CHAPTER-I
Existentialist Concerns: A Discussion
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Existentialism, though one of the most influential philosophies in twentieth century, is not a systematic school of philosophy. It is rather a fountainhead of several revolts in the past against traditional philosophy. It is by its very nature beyond a clearcut, an exact definition. It is actually an offspring of the combined attempts made by philosophers, thinkers, psychologists, sociologists, artists and litterateurs from different disciplines, periods and places of the world. It is said to have existed ever since men confronted his own frailty and the meaninglessness of existence. Hence it can also be understood more as a way of thought, an attitude to life, a vision, a way of perceiving the man and the world, a "timeless sensibility that can be discerned here and there in the past,"¹ a "style of philosophizing"² than an integrated system.

Taking note of the controversy of the term existentialism, Jean Wahl prefers to refer to it with a plural title, "Philosophies of Existentialism". Jean Paul Sartre, a noted existentialist thinker, observes:

What then is this that we called Existentialism? Most of them who are making use of this word would be highly confused if required to explain its meaning.... The word is now so loosely applied to so many things that it no longer means anything at all.³
Mary Warnock in her book *Existentialism* has remarked, “Existentialism is a compound of emotional and intellectual factors to an equal degree”. Thus the term provides scope for quite a few interpretations.

To take account of its etymology, the word ‘existentialism’ is made by adding, the suffix ‘ism’ to the word ‘existential’. It is an adjective and its substantive is ‘existence’. The Latin “existentia”, the German “existenz”, the French “existence” and the Sanskrit “asti” are its equivalents. The word ‘existence’ is used in the sense of the “state of existing or being”. But for the existentialists, the word refers to the act of existing rather than to the state of existing. Existence, therefore, is an act, the actual transition from possibility into reality. It is thus, a living, changing concrete fact.

Existentialism, taken as a whole, is undoubtedly a philosophical movement. It deals with man’s disillusionment and despair. Some thinkers have presented a very gloomy picture of it. They have described it as “the shocking, the sordid, or the obscene”. To them existentialism is “nearly meaningless”. They hold that it is mostly negative, morbidly individualistic and devoid of values of any kind. They attach to it such changes as extreme subjectivism, pessimism and even nihilism.

Despite a strong pessimistic note, Existentialism does not aim at plunging man into despair. It rather prepares him through disillusionment
and despair for a genuine life. It pleads for a life that has some purpose, 
sense and meaning. Such a concern is quite pertinently expressed in
Albert Camus’ play, Caligula:

To love one’s life is a little thing and I shall have the courage to 
do so if it is necessary, but to see the meaning of this life 
dissipated, to see our reason for existing disappear, that is 
what is unbearable. One cannot live without meaning."9

Existentialism is optimistic so far as it is a doctrine of action. Sartre 
has very well explained this;

Existentialism is nothing else but an attempt to draw the full 
collusions from a consistently atheist position. Its 
intention is not in the least that of plunging men into despair. 
And if by despair one means as the christians do-any attitude 
of unbelief, the despair of the existentialists is something 
different. Existentialism is not atheist in the sense that it 
would exhaust itself in demonstrations of the non-existence 
of God. It declares, rather, that even if God existed that 
would make no difference for its point of view. Not that we 
believe God does exist; but we think that the real problem is 
not that of His existence, what man needs is to find himself 
again and to understand that nothing can save him from 
himself, not even a valid proof of the existence of God. In this 
sense existentialism is optimistic, it is a doctrine of action, 
and it is only by self-deception, by confusing their own 
despair with ours that Christians can describe us as without 
hope."10
Eminent philosophers and thinkers have thus examined Existentialism to Joseph C Mihalich, it is “the individual’s own frame of reference in meeting reality-his own fears and hopes and encounters and crises”. Fernando Molina opines that it strives to analyse the basic structure of human existence calling” individuals to an awareness of their existence in its essential freedom”. According to David E. Roberts, it fights against those forces that destroy freedom, reminds men of their basic inner problems and calls them away” from stifling abstractions and automatic conformity”. Frederick Copleston recognises the value of existentialism in “drawing attention in a modern context to the human person as a free and responsible subject”. According to Roger Troisfontaines, “existentialism is a passionate return of the individual to his own freedom, in order in the unfolding of its processes to extract the significance of his being”. It promotes man’s striving for the making of himself. It makes man realise his potentialities amidst chaos and confusion of a hostile universe. It expounds man’s search for himself and his own values. It explains that man exists first and then he makes himself out his conditions.

Existentialism is a protest against all forms of rationalism. The existentialists have therefore reacted strongly against the excessive claims of reason. Kierkegaard reacted against Hegelian idealism. Marcel reacted
against the idealists like F.H. Bradley and Brunschvicg. Heidegger and Sartre, too, reacted against the age of reason. The existentialist actually thinks passionately. He sets forth the dictum—"existence precedes essence."

The Existentialists assert that man first exists, and then he looks at the world, thinks of it and then acts as an individual. His contemplations and his actions are possible only because of his existence. Existence, thus, is the first principle from which all-else flows. It is only later, by living, thinking and acting that man defines his nature and forms what is called his essence—that which he is and will be". The essence of man is pre-determined. Jean Paul Sartre has thus posited his viewpoint:

What do we mean by saying that existence precedes essence? We mean that man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world-and defines himself afterwards. If man, as the existentialist sees him, is not definable, it is because to begin with he is nothing. He will not be anything until later, and then he will be what he makes of himself.17

The dictum—'existence precedes essence'—paves the path for individual freedom. Sartre further clarifies:

If, however, it is true that existence is prior to essence, man is responsible for what he is. Thus the first effect of existentialism is that it puts every man in possession of himself as he is, and places the entire responsibility for his
existence squarely upon his own shoulders. And, when we say that man is responsible for himself, we do not mean that he is responsible only for his own individuality, but that that he is responsible for all men.\textsuperscript{18}

Thus Existentialism lays stress on the subjectivity and individuality of human existence. The Existentialists recognize very well the tragic elements in human existence, and hence they lay much importance on the facts of life such as anguish, anxiety, alienation, boredom, choice, despair dread, death, freedom, frustration, finitude, guilt, nausea, responsibility etc. They show their deep concern with the fundamental problems of human existence. They affirm that man should choose, decide and act as active participant in life situations. By doing so, he can save the world from deep distress, distrust and dissension in every walk of life.

Though the Existentialist thought has its roots deep in the past, it has been popularized mainly by Existentialist thinkers like Jean Paul Sartre (1905-....), and Albert Camus (1913-60). Professor Radhakrishnan quite candidly states that existentialism is a new name for an ancient method of the \textit{Upanishads} and Buddhism insisting on a knowledge of the self: “atmanam viddhi” or “know thyself”. Man is a victim of ignorance “avidya”, which breeds selfishness. He can achieve freedom from sorrow and suffering by becoming aware of the eternal. Such an awareness or enlightenment is called “\textit{jnana}” or “\textit{bodhi}”. 
The beginning of modern existential thought is traced by many in the philosophy of Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) who took keen interest in the problems of human existence. He observed:

What a chimera then is man! what a novelty! what a monster, what chaos, what a contradiction, what a prodigy.\textsuperscript{19}

He asked man to know himself: "Know then, proud man, what a paradox you are to yourself ".\textsuperscript{20} He realized the limitations of reason against which he prefers to set faith. According to him, faith alone can produce a smoothing effect in man's earnest need and can reconcile with this vast world. He begins with the human situation as viewed from within and considers the state of concentration as true existence. He suggests to go beyond reason to awaken the whole man to his true self. He has rightly been considered as "a forerunner of existentialism"\textsuperscript{21} and "the first philosopher who really can be called a predecessor of the existentialism"\textsuperscript{22}.

Soren Kierkegaard (1813-55) is generally regarded as "the father of modern existentialism, and is the first European philosopher who bears the existentialist label".\textsuperscript{23} He coined and used the terms "existence" and "existentialism"\textsuperscript{24} for the first time. He rejected the prevalent political, social and religious ideas, which identified man with state, society and church respectively. He thus brought about a revolutionary change in the
basic concept of existentialism. He rejected Hegel’s “Dialectical Method” and his contention that “objectivity is truth”, and emphasized: “subjectivity is truth, subjectivity is reality.”

He based his philosophy on the subjectivity of human existence and laid emphasis on the individual’s “act of choice” or “freedom of choice” or “free choice” and the subjective “will” and “responsibility”, raising them to the moral level. As a Christian and theistic existentialist, he believes that man acquires self-knowledge only when he has an “intensified awareness” of an encounter with God.

Unlike Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) is thoroughly anti-Christian and atheist. Through Zarathustra, who is his ideal of superman, he declares that for the modern man “God is dead.” Such a God should be abandoned:

Away with such a God! Better to have no God, better to set up destiny on one’s own account, better to be a fool, better to be God oneself.

Nietzsche acknowledges man’s potentiality of becoming God. He insists that man must exercise his “free choice”, his “will” in creating values for his own evolution into a “Superman”. He stands for “transvaluation of all values”.
Unlike Kierkegaard, Nietzsche believes in the glorification of the “human will” and “being”, and advocates “authentic living”. This “will” is the most important aspect of all existence. Man does not strive only to live and survive but to prevail and overpower the entire universe. This “will-to-power” is the central concept of Nietzsche. He firmly proclaims:

Life itself is essentially appropriation, injuring, overpowering the alien and the weak. It is oppression, hardness, imposing one’s form. Life just is will-to-power... It is a consequence of the Will to Power, which is, but the Will to Life.28

Nietzsche’s “Superman” or “Overman” is the expression of man’s “Will-to-Power”. He is a person who has become God-like by murdering God. Nietzsche’s much talked-about statement: “God is dead!God remains dead!and we have killed him”29 is interpreted in many ways. In one way, and this is, of course, positive, the death of God liberates man who imbibes a “genuine consciousness of power and freedom”30 to project himself for the highest achievement in life by becoming the “sovereign individual”. In another way the death of God takes us to the pessimistic side of his philosophy. To quote John Macquarrie:

The death of God brings us into the age of nihilism. Man’s self-affirmation takes place therefore against the background of a godless and absurd world, whose law is the law of eternal recurrence.31
The conflicts of the age became the central problems of his philosophy.

Karl Jaspers (1883-1969), German Professor, takes the Kierkegaardian line of philosophical faith. He is convinced that man in the modern age is doomed to failure. However, failure is not necessarily all negative. He proclaims in his *Way to Wisdom*: “The way in which man approaches his failure determines what he will become”.32 Failure leads man to seek redemption. Existentialism is “a philosophy of “becoming” rather than a philosophy of “being”. As such, it is anti-intellectualistic and voluntaristic. Jaspers values more highly the *élan* of an endless seeking and striking than the tranquillity of possession-regardless of whether it be a question of truth or being or God.33

Likewise, the French philosopher, Gabriel Marcel (1889-1973), offers a “metaphysic of hope”. He is the relentless critic of the “functional man” deprived of dignity, personhood, mystery, and eventually of humanity itself. He wrote Homo Viator, *The Philosophy of Existence, The Mystery of Being* and other articles to encourage the French people to rediscover their true dignity as human beings. His utter dislike of intellect and “bloodless rationalism”34, his “obstinate and untiring battle against abstraction”35 and his abhorrence for idealism made him a bitter critic of the idealist philosophers in general and Hegel,
Bradley, Leibnith and Brunschvicg in particular.\textsuperscript{36} Bergson who, likewise, has distrust for supremacy of intellect and is inclined to accept a stress upon intuition, creativity and para-psychology inspires his Existentialist vision.

Marcel in his \textit{Tragic Wisdom and Beyond} has discussed the concept of ‘Being’ which he designates as “plentitude”, “pleroma”, even “absolute super-being” or “most genuinely being”.\textsuperscript{37} The best approach to this sense of being is through man’s ontological exigency, the exigency for being. It is “a deeprooted interior urge”, even an “appeal”, for being.

Marcel has pointed out minute distinction between “Being” and “Having”. He attaches deeper significance to “Being” than to “Having”. “Having” implies possession, an encumbrance, a burden, and an impediment. “Being” suggests freedom from encumbrance, the shedding off the burden of possession to reach the realm of Being, the realm of freedom, the realm of the realization of true existence. Human existence is always trapped and human freedom stifled within the perspective of “having”. Releasing oneself from the encumbrance of all possessions is preparing for entrance into life eternal. “God can be given to me”, writes Marcel,” only as an Absolute Presence in the act of worship, and any idea which I form of Him is merely an abstract expression or intellectualization of this Presence”.\textsuperscript{38} Fidelity expresses “ontological
permanence”, and can be to oneself, to others, or to God. Hope is a recurring theme in his writings. It can meet the challenge of death. Love is equally an important theme. It is love through which one actually participates in Being. In The Metaphysical Journal, he writes: “... to love some one is to love God”. He perceives that the modern man is passing through a very critical juncture of the modern age. He is free, but feels no freedom because of social, political, economic and religious determinisms. He is free to choose, but he is forced to choose wrong paths. He is in a fix with anxiety, dread, and despair as his consequential facts of life. Marcel firmly believes that the ills of our society result from individual’s refusal to appeal earnestly to God. According to him, man is a “homo viator”, always on the way to self-realisation: “I am not, I have to become: I am not free, I have to become free”. The essential note of his existentialist humanism is struck in the following line: “To be men, to continue to remain men”.

Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), a distinguished German philosopher, exerted a profound significance on subsequent existentialist thought, although he rejected categorically the title of existentialist.

Among the formative influences in his thinking is the Phenomenology of Husserl, an interest in the question of ‘being’ derived from Brentano, and a pre-occupation with language, which he attributes to the days spent in a Jesuit seminary. Noteworthy too is his interest in pre-Socratics.
Kierkegaard’s existentialist idea, too, contributed much to his philosophy of "Being". His major work, *Being and Time*, presents a perfect and impressive analysis of human existence. According to him, although man is in the world, he is “not of the world”. His “authentic existence” is possible only when he is “free for his world”.

Heidegger depicts man in a painful situation in which accomplishment is a mere illusion. Hence, such themes as care, anxiety, guilt, fallenness, finitude, and above all death abound in his writings. He is original in his concept of “nothingness” which is elaborately discussed afterwards by the French existentialists, particularly by Sartre. There are three fundamental characteristics of existence. The first is “possibility”. The second is “facticity”, and the third is “fallenness”. These three structures of the being of man constitute ‘care’ (sorge). In all his writings there are indications of a trend towards nihilism. His existentialist vision is coloured by the philosophy of man’s unmitigated desire to be nothingness itself.

French existentialism has become probably the best know of all existentialist thinking, and in the hands of the French intellectual Jean Paul Sartre (1905-......), a famous novelist, playwright and philosopher of deep insight, existentialism found its richest treatment. He was a unique
expounder of atheistic existentialism on the pattern of Nietzsche. He took active part in the French Resistance Movement during World War II and defied German occupation on France. He served French army and even remained the prisoner of war in Germany for some time. The sudden collapse of France in World War II affected him adversely and brought him to an awareness of his own existence in the midst of the world-shattering situation.

His version of existentialism could be seen to be rooted in the thoughts of Marx, Kierkegaard, Husserl and Heidegger. Marx's passion for action to change the world already understood by philosophers, Kierkegaard's insistence on individual's freedom or subjective content, Husserl's emphasis on essential form in phenomenological analysis and Heidegger's emphasis on facticity, freedom and the relationship between essence and existence paved the way for Sartre's existentialism crammed with the problem of man and also his active role in forging his own destiny.43

He believes in the supremacy of man's existence in a godless universe. He writes:

Atheistic existentialism of which I am a representative, declares with greater consistency that if God does not exist there is at least one being whose existence comes before its essence, a being that exists before it can be defined by any conception of it. That being is man or, as Heidegger has it, the human reality.44
In a godless universe man himself has to take the place of God. He declares: “Man simply is”. According to him, man makes himself and is responsible for what he is. He asserts: “Man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself”.

Sartre’s “Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology” deals with various aspects of human condition. Man himself is both “being” and source of “nothingness”. According to Sartre, there are three kinds of being: an object has “being in itself”, a man has “being for itself”, and we all have “being for others”. Being-in-itself (en-soi) “means non-conscious being” which is what it is. Being-for-itself (pour-soi) means man’s conscious being which has to be what it is – i.e., which is what it is not and which is not what it is. Being-for-itself is that form of consciousness in which man is always aware of a “lack” or “nothingness” in him and is always in self-transcendence wherein “our existence from moment to moment is a perpetual flying beyond ourselves, or else a perpetual falling behind our own possibilities: in any case, our being never exactly coincides with itself”. Human existence is personified anguish and agony. It is characterized by nausea and falseness which make life miserable. Modern man is torn by inner conflict. Life for him is meaningless. In the beginning, man is a kind of existential romantic but after having experienced the bitter realities in life he turns
an existentialist. Existentialism, therefore, is a stage in the romantic pursuit of life when man’s agony deepens into anguish.

Sartre’s existentialism acquires political overtones. He has acknowledged Marxism as the only philosophy today. He recreates Marxism and explains it in terms of individual “praxis” (action). In his essay, “Materialism and Revolution”, he puts forward his philosophy of revolution and defines the existential “situation” of the revolutionary in a bourgeois world of corruption. He differs from Marx at the origin of the problem of alienation. Being placed in a world where he is not free alienates the individual. For Sartre, alienation is far more pervasive than it is for Marx as it arises from the fact of social life, and not from the mode of production. George Lukacs thinks that Sartre’s strictness against Marxists is justified. Marxists take economic determinism to mean a sort of mechanical relationship between the economic system and human consciousness, a view that neglects the role of human subjectivity in historical development, whereas “the emphasis on subjectivity constitutes the relatively justified element in existentialism”. Sartre emphasizes the creative role of the individual personality and the being of man as a process rather than a static entity. He accounts for the human person and describes his modes of being, his freedom, choice, responsibility, facticity, anguish, nausea, death, dread, despair, transcendence, etc. His
thought revolves round these ontological notions. To speak with Sartre, “Man is not the sum of what he has but the totality of what he still lacks, of what he might have”.52

Albert Camus (1913-1960) has developed a kind of existentialism of the absurd. In his approach he has been described as an “anti-theist” rather than an atheist. The political upheavals of the present twentieth century, which he calls “a century of fear”53 with the two World Wars, mass deportations, concentration camps, etc. shook the sensitive heart of Camus. He was pre-occupied with questions of the nature and meaning of man, his hopes and aspirations. He, therefore, can be termed a positive humanist. He expresses a feeling; a longing for better life and indicates that man’s kingdom is within him and “of this earth”. Being baffled by the blows and buffets of absurd and incoherent situations of worldly life, he exhorts people to revolt. His slogan is “to create, to transform the humanity of the world, into the image of man, to humanize what is inhuman – in short, to civilize”.54 His revolting hero has to create personal values for himself: “Meaning has to be created, not found, and it has to be created by the individual out of the actual experience of revolt”.55 Hence to him, revolt seems to be one of the essential dimensions of mankind.56 Camus finds man deprived of grace and justice and wants this revolt to restore to man dignity and honor. In all his
philosophical and literary writings, the rebel "protests against the human condition in general." \(^{57}\) The rebellion means protest against suffering, death and all sorts of evil. "Dismayed by man’s abandoned condition, the rebel advances from an initial attitude of blasphemy though an outright denial of God". \(^{58}\) Camus affirms: "Man’s solidarity is founded upon rebellion and rebellion can only be justified by this solidarity". \(^{59}\) Again he explains: "I rebel, therefore, I exist". \(^{60}\) Camus has experienced the absurdity of life and has declared: "Suicide and murder are thus two aspects of a single system, the system of an unhappy intellect which rather than suffer limitation chooses the dark victory which annihilates earth and heaven". \(^{61}\) Camus admits that "Suicide is the only serious philosophical problem" \(^{62}\) The very opening sentence of *The Myth of Sisyphus* reads: "There is but one truly serious philosophical problem and that is suicide". \(^{63}\) When man finds no justifications for living, he commits suicide. He ends his life and experiences the absurd: "This feeling of estrangement between a man and his life, which sometimes ends in suicide is the most elementary way of experiencing the absurd". \(^{64}\)

Camus points out that the experience of the absurd results not in Physical suicide but also in intellectual and philosophical suicide by way of self destruction (through physical suicide) and self-preservation (through philosophical suicide). \(^{65}\) Suicide is an act of self-preservation
in the sense "the man who kills himself in solitude still recognizes a value". While making a distinction between "rebellion" and "revolution", Camus remarks: "The majority of revolutions are shaped by, and derive their originality from murder".

*Le Mythe de Sisyphe* (*The Myth of Sisyphus*) begins with a discussion of suicide and ends with the theme of revolt. Sisyphus, the ancient hero, is the symbol of mankind. He is the hero of the absurd. He is condemned to spend his days rolling a rock to the top a mountain whence the stone would fall back because of its own weight. To quote Camus, "no punishment is worse than a task that is useless and without hope".

Actually, Camus regards neither man nor the world as absurd. What is absurd is the relationship between man and the irrational and incongruous world. Man aspires for eternity but is, at times, crushed beneath the "bloody mathematics" of his condition. The absurd can arise in many ways but ultimately ends with death. Death and despair constitute Camus's discovery of the absurd. His two dramas, *Caligula* and *Le Malentendu*, for example, stand as illustrations.

Camus's vision of life is decidedly modern as it bears the style of the age with all its tragedy and turmoil. He is all the time conscious of the terrible absurd forlornness of man. He remarks: "In a universe suddenly
divested of illusions and lights, man feels an alien, a stranger. His exile is without remedy since he is deprived of the memory of a lost home or the hope of a promised land."  

While Germany and France have been the countries where existentialism germinated and attained its fullest growth, there are many other countries where the existentialist type of thinking has appeared. The Spaniard Miguel de Unamuno (1864-1936) and the Russian Nikolai Alexandrovich Berdiaev (1874-1948) are equally great representatives of existentialism. A few non-philosophical writers like Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821-1821), Andre Gide (1869-1951) and Franz Kafka (1883-1924) dealt with certain existentialist themes and thus contributed much to the growth of existentialist literature. Dostoevsky’s two works, *The Brothers Karamazov* and *Notes from Underground*, deserve special mention in this context. Kafka’s *The Trial* sets forth the idea of thrownness and *The Castle* exhibits the modern sense of ontological lostness and bewilderment with much vividness.

John Macquarrie regards Johann Christian Friedrich Holderlin (1770-1843) as “the literary pioneer of the modern existentialist mood in literature”. He has given expression to the increasing sense of alienation and lostness in the universe,— a theme that eventually turned into philosophical expression in Nietzsche.
The foregoing discussion leads us to arrive at the conclusion that Existentialist thought and manner broadly stress on the following:

1. Existence is always particular and individual-always my existence, your existence, his existence;

2. Existence is primarily the problem of existence, i.e., of its mode of being; it is, therefore, also the investigation of the meaning of Being;

3. This investigation is continuously faced with diverse possibilities, from among which the existent, i.e. man, must make a selection, to which he must then commit himself;

4. Because these possibilities are constituted by man's relationship with things and with other men, existence is always a being-in-the-world, i.e. in a concrete and historically determinate situation that limits or conditions choice. Man is therefore called Dasein ("there being") because he is defined by the fact that he exists, or is in the world and inhabits it.

With respect to the first point, the existence is particular. Existentialism is opposed to any doctrine that views man as the manifestation of an absolute or of an infinite substance. It is thus opposed to most recent forms of Idealism, such as those that stress continuous Spirit, Reason, Idea or Oversoul.
Secondly, it is opposed to any doctrine that sees in man some given and complete reality that must be resolved into its elements in order to be known or contemplated. It is thus opposed to any form of objectivism or scientism since these stresses the crass reality of external fact.

*Thirdly,* Existentialism is opposed to any form of *necessitarianism;* for existence is constituted by possibilities from among which man may choose and through which he can project himself.

And, finally, with respect to the fourth point, Existentialism is opposed to any *solipsism* (holding that I alone exist) or any epistemological Idealism (holding that the objects of knowledge are mental). Because existence, which is the relationship with other beings, always extends beyond itself, toward the being of these entities; it is, so to speak, *transcendence.*

Starting from these bases, Existentialism can take diverse and contrasting directions. It can insist on the transcendence of Being with respect to existence, and, by holding this transcendence to be the origin or foundation of existence, it can thus assume the *theistic* form.

On the other hand, it can hold the human existence, posing itself as a problem, project itself with absolute freedom, creating itself by itself, thus assuming to itself the function of God; As such existentialism presents itself as a radical atheism. Or it may insist on the finitude of
human existence, i.e., on the limits inherent in its possibilities of projection and choice. As such existentialism presents itself as humanism.

From 1940 on, with the diffusion of Existentialism through continental Europe, its directions have developed in terms of the diversity of the interests to which they are subject: the religious interest, the metaphysical (or nature of Being) interest, the moral and political interest. This diversity of interest is rooted, at least in past, in the diversity of sources on which Existentialism has drawn.

One such source has been the subjectivism of the 4th - 5th century theologian, St. Augustine, who exhorted man not to go outside himself in the quest for truth, for it is within him that truth abide's. “If you find that you are by nature mutable, he wrote, transcend yourself”. 71

Another source has been the Dionysian Romanticism of Nietzsche, who exalted life in its most irrational and cruel features and made this exaltation the proper task of the "higher man" who exists beyond good and evil.

Still another source has been the nihilism of Dostoyevsky, who, in his novels, presented man as continually defeated as a result of his choices and as continually placed by them before the insoluble enigma of himself.
As a consequence of the diversity of these sources, Existentialist doctrines have focused on several aspects of existence. They have focused, first, on the problematic character of the human situation, through which man is continually confronted with diverse possibilities or alternatives, among which he may choose and on the basis of which he can project his life.

Second, the doctrines have focused on the phenomena of this situation and especially on those that are negative or baffling such as the concern or preoccupation that dominates man because of the dependence of all his possibilities upon his relationships with things and with other men; the dread of death or of the failure of his project; the “shipwreck” upon insurmountable “limit situations” (death, the struggle and suffering inherent in every form of life, the situation in which everyone daily finds himself); the guilt inherent in the limitation of choices and in the responsibilities that derive from making them; the boredom from the repetition of situations. The absurdity of man's dangling between the infinity of his aspirations and the finitude of his possibilities.

Third, the doctrines have focused on the inter-subjectivity that is inherent in existence and is understood either as a personal relationship between two individuals. I and Thou, such that the thou may be another man or God, or as an impersonal relationship between the anonymous
mass and the individual self deprived of any authentic communication with others.

Fourth, Existentialism focused on ontology, on some doctrine of the general meaning of Being, which can be approached in any number of ways: through the analysis of the temporal structure of existence; through the etymologies of the most common words-on the supposition that in ordinary language Being itself is disclosed, at least partly (and thus is also hidden); through the relational clarification of existence by which it is possible to catch a glimpse, through ciphers or symbols, of the Being of the world, of the soul and of God; through existential psycho analysis that makes conscious, the fundamental "project" in which existence consists; or finally, through the analysis of the fundamental modality to which all the aspects of existence conform-i.e., through the analysis of possibility.

There is, in the fifth place, the therapeutic value of existential analysis that permits, on the one hand, the liberating of human existence from the beguilements or debasement to which it is subject in daily life and on the other hand, the directing of human existence toward its authenticity; i.e., toward a relationship that is well grounded on itself, and with other men, with the world, and with God.

The various forms of Existentialism may also be distinguished on the basis of the language, which is an indication of the cultural traditions
to which they belong and which often explains the differences in terminology among the various authors. The principal representatives of German Existentialism are Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) and Karl Jaspers; (1883-1969) those of French personality Existentialism are Gabriel Marcel (1889-1973) and Jean Paul Sartre (1905-...); that of French Phenomenology is Maurice Merle Poncy; that of Spanish Existentialism is Jose Ortega Y Gasset; that of Russian Idealistic Existentialism is Nikolay Berdyayev; and that of Italian Existentialism is Nicola Abbagnano. The Linguistic differences, however are not decisive for a determination of Philosophical affinities. For example, Marcel and Sartre are further apart than Heidegger and Sartre; and there is greater affinity between Abbagnano and Merleau-Ponty than between Merleau Ponty and Marcel.

Having developed in different and contrasting directions, Existentialism has furnished philososophy and the whole of contemporary culture with conceptual tools. Such terms as ‘problematicity’, ‘chance’, ‘condition’, choice ‘freedom’ and ‘project’ can be employed usefully for the interpretation of existence. The literary artists all over the world were also influenced in a very significant manner by the existentialist emotions. The noted writers like Franz Kafka, Jean-Paul Satre, Albert Camus, Gabriel Marcel, Eugene Ionesco, Proust Malraux, Virginia
Woolf, Graham Greene, T.S. Eliot, Samuel Becket, James Joyce, William Godling, William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway and quite a few other have meaning-fully employed this theme in their immortal works. In post-Independence Indian English writings too, we witness quite explicitly such concerns, which forms the subject matter of the next Chapter.
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