EXISTENTIALISM AS LITERARY THEORY

(ABSTRACT)

By

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A Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirment for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

To

NORTH - EASTERN HILL UNIVERSITY

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In this project, I have attempted a comparative study of existentialism and other literary movements, with a view to establishing it as a distinct literary theory. A study of this type at the outset becomes inevitable due to the fact that different philosophical and literary movements are revived and abandoned in different epochs of human culture. Renaissance - Humanism is an instance of such an occurrence in human history. However, no revival is brought about in a complete imitation of the past. The revived movement will always be adjusted to the new demands of the time and situations. This fact and other circumstances, often present a revived movement in an entirely new form. Another difficulty, that is facing a student of comparative research is that the doctrines of different philosophical and literary movements are incorporated into one another. And the distinctive traits of particular movements are difficult to be traced out and grouped into the original movements to give them their proper classification and evaluation.

In this research 'existentialism as a literary theory', this problem had to be solved from the outset. If existentialism as a philosophical and literary movement is a repetition of the past events in their respective fields, it will be useless attempt to establish it as a new literary theory. Hence a fairly deep analysis of humanism, classicism and romanticism was needed to distinguish existentialism from these movements.

Besides existentialism was compared to the above movements, because of the claims made by scholars, even existentialists themselves feel that it is an off-shoot of humanism or romanticism. These are apparent similarities in their basic concepts. Hence all these aspects have to be analysed to distinguish existentialism as a distinct philosophical movement. The basic principle of existentialism is 'existence precedes essence'. When this principle is compared with the basic principle of other movements, we can distinguish its distinctive characteristics.

However, common concepts give more difficulties as we progress deeper into the problems. 'Individual' as understood by all these movements look similar. Since

they all speak of the liberty of the individual as a common characteristic, the peculiar ~~traits~~ of ic of the existential individual has to be distinguished. In existentialism the individual becomes a 'self'. Kierkegaard's analysis of the 'self' relates itself with despair to give the existential individual a unique position different from other movements. Besides, his division of existence into three existential spheres, helps to distinguish existentialism from other philosophical and literary movements.

After establishing the philosophical distinction, the next attempt is to show existentialism's distinct literary traits. It can be realized by the students of literary criticism that from the time of Coleridge onwards there was an attempt to relate philosophy and literature. Coleridge attempted this in the sphere of imagination. Kant and Schelling interpreted imagination as a faculty which could transform the external world. Schelling even held that the external world is created by the power of imagination. Coleridge did not go to the extend of attributing such idealistic functions to imagination, but held that imagination has the power of

creating values in the external world. It was a changed view of the power of inner faculties of man. Romantic literature was based on this idealistic principle of creativity.

Existentialism as a literary movement attributes distinctive functions to imagination. It is based on the existence of man in relation with other persons and the external world. Infact the external world and other persons have meaning for the existent, only from the awareness of his own existence in relation with the rest. These values created by the existent are changed into literary values by the power of imagination. Jean Paul Sartre holds freedom as the basic factor manifested by the function of imagination. It is through imagination that freedom comes into this world. Hence the distinctive characteristic of existentialism as a literary movement arises from the new existential interpretation of imagination.

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I certify that the thesis entitled "Existentialism As Literary Theory" submitted by Fr. Karipaparampil George for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the North-Eastern Hill University, Shillong embodies the record of original investigation carried out by him under my supervision. He has been duly registered and the thesis presented is worthy of being considered for the award of the Ph. D. Degree. This work has not been submitted for any degree of any other University.

Date: 19 April 1984
Place: Shillong

George A G

(GEORGE A G)
University Professor

C O N T E N T S

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SHILLONG
The 19th April, 1984

Fr. KARIPAPARAMPIL GEORGE

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In this project, I have attempted a comparative study of existentialism and other literary movements, with a view to establishing it as a distinct literary theory. A study of this type at the outset becomes inevitable due to the fact that different philosophical and literary movements are revived and abandoned in different epochs of human culture. Renaissance - Humanism is an instance of such an occurrence in human history. However, no revival is brought about in a complete imitation of the past. The revived movement will always be adjusted to the new demands of the time and situations. This fact and other circumstances, often present a revived movement in an entirely new form. Another difficulty, that is facing a student of comparative research is that the doctrines of different philosophical and literary movements are incorporated into one another. And the distinctive traits of particular movements are difficult to be traced out and grouped into the original movements to give them their proper classification and evaluation.

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Besides existentialism was compared to the above movements, because of the claims made by scholars, even existentialists themselves that it is an off-shoot of humanism or romanticism. These are apparent similarities in their basic concepts. Hence all these aspects have to be analysed to distinguish existentialism as a distinct philosophical movement. The basic principle of existentialism is 'existence precedes essence'. When this principle is compared with the basic principle of other movements, we can distinguish its distinctive characteristics.

However, common concepts give more difficulties as we progress deeper into the problems. 'Individual' as understood by all these movements look similar. Since

they all speak of the liberty of the individual as a common characteristic, the peculiar traits of the existential individual has to be distinguished. In existentialism the individual becomes a 'self'. Kierkegaard's analysis of the 'self' relates itself with despair to give the existential individual a unique position different from other movements. Besides, his division of existence into three existential spheres, helps to distinguish existentialism from other philosophical and literary movements.

After establishing the philosophical distinction, the next attempt is to show existentialism's distinct literary traits. It can be realized by the students of literary criticism that from the time of Coleridge onwards there was an attempt to relate philosophy and literature. Coleridge attempted this in the sphere of imagination. Kant and Schelling interpreted imagination as a faculty which could transform the external world. Schelling even held that the external world is created by the power of imagination. Coleridge did not go to the extend of attributing such idealistic functions to imagination, but held that imagination has the power of

creating values in the external world. It was a changed view of the power of inner faculties of man. Romantic literature was based on this idealistic principle of creativity.

Existentialism as a literary movement attributes distinctive functions to imagination. It is based on the existence of man in relation with other persons and the external world. Infact the external world and other persons have meaning for the existent, only from the awareness of his own existence in relation with the rest. These values created by the existent are changed into literary values by the power of imagination. Jean Paul Sartre holds freedom as the basic factor manifested by the function of imagination. It is through imagination that freedom comes into this world. Hence the distinctive characteristic of existentialism as a literary movement arises from the new existential interpretation of imagination.

CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

Philosophy tries to establish the purpose of man's life on earth. The different philosophical systems of the past have kept human mind in suspense with undying hopes for conclusive solutions to the varied human problems arising out of the search for the purpose of life. While every other science has advanced, philosophy seems to be perpetually revolving round the same point, without advancing a single step. Literature seems to be following the same beaten track, for its aim seems to be to arrive at the same goal of philosophy, but through different methods. Although both philosophical and literary movements have progressed through different routes, they seem to have met at some cross - roads, where both have gained from each other. The purpose of this research is to find out how 'existentialism' as a philosophical movement can be a literary movement at the same time. If we look back to the history of both philosophy and literature we can find several occasions in which both movements converged to produce notable results.

In Greece both Plato and Aristotle have related

philosophy to literature. It is a strange fact that Plato being a supreme stylist in prose, used poetic forms to condemn poetry. But his concept of poetry is high-rated. Whereas Aristotle, advanced a poetic theory through his treatise Poetics. The Poetics, written as far back as about 330 B.C. is a treatise on tragic poetry. Many fundamental problems relating to literature are advanced in it for the first time. Our point of interest is the concept of 'Imitation' or 'Mimesis' as explained by Aristotle. Here Aristotle explains the function of imitation as distinct from other intellectual activities usually followed by other sciences, but at the same time, the manner in which it is related to them. The aesthetic function of the mind is to imitate the external world through the 'universals'. The universals are permanent forms of thought and action which the poet uses for imitation and the reader for grasping poetic writings. Indeed, Aristotle took the concept of the universals from philosophy to use in literature. At the same time, he recognized the presence of such a human faculty in man to turn universals into poetic forms.

In the nineteenth century Samuel Taylor Coleridge advanced the theory of imagination, basing himself on the

philosophy of Kant and Schelling. The faculty of imagination, which man possesses can break through the external world of actuality, by giving it different meanings than it appears to have. Coleridge took this function of imagination from Kant, who held the view that the external world is transformed by imagination, and from Schelling who was of the opinion that the external world is created by the power of imagination.

Thus, having realized that philosophy has influenced literature in the past, we propose in this research to establish existentialism as a literary theory. But the task is not an easy one. For there are other philosophical and literary movements which look similar to existentialism. Hence, for convenience, we will divide the entire project into seven chapters, including a chapter each on introduction and conclusion. While we are presenting the scheme of the research in the introductory chapter; in the second chapter we will compare existentialism and humanism. Existentialist philosophers themselves sometimes have yielded to the temptation to designate their philosophy as a branch of Humanism. Jean-Paul Sartre reduced existentialism to a Humanism in his book, Existentialism and Humanism. We will study in this

chapter about the origins, the development, and the structure of both existentialism and humanism, so as to distinguish their distinct characteristics. The task is not an easy one, since over the years existentialism has drawn into its body-structure a variety of doctrines, even contradictory principles. We will start with Soren Kierkegaard, who seems to be the forerunner of this movement both as a philosophy and literature. The contribution of Kierkegaard to existentialism, in its structural divisions into aesthetic, ethical, and religious spheres, is basically essential to distinguish it from humanism and later on to show its literary nature.

But the comparison of existentialism with humanism makes it inevitable, due to the fact that both humanism and existentialism uphold the individuality of man. Humanism is as old as man, and it can be traced back to Greece, where under the influence of the sophists and mainly Pythagoras a high form of humanism developed. 'Man is the measure of all things' was the humanistic motto, which prevailed in the Greek culture. But humanism being a permanent characteristic of the human mind, it prevailed wherever human individuality could be expressed. In the Renaissance - Humanism this characteristic was revived

following the classical age of Greece and Rome. Moreover, the scientific age contributed to this realization. From then onward to the present day one form of humanism or other is always prevalent in human society. Our aim is to distinguish existentialism from humanism as a philosophical and literary movement.

In the third chapter, we will compare classism and existentialism. It has always been a belief among men that man should lead a controlled and subdued life. Man's behaviour can run contrary to his own interest if he is not kept under control by determined norms of behaviour. Reason seems to be the best guide for a well ordained life. Everything functions according to laws and if human behaviour can be channelled through laws and rules, great achievements can be reached for the sake of human interests. But the achievements of existentialism is not measured by the success of human achievements at the risk of sacrificing his human dignity as a person. The dignity of the human person consists in his capacity to choose his action in full freedom. It is this choice that makes him an existent different from other forms of existence. It is also basing on this principle, that the basic principle 'existence preceding

essence' is arrived at.

In the second part of the third chapter, we will compare existentialism and Romanticism. There is a strong belief that the former is only a form of the latter. Herbert Read in Existentialism, Marxism, and Anarchism, tries to relate Existentialism to Romanticism. According to him the basic principles of existentialism, such as 'existence preceding essence' are found in Coleridge. Existential concepts like 'death', 'angst', 'sufferings' are also found in Coleridge, who in his turn absorbed them from Schelling's philosophy. And this took place much before Kierkegaard brought out his existential doctrines. The contrary can easily be established, if we realize the fact that in Schelling 'thought' and 'being' are identical. For Kierkegaard, existence consists in their separation. It is true that romantic concepts, such as 'death', 'angst', 'anxiety' etc. are also found in existential philosophy and literature. However, their differences can easily be noticed in the analysis of their structure. Romanticism, in its varied forms based itself on the idealistic philosophies of Kant, Schelling and Hegel. Whereas existentialism derives the meanings of these concepts from existence, which the

individual has to realize for himself by a deliberate and free choice. And this act of existence distinguishes the existent from the external world, while the romantic concepts are realized through their identity with the external world.

From the analysis of all these movements, the individuality of man strikes out very clearly. Every movement considers man as an individual. And since in existentialism it is a basic characteristic in the forth chapter we will analyse the factors of individuality in all these philosophical and literary movements. Romantic movement, which started with Rousseau stressed the importance of individual liberty. Through social customs and laws, freedom of the individual was suppressed and a distorted society protected itself by destroying human personality. Rousseau through his Social Contract upheld the individuality of the human person. Romanticism, continued with this assertion of the dignity of the individual, and extolled the uniqueness of the 'ego'. But the craze for this individuality segregated him from the rest of human beings. So, our quest is to find out the distinction between Romantic individual and existentialistic individual.

One of the main traits of Romanticism and Existentialism is their relation towards suffering. In Romanticism suffering, death and similar facts of life are welcomed by the individual. The same way of relation with similar facts of life seems to be the peculiar characteristic of existentialism. For this a distinction between the 'tragic vision of life and the 'tragic sense' of life can distinguish romanticism from existentialism. Tragic vision of life ends in suicide and despair, while 'tragic sense' of life can help the individual to leap towards a religious goal and find meaning in existence.

For the above realization of one's life, suffering as analysed by Miguel de Unamuno seems to be a great contribution in the realization of the individual. It is suffering that makes us conscious of our individual existence. It distinguishes the individual from other beings. Other factors may help one to realize one's individuality, but never in the manner suffering can do. Unamuno reached the existential concept of individuality through the analysis of sufferings. The same may be said of Dostoyevsky, whose novels are noted for the description of sufferings and crimes. The purpose of the above was to revive the individuals from the lethargic

state, to which they have been reduced by following a life of ease and comfort.

But the main distinction that makes the existential individual different from romantic and classical individual was reached by Kierkegaard's analysis of the 'self'. Self is the one who relates himself to his own self not in thought but through the act of choice. Through the act of existence the individual stands in contrast with other individuals. It is a great task on the part of the individual to realize that he is a 'self'. Kierkegaard compares the entire transformation to that of a sick person and analyses the whole concept of the 'self' in his book The Sickness unto Death. Realization of 'self' is similar to sickness by which one never dies but has to bear the consequences of death. Such acurate feelings gives the awareness of self to the individual. Thus the concept of the individual is different in existentialism. Romantic and classical individuality is based on determined characteristics of the individual. Existentialism realizes its 'self' through the existential act of choice and the resulting experience of despair.

In the fifth chapter the concept of imagination

will be analysed. It is the changed view of human faculties that makes a distinct literary theory. The contribution made by Coleridge in the creative capacity of imagination is a breakthrough in literature. Hitherto the power of imagination was not considered by the literary critics and poets. The only faculty that was used by them was fancy, by which only the concept of the 'association of ideas' was used in poetry. Coleridge, relying on the influence of Wordsworth and mainly the doctrines of Kant and Schelling attributed the power of 'creativity' to imagination. The external world is created with fresh meanings by the power of imagination. Coleridge does not follow the complete idealistic theories, which claim that the external world is created by the individual's imagination. He claims that new meanings can be created through forming images, which are different from the mental pictures as understood by the principle of the 'association of ideas'.

The Romantic view of imagination stressed the fact of 'creativity'. The distinguishing characteristic of imagination as held by existentialism is 'existence'. The existent by his choice determines his human trait as well as his relation with the external world and other

persons. It is from this relation with other - persons and the external world that meanings are established in the human existent. This power of establishing meaning is done by the power of imagination. The concept of 'creativity' as understood by the Romantics have been replaced by the concept of existence. However it will be realised that existence is not a mere concept, but an act by which the individual makes himself a self by his choice. But existence in relation with the external world, is called by Heidegger as Mit-welt, and with other beings as 'Mit-sein'. The contribution made by Jean-Paul Sartre with regard to imagination is remarkable for the fact that he stresses the main point of freedom. It is through imagination that freedom is brought to the human person. Hence any form of determination within the structure of imagination destroys its being. Sartre speaks of images, but they are to be understood differently from the images that have been so far understood by other literary movements. Basing on this changed view of imagination existentialism can be shown as a different literary theory.

In the sixth chapter, we will analyse some of the main existential concepts which give literature its

distinguishing character. The contribution made by Kierkegaard in this regard stands out as a major factor. It is based on his three spheres of existence. The ethical reality which renders man an existent cannot become the matter for literature. For the simple fact that his reality cannot be communicated. For this Kierkegaard brings in the idea of 'indirect communication' which is done by aesthetic concepts. The literary concepts are presented in the aesthetic sphere of existence. Kierkegaard compares the aesthetic pathos and existential pathos. He brings out example for the former in Either/Or. The aesthetic pathos is expressed in words, whereas the existential pathos transforms the individual inwardly. Similarly, he compares the tragic hero and the religious hero. The tragic hero suffers and conquers in the aesthetic sphere. The religious hero is great because he suffers.

In the aesthetic sphere, there are concepts of 'fortune', 'misfortune', 'fate', 'immediate enthusiasm' and despair etc.. It will be our aim to show how these concepts become literary concepts. Kierkegaard also analyses the basis of 'tragic' and 'comic'. He explains

both concepts as arising from the fundamental contradiction, which is at the heart of existence. Kierkegaard also claims that the three existential spheres are differentiated in their relation to the comical. Similarly 'irony' and 'humour' are derived from the existence-spheres.

From Kierkegaard's analysis of literary concepts, and their transition from existential categories, have greatly contributed to the development of existential literary concepts used by modern existential writers. Jean-Paul Sartre emphasizes the basic structure of man as a consciousness of 'being' and 'nothingness'. There is nothingness always present in man. It is through 'nothingness' that man becomes aware of himself in this world. Man is essentially freedom, but his freedom cannot be realized unless he has nothingness present in him. And this fact of having 'nothingness' is the pre-requisite for creation of values and existence itself. Basing on this fundamental principle of existentialism Sartre approaches the concept of 'Bad Faith', which is a relevant concept for all times and seasons. Human life turns round this concept in its existence and

non-existence. It seems to be suiting the modern way of analysing life. As such it has been a favourite concept with modern existentialists.

'Bad faith' is manifested in various ways. We will analyse its structure and draw out the different literary concepts that are derived from it. Another concept that has come very common in existential literature is the 'absurd'. This concept as understood, especially by Camus is the peculiar state of existence and the awareness certain people have of it. In man's relation to the world one becomes aware of a dichotomy in his being with regard to the unity he craves for and the dualism of mind and nature he is experiencing. Man aims at the eternal and he becomes aware of his finite character of his existence. The world looks a chaos or anarchy when the existent tries to realize that he is basically a being-in-the-world. Hence we will delve deep into the concept of the 'absurd' as developed by Camus in his novels.

Another existential concept, that deserves attention is 'nausea'. A favorite term especially with Jean-Paul Sartre. It comes from the awareness that we

are our bodies. One feels so nauseated at the realization that in the external world existence is complete. It is both inevitable and unjustifiable.

Existential concepts alone do not make the distinct existential theory. It is through the power of imagination that these concepts become literary. Hence our effort in the following chapters is to establish the distinct literary character of existentialism. We will follow the scheme of procedure in our research as we have stated in this 'Introduction'.

CHAPTER - II

EXISTENTIALISM AND HUMANISM

Permanent and deep-rooted problems of human life have driven men in search of solutions, which in their turn have served to formulate different expressions of attitudes to life. A Weltanshauung is such an expression, which is ".... a particular view of the relation of man to existence.....".[1] Such attitudes will become the object of religion, philosophy and literature, ...where in a relatively formless way, attempts may be made to deal with the relation of man to the world .....".[2] A Weltanshauung has its period of existence, and when it has outlived its purpose, it will be followed by others. Humanism, Romanticism, and Classicism are different expressions of Weltanshauungs, which appear as different philosophical and literary movements.

In any comparative study of movements, whether in literature or in philosophy, one must be careful to realize the similarities and differences, which may overlap into one another. In fact, according to Thomas Ernest Hulme,

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[1] T.E. Hulme, Speculations, (London : Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1924), p.24.

[2] Ibid., p.24.

> Inspite of its extreme diversity, all philosophy, since the Renaissance is at bottom the same philosophy. The family resemblance is much greater than is generally supposed. The obvious diversity is only that of the various species of the same genus.[3]

Similarly, literary movements may appear to be different in various epochs; but in reality they may have greater similarities than they appear to have. Just as the humanistic attitude of the Greek and the Roman culture was revived in the Renaissance period, the existentialistic movement of the twentieth century may have great resemblances to the Romantic movement of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Faced with such problems, a clear analysis of the different literary and philosophical movements from their inception becomes inevitable in a comparative study.

Humanism as a Weltanshauung is based on the basic human belief, "..... that the chief end of human life is to work for the happiness of man upon this earth and within the confines of the Nature that is his home."[4] Whatever may be the meaning that is implied by the happiness of man, and the functions of Nature, that contribute to it, humanism acquired diverse meanings throughout centuries of human existence. However, the philosophical

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[3] T.E. Hulme, Op.cit., p.12.

[4] Corliss Lamont, The Philosophy of Humanism, (London: Elek Books Ltd., Third Edition, 1958), p.1.

starting point of humanism may be traced to the best-known statement of the Greek Philosopher, Protagoras, who says, "Man is the measure of all things, of those that are that they are, of those that are not they are not." This statement, according to F.C.S. Schiller, if fairly interpreted,

> ..... is the truest and most important thing that any thinker ever has propounded. It is only in travesties such as it suited Plato's dialectic purpose to circulate that it can be said to tend to scepticism; in reality it urges science to discover how man may measure, and by what devices make concordant his measures with those of his fellow-men. Humanism, therefore, need not cast about for any sounder or more convenient starting point.[5]

As the above words imply, this pithy statement is not without controversies, which stem mainly from its apparent omission of man's relationship with deity. Although modern secular Humanism accepts this principle as basic, the Athenians condemned Protagoras for impiety, burnt his works, and banished him from the country. In reality, in order to make a correct assessment of the Weltanghauung expressed by this statement, one must take into account the religious beliefs and attitude of the Greeks of the fifth century B.C.

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[5] F.C.S. Schiller, Humanism, (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1903) Preface, p. XVII.

The humanistic attitude expressed in "man is the measure of all things.....", evolved gradually from pre-Homeric times. The same attitude matured in the peak period of the Greek civilization, when Homeric literature was the prime vehicle for education, and later in their dispersion all over the Near-East, where the Greeks kept their common spiritual identity and unity through the study of Homer. This education shaped and preserved the Greek ethos, whose most characteristic feature was "..... the enormous importance attached to individual prowess, individual pride, individual reputation."[6] The same Homeric ideal could be expressed in a well-known single line, "to strive always for excellence and to surpass all others."

The extreme individualistic demand on the Homeric hero was stretched to such an extent that he could not submit to any higher sanction even to divine sanction.

> The great model is Achilles but the lesser figures are motivated by the same ideal, and their greatness can be measured by the nearness of their approach to Achilles. Achilles actually prays for the defeat of his own side in war, to enhance his own glory, and he allows his comrades to die in battle, when it is in his power to protect them.[7]

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[6] Moses Hadas, Humanism, World Perspectives, (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd. 1961), p.21.

[7] Ibid., p.21.

Nevertheless, the Greeks of this age did not consider the hero to be occupying a place of honour but a person, by whose sufferings show to others his capacity for individual greatness, especially if he can crown it with his own death.

This Homeric ethos, depicted in his epics, became the Greek ideal, throughout the classical period and beyond. And the peculiarity of the Greek classical culture was that every citizen could strive for excellence in any human activity. Thus their agonistic festivals comprised of competitive events in sports, music and poetry. Their leaders did ordinary jobs like ploughing and even the royal ladies washed their own clothes. All these activities were performed with meticulous precision to surpass others. Thus before the fifth century B.C. a true democratic society grew up with an awareness of individuality. Since such individuality sustained itself through a competitive spirit, choice for action must have been a special characteristic of the individual. Hence, from this attitude towards the world and man, a transition to man as the measure of all things is an easy step. In fact, the point of difference is only that of emphasis, for which the sophists of the fifth century B.C. like

the Biblical prophets, were well-known for their categorically direct statements.

> Actually, then, the sophist view is a natural outgrowth of the Homeric. Achilles could well have subscribed to Protagoras' dictum, and the Sophists, by corollary, were only emulating Achilles in a less heroic environment.[8]

The principle reached by Protagoras was the conclusion of centuries of human thought and activity. Within the span of this period of time, many principles were tried and abandoned. The question is whether any religious principles also were sacrificed to assert this anthropocentric principle. To answer this problem a clear understanding of the Greek religious attitude toward the supernatural is essential.

Although, religious principles have a rational certainty, what gives emphasis and meaning to these principles are the peculiar religious experiences, which each individual claims to be his own through divine sanctions. Religious experiences are distinct from mere human experiences, which can be contained within the functions of human faculties. Whereas, religious experiences

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[8]Moses Hadas, Op.cit., p.81.

may transcend human capacities and baffle human calculations. In fact, the peculiar ambivalent character of Divine behaviours has been the theme of Greek literature. To quote Moses Hadas again,

> Even on the question of the sovereignty of Zeus, where we should expect a definite and consistent position, there is ambiguity; sometimes zeus is sovereign, bound by no will but his own, and sometimes he is subordinate to Fate and only the executive arm for the decrees of Fate.[9]

Faced with such inscrutable experiences in religion it seems that the sophists of the fifth century B.C. had distinct attitudes in behaviour towards the deity and the world.

The above conclusion was reached from the awareness of the principle that human activities are determined by man's choice only within a limited sphere. Man adapts himself to this limited situations through laws and conventions which are changeable in accordance with the exigencies of the individual. If individuals, being aware of their exigencies, fearlessly change the established laws and conventions they become the measure of all things.

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[9]Moses Hadas, Op.cit., p.36.

This idealistic attitude was the outcome of the Homeric ethos, whose basic principle was that of individual liberty in activity. That the Sophists of the fifth century B.C. in Greece would meet with adverse opposition from an organized society is but an inevitable conclusion. But it was the highest form of culture, to which each individual may aspire inspite of its being not feasible within the framework of an organized society.

In Greek, Nomos stands for the laws and conventions made by man, and PHYSIS for everything that is ordained by the gods. The former may be changed in accordance with the Sophists' attitude that man is the measure of all things; but the latter is determined by the gods and therefore cannot be changed even if the individuals want to alter the values contained therein for greater achievements. Hence Protagoras' dictum that man is the measure of all things refers to a definite sphere in human actions. But in reality no philosophical principle can be limited to a compartmentalised section of life, without being influenzed by other spheres. And this is one of the causes of tensions in human behaviour. Nevertheless, the humanistic attitude as visualized by the Greeks has influenced the modern form of secular humanism.

For many centuries, Greek humanism influenced the Roman culture and literature, and the Jewish attitude to life. But with the coming of Christianity the impact of religion both as religious experience and institution was so overwhelming that for a millenium the anthropocentric humanistic attitude receded into anonymity. But being a permanent characteristic of the human mind, it cannot be said to have vanished from life-situations. In the European Renaissance of fourteenth to seventeenth centuries, there was a fresh realization of man's achievements and greater potentialities. The main features of Renaissance Humanism are "..... its insistence on getting away from religious control of knowledge; its immense intellectual vitality; its ideal of the well-rounded personality; and above all its stress on man's enjoying to the full his life in this world."[10] The Greek ideal of man, as the measure of all things, was revived in the Renaissance Humanism. But from the above cited words, the distinctive characteristic of the latter is evident. The Greek Humanism emphasized the importance of the PHYSIS-NOMOS relationship with definite distinctions, which do not deny the importance of the dualistic

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[10] Corlis Lamont, The Philosophy of Humanism, (London: Elek Books Ltd., 1958, Third Edition), p.17.

principle. But in the Renaissance Humanism the prime importance is laid on man's enjoyment of life. Knowledge through man's intellect was preferred to the religious-controlled knowledge of the medieval ages; and the many sided personality, a symbol of this earthly achievement, stood in contrast to the ascetic monk of the medieval ages.

Humanism, in its basic principle, upholds the independent spirit of man in answering the vital problems of life. Just as the Renaissance Humanism differed from the Greek Humanism basing itself on this common basic principle, humanism in general takes various forms from the Renaissance to the present days. As it was established in the beginning of this chapter, our aim is to trace out the chief characteristics of all humanisms, with a view to bringing out those common elements, that connect them together to merit the name "humanism", and then to analyse these in relation to existentialism to ascertain whether the latter is in anyway derived from any of the former humanist schools of thought.

Keeping in mind that humanism is a <u>Weltanshauung</u>, which includes the temporary aspect of its utility in meeting the problems of human life, we can realize the

existence of the different humanist schools of thought. If we consider the Academic Humanism, founded by Professor Irving Babbitt and Paul Elmer we find that its main purpose was to emphasize the importance of the study of Humanities. They insisted on the necessity of education based on the study of ancient classics. For the problem they tried to solve was the danger of reducing man as a mere part of Nature. After the spectacular scientific discoveries, man was thought to be a part of Nature, within the frame of its laws. They insisted on the necessity of self control, which dignifies man, as against the mere functions of the human faculties according to Nature.

Quite opposite to this is the naturalistic Humanism as described by Corliss Lamont, who says,

> I bring in the objective 'naturalistic' to show that Humanism, in its most accurate philosophical sense, implies a world-view in which Nature is everything in which there is no supernatural and in which man is an integral part of Nature and not separated from it by any sharp cleavage or discontinuity. This philosophy of course recognizes that vast stretches of reality yet remain beyond the range of human knowledge, but it takes for granted that all future discoveries of truth will reveal an extension of the natural and not an altogether different realm of being, commonly referred to as the supernatural.[11]

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[11] Corlis Lamont, Op.cit., p.18.

The main characteristic of the naturalistic Humanism is its rejection of the supernatural. And the principle that man is on his own in this world is emphatically stressed. It stands contrary to the Academic Humanism, which rejects the reduction of man to mere part of Nature. At the same time naturalistic Humanism does not stress the role of the individual man as upheld by the Greek ideal or the Renaissance Humanism.

Basing themselves on the rejection of the supernatural, various other humanisms have sprung up and spread all over Europe and America of the modern days. There is even a religious Humanism which accepts ethical values without any link with theological or supernatural considerations. The followers of Karl Marx, who are the Communists or the Socialists, spread all over the world, are also a set of Humanists. Although their doctrines are totally anti-individualistic, they merit the name of humanistic from their tenets, which reject all supernatural and religious beliefs.

All forms of humanism, that have sprung up from the Renaissance, can be termed as secular Humanism, from their rationalistic trait. But humanistic Rationalism of the present era has this peculiarity in the sense that the

logical assumptions which would be taken for granted by the earlier rationalists must now be subjected to empirical confirmation, through accurate observations and experiments. The Humanists of the above mentioned period, while emphasizing the priority of reason above other faculties of men, developed the quality of open-mindedness, with regard to their search for truth. This positive quality, as we may term it, came as a result of the modern scientific method in acquiring knowledge. Corlis Lamont says,

> The development, over the past four centuries, of a universally reliable method for attaining knowledge is a far more important achievement on the part of science than its discovery of any single truth. For once men acquire a dependable method of truth-seeking, a method that can be applied to every sphere of human life, then they have an instrument of infinite power that will serve them as long as mankind endures. Scientific method is such an instrument.[12]

The scientific method of acquiring knowledge influenced all aspects of human life in a rapid and penetrating manner. Even in religious faith, if the humanist professed any, he would hold it only on rational grounds. As Harold John Blackham says,

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[12]Corlis Lamont, Op.cit., p.163.

> The rationalism of the humanist is therefore a reliance on science, a cooperative and publicly controlled thinking, rather than on 'my reason' which tells me what 'stands to reason'.[13]

The scientific method, to which the humanist has adhered, is not an end in itself. Nor is science a new superstition to which the layman becomes a prey by seeing its technological achievements and offers his faith and worship. But by using the scientific method, the humanist forms public opinions, to which the individual humanist can adhere. And here the distinction between public and private opinions must be clearly kept in mind. The latter is not scientific in the strictest sense, since it cannot have the precise and limited meaning and application, which scientific propositions have. For, a private opinion, which occurs in every-day life, does not pass through the rigours of the scientific method. As such, private opinions do not have the rational standards of public opinions. Thus the humanistic way of life, lived according to scientific method functions through public opinions, which are accepted for their objective values created through joint responsibility.

The main defect of the rationalist humanism is

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[13] Harold John Blackham, Humanism, (Hassocks : Harvester Press, 1976, 2nd revised Ed.), p.32.

the reduction of human life to the part of a world structure from which values are generated on the basis of universal laws. Humanism further advances to the sphere of individuality through responsible decisions based on public scientific opinions. But this does not rescue the humanist from the defects of rationalism. To quote Blackham again,

> A responsibly taken decision involves more of the person and is more formative than a responsibly held opinion, although indeed opinions are inert, unless they influence decisions. A decision responsibly taken is a decision taken by rational standards, but it is more personal than opinion need be, less 'scientific'.[14]

Hence, the defect of rationalist humanism is evident, though it boasts of individuality basing itself on the choice made by the individual. By making a decision on the strength of publicly accepted and rational opinions, the humanist is entering more into rationalism, than attaining a higher form of humanism.

At this stage, we can refer to the Greek ideal of "man is the measure of all things....", and compare the individuality on the basis of Greek humanism and the rationalist humanism. For the Greeks the individual was

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[14] Harold John Blackham, Op.cit., p.34.

measured through his choice and activity. Whereas, in the rationalist humanism, the individual chooses on the basis of rationality. In the words of Blackham, this fact is clearly expressed,

> I do not have to choose, prefer, desire something because of what it is, but if I do prefer, desire, choose something, it is because of what it is. If I believe that God exists, I do not have to live in obedience to him, but if I do believe that he is creator and sustainer of all that is or can be, that is justification enough for my total objedience. Judgements of fact are more relevant to and intimately related with judgements of value than is indicated by the relation of means to independently chosen ends. Choice is logically dependent upon knowledge (established by reasoning from experience) although it does not follow logically from knowledge as a necessary influence. I choose something which I know (am informed about). I choose it by comparison with alternatives about which I am also informed, and I choose it in the light of what my choice will involve as far as my best judgement can determine. This choice of ends or values by making comparisons and bringing in relevant 'considerations', of which a rational account can be given, is certainly different from a 'blind' passion which wants to know only how to hold of the object which it would seize.[15]

When we have compared decisions made through passion and reason, we enter into a different sphere of human existence. We must start with existentialism from its inception, to put the choice made from passion in the correct perspective. However, the choice made through rationalistic principles destroys individuality by reducing

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[15]Harold John Blackham, Op.cit., p.36.

man to the rules of knowledge and facts attained through mere scientific experiments and opinions.

At this stage, we are in a position to have an overall view of the different humanisms. The Greek humanism differentiated between the life that is lived through human endeavours and divinely influenced life. The characteristics of the former were mainly centered around the individuality of man, which would be ascertained through activity in excelling others in the different spheres of human life. Life, lived in relation with deity, was not considered in measuring the personality of man. In the Renaissance-revival of the Greek values, the religious aspect in human life was further discarded. On the eve of the spectacular scientific age, humanism developed into a totally anthropocentric existence of man. This characteristic feature persisted till the first half of the present century, when all the values built up by humanism lay razed to the ground chiefly due to the two world wars. If man is a force, as the humanists argue, in relation with the other forces of nature, one has to expect unexpected eventualities.

The main defect of the modern forms of humanism is that they are totally based on the method of empirical

sciences, which are only engaged in certain spheres of human life. The areas of human life that can be analysed from manifest behaviour of groups of men, the unique quality of the individual cannot be ascertained. If humanism further bases itself on the principle that this life is all that can be expected from human life, then one has to face disastrous consequences.

However, humanism still holds on to the principle of open-mindedness by which every problem must be squarely faced and answered impartially. Basing themselves on this principle, the religious Humanists try to integrate religious doctrines to answer the perennial problems, which have haunted human mind from its inception. Human mind cannot be satisfied with ready-made formulas, which attempt to convince that the world is self-explanatory and self-justifying.

One of the most important and the best representative of the religious Humanists is Jacques Maritain. In his 'Integral Humanism', Maritain argues that the world with its possibilities can be integrated with the deepest religious principles. The primary fact on which Jacques Maritain bases his true Humanism is the ambivalence of

the world. He explains this as follows :-

> Since the time of recorded history, every formof humanism has been tried. Even in the peak period of humanism in the Greek culture or in the Renaissance or in the period scientific success man is faced with this ambivalence. There is unmerited suffering and misfortune, as also undeserved success. There is no clear equation between effort and end-result, between social status and moral quality. In other words, life at every step puzzles man, and baffles intellectual grasp. In fact, to the Christian Humanist Maritain says,
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> > The task of the Christian in the world is to dispute with the devil his domain, to wrest it from him; he must strive to this end, he will succeed in it only in part as long as time will endure.[16]

But this ambivalence is found not merely in the relation of man to the world. Even in the man-God relationship this fact is evidently realizable. To quote Maritain again,

> On the world, the Christian can thus gather contrasting Gospel texts which are explained by this fundamental ambivalence of history and of the world that I have already pointed out ... The Christian reads, for example, that "God so loved the world as to give His

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[16] Jacques Maritain, Integral Humanism, Trans. Joseph W. Evans, (New York: University of Notre Dame Press Edition, 1973), p.108.

> only begotten son", that Christ came to save the world; and he reads on the other hand, that Jesus does not pray for the world, that the world 'cannot receive the spirit of truth', that "..... the whole world is seated in wickedness and the devil is the prince of this world, that the world is already judged."[17]

Faced with this double-pronged ambivalence, Maritain advocates an integral Humanism. While most forms of humanism are one-sided, the integral Humanism unifies both the divine and the human aspects of life into the human person. Although the Greeks had come very close to this concept, Maritain says with emphasis that this unification, is the only solution to the alienation mankind has been faced with for a few centuries in following one-sided humanisms.

At the end of this short analysis, the fact that becomes most evident to our mind is that, humanism is basically an attitude which helps man to realize his goal as man in general. As civilization progresses and culture develops better attitudes will arise out of them. However, they can be only a general outlook on life. Whatever may be the height of culture, mankind as a whole has reached, that which really matters is whether man has been able to

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[17] Jacques Maritain, Op.cit., p.109.

make himself a better individual. To an extent, all forms of humanism help man to reach this goal. But, then, what is exactly that which makes man a being distinct from other beings? Is man part of Nature, subjected to the laws of Nature? Is it enough to discover Nature's laws to discover man? On the spur of the success of experimental sciences, humanism drifted towards the scientific method. We are not lowering the standard of humanism, but secular humanism is an attitude derived from scientific discoveries and scientifically oriented movements. Hence our comparison of humanism with extentialism takes on a definite shape, for existentialism is a philosophical movement from which one may attempt humanistic attitudes. Thus our aim is to scrutinize the nature of existentialism in the humanist contexts.

Existentialism, as a philosophical movement, started with Soren Kierkegaard. It came as a reaction against the dialectical system of Hegel and other idealists, who based their philosophical system on freely assumed rationalistic assumptions. Kierkegaard's main contention was that such dialectical developments do not correspond to the reality of life. For Kierkegaard, the Primum factum is "existence", and all reality must be understood, and related to existence. This is the point

of departure between Hegelian rationalism and Kierkegaardian existentialism. Hegel's rationalism was based on his well-known assumption, that what is rational is real and what is real is rational. The Hegelian position reduces all existence into one idealist category of thought. Whereas Kierkegaard posits "existence" as the central fact of all philosophy.

Many possibilities can be developed according to a rationalistic system, but the futility of all this endeavour is to assume that thought is reality. This attempt may be possible in a non-human form of existence. However, when this assumption is considered with regard to human existence, thought is pure fantasy. For Kierkegaard says,

> The triumphant victory of pure thought, that in it being and thought are one, is something both to laugh at and to weep over, since in the realm of pure thought it is not even possible to distinguish them.[18]

If human beings live the life of plants and animals they are similar to them. For the possession of distinctive

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[18] Soren Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript Trans. David F. Sevenson and Walter Lawrie, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), p.272.

human faculties alone does not render one fully human, if one lives in accordance with pre-determined values and forces. Hence, the distinguishing characteristic that makes a human being different from other forms of life is the act of decision or choice, made in freedom. Then one can be called coming into human existence. For according to Kierkegaard, "All coming into existence takes place with freedom, not through and by 'necessity'. Nothing comes into existence by virtue of logical ground, but only by cause."[19] And that cause is the free choice or the decision made by any individual human being.

Thus, in the words of Jean-Paul Sartre, "Man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself. That is the first principle of existentialism."[20] This is the principle one arrives at, when one follows the Kierkegaardian thought of human existence. The same principle, cited above, is rendered in another form when it is said that, "Existentialism is the philosophy which declares as its first principle that existence is prior to essence."[21]

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[19] Soren Kierkegaard, Philosophical Fragments, Trans. David F. Sevenson and Howard V. Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1936 Reptt, 1976), p.93.

[20] Jean-Paul Sartre, Existentialism and Humanism, Trans. Philip Mariet (London: Eyre Methuen Ltd., Repr. 1978), p.28.

[21] Marjorie Grene, Introduction to Existentialism, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, Repr. 1963), p.2.

It is an ancient assumption, held all through, that man has a given nature, or essence common to all human beings. As Jean-Paul Sartre puts it,

> Man possesses a human nature; that 'human nature', which is the conception of human beings, is found in every man, which means that each man is a particular example of an universal conception, the conception of Man. In Kant, this universality goes so far that the wild man of the woods, man in the state of nature and the bourgeois are all contained in the same definition and have the same fundamental qualities.[22]

If man exists according to a set-nature, he will be similar to a machine, or a plant which functions or grown up according to its predetermined qualities, or an animal which has a set-pattern of behaviours. If man is seen as only a being endowed with intelligence and fixed qualities he is not different from any of the above mentioned categories of beings, because they all function according to their natures. The difference which lies between man and other beings is that,

> ..... man primarily exists - that man is, before all else, something which propels itself towards a future and is aware that it is doing so. Man is, indeed, a project which possesses a subjective life, instead of being a kind of moss or a fungus or a cauliflower. Before that projection of the self nothing exists; not even in the heaven of intelligence. Man will only attain existence when he is what he proposes to be.[23]

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[22]Jean-Paul Sartre, Existentialism and Humanisms, Trans. Philip Mairet, (London: Eyre Methuen Ltd. rept.1978) p.27.

[23]Ibid., p.28.

This sphere of existence, wherein man chooses or decides to attain his subjectivity, is known as ethical, according to Kierkegaard's distinction. In fact, Kierkegaard divides man's life, at any time belonging to any of these three spheres. They are called the existential spheres, and are known as the aesthetic sphere, the ethical sphere, and the religious sphere respectively. According to Prof. A.G. George, "The doctrine of the three spheres of existence has become famous as Kierkegaard's most significant contribution to existential philosophy."[24]

The essence of aesthetic life is that it is lived without choosing. It is completely determined by external events. In Kierkegaard's own words, "..... For he who lives aesthetically does not choose.....".[25] The aesthetic life is at the mercy of fate and fortune. To quote Prof. George again,

> Thus while all aesthetes are determined that one must enjoy life, they also know that the conditions for enjoymentof life lie outside it. Thus the chief categories of the aesthetic life are fortune, misfortune, fate, immediate enthusiasm, and above all, despair.[26]

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[24] Prof. A.G. George, The First Sphere, (Bombay, Asia Publishing House, 1965), p.3.

[25] Soren Kierkegaard, Either/Or, Trans. Walter Lawrie, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), p.172.

[26] Prof. A.G. George, Op.cit., p.4.

The ethical sphere is the life of subjectivity which we have described and termed as existentialistic, and accepted by all its philosophers as the basic principle of existentialism. The main characteristic of the ethical life is the act of choice, irrespective of what is chosen. By ethical choice one becomes oneself or gains human existence. But in this transition from aesthetic to ethical, there is no transformation into another being, but a unification of one's consciousness. The aesthetic is never excluded absolutely, but only excluded as the absolute. In fact, the aesthetic element persists in the three spheres, just as the ethical is included in the sphere of religious existence.

In the sphere of religious existence, one accepts suffering as the principle of life. However, the suffering of the religious sphere is different from the misfortune of the aesthetic life. For the religious life is oriented towards the problem of eternal happiness, while the aesthetic life is centered around the sphere of immediate pleasure, without an absolute telos. In other words, the desire of momentary pleasure governs the aesthetic, that of eternal happiness the religious. In the words of Kierkegaard,

> Aesthetic pathos keeps itself at a distance from existence, or is in existence in a state of illusion; while existential pathos dedicates itself more and more profoundly to the task of existing, and with the consciousness of what existence is, penetrates all illusions, becoming more and more concrete through reconstructing existence in action.[27]

The concept of existential action is related to inwardness and not to action in the external world. By this action in inwardness, the individual tries to transform his inner existence. But the action par excellance in inwardness is suffering, for any other form of action cannot be as genuine as suffering. Whereas immediate existence within the aesthetic sphere views suffering as accidental to life. In fact, this constitutes the basic difference between the two spheres of existence.

The distinction which Kierkegaard makes between external action and inward action or "action in inwardness" gives us the clue to making comparison between existentialism and humanism. External action transforms the world, and it can be measured from tangible results. As Kierkegaard says,

> Action outwardly directed may indeed transform existence (as when an emperor conquers the world and enslaves the peoples), but not the individual's

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[27]Soren Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, Trans. David F. Sevenson and Walter Lawrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), p.387.

> own existence; and action outwardly directed may transform the individual's own existence (as when from having been a lieutenant he becomes an emperor, or from street peddler becomes a millionaire, or whatever else of the sort may fall to his lot), but not the individual's inner existence. All such action is, therefore, only aesthetic pathos, and its law is the law for aesthetic relationships in general, the non-dialectical individual transforms the world, but remains himself untransformed, for the aesthetic individual never has the dialectical within him but outside him, or the individual is outwardly changed, but remains invardly unchanged.[28]

Whereas the action in inwardness affects the nature of one's own inner consciousness. He is transformed into a different individual in the ethical sense, which may not be measurable by any quantitative methods.

It is no exaggeration or wrong assessment to conclude that humanisms in general, from the time of Protagoras to the present day, were concerned with the aesthetic sphere of life as categorised by Kierkegaard. The ethico-religious sphere was not only ignored but in some forms of humanism, it was rejected, as in the Renaissance Humanism, or Naturalistic Humanism or Secular Humanism. Even in the religious or Integral Humanism as attempted by Jacques Maritain, although a leap towards the religious sphere is made, the philosophy of individual

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[28] Soren Kierkegaard, Op.cit., p.387.

realization of existentialism, is not attained. The ethical sphere of life, which forms the basis of existentialism, is not even reached by Greek Humanism. Although, the Greek philosopher, Protagoras has made a very conclusive statement in the principle "man is the measure of all things.....", the concept of man as possessing and acting according to a determined nature, disqualifies it from the status of the ethical sphere of existentialism. Needless to say, that the other forms of humanism, from the Renaissance to the present days, based their humanistic principles on the fixed nature of man. All humanisms, basing themselves on Kantian and Hegelian philosophies, limited human beings to what Kierkegaard would call as the aesthetic sphere of life. Convinced by the spectacular success of scientific discoveries and inventions, the humanists lived in the aesthetic sphere alone.

Thus, our position that existentialism is a different philosophical movement and the possibility for a different literary movement stands clear. But our concern at this point of analysis is how existentialist philosophers like Jean Paul Sartre and others could call existentialism a humanism.

Earlier in this chapter, we had observed that humanism, in every form, emerges after a new breakthrough either in philosophy or in culture. Humanism is an attitude to life, which keeps on changing as new situations arise in the world. In the Renaissance period there was a revival of the Greek values in their philosophy and literature, as a reaction against the culture of the medieval ages. Besides a new scientific age had dawned with the discoveries of Galileo, Copernicus and Newton. Out of these new situations there arose a new humanistic attitude, which had a few of the revived Greek values and the new values created by the recent scientific discoveries. As the scientific discoveries advanced, new forms of attitudes were adapted in accordance with the new situations. One of the characteristics of the new forms of humanism was open-mindedness, which is the readiness to accept values on the basis of scientific evidence. There was a tendency to reject transcendental religious values. But, above all the predominant conviction was that man is on his own in this world, and man can successfully manage his own affairs in this world without any transcendental help. All these values were supported by the philosophies of Kant, Hegel and other Idealists.

As a reaction against Hegelian idealism, there arose Kierkegaard's existentialism, which, though a revolution in philosophy remained dormant for about a century until the coming of the modern existentialists.

Modern existentialists like Karl Jaspers, Gabriel Marcel, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre and others added to the tree of existentialism different branches, which give existentialism a multifarious appearance. Its doctrines are vast and various and in some cases to the extent of being contradictory. The purpose of our discussion in this present section of the chapter is how it can be considered as a humanism by some of the existentialist philosophers. As we have remarked earlier, modern forms of humanism, based on idealistic and dialectical philosophies, remained discredited by the middle of the present century. While all the values of secular or scientific forms of humanism rejected some of the religious and other transcendental values and in return reached a stage of not being able to maintain any values.

In this situation, few existentialists, faced with the permanent problems of man, stressed the religious predicament which is paradosical. Man sometimes feels (and feels for certain in some cases) that there is no God.

While others existentialists choose an ethico-religious attitude and accept a leap towards God in such predicaments, the former existentialists choose the secular humanistic attitude of rejecting God and other related values. And unlike the earlier forms of humanisms, which remained in the aesthetic sphere of life, as distinguished by Kierkegaard, the Humanistic existentialists adopt some of the values of ethical sphere to make a new form of humanism.

They base this new form of humanism on the basic principle of existentialism, as we have already seen expressed in the 'Existentialism and Humanism of Jean-Paul Sartre. But since the subjective state of life in the ethical sphere is not related to the religious sphere, there is no telos in the choice of the individual. Therein this new form of humanism, substitutes it with responsibility towards the individual and other men. As Jean-Paul Sartre says,

> Thus, the first effect of existentialism is that it puts every man in possession of himself as he is, and places the entire responsibility for his existence squarely upon his own shoulders. And, when we say that man is responsible for himself, we do not mean that he is responsible for his own individuality, but that is responsible for all men ..... When we say that man chooses himself, we do mean that every one of us must choose himself;

> but by that we also mean that in choosing for himself he chooses for all men ..... Our responsibility is thus much greater than we had supposed, for it concerns mankind as a whole.[29]

The individual, who has taken upon himself this profound responsibility, will face certain psychological situations as anguish, abandonment and despair. Anguish is the situation, which one experiences, when he is faced with the task of choosing or deciding in responsibility. This existential characteristic was especially expressed by Soren Kierkegaard in Fear and Trembling when he described about the anguish of Abraham. This is caused by the subjectivity of the religious person, who is faced with the tremendous paradox of faith. The anguish is heightened by the dichotomy that is contained in the paradox. Kierkegaard says about this paradox, that it is

> ...a paradox which is capable of transforming murder into a holy act well pleasing to God, a paradox which gives Isaac back to Abraham, which no thought can master, because faith begins precisely where thinking leaves off.[30]

In humanistic existentialism, this anguish is caused by the responsibility, which results from the

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[29]Jean-Paul Sartre, Existentialism and Humanism, Trans. Philip Mairet, (London: Eyre Methuen Ltd., Rept. 1978), p.29.

[30]Soren Kierkegaard, Fear and Trembling, Trans. Walter Lawrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, rept. 1974), p.64.

rejection of God, and therefore the individual's feeling that the weight of the entire decision falls upon himself. As Jean-Paul Sartre says,

> When, for instance, a military leader takes upon himself the responsibility for an attack and sends a number of men to their death, he chooses to do it and at bottom he alone chooses. No doubt he acts under a higher command, but its orders, which are more general, require interpretation by him and upon that interpretation depends the life of ten, fourteen or twenty men. In making that decision, he cannot but feel a certain anguish. All leaders know that anguish. It does not prevent their acting. On the contrary it is the very condition of their action, for the action presupposes that there is a plurality of possibilities, and in choosing one of these, they realise that it has value only because it is chosen.[31]

The next form of psychological predicament the humanistic existentialist has to face is the state of "abandonment". This situation again is the outcome of the rejection of God's existence. The atheism, which this new form of humanism advocates is not the secular type of atheism of the earlier humanism which rejects God, but retains a priori values. The Humanistic Existentialists reject God, and reject all forms of a priori values. Without God and pre-determined human nature, man is left to himself in the state of freedom to create his own values.

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[31] Jean-Paul Sartre, Existentialism and Humanism, Trans. Philip Mairet (London: Eyre Methuen Ltd. Rept. 1978), p.32.

As Sartre says,

> Thus we have neither behind us, nor before us in a luminous realm of values, any means of justification or excuse. We are left alone, without excuse. That is what I mean when I say that man is condemned to be free. Condemned, because he did not create himself, yet is nevertheless at liberty, and from the moment that he is thrown into this world he is responsible for everything he does.[32]

This conclusion of abandonment is the special characteristic of the humanistic existentialism, as portrayed by Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir and Camus in their novels and dramas. They throw overboard all the previous psychological values and disregard the literature, written under their influence. They reject the freedom which had been hampered by the doctrines of heredity, environment and childhood experiences. In the words of Hazel E. Barnes,

> Humanistic existentialism challenges this doctrine and claims that exactly the reverse is true: every man is free, but most men, fearing the consequences and the responsibilities of freedom, refuse to acknowledge its presence in themselves and would deny it to others. So radical a shift in point of view can be effected only when accompanied by a reorientation of all human attitudes. It requires a specific psychology to support it; it demands a reappraisal of the human situation. The literature which shows that men are free presents to the world a new philosophy of man.[33]

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[32] Jean-Paul Sartre, Op.cit., p.34.

[33] Hazel E. Barness, Humanist Existentialism - The Literature of Possibility (Lincold: University of Nebraska Press 1983, Rept. 1958), p.3.

So far we have been analysing the special characteristics of this philosophy. The next point of consideration is that together with anguish and abandonment there is bound to be 'despair'. Sartre explains this situation as a necessary outcome of the denial of a provident God, who will look after man, even if one were to be crushed by any possibilities that one would choose or decide. In this predicament one must not despair but act without hope. As Sartre says,

> Beyond the point at which the possibilities under consideration cease to affect my action, I ought to disinterest myself. For there is no God and no prevenient design, which can adapt the world and all its possibilities to my will. When Descartes said, "Conquer yourself rather than the world," what he meant was, at bottom, the same - that we should act without hope.[34]

This is the humanistic existentialism as presented by existentialists such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, Simone de Beauvoir and others. Basing themselves on the first principle of existentialism, that "man is nothing else but what he purposes", they admit only certain principles of existentialism. They discard God and other religious values and carry this situation to the extreme point of facing 'abandonment', anguish, and 'despair'.

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[34]Jean-Paul Sartre, Existentialism and Humanism, Trans. Philip Mairet (London: Eyre Methuen Ltd. Rept. 1978), p.39.

By this, they want to stress the importance of unhampered freedom. They argue that values can be created only in the possession of such freedom. When faced with such philosophy and literature, it is a tendency to take it for granted that the philosophy of existentialism as a whole is another form of humanism. Or in other words, existentialism is an outcome of modern forms of humanism. Our analysis, I believe, has been deep enough to claim that existentialism is a definite and independent philosophical movement, distinct from all humanistic philosophies.

Humanistic existentialism is a Weltanshauung, derived from the existentialistic philosophy. The literature that has come forth from it stands distinguished from other existentialistic literature. The main aim of this research is to find out whether existentialism is a distinct literary theory. In this endeavour, we want to avoid the pit-fall of identifying existentialism with other philosophical and literary movements. It may happen that existentialism is only a repetition of the classical and romantic movements. So far we have distinguished existentialism from humanism. In the next chapter, we will analyse classicism and romanticism, in their respective characteristics to discover and establish the distinctive qualities of existentialism.

CHAPTER - III

EXISTENTIALISM AS DISTINCT FROM CLASSICISM AND ROMANTICISM

We have argued in the previous chapter, that it is "freedom" and the power of choice emerging thereform, that constitute the really "human" in man. The emphasis of existentialism on the subjective becoming of man as against group-transformations or totalitarianisms, is its predominant characteristic. But man is not an isolated individual, living alone in a world of transcendental objects, or other living beings and men. Man is essentially related to them. A philosophy or a literary movement which develops itself without this basic relationship with the transcendental world is incomplete and impossible. Both existentialism and classicism are historically significant philosophical and literary movements, for their emphasis on man as an individual and in his relation with other objects and persons. In this respect, we will compare classicism with existentialism.

Classicism, though better known for its literary achievements, has its philosophic background. As a permanent characteristic of the human mind, classicism

reached its zenith in the Greek and Roman culture. According to Prof. A.G. George, "The old Greek maxim, 'nothing too much' expresses the spirit of classical art and philosophy. Classicism in art seeks to invest the universal with beauty."[1]

Hence we can notice in the classical art of Greece and Rome that the individual possessed restraint, simplicity, dignity, serenity and repose. The elements that lead the individual man to excesses are the emotions. So, we see in the Book of Phaedrus the well-known myth of Plato, the picture of the classical individual. The myth is that of a charioteer, driving a team of horses. Reason is the charioteer, and the horses both good and evil, represent the emotions. The charioteer, who is Reason is considered to be good. As Jacques Barzun says,

> Classic man is a kind of Centaur - man above and horse beneath. Now, one of the features of classical Reason is that it can be put into words and become common property. Hence a society can be built which embodies Reason and helps each individual to drive his equipage on the sraight road of duty and decency.[2]

With Reason as the main pillar of its structure, classicism upholds the doctrine, that individuals must

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[1]Prof. A.G. George, Studies in Poetry (New Delhi : Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1971), p.130.

[2]Jacques Barzun, Classic, Romantic and Modern(London: Martin Secker & Warbung Ltd. 1961), p.50.

be disciplined in order to generate a united society. Living in the city-states of Greece and Rome, the citizens faced innumerable difficulties for their existence. Both individual talents and social advantages were to be at the service of all for the sake of their survival. In this situation the primacy of reason was upheld for its capacity to analyse the world of impressions, and to arrive at objective conceptions that can be useful both for individuals and society in their dire necessity. To a certain limit, subjective decisions and actions are permitted. As soon as they run counter to the needs of society, the subjective aspect of the individual is controlled by society. But classicism is not a social attitude but a philosophy which claims that, "Man is an extraordinarily fixed and limited animal whose nature is absolutely constant. It is only by tradition and organisation that anything decent can be got out of him."[3]

Hence the philosophy of classicism considers man as having a fixed nature and as a result the relation among men can be established on the basis of this fixed nature. Similarly the relation with objects in the world is established by following the laws of nature. Reason is the main human faculty, that can find out abstract and

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[3] T.E.Hulme, Speculations, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd. 1924), p.116.

supreme ideals both in man and the transcendental world. Therefore, man as an individual realizes the "human" in him, by using reason. As Prof. A.G. George says concerning Plato,

> As a philosopher, Plato's chief concern was the application of philosophy to personal and social problems. An education was for Plato the realization of the ultimate values, the good, the beautiful, and the true. And because of this bias, Plato believed that poetry should subserve individuals and social morality, and when poetry fails to do this, poetry produces a corrupting influence.[4]

Thus we find that the chief aim of the classical work of art is to give concrete realization to abstract and supreme ideals of beauty and perfection. Classicism found its best aesthetic expression in the Athens of the fifth century B.C. From there it spread to Rome of the Augusten Age, and disappeared with the destruction of Rome.

Classicism was revived again in the Renaissance-humanism, when the philosophy of classicism was indirectly introduced into the new humanistic attitude to life. As it was discussed in the earlier chapter, in the Renaissance-humanism there was a great interest in the activity of man. Reason gave great emphasis to the classicism of the

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[4] A.G. George, Critics and Criticism, (Bombay, Asia Publishing House, 1971), p.12.

Hellenistic period, when the great philosophers of the period based their philosophy on reason. Similarly, reason was given a greater impetus in the scientific age. Thus the classicism revived in the Renaissance period, under the influence of the new scientific and other intellectual forces, is known as neo-classicism. However, the revived classicism kept the main characteristics of ancient classicism. As Rene Wellek says,

> A 'classical' author was obviously an author who could stand beside the ancient classics because of his assumed appeal to a distant posterity, beyond the immediate public of his time.[5]

The neo-classical philosophy inculcated the rule "fellow nature". But nature has been taken to mean different facts and principles in classicism. Sometimes, nature was understood as the normal course of the world. But the normal course of the world for the ancient stoics was the human duty to follow the moral law and the central cosmic reality. It also meant that nature was universal, governed by unalterable and eternal laws, with general human nature as the microcosm of this mechanical order. Nature also could be interpreted as idealized world. Whenever the human individual is referred to, it is an ideal human person that a classicist would be conscious of.

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[5] Rene Wellek, A History of Modern Criticism, 1750-1950 (London: Jonathan Cape Trinity Bedford Square, 1955, rpr. 1970 in five vols), I Vol. p.16.

The epic hero depicted in classical literature represents the ideal human nature, for which a model cannot be found in nature but it can be found in the mind of the artist, who relates himself to the nature of man before the fall. According to Rene Wellek,

> Idealization in art could be defended from two almost opposite philosophical positions by a theology which assumed the decay of nature and considered, as Dennis did, that the function of art was "to restore the decays that happened to human nature by the fall, by restoring order", or it could follow from a naturalistic trust in man's power and creativeness in making another and better world, on the analogy of and almost in rivalry with Divine creation.[6]

Thus in the classical philosophy, man and the transcendental world of objects are related through their natures, which can be discovered by reason. Idealization of human nature, based on religious truths and the creative faculties of man, generates values in the classical man. Strict adherence to the objective nature of the external world is its basic principle. And in the human person, emotions that disturb the balanced function of reason must be checked. In art and literature 'imitation' was the chief portrayal. In the individual purging of bad emotions, and encouraging good emotions under the guidance of reason was the chief aim of literature.

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[6] Rene Wellek, Op.cit., p.17.

With this short analysis of classicism, with regard to its relation with other men and the world of objects, we will examine how existentialism as a philosophy and literature deals with them. For the existentialists, as we have seen in the earlier chapter, man is not a 'being' with fixed nature, but his reality as man is realized through his subjectivity. If classicism is based on reason as its primum factum, existentialism is based on existence. According to Gabriel Marcel, it is through a primordial experience of the existence of 'my body' that I become aware of the existence of other bodies. Here, existence is not understood in the ethical sense. From this primordial experience of 'existence', knowledge of the external world and other existents are derived. This relation with other bodies continues, as long as the existent renewes this primordial experience of one's own body.

There are other primordial experiences, through which the existent is related to other existents. They are love, freedom, death, which are not known as facts of knowledge but as vital and primitive experiences. Through these vital experiences, the primordial experience of one's own existence and the existence of others is renewed and confirmed. This existential relationship with

others is maintained through 'fidelity', by which the existent bears witness to an other-than him. 'Fidelity' is also 'faith' in an other-than him, to whom the existent is in a continuous response. Again 'fidelity', according to Marcel is response to a person. It is not a response to an idea or an ideal. For a principle can never make any demand on anyone except through the action of a person. Whereas, in a classical society men are moved through principles of truth and knowledge established through reason.

Similarly, the relation between two persons is renewed through the primordial experience of 'love'. In a classically organized society, the relation between the existent and another is in the form of 'I - and - another'. Whereas, the relation through the primordial experience of love is 'I-and-thou', which turns into 'we' in 'disposability'. 'Disposability' is the relationship which is established by bestowing and spending oneself for another. The contrary is 'indisposability', which spreads restlessness, gloominess, despair and other forms of undesirable emotions.

Martin Heidegger uses the word Dasein which literarily means 'being-there' for human being. "The

essence of Dasein lies in its existence."[7] And here existence for Heidegger is the same as the basic principle of existentialism, which is to attain existence through free choice. And since man's existence is in his choice from possibilities, his choice can never be final and his existence is always indeterminate. Even in this indeterminate state, Dasein has a structure, since it is 'being-in-the-world' having inseparable relations with the world of things or other persons. Dasein's being-in-the-world structure is a primum datum, in the sense that the world in which the self finds itself is constitutive of its existence. World is not merely a place where the self has existence, but being-in-the-world implies that there is no existence out of the world. This fact is exemplified from the preoccupations, cares, concerns and pursuits that press round the existent. He may free himself from one or other preoccupations but will always be surrounded by them. Similarly the objects, which the existent is using are not mere tools but things with specified use for the existent, and they in turn, are related to other objects, which are of service to the existent. Heidegger calls this fact as being-ready-to-hand or Zuhandenheit. This again is a primum datum, for objects or things get

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[7] Martin Heidegger, Being and Time, Trans. From 'Sein Und Zeit' by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1973), p.67.

their fundamental meaning through their relation with Dasein.

Just as Dasein is Mitwelt or with-world in its constitutive structure, so also it is Mitsein or being-with-others in its basic structure. The relationship to others is characterised by solicitude or Fursorge, about which Heidegger says,

> Being for, against, or without one another, passing one another by, not 'mattering' to one another-these are possible ways of solicitude. And it is precisely these ..... deficient and indifferent modes that characterize everyday, average being-with-one-another.[8]

This average solicitude for others may again degenerate into the anonymous 'one' or the 'they' which Heidegger calls 'Das Man'. Kierkegaard refers to this in his account of the 'public', where one by established usages, judgements and opinions divert from responsibility into anonymity. In reality, the anonymous existence is,

> ..... an existence not chosen but having to be chosen, not asked for but demanding to be taken charge of, disclosing itself to me as a simple fact of which I have to bear the burden without knowing why or whence or whether. My primordial sense of this situation is the root of my affective life; all my emotions and sentiments derive from it and

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[8]Martin Heidegger, Op.cit., p.158.

> obscurely refer to it. From this sense of my finitude (Befindlichkeit) also derives my whole interpretation of the world and my capacity to respond to it, for it is a sense not merely of limitation but also of possibility and of imperative: I am and I must be. Otherwise, a world in which we were not merely finite but also finished, a world in which we were not implicated, by which we were not constituted, in which we were not constituted, in which we had no part to play, could not exist for us; if per impossibile, we could look at it as pure spectators, we should be indifferent, that is to say, we could not see it. As it is, my dereliction in the world, and my sense of this solitude and abandonment, the fundamental motive and situation of my whole life, can never be fully overcome because my achievement of myself can never be final, never ceases to require my projects and therefore my interest in the world, and therefore this dereliction which constitutes my existence for myself and my power to comprehend and interpret the world.[9]

Jean-Paul Sartre, divides 'being' into being-for-itself (L' Etre-pour-soi) and being-in-itself (L' Etre-en-soi). The former is consciousness or human being, and the latter is the object of consciousness. Consciousness is pure possibility, distinct from any object that exists. Hence consciousness begins its existence as nothing and it will remain so till death. The object of consciousness is determined. It is not possibility. Though pour-soi and en-soi are in contrast, they are related. But their modes of being are so distinct that they are unbridgeable.

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[9] Harold John Blackham, Six Existentialist Thinkers, (London, Rautledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., rpt. 1978), p. 92.

To quote Blackham again,

> Indeed, it would not be possible to unite the en-soi and the pour-soi if they were separate entities; and that is the position of defeat in which philosophy stands, whether based like Idealism on the primacy of the pour-soi or like Realism on the primacy of the en-soi.[10]

We can here distinguish the position of classicism in relation to existentialism. Classicism is based on the primacy of reason, and unites man and the objective world through intellectual identity. On the other hand in existentialism, pour-soi or human being is perpetually in separation from en-soi, and the denial of it. Pour-soi is embodied in historical existence in the world, but it is not in any manner identified with it. It is perpetually reconstituting itself and virtually having a totality of its own.

> This pure nothing which limits and defines being and is not a property of it nor something else set over against it is not a mere hypothesis to overcome the riddle of philosophy, it falls into place in the description of the only conditions which make our human presence in the world possible. Ontology, description of the structure of Being, will thus describe how consciousness, human presence in the world, neither substance nor process, is related to the body, to its situation in the world, to past, present, and future, to knowing, desiring, willing and choosing, to having and doing to value and ideals to other consciousness.[11]

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[10] Harold John Blackham, Op.cit., p.112.

[11] Ibid.,

We have so far discussed about the relation of man and the external world as described by existentialists like Gabriel Marcel, Martin Heidegger, and Jean-Paul Sartre. Gabriel Marcel's doctrine consisted in showing that existence is a primordial experience. Through the consciousness of the existence of one's body, he is related to the external world. Other primordial and vital experiences unite the existent to others-than-him. Fidelity and love are that which unite the existent to others. Thus consciousness of existence relates man to the external world of objects and other men. Martin Heideggaar bases in the structure of Dasein existence as its essence. Existence is attained through free choice, which relates Dasein to other persons and things. Dasein is both Mitwelt and mitsein, which include all the Dasein's qualities for its relation with them. Similarly Jean-Paul Sartre by his distinction of Pour-soi and en-soi explains their relation and separation through the basic fact of human consciousness.

Our comparison between classicism and existentialism becomes clearer when we realize that classicism is a philosophy of realism based on reason. Man and the external world are totally different entities. The faculty of imagination which unites these entities in literature

are mere imitation through the association of ideas. Whereas imagination for existentialism is based on the basic principle of existence. We will distinguish these characteristics, when we analyse the concept of imagination. In the meantime, we will compare existentialism and romanticism in order to find out their differences and affinities.

In the comparative study of existentialism and other literary movements we restricted the comparison to certain limited areas. We will follow the same method of comparison with regard to existentialism and romanticism. Both are complex movements and have sociological, philosophical and literary aspects. In comparing classicism and existentialism, we distinguished the individual in relation with other persons and the external world. And by this we arrived at the points of difference in their literary aspects.

It has been a common practice among cultural historians to trace back to certain permanent human characteristics as to the cause of social or cultural upheavals. According to them, the historical Romanticism, which extends from the end of the eighteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century, cannot be based

only on the temporary behaviour of certain individuals. It is also based on an instrinsic characteristic of the human mind, which is a consciousness of the fact that there is a great contrast between man's greatness and man's wretchedness; man's power and man's misery. It is not a matter of coincidence, that this fact has been brought to light in the age of Englightenment, when men on the whole boasted of their intellectual greatness. We have already referred to the humanistic tempo of the age, when men in general felt the acme of their greatness in scientific discoveries. They built social institutions which manifested only the aspect of man's greatness. At this juncture, Blaise Pascal spoke of man's misery in the following well-known words,

> When I consider the brief span of my life absorbed into eternity which comes before and after - as the remembrance of a guest that tarrieth but a day - the small space I occupy and which I see swallowed up in the infinite immensity of spaces of which I know nothing and which know nothing to me. I take fright and am amazed to see myself here rather than there: there is no reason for me to be here rather than there, now rather than then. Who put me here? By whose command and act were this time and p place alloted to me?(205).[12]

Similarly, Jean Jacques Rousseau pointed out that the conventions and laws of the age of Enlightenment had

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[12] Blaise Pascal, Pensees. Trans. A.J. Krailsheimer, (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1966), p.48.

destroyed the genuine greatness of men for the mere fact that they destroyed human freedom. Rousseau expressed this fact in the first sentence of his 'Social Contract'. "Man is born free: and everywhere he is in chains." In other words he meant that, 'To renounce liberty is to renounce being a man....".[13] In the period of enlightenment and the secular humanism of the age, man's freedom had been destroyed. Historic Romanticism was a revolt against this established way of life. We will examine some of its characteristics.

Individualism or subjectivity is one of the chief characteristics of historic Romanticism. By this subjectivity, the individual turns towards his own inner life and becomes aware of its conflicting state. This basic consciousness is the leitmotif of his siggularity, his egocentricity and sentimentality. He sees in his interior life vast horizons of realities to brood over. This realization turns the individual towards himself, introspectively analysing his thoughts, reactions and feelings. The centre of his universe is his 'ego'.

The relation between the 'ego' and the surrounding world is established through individual's personal

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[13]Jean Jacques Rousseau, The Social Contract, Trans. G.D.H. Cole, Great Books of the Western World, Vol. 38, p.393.

experience. The Romantics consider that which is experienced by others and reported, is only a general opinion, and therefore, it is not able to present truth as it is found in reality. The Romantics individually turned to reality to experience its naturalness. Their love for folk-art, poetry, or music, or their love of crude nature, as in the case of Wordsworth, is the desire to experience the surrounding world as it is.

Through the individualistic tendency to experience the external world or nature, a mystical sense of a strong bond between nature and the individual was developed. So we can find in poetry, the Romantics trying to establish meaning in landscapes, puddles and winds. They nurtured a quasi-religious belief in the total fusion of man with nature. Nature, in its turn is in sympathy with the poet, sharing his joys and sorrows. The Romantic poets like Shelley believed that nature was not just an outward world but a spirit that suffered with man. He, therefore, sought in nature the image of his own mood and situation and called on nature to participate in his sufferings and happiness. In the "rough wind", in the "sad storm", he hears a "dirge", a "wail for the world's wrong. "The same image is repeated in the "Ode to the West Wind", where the first three verses end in "Oh"I hear", which is an invitation to the West Wind. In nature, Shelley

was sure of receiving that response so disappointingly absent in his human friends. Thus Shelley's poems always move inwards opposite to the outward appearances and towards the recondite meaning of the physical appearances. The whole universe radiated from the poet's 'ego', and his impression of nature is very generalized, conveyed in vague plurals and non-specific adjectives. The basic principle of this poetic exaggeration is nothing but the stress on the subjective experiences and the gradual realization of the internal conflict within man.

In this relationship between the 'ego' and the surrounding world, where the individual often extols his misery, he appears as a hero, who is condemned to a life-sentence within the prison of his own egocentricity. Realizing his misery, the Romantic finds himself unable to be out of the gruelling situation, which may be avoided if the 'ego' adapts to the demands of the outer environment. Since the Romantic allowes himself to be carried away by the ideal situation, the dissonance created by the former in the face of actual reality, forms a wide chasm. The disjointed relationship is created when the desires of the 'ego' are thwarted and the individual recoils into his 'self'. And since self-observation or

self-analysis is the chief characteristic of the Romantic, he sinks deeper into this morbid psychic state. This is the Romantic Hero's tragedy, caused by his own egotism.

In such a situation no genuine or altruistic love is possible. A spontaneous, sincere gesture of love alone can break the spell of this 'curse' as depicted in Coleridge's Ancient Mariner. However, the Ancient Mariner seems to be an exception, for none of the other Romantic heroes were able to get rid of this mal du siecle or malady of the soul. Restlessness and a tendency to melancholy seem to be the milder symptoms of the above malady. Often the hero may seek refuge in perpetual movement or activity, that is tantamount to flight from facing the reality of relationship with others and surrounding world. It is a profound sense of tedium against which De Quincey resorted to a more drastic remedy, as he described in The Confessions of an English Opium Eater. He called opium a counter-agent to the curse of taedium vitae. As Lilian R. Frust says,

> So an egocentric individualism with its exaggerated self-awareness leads to introspection, melancholy, restlenessness, emotional instability, discontent with present reality and flight into vague dreams and longings.[14]

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[14] Lilian R. Frust, Romanticism in Perspective (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1969), p.102.

When the Romantic hero realizes that he cannot find happiness, he gees to the other extreme of savouring his own gloom. So, we find in literature, the hero's desire to experience a misfortune or even the cult of sorrow, even to the extent of reaching a streak of perversity. This masochism may appear at first as an outcome but it is deliberately nurtured by the Romantic hero, who in his individualistic urge to seclusion welcomes even exceptional sorrows and dramatic misfortunes. The extreme sense of this perversion is the suicide of the Romantic hero.

In the individualism or subjectivity of romanticism we have considered some of its basic attitudes and values. In comparison with existentialism, these factors strike out mostly because apparently they seem to coalesce with existential subjectivity. In fact, there are scholars, who believe that existentialism is another offshoot of the romantic temper and spirit. Herbert Read is of the opinion that all the basic ideas of existentialism are present in Schelling and Coleridge. In his book Existentialism, Marxism and Anarchism, Read claims that the main concepts of modern existentialism - Angst, the abyss, immediacy, the priority of existence over essence - are

to be found in Coleridge. In 'Coleridge as Critic', Read claims that, "The origins of existentialism are usually traced to Kierkegaard, but a much better case can be made out for Schelling."[15]

Mr. Read further argues that before Kierkegaard, Coleridge had discovered that existence is its own predicate and that the dialectic intellect cannot arrive at insights concerning the possibility and the world. The origin of these ideas can be traced to Coleridge, who was under the influence of Schelling. Schelling had already anticipated the basic problem of modern philosophy, which is the struggle between conceptual necessity and existential freedom. Kierkegaard and existentialists like Heidegger, Maspers, Marcel and Sartre have just continued the speculations of Schelling. So also, Read concludes that Coleridgean romanticism and Kierkegaardian existentialism are basically the same, since both are derived from the idealist philosophy of Schelling.

To reconcile Schelling's transcendental philosophy and his principal doctrine of identity with Kierkegaard's thought with its stress on existence, is difficult and

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[15]Herbert Read, Coleridge a Critic, (London: Faber and Faber, 1949), p.29.

impossible. Within the aesthetic theories of each we see basic differences. Kierkegaard's notion of 'leap' is opposed to Schelling's notion of intellectual intuition. As against the Kierkegaardian ideas of discontinuity and existential disparateness we have Schelling's principles of continuity and identity. To Schelling, art is the true organ of philosophy. The beautiful is the manifestation of the infinite in the finite. In art, Schelling solves the philosophical problem of the identity of the real and the ideal in the sensuous appearance. Poesy and philosophy are intimately related. The aesthetic intuition of the artists and the intellectual intuition of philosophy are the same. Whereas, according to Kierkegaard, art is to be understood as a process of communication. It is neither intuition nor revelation. Art does not reconcile us with reality nor with existence.

Kierkegaard's theory goes contrary to the Idealist aesthetic theory, which culminated in Hegal. Hegel's aesthetic philosophy tried to reconcile the Infinite and the Finite. As Prof. A.G. George says,

> Hegel's doctrine of the Absolute Spirit asserts the unity of subjective and objective. Spirit in this union becomes perfectly free from all contradictions and is reconciled

> with itself. The dichotomy between subject and object, representation and thing, thought and being, the finite and the infinite, is done away with. The infinite is recognized as the essence of the finite. The knowledge of the highest opposites or of the infinite in the finite manifests itself through the intuition of art, the feeling embodied in religion, and philosophical speculation.[16]

In short, aesthetic has been transformed into metaphysics. Art and truth are reconciled in a metaphysical synthesis. Whereas, Kierkegaard's aesthetic theory is not metaphysical. It is an empirical theory limited to the literary arts.

Kierkegaard's aesthetic thought offers some points of contact with romanticism. However, he does not belong with the romantics since he repudiates them. The most marked contrasts between romanticism and his thought are to be found in his criticism of the diamonic principles of life, which the romantics chiefly cultivated, and in his analysis of the nature of the human self and of human personality.

In Kierkagaard's interpretation of the legends of Don Juan and Faust, we have a sustained criticism of

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[16]Prof. A.G. George, The First Sphere, (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1965), p.59.

the romantic attitudes and values. Both Don Juan and Faust embody sensuousness and despair, themes which are the favourites of literary romanticism. The two principles in accordance with which aesthetic existence is determined are those of aesthetic immediacy and intellectual doubt.

Kierkegaard considers Mozart's Don Juan as the supreme expression of the romantic ideal of sensuous immediacy, an important romantic principle. The sensuality which Don Juan embodies is a kingdom of values in contradistinction to the world of spiritual and ethical values. Here we obtain the implicit tendency to make aesthetic interests primary. Don Jaun illustrates the fact that when passion is separated from moral will and the rule of the spirit it degenerates into lust. Existence loses its goal and becomes a search for the pleasurable moment. Such a life ends in ennui, restlesness, and finally, despair.

Kierkegaard brings in the example of Nero, the Emperor of Rome, to illustrate the above situation. Emperor Nero went to the extent of burning Rome, in order to get the pleasure of experiencing the conflagration of

Troy. The ethicist in the second Volume of Either/OR writes to the aesthetist in the first Volume:

> However, the spirit will not let itself be mocked, it revenges itself upon you, it binds you with the chain of melancholy.[17]

In his description of Nero's melancholy, Kierkegaard gives the stages of its presence in the human soul. Nero, like the romantics experiences the sensuous immediacy in every conceivable pleasure, the spirit at the same time wants a higher form of existence through a metamorphosis. To quote Kierkegaard again,

> But if this is to come about, an instant will arrive when the splendour of the throne, his might and power will pale, and for this he has not the courage. Then he grasps after pleasure; all the world's cleverness must devise for him new pleasures, for only in the instant of pleasure does he find repose, and when that is past he gasps with faintness. The spirit constantly desires to break through, but it cannot attain the metamorphosis, it is constantly disappointed and he would offer it the satiety of pleasure. Then the spirit within him gathers like a dark cloud, its wrath broods over his soul, and it becomes an anguishing dread which ceases not even in the moment of pleasure.[18]

The individual whose life is governed by the principle of aesthetic romanticism cannot make a permanent

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[17]Soren Kierkegaard, Either/Or, Vol. II, Trans. Walter Lawrie and Haward. A. Johnson, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), p.209.

[18]Ibid., p.190.

decision, because the aesthetic life makes no provision for the moral will. But Kierkegaard insists that the moral passion itself is one of the deepest passions. Kierkegaard's disagreement with the romantics was that they remained within the aesthetic sphere of life and refused to leap into the ethical sphere. For, in leaping into the ethical sphere, they may have to sacrifice the pleasures of aesthetic life.

Kierkegaard also analysed the despair of Faust in Fear and Trembling. Despair is a romantic theme, which comes as the result of a previous frustration and the loss of a whole kingdom of the intellect. An intellectual diamonia like the spirit of sensuousness is a special dominating principle, according to which a person tries to ordain his life. Kierkegaard's interpretation of the story of Faust shows the futility of such lives and the intellectual despair which is the final goal of such lives.

We have so far traced out the peculiar characteristics of romanticism. At one stage existentialism appeared to be the same movement as romanticism. Kierkegaard gave us the point of departure between the two movements both

as philosophies and literature. Now, we will compare the distinguishing characteristics of romanticism in literature which according to C.M. Bowra is imagination. He says,

> If we wish to distinguish a single characteristic which differentiates the English Romantics from the poets of the eighteenth century, it is to be found in the importance, which they attached to the imagination and in the special view which they held of it. On this, despite significant differences on points of detail Blake, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats agree and for each it sustains a deeply considered theory of poetry.[19]

The romantic literary movement is based on the changed view of the concept of imagination. The romantics both in England and the rest of Europe held the opinion that the most vital activity of the human mind is imagination. To quote Lilian R. Frust again,

> Just as the individual is the pivot of Romantic universe, so within the individual the focal point is his imagination, his power to perceive and recreate the world according to his own inner vision.[20]

In the relation between the 'ego' of the individual and the objects of the surrounding world, the 'ego'

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[19] C.M. Bawra, The Romantic Imagination, (London: Oxford University Press, 1961, Rept. 1969), p.1.

[20] Lilian R. Frust, Romanticism in Perspective, (London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1969), p.119.

controls the outer universe by shaping it through his imagination. Hence, it may be said that for the romantics, the objects of the universe are frames through which meaningful perceptions are experienced. The function of the imagination has the power to relate the world of objects and vegetation to the world of eternity, where all human beings will reach, after the experience of this finite world of objects. Similarly Coleridge held that imagination is the living power and the prime agent, which causes repetition in the finite mind, of the eternal act of creation. Worldsworth referred to all serious writing as the work of imagination. And Shelley defined poetry in the Defence of Poetry as the expression of the imagination.

In the earlier part of this chapter, when we had compared classicism and existentialism, we pointed out that for classicism the function of imagination was mere association of ideas. In fact, the change that took place from the classical period to the modern period, with regard to imagination is summarised by M.H. Abrams in the Mirror and the Lamp. Abrams shows that from Plato until the eighteenth century, the mind had been a mirror, a reflector of objects. But for the romantics the mind is

a lamp, a radiant projector. Abrams claims that this shift from mimetic to an expressive conception is a decisive break from the classical approach in the field of critical theory. To quote Lilian R. Frust again,

> It is no exaggeration to claim that this revolutionary evaluation of imagination represents the great single advance made by the Romantic movement as a whole, its most valuable contribution to the development of criticism; indeed no modern aesthetic is conceivable without some such notion of a creative imagination as one of its cornerstones.[21]

According to the romantics, imagination is the power to create or to construct mental images of things. It is not the faculty for reflecting images. The inner eye of the imagination transforms existing reality into some higher reality through literary forms and genres.

Imagination for the romantics has different types of powers and it can do what the power of reason is unable to do. It brings disparate elements together into a coherent shape. Shelley attributes to imagination the power of associating things. Against the Cartesian view of separating the body from the mind, by which nature is reduced to a purely mechanistic phenomenon, the romantic philosophy of nature claims unity in nature.

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[21] Lilian R. Frust, Op.cit., p.128.

Through religion and contemplation of nature the romantics hoped to escape from the dualism of reality. Through art, they hoped to make a permanent harmony in nature. Through the unifying force of imagination, they embraced every facet of human life, shaping and transforming it into a harmonious, beautiful entity. Imagination has also the power of mediating between the known universe and the transcendental realm, and also between the individual and nature. Thus, through imagination, the way to mysticism is opened out. The function of imagination is similar to intuitive knowledge, which added to the knowledge and participation in truth.

From this analysis we can draw out the distinction between existentialism and romanticism. To quote Prof. A. G. George,

> In one sense, idealist philosophy and artistic romanticism belong together. In the case of philosophical idealism, the philosopher seeks to integrate into his thought the creative intuition of the artist, whereas the romantic artist seeks to integrate idealist assumptions into his art.[22]

It was the attempt of idealism to unite the individual and transcendental world, the finite and the

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[22] Prof. A.G. George, The First Sphere, (Bombay, Asia Publishing House, 1965), p.62.

infinite. Whereas existentialism, through a deliberate choice, experiences the separation of the finite from the infinite. As Paul Tillich says,

> The philosophy of experienced existence re-establishes the consciousness of the divorce of the finite from the infinite.[23]

Similarly, Kierkegaard says in the Concluding Unscientific postscript that, "Existence is a synthesis of the infinite and the finite."[24]

As a result of this synthesis, which is opposite to identity, the basis of existential despair is established.

> It is the basis of Existential despair, of the will to get rid of oneself. Despair is the expression of the relation of separation in this synthesis, it reveals the dynamic insecurity of the spirit.[25]

The principle of synthesis between the finite and the infinite is one of the basic contribution of existentialism to philosophy as a whole. For centuries

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[23] Paul Tcllich, Theology of Culture, (New York, Oxford University Press, 1964), p.96.

[24] Soren Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, Trans. David F. Surenson and Walter Lawrie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941, Rept. 1974), p.350.

[25] Paul Tillich, Theology of Culture, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p.97.

philosophers had struggled with the problem of relation between the individual and the external world. While both idealism and realism forced out unity and separation, existentialism arrived at synthesis through existence. Since literature is based on imagination, it will be our endeavour to realize how imagination is related to existence and its changed interpretation. For this, we have to wait for the chapter on Imagination and Existentialism. In the next chapter we will distinguish the concept of the 'individual' and the 'self'. In existentialism, a clear distinction between them has been reached. This will further help us to establish the chief aim of our research, which is to show existentialism as a literary theory.

CHAPTER - IV

CONCEPT OF MAN AS THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE SELF

In the previous chapters, we compared existentialism with other literary and philosophical movements. While all these movements have complex aspects, we limited ourselves only to certain areas for our comparative research. They were mainly the concepts of man in relation with other beings and the external world. In this chapter, we will analyse the concept of man as an 'individual' and 'self'. The concept of man as an 'individual' varies in different philosophical and literary movements. Our effort is to establish the distinctive characteristics of the individual as held by existentialism. And for this analysis, our comparative study has to be extended to this chapter, where we will compare existentialism and other lietrary and philosophical movements. If we start with romanticism, we can already notice the different concepts of man as an individual within the movement itself. As Prof. A. G. George says,

> Rousseauistic individualism asserts the importance of the individual as against society and social institutions. Romantic individualism on the whole stresses the experimental side of man, rejecting the moral will in existence.[1]

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[1] Prof. A.G. George, The First Sphere, (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1965), p.65.

Speaking about the social institutions and society against which Rouseau upheld the individuality of man, Jacques Barzun says,

> He (Rouseau) found for example, that in his century children were dressed and reared as if they were minimature men; he found the mothers of the well-to-do classes sending their infants to baby farms, which resulted in neglect and high mortality; he found pregnant women lacing themselves in corsets. He saw a useless nobility and clergy given over to gambling, intrigue, and etiquette. He saw a widening gap between idle rich and toiling poor. Tragic or trivial, these were social symptoms as indicative of the precarious state of France as the complex inefficiencies of public finance or the 285 different codes of custom law which defined the rights and controlled the relations of men.[2]

In these social situations, Rousseau's clarion call was the well-known phrase of 'Back to Nature', by which he wanted the men and women of the social conditions of his days to be individuals exercising their human faculties, as even a tree would do if unhindered by artificial human controls. Man, in his state of nature, is able to exercise his liberty; but due to reliance upon society, he sacrifices liberty, to be secure in layers of conventions which have been built up through centuries of existence. It is this situation that Rousseau expressed

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[2]Jacques Barzun, Classic, Romantic and Modern, (London: Martin Secker and Warbung Ltd., 1962), p.22.

in the first sentence of the Social Contract, "Man is born free and everywhere he is in chains." Man is born to be an individual, free to use his human capacities, but his individuality is suppressed by a system of duties, which are compulsions to keep up a social and political structure.

Against these situation in the Social Contract, a new concept of man was projected by Rousseau. Man is an individual, endowed with a specific nature, wherein his liberty distinguishes him from other forms of beings. So Rousseau would say, "To renounce liberty is to renounce being a man..."[3]. This liberty of the individual is presented in contradistinction to the social and political systems, which may destroy the liberty of individuals. At the same time, Rousseau also adds that if man is endowed by his nature to be an individual with freedom, he is also compelled by his nature to live in society. For the freedom of the individual, as understood by Rousseau, is not to be taken for instincts and physical impulses. Freedom is a natural capacity developed by social relationships, especially by a life in a civil state. So Rousseau says,

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[3]Jean Jacques Rousseau, The Social Contract, Trans. G.D.H. Cole, Great Books of the Western World (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1978), Vol. 38, p.393.

> The passage ffom the state of nature of the civil state produces a very remarkable change in man, by substituting justice for instinct in his conduct, and giving his actions the morality they had formerly lacked. Then only, when the voice of duty takes the place of physical impulses and right of appetite, does man, who so far had considered only himself, find that he is faced to act on different principles, and to consult his reason before listening to his inclinations. Although, in this state, he deprives himself of some advantages which he got from nature, he gains in return others so great, his faculties are so stimulated and developed, his ideas so extended, his feelings so ennobled, and his soul so uplifted, that, did not abuses of this new conditions often degrade him below that which he left, he would be bound to bless continually the happy moment which took him from it for ever, and, instead of a stupid and unimaginative animal, made him an intelligent being and a man.[4]

From the above passage of The Social Contract, we can realize that Rousseau upholds the concept of man as a free individual, who develops his liberty in a social group or civil state. For Rousseau again stresses this fact,

> We might, over and above all this, add, to what man acquires in the civil state, moral liberty, which alone makes him truly master of himself; for the mere impulse of appetite is slavery, while obedience to a law which we prescribe to ourselves is liberty.[5]

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[4] Jean Jacques Rousseau, Op.cit., p.393.

[5] Ibid.,

So far, what has become clear about Rousseau's stand is that individual liberty endowed by nature is enhanced by the participation of the individual in the society or the state. But the actual situation is that, neither the individual nor the society being perfect, the former's liberty and the latter's rights are jeopardised by the excessive influence of one over the other. The solution that is proposed by Rousseau and the Romanticists is that of balance. As Jacques Barzun says,

> The whole quarrel in political science is about the way to reconcile the legitimate demands of the individual and the legitimate requirements of the group. And on this point we should observe that Rousseau like most of the Romanticists, is a proponent of balance - of contradiction, if you will - rather than of unity achieved at the expense of one or the other legitimate claim.[6]

Hence we can conclude that the concept of man as visualized by Rousseau and the Romanticists is that man is an individual endowed with liberty and other faculties, but

> ..alone, he is wretched and weak; in society his individual powers are released and multiplied; he can be not only strong but happy. He can purge his selfishness through devotion to tasks that transcend his short life and temporary interests. The state, in brief, can become an object of reverence like any other, and as such can direct the energies of men. The use that is made of these energies, and not the fact of their having been directed, is the pragmatic test by which a nation can be judged.[7]

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[6]Jacques Barzun, Classic, Romantic and Modern,(London: Martin Seeker and Warburg Ltd., 1962), p.28.

[7]Ibid., p.35.

Quite opposite to this Romantic concept of man is the classical concept of man. Classicism holds that truth is an objective structure, which must be discovered by the few talented representatives of a tribe or a nation or even mankind. Values have been pre-ordained by God or other transcendent beings. Common folk or individual man is not able to reach truth or create any values. Hence individual man is the one, who searches for truth and values, which are already pre-established. Just as in the romantic state the individual must be in a state or group so also the classicist must be in a group. But as we quoted earlier, in romanticism, energies of men may be made use of, for confirming the individual's liberty. However, the same feelings may not be directed by the state. Whereas the classical man has the state to direct him through conventions. His thoughts are controlled and his feelings are shaped according to set-patterns which produce serenity and repose in the individual.

The main characteristic of the classical man is the use of reason. Reason is not a creative faculty, but that which can find existing realities. T.S. Eliot is one of the proponents of classicism of the present century. René Wellek brings out the emphasis Eliot places on the importance of objective values and the relation

of classical poets towards them, when he says,

> Eliot's emphasis on the impersonality and objectivity of the poet, his view of the poet as "the shred of platinum" (to quote the famous simile from Tradition and the Individual Talent could be interpreted as a revival of neoclassical principles, and it is surely a reaction against romantic subjectivism, lyricism and exaltation of the ego.[8]

So also Eliot's emphasis on the importance of traditional element in literature is a confirmation of the fact of truth as an objective value and the function of the artist to bring out the traditional elements in his work of art. But as Prof. A.G. George distinguishes in his Critics and Criticism,

> Eliot's concept of tradition is not a passive transference of the poetic practices of a previous generation or generations. In this sense "tradition" is to be discouraged. But true tradition is not passive. It cannot be inherited. It can be obtained by much conscious labour. The most important element in tradition is the 'historical sense'. Eliot defines the historical sense as a 'sense of the timeless as well as the temporal and of the timeless and of the temporal together. It further involves the simultaneity of the past. The historical sense makes a writer aware that the whole of European literature from the time of Homer to his own day constitutes a simultaneous order.[9]

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[8] René Wellek, A History of Modern Criticism, 1750 to 1950 (London: Jonathan Cape Trinity Bedford Square, 1955 reprt. 1970, in five vols), Vol. I, p.1.

[9] Prof. A.G. George, Critics and Criticism, (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1971), p.127.

The act of conscious labour on the part of the artist to reach traditional values and the historical sense consists in the fact, that he should possess and reflect the importance of reason in the philosophical aspects of classicism. In fact, as Rene Wellek says,

> Eliot's constant stress on the share of the intellect in the creative process, his plea for reasonableness and toughness, and his view that poetry must be at best as well written as prose.....[10]

is a further confirmation of the importance of even in the latter-day developments in classicism. This view is confirmed more emphatically, when Eliot's view of the poet is compared to the function of the "shred of platinum".

> When a catalytic agent like platinum wire is introduced into a mixture of oxygen and sulphuric dioxide, sulphuric acid is formed. This formation takes place only when the platinum is present. But it itself does not undergo any change although without its presence no chemical reaction will take place. The platinum remains inert, neutral, and unchanged. The mind of the poet is the shred of the platinum. It does not undergo any change in the process of composition. It may use biographical material or material from outside. Thus the poem has no relation the poet.[11]

Eliot further argues that feelings do not matter

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[10] Rene Wellek, A History of Modern Criticism 1750 to 1950 (London: Jonathan Cape Trinity, Bedford Square, 1955, reprt., 1970 in five vols), Vol. I, p.2.

[11] Prof. A.G. George, Critics and Criticism, (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1971), p.128.

in the creation of a poem. Feelings may be there but if they interfere with the creative work they should be suppressed. Thus we get the classical concept of man, with reason performing the major work, emotions played down and related with the rest of humanity through tradition. The state and society are ever ready to help for a steady improvement of the realization of man. The classical concept of man is thus opposed to the romantic concept with regard to the individuality of man.

We have attempted to outline briefly the differing emphases on the conception of human reality in the two contra-distinguished literary movements of romanticism and classicism. When we proceed to compare and contrast the existential definition of man with those of romanticism and classicism we face new problems and encounter new difficulties. For instance, the two movements of romanticism and existentialism appear (only superficially) to coalesce in their theories of man, his nature, and destiny. With regard to the nature or essence of man, it is a basic existential principle that existence precedes his essence. As Jean-Paul Sartre, in giving the meaning of the above principle also describes the existential concept of man, in the following words:

> We mean that man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world - and defines himself afterwards. If man as the existentialist sees him is not definable, it is because to begin with he is nothing. He will not be anything until later, and then he will be what he makes of himself.[12]

The actual application of this philosophical principle to reality engenders many other factors, which in their collaboration make up the existentialistic individual. Even from this principle, one can realize that the concept of man as envisaged by the existentialists differs from the classical or the romantic concept of man. In classicism and romanticism, the individual is the one who possesses a fixed nature, from which all the characteristics of the individual are derived in a determined manner. Romanticism, chiefly emphasizes the liberty of the individual. Society, though it should assist the individual in the exercise of his liberty, often becomes a hindrance for the individual. Usually, society is reluctant to give up the obsolete conventions, which become a hindrance for the development of the individual. Romantic subjectivity, thus depends on environmental suitability and social assistance. Existentialistic subjectivity, on the other hand, is within the person of the individual. Social collaboration is essential, as Heidegger says Dasein or

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[12]Jean-Paul Sartre, Existentialism and Humanism, Trans, Philip Mairet (London: Eyre Methuen Ltd., 1948), Reprt. 1978), p.28.

'being-there' is essentially a being-with or Mit-sein. Similarly Being is essentially a with-world or Mit-welt. But the choice or decision that makes existence prior to essence is entirely a personal and interior act of the existent. The environment may be unsuitable in accordance with the romantic or the classical philosophic principles. The existing individual must utilize this very intractability of the world (and transform it, if necessary) in the process of becoming. Thus existential subjectivity is an interior phenomenon.

So far, we have seen the concept of man as an individual. It is not only existentialism or romanticism or classicism that conceives man as an 'individual'. Even marxism or any other form of totalitarianism has this basic concept of man as an individual.

As Miguel de Unamuno says in The Tragic Sense of Life",

> "I. I. I. always I" some reader will exclaim. "And who are you?. I might reply in the words of Obermann, that great man: 'In the eyes of the Universe nothing. In my own eyes, everything.[13]

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[13]Miguel de Unamuno, The Tragic Sense of Life in Men and Nations, Trans. Anthony Kenigan (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), p.14.

At the basis of every human being's consciousness is the realization that he is an individual. Erring minds and social circumstances may have misled individuals and groups into thinking that one is a cog in a machine, but the independent spirit of human individuals has been so great that for the sake of this consciousness they have braved tyrants and calamities.

We must now enquire into the factors that produce this indomitable conviction of individuality. Miguel de Unamuno, who was much concerned with this basic problem of man's awareness of himself in his unique concreteness, argues that it is suffering which shapes the individual, and endows him with the sense of particularity. He says,

> But the world suffers, and suffering means to sense the flesh of reality, it is to sense the mass and substance of the spirit, it is to palpate oneself; it is immediate reality.
>
> Suffering is the substance of life and the root of personality, for only suffering makes us persons. And suffering is universal; all living beings are united by suffering, the universal or divine blood which flows through us all. Will, what we call will, what is it but suffering?[14]

But before we come to this stage in the concept of suffering we will trace the development of the concept of suffering in classicism and romanticism.

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[14]Miguel de Unamuno, Op.cit., p.224.

For the classical Greeks sufferings were the means for anyone to contribute to their community. At the same time the individual reached the acme of his greatness through sufferings and especially in his death for the sake of the community, which would even raise him to the dignity of a deity depending on the magnitude of his sacrifice. About this practice of the Greeks, Moses Hadas says,

> That is why tragedy, and in particular the tragedies of Sophocles, must involve the violent death of the principal personage. Sophocles' plays indeed often amount to a demonstration that a personage generally esteemed as a hero did in fact earn that high status. All are stark and uncompromising figures whose obsessive willfulness causes their deaths, but all are also useful to other men, who if they desire the obverse of the coin, must accept with it its inseparable reverse.[15]

By the fifth century B.C. the Greek way of life lost touch with the concept of the great classical hero. The importance of the individual decreased and human sufferings were considered to be caused by misfortune, accident and fate - an inevitable circumstantial situation. And this fact is evident from Aristotle's Poetics in which he gives a detailed interpretation of tragedy and suffering. Our concern about Aristotle's opinion with regard to

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[15] Moses Hadas, Humanism, World Perspectives. (London: George Allen and Urwin Ltd. 1961), p.22.

suffering is the manner in which suffering has individualised man. From the fact that Aristotle traces back to Hamartia, as the originating cause of suffering, it is clear that man's suffering comes from his nature. This fact he proves by his analysis of the play, Oedipus the King. This tragedy of Sophocles is held by Aristotle to illustrate the theory of the characters and the plot. This theory in its turn is based on the suffering of the individual and its influence in individualising the character. But suffering in this theory is caused by fate, or passion based on human nature. For the character of Oedipus was responsible for the dark forces which ultimately brought on his destruction. Hence the conclusion is that aesthetic passions are used for destroying evil passions in the individual, whether he is the hero or the spectator.

By witnessing a tragedy, the spectator is roused to pity and fear. This fact is also shown as taking place in the characters. The meaning of pity and fear consists in the fact that while the spectator fears the evil consequences of fate and his own passions, he pities when such consequences take place in others. This function of tragedy is known as Catharsis. There are various

interpretations to the finality and cause of suffering. They are based on the philosophy one holds with regard to the nature of human beings. Since all philosophers, which attempted an interpretation of Catharsis held the view that man has a fixed nature, the effects of sufferings can be nothing more than a determined function of nature within nature itself. Thus given this philosophical background, suffering cannot generate individuality in a human being.

This fact is very well brought out in the Shakesperean tragedies of the Renaissance. Whether we consider the heroes and characters of King Lear, or Hamlet or Julius Ceasar we do not find the emergence of an individual but a purified king dear or prince Hamlet, which is the same as any other form of being which is subject to purging through a cleansing agent either from within the being or from without. King Lear is presented by Shakespeare as an old man, with the senile shortcomings, peculiar to his age and status. Although, the title of the tragedy is King Lear, his purification through the tragic events following the ingratitude of his two daughters, does not depict anything different from the Aristotelian theory of 'suffering' in tragedy.

However, the character of Cordelia and the Earl of Kent depicts the transformation of individuals through sufferings, freely chosen by them. It is not a mere good character trait that Shakespeare develops in the persons of Cordelia and Kent. Nor are they suffering because of fate or circumstances but through their voluntary choice of which they knew the consequences, and by which all their faculties as human beings were used. But this fact is not presented in the tragedy neither through the course of events nor through the concepts expressed in words. On the whole, Shakespearean tragedies follow the Greek classical concepts of suffering without the finality which existential theory of the individual would require. But to a thoughtful reader, Cordelia and the Earl of Kent impress as genuine individuals.

During the neo-classical age many of the classical doctrines were revived. "Neoclassicism is a fusion of Aristotle and Horace, a restatement of their principles and views which underwent only comparatively minor changes during almost three centuries."[16] And in the field of suffering Rene Wellek expresses this opinion,

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[16] Rene Wellek, A History of Modern Criticism, 1750 to 1950 (London: Jonathan Cape Trinity, Bedford Square, 1955, rept 1970 in five vols), Vol. I, p.6.

> It can be safely said that in the neoclassical age purging was interpreted to mean hardening, becoming inured to the passions of pity and fear, just as a physician becomes indifferent to the sight of terrible wounds and a veteran soldier to the most dangerous fighting. In Corneille Catharsis was interpreted as the purging of the spectator from the emotions in which the characters of the play indulged to their cost. Tragedy became a warning example. The misfortune of the hero should arouse our pity, and this pity should in turn arouse our fear that we might meet similar misfortunes ourselves. Corneille minimized pity and exalted "fear", the pathetic, the admiration we carry away for the suffering hero.[17]

From the above opinion we can realize that the aesthetic passion, which is the result of human nature does not turn into ethical passion in the neoclassical age. Suffering arouses pity, admiration, fear. Nevertheless, the fact of tempering the character seems to be ethically oriented and individualistic.

In the present twentieth century, as we had said before, several literary theories were established. A classical revival received a prominent thrust at the hands eminent theorists and artists like T.S. Eliot. In his approach to the problem of suffering, the religious aspect seems to be the solution to this paradox of life. Prof. A.G. George distinguishes between tragic sense and

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[17] Rene Wellek, Op.cit., p.22.

tragic vision in his analysis of Eliot's attitude to suffering. In a tragic vision the philosopher tries to visualise a solution to the problem of suffering and ends up in pessimism and finds no escape from the vicious circle of suffering. It engenders despair and gloom and absurdity. Whereas the tragic sense has a different origin.

> It springs from the experience of human finitude, from the sense of guilt, of sin, of anxiety, of "the thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to." Any kind of speculation on the problem of suffering is ruled out for one filled with the tragic sense. The tragic sense poses no problems, gives no solutions. For one with religious convictions the tragic sense finally gives the vision of beatitude, of felicity, and of the peace that passeth understanding; and without religion it simply leads to the vision of unmitigated despair.[18]

From the above citation we realize that T.S. Eliot's solution to the problem of suffering is the leap to God through faith. By this leap to God, suffering, considered in the tragic sense, will not be an intellectual problem nor will it give a solution to it. This is the characteristic nature of the leap to God by faith. However, a distinction has to be made between the Kierkegaardian leap and the leap as understood by T.S. Eliot. For the former,

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[18] Prof. A.G. George, T.S. Eliot. His mind and Art, (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1969), p.196.

leap is an existential choice by which the individual uses all his faculties to entrust himself to God. In this process he is not freed from his agony, anxiety, tension and other aspects of suffering. The example of Abraham sacrificing Isaac may be recalled, as explained by Kierkegaard to prove the point. Whereas, as Eliot explains the leap to God, the individual consents to the doctrines of beatitude, felicity and peace in answer to the suffering one undergoes. This consent is a predominantly intellectual assent to the doctrines based on Divine authority. It is a classical solution, but at the same time the assent raised the individual's dignity. However, before we enter into the area of the transition from individual to self we will consider suffering as explained by romanticism.

We have dealt with suffering as one of the main spheres of romantic literature. Sufferings, which eventually culminate in death were considered by the romantics as part of experience in life by which the individuals matured in human life. When the values of life are seen in the background of death, they get their full magnitude. According to M.H. Abrams,

> Wordsworth's Tintern Abbey and the Intimations Ode, which like The Prelude, are poems of what it means to grow to maturity, resound with virgilian sense of lachrimae rerum. Life is growth, but growth means loss, and the loss deeply matters; so that, although Wordsworth finds in the attributes of maturity "abundant recompense", the Ode's conclusion is that to have a 'human heart' is to find the meanest of mortal things thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.[19]

More than maturity, what we see reflected in the romantic predilection for suffering is the basic principle of romanticism, which we have discussed in the earlier chapters. The basic principle is the romantic awareness of the dichotomy of the human soul by which man's greatness and wretchedness exist together. As M.H. Abrams says that maturity as understood by Wordsworth is not a transformed state of perfection but the realization of the loss that goes together with growth or happiness that is surrounded by sadness. The same principle is included in the words of Mario Praz in The Romantic Agony where he says,

> For the Romantics beauty was enhanced by exactly those qualities which seem to deny it, by those things objects which produce honour; the sadder, the more painful it was, the more intensely they relished it.[20]

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[19] M.H. Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc. 1971), p.444.

[20] Mario Praz, The Romantic Agony, Trans. Angus Davidson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), p.27.

Or if we read Shelley's Prometheus Unbound we find that man even in the best of environments will be facing death and sufferings.

> The Furies tempt Prometheus to despair by revealing the foulness beneath the threshold of consciousness in every mind, and especially the corruption of the erotic instinct by the death instinct which expresses itself in a lust for destruction. (1,445.91).[21]

Thus the Romantic literature contains always the fact of suffering, pain, angst, and death in relation with the beautiful.

> In fact, to such an extent were Beauty and Death looked upon as sisters by the Romantics that they became fused into a sort of two-faced herm, filled with corruption and melancholy and fatal in its beauty - a beauty of which, the more bitter the taste, the more abundant the enjoyment.[22]

The point of our consideration here is whether suffering, which the romantics have extolled as a poetic theme, helped man to realize his individuality. They write in terms of pleasure at suffering, beauty in death, etc.. The lyrical Ballads of William Wordsworth and Coleridge are about the events of life, experienced and

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[21] M.H. Abrams, Natural Supernaturalism (New York: W.W. Norton & Co. Inc. 1971), p.445.

[22] Mario Praz, The Romantic Agony, Trans. Angus Davidson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), p.31.

expressed in emotional language. In John Keats, we can find that the Odes were a means of escaping the realities of life than enriching the individual. As Prof. A. G. George says,

> When Keats was writing his Odes, he had begun to feel the tragic sense of life. The death of Tom Keats and the emigration of George had left him lonely. The agony of his unfulfilled love was wearing out his spirits. His health was beginning to fail. In the Odes we do not find the joyousness of youth and vitality. These are replaced by a note of solemnity, deepening now and then into acute suffering. There is everywhere a desire to escape the realities of life and a sense of unreality.[23]

Keat's Ode to a Nightingale depicts a world, where everything perishes and decays. Youth and beauty, which are the goals of human life in aesthetic passions are transitory and momentary. This meaningless life causes suffering to the poet, but Keat's philosophy does not take the all important leap, but sways from the realities of life into a world of dreams and visions. In fact, this is the romantic way of life. It accepts suffering caused by human misery, but it cannot climb into the sphere of ethico-religious life as done by the existentialists.

If we examine the novels of Dostoyevsky we realize that he maintains that suffering is a human constant. It

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[23] A.G. George, Studies in Poetry, (New Delhi: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd. 1971), p.253.

is a humanistic tendency to avoid suffering. Whereas suffering pierces the lethargic state of human consciousness, reduced to such a state through a life of ease. According to Dostoyevsky's philosophy of life a normal state of life is not a life of ease but of suffering. Suffering is the only factor that can rouse consciousness.

The humanistic way of life, as we have discussed earlier, looks for the finality of human life in this world itself. In such circumstances, well-being is the most satisfactory end that can be thought of in this world. But the result of such a philosophy is that it reduces man to smugness and security in this life, which is equivalent to a lethargic non-existence. The main problem of Dostoyevskyan novels was to force man out of this normal self-complacency. In fact, one is struck by the blood-curdling crimes in Dostoevsky's novels. But this is the only way to rouse up generations of human beings lost in the ordinary, daily, routine-life; avoiding every trace of suffering that they may have to face. Murder produces guilt, remorse, and fear of punishment not only in the murderer but even in the reader of the novels. And this suffering is life-long as in the case of Cain in the murder of Abel. Even conversion or leap

to God does not relieve the murderer from the suffering or the mental agony. Raskolinkov, the Crime and Punishment commits two murders, which destroy his intellectual pride and reduces him to a veritable wreck. Even the confession of his sins does not relieve Raskolinkov of his mental agony and suffering. But it transforms the hero into an individual and this is the purpose of the novel. Hence in the analysis of Miguel de Unamuno, "Suffering is a spiritual matter and the most immediate revelation of consciousness, and it may be that our body was not given us except as a means to suffering."[25]

The individual 'I' is a consciousness in a dormant state, imprisoned within the body. But at the same time this consciousness is a spirit trying to be conscious of itself. And this function is done through the body, which is limited. The spirit of the individual may be compared to electricity which passes through a wire. When the wire because of its limitations offers resistance to electricity, the wire turns hot and becomes the cause of light. Similarly, the body is like the wire, which offers resistance to the spirit from realizing its consciousness. And this causes suffering to the body which developes consciousness in the individual.

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[24]Miguel de Unamuno, The Tragic Sense of Life in Men and Nations. Trans. Anthony Kerrigan (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), p.231.

In the words of Miguel de Unamuno,

> Although we may accept the fact from superior authority, we do not really know we possess a heart, stomach or lungs until they pain us, or oppress us, or cause us anguish. It is physical suffering, or even discomfort, which reveals the existence of our inner being.[25]

Similarly anguish is like the resistance caused in our knowledge which remains in the notional level if resistance is not experienced. With the experience of resistance, consciousness is aroused and real knowledge is attained. The anguish that one will definitely die which is a surety from related experiences rouses the human spirit to great heights of existence. To quote Unamuno again,

> Suffering which is a form of dissolution, causes us to discover our inner being, and in the supreme dissolution, which is death, we shall, through the suffering of annihilation, reach the core of our temporal matrix, which is God, whom we breathe and learn to love in our spiritual anguish.[26]

Arguing in the same vein, Miguel de Unamuno traces the cause of evil. Spirit progresses towards higher being by longing for immortality or even to be equal to God. But the matter to which the spirit is related essentially

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[25]Miguel de Unamuno, Op.cit., p.232.

[26]Ibid., p.233.

draws back the spirit. Matter is the cause of sloth in the individual. Hence it is a dualism in which,

> Each consciousness seeks to be itself and to be all others as well without ceasing to be itself: it seeks to be God. And matter, unconsciousness, tends to become less and less, tends toward nothingness, its thirst being for a state of rest. Spirit exclaims: 'I want to be!'; matter answers: 'I want not to be!'[27]

This progress towards nothingness, which is caused by the material world is counterbalanced by society. The material world is created by the instinct of preservation, whereas society originates the instinct of perpetuation in the individual. The individual, who is drawn towards nothingness faces the force of resistance from matter, when he tries to soar high in the power of the spirit and with the aid of society. The resulting tension is the cause of suffering in the individual, which helps the individual to climb higher in the sphere of existence.

The main outcome of suffering is that it generates love in the individual. "True love does not exist apart from suffering, and in this world we must choose either love which is suffering, or happiness."[28]

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[27] Miguel de Unamuno, Op.cit., p.233.

[28] Ibid., p.225.

Happiness is a state of habitual living by which the individual loses his consciousness. The state of happiness is without suffering, and therefore without love. Thus it is usual with men to leave off suffering in order to attain happiness. Hence it is a great choice for the individual either to gain happiness and lose all love and consciousness or to approach the infinite sphere of love in the supreme anguish of suffering. But it is a risk that transforms the individual from nothing to everything. As Unamuno says,

> Suffering tells us we exist; suffering tells us those who love exist; suffering tells us the world we live in exists, and suffering tells us that God exists and suffers; and this is the suffering of anguish, the anguish to survive and be eternal. It is anguish which reveals God to us and makes us place our love in Him.[29]

Thus, there is a great difference between the classical concept of suffering and the suffering as the manifestation of consciousness and love. In the great classical age of Sophocles, suffering and death were considered as the factors that enriched the hero or the individual. And for Aristotle it was the negation of the individual through fear and pity. While these

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[29] Miguel de Unamuno, Op.cit., p.226.

concepts were revived and improved through centuries with modifications, the romantic concepts of suffering and death, stressed the aspect of experiencing them. In this experience of suffering they exposed the simultaneous existence of two contradictory principles of greatness and wretchedness in man. Their depth-analysis, however, was not able to show the individualising characteristeric of suffering. The existentialists through their philosophy and literature showed that suffering not only makes a man individual but a self.

Soren Kierkegaard, in his treatise The Sickness Unto Death, investigates this change of man into an individual and the self. He says,

> Man is spirit. But what is spirit?. Spirit is the self. But what is the self?. The self is a relation which relates itself to its own self, or it is that in the relation (which accounts for it) that the relation relates itself to its own self: the self is not the relation but (consists in the fact) that the relation relates itself to its own self. Man is a synthesis of the infinite and the finite, of the temporal and the eternal, of freedom and necessity, in short it is a synthesis. A synthesis is a relation between two factors. So regarded, man is not yet a self.[30]

The last sentence, which says, that 'man is not yet a self' as described earlier, brings out the distinction

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[30] Soren Kierkegaard, The Sickness unto Death, Trans. Walter Lourie (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941 fifth printing 1974), p.146. (compiled with Fear and Trembling).

between the ideal conception of spirit or selfhood and the existential conception of the same. Man's existence is not only different from his nature as visualised and defined by the idealistic philosophers, but is diametrically opposite to the idealistic conception. The reason for this basic distinction is that man is not a unity in reality, which is the same as saying that he is not a self. In The Sickness unto Death, Kierkegaard investigates this fundamental state of the individual which may be called as corruption, or sin by Christianity or suffering by Miguel de Unammuno, but Kierkegaard calls it despair. Finally Kierkegaard concludes that one can become a self but that is not done by the personal effort, which is understood as virtue, but through faith. We will go through the entire treatise summarily, and this will help us to establish the concept of self and its real existence.

Kierkegaard clarifies the meaning of the concept of the sickness unto death in the following manner. The phrase gets its real meaning only when death is understood in the non-christian conception of death as the end of human life. In the Christian doctrine, natural death is only a passing phase into a new life. Thus despair or

the sickness unto death is similar to the dissolution of life through death for ever. Besides, the worst aspect of despair is that, although man is experiencing this type of death it is not the end of everything. As Kierkegaard says,

> On the contrary, the torment of despair is precisely this, not to be able to die. So it has much in common with the situation of the moribund when he lies and struggles with death, and cannot die. So to be sick unto death is, not to be able to die - yet not as though there were hope of life; no, the hopelessness in this case is that even the last hope, death, is not available. When death is the greatest danger, one hopes for life; but when one becomes acquainted with an even more dreadful danger? One hopes for death. So when the danger is so great that death has become one's hope, despair is the disconsolateness of not being able to die.[31]

Hence, when despair is compared to sickness and death, it means that despair is a permanent characteristic of man, for dying of despair means constantly being transformed into living, which means to experience death again. It is a self consumption which does not consume the self. But this fact of being not consumed is not a consolation, for this comfort will turn into a worse torment. Kiergegaard calls this as the 'potentiated formula of despair', which carries on increasing as fever in this sickness of the self. It is a matter of common

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[31] Soren Kierkegaard, Op.cit., p.154.

experience that man despairs over something. But in reality it is the despair over oneself, because this sickness does not allow the realization of the self. The last chance left to man seems to be not to think of this sickness at all. But that itself, is another cause of the consciousness of this sickness being present in man. "And thus it is eternity must act, because to have a self, to be a self, is the greatest concession made to man, but at the same it is eternity's demand upon him."[32]

After this initial explanation of despair, Kierkegaard explains the different forms of despair basing himself on consciousness. Despair is in a person according to the stage of consciousness one has developed in oneself. The greater the consciousness, the more despair is the proportionate ratio of the presence of this sickness in man.

Sickness unto death or despair is in a person who is unconscious of its presence. It may happen that one is deluded into believing that he is not in despair. But in reality it is a type of despair. It is a negative type of despair. This form of despair is, according to

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[32]Soren Kierkegaard, Op.cit., p.154.

Kierkegaard the commonest type in the world. The humanistic outlook on life, by which man feels that he is self-sufficient falls into this category. Or the totalitarian systems or individuals in romantic experience may be placed under this category of despair. As Kierkegaard says,

> Every human existence which is not conscious itself as spirit, or conscious of itself before God as spirit, every human existence which is not thus grounded transparently in God but obscurely reposes or terminates in some abstract universality (state, nation, etc.) or in obscurity about itself takes its faculties merely as active powers, without in a deeper sense being conscious whence it has them, which regards itself as inexplicable something which is to be understood from without - every such existence, whatever it accomplishes, though it be the most amazing exploit, whatever it explains, though it were the whole of existence, however intensely it enjoys life aesthetically - every such existence is after all despair.[33]

Proceeding from this, Kierkegaard considers the individual, who is conscious of being in despair, and also at the same time conscious of being a self because he realizes that he is related to the Eternal, he is either in despair because at not willing to be his self, or in despair at willing to be his self. However, it is evident that conscious despair must be corroborated with

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[33] Soren Kierkegaard, Op.cit., p.179.

the knowledge of what despair is in order that an individual may be in real despair.

In examining the despair at not willing to be oneself, which is a despair of weakness, we find that there is contained in it the despair of willing to be oneself and vice versa. For every form of despair is basically a defiance of weakness and defiance. The despair of weakness is over something earthly or environmental circumstances, for which the individual is not ready to be a self.

In immediacy the individual is immersed in the other. His relation with the eternal is not clear. In vulgar language one speaks of good fortune, misfortune, fate etc.. In this situation, when the individual feels that he is overwhelmed by the exterior situation, to which, through reflection he can become a true self, but he surrenders and despairs. But his despairing is a momentary non-existence. But being transient, he recovers with external help, but not with the power of his self.

> This form of despair is: despair at not willing to be oneself; or still lower, despair at not willing to be a self; or lowest of all, despair at willing to be another than himself, wishing for a new self.[34]

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[34]Soren Kierkegaard, Op.cit., p.186.

In its second form despair can be about the eternal and about oneself. When one relies entirely on earthly things and situations or by attributing greater value to earthly things, one is said to be in such despair. One who despairs understands that it is a weakness to overvalue earthly things, but instead of turning away from such despair, and to turn to God in faith, he sinks deeper and deeper into this despair over his weakness. But in reality this despair indicates that the individual is conscious of his self and he is not despairing over any earthly things but over himself. But through this despair a greater consciousness over despair is reached that he is so weak as to consider earthly things so important and to lose the eternal and himself.

Against the despair of weakness, there is the despair of manliness or defiance. Just as it was shown earlier in the despair of weakness, defiance is manifested over the earthly situations, which is followed by despair over oneself about the eternal. After this follows defiance which is despair by the aid of the eternal, by abusing the eternal in the self which shows that one is determined to be oneself. And the way to faith by which one gains his self is also by the aid of the eternal.

The self has the courage to lose itself to gain itself. Hence the contrary to despair of defiance is by willing to be itself, different from the contrary to despair of weakness which is by willing to lose itself.

Besides in the despair of defiance consciousness of self is greater and together with it as a consequence of greater consciousness of what despair is and also that one's condition is that of despair. In the despair of defiance, despair is conscious of itself as a deed, unlike the despair of weakness which is conscious of itself, as a suffering caused by the influence of circumstances and which comes directly from the self. Hence despair of defiance is a new qualification, in addition to the despair over one's weakness.

When anyone wills in despair to be oneself, there must be in him the consciousness of the infinite self, which can be called as the most abstract possibility of the self. But this self, which one wills to be, is detached from every relation with the power which posited it. He wants to create an independent self for himself, different from the one he is conscious of, as having. Although the desparing self is active, it cannot become

the abstract infinite self it wants to be.

> For though this self were to go so far in despair that it becomes an experimental god, no derived self can by regarding itself give itself more than it is: it nevertheless remains from first to last the self, by self-duplication it becomes neither more nor less than the self.[35]

But the realization of this is a painful journey through hard realities. Yet he will still remain the field of abstract consciousness of the infinite self that is in despair.

"The sickness unto Death", as told by Anti-Climacus and edited by Soren Kierkegaard is an indirect communication of Kierkegaard's thoughts. Although analytically centuries of thoughts have gone by before the concept of self has been established, it is a permanent belief of the human mind that each individual is a self. Due to social circumstances and environmental situations, this fact has been overlooked. It is only due to the daring efforts of philosophers and literary men that we can expect to get such depth analysis of Soren Kierkegaard or Miguel de Unamuno. Even their efforts remain hidden from the majority of humanity, as in the case of Soren Kierkegaard. As Robert Bretall says,

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[35]Soren Kierkegaard, Op.cit., p.202.

> In view of the remarkable passage, 'despair is 'the sickness unto Death'"; it is clear that Kierkegaard understood the 'death instinct' fifty years before Freud. Indeed, the whole murkey realm of the subconscious is here opened up in so illuminating a fashion as to prove Kierkegaard one of the fathers of "depth psychology", even though his interest in this realm is always re religious and more specifically a Christian one".[36]

The concepts of death, evil, destiny and suffering and despair are visualised differently from the traditional meanings offered by classicism and romanticism or any other philosophical and literary movements. Consciousness of the self is creative. And the means for such great insights and creativity are accomplished through the power of imagination. Imagination had received an impetus in the creative activity of the romantics. But the existentialists have realized the importance of imagination, not only because existentialism is against rationalism but mainly because existentialism is a philosophy based on choice, creation and the idea of existence as a preceding essence.

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[36] A Kierkegaard Anthology, Ed. Robert Bretall, (New York, The Modern Library, 1974), p.340.

CHAPTER - V

IMAGINATION AND EXISTENTIALISM

A central concept in Romanticism has all along been that of 'imagination'. In a sense the Romantic poets and thinkers have related 'imagination' to their ideas of the individual, and all that is noble and worthwhile in man. Poetry, to the Romantics, is a special artistic expression of this faculty of man. Let us now see how the existential thought deals with this concept.

The concept of imagination has a history of its own, and this in turn helps us to explain literature in its various movements. In Greek literature, Plato and Aristotle have expressed views similar to different schools of thought concerning imagination.

Plato's poetic theories are contained in the two dialogues the Ion and the Republic. The main concerns of Plato in these dialogues, as stated by Aristophanes, were the relation between art and truth, and the wisdom to be obtained from poetry, and the moral and educational

purpose which poetry can impart to the citizens. The Ion is a debate between Ion the reciter of Homer's poetry and Socrates. According to the main contention of Socrates, poetry is the result of a sort of 'madness', 'frenzy' or 'inspiration'. Poetry is not a species of knowledge. However, in his Republic, we have Plato's theory of imitation fully stated. In the 10th chapter of the Republic the debate is between Socrates and Glaucon. The main points of the debate are: the nature of poetic activity, the doctrine of imitation, explained on the analogy of the bed, the function of the poet in an ideal state, and the practical uses of poetry. The nature of imitation is explained by his theory of ideas. In brief, his theory of ideas is as follows.

Whenever a number of individuals have a common name, it is assumed there is a corresponding idea or form. For instance, there are beds and tables in the word. But there is only one idea or form corresponding to all the tables and another idea or form corresponding to all the beds in the world. Plato calls the idea of the bed, the "ideal" bed and the beds in the world the actual beds. When a carpenter makes a bed, he imitates

or copies the idea of a bed or the ideal bed. But no artificer or carpenter can make the idea of the bed. This idea can only be made by God. It exists in the world of supersensible realities. Poetry is a form of imitation or a representation of the actual and the contingent and not of the ideal and the essential.

There are three important poetical concepts which Plato dealt with in the dialogues. They are poetry as education, poetry as imitation and poetry as inspiration. As a philosopher, Plato's chief concern was the application of philosophy to personal and social problems. And education was for Plato the realization of the ultimate values, the Good, the Beautiful and the True. And because of this philosophical bias, Plato believed that poetry should subserve individuals and social morality, and when poetry fails to do this, poetry produces a corrupting influence. More important than this criticism of the immorality of poetry is the charge that poetry is inevitably trivial. This conclusion is reached through his theory of ideas.

According to this theory the created world is an imperfect imitation of a divine archetype. And poetry is

explained in the Republic as an imitative art, because the poet uses the objects and models from the created world. Poetry is therefore an "imitation of an imitation" more false than that which it "imitates".

But the conception of poetic inspiration attributes greater recognition to the poet. When a poet is under the influence of inspiration or "furor poeticus", he has a superhuman ability, by which he is able to have a glimpse of the ultimate nature of things, their eternal forms, and their divine archetypes. Plato thus equates poetry to philosophy. The end of philosophy is to have a glimpse of the ultimate nature of things. However, this statement of Plato was said in the midst of his attacks on poetry. Hence, Plato had been considered as an enemy of poetry. In reality, he recognizes that poets have a power, which has the capacity to reach the ultimate truth. Plato did not define the nature of it, but this power may be interpreted as the power of imagination.

Although Plato had contributed to poetry by his recognition of poetic inspiration, he left many problems unanswered through his direct attack on poetry. From his philosophy he concluded that poetry is separated from

truth because all artistic objects are mere copies of reality. Being an act of imitation, poetry does not lead to utility but only to pleasure. Plato disliked pleasure. Besides, poets generally spread bad moral and theology. He took the instance of Homer, who made the gods all too human. The gods in the Iliad fight; they quarrel by taking sides in human events. They manifest man's frail characteristics. And in an ideal republic poetry can produce the most disastrous consequences. Tragic poetry debilitates man's moral character, undermines courage and makes men unfit to bear the trials of life.

The answer to these and other questions of Plato concerning poetry are given by Aristotle in his Poetics. His method of approach is historical, comparative and analytical. He formulates his theories on the basis of the ancient Greek tragedies. For our analysis, we are concerned here with the power that moves the poet to create his work of art. According to Aristotle, imitation is the fundamental human instinct by which poetry is created. Imitation or mimeses is not the counterfeiting of the sensible reality but the presentation of the universals. The Aristotelian universals are different

from the Platonic ideas, which are abstract metaphysical entities. The universals of Aristotle are permanent modes of human thought and action. The poet can represent these universals through the faculty of imitation, and the reader of poetry can grasp them. The element of imitation is in the plot and not in the characters of the poetry. By plot Aristotle means not only a sequence of events, but an organic structure of events which would be a valid representation of the actions of men according to the laws of probability and necessity.

The central conception in Aristotle's theory is the new theory of poetic structure, which is evolved from a re-definition of the concept of imitation not as copying of the ordinary reality but as a generator or idealized rendering of character in action. This is the essence of the Aristotelian conception of poetic mimesis. As against Plato's theory of imitation as representation, we have the Aristotelian mimesis, the act of creating a poetic structure. But there is a problem, arising out of this theory. Since Aristotle has said that poetry is one manifestation of the intellectual instinct, the question is whether this new conception of imitation is purely aesthetic faculty or part of the general faculty

for learning which man is endowed with.

According to modern scholars, it is Aristotle who recognizes imitation as an aesthetic faculty. However, the concept of imitation is prevalent in Greek thought before Aristotle. Plato used it in his discussion of poetry and the fine acts. But Plato dismisses the activity of imitation instead of according to it an aesthetic status. Aristotle was no doubt in the early part of his Poetics concerned with Plato's attack on imitative nature of poetry. He meets this change by giving a completely different interpretation of the whole notion of imitation in poetry. But there are occasions when Aristotle has understood imitation with a view to learning. Hence the Aristotelian scholars admit that both meanings of the word 'imitation' or 'mimesis' are present in the Poetics. But the aesthetic meaning of the term is more relevant. The precise aesthetic meaning of 'imitation' or 'mimesis' is 'portrayal'. An image of the impressions is made by the facts of human life and nature upon the mind of the artist by the function of imitation.

From Chapter 9 we learn that poetry imitates the universal elements in human life. Imitation reveals

the universal beneath the individual. Imitation does not imitate the created nature, but the creative nature. The aesthetic faculty of imitation neither draws lessons from nature, nor produces a copy of reality. But it produces a higher form of reality, an ideal or formal reality, suitable for 'sensible' appreciation. By aesthetic imitation the artist seizes the universal and reproduces it in simple and sensuous forms.

After Aristotle, aesthetic power as a creative power was recognised by the English empirisists of the seventeenth century. Their theories evolved from the basic fact they held with regard to human knowledge. All human knowledge proceeds from sense experience. Transcendental objects leave their impressions on the sense organs, which in their turn produce images in the mind. According to Thomas Hobbes, the images remain stored up in the mind. In any work of art, suitable images are associated together to generate new and pleasing patterns. This function of the imagination or fancy, which was not distinguished by Hobbes, is held in check by judgement, so that something entirely new and different from the external world was not formed. It was also Hobbes, following John Locke's principle of the 'association of

ideas' held that imagination has the power to recall from memory images, that have been previously connected with other images.

Associationism originated with David Hume and David Hartley. Hume was a sceptic as regards the powers of reason as is shown by his book the 'Treatise of Human Nature'. Hume and Hartley both repudiated the supremacy of reason. Before Hartely's time reason was supposed to be a supreme faculty through which man understood nature. Hartely disclaimed any special superiority for reason and showed that it is better to trust instinct rather being duped by any logical illusion. Following Newton's example, he attempted to introduce the experimental method of reasoning into moral subjects. There was a search for a psychological and a moral counterpart of reason, a principle which would unify the moral world, as gravitation had unified the physical. Hume had already advanced the principle of 'association of ideas' as this unifying principle in experience.

Hume divided experiences into two groups: impressions which include all our sensations, passions and emotions as they make their first appearance in the

soul, and ideas; and the faint images of these in thinking and reasoning. These ideas are held together in the mind by memory, and imagination associates and unites simpler ideas into complex ideas. Thus the principle of association functions by means of the relations of resemblance, nearness in time and place, and cause and effect. As Prof. Mary Warnock says,

> From the outset, then, he (Hume) regards imagination, the image-making faculty, as playing a crucial role in our thinking. At the very least it supplies us with ideas to think about. It is what reproduces impressions so that we can think about things in their absence.[1]

From this associative principle are derived the complex ideas comprising "relations, modes and substances". We have no idea of substance, except as a collection of particular qualities. They are united into the idea of a substance or a mode of being by the principle of association of ideas. This was the fundamental principle underlying the system of philosophy subsequently developed by David Hartley.

Hartley is chiefly remembered for the development of the moral principle of the 'association of ideas'. He

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[1]Mary Warnock, Imagination, (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1976), p.15.

carries the application of Hume's theory further and uses the principle of association not only for explaining the mechanism of mental process but also for the evolution of our moral characters from childhood to manhood. As R.L. Brett says,

> Morality for Hartley is based upon the association of ideas and especially the association of evil with pain, and good with pleasure. This kind of psychological hedonism argued that we are led to a life of virtue because doing good affords us pleasure and that a refined form of self-satisfaction is the mainspring of morality.[2]

Thus Hartley's theory explains the formation of human character through the universal principle of association. We associate sensations of pleasure with certain objects, although pleasure can be associated with the wrong objects. But since there is a providential design in the universe, the human mind instinctively associates pleasure with the right objects. Under proper educational discipline our characters are shaped for us partly by unseen powers that impress themselves upon our minds. We need only a wise passiveness in order to proceed from childhood to youth to the final years of moral maturity and wisdom. We begin with sensation,

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[2]R.L. Brett, The Critical Idiom, Fancy & Imagination (London: Methuen & Co. Limited, 1969), p.17.

proceed by associating pleasure with loftier and loftier objects until we reach the stage when the presence of God is felt everywhere.

This doctrine of Association implies Necessitarianism, which maintains that the moral order of the world and its perfection necessarily follows from the laws of human nature. And human nature itself is conceived on the Associative basis, with the external world viewed as providentially arranged. Thus a better behaviour or moral perfection is reached through the operation of the principle of 'association of ideas'. Associationism and Necessitarianism can together lead to a materialist psychology and a mechanistic conception of the world.

Hartlean and empiricists' notion of imagination or fancy was mainly a mechanistic theory of the mind. It was defective and failed to explain the active function of the mind. Coleridge, basing himself on the 'Kantian Transcendentalism', developed his later theory of imagination as an active and creative principle. Coleridge maintained that art is not a mere imitation of nature but its re-creation, which is done by communicating the spirit of nature through symbols.

According to the new theory of the human mind, Coleridge divides all mental activity into fancy, and imagination. Fancy is only mode of memory, and receives its material ready-made from the law of association. Similarly for Wordsworth, fancy merely reflects the external world. It is not related to our cognition. Through the power of fancy we never understand what it is that we perceive. It can only give us impressions. But imagination, according to Wordsworth, has the poetic power of 'conferring, abstracting, and modifying' the original impressions in order to load them with new significance. It can thus shape and create. It was this peculiar fascination of the creative genius of Wordsworth which made Coleridge change him from his old theories.

When Coleridge returned from Germany, he had a growing conviction that insight into truth is essentially dependent upon the soul and the emotions. His philosophy is drawn from his own experience of the emotions and love. His conviction of the vivifying power of imagination is drawn from his craving for love. Similarly Prof. Mary Warnock, commenting on the "Dejection: an Ode" in which Coleridge felt that he lost his imaginative powers says,

> Imagination then, which is characterized as 'shaping', is essentially connected with joy. And joy is something that comes from within, 'we in ourselves rejoice'. Without this joy we merely see; and we may even see that things are beautiful, but we cannot feel that they are so. It is joy which converts a perception to a feeling, and it is this that is lost in the loss of the shaping power of imagination.[3]

Let us now consider Coleridge's theory of imagination. Imagination has two functions which go together. They can shape perceptions by an inner power and can convert them into feeling. Besides imagination can generalize and construct symbols. A poet of genius like Shakespeare, can present the ideas or forms of Lear or Othello with his own feelings which are universal. In the same manner, the readers can create feelings in relation to these forms of ideas. These universalizing functions both of Shakespeare's imagination and of his reader are known as the 'combining' power of imagination. In the words of Mary Warnock,

> What has emerged so far is a concept of imagination as something working actively from within to enable us to perceive the general in the particular, whether something we see or something we call up as an image, as symbolic, as meaning something beyond itself. Ideas of imagination cannot be called up by mere association, nor

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[3] Mary Warnock, Imagination, (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1976), p.78.

> by mere likeness to one another or to what is seen. The imagination is not mere passive, it is an active combining power which bring ideas together, and which is at work to create the forms of things which seem to speak to us of the universal, and which at the same time necessarily cause in us feelings of love and awe.[4]

By the power of imagination, according to Coleridge, there is an inherent relationship between nature and the human soul. All things represent the infinite, and this "infinite" which is the ground and source of all nature, is arrived at through a special insight. This insight which is the gift of a few only is essentially the gift of imagination. The Coleridgian theory of imagination as a creative faculty anayses the special nature of the insight which reveals the infinite in all finite things. But it must be remembered that Coleridge was never a pantheist. Instead of a patheistic faith, Coleridge affirms faith in a personal Being. He subordinates nature to the human soul. Thus when man appreciates natural beauty, man is not yielding to an external function. On the contrary, he is only appreciating the mystery and beauty of the inner life, which mysteries manifest themselves in the sensual world, and the sensual world mirrors our spiritual experiences.

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[4]Mary Warnock, Op.cit., p.84.

This theory of imagination is similar to the theory of the German Idealist Philosopher, Schelling. Coleridge develops his theory in the 'Biographia Literaria' according to the philosophy of Schelling. Schelling, in his system of Transcendental Idealism accords to the faculty of imagination a high function, as the organ of artistic and philosophical truth. The quality of imagination which makes it common to philosophy and art is its power of reconciling opposites and discovering the harmony between the contradictories. The transcendental philosophy of Schelling explains the principle of unity of life through the nature of imagination. In the ordinary consciousness, imagination makes a distinction between the self and world. In the philosopher, imagination is the power of mediating on this ground of distinction. In the artist, imagination plays the function of reconciling opposites and giving them an outward and objective expression. Schelling thus concluded that art and poetry are therefore superior to all forms of knowledge. He further maintained the inherent interdependence of subject and object through the power of imagination. And this power which unifies all contraries was denoted by Coleridge as the

"Esemplastic power". This power unifies and creates experience and it constitutes the essential principle of unification in human consciousness. Separation between thought and feeling, reason and emotion is bridged on account of its activity. Coleridge accepted this theory of Schelling. The whole self of man is involved in the apprehension of reality. Coleridge thus fully formulated his philosophical conception of imagination.

Coleridge's analysis of the faculty of mind makes a distinction between fancy, primary imagination, and the secondary imagination. Fancy is arbitrary and lawless. It is not controlled by any higher power of judgement and selection. And it has no serious purpose. Coleridge says,

> The imagination then, I consider as primary or secondary. The primary imagination I hold to be the living power and prime agent of all human perception and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM. The secondary I consider as an echo of the former, coexisting with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the kind of its agency, and differing only in degree and in the mode of its operation. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to

> idealize and unify. It is essentially vital, even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead.
>
> Fancy on the contrary, has no other counters to play with but fixities and definities. The fancy is indeed no other than a mode of memory emancipated from the order of time and space; and blended with, and modified by that empirical phenomenon of the will which we express by the word of choice. But equally with the ordinary memory it must receive all its materials ready-made from the law of association.[5]

Coleridge's primary imagination corresponds to what Kant calls simply the 'imagination'. According to Kant, imagination is a universal human faculty which reconstructs experience. The data of the senses is arranged into various forms and designs in the process of perception through the power of imagination. Thus Kant makes imagination a cognitive faculty, and gives it no special poetic status. Here Coleridge disagreed with Kant, to agree more with Schelling. In The System of a Transcendental Idealism, Schelling distinguishes between the 'productive intuition' and the 'poetic faculty'. From the productive faculty of the absolute 'I', the existence of nature is deduced. In Kant, an active function of the imagination constitutes the world-as-it-appears-to us. Whereas in Schelling it is a creative

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[5] S.T. Coleridge, Biographia Literaria, ed. A.G. George. Makers of Literary Criticism, (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1967), Vol.II, p.63.

function of imagination that constitutes the world as it really is. To what extent, Coleridge has agreed with Schelling cannot be determined, but in the opinion of Mary Warnock,

> It may be said that he is not completely committed, at least in this passage, to idealism; for the work of actual creation is ascribed to the deity, while the human imagination is a 'repetition' in human terms of this divine activity. Perhaps we must be content to say that there is no clear answer to the question whether, in Coleridge's view, the imagination does or does not create the world. Lack of clarity on such a 'profound' question need not after all surprise us.[6]

Hence, to Coleridge, imagination is a poetic faculty in its most highly developed form. It is a "dim analogue of creation". The Kantian imagination is not the faculty of poetic invention. It is only a synthesising power with little of creative freedom.

The activity of the secondary imagination surpasses the primary imagination. It is this which is the poetic faculty. The secondary imagination dissolves the work of the primary in recreating it and thus transforming the sense impression already modified by the primary.

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[6] Mary Warnock, Imagination, (London: Faber and Faber limited, 1976), p.91.

When we analyse Coleridge's theory of imagination we are compelled to discuss the views of Wordsworth, for both had mutually influenced each other. About Worldsworth's theory of imagination, Prof. A.G. George says,

> It is not passive, and does not passively reflect the external world. But it is active, and it half-creates the world it perceives. This faculty of mind which creates is the faculty of imagination. It may be noted that the theory of imagination refutes the early associationist psychology. The psychological theory of perception, as developed in the eighteenth century, especially by David Hartley, was a mechanistic theory. According to this, the mind merely reflects the external world and perception is similar to the reflection of an image in a miror. Cognition is the result of accidental association, and hence the word 'associationist'. Wordsworth opposed this theory. To him the mind has two faculties, fancy and imagination, the one passive, the other active.[7]

Hence, imagination, according to Wordsworth, is the mental power that transforms the literal to the figurative. It does not refer to images that one stored up in the mind as the faithful copy of absent external objects. But imagination refers to the operations of the mind upon those objects, and processes, of creation or of compositions, governed by certain fixed laws. The mind can confer on objects certain properties, which are not

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[7] A.G. George, Critics and Criticism, (Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1971), p.85.

inherent in them. It can abstract from them some of the properties that they actually possess. It can also modify one image by another. Thus the mind alters the object creatively. Through the power of imagination man realizes his relation with the external.

Wordsworth's theory of imagination was a reaction against the scientific approach to truth. Truth arrived through scientific method is limited to certain categories. Whereas truth is universal and can be reached only through insight. Poetry, as created by imagination, is the sensuous imcarnation of this philosophical insight. Imagination gives us this unified vision of reality. Thus Wordsworth relates truth and poetry through the theory of imagination.

Although the theories of imagination held by Wordsworth and Coleridge were discussed separately, they constitute together into one complete phase of the romantic movement. There are superficial differences between their theories of imagination. In reality the differences in their theories life in their conception of fancy. Wordsworth merely distinguished between fancy and imagination as an inferior and as a superior mode of

imaging, while both are inventive, fancy was an inferior and arbitrary way of imaging, and imagination was a superior faculty.

Coleridge, on the other hand, made a distinction between three types of mental faculties, the fancy, the primary imagination, and the secondary imagination. But fancy, as Coleridge explains it, is only a mode of memory, and receives its material ready-made from the law of association. The primary imaginationis a universal faculty, and it is at the source of all human perception. The secondary imagination is the poetical faculty, the special gift of the creative imagination. It is essentially vital and it struggles to idealize and unify. It reveals the underlying unity inherent in life and relates man to nature and to reality. As Prof. A.G. George says,

> But it may be pointed out that Wordsworth uses precisely this conception of the nature and function of imagination in The Prelude. It is thus futile to attempt to separate the two theories of imagination.[8]

We have analysed the concept of imagination as held by different schools of thought. Although some theories held by them appear to be contradictory, we cannot but admit the fact that 'creativity' was the main

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[8] A.G. George, Op.cit., p.102.

thought they were trying to express through their theories. Unfortunately the earlier schools did not have the assistance of the philosophies of Kant, Schelling and Hegel. Through their philosophical ideas, Coleridge and the romantics in general were able to attribute extraordinary power to imagination. And this in turn assisted to bring out the romantic literature, which we have analysed in the earlier chapter.

The object of our investigation in the different philosophical and literary movements, was man in relation with external objects and with other men. And in our analysis of imagination we followed the same method. For imagination itself is a power, which receives its definition in the subject's relation with the external world and other subjects. Among the various functions of imagination, according to Kant, the world-as-it-appears-to-us is constituted by an active function of the imagination. And for Schelling, the creative function of the imagination constitutes the world as it really is. From this philosophical position of Kant and Schelling, Coleridge attributes the function of limited creative power to imagination. Hence the basic relationship with the external world in romantic literature, is that of

'creativity'. The relation with the external world is not that of reflected objects, but that of images, created by the subject's imagination.

In the existential concept of imagination the relation with the transcendental world will be realized through existence. We need not dilate here on the various existential concepts. We had established earlier that there are differences in their individual interpretations of existence. Soren Kierkegaard's concept of existence is 'ethico-religious' in character. And the function of imagination consists in establishing relation with the Transcendental Being (who is God) through a 'leap of faith'. 'Leap of faith' as explained by Kierkegaard in Fear and Trembling is an existential image. In this existential function of imagination, the faculty of intellect and will, and all other faculties of the individual are combined together to make the all important act of the leap of faith. In fact, the entire writings of Kierkegaard is focused on to this main 'image'. As it is said in the Introduction to "A Kierkegaard Anthology edieted by Robert Bretall,

> What is it, then, to become a Christian in Christendom? In 'The Point of View' for my work as an Author' S.K. tells us that the whole of his authorship centres about this one question; everything he wrote is relevant to it - even the Diary of the Seducer - and he proceeds to show us how.[9]

We are aware of the fact that for Gabriel Marcel, existence, as we had described earlier, starts from an awareness of the existence of the external world through the consciousness of the existence of one's own body. Then we said that when the primordial participation of one's bodily existence in the world is lost sight of, this awareness must be renewed through reflection. And by this reflection through which the existent reinstates and relives such essential experiences are done through the imagination. This function of the imagination is that through which the relation between the subject and the object is established. Other primordial experiences, through which the relation with other existents is established are love, and freedom. Similarly, 'fidelity' by which the existent bears witness to an other-than-him, or 'faith' in another-than-him are actions of the imagination. Again, as Gabriel Marcel speaks of the

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[9] Robert Bretall, A Kierkegaard Anthology, (New York: The Modern Library, Princeton University Press, 1974) Intro. p. XXII.

'dispossibility' by which I-and-thou' is turned into 'we' is through the function of imagination. And the 'indisposability' which spreads restlessness, gloominess, despair and other bad emotions are the result of the absence of the function of imagination.

Imagination, which functions through the basic fact of existence is, according to Martin Heidegger, that which gives essence to 'Dasein'. The structure of 'Dasein' is 'being-in-the-world'. And this structure of 'Dasein' is constituted through the function of imagination. In fact, the objects in the world get their fundamental meaning through their relation with Dasein. Dasein's is Mitsein or being-with-others, and this constitutive structure together with Mitwelt is realized through the power of imagination. Thus, the constitutive structure of Dasein, though established through choice in freedom, the very function of its realization is through imagination.

Sartre in The Psychology of Imagination applied the phenomenological method of the analysis of imagination, which ultimately amounts to the description of what it is like to exercise imagination. For this exercise he says that,

> The method is simple; that is, attempt to determine and to classify their distinctive characteristics.[10]

His first effort at the analysis is to formulate the knowledge which is derived from reflection, and which is immediate, general and certain. After this he attempts to explain the concepts which have been used in the formulation, and to relate them to other concepts and theories. At this stage he moves from the certain to the merely possible.

As Prof. Mary Warnock says, the distinction between the certain and probable is not viable for the simple reason that reflection does not give any pure, theory for descriptions of imagining. He thinks that the imaginative consciousness is at work when a portrait is looked at, and seen as a portrait of a real but absent objects. But in such a case, the portrait may be seen in two ways, either just as a painted canvas or as a portrait proper. And we can change from one way of looking at it to the other. To quote Mary Warnock,

> But no description could tell us anything about a mental image as it could about the portrait considered merely as a canvas,

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[10] Jean Paul Sartre, The Psychology of Imagination, Bernard Frechtman, (New York: Washington square Press, 1966), p.4.

> because if, when we are imaginatively conscious of an absent man through an image only, our imaginative consciousness wanes, then the image fades too. There is no describable residue. This is of the greatest importance. We shall find that, though we must talk in terms of images, though we must use the noun 'image', yet we shall always go wrong if we try to separate the image, and regard it as something totally distinct from that of which it is the image. In other words, it is impossible to describe a mental image in itself. Introspection, however prolonged or purified, cannot help us to do this, because it is logically impossible. It is for this reason that Sartre has to abandon the introspective method, the proposed method of certainty, and move on in the second half of the book to non-introspective conceptual analysis, in order to try to find out what imagination is and how it works.[11]

For this analysis, in the second part of The Psychology of Imagination, Sartre lists certain features which are essential to an image or rather to imagination. Imagination is essentially directed towards an object, but apart from this direction towards something else, the image itself is nothing. Hence, we can say that the first essential feature of the image is, that it is a kind of consciousness, a way of thinking of something. However, this particular manner of thinking refers to what Sartre calls a 'quasi-observation'. The characteristic of the quasi-observation is that, the image can teach us nothing, since it contains nothing additional

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[11] Mary Warnock, Imagination, (London: Faber and Faber, 1976), p.161.

to that which we have incorporated in it ourselves. No special aspect of the object is revealed by the image but it delivers in en bloc. And this is because we know already what object it is and we need not scrutinize it further. In this respect the image has no richness of its own, and remains impoverished. By the next characteristic, when we think with images we are aware, that this is what we are doing. The differences between it and the real object is, as it were, incorporated in it by its very nature. There can be no external criterion, by which we may distinguish an image from a real object of perception. As Sartre says,

> Alive, appealing and strong as an image is, it presents its object as no being. This does not prevent us from reacting to the image as if its object were before us;..... it is possible for us to attempt to react to an image as it were a perception. But the false and ambiguous condition we reach thereby only serves to bring out in greater relief what we have just said: that we seek in vain to create in ourselves the belief that the object really exists..... we can pretend for a second, but we cannot destroy the immediate awareness of its nothingness.[12]

Among the characteristics of the image Sartre maintains its spontaneity, by which we are aware, in having an image, that we are ourselves doing something.

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[12] Jean Paul Sartre, The Psychology of Imagination, Trans. Bernard Frechtman, (New York: Washington Square Press, 1966), p.16.

Unlike perception, in which we are passive, in imagination we are presenting objects to ourselves. As Sartre says,

> An imaginative consciousness appears to itself as an imaginative consciousness, that is, as a spontaneity, which produces and holds on to the object as an image. This is a sort of indefinable counterpart of the fact that the object occurs to itself as being creative, but without positing that what it has created as an object.[13]

From the abovementioned criteria, it appears that one must always be conscious that one is imagining something when one is doing so. However, we may not speak of the image as a thing, like a canvas only in our heads. As Mary Warnock says,

> .... we may say that in thinking with images we are thinking analogically, or by means of representations, just as we are when we look at somebody's portrait rather that himself. And we do this consciously, according to Sartre. The image is deliberately used just as much as the portrait is.[14]

In other words, Sartre is here maintaining that for true imagining, one must form a mental picture, concentrate upon it, separate it from the world, recognize it as unreal, and present it to oneself as a nothingness.

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[13] Jean Paul Sartre, Op.cit., p.17.

[14] Mary Warnock, Imagination, (London: Faber and Faber, 1976), p.163.

It was Hume's view of the role of imagination that it works by forming images intrinsically similar to sense perceptions. This is the difference between Sartre's concept of the image and that of Hume. According to Sartre we may need to talk of images but cannot think of them as impressions. Thus in any intelligible experience there are elements which have gone into retirement. These are the awareness of the past, the future and the hidden aspects of what we are now experiencing, which amounts to the thoughts about our present experience itself. But Sartre denied this role to imagination though it looks intelligibly possible, for it seems that he wished to rescue imagination from the danger of necessitarianism. Just as Coleridge thought that if imagination were related to the past, relying on memory, then imagination would be subject to causal laws. Then the images, are forms could be explained by previous experiences. According to Marcy Warnock,

> Now Sartre believed that if he could find one area of human activity which was totally free from the possibility of a causal explanation, then it would justify his thesis of the essential freedom of man. Imagination freed from the chain of associationism, or any other such explanatory system, was thought by him to furnish such an area. The power of envisaging what is not the case is, he argued, totally uncaused. And man's freedom of choice and action stems from this initial freedom to

> present to himself the non-existent, knowing it to be such. Man's freedom, then, lies in the imagination. Imagination thus has for Sartre a crucial role to play in the total metaphysical view of man, who conceived as the only free item in a world otherwise wholly governed by necessary casual laws. In exercising imagination, Sartre argues, a man must start from the world he is in, but treat it as a world which does not contain the imaginary object. This is what is meant by saying that in imagining he thinks of the object as non-existent. A deliberate act of imagination entails saying, 'let me conceive of the world as containing this object, which it does not contain.'[15]

Sartre's concept of imagination becomes clear, if we recall to mind his Philosophical basis, which we have established in the earlier chapter. 'Being - for - itself' is consciousness or human being and 'being - in - itself' is the object of consciousness. Consciousness is pure possibility and distinct from any object that exists. As such, Consciousness begins its existence as 'nothing' and it will remain so till death. The object of consciousness is determined and it is not possibility. Pour-soi and en-soi are in contrast, but they are related. But their modes of being are so distinct that they are unbridgeable.

From the above Sartrean philosophical position, we can understand the structure of image and the functions of imagination. Freedom is its basic characteristic.

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[15] Mary Warnock, Op.cit., p.180.

At any stage if any determination is introduced into image, it becomes en-soi. In other words if imagination incorporates determinded functions then pour-soi will lose its freedom of consciousness. Hence image and imagination, which are based on these philosophical principles of Jean-Paul Sartre, gain distinct characteristics from his theories.

Other existentialistic philosophers like Kierkegaard, Gabriel Marcel or Martin Heidegger did not enter into the discussions of image and imagination. But their position with regard to them is derivative from their philosophical principles. Whereas Jean-Paul Sartre, starting with the terms of 'image' and 'imagination' incorporated them with existentialistic principles to give them new meanings. Since they have existentialistic structure, they cannot be explained through the concepts of 'associationism' or romantic theories. As William V. Dych says,

> The movement towards the free, active unifying and shaping of a world into our world, the forming and informing of it into a human world is basically the work of imagination. For from out of the concrete actualities and potentialities which confront us in all their variety both "within" and "without", we have to freely imagine how things can fit together and freely choose to the fitting,

> we sometimes imagine life to be like a jig-saw puzzle with the finished product already pictured on the box. All we have to do is to keep one eye on the box and the other on the pieces and conform to the picture by getting all the pieces in the right place. But we do not have to imagine it that way. Suppose that there is no picture on the box, no antecedent blueprint, suppose that the pieces can fit together in any number of "right" ways, what then? Imagination in this case has no choice but to be free and creative, or at most it can freely choose not to be. To live a human life which is a free, responsible and creative making, then, we all have to do something similar to what the artist does with his materials: we have to form and inform the "materials" of life with shape, form, action movement, rythem, meaning, sense and direction. What is more characteristic of the human than this capacity for not only observing reality and meaning which is already there, but also for discovering and creating reality and meaning which would not be there but for the freedom and imagination of the creator?[16]

With this short analysis, we have established the distinctive characteristics of imagination as held through existentialistic principles. The main function of imagination is 'choice' done in complete freedom. Both choice and freedom have been interpreted in various ways. However, freedom in imagination as held by the existentialists has unique characteristics. Through these characteristics different concepts have been established in existential literature. After having established that

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[16]William V. Dych, Theology and Imagination, 'Thought' 57. No. 224, Mar, 1982, p.122.

existentialism has a distinctive literary character through the changed meaning of imagination, we will examine these existential literary concepts. And this will further establish that existentialism is a distinct literary movement, different from classicism, romanticism or their other related forms. This will be done in the next chapter.

CHAPTER - VI

EXISTENTIAL CONCEPTS IN LITERATURE

> Man's awareness of his existence, and his manner of expressing this awareness, is the material for a criticism that calls itself 'existential'.[1]

Such a criticism looks upon literature as a verbal expression of a coherent experience in human activity. Literature presents a literary figure, who is presented in the form of the perception and skill of the writer, whose experience that is presented in the text. In other words, "This 'author's' act of consciousness is the act of literature."[2]

This changed view of literature is based on the existentialistic principle that reality can be known by the intellect only after distortion. Kierkegaard rejects the pre-eminence of thought in its engagement with reality. The only reality that can be known is internal reality or existential reality. The distinction, Kierkegaard makes between external or objective reality and internal or

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[1] Lawall N. Sarah, Criticis of Consciousness, the existential structure of literature, (Cambridge: Narward University Press, 1968), Preface, p.VIII.

[2] Ibid., Preface p.VIII.

ethical reality is apparent in his writings. Existential reality can never be systematized, for existence separates and holds the various moments of existence discreetly apart. The only reality that exists for an existing individual is his own ethical reality. He can have only a cognitive relation to external reality.

Kierkegaard maintains the concept of existential thought and rejects objective thought. Existential thought has existence as its basic structure and its reflection is combined with feeling and passion. As Kierkegaard says, "All existential problems are passionate problems, for when existence is interpenetrated with reflection in generates passion."[3] When the communication between the individual and the objective reality is made, the method will be direct or objective communication. Objective reality deals with results and conclusions. Thus, objective communication can aim at precise and accurate statements. But subjective communication is related to existence. And since existence is continuous becoming, it has no final conclusions to communicate. The subject of existential communication is in the very process of becoming. In this situation, communication

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[3] Soren Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript, trans. David F. Swenson and Walter Lowrie, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), p.313.

is not possible, since the very subject matter of communication is not available in formulable terms. According to Kierkegaard, the nature and function of art consist in this. Communication of subjectivity is what the artistic process achieves. In the words of Kierkegaard,

> Whenever the subjective is of importance in knowledge, and where appropriation thus constitutes the crux of the matter, the process of communication is a work of art, and doubly reflected. Its very first or is precisely the subtle principle that the personalities must be held devoutly apart from one another, and not permitted to coagulate into objectivity. It is at this point that objectivity and subjectivity part from one another."[4]

The nature of the artistic process, especially the art of literature, is explained in terms of the process of communication. The content of subjective thought has essentially the characteristic of a secret, because it cannot be directly expressed. A secret is not only that which is not expressed but also that which cannot be expressed. This elusiveness of existential problems in their communicability renders them into secrets or into mysteries as Marcel called them.

Since existence is part of the process of becoming,

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[4]Soren Kierkegaard, Op.cit., p.73.

the existential thinker constantly reproduces this existential situation in his thoughts and translates all his thinking into terms of process. The raw material of art is to be found in the endeavour to reproduce and communicate the existential process of becoming. It is in this doctrine that we find the source of Kierkegaard's attempts to deduce aesthetic activity (what he sometimes calls "the poetic activity") in the context of what is termed as the aesthetic of existence.

The negativity that pervades existence, the tension at the heart of consciousness, the paradox that man is an existing infinite spirit, the contradiction that in existence the temporal and the timeless meet, the isolation of the individual consciousness, the inadequacy of reflection to grasp the nature of reality - all these can lend themselves only to the artistic or indirect process of communication.

There is a clear distinction between Kierkegaard's theory of artistic communication and that of the moderns. The modern theory does not make the above distinction between existential experiences and objective experiences. By communication they mean a transference of the experience. Hence the artistic excellence will consist in the

intensity of the process of communication, irrespective of the nature of experience. But this tends to minimize the importance of the subject of art. Whereas, the Kierkegaardian theory, by relating existential reflection to the artistic process of communication, covers both form and content in art.

The close affinity between Kierkegaard's philosophical and literary insights springs from this principle. Analysis of an existential problem is only possible through the artistic process. Kierkegaard chooses, the problem of death from among the most intimate of personal problems and demonstrates that death can never be dealt with in philosophy. Because of its essentially personal character it cannot be understood intellectually. Being an ultimate event, it cannot be grasped in an anticipatory conception by philosophy. In other words, the being of death is a non-being. Only existential reflections can be made about the nature of death. We can agree with this conclusion when we remember that the poetic rendering of death in lyrics and dramatic soliloquies is far more effective in their communication that what philosophers have said.

But at the same time we must avoid one error. On account of the fact that Kierkegaard relates art and existential or ethical reality, we have no evidence to conclude that he validates the aesthetic interpretation of reality as the finally dependable one. As we said earlier, he avoids the idealist and the romantic error of equating aesthetic intuition as the only possible agency for grasping truth. The aesthetic (or poetic) engagement with reality is merely the first step in the three spheres of existence as we said about earlier Kierkegaard's spheres of existence. What is considered as a valid engagement with reality is the ethico-religious orientation towards it. Thus poetry and art deal with ideal possibilities of existence. This explains why the poetic presentation of any experience is more beautiful than its actual experience in life. Thus from the artistic standpoint, possibility is higher than reality. But from the ethico-religious standpoint, reality is higher than possibility.

We have already seen that in literature or in any work of art, according to Kierkegaard, the aesthetic is to be contrasted with the ethico-religious. We have also seen how Kierkegaard combines passion with existence.

As Kierkegaard says, "Without passion no poet, and without passion no poetry."[5] In passion we find the common element between the poet and the religious man of faith. We can trace this idea of suffering in "Either/Or". The first 'Diapsalm' in the first volume, defines the poet as an unhappy creature whose heart is tortured by the deepest sufferings, and whose lips are so formed as to make the cries and sighs of his heart sound like beautiful music. The poet is compared to the unfortunates who were imprisoned by the Greek tyrant, Phalaris in a brazen bull. There the victims were tortured over a low fire. Their cries, however, could not reach the tyrant's ears, for they got transformed into sweet music.

The aesthetic pathos finds expression in words, while existential pathos transforms in - wardly the existence of the individual. As we have said earlier, the poetic pathos is oriented towards ideality, and not reality. As Kierkegaard says, in the Concluding Unscientific Postscript

> Reality is for the poet merely an occasion, a point of departure, from which he goes in search of the ideality of the possible. The pathos of the poet is therefore essentially imaginative pathos.[6]

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[5]Soren Kierkegaard, Stages on Life's Way, trans Walter Lowrie, (New York: Schocken Books, 1967), p.369.

[6]Ibid., p.347.

Kierkegaard continued the comparison between the tragic or aesthetic and existential sufferings in his book Training in Christianity. Aesthetically viewed the nature of suffering is inexplicable. The individual who lives in the sphere of the aesthetic immediacy cannot grasp misfortune. He can only present it through the medium of art. Tragic poetry, for instance views suffering as external to life and as accidental. But existentially or ethico-religiously considered, suffering is essential to life.

We can continue comparing the relation between literature and ethico-religious existence in the following manner. The qualities of the tragic hero and the religious individual can be differentiated from their concepts of suffering. The tragic hero suffers and conquers. Whereas the religious hero is great because he suffers. The aesthetic hero is always represented as possessing the requisites for conquering. He is a pre-eminent figure socially, and is in full vigour and good health. And the tragic collision comes from without. On account of the externality inherent in the aesthetic view of suffering it has to relate all suffering to some central ideas.

Fortune, misfortune fate, immediate enthusiasm,

and despair are the categories, which determine the aesthetic view of life. In order to express this attitude towards suffering, the poet invests immediacy with ideality by using the idea of fortune. On the other hand, misfortune as employed by the poet must depict the hero succumbing to suffering. Thus we have in aesthetics, either fortune removing suffering or misfortune leading to the destruction or death of the tragic hero. But tragedy does not come to an understanding with misfortune by making suffering the point of departure for a new view of life. When confronted with the problem of suffering, the tragic poet uses either fortune or misfortune to explain it away. But the ethico-religious view of life makes suffering its central principle. In 'Either/Or the same view is advocated by the ethicist:

> As for poetry and art, I would remind you again that they provide only an imperfect reconciliation with life....[7]

Suffering becomes essential to the ethico-religious dimension of existence, while, if aesthetically viewed, it is only accidental.

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[7]Soren Kierkegaard, Either/Or, trans. Walter Lowrie and Haward A. Johnson, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), p.277.

In the religious sphere every suffering acquire an interest. But if the relationship to a controlling idea is absent, suffering becomes meaningless in aesthetics. This is why poetry, instead of reconciling one with existence, arouses one against it. For example, tragic poetry can never make sickness a fit subject for tragedy. Tragedy deals with suffering by positing distinctions and concerns itself only with the privileged sufferings. But the religious attitude welcome all suffering as inherent in the individual himself.

The Aristotelian principle of tragic pleasure, pity and fear, is itself controlled by this central idea to which suffering is related. Kierkegaard further argues that without emotional susceptibility the spectator of the tragedy is left unmoved. Therefore fear and pity must be a part of a definite sort. The purely natural man is unmoved by the art of tragedy. Consequently the views about the nature of tragic pity vary in accordance with the various world views of the spectators.

Kierkegaard's theory that the tragic hero becomes the universal man is both new and contrary to the post-renaissance view of the tragic hero as highly

individualized. He explains Aristotle's remark that poetry is higher than history on the basis that poetically speaking, possibility is higher than reality. Because the tragic represents the possible, therefore in that sense, tragedy represents the universal.

In Fear and Trembling, the tragic hero and the man of faith are compared. The internal conflict of the tragic hero, his inner dilemma, arises from the conflict, between duty and wish. The stories of Agamemnon, Antigone, and Hamlet are brought in to illustrate this theory. The tragic hero, instead of fulfilling his own wish, chooses duty and transforms his own wish into duty. And since the ethical is the universal, the tragic hero, because he acts according to the universal, becomes the universal man. As Kierkegaard says:

> The genuine tragic hero sacrifices himself and all that is his for the universal, his deed and every emotion with him belong to the universal, he is revealed, and in this self-revelation he is the beloved son of ethics.[8]

It is clear that Kierkegaard repudiates the individualistic and the subjectivistic interpretation of the tragic. He views individualistic isolation as

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[8] Soren Kierkegaard, Fear and Trembling, trans. Walter Lowrie, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), p.122.

comic, for the comic lies in isolation. Pure subjective self-absorption also cannot explain the nature of the tragic action, guilt and the hero.

Kierkegaard's analysis of the categories of the tragic and the comic are related to, and in fact derived from, his doctrine of human existence. Another conclusion which it leads us to in aesthetics is the doctrine of the unity of the tragic and the comic. Existence involves contradiction. In existence we find the union of contraries : freedom and necessity, time and eternity, the universal and the individual. All these are held together in existence. The process of becoming, manifested in the existential struggle maintains their unity in activity. This explains the agonistic view of life as held by Kierkegaard. According to Kierkegaard, both tragedy and comedy arise from the very contradiction at the heart of existence. He says in the Concluding Unscientific Postscript,

> The tragic and the comic are the same, in so far as both are based on contradiction; but the tragic is the suffering contradiction, the comical, the painless contradiction.[9]

In the Stages on Life's Way Kierkegaard again refers to

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[9] Soren Kierkagaard, Op.cit., p.459.

the unity of the comic and the tragic:

> ..... in the relation between the aesthetic and the religious I see again the unity of the comic and the tragic which the two of them constitute when they are brought together. Thus in poverty I see the tragedy that an immortal soul suffers, and the comedy that it all turns on two shillings. I go no further than the unity of the comic and the tragic in the equilibrium of life.[10]

The comical according to Kierkegaard, is universally present in every situation and stage of life. Contradiction lies at the base of the comical. Wherever we have contradictions, we have the comical. Similarly, the tragic springs from contradiction. The difference between the two lies in the relationship between the contradiction and the controlling idea. The comic, while manifesting the contradiction inherent in life, points also to a way out of the contradiction. Hence it is painless. The tragic attitude sees the contradiction without, at the same time, being able to find a way out.

The existential spheres themselves are differentiated according to their relation to the comical. The aesthetic consciousness has the comical outside it. But

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[10] Soren Kierkegaard, Stages on Life's Way, trans. Walter Lowrie, (New York: Schocken Books, 1967), p. 418.

the ethico-religious consciousness has the comical within it. So also the concepts of irony and humour are derived from the theory of existence-spheres, as Kierkegaard says in the Concluding Unscientific Postscript.

> There are three spheres of existence: the aesthetic, the ethical, the religious. Two boundary zones correspond to these three: irony constituting the boundary between the aesthetical and the ethical: humour as the boundary that separates the ethical from the religious.[11]

Rejecting the romantic concept of irony as verbal artifice or a form of expression, Kierkegaard calls irony and humour existential determinants. Whoever has the ironical has it within him always, because it springs from having a secret incommunicable to others, and nothing is so ennobling. Irony is the attitude of the ethicist when he recognizes that he has the infinite within him. This discovery consitutes his secret, and he, avoiding direct communication, becomes an ironist. We can gather the following ideas about the nature of irony from the Concluding Unscientific Postscript.

Irony arises when the finite confronts the infinite.

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[11] Soren Kierkegaard, Op.cit., p.448.

From this mutual confrontation arises the contradiction. Irony is further, a synthesis of ethical passion and culture. The ethical passion accentuates the existential inwardness of the individual and makes him more and more subjectively individualistic. But at the same time education and culture demand that a man should abstract himself from his personal ego. The tension between cultural retraint and ethical passion is the essence of the ironical. The ethical ironist conceals the manner of his inner existence. The ethicist perceives that what interests him absolutely does not interest others absolutely and his perception transforms him into an ironist. According to Kierkegaard,

> Irony is thus a specific culture of the spirit .... (it) follows next after immediacy, then comes the ethicist, then the humourist, and finally the religious individual.[12]

Kierkegaard's doctrine of humour is developed in the context of his theory of total guilt or religious guilt. Just as irony is explained as the attitude of an existing individual who must conceal his inner passion for ethical transformation, so also humour occurs as the result of an inner consciousness, the consciousness of

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[12]Soren Kierkegaard, Op.cit., p.450.

guilt. This consciousness of guilt is just the criterion of religiosity. The sense of guilt originates in the disparity between the magnitude of the task facing an existent and the fleeting character of temporality. The essential task is that of relating one absolutely to an absolute telos and relatively to a relative telos. This task has to be achieved in time and thus the individual is responsible for the use of his time. Every delay, every hesitation, means that time has passed. The sense of guilt endures. New decisions are made, and again time goes forward. Thus when we realize the enormity of the task facing us in comparison with its totality, the fact of realizing a little of it is a retrogression. There results the consciousness of total guilt.

The consciousness of total guilt is not to be numerically computed as the sum of smaller guilts. The total guilt is related to an eternal happiness and not to particular deeds of guilt, or what is called the comparative consciousness of guilt. Comparative consciousness of guilt does not comprehend existence as total guilt does.

Comparative consciousness of guilt belongs to

aesthetics. Total consciousness of guilt belongs to religion. The aesthetic consciousness has a lower conception of guilt. Aesthetically speaking, guilt is not existential, but only dialectical and accidental. Aesthetically, the individual becomes guilty through some particular action and is not always and existentially guilty. The remedy for aesthetic guilt is nemesis which Kierkegaard explains in the following manner:

> The aesthetic is the unopened inwardness; hence that which is or should be inwardness must manifest itself as an outward perception. It is as when in a tragedy the hero of a bygone age manifests himself as spirit before the eyes of the sleeper; the spectator must behold the spirit, although its manifestation is due to the sleeper's inwardness. So it is also with the consciousness of guilt: inwardness becomes externality. Hence one could see the Furies.[13]

Nemesis is the satisfaction for aesthetic guilt. Humour provides the satisfaction against the consciousness of total guilt. In this sense it constitutes the borderline between the ethical and the religious. To quote Kierkegaard again, "The humorist therefore talks rarely of this guilt or that guilt because he comprehends guilt totally."[14] The spirit which can transform the consciousness of total guilt is the spirit of childlike

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[13] Soren Kierkegaard, Op.cit., p.482.

[14] Ibid., p.489.

innocence. Let the childlike spirit reflect upon this consciousness. The resultant would be a sense of humour.

There is a difference between humour and irony. In humour there is a concealed pain. Consequently it also expresses sympathy. But irony has no sympathy, for it is detached. Apart from this difference, humour and irony are similar existential determinants in the aesthetics of Kierkegaard. Humour too is a specific culture of the spirit. It gives to existence a greater significance than irony. Humour is a borderline for the hidden inwardness, and it connets the ethical with the religious by assimilating the suffering which religiosity views as essential to existence.

We have so far analysed Kierkegaard's theory of literary concepts in relation to his existential doctrines. One of the main concepts of his literary theory is that existential reality can never become the object of knowledge. Since in the ethico-religious sphere existential activity is held discreetly apart in its various moments of existence. Existence itself, is continuously becoming and so it has no final conclusions to be communicated. The subject of existence is in the very process

of becoming, which makes his communicativeness impossible. Thus the content of subjective thought is essentially a secret, since it cannot be communicated. However, the raw material of art is the endeavour to reproduce and communicate the existential process of becoming. For this, as Kierkegaard says, aesthetic categories are to be deduced from existential categories, since the latter is incommunicable. And the aesthetic categories must be expressed in the aesthetic sphere of existence. Hence, as we have said earlier, the negativity that pervades existence, the tension at the heart of consciousness, the paradox that man is an existing spirit, can be expressed only through the indirect process of communication. The traditional aesthetic terms such as 'tragic', 'comic', 'irony', 'humour' etc. receive an existential orientation in the literary theory of Kierkegaard.

The modern existentialists such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Albert Camus and others follow the basic Kierkegaarian principle. Since existential becoming is incommunicable, the themes of existential literature are rendered through aesthetic themes. 'Bad faith', 'absurdity', 'anger', 'nausea' are aesthetic concepts, through which these literary men communicate

indirectly their ethical process of becoming. Our aim in the rest of the chapter is to analyse and establish the existential aspect of these literary concepts.

One of the basic principle of literary existentialism, which Kierkegaard also held as such, is the negativity that pervades existence. For Jean-Paul Sartre, man or consciousness is 'being and nothingness'. Nothingness lies coiled in the heart of Being - like a worm. In the words of Hazel E. Barnes,

> In Sartre's formulation, nothingness is always present. Man is, in fact, the being through whom Nothingness comes into the world. He is the being who is what he is not, and who is not what he is. He is freedom and freedom is a lack of Being. Yet there is an existentialist imperative as well. For if man is to live a life appropriate to the truth of his existence, then he must make himself a lack of Being in order that Being may be there.[15]

This awareness of the negativity, the pervades Being, is the necessary pre-requisite for the choice of values, by which man lives. As he is not endowed with the ready-made self or nature, man must be constantly making himself. He is nothing and is always about-to-be whatever he chooses. Sartre points out that man in

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[15] Hazel E. Barnes, Humanistic Existentialism (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1962), p.41.

general withdraws from his ethical state to the aesthetic state. He cannot bear the realization that all the values he lives by or chooses through his freedom be continuously sustained. Hence man escapes into an anbnymous world. This behaviour on the part of man is known as 'bad faith'. As we have said earlier 'bad faith' becomes an aesthetic concept and not the value that is chosen by the existent in the ethical sphere. Thus we find this concept being continuously used in existential literature, for the mere fact that the existential values created by the existent cannot be communicated subjectively.

'Bad faith', according to Hazel E. Barnes can be aesthetically expressed in three modes,

> Manifold as are the outward expressions of a life in bad faith, the psychological structure is reducible to a description involving three types of conduct: (1) the simultaneous use of both meanings of the word "is", not as they apply existentially but as they are advantageous to the purpose of the person using them; (2) a pursuit of sincerity which is actually insincere; (3) an unauthentic attitude toward "faith".[16]

The first aspect of 'bad faith', as we have already referred to earlier, consists in man's being as a fact as

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[16] Hazel E. Barnes, Op.cit., p.51.

things are. At the same it is an awareness that he is never finally what he choses to be. There is always nothingness between him and what he chooses to be. The second form of 'bad faith' is the pursuit of sincerity, which may be defined as the determination to be what one really is for oneself and for others. Apparently, sincerity may seem to be the antithesis of 'bad faith'. But in reality it is a form of 'bad faith', because one is trying to be in ethical reality by his choice and at the same to be communicating such a reality through existential concepts. This contradiction has been pointed out as a basic impossibility of existentialism. In the third form of 'bad faith' consists in having an unauthentic attitude toward faith itself. 'Faith', whether it is good or bad, tends to conceptualize itself. Whereas bad faith is based on incomplete evidence, good faith pretends to base itself on complete evidence. And this fact destroys its possibility to be good faith.

Thus, human existence is immersed in 'bad faith'. And the existential reason for such situation is that to communicate ethical reality is impossible. And this fact can be communicated only through the concept of 'bad faith'. Hence, to quote Hazel E. Barnes again,

> For the existentialist, bad faith is almost original sin. One is not, to be sure, born in it. But bad faith is so prevalent in the world that one can hardly escape its contagion. Moreover, the philosophical vision required if one is to avoid bad faith is such as could hardly be attained by one living in a state of complete innocence. The existentialist hero comes face to face with the truth about himself when he recognizes within him the structures of bad faith - in much the same way that the Christian convert is saved from sin at the moment when he acknowledges that his soul must be cleansed of it.[17]

We analysed 'bad faith' and have realized that it is an existential literary concept. 'Bad faith' is manifested in the various situations of life, which have become areas of literary concern for writers of the past few decades. In addition to 'bad faith', there are other recurring concepts such as, 'absurd', 'anguish', 'dread', 'nausea', 'despair', which are the outcome of the passionate choice or total commitment of the existent.

Kierkegaard held the principle of the incommunicability of the ethico-religious reality. Hence, he had resort to 'indirect communication' through aesthetic concepts. In literature, aesthetic concepts are presented within the aesthetic sphere of existence. If religious sphere of existence is rejected by some existentialists,

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[17] Hazel E. Barnes, Op.cit., p.55.

mainly because it curtails human freedom, then the purpose of life becomes 'absurd'. Choice, which turns the individual into an ethical reality, also opens out to him a life without meaning. This situation is the central theme of Camus' plays, novels and essays. The concept of the 'absurd' will be manifested in the aesthetic sphere of existence, as Camus draws our attention in Cross Purpose (Le Malentendu). The absurdity of things is brought out in gratuitious human suffering and in the misunderstanding and hatred existing among individuals, who could have turned them into love and mutual help. The characters of the play, neither try to understand nor seek to transcend the absurd situation. They simply despair.

In his analysis of the concept 'absurd' as understood by Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre says that the hero of the 'absurd' novels has a peculiar meaning of its own. Sartre says,

> His hero was neither good nor bad, neither moral nor immoral. These categories do not apply to him. He belongs to a very particular species for which the author reserves the word "absurd". But in M. Camus' work this word takes on two very different meanings. The absurd is both a state of fact and the lucid awareness which certain people acquire of this state of fact. The "absurd man is

> the man who does not hesitate to draw the inevitable conclusions from a fundamental absurdity..... What is meant by the absurd as a state of fact, as primary situation? It means nothing less than man's relation to the world. Primary absurdity manifests a cleavage, the cleavage between man's aspirations to unity and the insurmountable dualism of mind and nature, between man's drive toward the eternal and the finite character of his existence, between the "concern" which constitutes his very essence and the vanity of his efforts, chance, death, the irreducible pluralism of life and of truth, the unintelligibility of the real - all these are extremes of the absurd.[18]

Thus, according to Sartre, 'absurd' consists in man's relation to the world. It resides neither entirely in the man, nor in the world. But since, basically man is 'being-in-the-world' absurd is an inseparable part of the human condition. The world is a chaos, anarchy and without any purpose. In this situation man feels that he is an outsider to the situation of the world. If he were to be a tree among other trees, then life would have a meaning for he would be part of this world. In part, this explains the title of the novel; for the outsider is man confronting the world. The outsider is also man among men. There are occasions when you realize that the person you have loved has become a stranger. Finally, the outsider is the person in relation to oneself.

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[18] Jean-Paul Sartre, Literary Philosophical Essays, Trans. Annette Michelson. (London: Hutchison & Co. Ltd., 1969), p.24.

However, there is another factor which makes absurd more glaring: and that is the passion of the absurd. In ordinary situation, given the above conditions of the absurd, man should seek to commit suicide but he does not. As Sartre describes,

> The absurd man will not commit suicide; he wants to live, without relinguishing any of his certainty, without a future, without hope, without illusion and without resignation either. He stares at death with passionate attention and this fascination liberates him. He experiences the "divine irresponsibility" of the condemned man.[19]

Another aspect of the absurd is that God does not exist and man's life comes to an end. Given the above conditions everything is permissible for man in this life. What matters in life is to acquire as many experiences as possible since every experience is good. All established values are thrown overboard. This explains the title of Camus' novel, "The Outsider".

> The outsider he wants to portray is precisely one of those terrible innocents who shock society by not accepting the rules of its game. He lives among outsiders, but to them, too, he is an outsider. That is why some people like him - for example, his mistress, Marie, who is fond of him "because he's odd". Others,

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[19]Jean-Paul Sartre, Op.cit., p.27.

> like the courtroom crowd whose hatred he suddenly feels mounting towards him, hate him for the same reason. And we ourselves, who on opening the book are not familiar with the feeling of the absurd, vainly try to judge him according to our usual standards. For us, too, he is an outsider.[20]

While one starts reading the novel, 'Outsider', one is overwhelmed by the feeling of the absurd.

> It occurred to me that somehow I'd got through another Sunday, that mother now was buried, and tomorrow I'd be going back to work as usual. Really, nothing in my life had changed.[21]

It is a deliberate sentence, by which the author intends to introduce the concept of the 'absurd'. But as it would happen in other novels, the riddle of the absurd is not clarified. The purpose of the novel is not to clarify the 'absurd' but to describe the image of the 'absurd' present in the world. According to Sartre, The Myth of Sisyphus teaches one to accept Camus' novel of the absurd. The absurdity of the human condition, as described earlier, is the sole theme of the novel. It is not a novel with a precise message. It has no proofs of convincing one of any truth. However, just like any existentialist concepts it is a proof in itself of the

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[20] Jean-Paul Sartre, Op.cit., p.28.

[21] Albert Camus, The Outsider, trans. Stuart Gilbert. (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd. 1981), p.32.

futility of attaining objective knowledge through abstract principles.

We had argued earlier that existential reality constitutes the basic theme of all literature. Being an ethical reality, whose actuality is realised through one's choice, it does not remain permanently established in human reality. In fact, it is for this reason that we said earlier that only an indirect communication of ethical reality is possible. It is this fact, that 'The Outsider' is pointing out. As Sartre says,

> Such, in any case, is The Outsider, a work detached from a life, unjustified and unjustifiable, strile, momentary, already forsaken by its author, abandoned for other present things. And that is how we must accept it as a brief communion between two men, the author and the reader, beyond reason in the realm of the absurd.[22]

From the concept of the 'absurd' we can analyse the concept of 'nausea'. This literary concept evolves from the basic existentialist position, that life is meaningful only if one is ready to make the 'leap', by engaging in action. In his choice one is faced with two problems. One is nausea. Existentialist nausea arises from the consciousness that we are our bodies.

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[22]Albert Camus, Op.cit., p.29.

This fact is well expressed in the novel 'Nausea' in the following words:

> I exist. It's sweet, so sweet, so slow. And light. You'd say it hung there in the air all by itself. It stirs. Everywhere there are little touches which melt and pass away. All soft and gentle. Water wells up in my mouth. I swallow it, it slides down my throat, it caresses me - and now my mouth is full of it again. I have in my mouth forever a little pool of whitish water, lying hidden, brushing my tongue. And this pool is Me. And the tongue. And the throad is Me.[23]

Roquentin, the chief personage in the novel is faced with existence of things and his own existence. It reveals a disquieting quality of being both inevitable and unjustifiable. Since Being already is, nothing more can be added to its existence. Even the existence of particular beings is so complete that no reason for their existence can be enquired into. Thinking in this manner,

> Roquentin finds no reason for his hand being just as they are and no other way. Why should they not suddenly become something else? Yet again objects, whether his own body or things out there in the world, have a sort of passive resistance which makes them be absolutely what they are, offering as it were a meaning which one cannot read. The root of the chestnut tree exists so absolutely in its own complete fulness that one cannot really think about it; and yet

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[23] Jean-Paul Sartre, Nausea, Trans. Robert Baldick, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1981), p.143.

> since there is no reason for it to be a root of a chestnut tree, it is absurd. The same is true of Roquentin. Since he exists as a particular consciousness, he not only is continually aware of the body across which he is conscious but he cannot stop being conscious; he must forever think, think, and think about thinking. In a kind of "horrible escatasy" Roquentin senses the obscene fullness of existence, which is "an imperfection", "a sagging (flechissement)" of Being. Existing things have no reason for being, they are neither necessary nor meaningful. And yet they are there. They are de trop, and he, like them, is "De trop for eternity."[24]

Faced with such absurdity in existence, Roquentin tries to establish a contrast between his own existence and the external world. Comparing his own existence to that of a circle, which does not exist, he realizes that his own individual consciousness in relation to his body is a contingent existence. But consciousness is never a fullness, for there is always negativity that pervades it. Roquentin as a consciousness seeks for an existence similar to that of a circle. The image, that is built here, is to express the becoming of the subject in the ethical reality. It is an indirect communication. Sartre expresses the concept of becoming as "adventures". But adventures are different from extensive travels, intense emotional relationships, or exciting events. Nor are

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[24] Hazel E. Barnes, Humanistic Existentialism, The Literature of possibility, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1959), p.197.

adventures similar to facts recorded in books. In real adventure one appears to be carried away through inevitable sequence of instants. Every instant is uniquely precious and experienced to the full and willingly allowed to pass by because of one's impatience for the future moments. The end of the adventure comes sharp and clear. When the adventure is over, and the everyday routine life starts.

Adventure cannot be repeated again in the same manner, nor can it be prolonged. Similar to a piece of jazz, it starts, progresses and ends. Through the image of adventure Sartre contrasts the feeling of adventure and the feeling that he is nausea and there can be no adventures. He realizes that he cannot live the life of adventures, at the same time in constant relation with other nauseating existents.

In this chapter we have analysed literary concepts, which have existential meanings. They are used to convey poetic meanings to problems of life. The main concern of human life is that of existence. In what does one's own existence consist? The answer to this problem is related to all human problems. Literature,

all throughout human history has expressed valuable messages for human beings. They are conveyed through literary concepts. But every concept is determined through different attitudes to life. Existentialism determines its concepts through the reality of existence. Again existence itself takes different meanings, in accordance with the manner human existence is distinguished from other forms of existence. This itself, contains the structure of existentialistic literature, as distinguished from other literary concepts. Tracing out these distinguishing characteristics of existential literary concepts was the purpose of this chapter.

CHAPTER-VII

CONCLUSION

We had set out to establish existentialism as a distinct literary theory. In the preceding chapters an attempt has been made at analysing the philosophical and literary structure of Existentialism. Our presentiment at the outset was that existentialism may be similar to other movements which have influenced manking for centuries in different forms. Such philosophical and literary movements are humanism, classicism and romanticism. We have analysed quite at length to conclude that existentialism is distinct from these movements.

Humanism is a permanent characteristic of the human mind, which feels that man can be on his own in this world. He must aim at being happy in this world. And this amounts to saying that the end of man's life is in this world. But humanism, being an attitude to life, it has many meanings and aims. From Greek civilization to the present day its various forms have been recognized by people of different ages. If existentialism is limited

only to a few of its characteristics it may be reduced to a humanism, as Jean Paul Sartre has claimed in his book Existentialism and Humanism. In fact, there are a few existential philosophers and literary men, who still hold this view. But our aim was to show that existentialism is not similar to any of the different humanisms prevalent in the world.

In our approach to the analysis of classicism and romanticism, we tried to show the relation which the individual man has towards the external world and other men. In classicism the individual man and the external world are related through their natures. Every being has a determined nature, sustained by determined laws. It is the effort of classicism to limit man to determined ways of life, in accordance with the laws that are found in nature. It is against this determined characteristic of classicism that existentialism brings out the act of 'choice' of man in 'freedom' to realize that he is human. 'Existence precedes essence' is the basic principle of existentialism.

Romanticism claims the greatness of the individual

in relation to the external world and other men. The 'ego' is the centre of the universe. If he is given unlimited chance, man can reach his greatest realization of his goal. But soon the romantic man lands into difficulties. Realizing his incapacity to reach this individuality, he either soon gives up or carries his claim to the extreme of committing suicide. On the other hand in existentialism the individual becomes aware of his self through the consciousness of the existence of the external world and other men. Man is a Mit-welt, a being with-world, and a Mit-sein, a being with others. Dasein or man cannot realize his existence alone by himself. As Sartre establishes, we cannot think of a world in which we are not implicated, not constituted and in which we have no part to play. Such a world cannot exist for us. But all this realization comes through one's own free choice. Man is an individual because he freely chooses to be so.

Man's individuality is realized through a gradual becoming, as Kierkegaard argues in The Sickness Unto Death. It is a painful journey through hard realities. The concept of the individual turns into self in existentialism. This transformation is achieved through

existence in the ethico-religious sphere as Kierkegaard insists. Through this reality of self, other existential concepts like 'death', 'suffering', 'despair' etc. receive a meaning different from that of other literary movements.

'Creativity' of the self is realized through the faculty of imagination. Here again a distinction should be borne in mind. Romantic creativity is directed to the external world through the function of imagination. This theory was established by Coleridge following the philosophical principles of Kant and Schelling. By existential creativity it is claimed that the individual transforms himself into a self. The action of creativity is realized within the individual through the power and function of imagination.

Imagination, that can transform the individual, transforms the values in the external world and other-persons through its function in the individual. It is this transformation, that is realized through the act of existence. Besides, imagination transforms ethical reality into aesthetic concepts. Ethical or existential concepts are transformed into aesthetic concepts and

images. They in their turn become literary works, distinct from other works of literature. Needless to say that, the concept of imagination as distinctly understood from other literary movements has been responsible for this renewed literary theory.

The basic concepts that centre around this literary theory are freedom, choice and individual and internal transformation. Other existential concepts may vary from author to author and from situation to situation. But the basic concept will not change. This calls for deep sense of responsibility on the part of the existent. This factor is that makes marked difference on existentialism compared with other literary and philosophical movements.

It is true that existentialism may not be appealing to man in general for the responsibility that is demanded from individuals. But the fact will remain that any human achievement that is realized in this world can only come through the individual decisions of men. And the power of imagination that makes this realization possible through literature will always be recognized.

This was the purpose of this research project. Existentialism as a philosophy and literary movement meet at a point in human culture to make individuals recognize their dignity by living the very problems of life which have haunted men for centuries. By facing problems like death, suffering, agony man realizes his individual greatness. It is the attempt of literature to express these achievements in their characteristic forms, concepts and images. Thus existentialism shows itself to be a distinct literary movement.

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