Conclusion
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Generally, Existentialist philosophers ponder over the question of creation and existence of the universe and especially of Man in this world. They raised the questions, like, why has the Almighty created the Earth, the Moon, the Sun, the Universe, and most significantly why has He created ‘Human Being’ in this Universe? What is the purpose behind the creation and the origin of Man? Why did Adam and Eve, the first creations of God, our first ancestors, ate that forbidden apple, and initiate the cycle of life and death? The answers of these questions are still unrequited as the question of the evolution and foundation of the Human Being. These matters have also been explored by different philosophers from the beginning of philosophy from time to time.

Numerous studies have been focused to answer the most significant and the central question: How the human being originated and what is the purpose behind it? Most of the philosophers have marked a shift from tradition to modernity. They have conducted their studies to understand the exact nature of the origin and evolution of human being. From the commencement of the human history and even at the present day, human being has been trying to seek answer of these questions.

The clarification of all these questions can be explained only if we first understand the history of the traditional thinkers and more so the philosophers of the recent
time. These philosophers have tried to explain and solve the mystery of evolution of the Human Being. In the ancient times, on the one hand, the traditional thinkers studied the questions, like “what and who am I?” In modern times, on the other hand, the philosophers compare and contrast different cultures and study the development of human being. They ask such a pertinent question, i.e., “What is man?”

While firstly understand this theory comprehensively, we will comprehend the philosophical problem of ‘the concept of man’ which apparently deals with the very question about the existence of human being. Like physiological, sociological, archeological, psychological, biological, linguistic, even Anthropology, a modern branch of the history of science, studies human being from different point of views and contributes to our knowledge of man to a great extent.

The problem is, however, still unsettled. By virtue of this, it is necessary to reconcile philosophical approach with the anthropological study for the appropriate reply of this fundamental question. In this regard, in 1920s, a new and specialized branch of anthropology was developed, which is known as “Philosophical Anthropology”. It studies the human nature from philosophical point of view, and is also applied to study the meaning of the human existence. In another words, it studies the existence of man, his experience, and interprets philosophically the facts discovered by various sciences. It connects the other anthropologies to this new and developed branch which interacts with all the special sciences. It is not only study of the nature of Man but also study the other living beings, which differentiates Man from all the other living beings in respect
of his traits and potentials, for example, his character, personality, behavior, emotions, and feelings. Recently, it has been initiated into scrutinizing the ontology, considered as the major part of philosophy known as Metaphysics. It is the philosophical study of the existence of human being and it deals with the study of entities that co-operate with human relationships, with a major theme termed as inter-subjectivity which is the study of how two individuals whose experiences and interpretations of the world are primarily different, understand and relate to each other, and to the studies of language. This study further moves towards the existential and phenomenological themes.

Immanuel Kant, the German philosopher, formulated three questions meant to answer the problems of human interests: What can I know? What ought I to do? What may I hope for? And later he developed a fourth question, what is man? Still scientific methods and philosophical approaches do not entirely clarify the philosophers and for better understanding of human being, they used phenomenological methods of Edmund Husserl, who studies the structures of consciousness and the related phenomena. Philosophical anthropologists also reckon to use “Interpretive Understanding”, which simply means understanding the things from someone else’s perspectives for analyzing the basic categories of human nature. Thus, today in the modern times the combination of the scientific methods and the philosophical approach is assigned to evaluate the unresolved question, i.e., the Existence of the Human Being.

In the second half of the 20th Century, Western philosophers set up a philosophical tradition from Continental Europe excluding Cyprus, Iceland, and Ireland, Malta and the United Kingdom and its dependencies, which termed as
‘Continental Philosophy’ the movements initiated by Continental Philosophy are
German Idealism, Phenomenology, Existentialism, Hermeneutics, Structuralism,
Post-Structuralism, French-Feminism, Psychoanalytic Theory and many others.

Philosophical Phenomenology was a movement in the early 20th Century, founded
by Edmund Husserl who studied the structures of subjective experiences and
consciousness and its phenomenon. His philosophical movement was followed by
his students, philosophers and existentialists, for example, Edith Stein, Martin
Heidegger, MaxScheler, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Gabriel Marcel, and Jean-Paul
Sartre and many others.

The other important movement of his time was Existentialism. The word
‘Existentialism’ has an additional and very important source. For many
philosophers, the word ‘existential’ was derived in the expression of ‘existential
phenomenology’. There is general agreement that the most significant versions of
twentieth century existentialism are developed from phenomenology, the
philosophy elaborated by Edmund Husserl in the early years of the century.
Heidegger described “Being and Time” as work of phenomenology, while Sartre
and Merleau-Ponty used this term in the title or subtitle of their main works.

The term Existentialism has been derived from the words; Exist and Existential,
which go to show that this philosophy primarily deals with the question of human
existence. The term Exist means ‘to be real or present’, Existence denotes ‘to exist
outside of’ and Existentialism is the philosophical theory which maintains that
man is the free agent responsible for his own action. There are two core tendencies
in the philosophy of Existentialism, which are distinguished from each other: the
first is Theism and the second is Atheism. Soren Kierkegaard, on the one hand, is
considered to be the father of the theist existentialism; he is a great Christian existentialist and has ardent attachment to the Christian faith. Nietzsche, on the other hand, sincerely rejects the Christian faith and is considered to be the father of the Atheist existentialism.

While dividing the philosophers into these two different categories is not sufficient to understand Existentialism in the totality. There are some other philosophers who do not categorise into this scheme, for example, Karl Jaspers and Martin Heidegger stand apart from the above categories, since they are neither Christians nor they are decidedly atheist. However, on account of their diverse outlook towards the philosophy of existentialism, these philosophers have united under one umbrella, i.e., ‘Existence’. In addition to this, the ways they do philosophy together also constitute the shared style of philosophizing, and permits us to call all of them the existentialists. One of the realistic and the tragic elements in the Existentialism is that all Existence ends in death.

There is no definition which can adequately explain the meaning of Existentialism, so it is said that at first it focuses on the condition of the human existence, and individual emotions, actions, responsibilities, thoughts, and the existence of the human being in general. Existentialists focus more on the subjective rather than the objective aspects or knowledge in the human being such as the beliefs, religions, feelings, and emotions- freedom, pain, regret, guilt, anxiety, despair, finitude, alienation, and boredom, etc.

The basic characteristics of the style of philosophizing are, firstly, it is involved more with human being inter aliasing with the nature. In other words, we can say that this is the philosophy of the subject rather than the object, which is also
considered to be the major limitation of the existentialist philosophy, because the discussions of most of the existentialists are centered on the individual only, and the second characteristic is also its key term, which is the Existence. Jean-Paul Sartre’s famous statement explains it very clearly that ”Existence precedes essence”. This statement elucidates that the man or the human being first exists, he encounters or comes across life around him, and then he reacts with the world giving meaning to his own existence, defining himself in terms of his actions. In other words, first of all, human being exists in this Universe and then with freedom creates his substance or being, and he himself is responsible for his behavior, whatever it may be. If one considers some manufactured object, such as a paper-knife or a table, each has been made to serve a definite purpose. It has an essence, and its purpose which precedes its existence. The concept of man in the mind of God is comparable to the concept of paper-knife in the mind of the artisan.

The roots of the Existentialist philosophy, which is a contemporary phenomenon, are believed to be in the history of philosophy, or the pre-philosophical attempts of the human being to understand the meaning of life and his own self or existence and the pre-phenomenological endeavor. This particular philosophy has brought clarity and awareness about a way of thinking and an attitude of mind. Existentialists turns inwards and stresses knowledge by participation.

Humanism is considered as the system of thought, which believes people are able to live their lives without the need of religious beliefs, and in one sense, existentialism is humanism- as it is very much concerned with the human and personal values and also with the authentic existence of the human being.
Philosophers made a useful distinction between ‘Open humanism’ and ‘Closed humanism’. ‘Open humanism’ refers to the pursuit of human values in the world, and the ‘Closed humanism’ means that the man is the sole creator of meaning and value in the world. The second type of humanism is related to Jean-Paul Sartre’s views, as only the human being has the freedom to choose from all the alternatives about his present and future, and with this decision making ability he is able to create the values and meaning in individuals life and at the same time he is responsible for the outcome. Martin Heidegger, however, accentuates on ‘Open humanism’. In his “Letter on Humanism” he says: “Man does not create being, but rather receives his existence from being, and becomes responsible for being and to be being. Before he speaks, he must let himself be addressed by being.”

Phenomenology offers a methodology for the existentialists with which they can pursue their investigation of human existence. Literally phenomenology is defined as the philosophical study of the structures of subjective experience and consciousness. Husserl has formulated a method for the detailed and accurate description of the various kinds of objects in their pure essences, and requires clarity of mind from all the presuppositions and prejudices. It is also necessary to be bound to the description only, as it is very difficult to resist moving from description to inferences. On account of all the above reasons, the phenomenology is a complex study demanding strict control on the mind. Many existentialists have been influenced by phenomenology, for example, Martin Heidegger, Max Ferdinand Scheler, Immanuel Kant and Hegel. However, they did not follow the methodology of Husserl and developed their own phenomenological thought to suit their purpose. In spite of all the correspondence between Husserl and
Existential Phenomenology, a very prominent difference has arisen between them. Husserl stresses on the ‘essence’ and thinks of phenomenology as the eidetic science and follows idealist tendencies which believe consciousness to be always intentional, that means being directed to a particular object beyond itself, where as Existential Phenomenology lays stress on ‘existence’ and rejects idealism.

In other words, phenomenology describes what is seen, as each and every individual has his own perspectives, similarly every human being will see differently. And it provides scholarly and reliable methods to investigate the elusive question that is the existence of human being. Later, this philosophy was adopted by many other philosophers, but every philosopher concurs on one key point that is ‘Existence’, and in particular the Existence of human being, in which all the Existentialists aver that only human beings exists and the plants, animals, etc don’t exist in this world. They have simply ‘Existence’ is a technical term which means ‘to Exist outside of’ and human being takes constant leaps from himself and moves further, it is a continuous process which ends with the death of the person, which is a very significant reason for the human being to develops himself. In other words, we can say that a human being makes himself to the extent that only human beings have the potential to create and formulate himself. Only the human being had the knack to surpass his present and his future continuously, and only he has the freedom to take his decisions, and at the same time he is responsible for his actions. Jean-Paul Sartre’s famous pronouncement clearly states and explains that: “Man is condemned to be free: condemned because he did not create himself yet nonetheless free, because once cast into the world, he is responsible for everything he does”\textsuperscript{2}.
In the Existentialist philosophy, ‘freedom’ is a very significant component and it is considered as a compulsory factor, as human beings have the freedom to think and progress and they are completely responsible for the consequences of the same. It is considered as a burden, as human being has no other way to be free and every time he takes decision he is bound to face the consequences of his decision. As the human being is responsible for his own existence, his past, present and future, and he has the power to develop his own personality, character and individuality, he is responsible for the outcome of his own decisions and in this process he does not have to impugn on the circumstances, situations or any other individual. Even when the human being has freedom to choose a lone alternate from many others, freedom is only to help in making the choice, and it does not mean freedom to accomplish that thing. Human being can endeavor to attain something, he can try to get desired things in his life, but all the circumstances are not in his hands, and he does not have the freedom to achieve it.

Sometimes due to being saddled with the responsibility of his actions he takes concession or exemption from the freedom, and tries to run away from his responsibility of taking decisions. And for this reason he takes external or foreign assistance from some deity, religious conviction, tradition, doctrines, and ritual. But at the same time he forgets that in taking any decision even with help of the some outer source, only the human being will be responsible for it. In other words, whether the human being takes some decision by himself or with the support of some outer agency, he is condemned to be free.

But, we can point out that Sartre’s theory of freedom is self-contradictory. The problem is, if freedom is determined by freedom, then we may think the freedom
is becoming restricted by other things. However, the meaning of independence from everything, even freedom, is that I have power to destroy my freedom. In Sartre’s analysis of freedom, there is one thing I cannot do, that is the desertion of freedom. But if I do not have the freedom to abandon it, how can freedom acquire completeness? Again, if there is power to destroy freedom, it becomes self-destructive. In the case of absolute freedom, not only the idea of subject and object disappears but in the disappearance of all opposition, the self no longer is. Absolute freedom is nonsense, freedom becomes empty without contradiction.

Sartre cannot justify his philosophy of freedom, consciousness and human nature all these resulted as self-contradiction. We also find that Sartre’s thoughts were not conducting and support traditional human values. Characters like Raquinton were not connected to the realistic and genuine human nature; they were portrait either extraordinary or fake by their regular activities. Here, there is the lack of originality. While denying the reality of human life Sartre’s philosophy ultimately transforms in Marxism. Likewise, Heidegger’s being ultimately culminated in mystery. It begins with a mystery and ends with a mystery. Heidegger mentioned the structure of language which cannot express anything without a notion of being. It may be said that perhaps there was a time when man experienced his life in the light of being. He was in the presence, but with the growth of thought and civilization he had fallen away from that experience. We experience our ordinary ideas of existence in which an object is called a being, as it is something that exists. It is the experience of existent object which is expressed in the sign of affirmation. But we do not discover anything called being. Furthermore, Heidegger called Death as man’s utmost possibility. The word possibility,
however, is not appropriate. Death is not a possibility, but it is an end of the human life. A possibility is something for which man has to make some active efforts. In the case of death, however, man may not even think actively of death, still death may not come to him.

It may be an overstatement to characterize Merleau-Ponty’s thought as a philosophy of ambiguity. It is true that in his phenomenology there is a tendency to leave the phenomena in an aura of indefiniteness, as a result of which the issues and decisions become blurred. Ponty attempts to fuse the differences between consciousness and non-consciousness by introducing the term ‘existence’. It is, however, never clarified explicitly and is likely to bring about a confused mixture instead of a synthesis. Ponty claims that his phenomenology can break the deadlock between realism and idealism, and between empiricism and rationalism. It seems that he attempts to do it by making use the best insights of Gestalt psychology in a way which the Gestaltists themselves had not been able to do. This raises questions about the validity of his criticisms which are based on an outdated conception of science.

Apparently, Merleau-Ponty’s existentialism is thoroughly humanistic in approach and expresses a much more sober and balanced estimate of human existence. It is an existentialism in which human existence is neither absurd nor saved without remnant. It is dialectical, but it does not get bogged down in antinomies.

Existentialist philosophers were trying to provide a new systematic and scientific way but indeed they were not fully succeeded to convey their own thought. Everyone concedes that human life is incomplete and dissatisfying due to suffering and losses that occur when considering the lack of perfection, power and
control one has over their life. Existentialism is the journey and search for human existence and true self.

It elucidates the existence of the human being; that is the individual person lives his life or performs all of his duties without being certain about its consequence. The human being is thrown in this world, or exists in this world and then he is bound to develop himself with his freedom and he lives with the fact that his future is indefinite, they face alienation from their family and society and on account of this they undergo traumatic existential experience. For example, the aspect of loneliness and aloofness make an individual anxious, fearful, absurd and is led to question the factuality of individuals own life as authentic or inauthentic. It is apparent that all the aspects of existentialism are inter-related, and any individual can experience them one time or the other as they face traumatic happenings in their life. How the aspects of existentialism influence the life of sensitive men and women?

In spite of many contradictions, mistakes and limitations, Philosophy of existentialism was working like a bridge to connect the real and common man with various philosophical streams of the world for thinking and knowing the purpose and reason behind their own existence. Philosophy is the way of life, not of one part of life but of the whole life. This life is the life of man. He wants a theory of life as a guide. Other creatures do not care for any such theory; the drives themselves of their nature are enough for them.

Scientific and analytic thought has helped in dispelling many superstitions, but what we want is that this growing scientific and analytic spirit should not also destroy the values of life which are of lasting importance. Science has not said the
last word about what even material things are in themselves, much less has it been able to say about what men are in themselves. We have to understand ourselves, understand man behind all his activities, scientific, ethical, and spiritual. Science cannot dictate what man is to be; but man must understand what scientific activity is, for it is his activity. Accumulation of scientific evidence suggests and strengthens a policy, not a creed; but a policy is a guide to human action. The difference; even in theory, between pure and applied science is fast disappearing. A true theory is that which works; and work is human activity. By virtue of this, we come to the old advice of Socrates: 'Know thyself'. Pope said that the noblest study of mankind is man himself. The Upanisads also declared: 'Know thyself' (ātmānanam viddhi).

A man is not only a physical entity but also a spiritual being. On the one hand, he desires for the fulfillment for the physical needs, on the other hand, he has also keen interested to attain the ultimate, i.e., self-realisation. As The Aitareya Āraṇyaka utters, “Among living beings, it is man alone that says what he has known, that sees what he has known. He knows the future, he knows this world and the next; and he desires to attain the immortal through the mortal. Thus he is endowed, while other creatures are aware of only hunger and thirst.” We, therefore, may say that values are not only derived from life, society, culture, and environment but also from transcendental dimension of human behaviors and experiences of a person. In such situations, a person not only thinks about individuals personal interests but also thinks about the greater interest of greater number, for instance, love, compassion, sacrifice, co-operation, humility, non-violence, patriotism. Moreover, he develops the proper sense and respect for
public and private property, equality, justice, social-service, and freedom of speech and in action, participation in government policies and activities, and so forth. These things are *sine qua non* for the development of individual and society both.

This thesis attempts to understand the nature of the origin and evolution of human being, which is still on. The whole world is coming together more intimately and consciously than ever before, the problems of each have become the problems of all. It would be interesting and useful, therefore, to know how man, his nature, his ideals and values were understood by each tradition. We are responsible for what we are or will be. Let us work together for a humane world by means commensurate with humane ends.
Notes and References


3. Aitareya Āraṇyaka, II. iii. 2.