upbringing. Of the 13 moral virtues, he put Silence to the second place, noting that «my desire being to gain knowledge at the same time that I improv'd in virtue, and considering that in conversation it was obtain'd rather by the use of the ears than of the tongue, and therefore wishing to break a habit I was getting into of prattling, punning, and joking, which only made me acceptable to trifling company» [11, p. 139]. According to this, he wrote in the column «Silence»: «Speak not but what may benefit others or your self. Avoid trifling Conversation» [11, p. 139]. Thus, the choice of the pseudonym was caused by the objective circumstances and fully corresponded to the moral and ethical settings of the author.

In order to reveal the common features in the content of «The Silence Dogood Letters» and primary sources, we chose two most significant, in our opinion, works that influenced the author's point of view: an essay from the magazine «The Spectator» and the novel by preacher John Bunyan «The Pilgrim's Progress from This World to That Which Is to Come».

In the first case there is a copying from the text canvas of the «The Spectator», as well as semantic reminiscences from it. Most obviously, copying of entire structures from the mentioned magazine should be shown in such a comparison of the first numbers of essays and «The Letters», when the beginning of the two works structurally coincides.

Already in the first essay, «Have observed, that a Reader seldom peruses a Book with Pleasure 'till he knows whether the Writer of it be a black or a fair Man, of a mild or choleric Disposition, Married or a Batchelor, with other Particulars of the like nature, that conduce very much to the right Understanding of an Author. To gratify this Curiosity, which is so natural to a Reader, I design this Paper, and my next, as Prefatory Discourses to my following Writings, and shall give some Account in them of the several persons that are

engaged in this Work». [3, p. 97]. These words coincide in content when they are superimposed on the initial words from the letter of Silence Dogood, in which only specific qualities are replaced, which fit the situation:

«And since it is observed, that the Generality of People, now a days, are unwilling either to commend or dispraise what they read, until they are in some measure informed who or what the Author of it is, whether he be poor or rich, old or young, a Schollar or a Leather Apron Man, &c. and give their Opinion of the Performance, according to the Knowledge which they have of the Author's Circumstances, it may not be amiss to begin with a short Account of my past Life and present Condition, that the Reader may not be at a Loss to judge whether or no my Lucubrations are worth his reading» [16, p. 8-11]. Silence Dogood also promises to continue the story of herself in the next letter.

Next, the author of «The Spectator» describes chronologically the events of his life, from behavior in childhood, college education, his current life, his habits and passion, life position. The same plan is followed by Franklin on behalf of Dogood. Further on, Addison adds: «I have given the Reader just so much of my History and Character, as to let him see I am not altogether unqualified for the Business I have undertaken» [3, p. 101]. At the beginning of her letter Silence said about passing the events of her life to the readers.

Addison's remark «if I can any way contribute to the Diversion or Improvement of the Country in which I live, I shall leave it, when I am summoned out of it, with the secret Satisfaction of thinking that I have not Lived in vain» [3, p. 101] in «The Letters» corresponds to the author's statement about trying to serve his fellow countrymen, to add to them with his letter entertainment and assertion that he has the ability to identify all sorts of mistakes, for each of which there will be the appropriate punishment, but on the contrary promises to encourage virtue. To some extent, it is also a periphrasis of Addison's promise «to march on boldly in the Cause of Virtue and good Sense, and to annoy their Adversaries» [3, p. 127]:

«Know then, That I am an Enemy to Vice, and a Friend to Vertue. I am one of an extensive Charity, and a great Forgiver of private Injuries: A hearty Lover of the Clergy and all good Men, and a mortal Enemy to arbitrary Government and unlimited Power. I am naturally very jealous for the Rights and Liberties of my Country; and the least appearance of an Inroach on those invaluable Priviledges, is apt to make my Blood

boil exceedingly. I have likewise a natural Inclination to observe and reprove the Faults of others, at which I have an excellent Faculty» – and further: «It is undoubtedly the Duty of all Persons to serve the Country they live in, according to their Abilities; <...> Let it suffice, that I now take up a Resolution, to do for the future all that lies in my Way for the Service of my Countrymen» [16, p. 13-14].

From «The Spectator» Franklin borrowed, obviously, the idea of using a mask.

Thus, the author of «The Spectator» asks to write him on behalf of a viewer to the address of Mr. Buckley's cafe (which, in fact, Dogood offers to her readers), explaining it as the need to conceal her identity because of the fear of becoming famous and unable to be a detected on-looker of British behavior and customs.

Further on, Addison often uses the method of publishing the readers' letters, to which Franklin appeals in the fifth letter, which raises the issue of female education. The position of the contributor, Dogood, also seems to have been copied from «The Spectator», who considered: «Their Amusements seem contrived for them [the weak sex – author] rather as they are Women, than as they are reasonable Creatures» [3, p.113]. This is explained by the fact that Franklin and Collins, during the discussions on women's education issues, had read the same works and, accordingly, took their ideas from them.

Particular attention deserve the essay No. 3 of March 3, 1711 and No. 21 of March 24, 1711, the elements of which are combined in the letter of Silence Dogood No. 4, which contains a description of her dreams.

So, with the second essay, the letter has a common view on the teaching of children, expressed by a viewer to explain the natural purpose of everyone in life: «in so great an Affair of Life, they should consider the Genius and Abilities of their Children, more than their own Inclinations» [3, p. 120] – with only difference that Dogood adds to personal preferences of parents, which is the thickness of their wallet. With the third essay, Dogood's letter is similar with a plot.

It is possible to argue about the origin of the method of dreams. After all, the same method was used in the cult book of John Bunyan's «The Pilgrim's Progress from This World to That Which Is to Come» [4] and, in our opinion, it was he, but not the work of Addison and Steele, that influenced Franklin's choice of storyline for this letter.

However, the common features with «The Spectator», of course, exist: first, the reception of

a dream; and then, the presence of joint action elements; and finally, the names of the heroes. The viewer describes his day-to-day visit to the bank hall, which caused his thoughts, which didn't leave him in his dream, in which he returned mentally. In Dogood's letter, it corresponds to the dream during her walk in the garden with a book. In spectator's dreams inside the hall there was a throne, on which the so-called Kredita sat – a character, according to the plan of the author. As to Silence, she starts her education, also according to the plan. Both these works have one common detail: those sitting on the throne have servants located on both sides of them. The names of the characters in the works also have a common allegorical nature: in «The Spectator» they are the ghosts that went in pairs, and then exchanged: Tirania and Anarchy were replaced by Freedom and Monarchy, Fantasy and Unbelief by Tolerance and Faith. As to Silence Dogood, it is Infertility, Ignorance, Plagiarism, etc. Franklin uses his own allegories and allusions: for example, when describing how Pekunia handcuffs the curtains, because the curtains are the euphemistic name of the money. When naming those present at the Temple of Theology, he describes the pauperous work of Plagiarism of borrowing eloquent places from the works of John Tillotson, the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury from 1691 to 1694, to decorate its own.

However, as it has been already noted, definitely, the idea of using the allegorical dreams Franklin took from the «The Pilgrim's Progress from This World to That Which Is to Come», since he had an incomparably greater significance for the author's outlook than Addison and Still magazine. «The Pilgrim's Progress from This World to That Which Is to Come» is one of the most famous works in English, the second for believers after the Bible, which, according to its religious significance, was very close to Franklin as a descendant of settlers. In addition, the reminiscences of this work can be found in the works of such famous writers as Defoe and Swift, therefore, borrowing is well grounded, given that the idea had multiple reflections in other works in one form or another.

The work of Bunyan tells in an allegorical form about the journey of a Christian to the Celestial City. The author laid the following basic ideas for it: 1) the path to eternal life is full of dangers and runs through the thirst and temptation; and much more important for understanding is the plan of Franklin – 2) all people make mistakes, and the way, that seems to be true, can turn out to be not just wrong but also disastrous. This idea is

echoed with the common view of the viewer and Dogood and, from our point of view, has two interpretations of Franklin: 1) the path to determining his mission is just as difficult as that of a Christian to the Celestial City; 2) not everyone will survive a difficult and long path to learning, especially with the absence of money.

It should not be forgotten that Franklin didn't go through his lack of education, and therefore could not resist to ridicule Harvard, which he hadn't entered, and which prototype he exploited in his works. Another demonstration of the fact that the text of Bunyan, not Addison and Steele, was the source is geographic similarities of the trails of Bunyan and Franklin's characters, as well as the identity of certain points, for example, Narrow Gate is the symbol of obstacles on the way to the goal. The mentioned above facts speak about the literary priority in the formation of the author's position of precisely «The Pilgrim's

Progress from This World to That Which Is to Come».

Conclusions. We can name the following sources of the formation of the author's position in «The Silence Dogood Letters» by Benjamin Franklin: 1) the origin and family relations of B. Franklin; 2) parenting and life stories; 3) personal experience; 4) literary preferences of the author. We came to the conclusion that the main literary sources of forming the position of the author were the English magazine «The Spectator» of Addison and Steele and the novel «The Pilgrim's Progress from This World to That Which Is to Come» by John Bunyan. And the advantage as to the importance is given to the latter. In our opinion, the work of John Bunyan had the greatest influence on the formation of the author's position and the architectonics of «The Letters», and an essay from the magazine «The Spectator» – on the choice of the form and individual fragments of this work.

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