

CHAPTER III

EXISTENTIALISM IN MARATHI NOVELS

Maaz. Aaydy he maz. Aahje te ks. 6al vayc. Tae
maz. mlc #rv`ar| tihl Anuvaca sLi a `a; p`
tae ml marl ac paihje he brobr nah| mg ml
qDDyat pDI o tri cal d | p` ml kay krayc.
te ml ac #rvll `aj

—kml paeye b2-Anb2

With the publication of Baba Padamji's novel, *Yamuna Paryatan* in 1857, the voyage of Marathi novel started. This was not only the first novel in Marathi but it was also the first Indian novel. This is reformative novel as it depicts the life of the then Hindu widows. This tradition, laid by Baba Padamji, was followed and enriched by many authors like, Hari Narayan Apte, Vaman Malhar Joshi, Sane Guruji, Vibhawari Shirurkar, Bhau Padhye, Anant Kadam, Deenanath Manohar, and others. Besides this, Phadake Khandekar, G. T. Madkholkar, and so on had brought the romantic age in the Marathi literature. All these novelists made the readers aware of progressive and modern thinking about social problems and age-old traditions. They used the entertaining medium of novel for social education and betterment of the society.

After 1930's, a wave of modern thinking was very prominently being spread in Maharashtra. At the same time Malti Bedekar's (Balutai Khare) novel, *Hindolyawar* was published (1934) under a pen name, Vibhawari Shirurkar. In the novel, she has handled sensitive problems in the life of the hero and the heroin with sympathy and wisdom. After 1960

the Marathi novel depicts reality and modern values in life today. *Dhag* (1960) by Uddhav Shelake; Bhau Padhye's *Karanta* (1961), *Vaitagwadi* (1964), *Vasunaka* (1965) *Barrister Aniruddha Dhopeswarkar* (1967), *Homesick Brigade* (1974), and *Rada* (1975); Prabhakar Pendharkar's *Are Sansar* (1971), Kiran Nagarkar's *Sat Sakkam Trechalis* (1974), Kamal Desai's *Ratrandin Aamha* (1959), and Shanta Gokhale's *Rita Welankar* also powerfully present new contemporary themes. The factual representation in the novels has added progressive dimensions to the Marathi literature. Common people like a rickshaw driver (in *Manus*), an ordinary labourer (in *Dombaryacha Khel*, *Karanta*), a clerk (in *Waitagwadi*), hoodlums and unemployed youth (in *Wasunaka*), a soldier (in *Robot*), rural women (in *Dhag*, *Manus*), have been presented for the first time in the Marathi novels. However, the radical change in the Marathi literary tradition is brought by Bhalchandra Nemade with the publication of his first novel, *Kosla* (1963) and its sequels *Bidhar*, *Zool*, and *Jarila*. For the first time these novels describe the existentialist heroes as having a sense of futility, alienated from the society and enjoying freedom of choice.

3.1 *Kosla* (कोसला):

Bhalchandra Nemade's novel *Kosla* was published in the year 1963. The novel got an immediate critical acclaim after its publication. It is supposed as the first existentialist novel in Marathi. Though E.V. Joshi's *Ranbhool* (1957) was published before *Kosla* and excogitated as existential novel, still the existential tenets were not clearly explored by the novelist in it. *Kosla* can be considered as the first existential novel, it

is because the existential tenets, such as, obsession of birth and death, dread, alienation, absurdity and other, are clearly exposed in the novel.

Similar to other existential novels of the West, *Kosla* also explores the life of an individual and divulges many questions regarding the meaning of life and the values of existence. Pandurang Sangvikar is a protagonist of the novel. He tells us about his 25 years life story—from the childhood to graduation. At the beginning of the novel he declares that he has done nothing, though his father has spent money for his education, and he has never taken exams seriously. Even though, he has spent some years in the city, he could not develop his living style neatly. As in the existential novels, he tells his life story from the first person point of view.

The novel portrays a modern youth in the wake of drastic change in every sector of India. Pandurang represents many unspoken modern youths who feel alienated from the society and culture they belongs to. After the independence of India, democracy and secularism become glittering slogans among the Indian intellectuals. But the democracy and secularism fails to provide hopeful, progressive and satisfactory aspirations to the young Indian generation. Modern youth is disillusioned by the inequality, hidden castism, corruption, superstitions, unbearable poverty and inactive government. On the other hand modern technology has made man's life comfortable and materialistic. As a result modern man is alienated from the society and even from himself. He becomes somewhat rebellious and critical about the society. In his article 'Kosla Aai` praImwav', Gangadhar Patil says,

{Xvrin*#a,]darntvadi, smaj vadl,ga2lvadi vgre manvtavadi
 Aadxlvadi tTiv)ane t4aki4t Aaxavadi &@da, nitk mllye hl
 'npskil gl' #rLyaca Anuvv ytac, A2ink ma`saCyā vtñan
 j lvnat Ok ivStl`R wyank pok; l inmaR zaLyaci j a`lv
 m!kranl pAm kivtē VyKt kd ll Aai` kadbrlCyā 95at yac
 pok; lcl j ai`v pAm 'kosla' mēye VyKt zal ll (Bhand 14)
 (When modern man experiences the failure of faith in God,
 liberalist, socialist, Gandhist, humanist idealist
 philosophies, so called optimistic faiths, and moral values,
 the large vacuum is emerged in his life and for the first time
 this emptiness is expressed in Mardekar's poetry. And in the
 form novel the same realization of emptiness is expressed in
Kosla, for the first time.)

Pandurang also feels that he is alienated from the society. As a result he examines and criticizes society and social values by remaining aloof from the society.

Alienation is a prominent theme in the modern literature across the world and the major cause of it is that it is a common feeling experienced by human beings in general. The feeling of alienation can be physical, mental, religious, spiritual, psychological, political, social, or economic, and many times it is a combination of all these aspects. Alienation is obviously a major theme in *Kosla*. Pandurang Sangvikar, an adolescent central character, seems alienated from his teachers, schoolmates, family, and society at large. Although he interacts and maintains relations with numerous people during the twenty five years of his life, he remains fundamentally withdrawn and isolated. He is estranged from others and

even, up to some degree, from himself. He has no close and real friends; his interactions with others are superficial, and many of his relationships are insincere. He seems frustrated and unhappy with his life and the people around him. Most of these people, in turn, appear to exist—at least as they are perceived and described by him—in shallow, unfulfilling, and insubstantial relationships with one another. Very few characters in the novel appear to enjoy satisfactory and purposeful lives, from their own point of view. Instead, they are living lives that are essentially self-centred, calculating, and not serious.

By portraying Pandurang's character, Nemade demonstrates an individual's sense of alienation, as in the case of Pandurang. The novel opens with the nostalgic memories of Pandurang; he is nauseated by his home and village. He has no real attachment with his family members, except his mother, who loves him a lot. But after the birth of his third sister, he starts feeling that his mother does not love and care him as before. He also feels alienated from the real love of his father. His father always rags him and sometimes even beats him, and he never appreciates his any good deed. As Pandurang says,

maz. Aŋq. I hanp` Tyaŋya 2akat gđ | te dũ3p`a vgr̄e
 krayc̄ m; yat AaMhI 4oDixI jaga nI3 k=n it4e fil zaD.
 vgr̄e I avl I | tr he k; Lyavr tI]p3th 3akth maza kan
 ip; t te Mh`al e Ov! Ya jagđ dha k̄e Icl qoD. I avl I tr
 pclvIs =pye yđII |

Aata ml basrl ixkt Astana 6rat sg; Yana 5as
 vgr̄e zal a Asd | p` vDII ml a wDkavth dđ Mh`al e ha
 kay k̄`aca j mana Aah? pđtk 6̄ f̄k to babl As. Mh`th

ixvay basri ihskth Tyani ti iwtlvr Aap3th foDth fKth
idl || | | | xa; Eya Naa3kat kam kd | tWha ihj DYasarq.
bol t hotas Mh`th Hyanl ml a kaymcl 2aStl ^yayl a l avl ||
(Nemade 4) (My whole childhood passed in awe of my
father. He used to be wicked and cruel, etc. On the farm,
once, having cleared a bit of ground, we children planted
some flowers and such. So then, the moment he heard, he
ripped them out and chucking them away, he said as he
twisted my ear, if you plant ten banana stumps in this patch
that would at least fetch twenty-five rupees.

Now when I was learning to play the flute, perhaps
everyone in my family may have been disturbed, and so on.
But handing me a tight whack my Father said, This isn't
Krishna's Age, is it? Take up your book. Throw away that
bamboo. Having spoken thus, besides, he snatched the flute
from me, broke it against the wall and flung it away. (2))¹

So he hates his father and keeps himself aloof from him. If
anything interests him, his father thinks exactly opposite of it. It may be
because of a generation gap. His innocent mind, as a child, compels him
to think that his father behaves wickedly, which makes him emotionally
detached from his father.

This feeling of aloofness and alienation increases when he leaves
his native place after completing his SSC, and moves to Pune for further

¹ The English translation of each Marathi quotation of *Kosala* is taken from its translation as *Cocoon*
by Sudhakar Marathe. Macmillan India Limited, 1997.

education. Earlier in Pune he stays at his Aunt's home until the college starts. After the commencement of his college, he takes admission in the college hostel where he gets a single room without any roommate which alienates him completely from the people around him. At the beginning he frequently visits his aunt's house but as he criticises for her heavy makeup, their relations get disturbed and then he stops visiting her regularly as before. At first, though he feels comfortable in the hostel he becomes sentimental by reading a letter sent by his mother.

His alienation from his father further increases in his college life. In the hostel he is elected as a secretary of mess, but totally fails to prove himself as an eligible candidate, and when the academic year ends, discrepancy of six hundred rupees in the expenditure and actual budget is found, and so as the secretary of the mess he has to refund it. Despite being quite honest in his financial dealings he has to face a charge of embezzlement of money in mess-expenditure. He demands four hundred rupees from his father. Father sends the money along with a letter, in which he writes that he has bought him (Pandurang) for four hundred rupees. When he reads the letter he becomes furious and thinks to revolt against his father by separating himself from him and rejecting his every suggestion. He rarely speaks with his father, and even avoids seeing the face of his father. His alienation from his father also affects his family relations. He tries to avoid going to home in Diwali and summer vacations. Another reason for his alienation from his family is immature death of his younger sister, Mani. He learns that his mother, father and grandmother treated her badly when she was bedridden. Due to her contagious disease of Small Fox, they avoided contact with her and to

enter in her room. He thinks that all the family members are selfish and hypocritical so he hates all of them and keeps himself away from the family.

In the next year of his Junior college his alienation grows more than before. His first year's intimate friends could not pass the examination and consequently he has to see new faces in the hostel as well as in the class. For this year he has given a dark room in the corner of the upper wing. As the room is isolated and dark, his friends very rarely visit his room. So he has to sit alone in the room. To avoid the loneliness, he starts smoking cigarette or wandering at nearby hills of Pune, and sometime he listens the boasts of Kalya, a wrestler of his hostel. If nobody meets him then he becomes nauseated and consoles himself by saying, "Aaj n\White sal | | | p` he cagl . nah| kũ l n ka wBna| Aap`c Aapl . kay te s2a=n idvs 6al vavè" (190). (They weren't there today either, sod'em. . . . But this is not good. So what if I don't meet anyone? I must sort out things and manage my own time (227).)

Pandurang feels nervous and restless whenever his old friends come to meet him and go back. For instance his intimate friend, Madhu comes to meet him and after staying for few days goes back to Mumbai. Then, Pandurang feels very lonely and rootless. He thinks that everyone, who comes in the hostel, has to go back one day or other. No one is permanent here, and one day he also has to leave this hostel as hundreds of the students have left the place before. As he thinks: "p` ntr trl kay? kũha trl kaym [4th j aycc Aahè qol lvr pñ Aso-nsol hoS3d Cya [martlvr pñ Aso-nsol | | | ij 4e tũh| rah`ar it4e-he ho`arc| sagvl

[4e nahl| lab Aahē tl sēda jagac” (111). (And what after that, anyhow? we have to go from here, permanently, now or then. Whether you love to your room and hostel or not . . . wherever you lives, such will be happened. Sangvi is not here, it is far away. That too is my place (132) .) The feeling of rootlessness and realisation of momentousness of life is universal with the existential characters. Such characters are detached emotionally from the physical environment around. They cannot establish themselves anywhere in the world because they cannot identify themselves with their environment. The same thing can be observed here in the case of Pandurang.

Every day in the evening he experiences loneliness because no one stays in the hostel. This loneliness leads him to think about the future. His fear of alienation and rootlessness becomes severe when he and his friend Suresh go to ramble on the hills. He thinks that trees have their own roots in the soil, they have their own permanent bond with earth, but the question about us (man), remain unanswered. Man does not have his permanent place on the earth, he is nothing but an outsider as if thrown on the earth by someone, and the body is rented on the temporary basis. These ideas resembles with the concept of ‘thrownness’ by Martin Heidegger. He also believes that man is thrown into the world. Trees are deeply rooted in the earth, but man is in the midst—between earth and space. As Pandurang rightly says, “tūcyā ibyā tūhl 2ir’alxl sb2 yvll n dta pṛta| Aai` Iya vrCyavr]gvtat” (160). (You sow your seeds without letting yourself come in contact with this Earth. And they too sprout without that contact (196).) This belief once again becomes apparent when he leaves the hostel room. He thinks,

hl j aga Aapl lc Aahē ya ihxoban. Aap` vagl o| Aai` Aata
ihl a soDh j a kahl kar` nstana| | | | hl zaD, Hya
qoLya, Hya iqDKya, Hya 3kDYa, vta; amagcl kr`. Aai`
it4Lya gj a-sg; yaca sb2 inWa; hl j aga soDI l kl
tβl a|sb2 j u tana te tβtl , he mahlt nst| hl j aga ma" a
tβU xktē kar` Aapl e pay j imnl t rovl e nahlt| (174)
(I've behaved here as if all of this belonged to me. And now
I must leave it all and go away. For no reason at all. . . . these
trees, these rooms, these windows, the hills, the grasslands
behind the Vetat Hill, and red gunja there—the relation with
all these is sundered the moment one leaves this place. When
relations are formed, one doesn't know that they must later
break. This place can, however, break off from us. Because
our feet are not rooted in this soil (213-14).)

His sense of rootlessness is gradually fostering spiritlessness and alienation in him. He avoids to mix up among the people, and whenever he mixes up with the people he finds himself unable to sustain a meaningful communication with them, and his communication with others always fails due to his fear of isolation.

Another important feature of an existential hero is his obsession of death itself. Many existential philosophers concentrate their philosophical discourses on the theme of 'death', which can be seen as a major theme in many existential fictions.

Pandurang's life is also obsessed by the death of his younger sister Mani, who dies due to small-pox disease at the age of five. This death

affects deeply on his mind. He becomes restless and anxious by the fear of ultimate death. He gets totally disturbed when he learns, through the letter written by his mother to him, that Mani is dead. After his grandfather's death, it is the first time that someone has died in his house; this is the first exposure of death for him. Hereafter, he starts thinking about death and birth in human life. As he expresses it in his agony, “paC v8R kahl mrayC. Vay nahl| paclyA v8R mr`ar. mU j NmI c ka ha mEa” (121). (Five is hardly an age to die. The whole point would be, why was a child born in the first place if it was to die at five? (144)) He is surprised by the momentariness of man's life. Whenever he goes home, Mani demands him for red sari, but now she is no more. In the fear of death, he says, “As. kũl kxal a mrd ? gEya sPIt in6tana ml a hst-hst kgva A`n dE arl mnl Ata sPIt ja} tWha ids`ar nahl| ha kay pkar? Mg ml kmal lca sln zal 0” (124). (How can anyone just die like that? Last holidays, that Mani, who had, with a broad smile, brought me my forgotten comb as I was leaving home. Now when I go home on holiday I won't ever see her. What does this mean? And then I became unimaginably numb (148).)

Mani's death affects Pandurang's innocent mind. When he reads in the letter how Mani was suffered from small-pox, he realises agony of her death. For the first time in his life he realises that death is very painful and everyone has to encounter it in the life. In the same letter when he reads that all the family members—father, mother and grandmother—have treated Mani badly, he loses his patients and becomes furious. He says in rag, “ml vDI aca qm krIn| ml Aj II a #ar marIn| mg ml sg; . 6r p8vth dE n| sg; yacl pE. Iya 6rat Ja; th 3akIn, Aa{l a j Iv:t| he

As. m`.” (125). (I said, I’ll murder Father. I’ll kill Grandma. Then I’ll set fire to that whole house. I’ll burn all their cadavers in that house. Spare only Mother. O to die thus (150).)

Pandurang is very disturbed by Mani’s death so he cannot control his emotions. How deeply he is affected by the death becomes clear through the incident in which he burns his own hands in the fire. In the fit of emotional outburst, he buys a new yellow sari, cuts it into small pieces, lits fire to it and burns his hand in that fire and tries to realise her pains. Then he pours ink on his hand and stamps the impressions of his hands on the pillow, bed, table, notebooks, books, door, windows, and walls, and then he declares that he will take revenge on the family members. As a part of revenge he decides to spend one hundred rupees for a month, and demands four hundred rupees per month from his father. In the evening, he goes to wander on the hill, where, in a disturbed state of mind, he runs fast and suddenly stops and sits silently, then runs fast and seats silently. Thus it is evident from his behaviour that he cannot bear the death of his sister and so he cannot control his emotions. When he wanders aimlessly throughout the night in Pune, a police asks him about his wandering. He unconsciously utters that ‘my sister is dead’.

To find a relief from the thought of death, he decides to go to Ajanta with the college trip. In the cave he sees statues of Buddha. He observes that there are hundreds of glimpses of sorrows on the face of Buddha. He compares his sorrows with Buddha and thinks that his own sorrow is nothing compared to Buddha. In one of the dark caves, he hallucinates that Mani collapses on the trunk into the dark space and he tries to find out her but there is nothing except the darkness.

After coming back from Ajanta he feels comfortable and tries to get relief from the thought of Mani's death, but he cannot remove it entirely from his mind. He thinks that,

j t̄ha mlhl Tya va3vr ja{n, t̄ha tl iktltrl p̄e ḡd̄ |
As̄d̄ | Mh`je sapD`arc nah| ḡd̄ . te ḡd̄ , Aata nv. kahl—
As. Mh`th| itCyabrobr itc [vl.s. gwa&ky ḡd̄ | itn Ok
mo-lc qansmarlcl Ao; vacvl | Aata itla h̄hl kahlc nah|
itla kslac par nah| tlr nah| iknara Aahe jo fKt
Okdac ga#ta ȳl | itn. 2mR trl kay brobr nd a As̄d̄ ?
itn. ȳtana fKt kmR Aa`l | jatana fKt ka; oqa p̄vas|
itca p̄vas itcac| tl sv̄nkt| henkt tenkt| rgmkt| Agmkt|
mnmkt| s.)amkt| tl miKtmkt| itc. p̄s3 mnoibb fKt
maZyaj v; | (129) (When I enter that path, she will have
advanced so far, so far ahead. That means I can never catch
up with her. Saying, what is past is past, now perhaps
something fresh. With her, too, passed away her little womb.
She has curtailed a terribly long column in the national
census. Now she is not bothered by any of this. She
experiences no constraints now. No bounds. There is a shore
which can only be reached once. What Dharma could she
have carried with her? She had brought with her only her
Karma when she came. On her way out, there's only that
dark journey. Her journey is verily her own. She is now free
of all else. Free of this, free of that. Colour-free. Flesh-free.
Mind-free. Perception-free. She is even freedom-free. Only
her almost erased, misty mind-image with me (155).)

The novel also explores the meaninglessness and futility of life and criticizes the social hypocrisy. It evaluates the traditions, customs and social norms from existential point of view. The aspects of existentialism, meaninglessness and irrationality of life, are stuffed with almost every page of the novel. In the very beginning of the novel, Nemade tries to suggest that the existence of man is important rather than what he is and what he has done in his life. For instance, Pandurang says that he is Pandurang Sangvikar and is of twenty-five years, except this fact there is nothing important to say. The first paragraph of the novel also denotes that to give examination, to earn money, to wear neat and fashionable dresses and to speak modestly are nothing but meaningless pursuits in the life.

According to Pandurang's father, to cultivate a garden or to play a flute or to act in a drama is useless and absurd. Pandurang plants some saplings of flowers in the small cultivated land, but when his father sees it he digs out all the saplings, and advises him that if he had planted ten saplings of bananas it would have given twenty-five rupees. When he tries to learn to play the flute his father slaps him and breaks the flute. He suggests him that 'instead of plying the flute he should read the books': "ha kay j *`aca j mana Aah? p`tk 6f f`k to babf(4). (This isn't Krishna's Age, is it? Take up your book. Throw away that bamboo (2).) Thus for his father the flute is nothing but a piece of reed. When he participates in a drama his father says he has spoken in the drama like a neuter. Through this incident Nemade wants to suggest that all the romantic ideas, created by man, are meaningless and absurd in the face of modernity.

Man is born free to lead life as per his own desire; it is his birthright. It is therefore clear that nobody else should try to take lead to guide someone, against his own wish. Thus, Pandurang pleads that one can prefer his own way to lead his life but one should not become a teacher to mould the lives of others, which according to him is absurd, futile and also against the spirit of personal freedom. He thinks that to advise someone is meaningless, because every person has his own ideas about his life and he should live it for his own-sake rather than for society. His uncle advises him to study seriously with a definite aim and hard work, but for Pandurang the advice is meaningless. His uncle suggests Pandurang to take history as a special subject for B.A. and Pandurang follows the advice honestly, but when he reads history books for the examination, he feels boring and hopeless, and he thinks that to make a career in the subject would be silliness.

In his childhood, he wants to be a great person but he does not understand what does it mean to be a great a person? But when he comes to Pune for B.A. he is disillusioned by the idea of becoming a great person. His friend, Tambe is a poet; he always writes letters to his mother in verse and his aim is to achieve the Nobel Prize. In his room Tambe has written a line, "Arise, awake, and stop not till the aim is achieved" (26), but in contrast Pandurang thinks that aims, endurance, and hard work is nothing for him.

Pandurang never speaks with girls intentionally; he avoids them most of the time. The words like love and romance have no meaning for him. He observes that to love someone is a boring, hopeless and meaningless task; it has nothing new in it. He says, "p` vřtag ha kl pñ

ks. krav. he pīyk ml an Aai` ml ln. Aa2lc #rvth 3akld. Ast| isnmat-kadbrit j s. pñ Ast, tsc hñl pīy9at hot| he wyank Aahē pñat navlly nahl” (45). (The trouble is that each boy and girl has decided in advance How to Fall in Love. The way love proceeds in film and fiction, So it is in reality too. This is terrifying. There’s no novelty in love any more (50).) Further he says it would be meaningful if, “pīyk ipykan. Aapapll pīysi ma=n 3akñ itCya katDyaca Df k=n Tyavr pñgl. Mh`avl| Orvl nst. pñ he #lk Aahē’ (193). (Every lover must kill his beloved and having made a drum out of her hide, sing love songs to its beat. Otherwise, plain love is good enough (231).) His thoughts about love are eccentric; it denotes his rebel against the traditional concept of romantic and Platonic love.

Nemade describes two incidents of mice and cat in the novel thoroughly to point out the futility of the human action. These two incidents are very trivial but he explores it in very detail and tries to suggest that we are haunted by very small things although they do not deserve that much importance.

In his childhood he pets a rabbit which he puts in a cage but unfortunately mice kill the rabbit. The mice also nip his books, since then Pandurang decides to kill every mouse he comes across. He spends a whole night to kill the mice. He kills ultimately two mice, but the dead mice are the quite different from those that he wants to kill. Thus, his whole efforts to kill the mice, that killed his rabbit and nipped his books, end in vain.

He is very much disturbed by the cat which has drunken entire milk, continuously for three days. To give punishment he traps the cat in the room and strokes it with belt. He beats the cat until he is tired. Then he decides, as a punishment, to pour boiled water on the cat and when it will run through the door he will trap it in the plank of door, and will press it heavily. But all is in vain, when he pours boiled water on the cat, it runs towards the door. To trap the cat, he shuts the door vigorously, but instead of cat, his fingers trap in the door and he screams loudly with pain. These two incidents imply that man always traps himself in the trivial and meaningless things, which have no importance in his life. Every effort, plan, aims, endeavour to achieve something is meaningless and hopeless, it results in nothing. From existential point of view, it is wrong to say that life has any meaning. Idealism is also meaningless. Bravery and courage are also meaningless in the human life. It is clearly evident when Suresh laughs loudly and says by looking at Tanaji's tomb, "Saal I insgkowa j ङ दे खडुyat| qra ivnod hac" (136). (Let the beauty of nature and all that go to hell. This is the real jock (165).)

To appear for examination and pass is a boring task for Pandurang. For him to achieve something in the life is absurd because he thinks that whatever one achieves in the life, ultimately, after the death has to leave it on the earth, so it is better to do nothing. When he fails in the examination, he consoles himself as:

prvapyt̃ Mh`ayco, Aap` prI9t̃ fSI o trI Aap` he-he
im; vl . Aah̃ im; v` | Cyayl a| kay im; vl ? im; v-yacl wa8ac
bd krav| khlc ts. im; vta yt̃ nah| im; vl d . sg; . xw3l
[4e p\$vlvr #vth j av. l agt| p` he trI indan im; v`.—p̃Se

nokri, smaj at vgrē vj n, car lokat wav, bayko vgrē
 Hyat l. k2l im; vl. Asd tr xp4| mg im; vl. im; vl.
 kay? n im; v`c br| (191) (Until just the other day I used
 to say, so what if I got gypped in the exam, I have achieved
 this and that. Achieving. Nobody can achieve anything,
 really. One must leave everything that has been achieved
 behind on this Earth. But at least one does achieve—money,
 job, some weight in society, etc., some worth among a few, a
 wife and all that. But by gum I have not achieved a thing like
 that. So what have I achieved, then—achieved? It’s better
 not to achieve (228).)

Thus, he is clearly aware of the futility of human action and
 meaninglessness of human existence. There is nothing after the
 education, service, marriage, and bearing the children, so he decides to
 stay at home after completing his B. A. He has no ambitions, no aims,
 and no plans for the future, but to live an imposed life by his father is the
 only work for him. In his disgust, he says, “pWj alya nixbl npskigr|
 nVhtl| Mh`th he fire mdr bapapayl” (184). (Unfortunately, our ancestors
 [were] not gifted with sterility. That is why this turn and return—all
 because of manly sires (221).)

When his father learns that his son does nothing but spends his
 days in laziness, he rebukes Pandurang for his eccentric behaviour, and
 thinks that he has achieved nothing by his education. He says, “tū a bara
 hj arant gū l. trl shasat v8aka gū akar xWyc” (216). (Even if you were
 multiplied by twelve thousand, still the some of the last six or seven years
 comes to zero (255).)

Authenticity is another important aspect of existential fiction reflected in the novel. In his restlessness, discontent, and alienation, Pandurang is an affected youth, and surly rebellious. He rejects the values and pretensions of the society without having formed any coherent or articulate set of superior values or a more successful plan for a satisfactory life. Pandurang is an authentic, who criticizes social and human hypocrisy and rejects the moral principles of the society. This authenticity is visible throughout the novel. He rejects the traditional life style. To take education to acquire good service then marriage, bear children and live peaceful life, is the boring routine to him. Generally students try to achieve more and more marks in examination, therefore they study hard, but Pandurang takes all these casually. He wanders in the hills during the exam period instead of studying hard. He never writes papers seriously, so he fails. Instead of repentance he thinks that whatever has happened is a better as he does not want to follow the tradition. He thinks,

smj kl tl gēya v8lk pas zal a Astas| mg kay? mg
 Om|0| mg pl ē ple fartr Axlc]Cc vgrē pdvl| mg? mg
 nokrl? mg l Gn? l Gn vgrē ml ba; ? mg smaj at vj n vgrē
 pl ē ple kay? ple kahlc nah| Iyapθa he j gto Aahs hē
 cagl | (191-92) (Just suppose that you had passed the exam
 last year. So what? Then MA. So, after that? Latter at the
 very most some other such higher degrees, etc. Then? Then a
 job? Then marriage? Marriage and all that, and Kids? Then
 prestige in society etc. Next? What next? Nothing next. It is
 better that you exist like this (229).)

wife. They have no strong reason to sustain their relation, and this factor, day by day, creates bitterness in their relations.

Two other characters Ivy and Clara are introduced in the middle of the novel. Once, while crossing the road, Aniruddha meets them. Ivy is a former maid in Aniruddha's home. Clara serves as a clerk in the office of Sukhadeorai, who frequently attempts to seduce her but she always makes his attempts fail. All these four characters become well acquainted with each other and used to come together on some or the other occasion, go to movie, stray at beach etc. Once, they go together to see a movie. While returning home, Clara accompanies Aniruddha and Ivy is driven home with Sukhadeorai. At his home, Sukhadeorai rapes her and as a result she becomes pregnant. He refuses the responsibility and offers her money for abortion, but doctor refuses to abort by saying it would harm Ivy and is against the law. Aniruddha shoulders the entire responsibility of Iva, and takes her to Visgaon a small village, where, unfortunately, she dies during delivery. After the death of Ivy, Priyamwada comes to Visgaon and convinces Aniruddha to come back to Mumbai with her. She is now pregnant and wants to live happily with him. In the end of the novel, without any conscience, Aniruddha embarks in the train with Priyamwada, but when the train moves Aniruddha jumps down on the platform and bids good-bye to Priyamwada.

What the existentialist admires is not the happiness of a man's life, the goodness of his disposition, or the rigidity of his acts, but the authenticity of his existence. The concept of authenticity is rooted in the existential interpretation of freedom. We live from birth to death under the compulsions of brutal facts; yet out of the mere givenness of situation,

we shape ourselves and our world, and either we succeed in it or fail. Aniruddha is bored with his married life, irritated by the hypocritical attitudes of the people around, and is haunted with the questions—‘Why did I born?’ and ‘Why do I live?’ If a person has sensed the meaninglessness and futility of life, he gives a strange perspective to his ways of worldly actions. He may be wealthy and civilized enough to meet his daily needs and may dislike leading a way of life, which others may prefer to live. He would rather throw away this burden of behaving, unlike others, as a member of society, and he would remain loyal to his own feelings and sentiments. He hates the pretentious behaviour of society.

Aniruddha loses the case of a widow, Smt Ansuyabai, who is entirely ruined by the result of the case. She becomes mad. Aniruddha also becomes desperate and thinks that he would no longer practice. To avoid such recurrence of loss, he declares that he has given up the practice. It is not necessary for him to do something for his livelihood, because his father has earned a lot of money as Public Prosecutor, and even after his retirement. Whenever he decides to do any job, he suspects whether it would be possible for him, because he has no other qualifications except his degree in Law. In fact, he has no ambition at all in the life. Though he has been very clever in his studies, won many medals and got Bar at Law degree, and started practicing for practical concerns, he finds it absurd. When he leaves practice and starts contemplating on his existence, he comes to the conclusion that he hasn't any interest in his practice and even in his routine family life. This contemplation leads him towards many existential questions like, why he

was born, why he lives, what is the purpose of his life, and what is the meaning of his existence.

Bhau Padhye has portrayed Aniruddha as an authentic person. He is a young barrister with full of enthusiasm and calibre but he finds his job boring and meaningless. He has been spending his days hopelessly doing nothing. He is thirty-two years old, an age of full of ambitions and achievements. Generally, a man of this age struggles to achieve more and more success in his life, always tries to accomplish his ambitions and accumulates more wealth for his betterment in the life. But Aniruddha is exception for it; he has no such ambitions, aims and plans for his future life. He rightly confesses,

ts. Mh3l . tr he vy AapapLya mhTtvka9ecl pttRta Aai`
wiv*yka; akrtā trtṭṭ yakrta j lvapaD 2DpD kr-yac| | |
ml a ma"ā maZya Aayṭyaiv8yl Asl a]Tsah raihl ac nah||
Svt: Cyā Aayṭyac. kLya` k=n kṛykṛy ho-yam@ye ml a
ksl.c SvarSy va3t nah|| (4) (In fact, this age is of
struggling to fulfil our ambitions and to make provision for
future. . . . but I no more have such fervour about my life. I
am not interested in achieving accomplishment to welfare of
my life.)

Aniruddha lives in 'Sujan Sahakari Vasahat', where the people of the society always arrange conferences, festivals, parties, etc., but Aniruddha never participates in such functions. He feels that to participate in the function is punishment, "Ok wykr ix9ā" (a horrible punishment) (7). In the society he is reputed as careless of social

prestige, customs, traditions, social morals and a mutineer of traditional values. To earn money for family, to participate in the various functions seriously, go for a movie with a wife, such things are too far from him. Therefore, when his wife asks him to attend *Kojagiri Pournima* festival arranged by the people of the society, he refuses to participate in it. Nevertheless, he goes to the function only because Abhimanyu, a member of society, insists him. Though he comes in the function hall, it is boring and punishable for him. So, instead of listening boring songs of Soudaminibai, he prefers to go for drinking wine. After drinking he and his drunkard fellow, Bhujbal, chat and laugh loudly in the function. The song of Soudaminibai becomes too crisp and bore for Aniruddha, so he shouts loudly at Chikarmane, her father, and asks him to stop the song of his daughter. As a result Soudamini runs away throwing *tambora*.

For Aniruddha social prestige is a farce. His wife expects him to practice successfully in the high court so that they will get high social prestige. She supposes the high ambition is one of the features of manliness. On the contrary, Aniruddha thinks such ambitions and social prestige are useless and hollow concepts. Though his wife always scolds him and asks him to behave according to the social norms in order to keep their prestige as it is, he never listens her seriously or follows her suggestions. His father Tatyaa also tries to make compromise between them but he deliberately neglects his advices. He does not care about social taboos, restrictions and values.

For him, social work and fortification of the poor is false pretensions. In his opinion these pretentious actions are done for the self interest. Chakrapani declares that he wants to work for society. He says

there are number of problems among the people and we have to help them, especially to the poor. We must make them acquainted with the knowledge of Law by translating it into Marathi. Aniruddha laughs at Chakrapani's decision and concludes that to work for the poor is a farce and hypocrisy because he has seen many lawyers who only pretend as social worker, but in reality they make money in the disguise of the social work. He argues that to become a successful lawyer you should be indifferent to the philanthropic and ethical norms. Misinterpreting the realities of life and attempting to create an imaginary favourable atmosphere around us and seeking ostrich-like satisfaction in it are self-deceit. Aniruddha himself is nauseated by this bogus profession of barrister, therefore he gives up his practice.

For Sartre, it is a peculiar attitude towards freedom in its relation to value that defines authentic existence; for Heidegger it is the orientation to the end of life, to resolve the death that is essential to authenticity. In both cases authenticity is a kind of honesty or a kind of courage; the authentic individual faces something which the inauthentic individual is afraid to face. Aniruddha shatters all the social traditions, banalities and restrictions. His rebel can be traced out from his love marriage with Priyamwada. Instead of following the convention of an arranged marriage, he prefers love marriage. Instead of following the tradition of drinking milk on the occasion of *Kojagiri Pournima* festival, he drinks wine. He always goes to see *tamasha* (तमाशा), reads pornographic books and tells the obscene jokes to his friends. He makes friendship with Clara and visits her home regularly. Clara is a sister of Ivy, a former maid servant of his family. Clara has bad reputation in her colony; people the

colony suspect that she has an affair with her boss, Sukhadeorai. As libertine girls, neighbours and the people of their community avoid to visit them. But Aniruddha visits regularly to such bad repudiated girls without considering social virtue. Even, when Ivy becomes pregnant by the rape of Sukhadeorai; he takes the responsibility and goes to live with her at Visgaon.

He thinks only in the terms of present and does not worry about successful satisfactory life or fulfilment of any ambition, or social status in the future. Though he seldom remembers the incidents happened in his past life, he does not regret his past. He always thinks in the present moment and denies any influence of his past life; 'here and now' are his only watchwords. He dislikes pretentiousness of the people around him, but he would never try to correct them because he does not believe in reformation.

Aniruddha has loved and married Priyamwada only because of her sweet singing, but after marriage she has abandoned regular practice of singing and as a result Aniruddha himself alienates from her. She is very beautiful woman, but now, after the marriage, Aniruddha loses his interest in her. Even sex remains just a mechanical routine for him, which he can hardly enjoy. As an authentic hero, he supposes, sex is nothing but a natural mechanism. Generally, youths of his age have great attraction for a beautiful woman; Aniruddha is also on the pick of this youthful zest. However, he has no interest in his beautiful wife, Priyamwada.

ipyvdév8yl Aata, ml a kahlc Aak8R va3t nahl| | | | Gn
 krtwē | j s. itCya saḍyaḥ e maz. Atr hē avt Ase ts. te
 Aata ma"ā hē avt nahl| itCya Spxḥsa#l ml Aata vḍavh
 jat nahl ikva AasKtIn.]±lipt hot nahl| itCya xrlramēye
 ml a SvarSy va3nas. zale Aahē ko`ltrl kamsūqala svaḥc
 pkarc. sūq Mh3l. Aahē prtū ml a te sūq k2lc pḥyyal a
 Aal. nahl|]l3, Aap` je]pwogt Aahot, Tyala insgḥce
]Tpḥtl, iS4tl Aai` l y he inym l agū Asth, Tyat samally
 jlvnaCya icm3yam2th sḍḥth vq; l Svglḥy 73a idsavl, As.
 kahl nahl, ha mnal a ivmnSk kr`ara Anuv tv!a pḥyyal a
 Aal a hota| Ata cḥnat Ao! raihl l nḥtl kl smagmat
]Nmadkta raihl l nḥtl Aai` xrlraCya wogan. samally
 pat; lvrCya yai"ak 63nē. Sv=p 2ar` kḍ. hot. (10). (Now I
 don't feel any attraction for Priyamavada. . . . Now my heart
 doesn't get stirred with emotions by her beauty like it was at
 the time of marriage. Now I don't get crazy for her touch or
 don't get stimulated sexually. I feel I have been losing the
 interested in her body. Someone has called sexual pleasure
 as highest pleasure. But I have never experienced such
 pleasure. Instead, I got dejected experience that whatever we
 enjoy in our life is conditioned by nature's rules such as
 birth, state of being, and rhythm, and furthermore, there is
 nothing like heavenly pleasure in it. Now, there wasn't any
 craving for kissing nor intoxication in intercourse and
 physical pleasure was converted into more mechanical
 event.)

He asks himself why he hasn't any romantic passion for Priyamwada. He thinks it may be because her beauty is nothing more than blood, bones and flesh. He cannot conclude, but his mind warns him not to surrender himself to her beauty, “he tU l a4aD! i2Kkar!—TyaCyA AahaR! gD aS tr SvT:l a ivkxll |—SpXR kD aS tr AaTma hrVth bSxll ” (You discard it! disregard!—if you got addicted to it, you will sell yourself.—if you touch it, you will lose your soul) (11). For him sleep is more important rather than sex. When Priyamwada creeps into his arms and kisses him passionately, he becomes upset instead of making love with her. Some days after the sexual intercourse, Priyamwada becomes happy and she tells Aniruddha that very soon she would be pregnant, but he feels nothing, rather he questions “p` ml ASl . Mh`j e kay hot?” (But what happens, if one has a child?) (95). In fact he must be happy for being a father and must feel proud of it, but he considers it as worthless thing. He thinks, for a man, to make woman pregnant is a certificate of manliness in the society, therefore some men struggle for it. They take advice from doctors or they pray to god for child, and once they get a child, they feel proud for their manliness, by assuming this pride they gladly share sweets among the people. In short, they exhibit their deeds. However, Aniruddha does not want to behave and exhibit himself falsely. He thinks,

‘iplyvdd a idvs gD e AahT; —ml Aata bap ho`ar AahE—ya go*3lmU e ml a kahlc v3l . nahll ‘bayko po3axl rah`? ha smaj am@ye qas p#8a4R smj l a j ato, hl go*3 ml a mahlt AahE | | | ml a ma”a maZya ya p#8l prakmaiv8yl kahlc va3t nahll mg, ml kU a la Aman@ ikva nadan va3l o trl

hrkt nahll qr. Mh`j e yat p#8a4R ksl a? | | | sagaycl
g0*3 Axl kl 'ipyvdd a idvs gd e hoté ya Oka fal tl
63nmu e ml a]Tsah ikva]mel va3-yasarql nWhl (127-28).
(I felt nothing with the fact that Priynavada is pregnant and
now I will be a father. I know that wife getting pregnant is a
sign of manly valour in society. However I feel nothing of
my manly valour. For it I don't have any objection if
someone calls me inhuman or feeble. In fact, what is valour
in it? In short, I was not excited or intoxicated due to a trivial
incident that 'Priymavada is pregnant')

Thus, he is a true existentialist hero, who behaves authentically in the society. Power, prestige, money, social status, etc. are the meaningless and hopeless concepts for him. He rebels against the social morals, rules, customs, and traditions of the society and lives life according to his own perspective.

Priyamwada, his wife, is totally opposite to Aniruddha's nature. From existential point of view she is an inauthentic character in the novel along with Tatyá and Sukhadeorai. Each and every activity of Priyamwada is dominated by the social code and conducts. She wears saris or uses lipsticks not for herself, but for being praised by the people, especially, the women of her club. She attends the social gatherings, parties, and various public festivals only to keep social status in the society. To avoid the social criticism and blame, she prefers to participate in each function of the colony. She is also afraid of the social atrocity, if they could not attain the public programmes. Therefore, she always forces her husband, Aniruddha to participate in the social function, but when he

refuges to attend the programme of *Kojagiri Pournima*, she shouts loudly, “l ok kay Mh`tll ml a Ok3ll a pahh? | | | l okana kay tmaxa daqvayca Aahe ka? | | | [4e kxal a rahta car l okat? | | | Aai`] `a l ok ytl ka tncyakD?” (What peoples will say to see me alone? . . . you want to show shameless behaviour to the people? . . . Why are you living here among the people? . . . And will people come to you due to such behaviour?) (5). She is very much cautious about what people will speak and think about her and her family. In the singing programme at the eve of *Kojagiri Pournima*, she cannot control her sleep and dozes while listening to the song. In fact she should have gone to sleep at home, but she cannot, because she is under the bad faith, she fears and thinks, it will be misfit action for the society.

She forces Aniruddha to give up the habits of drinking and smoking, not because it is injurious for his health but to avoid social comments upon his bad habits. When he abandons his practice and decides to do nothing, she becomes furious, scratches him on his body by her nails in the fit of anger. One should not suppose that she is very careful about her family and very much anxious about its earning source, rather she is worried about social criticism. She forces him to join the *Bhudan* movement, so that people will not ask her about his job. But when he refuses to do so, she scolds him and says, “maza nvra kahl n krtā 6rl bsl a Aahe he ks. idst l okana!” (How it see to the people that my husband is sat in the home doing nothing!) (50) She thinks that if her husband has stayed at home doing nothing, people will call her husband irresponsible and unwaged person. In short, she wants him to do something only to evade the social criticism. Aniruddha rightly speaks

about her, “tī a qrp`an. Jagtac yē nahī mī || tū fkt ihxab krtē|—
 ihxab k=n Aagt-Svagt, mansllman, wa3Sttī hl kxl im; Ū xktll , Ov! c
 phats| yū ŌikzS3 Aaī\ ŌKS`lml l fāml AḌ sprifixAl l Whl ” (You
 does not know at all to live authentically. You are too calculative.
 Through it you only seek to get hospitality, honours, and flattery. You
 exist on extremely formal and superficial level) (11). Thus, she never
 enjoys freedom and never lives for herself, but only for social sake.

Freedom, choice, and responsibility are the interrelated concepts of
 existentialism. According to existentialism, man is completely free, and
 he must create his own future, his own essence, crossing nothingness.
 “Man is condemned to be free, and he carries on his shoulders the weight
 of the entire world.” (Sartre 341). Freedom and the constant exercise of
 choice make man responsible for himself and for all humanity. From the
 beginning of the novel Aniruddha is totally free to make his own choice
 and behaves according to his will. When he learns the falseness and
 hypocrisy of his profession, he decides to give up the practice. He tells
 this decision to his tout, Sandav, who insists him to reconsider his
 decision and to continue his practice in the court, but he remains firm on
 his decision. His wife and father are shocked when they learn that
 Aniruddha has given up his practice. They try to convince him not to take
 such spiteful decision by imposing on him social burdens. Tatyā
 persuades him that he must do something, “ma`san. kahltrī kḍ paihj e
 kl nahī?—pkasa#l nko; p`, dīs-ya kxasa#l Mh`a| p` ma`san. hatpay
 hal vl e paihj t c kl nahī? | | | yū mS3 DU smi4g” (Shouldn’t one do
 something at least?—not for money but for anything else. Shouldn’t one
 do something or other? You must do something) (39). But he ignores all

these advices because being existential hero he is authentic in his decisions, so he says, “ml a ma'a kũ aCyaC]pdkaCl grj nah!” (I don't need anyone's advice.) (40). As a free individual, neither he thinks about social statues and would be social criticism, nor about social conducts, while taking decisions. From existential perspective if a decision is taken, a responsibility of it must be accepted. Aniruddha too thinks that the decision, he has taken, is right. According to him there is no need to do something to earn a living, because his father has earned lot of money. He knows that his wife and father would not agree with his resolution and they would get angry upon him, but he determines not to change his decision.

Being an ardent preacher of individual freedom, he is ready to accord similar freedom to women also. If a husband can desert his wife and marry other lady, she also has the reciprocal right in case she is fed up with the behaviour of her husband. When Kasturabai, his sister-in-law, says, “p#8aC Aapl . br. Ast| mnat Aal —ya baykoca k3a; a Aal a| itl a 3akl l| dsr| kd l” (It is better for men. He can give up his wife and get another, if he bored with her) (53). In response Aniruddha says, “p` , ml lh` to baykanl As. ka vagl ny@—indan Jyana Aapl a nvra nkosa zal a Ast , Tyanl?” (But I want to say, why should not women behave alike? At least those who are fed up with their husband) (54). He thus revolts against the religious faith and moral ethics of traditional marriage system. For him traditional married life is irrelevant and meaningless; he hates such nauseating customs.

Similar to other existential heroes, he advocates freedom. Man is free to take his own decisions, but once he takes a particular decision he must abide himself with the follow-ups of his decision. Ivy becomes a victim of Sukhadeorai's sexual desire and becomes pregnant by him. He rejects to take the responsibility of Ivy, and offers her some money for the abortion, but doctor refuses to abort. When the people of Ivy's colony start to suspect that Aniruddha is responsible for Ivy's pregnancy, he decides to take the blame on himself. Now it is his responsibility that he should never desert her. Tatyia advises him to disown her; the doctor and others also rebuke him for indulging in this nonsense affair. But undauntedly he brings Ivy to a village, neglecting social criticism. She dies during the delivery is altogether another matter, but Aniruddha never shuns the responsibility and its consequences. Indeed, it is a single-handed fight by him against the entire hostile society.

Alienation is another important existential aspect that makes novel truly existential fiction. Aniruddha is seen alienated from the family and the society, at the beginning of the novel. He feels education and his profession meaningless because it makes man inauthentic and kills the true nature of man. It makes him lyre and hypocrite. He is disgusted by the fraudulentness of the people. He understands that he cannot change this situation, and therefore he isolates himself from it.

After the marriage he alienates from Priyamwada, to whom he loved passionately before the marriage. He alienates from her because she gives up singing, as she used to sing before the marriage, and another important reason is, she has forcefully shifted their home from Boriwali to the apartment in the central Mumbai. These two reasons become the

main cause for the crises between Aniruddha and Priyamwada, as a result they alienate from each other by the mind and body. As he alienated from his wife, equally he is alienated from the society. He neither goes among the people nor he participates in any social function, instead he spends his time by lying in the bed and smoking cigars, alone in the bedroom. Actually, he wants to live aloof from the crowds; his home at Boriwali was at remote place, surrounded with trees like mango, neem, etc. He feels more comfortable in that house than in the centre of Mumbai.

His alienation from the family and society increases after his meeting with Clara and Ivy. Hypocrisy and falseness in the profession of advocate makes him disgusted, so he gives up this profession and determines to spend his days, lonely doing nothing at home, and whenever he gets bore, he kills his time with Clara and Ivy. At the end of the novel he takes Ivy's responsibility and goes to live in Chakrapani's village. He takes this decision not to show his courage, bravery or manliness, but he wants to relax. He explains,

prakm, p#8a4R xalyR 2aDS, ktlv he xBd ml a namj | ml a
 ASl . kahl krayc. nahl|—ASl . kahl sa2ayc. nahl| ml a
 fKt hva invatp`a| bahrc| samslh nko; Aatl l xatta| | |
 | 9`wr DoKyat kahlc AS`ar nahl kSl ac ivcar, kSl lhl
 j a`lv, kSl lhl Sm#l—kahl nahl| sar. irkam. Asd ; Agdl
 mixdlCya Deyasarq. Saar. xly Asd ;—qol —qol A2arasarq|
 (106) (I disapprove words such as bravery, valour, heroism,
 courage, deeds. I don't want to do or to achieve such things.
 I want only quietness. Not outer silence but inner calmness. .
 . . For a second there will not be any thought, any sense, any

memory—nothing in head. Everything will be empty like a dome of Masjid, deep—deep and dark.)

D. B. Kulkarni opines that the broad widening gap, created by the meaninglessness and inconsistency of life between the hero and rest of the world, is the centre point of this novel that the novelist tries to prove (Tisryanda Ranangan, 1976). Priyamwada is a daughter of eminent singer, Palnitkar. She is a good singer therefore Aniruddha marries her, but when he returns from the England, he finds that she has abandoned singing. It widens the emotional gap between them; it makes him nervous and hopeless. He becomes aware of the emptiness of the emotional bond which binds them together previously. He says, “| | | itn. ga`. Saaf soDI. hot, | | | tVha tr sar.-sar. inr4k va3U lagl | sg;c spl. hot.” (She had quite abandoned her singing at that time I feel everything meaningless. Everything had been finished) (13).

When he learns the meaninglessness of his profession he abandons it and this leisure makes his empty mind a devil’s workshop. In order to pass the time, he does meaningless and absurd activities. For instance, he puts a flower garland in his neck, sticks the *kunkum* on the forehead, writes on the back of one of the medals, ‘ideal husband’; hangs it in the neck and wanders throughout the colony. On an occasion, he sticks duplicate moustache and goes to Ivy’s home.

At the end of the novel he retrospects about his life and feels that absurdity is deeply rooted in his existence itself. He perceives his life—a degree of Bar at Law from England, a prestigious position in the society—and raises a question about his achievement in the life and

answers himself as nothing. He finds the root causes of this nothingness in his education. He says, “Aayiyat kd . kay tr;—bk. vacl l, pri9a idLya Aai` Aqr bayko iryaz krt nahl, lh`th qDkt ra34l o| Okth Aayiyaca payac cikl a; Oka sqvStll 6rat j llm 6dLyamu e Aai` in=pyogl ix9` 6dLyamu e” (What I have done in the life—read the books, gave the exams and still regretting, because of wife does not rehearse singing. Due to taking the birth in well-off family and useless education, the base of whole the life had been failed) (107). Thus, his education, job and even his wife and sexual satisfaction, all, he feels meaningless.

After the death of Ivy he totally collapsed, and his feeling of meaningless and absurdity becomes severe. Ivy’s death makes him sad and more conscious about life and death, as a result he loses his faith in life. He does not understand what to speak about other’s death. He coagulates by seeing the people crying on the death of their near and dear. He is terrified to see dead bodies, and imagines himself to be in their place. The feeling that ‘I will also cease to exist’ is utterly terrifying for him. He says, “pTyk ma` sac. pt ml a Asc]d@vSt krt Aal . Aah? ‘ml ko` Aah? | | | he xrlr ml ka pa6rl . Aah? he pa6=` in6alYavr ml k#e j a`ar?” (I have been ruined by every corpse. Who am I? . . . Why have I covered my soul with this body? Where would I go after this cover is removed?) (123-24). He ponders over such questions and further concludes that everyone knows death is inevitable. He, therefore, does not look for the meaning of life; for him life and death are equally meaningless.

3.3 *Kala Surya* (ka; a syf):

Kala Surya, a revolutionary Marathi novel by Kamal Desai, was

first was published in the magazine *Satyakatha* in November 1968, and in a book form it published in February 1975 along with *Hat Ghalnari Bai* by Mouj Prakashan. The novel has translated into English by Sukhumini Roy. It is a haunting poetic journey of a woman, Meera, who is transferred to a Post Office in the taluka place, Viranchi. It is a barren no-man's land where rocks substitute for vegetation and only a disturbing artefact of a temple adorns the arid landscape.

The protagonist, Meera herself unfolds her autobiography in the first person. Her strange, compelling inner life drives the logic of the novel's narrative. She is not only in constant conversation with herself but also with a significant array of voices, figures, images and stories from the everyday life in a middle class Maharashtrian domestic world. In her childhood she had a long stay with her aunt. After being educated and lived with her father, she has got a job in post-office. After the transfer, she joins her duties at Viranchi and stays with her maternal aunt. During a visit to Viranchi she observes that the area is totally barren, and is replete with huge black stones, hardly is there any green shrubs. She lives there alone.

The plot progresses from the perspective of the protagonist, Meera. She embarks on an inward journey psychologically, questioning the paradigms of her existence and the world around her, through abstract vignettes of her past and present. *Kala Surya* explores the boundaries of the human psyche using the minimal motifs of landscape and civilization in its short, concise plot. Depicting the alienation of an individual from the norms of societal constructs, *Kala Surya* archives a woman's anguished journey of self-realization. In the novel the temple of the Kala

Surya has a mythological and geographical reference. The reason of scorching heat of the Vidarbha especially, Viranchi, is, as the local folklore explains that the Sun itself chose this dilapidated shrine to escape its own heat, and was trapped in it forever. At the end of the novel Meera destroys this temple by blasting it with gelatine.

The concept of sin and its place in social life is the main subject discussed in this novella. Generally speaking 'sin' is a religious concept. Any action against the rules of God or any action disapproved by religious conventions is treated as sin. Most of the religions have their own concepts of Sin. Some remedies are also suggested to compensate from the actual acts of sin by various religions. Incest, adultery, etc. are generally supposed as worst sins in Hindu and other religions. In the novel these sins are committed deliberately by the characters. However, to protect and maintain firm social foundation, according to some of the intellectuals, the concept of sin is produced by the 'man' himself with good intention. The concept of sin changes from time to time as per the needs of the time. It is not guaranteed that today's act of sin may also be treated as a sin of tomorrow.

Meera, the main protagonist of the novel, seems to be quite an unusual, odd, and therefore, authentic character. She lives her life authentically and enjoys the freedom of choice. She has intense liking for darkness instead of light, as she prefers to go from light to darkness, which, in her opinion, is natural one. She was conscious of her own freedom, even, in her childhood. In her house, only her father used to sleep separately on cushioned bed. Meera also wants to have separate bed, so she can enjoy the sleep separately, like her father. It seems that

she must have observed in her house and in the society that only men can enjoy their own freedom, therefore in her sad mood she wishes that she would have been a man, so that she also could enjoy individual freedom.

As she is born free, she rejects all the social and physical restrictions even though she is not a man. She can make herself man by acting manly. To get the bed like her father, it requires the money and as she is very small, she has no money to buy the bed. She observes that some boys are playing a game, *espit* ([iSp3]) and achieve the money from it. She also decides to play the game of *espit* and get the money for bed, but it is against the social norms. Generally, this game is supposed only for the boys and not girls. She plays this game of *espit* with her friend Nalini. However, Nalini's father beats Meera for plying the game of boys.

During her short educational period also, she behaves differently. As if she has decided to abolish all the rules, norms and customs of society, she behaves boldly. Generally, it is expected that a student must present in the class room before school hours. Meera is exception for it; she always goes late in the classroom. In the classroom, she applies her own methods to solve the problems in arithmetic, instead of those taught in the class and given in the textbooks. This strangeness in her personality becomes obvious in her school life also. Mostly, students fail in S.S.C. in Mathematics and English, but Meera fails in Geography, which is supposed as a very simple subject for passing. Next time she fails in a simple subject like Hindi. Thus this failing in the simple subjects becomes boring to her, so she decides to stop this useless business; instead, it is better to eat and sleep like a buffalo.

Man is born free to live his life according to his own ideas and wish. It is wrong to guide someone how to live and how to behave according to social norms. To teach someone is against nature and against individual wish. It is wrong to say that teacher or an elder person moulds the life of an individual, but individual can himself mould his own life according to his own concept of living. One should not therefore, lead to impose values and morals on someone, otherwise it would be against the individual's freedom of choice. Meera's father makes compulsion on her sister, Rekha and indirectly on her too to recite a hymn in praise of Rama, but Meera feels it absurd. She thinks to pray the god is a big joke. Her father gives her Madam Curie's biography so that she can get inspiration from Curie. But Meera gets is bored with the book because Curie's childhood, her frustration in love, her inventions, all these are conventional things; nothing is new in it. In short, it is meaningless for Meera. She does not find authentic life and real pains in this book, so she doesn't read this book completely. Even, she supposes that the religious books like *Shivleelamrut* and *Gurucharitra*, are obscene and cannot make people's life better. For her God is only a showpiece and useless entity. It neither makes people's life better nor does it destroy. Instead, God has created only a chaos in the society, so it's officious in the world must be restricted. If there is God then why there is natural disaster like cholera which takes thousands of people's lives. In Meera's ally each ear number of people die by cholera. Therefore, at the end of the novel she declares the war against God because, “” | | | prmXvr Ok ibnAavXyk vStU Aahê tl Anahlit Aahê p` itn. far go2; maj vl a Aahê Tyacl I DbD Aata 4abvayl a hvl Tyacya mµ.c Aap`]l 3a, cq3a pkaxaca magR iSvkarto” (54). (Besides, God Almighty is an unnecessary object. He is un-invoked.

But he has created a lot of commotion. His interference must be stopped. It is because of him that we accept the opposite, the path of light, a false path (66).² She develops intense desire to die in sorrow. She has fancy for something which is uncommon for ordinary people. She would uphold so called sinful acts compared to pious life. On the beginning of the novel, she declares,

pkaxatth ml a ka; oqakD. nþ

[tk. ml a papac. Aak8R Aahe(1).

(Carry me away from light into darkness

So enamoured am I of sin (4).)

As she declares, she is very much fond of sin and wants to merge herself into the sin, she either attracts towards the sinful act, or sinful person, discarded by the society. When she becomes young she enjoys sex with her cousin, Avinash. He does not ask her directly about sex; instead, he gives her sleeping pills and makes an intercourse with her. She asks him why he has given her sleeping pills because in fact, she also likes the same. This is very strange for Avinash because, generally a woman does not easily agree to have sex. She takes objections to intercourse. But Meera is different; without any hesitation and sham she submits herself to Avinash. Here, in this incident, she experiences the conflict between stereotyped decision and authentic decision. Avinash shags with her by giving her sleeping pills and she takes it easily, but Avinash rejects its responsibility. He rejects, only because, he accepts stereotypical social

² The English translation of each Marathi quotation of *Kala Surya* is taken from its translation as *Dark Sun* by Sukhamani Roy. Calcutta: Stree, 1999. Print.

norms to his decision. As he says, ‘ml a va3l. nVht. tU [tkl inl Bj ASxll | | | nahl tr ko`tl sCcll ml gl l gC Axl tyar ho{l?’ (28) (“I didn’t think you were so shameless. . . . otherwise which decent girl would be ready for seduction?”(35-36)) After his rejection, her first reaction is romantic and stereotyped, but she goes far from it steadily and thinks how that reaction is disgusting, ‘ml a Tyac bol`. smj t nVht, ‘l o3U nko mj d# kLhlya’ he ga`. ml a Agdl AvDI. nVht| te far il bil blt, 4kl Lya ivDyatLya l al l a; sarq. Aitxy ik; sva`, Aug; Aah# p` ts. ml Tyal a htax ho}n ivnvt hot#’ (28). (I couldn’t understand what he was saying. I intensely disliked that song, ‘Caste Me Not Away, O Kannaiya . . .’ it was slimy like the sticky, red betel-leaf saliva spit. Utterly repulsive, disgusting. But I was pleading with him in that way in sheer desperation. (36)) However, after this romantic mood, she neglects the romantic world, makes abortion and thinks it as a natural process.

Social code and conduct are nothing for Meera; she always wants to shatter the social norms. She joins in Viranchi post office as a clerk. In the Viranchi, she initially goes to live in her maternal aunt’s house, but when she learns that her maternal uncle’s ghost exists in the house, she runs away from the house. Shiva, peon in the post office, gives her one room to live. In the next day she goes to bring a cup of milk from Bendre’s house. Bendre’s daughter informs her that people have expelled their family from the society, for the incest of her father. Meera says that she has nothing to do with society its’ norms and morals, she simply wants milk. She makes Bendre’s daughter to give the milk, and ultimately she takes the milk from the home which is sinful for the society. When

people beat Kedarnath Bendre for his sinful act, he argues the people brilliantly. Meera is so much haunted with his argument, that she approaches him and expresses her desire to marry him (though he is already a married person and is guilty of having sexual relation with his own daughter). She lives with him without marriage till his death. The reason is that she loves sin; she wishes to get buried in the so called 'sin'. According to her, sin is the religion of soil. God, in fact, is an irrelevant entity and therefore we should not follow the path from darkness to light, which is unnatural. Once we accept this natural position, we cannot make difference between happiness and sorrow, moral and immoral, good or bad; whatever we come across we simply bear it. As a matter of fact man has only one dominant basic urge, that of sex. Due to such revolutionary thoughts, she has been outcaste by the society like Kedarnath which gives her happiness. She regards it as her special individual identity compared to traditional social norms. It is an absolute sign of her existence. After the death of Bendre, she develops her relations with socially boycotted person Mr. Washinde. At the end she rebels against Hindu custom. According to Hindu religion, only man can make cremation and funeral rites of his mother and father, and not a woman. Meera is the only daughter of her mother, so she herself makes funeral rites of her mother. Thus Meera is really an existential character, who searches her own identity in the society.

When for the first time she goes to see the Sun temple and hears the story of Ashwarath from Shiva, she accepts Ashwarath as her husband. Ashwarath, a son of Bramhadeva, tried to fetch the sun in the temple, though all the gods opposed him doing this. As a result he

remains lonely like Prometheus, because after the failure in his efforts to fetch the sun in the temple, he becomes the enemy of the human and earth, along with Gods. But in the novel Meera attracts towards the Ashwarath and says, “AXvr4 ASl a pathj ꞑ ml Tyal a mnar. vrl . Aahꞑ Aai` ml kꞑyat Tyal a w8`ar Aahꞑ Agdl nKkIc” (37). (“Ashwaratha must be great. I am wedded to him in my mind. And I am going to search him out in the crater. Most certainly”(48).) Her choice to accept Ashwarath as a husband is radical decision. In fact, Ashwarath is an enemy of the people and earth too, but she surrenders herself to the enemy of the people. Her acceptance of Ashwarath suggests that she is against the social norms and values. It is her rebel against the traditional beliefs and practices. In this context, R. B. Patankar says, “AXvr4acl invD kr`e Mh`j e prparIk mLyaca AVhr kr`ꞑ kdaclt mLyxlytavad hoy| he itI a maiht Aahꞑ” (To choose Ashwaratha means to discard traditional values, perhaps it is nihilism and she knows it.) (87).

At the end Meera decides to desecrate the temple. Possibly, that alone is her lifetime achievement; it is a blot on the city and she decides to make the city free from this stigma. If a good act, in its effect, brings out a bad outcome, let us do a sinful act, which may be converted into good fortune. We cannot afford to live without sin. Nothing on this earth has escaped from our sinful action. With the help of the blast she demolishes the temple and in this attempt she gets brutally injured and dies ultimately with full satisfaction.

Kedarnath Bendre is another character in the novel, who has been expelled from the society because people have charged him of spoiling his daughter. He has incest relationship with his own daughter, and such

an illicit act is supposed as a sin in the society. Though people have banished him from the society, some people like, Saraswatikaku, Painter, Poet, and Mansur remain in touch with him. When he learns that people of Viranchi are impotent; they cannot harm to him, he says people,

l kə, ml tʰal a qə vl . Aai` tʰl qə lat—ksll ma`s.
tʰl! tʰl kay ml a va; lt 3ak`ar? tʰcyavr maza rag
nahl rɕ fkt klv yɔ tʰcl| Aata mlc ml a va; lt 3akʰ
6ɔ| (51) (“I made you dance and you danced. And you call yourselves men. And you say you’d boycott me. No, I am not angered. Only I pity you. Now I shall boycott myself” (63).)

He thinks that the people of Viranchi are not authentic. They behave according to Bendre’s response to them, so he shuts the door and keeps himself away from the society.

After some days, aggrieved and angered by Bendre’s incest act, people gather in front of his house to punish him. He boldly opens the door and stands before the mob. People ask him, ‘Do you agree that you are sinner?’ However, Kedarnath has his own strong plea in defence. He accepts what he has done and its responsibility, but refuses to call it a sin. He argues with the mob that he has not committed any sin nor has he brought it with him since birth, if it is sin, it is that of the 'soil'. Soil of Viranchi itself is sinful, then how can he act differently. He challenges the mob with a counter question that the same action could be done by anybody among the people gathered there. In this context his act is authentic because he does not prefer to be a moral, but mob declares him

sinner and beats him mercilessly. He has demolished the social norms and conduct. One's sexual relationship with one's own daughter is against the social code and conducts; such incest is a stigma on sacred relations. Bendre rejects all the sacred relations by keeping relationship with his own daughter.

Atheist branch of existentialism does not believe in God or traditional morality. Men are moved with primitive urges and sentiments for action. These impulses may be acts of sin from traditional points of view of the society, but for Meera and Kedarnath, it is nothing. They are very loyal to their urges and are ready to shoulder any responsibility or punishment followed by such actions. Social dictates can hardly change them. Destiny and pricking physical pain, unmindful of the concept of sin, are the real nature of human life. Those existentialist traits find explicit expression in this novel.

As authentic person, Ramanna, a father-in-law of Meera's paternal aunt, does not believe in god. He says that god does not punish him; the God itself is afraid of him. No one could possibly call him well, because he has killed his first wife by thrusting the spoke of an umbrella through her and has pushed the second wife into the well. But neither people harm him, nor does the God punish. Killing the wives is a heinous act in the social point of view, but he does not care it, as social values and morals are meaningless for him. Without thinking his social prestige, he keeps a low caste woman, Goda in the house as his mistress. He does not lose people's respect either. Marriage is supposed as one of the sacred rites in Hindu society but he discards his son, Vyankanna's marriage life. In the

dowry, it has been decided to give a silken headgear to him, but it has not been given, therefore, he refuses to dwell the bride with his son.

On the contrary, his son Vyankanna is under the bad faith. He cannot take his own decision; he does only what his father tells him to do, without thinking whether it is right or wrong. After some years of his marriage, he comes out from his bad faith and brings his wife to his house, against his father's wish. But he, again, goes back under the bad faith and he cannot understand who he is and what his duty is. Even he cannot satisfy his wife and cannot oppose to his father. He only gives promise to his wife to settle in Pune but does nothing. Once, at midnight he goes with knife in Ramanna's room to kill him, but at that moment he trembles and loses his confidence. He throws out the knife and cries by hiding his face in his palms. Thus he is perfectly imbecile person. Ramanna rightly says him,

Aai` tu maza ml ga Aahs—ya ram-`aca—ml kay va^ol te
k^o | qns^oda pcvl | Aai` tu—b^okl payavr mtll trl t^o.
2otr Aol. hot| [tka Drpok | | ml a laj va3te t^oya
ya ml, j D w^o; yacl| tu maza ml gac nsl a paihj | | |
ml a t^oysarq. j g`. AavD` ar nah| (9) (Yet you are my son.
This Ramanna's son. I did what I pleased. Got away even
with murder. And you—your dhoti gets wet even if a frog
pisses on your feet. Such a sissy. You are my punishment. I
am ashamed of you. Lazy beanbag. You can't be my son. A
eunuch like you—my son! When this thick, dim-witted, clod
like body of yours crawls past me I feel enraged. At times . .

. I imagine I am you . . . and I am terrified . . . I wouldn't like to live like you (13.)

and when Vyankanna fails to kill Ramanna, Ramanna says,

. . . h.]#a Vy.koba| ASlI kam. tmcl nVht| j ocmar tU bagDya w+n ipv; a wDara]2; It j ogva magt flr gavatn| tU kSl a maza ml ga (12) ('Yes, get up Vyankoba. Such jobs are not for you. Eunuch. Wear bangles, smear turmeric on your body and beg for alms in the village. You don't deserve to be called my son'(16).)

In the novel Meera, Bendre, and Vashinde are the abandoned and alienated from the society. Meera feels alienated from her childhood in her home and parents, especially from her father. In her sleep, she has a habit of kicking the person who sleeps beside her, therefore, her father never allows her to sleep in his bed. Rekha, her elder sister, is a darling of her father, who allows her to sleep in his bed, but Meera is always neglected. She never stays for long time in the house; she comes to home only to take meal. This alienation increases after her intercourse with Avinash. Consequently, her father becomes very furious on her and stops to speak with her permanently. She alienates from the home when she comes to live in Viranchi where she lives with her maternal aunt, but after the some days she lives in Kala Surya colony separately. To avoid loneliness she approaches various persons like Poet, Painter, Bendre, and Vashinde. However, when she develops illegal and immoral relation with a sinful person, Bendre, and lives with him as if she is his wife, people kicked out her from the society. Thus, she becomes totally alienated.

Vashinde is also abandoned by his parents. In fact he is a son of a great and famous singer Wamanbuwa, but Vashinde has a bullock's hump on his neck so his parent gives him to their maids to rear up. People of Viranchi also keep him away from them and never speak well to him. He lives in his house alone; not a single person (except Meera) visits his house to speak with him. Bendre is also excluded from the society and lives alone with his daughter in closed house.

Absurdism is another important existential aspect depicted in the novel. At the very beginning of the novel, Desai tries to suggest that human life is meaningless and useless. As Ramanna rightly says,

rSiyavrca matlca Oqada k`. pDI d . xè sœda]pykt Ast|
 p` ma`sa[tk. wykr in=pyogl kahlc Naahl s3It| Are
 tthala kaph tnce tkDe ig2aDapl. 3akle tr ig2aDsœda
 cœc ifrvll | (9) (Even the dung on the road is useful. But
 there isn't anything more utterly useless than human beings
 in this world. If you were chopped up and thrown to the
 vultures, even they would turn away their beaks (12-13).)

Washinde is an accountant in post office; due to his physical abnormality he feels his life is useless. He is quite an ugly and shapeless person and has been abandoned by his father in his childhood. It is absurd that though he is a son of Wamanbuwa, a great singer and very popular in the area, he lives his life in abandonment. The people of Viranchi also neglect him. Even more worst is that he has been dismissed from the job of accountant in the Post office by the boss, only because his repulsive appearance. Kamal Desai tries to show here that the so called belief of

'inheritance' as such has no value or virtue in human life.

In another incident Desai makes clear how human actions become purposeless and meaningless. In the Viranchi, there are only rocks and rocks, not a single tree exists in the five kilometre area of the village. If someone tries to plant any sapling, it burns within two days by the heats of the sun. In such adverse conditions, a company manager, Ganesh Kaikini has planted some saplings. He waters every day to the plants, even with his own drinking water. His efforts prove fruitful and, in the Viranchi, he creates a beautiful garden, but day after day trees become dry. He waters more and more to plants; sometimes he remains thirsty but waters the trees. But one day all his trees become dried out, he could not see the droughty trees, and in despair one day he dies. Thus, it suggests the futility of human life. Man's efforts and plans are also meaningless in the world.

Meera's attitude at life is absurd. She is fond of darkness instead of light; she wants to die in sin, and, for her, morals values and social conducts are worthless; they have no value in her life. She criticizes *Sattyanarayan* and its power of redemption. For her, the god Vaishwanar has an ugly look like, a boy who is diseased by rickets (mDds). She thinks to sleep in dignity on phallus of Lord Shiva by wearing dirty clothes and bad smell. According to her, saints are stupid; she parodies the myth of saint Namdev. There is a myth about Namdev in which the stone idol of Pandurang eats the offerings made by Namdev. Namdev threatens to smash his head at the foot of the idol if it will not accept his offering. However, in the protagonist's imagination in the novel, this plea would sound somewhat differently as: "mk3yan. pl Lya ta3atl. ig; t0S Kl

ha`ll Ok kanf3at? kay ibxad Aahe d@ nah! j w! e tr!” (6) (Now are you going to eat what I have here or shall I give you a good whack on your ear? The gods dare not make a fuss and not eat (10).) Here, the protagonist, Meera threatens god in different way. She does not convince the god for eating the offered food. Instead she threatens god that if he does not eat whatever she has offered, otherwise, she will give him a slap on his ear.

Her attitude towards the god, religious codes and rituals, is also absurd as it is proved when her mother dies. She has been in the market to buy a new sari for her mother. When she returns home, she observes a crowd assembled at the door of her house. Her mother has died, having slipped into the bathroom. But Meera is quite in her usual temper. Death of her mother does not affect on her. She is not even interested in seeing her dead mother. She is not worried about her future. With the help of Postal peon, she manages further rituals of funeral. This very incident reminds us 'Meursault' of Albert Camus's novel *Outsider*. In the *outsider* Meursault does not grieve on the death of his mother.

Albert Camus' *The Myth of Sisyphus* counter echoes in the 'myth of Ashwarath.' Sisyphus was condemned by the Olympian gods for his stealing secrets of god. He is punished to spend all eternity in fruitless labour, rolling a rock up a mountain but it would roll back down of its own weight, again and again and again. Nothing could be more absurd, Camus tells us, than a life of such futility. The same happens with Ashwarath. Ashwarath, son of God Brahma had erected the Sun temple in Viranchi. The temple is excellent and Ashwarath wants to install idol of Sun in it. To invite god Sun for the ceremony he tries to create a very

high ladder with the help of arrows, and tries to ascend it. But because of scorching heat, he falls down on the earth and is left blind. For this effort, he is declared enemy of God, man and the earth. He is therefore, chained, and is ordered by god to take continuous rounds. He is not allowed to stop for a single moment and undertake this as a punishment. The moment he stops he will get 'salvation'. But Ashwarath never wanted salvation; he is happy with this punishment and he prefers to remain so forever. By remaining happy with his punishment he has defeated the God. Like Sisyphus, Ashwarath is also happy with his punishment.

3.4 *Enkichya Rajyat (Onkilya rajyat):*

A poet, short story writer, critic, and translator, Vilas Sarang's first novel, *Enkichya Rajyat* was published in 1983. It is based on political, social, cultural and religious aspects of Iraq. A professor's quest for the meaning of human existence, his attempt to understand the emergence of human culture, and eventually, his emotional tensions and disillusionment are the major concerns explored from existential point of view. Existential aspects, such as, freedom of choice, anxiety, fear, and alienation are clearly expressed in the novel.

The story of the novel moves around the life of Pramod Vengurlekar, a young Indian professor, who immigrates to America in search of more meaningful life, but eventually disillusioned and frustrated in the land of materialistic prosperity. After completing the doctoral degree he decides to settle abroad instead of returning to India, therefore he applies for a job in various educational institutes. Though the job market of America is not healthy for immigrants, a college at Rockford in Midwest offers him a job of a lecturer. At the same time Basra

University, Iraq also offers him the same job. After a long contemplation, he decides to accept the offer of Basra University and goes to Iraq as a lecturer in English. He decides to accept the job at Basra because it is known as the cradle of human civilization and the land of Enki, who was an all-powerful Sumerian god, the ancient mythical figure of the Arabian countries. He thinks that he will find a meaning of human existence in the foundation of human culture, but soon he is disillusioned by the dictatorship of the Iraqi government and its restrictions on the individual freedom. He again faces the same disillusionment, and frustration, which he experienced in America. In the offshoot of the main plot novel also reflects the stories of torture and entrapment of other characters like—Bukhari, Akil, Abu Farid, Hamid, and Sharma. The focal point which the novelist wants to transmit through this fictional discourse is not just the political or social scene of the contemporary Iraq, but the existential aspects like individual freedom and meaning of human existence. To escape from this trap of alienation, at the end of the novel, he decides to have a tour of India or any other country with his American girlfriend, Joanne, for the summer holidays. But again his plan of escaping is shattered by the Iraqi government, as all the flights are cancelled, and the Bagdad airport is closed for ten days due to the conference of foreign affairs Ministers of Arab countries, on the issue of Iran and Egypt's compromise pact. Beyond the materialistic facilities, economical prosperity and professional success, Pramod tries to find a true meaning of his existence and basic purpose of his life, which is disillusioned at the end of the novel.

As mentioned earlier, the novel explicitly depicts some major aspects of existentialism, among them the freedom of choice is a prominent aspect in the novel. After the completion of Ph. D., Pramod is in search of a job. Meanwhile, his application gets positive reply from two institutions, a College at Rockford in Midwest America, and Basra University, Iraq. Both institutions offer him a job of lecturer; he has to decide either to go Iraq or to stay in America. Another option of returning to India is still viable, but disgusted by the Indian life, he has had preferred to live in America, but here also he is not happy with American life style. Therefore, he decides to accept the job of Basra University, Iraq. His Ph. D. thesis adviser Dr. Feldman and Joanne advise him to accept the college job and stay in America, but he ignores their advice and goes to Iraq.

His decisions to come to America and accept the job in Basra University are his own. In India and America he had a freedom of choice and decision, but in Iraq he cannot enjoy such freedom. In Iraq, however, his freedom is restricted by the Iraqi government. Initially, at the airport customs officer seizes his FM radio and a magazine, *Reader's Digest*. This first experience of restricted freedom upsets him. Accompanied with his friend Akil he goes to see cabaret, where Pramod finds that most of the people there are from the orthodox country Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. He comes to know from Akil that in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait such programmes are banned and these governments impose many restrictions on the citizens.

Individual freedom of choice is totally restricted by the government; even an individual cannot speak publically about the

government policies, though he is affected directly or indirectly by its harmful decisions. In India and America Pramod has enjoyed the individual freedom, but in Iraq he is disgusted with the government restriction. When Pramod goes with his friend Hamid and Franswa to see the sea shore and the temple of Enki in a deserted land, a military officer obstructs them and gives a permission to see the sea in the presence of security guard. Pramod's desire to enjoy the trip of beach, which he cannot experience in the city, is totally shattered, and he feels more nervous. In a sad mood he says, "Sal a, kay vtag Aah! smadla a CKk t#gat 3akl y. Iyanl!" (58). (It's a damn shame! They've put the sea behind bars' (57).)³ Next time he plans to visit ruined temple of Enki, an ancient god. At Enki's temple he spends more than two hours in silence and experiences a true moment of freedom. But again the military officer enquires him how he has spent two hours at Enki's temple, because there is nothing to see except ruined residue of temple. Pramod is flabbergasted to know that even in the deserted place he has no freedom to enjoy.

Many characters like Bukhari, Akil, Abu Farid, Hamid, Sharma and others are affected by the government policies. They are under the control of the government. For instance, Iraqi government has ordered Bukhari, a vendor of Indian spices, either to accept the citizenship of Iraq or leave the country. Though on the surface it seems as a freedom of choice, but in fact it is a choice between bad and worst. Any choice he makes would be painful for him. The reason is that he has accumulated lot of money from his business in Iraq and he cannot lose it (there is no

³ The English translation of each Marathi quotation of *Enkichya Rajyat* is taken from its translation as *In the Land of Enki* by Vilas Sarang. Calcutta: Seagull Books, 1993. Print.

permission to take the money out of country). If he decides to leave Iraq and settle in India, he has to lose all his money, and even if he does so he cannot start new business again. Moreover, in India, he has no relatives. His natural right to live where he wants is, thus, controlled by the government policy.

Pramod's friend and colleague Akil is also harassed and his married life is disturbed by the government's rules. His wife, Patty is an American. She is bored with government rules because she cannot enjoy her freedom as she could experience in America, therefore she goes back to America. She refuses to come back to Iraq; instead she expects Akil to leave Iraq. Here, Akil is on the peak of frustration and confusion as he cannot take any firm decision. Government has given him a flat, furniture and car in discount and freed his income from taxes, and if he leaves country he has to pay a big amount to the government. It is not possible for him to refund such big amount, and therefore, he cannot leave the Iraq. When he realizes that neither his wife, Patty, would come back nor he can go to America, in a rage of frustration, he commits suicide by the overdose of sleeping pills. Abu Farid, another victim of government's rules, is a clerk in a bank, who has hoard a lot of money and wants to take it out of the country. But he is trapped in Iraq because as per government rules he neither can resign his job nor can he go with his money out of the country. He, in his attempt to transfer his money to another country, is arrested and put into a prison.

Though Iraq seems as a confinement for other characters, Hamid, finds it a land of freedom. In India he was under the pressures of his father's orthodox beliefs. His father forced him to marry against his wish.

In such circumstances he never enjoyed his freedom. As he says, “6rI koDmara hot hota| | | txa babtIt nVhè p` ya Oka babtIt| Kvict k#e co=n, 6a{6a{t—tè!c!h3l, 6rapasTh dÙ gd. Kl hv. te SvT’y l awd ” (164). (‘I felt cramped at home. . . . I don’t mean that. Just with this thing. I was reduced to occasional, furtive encounters. I thought I’d enjoy more freedom once I left home’ (162).) But now, in Iraq, he is free to do what he wants—here he can eat frozen chicken, can drink the wine, can see movies, and most important thing is that he can enjoy here his homosexual satisfaction. Instead of bring his wife in Iraq; he enjoys his sexual satisfaction by developing a homosexual relationship with young and very fragile boy, Javad. Until he sends documents to India, no one from his family can come to Iraq. In Iraq he is free from the burden of his father’s orthodox beliefs and the imposed familial responsibility. Hamid makes a choice between India and Iraq; in India he has to live life inauthentically by following the social and religious norms, on the other hand in Iraq he is free to live authentically. When Pramod learns the story of Hamid and observes his extravagant life, he realizes that the concept of ‘Freedom’ is paradoxical; it changes from person to person and from place to place. In Iraq he feels trapped by the rigid government rules; his freedom of choice is restricted and he is compelled to lead an inauthentic life but in the case of Hamid, he finds these rigid rules are blessing for Hamid’s freedom of choice; these rules allow him to live an authentic life.

Maria Nazar is another character who represents authenticity. She has willingly married Mr. Nazar, and comes in Iraq to live with him. According to the Existential concept of ‘Authenticity’, an authentic

person is one who takes his own decision and also shoulders its responsibility. To live in Iraq is her own decision, and she accepts its responsibility. Though in Iraq there are certain restrictions, she has been living in Iraq since ten years. She attempts to create her own world and lives authentically. She pets a dog, though, Mr. Nazar, her husband opposes. In Islam, petting dog as a domestic animal is prohibited; as Iraq follows Islam there is no custom of petting a dog, but Maria obstinately pets it. She lives according to her will, if she does not like to go with her husband for the party, she without hesitation, refuses to accompany him. Her husband is a contractor and has earned lot of money, so obviously there is no need of doing job for Maria, but she prefers to be a typist in Pramod's department only for her own satisfaction. When Pramod asks her that for what reason she is working on such a post, she says, "Arē gmt m̄h`th ml kam krtē" (45). (I'm doing it for fun (44).) Later on, she leaves her job and stays at home doing nothing. Pramod inquires about her decision to leave the job, here also she answers authentically, "maz. Asc cal t! ml a Okdm I hr yēḡ ḡrabahr̄ kahl hal cal kravl, kxat trl gtv̄h ^yav| mg ml As. kahltr̄l kam Agavr ḡḡḡ ha]Isah far tr pac sha mihne i3ktō| | | mg p̄lha ml pac sha mihne ḡrl bsth rahte | |]" (103). ('That's how it's been with me. I suddenly take it into my head to do something, to get involved in something outside home. Then I take up a job like that or some other sort of work. My enthusiasm lasts five or six months, then I begin to lose interest. I give it up and stay at home for another few months . . . ' (102).) Thus, as a free individual she has a freedom of choice; and she takes decisions according to her own will. She is far from the traditions and customs of the society in which she lives. She drinks and smokes regularly with number of men, and has

boyfriends. For her sex is nothing, she is strong supporter of free sex. Though she is middle aged woman and has children, she maintains extra marital relationships with men. When Pramod meets her, she wilfully offers herself to him, and whenever she wants she enjoys sex with him. In the social context of Iraq, where men are possessive of their wives, she commits adultery without caring for her husband. After his first sexual intercourse with her, Pramod thinks about her husband, and out of curiosity he asks her, Aaj tu [4. Aal Is Tyan. kahl ADC` nahl inmaR ho` ar?" (67) (Today you are come here. Will it create any problem?), she answers,

hl mazl pihl lc vè nVhè ml a 'iSvglg l a[f' vgrca hlyas nahl| p` [4Lya Aytyat A2m2e ml a 4oDa mok; p` a hvasa va3l a tr Tyat kay gr? | | | [4. pè8 far 'pzisVh' Astat| p` ml nzarl a Mh3l , maZya manisk grj ana xwr 3Kke mrd 6l`. ml a j m`ar nahl| ml soDh j a`. nzarl ahl nko Aahè tVha to ka`aDo; a kr` pIkrtol (67) ('This isn't the first time. . . . I'm not looking for what's called a 'swinging life'. Still, with the kind of life you face here, what's wrong with a little liberty once in a while? . . . Men are extremely possessive in this society. But I told Nazar that I couldn't give up my psychological needs completely. He doesn't want me to leave him either. . . . So he turns a blind eye. He prefers not to know' (66).)

Thus, Maria is truly an authentic character in the novel. Everything she does in her life is according to her personal desires and, therefore, authentic. Despite social banalities, she behaves freely, maintains several

sexual relations and at the same time she does love her husband and her children. She never pretends as virtuous and never conceals her adultery, instead she directly informs her husband about her extramarital relations with others. Basically, she is born in American culture; therefore, in Iraq also she tries to live so. It is her virtue that she never surrenders herself to the tradition and customs of Iraqi society, and acts according to what she wants rather than what society expects.

Alienation is another important existential aspect reflected in the novel which makes it an existential fiction. All the major characters of the novel are expatriates and feel alienated from their own family and homeland. As Pramod is a major character of the novel he is alienated from his family and nation. After his post graduation Pramod comes to America for Ph. D. and decides to settle permanently in America. But in America also he cannot settle himself properly and leaves for the Basra University, Iraq. But even in Basra, the feeling of loneliness haunts him again. There is no one familiar to him in the city, and he is unknown about the various parts of the city. In such condition, he can neither speak with any one nor can he wander in an unknown city to make himself comfortable. In Iraq he experiences 'homesickness'.

Pramod's condition in Iraq is similar to Meursault. Meursault is French by birth, but lives in French colony Algeria, due to his different race and region and culture, he is an outsider in the Algerian society. This strangeness makes him curious about the way of living and the real meaning of it. The same case is with Pramod, though he is born in India he lives in the Basra, an ancient city in Iraq. In the entire new world of

Iraq he feels alienated from the society and afterwards due to the government policies he is also alienated from the entire world.

Franswa, Pramod's colleague, experiences his alienation in Iraq. He is a French citizen and has been an employee of French government in the Beirut for eleven years. Due to the war in Lebanon, he has been sent to Iraq by French government. In Beirut he lives peaceful life with his family, but his life is destroyed by the war and he is compelled to live life alone in Basra with the hope that the war would end, and again he would be in Beirut with his family. At the end of the novel, his plan to spend some days with his family is collapsed by the conference at Bagdad on the Iran issue and he consequently feels alienated from his nation and family.

Two Indian friends Mukharji and Sharma come to Iraq by leaving their families and relatives back. Similar to other characters of the novel these two guys experience alienation and to overcome this feeling they live together. Akil and Sabari, though they are Iraqi citizen, feel a sense of alienation due to the separation from their wives. Akil's wife is an American; she cannot adjust herself in Iraq, and therefore, goes back to America with children. Akil remains alone in the home, because government has denied him permission to go to America. In his extreme loneliness and the agony of separation from the family, especially from his wife, he commits suicide. Sabari is also alienated from his English girl friend and would be wife, Jill, because of Iraqi rules. According to the rule, Iraqi citizen cannot bring a foreign woman as a wife in Iraq.

Maria, an American, is also alienated from her nation, though, she lives peacefully with her Iraqi husband and two sons in Iraq. She behaves as per her own wishes, but still she experiences rootlessness. When she feels alienated from the country she utters melancholy, “h...ml ‘6rI’ j a{n ka mr-yaSa#I?... kl [4.c mrn ml... ya ndlCya mQapaxl...”(47). (‘Went home to die, did she? I wonder if I’ll go home to die . . . or if I’ll die here, at the mouth of this river . . .’ (46)) Thus, almost all the major characters in the novel experience the sense of alienation. Each character tries to overcome the feeling of loneliness in a different ways. For instance they seek out others company to spend time better by inviting other for drink or dinner.

In the novel Vilas Sarang, by exploring the agony and pathetic condition in which characters lead their life, tries to suggest how the modern man is always under the shadow of fear and anxiety. Though Iraq adopts a socialist government and has friendly relations with Russia, it denies the Russian Communism. Nevertheless, its relations with America are not too good, but instead, it has more hostile relations with the America. In short, being a Third World country, it neither accepts Russian ideology nor in favour of American democratic ideology. In Mukharjee’s words, “its-ya j gatLya srkarac Asc cal t....AayiDAa j lcl ktrAa! cal l d l Astè’ (Many Third World governments lives under botheration of ideology) (132). The governments of the Third World countries always remain under the terror of the first and the second world countries. Iraq is also one of the Third World countries, and it is always afraid of rightist and leftist, therefore its approach towards the citizen is suspicious. This suspicious and fearful

approach of the government and its effects on the individual life is described in the novel. There is a ban in Iraq to bring a typewriter from any other country to Iraq for the personal use. But unfortunately when on the airport security checks Pramod's luggage they cannot find out his typewriter which is at the bottom of trunk. Though he has not brought his typewriter deliberately, he becomes so anxious when Maria informs him about the ban on it in Iraq. He is afraid of being accused in illegal bringing of the typewriter. Even in his intercourse with Maria, he cannot keep aside his fear. He imagines the typewriter as a frightful laughing jaw of a monster. Whenever he tries to remove his fear of a tyrant authority from his mind, it increases more. Ultimately he gives up typing, on the typewriter and gets himself released from the anxiety and fear.

Sherwan, a northern Kurdi student, is another victim of government's policy. The Iraqi government is under the shadow of fear that Kurdi people would rebel against it and might have been plotting to demolish the present government. From his family history we come to know that his father has been imprisoned by the government of Iraq because his father has been one of the Kurdi rebellions, who has rebelled against the government and as a result, the government has persecuted him mercilessly. His family background and Kurdi origin has created a sense of fear in Sherwan's mind. This fear about government policies shapes his thoughts and behaviour, throughout the novel.

For Instance, as he is a clever and fluent in English, Pramod and Sabari select him for the role of Julius Cesar in the performance of Cesar's assassination scene. But Sherwan is worried about his role of Cesar in the performance. Therefore, he is suspicious for his selection of

Cesar's role, because he knows that Sabari is a Party member and has asked him to be a Party member, but he has refused to join the Party. In this connection he is terrified by his role in the performance. He thinks, due to his refusal, Sabari has deliberately chosen him for this role, so that they can kill Sherwan easily. His fear of getting killed in the dramatic scene of Cesar's assassination has one more reason that his roommate Jamal and other students are also selected for the performance. Jamal is a party member so Sherwan is suspicious of Jamal's behaviour. He thinks that Jamal must have been making conspiracy against him. He cannot even sleep at night in Jamal's presence. All the selected students are also the party members and Sherwan thinks that they must have been chosen deliberately by Sabari. He finds resemblance between the things happened before Cesar's assassination and in his life before performance. For instance, he associates the ominous thing happened before the assassination of Cesar—when calf was scarified, heart was not found in it—with an incident of his buying a packed chicken in which heart is missing. This, so called, ominous prophecy, which he symbolically links with his own death, reveals how much he is afraid of being killed. Thus terrified of being killed in the actual performance, he refuses to play the role of Cesar. Due to the fear, he suddenly disappears on the day before the performance.

Thus, the novel focuses on the question of the existence of marginal communities and their search for identity, and attempts to create a modern world where everyone is obsessed with unknown fear and doubt. Many nations are under the shadow of the fear of being attacked by another nation or terrorists, which generates the question of

individual's existence. These governments become suspicious about their citizens. Iraqi government suspects Kurdi community and employs the policy to send Kurdi people to the south, and, southern people to the north in order to make their rebel neutral.

Meaninglessness is one more tenet of existentialism that describes individual's life as worthless business. Existential fiction explores the futility of human action; it generally focuses on individual's meaningless existence and futile endeavours. In the present novel the theme of meaninglessness is very prominent, and it raises many questions about the meaning of human life and tries to find out the outcome of the human action. For that Sarang uses the setting of the novel as Basara, an ancient city in Iraq, which is known as an origin of the human culture.

Pramod is bored with Indian life and finds Indian traditions and customs, useless and meaningless. So, he moves to America in the search of meaningful life, but, there, he is disillusioned by American life. He cannot make his own space in the America society. Therefore, when Basra University offers him job he enthusiastically decides to accept it to escape from disillusioned life in America. Basra city is situated on the bank of the rivers and near the sea shore. This region is known as, cradle of human culture from where many ancient cultures were emerged and nurtured. Pramod thinks it as a great opportunity for him to live there and get knowledge of its ancient culture. By doing this, he thinks, he can get something meaningful in his life. But when he actually reaches in Iraq, he forgets all about his aims and objectives and again sinks into the everydayness. He is also diverted from his plan of writing a book entitled, *On Identity*, in which he has decided to write about autobiographical,

philosophical and meaningful things. He thinks that in Iraq, far from America and India, he can write more objectively. Therefore he sends some philosophical books and a typewriter to Iraq in advance before his departure. But when he comes to Iraq and finds the entrapping social and political situations, his wish of writing the book is shattered into pieces. He cannot write a book in Iraq, where individual freedom is denied by the government. By denying the individual freedom, government has erased true identity. So he cannot write a book on the subject like 'identity'. Identity cannot exist without an individual freedom, and this freedom is rare in Iraq.

[4. Maa` sara mKtp`e j gayl a, invD krayl a farsa vav nVhta| sakarn. Tyacl Ayiy. taByat 6d|d| hot| he Saar pahta pahta phodCya mnatle 'AyDi33l' ce pKn h; th; U ApoAap iv=n gd e hotp kar` [4Lya Ayiyacya sdwaik 'AyDi33l' la kay mhTv hot? to xBdc [4. A4kly wasl l agl a hota| Svt:cl 'AyDi33l' 6Dv-yasa#l tl 6Dv-ya[tpt mok; lk Asavl l agtp Orvl 'AyDi33l' pKnc]dWvt nah| (129) (In this country individuals had little scope to live as they liked, or they chose. The government had taken control of their lives. In the face of this fact, the question of identity had slowly and imperceptibly receded. For, in the context of the lives that he had observed here, what did personal identity means? The very phrase became absurd. Identity presupposed a certain basic level of freedom, in the absence of which the question of identity didn't arise at all (129).)

One more important situation projected in the end of the novel is the futility of human action and eventual disillusionment of his plan to spend his holidays out of Iraq. Therefore, he hurriedly checks all the papers, but he cannot go out of Iraq because Bagdad airport is closed for ten days. He seeks some other ways to escape from Iraq, but fails. All his plans, struggle and efforts are made useless and meaningless.

Thus defeated on every front, he realizes meaninglessness of his own life. At end of the novel he contemplates on what he has achieved by coming here in Iraq. Neither he has searched ancient culture of Iraq, nor can he write the book, *On Identity*. He feels rootless, defeated and alienated. The purpose of his life is not yet fulfilled; his plans and aims remain as it is. When he learns that he has spent his life in Iraq barren, gaining nothing, he weeps while sleeping in the lap of a whore.

Besides the protagonist, many other characters of the novel experience this meaninglessness and futility in their lives. Abu Farid is a clerk in a bank and has a lot of money inherited from his ancestors. He has planned to settle abroad by transferring his money out of the country, but he is caught and imprisoned by the authority, while transferring his money through another person in a foreign bank.

Hamid's sacred ideas, beliefs and reverence for his Islam also shatter into pieces; now religion, for him, is meaningless and useless. In the homeland of Islam, his ideas about Islam are disillusioned. Before he comes to Iraq, he has sacred feeling and full of reverence for the Islam. He thinks that he is going to the homeland of Islam, where he will get real

principles of Islam than in India, but he is disillusioned by the plight of the Islam in Iraq. As he says,

ml a mo#a 2Kka bsl a [4. Aalyavr| [4 ytana va3l. hot,
Aap` ArbStanat j atoy—[Sl amCya mah#6rl| [4. AapLyal a
qra 2mR sapD#, Ai2k qol p`e]mj # | An\ pahto tr kay?
sg; lkDe bar An\ Kl bam@ye ibArCya ba3LYacl gdIR pl yat
#vth l ok bsl # # wykrc h# (53). ('I was terribly shocked
when I come here. I thought I was going to an ancient Arab
country, the home of Islam, and that I would discover Islam
here in its true, authentic form. And what do I find? Bars and
clubs everywhere, with people sitting with bottles lined up in
front of them! It's appalling' (52).)

In Islam, drinking is prohibited and also to eat packaged meat. However, throughout Iraq he finds Beer Bars and packaged chickens, and people willingly drink and eat the packaged chicken. Hamid has never cut his beard, but here there is no single person who has beard. It seems him absurd, contradictory to Islamic principles. In frustration he says, "he
sg;. bdl th 3akl. Pahlj # plha sg;. x#d payavr]warl. pahlj e' (54).
(‘It must change. Things have to be set up again on a firm, true
foundation’ (53).) However, he thinks that it is impossible to change all
these bad practices, and if someone tries it will be useless and worthless.
When he comes to know the hollowness of religion, he rebels against it.
He also starts to eat packaged chicken, drinks the wine, watches movies
and involves in the homosexual relations with a very young boy, Javad.
The novel shows a gradual change in the personality of Hamid and his

shift from highly religious ideology of Islam to the practical modern man. It shows how the religious ideas are shattered and replaced by nothing.

Thus, many existential aspects like fear, anxiety, death, freedom and meaninglessness are prominent in the novel. The novel uses Iraq as a setting and utilizes the socio-political situation to explore the existential crises in the lives of the characters. All these characters try to search the meaning of their existence, freedom of choice and try to overcome to their anxiety and fear. They try to create their own meaning in their lives but in the end of the novel they find it meaningless and futile.

3.5 *Baki Shoonya* (बाकी खोण्या):

Baki Shoonya was published in 2005; it is the first novel of a young Marathi author, Kamlesh Walwalkar, which gets mixed reactions from scholars and readers. The novel explores the life of an individual from the existential point of view. The novel in its bildungsroman scope comprises a journey of an ordinary young man, his frustration in search of meaningful life and eventual existential enlightenment. The protagonist Jayaraj Sardesai, after his many attempts to find out the meaning and purpose to his existence, realizes the meaninglessness and purposelessness in the life. As nothing is meaningful to do in the life, he thinks that he has been living his life simply because he is born.

The novel recounts the breakdowns in the reassuring daily life of Jayaraj Sardesai, who feels nauseated as he experiences the absurdity normally hidden in his routines, and the truth of that absurdity appears more sharply as his life slowly gives way around him. It is a story of twenty-nine year old Jayaraj Sardesai, an engineer, who is a narrative

voice and believes that there is nothing to do in the life; hence it is foolish to do something. Yet, he feels that he should write an autobiography, so that by writing this he would do something and at the same time it would be seen as nothing. Initially, he makes clear that there is no specific purpose to write his biography, and there would not be any economical, social, spiritual, political, or artistic benefits of his autobiography to people. In fact there is nothing to say about his life, because for him nothing is valuable or meaningful. Gautama Buddha, Jesus Christ, Ashok Maurya and Napoleon Bonaparte, and their accomplishments are also worthless to him.

In the beginning of the novel Jayaraj introduces himself. He says he was born in a small city, Sangli, Maharashtra, and lives with his parents and two brothers, Subodh and Sagar. In his schooldays he is a very intelligent student and always stands first. He ranks first in the S.S.C. Board examination and secures 96% marks in the H.S.C. examination for both A and B group. He wants to complete B.Sc. and later to make a career in F.T.I.I., but his father forces him to do engineering, and he becomes engineer reluctantly. After his engineering he does get himself involved in various jobs; he works as a journalist in Abhinav Features for some months in Pune, and then, in Nashik, he works with Eagle Equipments for a year as a sales manager. But, he cannot make his career in any of these jobs, because no job gives him satisfaction. As a result, he quits these jobs and decides to prepare for the UPSC examination. By studying hard, he gets himself qualified for the main examination, but while preparing for it, he realizes the emptiness and meaninglessness of human action, and so that of his life. Eventually

his attitude towards life and the world around becomes hopeless when Vinay, his friend Ketan Bharucha's brother, commits suicide, and then he realises the futility of his own life. Vinay's death raises many questions in his mind like who is he? Why does he live? What is the purpose of his living? Such questions about his existence make him an absurd human being. At the end of the novel he comprehends the uselessness of his life, and so thinks it is better to do nothing.

The present novel can be analysed from existential point of view, by applying the Sartrean, Kierkegaardian and Heideggerian concept of existentialism. Authenticity is a common existential aspect focused in almost all the existential philosophical discourses. Man's authentic existence begins when he realises and thoroughly understands what he is. In other words, to be truly authentic one has to realize his own individuality. For Sartre, one can become authentic being by owning one's radical freedom and responsibility. Jayaraj is an authentic being in the sense that his every action is according to his own choice. For him there is nothing good or bad, pleasant or unpleasant, everything is same, yet he never hesitates to criticise those things which seems to him pique. He narrates each and every matter of his life without any moral consideration. In his childhood, he feels uncomfortable to come to school with his father on scooter, because almost all the students used to come with their own bicycle, except him. He also tells us that his father is heavy drunkard, and his maternal as well paternal grandfathers were adulterous. About himself he says,

I hanp`l ml l y hıkar hoto| Dok n\ht, p` hıkar j br|
hıkar Mh`je vgaıt pyl a nbr| tıhı Alıyas kđ a n ktyasarq.

к=η| vgañll [tr huxar ml. Tya manan. qñc Allyas
kraycl| p` nhml pihl a mlc Asayco| Tyamu e ml a mazc
qññ kaitk va3ayc| (8) (In my childhood I was so clever that
I stood first in my class. I never studied hard as such, even
though, I always secure first rank.)

Thus he himself is aware of his own talent, however this intelligence leads him to realise his own identity and it makes him an authentic person. When he was in fifth standard, instead of taking down notes in the history class, he plays some mischief with his friend. But when teacher asks him to read what he has written in the notebook, though he has not written a single word in the notebook, he read each and every word by his memory without any mistake. By knowing this matter the teacher complains to his father that he would spoil other students too. His father slaps him, and thereafter, the teacher makes him compulsory to sit on the first bench every day, but only for a few days he sits on the first bench. Then, he deliberately starts to sit on the last bench. After this incident he decides not to respond any question of any teacher. Once his English teacher asks him to read a lesson loudly, he denies to read because he doesn't want to read loudly in the classroom. Teacher threatens him by declaring that until he reads the lesson, she would not teach them further. She also insults him, and gives punishment to stand on the bench for two hours, but even then he does not read a single line from the lesson. The same thing happens with the teacher of Mathematics, who asks him to solve a problem on the board, but as usual, he refuses and accepts to sit for the whole day on his knees.

Thus, it becomes obvious from the above incidents that he sustains his freedom of choice. These incidents indicate his existential belief that everyone is capable of doing his own business according to his own way. In the first incident he intentionally ignores to take down the notes, in the second he doesn't read and in the third he refuses to solve the problem. Thus all these decisions taken by him are deliberately and carefully chosen. It makes him a truly existential protagonist, who takes the responsibility of consequences of his decisions. As Sartre says, "this absolute responsibility is not resignation; it is simply the logical requirement of the consequences of our freedom" (708). Jayaraj accepts the punishment given by the teachers without any hesitation. His beliefs are identical with the Sartrean principal, "What happens to me happens through me, and I can neither affect myself with it nor revolt against it nor resign myself to it. Moreover everything which happens to me is mine" (708).

In the S.S.C., he gets distinction and stands first in the Board merit list. As usual he feels nothing about this success because he has neither taken special efforts for it nor he desired for it at all. Initially he feels romantically elevated because everyone greets and praises him for his success. But very soon he becomes aware that people hypocritically speak and inauthentically praise him, and few of them even invent fictitious stories about his success. He is mature and intelligent enough to understand the falseness and emptiness of the social concept of success. As a result, success, aims, and heroic deeds become meaningless and worthless, so he stops being felicitated by the people. He is not interested in such disgusting formalities, he has no any ambition in his life nor does

he desire to be a great person because he is aware of the hollowness of human life. Once his friend, Godbole tells him that his aim is to devote his life in the service of the nation, Jayaraj laughs at him. Though Jayaraj desires to make his career as film director, he gives up this desire, when he learns its uselessness and meaninglessness. Even after engineering course he never desires for a good job, instead he prefers to do nothing. His beloved, Mrunal, sends his applications for various positions in the various institutes and industries. His father insists him to join Eagle Equipments, so unwillingly he makes himself geared up to accept the job. In the company he does not demand salary more than five thousand because he thinks that it is sufficient for his living.

As he has declared that he has no ambition, he refuses one glittering job opportunity. Impressed by his work, a managing director of a company from Indore offers him a permanent job, and ready to give him salary thrice than what he gets in Eagle Equipments. But he refuses this offer simply because he does not want to be a manager and has no interest in more salary; instead he prefers to live his life as it is. He perceives his future and finds it boring. He thinks:

Mh`j e mg yxaci c!tl kman| JyinAr OikzKyii3Vhca isinAr
 OikzKyii3Vh| it4th minj r| mg j nrl minj r| mg Aa`ql kahltrll
 yxacya ixDiv=n srsrt vr| c!tl kman, va!ta p!sa, bgl a, gaDI
 vgrf p` yac. fil t kay—bayko, por, Tyaci ix9`| Tyace yxace
 Aal e| mg plha Tyachi tsc|—p` he kahl qr. nahl| he farc
 w18` ho{l | Aai2c ml a nokrlca k3a; a Al d a| k3a; a kamaca nVh
 Tyat mj a Aste; p`]glcc gavogav w3kt vStU ivkayCyA Aai`
 mihlyacya mihlyal a sri9ttel soy kraycl, he farc ivic5| (254)

(Growing graph of the success. Junior executive, and then promoted as senior executive. Then manager, general manager then something else. Climbing swiftly the ladder of success. Growing graph of success, abundant money, bungalow, car, and so on, but what is its rewards—wife, children, their education, their graphs of success, the same like me. But it is not good, it will be very horrible. Already I am very bored with my job. It is not that I am tired of working, it is interesting. But it is strange to wander from one place (city) to another in order to sell various things and ensure security for every month.)

This is very much identical with Meursault, a protagonist of Camus's *Stranger*, who also refuses a good job in Paris offered by his boss. Meursault's employer has a project in his mind to open a branch of his company at Paris to pact with the big companies on the spot, without postal delays. However, Meursault refuses saying, "it didn't appeal to me, and I answered that one never change his way of living; one life was as good as another, and present one suited me quite well. . . . he . . . told me that . . . I lacked ambition"(28). Jayaraj also lacks ambition like Meursault. He refuses a good job only because he is disgusted with the industrial job and has realised the meaninglessness of the field. As Meursault was not ready to accept the new job and subsequently to change his routine life because he simply desires to remain as it is, Jayaraj also opines the same, he also does not want any changes in his present life. He never aspires for a permanent job, and when his company Manager confirms his permanent order, he decides to leave the job. He does not want any perpetuation of his existence in the life as he thinks the

perpetuation of existence is a horrible thing; instead of it to quit the job is best alternative to him. To experience something more meaningful in the life, he decides to appear for U.P.S.C. exams. As he says, “I am not interested in minting money any ways. Civil services may offer a lot of scope to do substantial things. Aayiyal a kahltril A4R yel ” (Life will be meaningful) (272).

He thinks that if he accepts the job it will lead him towards the trap of marriage. His beloved, Mrunal tries to persuade him for the marriage, and he has told her that when he gets a permanent job, he will decide about the marriage. Actually he doesn't want to get trapped in the marriage. He knows very well that once he gets married, he would lose his freedom and will live the disgusting married life like other common people. To him, like Judge William, a fictional character created by Kierkegaard in the second part of *Either /Or*, marriage is a trap. According to him, marriage cannot assure the eternity of love as it is considered in the social ideology; it vows mere pretence for eternal love. He claims that it would be more valid if we live in relations for six months instead of marring for the life, as for him, eternal love assumed in marriage is highly vague and unrealistic notion. In fact, marriage as an institution is seen as a routine of the social life and remains a continual source of boredom. He tells the real cause to Mr. Bharadwaj, his boss, that is why he is quitting the job, “ml nokrl soDil nahl, tr ml a l Gn krav. Laagd | mg ml a kdaict j gc soDav l agd ” (274). (If I don't leave my job, I will have to get married. Then, perhaps I will have to leave the world.) He claims that marriage limits one's physical mobility and individual freedom. A married person is bound to his family and cannot

move or travel freely. In addition, according to him, the matter of being faithful becomes difficult for both and eventually both deceive each other and become unfaithful. Since marriage does not lead to any productive event, it loses its value over time and leads to boredom. Therefore, at the end of the novel, when Devayani proposes him for marriage, he accepts it passively. To be married or unmarried is similar to him; it would not change his life. As a social being, man is possessive of his or her mate, and marriage as a social institution also expects the same from both parties. But in the case of Jayaraj, he disowns his authority and denies his conventional possession and he offers his wife a total freedom in order to secure his own freedom:

| | | ba{ tæ. Aayiy tu cal tæ #v| tæe im5mi5`l kay hva
to g02; 6al a| tu tūya im5abr0br z0payl ahl mok; l Aahs|
va3l . tr maZya im5abr0brhl zopl xktæ| Tyasa#l maZya mage
l kDa nk0| (427) (Madam, you continue your way of living,
as it was. You and your friends can enjoy as per your wish.
You are also free to sleep with your friends, even, you can
sleep with my friends, if you wish, and for that there is no
need of pestering me.)

In *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Camus projects a mythical figure of Sisyphus, who was condemned by the God to eternal, futile labour of pulling a huge stone on to the peak of the hill. He stands for ‘Absurd Hero’ in the philosophical context, and in the modern context Sisyphus is a prototype of the modern individual:

Rising, streetcar, four hours in the office or the factory, meal, streetcar, four hours of work, meal, sleep, and Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday according to the same rhythm . . . But one day the ‘why’ arises and everything begins in that weariness tinged with amazement (Camus 10).

Because “the why” will outstrip any answer that we might give it. That is, because all of our endeavours will be deemed and meaningless as there is no transcendent meaning that exists to justify them. The same happens with Jayaraj, he is bored with his daily routines of life and, later on, with his college life. Though, initially he enjoys the college routine, he is disgusted with it after few days, and realizes its monotonousness. As he says: “drroj]#th A60; kr`e kad g la ja`e taS kr`e gPpa mar`e v prt 6rl ye`e pllha dis-ya idvxl te, te Aai` te” (55). (Getting up every day, then taking bath, going to college, attending the classes, gossiping and then coming back to home. Next day, the same tedious routine again.) So, in the fit of appal, he takes bicycle, rides it fast in hot sunlight and after few minutes he collapses in hot dust. He becomes very sweaty and weary by scorching heat, but feels something new and pleasant. This painful experience gives him better feel than the daily routine. To take relief from his everydayness he gets himself involved in various activities. But very soon he experiences boredom so that he decides to do exercise every morning. But after a few days he contemplates on this routine and starts questioning about it:

ska;l]#`e Kvict p;`e v vyayam kr`e mg Kl as kr`e mg qa`ep`e mg A60; kr`e mg kad g la ja`e piK3kLs

kr`e v pliryD\$ kr`e pK3KLS ckv`e v pliryD\$ ckv`e
kad g wr bobl t ifr`e kK3lInl a ja`e cha ip`e gavat ja`e
baj arat ifr`e ha3d at qa`e rs ip`e ipKcr b6`e la{n
mar`e Mh`je Aayty Aahe ka? Aaj p;`. nahl| Kl as Naahl|
kad g hl nahl| | | i403rat p` k3a; a Aal a| | | ml ko`
Aah`e ml kxasa#l j gtoy| (47) (To wake up in the morning,
occasional running and exercise; then to attend classes, then
eating, drinking. Then bathing and going to college. To
attends practicals, periods or to bunk practicals and periods;
loiter in the college; Go to the canteen, get tea; go to the
town and wanders in the bazaar; eating in hotel, dirking
juice; watching the movies, flirting girls, is it life? Today, no
running, no class, no college . . . tired in theatre also . . . who
am I? Why am I living?)

Eventually he stops his morning exercise permanently. On the
auspicious day of New Year, he decides to write a diary and continuously
writes it till the August. His diary entries also explore how much he is
nauseated with his life.

21 macR (21 March)

vřtag ß vřtag = vřtag

(Disgust + Disgust = Disgust)

vřtag á vřtag = ũvřtag^É

(Disgust á Disgust = Disgust²)

vřtag á vřtag á vřtag á|||vřtag = ũvřtag^řn

(Disgust á Disgust á Disgust á Disgust = (Disgust)n)

28 macR (21 March)

k3a; a, vřtag, b0Dñ (Boredom, Disgust, Boredom)

]bg,]Vdg, itrSkar (Revulsion, Dejection, contempt)

itDIK, 6z`a, ik; S (Outburst, repulsion) (52).

These entries suggest his absurd and disgusting state of mind. With this repulsive sense he loses his interest in education and career. Consequently, very soon, he realizes the hollowness and meaninglessness of the traditional education system. He thinks that each and every action of one's life is futile, therefore one loses the happiness of living life, and human existence itself is a meaningless. In the HSC exam, he gets 96% marks, which are beyond his expectations, so as he says, he loses his trust in educational institutes. During the four years of his Engineering he comes to know the hollowness and purposelessness of education. It becomes pasture of the hypocritical fools, because learners know nothing about how and what to learn, and teacher knows nothing about how and what to teach. In short, it is obvious that Jayaraj is totally disillusioned by educational system and tired of the everydayness:

Mg kañ j | (Then college.)

t0c bSS3ap| t1c bs| (The same bus top. The same bus.)

t0c chrř t0 k3 t0k3| (The same face. Oily.)

inb0d j g`, m- bagD` | (Stupid living, stupid frisking.)

vra`]ñh| grm fřfa3a| (Bare sunshine. Hot dust.)

t0c vD t0c k0a| (79). (The same Banyan tree, the same katta)

This sense of everydayness and meaninglessness makes him aimless. He never aspires for good job, car, bungalow, wife, etc., but

comes to conclusion that he is living his life simply because he is born. In the final year of engineering, his friends discuss about how to face the campus interviews for jobs. Jayaraj is exception for it; he does not want to face the interview and get a job because all these things are “wpk” (95) (useless) for him. Tired with his utter boredom routine life, he prefers to sit in the hotel and smokes cigarettes, doing nothing. Instead of attending the periods and practical, he wanders barefooted on the heath behind the college, and when hot dust burns his feet, he feels comfortable and gets relief from his boredom. This disillusioned state of mind compels him to realize futility of human action. He explains, through his story, “K; S” (Peak) that the struggle for great achievements is nothing but a futile action in life.

The protagonist of Jayarj’s story has been thrown into the stormy sea by the captain of the ship. He struggles to save his life and tries to escape from the huge tides, but fails. Eventually he finds a floating big wooden piece which he picks up, and spends entire night on it. In the morning when he wakes up, he finds himself on the bank of an island. He wanders on the island and after some time he reaches at cross road, where he finds two different roads, going to two different directions. Right side road is very comfortable and successful, so many footprints he finds on this road, and it indicates that most of the people have preferred it. He looks at left side road, which he finds stony and discomfort and is mostly not used. But if one succeeds to reach his destiny through this way, he would be known as most successful person in the world. The young man decides to go on the left side road; he takes many efforts to walk safely on the road. The broken glasses, sharpened stones, and thorns were

spread throughout the road, which makes his way very difficult. The thorns and glasses make his feet bleed, therefore, for a while, he thinks of going back, but, ultimately, he succeeds to reach at his destiny. When he reaches at his destiny he sees a peak of a temple, and feels that it is his great achievement. People come to him and pray him sacredly and devotionally, and depart. After their departure he remains alone, he gets feared. He even forgets his name and thinks about his struggle. He thinks about what he has achieved ultimately by choosing left side road, deliberately: “Aap` tI DavI payva3c ka invDI I, ij vaca Aa3aip3a k=n [kDe ka Aal o Aai` [tkI yatayat k=n kay im; vl. tC Iyal a smj na” (101). (He could not understand why he has chosen the left foot-path, why he came here by hard struggle and what he has achieved by struggling). Thus, this story of a young man represents the futility of human action.

He thinks about his own existence and his relation with other people. Every individual is different from other, and each one has his own concept and values of life, and leads his life accordingly. He believes that other's (people) existence, who lives in a different city, is worthless for him, and in their view, his existence is worthless. The scope of the world is so huge that a single individual loses its value in it. Innumerable planets, stars, meteors and solar systems, whirling in the vast space, are nothing but a, “kAaS| AaDID kAaS|” (Chaos. ordered chaos.) and therefore he feels, “Hya sg; yat AapLya za3U AiStIval a kay ikmt AS`ar| AapLyac ivcarat AapLyal a ikmt” (in all this what is the value of our trivial existence. Our value is in our thoughts only.) (98). As Roquentin, a protagonist of Sartre's *Nausea*, is totally estranged from the

world in which he exists, he attempts to give the justification for his own existence, by twisting Descartes' sentence '*Cogito, ergo sum*' (I think, therefore I am): "I am. I am, I exist, I think, therefore I am; I am because I think, why do I think? I don't want to think any more, I am because I think that I don't want to be, I think that I . . . because . . . ugh! I flee" (Sartre 100–1). In the same way Jayaraj tries to prove his own existence in the meaningless world. He says,

| | | the only way one can exist is in its existence in your thoughts. p` ivcarathl 0qadl vyKtl nsd , tr tzyaprtl tl vyKtl AiStIvatc nahl ikva m` Aah` (If a person does not exist in your thoughts, then for you, that person does not exist or is dead). The person does not exist as far as you are concerned. It's all perception. The world never existed before 1970 nor will it after I'm gone. Oko`lsxe sItr pVIR j g AiStIvatc nVht| maZya m`ybrbrbc te sp`ar Aah` I am, therefore the world is. . . . dKath. I think, therefore I'm AS. Ok C`aitkarl iv2an Kd . Aah` | | | tr (is a revolutionary statement by Descartes in that case) I am, therefore the world is AS. maZ. Ok C`aitkarl iv2an Aah` (. . . it is my revolutionary statement) (115).

He cannot understand the purpose of his life and why he is living. If any plan or aim of the life results in nothingness, then why one should do certain things, and stick to achieve those things throughout life. He aspires to do his career in the field of film industry, therefore, he tried his hand in it but neither has he become Director, nor does he complete a

course of FTII. Instead of it, soon he gets fed up with all the disgusting film proceedings, which he witnessed in Kolhapur, and shifts to the corporate sector. Here again he has to face similar disillusionment, so he decides to prepare for the UPSC exam, but he cannot achieve success in it too. But when he starts contemplating on his decisions, he comes to the conclusion that there is nothing new, but they are common perpetuations for the better life, wife, and children and bringing them up for whole life. These contemplations about the purpose of his life eventually lead him towards the existential enlightenment. He becomes aware of his existence and tries to rebel against the logical order of the world. Therefore, he neither aspires to have a permanent job nor desires for a big salary and a beautiful wife because he is involved in the existential search for purpose of life. He writes in his diary:

p̄kaca ml a hl̄yas nah| p̄s̄d̄lca sos maḡc spl̄ ay| ba{
 Mh3l . kl !v; th̄ ȳt̄.y| s̄T̄t̄ca ml a moh nah|)an Aai` s̄Ty
 AavaKyabah̄rc. Aah̄ | | | ml j̄gt̄oy kxasa#l? maZya
 Aaȳiyac. p̄ȳoj n kay? m̄ at Aaȳiyac. p̄ȳoj n kay? Aaȳiyac.
 p̄ȳoj n wos̄D̄yat ḡd | p` p̄TȳkāCya j̄g-yac. kah̄l̄trl p̄ȳoj n
 Ast̄c| maZya j̄g-yal a p̄ȳoj nc nah| ml]gac j̄gt̄oy|
 (299) (I am not greedy for money. The passion of popularity
 is already over. Woman makes me feel qualmish. I have not
 infatuation of power. Knowledge and truth is beyond my
 reach. . . . Why am I living? What is the purpose of my
 living? Basically, what is the purpose of life? The hell with
 the purpose of life, but there is purpose for every one's
 living. My life is without any purpose. I am living without
 reason)

For the preparation of the UPSC exam he reads a lot, including subjects like History and Geography and metaphysical subjects like Philosophy and Literature. By reading all these subjects he realizes the true nature of the human existence. He asks some fundamental questions about the nature of human existence to himself—what is the essence? What is the essence of World? and what is the essence of existence? is there any order or purpose in a life? or is it like mere aimless whirling of the atoms? All these questions are, he thinks, as old as existence itself. Existence is self enlightenment. If we understand our own existence, we can behave as per our own wish, and can get redemption from the life. His awareness of the absurd is clearly reflected in the novel when he asks his friend Vishal, what did Samrat Ashok, Alexander, César, Buddha, Chandragupta, Akbar, Nehru, Gandhi achieve in their lives? He concludes that nothing has been achieved by them and generalises this nothingness with their lives. He thinks whatever he and Vishal will gain in their lives is meaningless. For him the world is hopeless, meaningless, and all things are worthless.

He reads about Egypt's Pyramids, Maya people's Huge constructions, Mohenjo-Daro, Chingis Khan, Babylon, etc. and thinks that these things can give the direction to live better life, but it fails to prove that there is any value in the life. When his friend Deepak calls him indolent person, he responds saying that industrial or diligent is nothing but worthless thing. It is true, to do something is better than speaking only, but it is not certain which deed would be fruitful or meaningful. Therefore, what is deed is a problem:

ml grj nstana pprat kam krayco, Tyal a ktl Mh`av. ka?

ml na3kat j e krt hoto, Tya a kãl Mh`av. ka?
 ml Anik 2de k=n bDal o, Tya a kãl Mh`av. ka?
 ml g#63al Cya s8vr j e krayco, Tal kãl hotl ka?
 ml {gl m@ye rahh Aapl l pgtl sa2l l Astl, tr Tal kãl
 #rll Astl ka?
 ml j lv toDh j o Allyas krtoy, Tal kãl #rte ka?
 ml]glcc bDbDt ifrt Asto, Tal kãl Aahe ka?
 he sg;. soDh smaj kayal sa#l ik.va dexhtasa#l ikva]glcc
 kaylkaR zal o, tr Tal kãl #rd ka?
 #rll trl Tyath kay in*pln ho`ar?
 Ayayac. p/oy n Sp*3 ho`ar, kl ml ko` te ml a k;`ar?
 (329)

(Without need I was working in the news paper, should it be
 called as an action? / Whatever I was doing in drama, should
 it be called as an action? / I was doomed in various
 businesses, should it be called as an action? / Whatever I was
 doing on the set of *Gurughantal*, was that an action? / If I had
 been progressed by staying at Eagle, had it been proved as an
 action? / Now I am studying hard, is it an action? / I wander
 jabbering, is it an action? / Apart from all this, if I become a
 volunteer for social work or for nation or any serious
 purpose, will it be an action? / If so, what will be the result of
 it? / will it clarify the purpose of life; shall I come to know
 who am I?)

Thus, he tries to explain his argument that any deed in the life is
 meaningless, and neither will it give the answer of his overwhelming
 question, 'Who I am?', nor it will reveal the purpose of his life. In short,

any action or deed in the life is futile and therefore it is better to do nothing. When Vinay commits suicide, he gets frustrated more than before. Vinay's suicide confirms his realization about life that 'life has no meaning, it's worthless'. In his disturbed state of mind he writes a story, in which hero, Bal commits suicide because there is nothing better than that for him to do in his life. He depicts Bal as an authentic existentialist hero because whatever he has done in his life is only to fulfil his desires. When he realizes that his aim, to be an astronaut, would not succeed due to his physical unfitness, he decides to end his life. As he says, "I had a cause. *maZyasmor Amyatl, Afā3 Atir9 psrl . hōt|* (There was boundless, huge sky before me) Now that, that cause is no more, I find no good reason to exist" (374). He gets comfort by writing the story, but soon he feels it meaningless. He gives up U. P. S. C. studies, and remains absent to each test and begins to behave as an absurd and authentic man. At the end of the novel he does what he feels; he wants to walk to university so he does so, but when he reaches at the gate, he feels to go back and he returns. He wants to walk without shoes and to hang the shoes around neck and so he does. He drinks wine excessively and thinks to set fire to the building of Municipal Cooperation, but when he realizes he cannot do this, he stops to do so. One day he goes in a whore house and chooses a whore, and even pays her but does not sleep with her; rather he sits there and drinks with her. He continuously visits the brothel and becomes permanent member of it. Once he goes to the police station and makes a chaos by breaking the telephones and other furniture, as result the police beat him and arrest him.

Thus, all these activities may seem absurd and irrational, but they are authentic for him because he has done certain things only for his satisfaction, and while doing so he has not considered the social norms and restrictions. At the end he denies advises of other people and accepts the job as a building worker and coolie at the railway station, instead of working in the publication company of his father-in-law or any other standard job.