EXISTENTIAL CONCEPTS AND SARTRE'S CREATIVE WRITINGS
Consciousness is in immediate contact with things-in-themselves. This view is based on phenomenology's basic axiom: Consciousness is consciousness of something that it is not of itself. Consequently, understanding involves no reference to an absolute in relation to which things would appear to be shifting and unreliable manifestation. This phenomenological analysis of Husserl leads one to discover the possibility of the meaningfulness of things-in-themselves.

Instead of emphasizing the question of structures which would make things understandable, existentialists stress upon the fact that everything encountered by consciousness exists. For existentialists, consciousness is fundamentally emotive; its nature is not that which reveals material things. Feeling, for example, is one of the most common states of consciousness.
Since consciousness can reflect only what exists, feeling co-exists with things and is a subject of philosophical enquiry of the same significance that is attached to things. Similarly, dread or fear exists as much as does a tree or a table and therefore enjoys the status and significance of an object existing in the objective world.

The fundamental problem for Husserl was to explain how every object could not only be unique but also comprehensible. He held that an object was not a sum total of its interchangeable qualities. A quality cannot be separated from its object. It is the object in itself and not merely the means by which the real object is perceived that is hidden from us.

Existentialists pointed out or rather enlarged this view by saying that just as the quality of an object, for example, a particular colour, say red, is never the same in relation to another object because of being inseparable from its object, so no two existences can ever be identical. Existence is not only primary but also every human existence is unique. Existence is not a common quality that is added to something to produce man. Man is without any essence and there is no universal essence to which existence is added. We cannot define man first, for instance a rational being, and then describe him as a professor or an engineer, because a professor or an engineer can be described by his existence.
only, apart from them he is nobody.

In the view of existentialists, man is born in a certain historical situation and thereby acquires a character completely different from that of a man born in other ages. There is no possibility of conceiving a man apart from his given situation. Being conscious of situation and historicity, human existence is, therefore, unique. It implies that man has a certain historical commitment, a particular role to play.

For Sartre, existence precedes essence means that "man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world—and defines himself afterwards."\(^1\) It means that he encounters his historicity and moulds himself accordingly. Thus he plays a role in shaping his historic situation and making himself. "He will not be anything until later, and then he will be what he makes of himself."\(^2\)

This inescapable decision on the part of man to be 'what he makes of himself', makes him not only responsible for his own existence but a legislator of the man. Because "in choosing what I shall be", Sartre holds; "I choose what man shall be".\(^3\) Sartre says:

"When we say man is responsible for himself we do not mean that he is responsible only for his own individuality, but that he is responsible for all men... If however,
existence precedes essence, and we will to exist at the same time as we fashion our image, that image is valid for all and for the entire epoch in which we find ourselves... In fashioning myself, I fashion man.⁴

This clearly indicates that man in Sartre's philosophy remains committed to the entire epoch in which he lives. In the passages that follow, we will develop this concept of commitment as elaborated by Sartre in his literary and philosophical works.

Commitment as a concept, though widely used and illustrated in literature has its roots in Sartre's basic philosophy. Sartre's concept is purely a 20th century product, however literature has been always committed to its contemporary era, and thus this concept in one or the other form has been employed in evaluating literary works of all ages. In the broadest sense of the term, commitment means acceptance of an outlook of life—a Weltanschauung—that is represented and defended to the best of one's ability in everything one undertakes. In art and literature commitment would mean an expression, implicit or explicit, of a specific historic experience and a value system that such an experience generates. It forms one's outlook. This specific outlook cannot be narrowed down to simple political or social situations only. It is, in addition to political and social situations of a certain era, the recognition of
specific men in specific relations to specific situations and experiences.

Sartre's stress on commitment in art and literature is not only a theoretical outcome of his philosophy as expressed in his "Being and Nothingness" but also projects his specific relations to his own historic situations and the experiences of his era. The specific situation and the experiences of the era which Sartre had encountered, requires to be examined briefly, to understand not only his view but also of the spread of existential thought in France during German occupation.

Existential philosophy is fundamentally a philosophy of crisis. "It is a philosophy of extreme situations, flourishes in extreme situations and produces a literature of these extreme situations." The situation of France during German occupation was of extreme crisis, or extreme situation. Hence the emergence of existential thought during this period was the historical outcome of the era. In such situations the whole approach of man's consciousness changes and he starts asking questions anew. Since Sartre wrote during the war as well as during the German occupation of France, some critics, particularly Marxists, claim that Sartre's philosophy is essentially an echo of war—years and the expression of a people's disillusionment and shattering of his dreams and ideals.
To this claim, it can be said that if existentialism is a philosophy which develops and flourishes in extreme situations then it is not only war that could create such conditions. Many other conditions can create extreme situations. "The Plague" by Albert Camus, is one of such examples, where an epidemic, and not the war, is the cause of creating extreme situations. Alfred Stern has over simplified the issue with regard to Kierkegaard's revival (in the philosophy of Heidegger) in Nazi Germany because of the rise of Hitler. Sartre has rejected the view of the exponents of the traditional and dogmatic Marxism that: German existentialism became active under the influence of Nazis or that French existentialism was a war time reaction of the bourgeois class against the occupation forces. Wilfrid Desan holds that traditional Marxism has provided a framework into which its followers think that they must impose history upon man instead of letting the events speak for themselves. He maintains that "if Sartre is a Marxist in his adherence to the Marxist formula of History, he is nevertheless existentialist in his reading of that formula." Moreover, Heidegger has never been an activist. On the contrary he was criticized for remaining silent during Hitler's regime or rather supporting it. "It is as absurd", says Wilfrid Desan, "to claim that Heidegger was the product of Nazi influence as to say that Sartre's philosophy is an echo of war." Moreover, besides his other philosophical works, Sartre had started writing his philosophical magnum opus "Being and Nothingness" in 1930. Though it
was published in 1943, i.e. during German occupation, he might have completed the main portion of this work much before war or occupation.

The situation and the conditions that were created during the war could be responsible for the development of existential thought, but that Sartre's philosophy took its specific shape during the war years is just a co-incidence, it can't be connected necessarily with the war. It seems that the complexity of existential experience is beyond the comprehension of its Marxist critics. The blunt fact is that though war could provide the situation that was conducive to the development of existential thought, but there are other factors as well which could equally help to develop this trend of thought. Religion, politics, science, technology, disease and even extreme poverty can culminate in situations which may be instrumental in the development of existential thought. As for the world war II, France was really a place where such extreme situation had arisen. In the words of Sartre:

"We had lost all our rights, beginning with the right to talk. Every day we were insulted to our faces and had to take it in silence... At every instant we lived up to the full sense of this common place little phrase: 'Man is mortal.'"
This historic situation not only helped Sartre to develop his philosophy but also made him to stress firmly the fundamental requirement of a writer to be committed to his era. Sartre says:

"The writer is in a situation in his era; each word has its repercussions. Each silence as well. I hold Flaubert and Goncourt responsible for the repression that followed the commune because they failed to write a line to prevent it."\(^{12}\)

"Each word has its repercussions" means that the very act of writing is an act of commitment. Sartre says:

"To write is to talk, and to talk is to reveal an aspect of the world, in order to change it."\(^{13}\)

In this sense, the whole literature has been always committed to the world with a resolve to change it. This interpretation of literature does not only reject the notion of "Art for Art's sake"—but also reminds writers that they have no choice but to commit to the world of men. They cannot but portray their existential experience implicitly or explicitly, and this portrayal has to be in contemporary perspective. A writer who succumbs to social, political or even religious forces unconsciously denies his freedom and becomes an instrument in their hands instead of changing it. Sartre says:
"As I talk I reveal the situation... I reveal it to myself and to others in order to change it."\textsuperscript{14}

Sartre's repeated stress on writers 'to change the world' involves two aspects. Firstly, it is an assertion of man's creativity and freedom, and freedom is not possible unless man encounters his historic situation as a truly free being. Unless a writer is committed to the liberty of man, a truthful representation of human situation is not possible. It is this truthful representation of the world that can lead writers to change the world. Secondly this dictum, that is 'to change the world' immediately reminds us Karl Marx's famous pronouncement, 'Philosophers have hitherto interpreted the world in various ways—the point however is to change it'. Since Sartre's philosophy is closely connected, though not fully, with Marx's philosophy, his use of the phrase 'to change it' should also mean political and social revolution in the Marxian sense of the term. Of course, Sartrian revolution is for safeguarding individual's freedom, while Marxian revolution is historically determined, not the outcome of man's free choice.

It is for this reason that almost all the characters of Sartre's novels, stories and plays are not only involved in a particular historic situations but are also committed, directly or indirectly, to the overall human situation of
their epoch. The most striking example of this commitment is found in the third novel of his triology 'Roads to Freedom'. The main character of this triology Mathieu Delarue is committed to his own freedom, but in a particular historic setting he remains politically uncommitted and inactive in the first two novels, viz. "The Age of Reason" and "The Reprieve". It is mainly because in these two novels all the action takes place before the outbreak of the second world war. Mathieu's hesitation to commit himself is an indication of his misconception of individual freedom. He considers it abstract and solely personal, though individual freedom is meaningless if it is isolated from historic situation. But in the third novel "Iron in Soul" the 'die is caste' with the defeat of France. An extreme situation prevails under the Nazi occupation. The Nazi forces indulge in atrocities unheard of in human history—people are driven to concentration camps—dead bodies are found everywhere—political prisoners are tortured brutally and gas chambers are in operation. Mathieu finds no alternative but to commit himself to fight against this unprecedented encroachment upon a people's freedom. The entire France is transformed into a vast concentration camp, where no one has freedom. Even the victors do not behave like free human beings.

Since man in the modern age is entangled directly or indirectly, in the political struggle of the era, Sartre's characters are also involved in it. One of the most acute
expressions of this aspect is presented in "The Reprieve".16 Gross Louis, an innocent and simple man not involved in any unlawful activity, always finds himself in trouble and is finally locked up behind the bars. This is all because of the 'Dirty Hands' of politics about which the poor fellow knows nothing. That is why Sartre says:

"What is universal... is not nature but the situations in which man finds himself; that is, not the sum total of his psychological traits but the limits which enclose him on all sides."17

This is the reason why Sartre abandons the 'literature of hexis' in favour of 'literature of praxis'. By 'literature of hexis' he refers to the literature that presents an explanatory view of life, while by the 'literature of praxis' he means the literature which inspires action. Sartre defines the latter further:

"Through literature the collectively turns to reflection and mediation; it acquires an unhappy consciousness, an unstable image of itself which it forever seeks to modify and to improve."18

This literature is called by Sartre as 'total literature'. Instead of psychological treatment or analysis of characters it concerns itself with fundamental situations of man. This
literature will be inspired by such concerns whose primary aim will not be pleasing but irritating and disturbing.

"...they offer themselves as tasks to be performed; they invite us to quests without conclusion; they lead us to share in experiences in which the outcome remains uncertain." 

This position makes writers not only responsible but also committed to the era they belong, for, they cannot but write for their own time. As a result of the rapid scientific development and the disasterous effects of the two world wars in our century, philosophers had to re-examine their role in the world. What type of philosophies have been responsible for all this. They had to fix responsibility somewhere. However man was himself responsible for all the disasters. At an international writers congress, Sartre made the following statement:

"In such conditions, it matters little whether literature calls itself committed, for commitment it is bound to be inasmuch as totality nowadays consists, among other things, in the fact that we are all threatened with the possibility of dying in a nuclear war... This does not mean that the writers must necessarily deal with nuclear war; it rather means that a man who is afraid of dying like a rat cannot be wholly sincere if he confines himself to writing poems about birds."
Some aspect of the times must, in one way or another, be reflected in a work of art.\(^{20}\)

Instead of confining the concept of commitment to his ideological viewpoint, Sartre, by using the notion of 'totality', makes it an open concept. In *What is Literature*, he says:

"Commitment is inherent in the act of writing. To write is to talk and to talk is to reveal an aspect of the world, in order to change it. Literature is therefore the result of an attitude, conscious or unconscious towards the world. The committed writer is different from others, not because he is involved in the world, because... he endeavours to acquire the most lucid, most complete awareness of being involved, i.e. because he transfers his commitment from the level of immediately spontaneous to the level of consciousness."\(^{21}\)

What Sartre implies by the 'most complete awareness of being involved' is that the writers, who are lost in the deep slumber of their past, should have a tremendous sense of the present. He emphasizes so because the sense of the present is the most peculiar characteristic of our era. Life will remain a puzzle for a person who remains uncommitted to his situation in life. An uninvolved or uncommitted
person cannot understand the essence of life. Sartre says:

"It is not in some esoteric haunt that we discover ourselves, it is on the highway, in town, in the middle of the crowd, as a thing among things, a man among men."  

Art was considered in the past a self sufficient discipline, a 'thing apart', because its province was considered to be the so called unchangeable human nature. With the realization that man has no fixed natures, but he creates himself and his environment by constantly encountering his contemporary situation, the writers have to come to grips with their era, for, they cannot afford to take refuge in eternity. One cannot discover himself, i.e. his 'Being-for-itself' in some 'esoteric haunt'. One has to find it in the 'middle of the crowd' as 'a man among men'. Sartre says:

"For us, to write is to commit ourselves, for we must live before we can die."  

In this sense writing itself is 'living' one's life.  

What Sartre wants to emphasize is the impending danger of man's death through warfare. It is our responsibility to save mankind from such a death. If the writers do not take this aspect of the contemporary situation into account, the
whole literature as well as philosophy will become absurd. It is this situation the expressions of which are found in such movements in literature as the revolt of 'Angry young man', the 'theatre of the Absurd', the 'theatre of cruelty' and 'the absolute theatre' etc. These movements express the anguish of our generation for their pathetic search for new values in the background of continuous threat of extinction and loss of all meanings and values.

The culminating point of all these movements is a sense of commitment to our predicament. Though the first coherent expression of this concept is found in post-war French literature but it has acquired greater significance in the last three or four decades. Existential commitment to our own destiny and man's fate in general has, in-fact become more important today then it was earlier. Not only has the present day social stresses and strains increased complexity of life, the modern technological and scientific developments have reduced man into robots. This situation demands a stronger commitment to human existence from a writer. They have to discover or rather create a new meaning of life. That is also the reason why the existential writers stress upon subjectivity, which, not only authenticates the existence but also helps to unveil the mystery of existence.

Sartre, declares that 'eternity is the reward of those who take sides in the peculiarity of our time.'
Eternity, as we know, does not mean for Sartre, what theologians mean by it. He uses this term for a work of art which will be a work of art for all times. This is possible only when the artist creates his own age. Greater the artists' commitment to his age, the more profound will be his understanding of human existence in all ages. However, Sartre warns us that for the sake of commitment we should not ignore the technical and aesthetic values of literature or art, for literature as well as other fine arts have their own justification, values and purpose.
## REFERENCES


2. Ibid. : p. 28.

3. Ibid. : p. 29.


5. Stern, Alfred : "Sartre, His Philosophy and Psychoanalysis", op. cit., p. 82.

6. Ibid. : p. 83.


Maurice Natanson in his 'A Critique of J.P. Sartre’s Ontology', has summarized Sartre’s concept of freedom in the following lines:

"Freedom is the condition of the pour-soi, and since the pour-soi exists as "lack", its freedom is the expression of its Nothingness. The pour-soi is what it is not, and is not what it is. This instability defines its freedom. Again, since this is the condition of the pour-soi, man is condemned to this freedom. Man is condemned to be free because man is freedom."

Sartre’s concept of freedom is unique. His whole philosophy revolves around it. Like all other concepts, the concept of freedom is also grounded in Sartre’s distinction between being-in-itself (en-soi), and being-for-itself (pour-soi). As elaborated at many places in this dissertation,
being-in-itself has no possibility of extension or detaching itself from what it is; being-for-itself or consciousness, having an absolute possibility of nihilation, is in a continuous search of itself which it never attains. This continuous search for itself on the part of consciousness would not have been possible, had consciousness not been fundamentally free. The search, through negation of itself, at each and every breath of its existence, is nothing but a continuous activity of consciousness. "This activity, this necessity of choosing at every instant a perspective for viewing the world constitutes freedom."²

Freedom is, therefore, a condition of pour-soi, as Natanson has already pointed out; it however constitutes nothing other than the negation of itself by for-itself. It is through this freedom that man is not what he is and is what he is not. Only the awareness of freedom forces man to surpass towards his possibilities. Sartre says:

"To say that the for-itself has to be what it is, to say that it is what it is not while not being what it is, to say that in its existence precedes essence... all this is to say one and the same thing: to be aware that man is free."³

For Sartre, freedom is without essence. What Heidegger said of the Dasein in general can be said about freedom: that
is, "In it existence . precedes and commands essence." Therefore, there is no possibility of assigning any essence to freedom because essence is something that is given, a priori. However, freedom always surpasses essences when 'man surpasses the world towards its own possibilities'. Therefore;

"I am condemned to exist forever beyond my essence, beyond the causes and motives of my act. I am condemned to be free."^5

This statement also implies that no limit could be found to one's freedom except, of course, freedom itself or as Sartre puts it, 'we are not free to cease being free'. Only in 'bad-faith' can for-itself hide its freedom from itself. Sartre says:

"Thus refusal of freedom can be conceived only by an attempt to apprehend oneself as being-in-itself."^6

What Sartre wants to establish is that the very existence of man implies that he is free because freedom is not something that is given to him; he is it; he lives it from birth till death. Freedom, therefore, becomes inevitable to man. It is 'indefinable' and 'unnamable'. For-itself is always in the process of 'making', hence it refuses to be confined to definition. That is why Sartre identifies consciousness with freedom. But 'freedom is not being but the being of man' that receives nothing from outside or from inside.
"He was free, free for everything, free to act like an animal or like a machine, free for accepting, free for refusing, free for shuffling... He could do what he wanted to do, nobody had the right to advise him. There would be neither right nor wrong unless he invented them... He was alone in a monstrous silence, free and alone, without help, without an excuse, condemned to decide without any possible recourse, condemned forever to be free."

This is just one description of freedom given by Sartre in his novel "Age of Reason" through its main character Mathieu. Similarly Orestes, the central character of the play "The Flies", exclaims:

"Suddenly freedom dashed upon me and penetrated me... There was no longer anything in heaven, neither "good" nor "evil", nor anybody to give me orders... I am condemned to have no law other than my own... For I am a man and each man has to invent his own way."

A man, who is free, is evidently without any essence, as depicted in the above mentioned two passages. In this sense man becomes somewhat inessential entity without any activity or purpose. While depicting this role of consciousness, the characters of Sartre's novels and plays are often
seen to hesitate to commit themselves to any situation. Mathieu, (in Age of Reason) when approached by his old accomplice, Brunet to join the Communist Party, finds it not only difficult to agree but he rejects the proposal categorically. Brunet criticises the abstract freedom of Mathieu in the following words:

"You live in a void, you have cut your bourgeois connexions, you have no tie with the proletariat, you are adrift, you are an abstraction, a man who is not there. It can't be an amusing sort of life... you renounced everything in order to be free. Take one step further renounce your freedom and everything shall be rendered into you."

Mathieu, unable to renounce his freedom, expresses the following view about a man who commits himself to some cause:

"You have chosen to be a man. A man with powerful, rather knotted muscles, who deals in brief, stern truths, a man erect and self enclosed, sure of himself, a man of this earth, impervious to the angelical allurements of art, psychology, and politics, a whole man, nothing but a man."

And again, Mathieu thinks about his friend Brunet—who has committed his freedom to a political party:
"Brunet was right, his life was a destiny. His age, his class, his time—he had deliberately assumed them all, he had chosen the leaded stick that would strike him on the temple, the German shell that would shatter him to pieces. He had joined up, he had renounced his freedom, he was nothing but a soldier... 'He is freer than I; he is in harmony with himself and with the party.' There he was, extremely real."

"Mathieu : Well, you are lucky.
Brunet : Lucky to be a communist?
Mathieu : Yes.
Brunet : What a thing to say. It is a matter of choice, old boy.
Mathieu : I know you are lucky to have been able to choose.
Brunet : That means you are not going to be equally lucky."

Mathieu thought:

"Well an answer must be given. He is waiting. Yes or no. Join the party, inject a meaning into life, choose to be a man, to act, and to believe. That would be a salvation."

Brunet : You refuse.
Mathieu : Yes Brunet. I refuse.
Brunet : If you are counting on an inner inspiration to make up your mind, you may have to wait a long
time. Do you imagine that I was convinced when I joined the Communist Party? A conviction has to be created.

Mathieu: I know that. Go down on your knees and you will believe. I daresay you are right. But I want to believe first.¹²

A similar type of human reaction in the same kind of situation is found in Sartre's "The Flies", where its main character Orestes is addressed by his "Tutor":

"The Tutor: ...Your mind is free from prejudice and superstition, you have no family ties, no religion and no calling; you are free to turn your hand to anything... And yet you cavil at your lot!

Orestes: No, I do not cavil... you have left me free... I am light as gossamer and walk on air... Some men are born bespoken; a certain path has been assigned them and at its end there is something they must do, a deed allotted... And there are others, men of few words, who bear deep down in their hearts a lord of dark imagination; men whose whole life was changed because one day... when I was seven, I know I had no home, no roots. I let sounds and scents... slip past my body and fall round me—and I knew these
were for others... whereas I——! I am free as air, thank God. My mind is my own, gloriously aloof.  

From the first example, it is already evident that sticking to abstract freedom has made the life of Mathieu inessential and unbearable. Though Mathieu does not renounce his freedom at any stage either in "The Age of Reason", or in its second part "Iron in the Soul", yet we see him renouncing his freedom when France is defeated in the Second World War, in the third novel of Sartre's triology, "The Reprieve". Here Mathieu commits himself in a direct action to act against the German forces by joining a resistance movement.

In a similar way Orestes, fed up with his inessentialism, longs for renouncing his freedom. He exclaims!

"If there were something I could do, something to give me the freedom of the city; if even by a crime, I could acquire their memories, their hopes and fears, and fill with these the void within me, yes, even if I had to kill my own mother." 

It is not to be inferred that in particular dramatic situations consciousness of the characters of Sartre's novels and dramas urges for renouncing abstract freedom. What Sartre aims at stressing is that human existence lies in authentic commitment. Renunciation of abstract freedom leads one to
make a free choice by committing oneself to real freedom. In "Existentialism and Humanism" Sartre proclaims:

"What is at the very heart and centre of existentialism, is the absolute character of the free commitment, by which every man realises himself in realising a type of humanity." \(^{15}\)

Hence a man, even if he commits freely to some goal does not lose his freedom. He rather enhances its scope. By commitment he receives an essence but this essence is not inherited—it is his own work, his own choosing, which is, however, immediately thrown into his past. This choosing is his essence which can determine him—making him an in-itself. But since nothingness separates him from his past, he remains all the way as empty as for-itself. However, this distinction makes man free at two levels. At the first level, as being-for-itself, he is in search of total freedom or absolute freedom—it can be called ontological level (we borrow if Sabhajit Mishra's terminology because Sartre has nowhere used it),—the second level may be named as empirical level, the level where man commits to some cause and renders meaning to his existence.

The first level marks that state of consciousness which is absolutely barren and empty—it is free in abstract sense, it is unable to commit, it is absolute:
"The Church may collapse, I may tumble into a shell-hole, or drop back into my life; nothing can rob me of this eternal moment. There had been, and forever would be, that cold glare upon these stones under the black sky; the absolute forever, the absolute, without cause or sense or purpose, without past or future save a gratuitous splendid permanence. 'I am free'.\textsuperscript{17}

But consciousness is not what it is; it is freedom itself; it is always in search of its identity:

"Outside. Everything is outside: the trees on the guay, the two houses by the bridge that lend a pink flush to the darkness, the petrified prance of Henri IV's steed above my head; solid objects, all of them. Inside—nothing, not even a puff of smoke, there is no inside, there is nothing. Myself: nothing. I am free, he said to himself, and his mouth was dry.\textsuperscript{18}

Since man is nothing, he has to be; he has to create himself:

"I am nothing, I possess nothing. As inseparable from the world as light, and yet exiled, gliding like light over the surface of stones and water, but nothing can ever grasp me nor absorb me. Outside the world, outside the past, outside myself: freedom is exile, and I am condemned to be free."\textsuperscript{19}
In a very desperate and precarious situation of indecision, Mathieu even tries to commit suicide:

"Forgotten, unknown, and utterly alone: a defaulter; all mobilized men had gone two days ago, he had no business now to be here. Shall I take the train? What did it matter—go, or stay, or run away—acts of that kind would not call his freedom into play. And yet he must risk that freedom. He clutched the stone with both hands and leaned over the water. A plunge, and the water would engulf him, his freedom would be transmuted into water. ...This obscure suicide would also be an absolute, a law, a choice, a morality, all of them complete... He need only lean a little further over, and he would have made his choice, for all eternity... But he had no special reason for letting himself drop, nor any reason for not doing so... here was his freedom, and how horrible it was!... his legs dangling... suddenly he decided not to do it."\(^20\)

This decision of Mathieu, not to commit, is a decision at purely ontological level. But if man does not decide, choose and accept his responsibility at what we may call, empirical level, his existence remains unjustifiable. He remains unauthentic so long as he does not attach meaning to things, interpret them and thereafter commit himself to them. In this light we can understand why at the fall of
France, Mathieu renounces his freedom. He along with other soldiers wait for the arrival of Germans. Finally they came and the 'die is cast', Mathieu decides to act, he takes up a position in a tower and starts firing at the Germans. Now he attaches a specific meaning to each of his shots:

"One for Lola, whom I dared not rob, one for Marcelle, whom I ought to have ditched, one for Odetta, whom I didn't want to screw. This for books I never dared to write, this for the Journey I never made, this for everybody in general whom I wanted to hate and tried to understand... He was firing on his fellow men, on Virtue, on the whole world: Liberty in Terror... He fired, he was cleansed, he was all-powerful, he was free."
## REFERENCES


5. Ibid., : p. 439.


10. Ibid., : p. 119.

11. Ibid., : p. 120.

12. Ibid., : p. 121.


In lexicographical sense, authenticity means trustworthiness, reliability or genuineness. In existentialist terminology one's genuine commitment to one's own-self is also authenticity; wholeness, integrity or unity, in any field, is also authenticity. All that is opposite of such categories as hypocrisy, falsehood, conceit or deceit is also called Authenticity. An authentic life in its broadest sense can be said to be one based upon an accurate appraisal of the totality of human condition.

Existential philosophers, to some extent, attach the same meaning to this concept, but their treatment of this 'totality of human condition' is not only characteristic of their philosophy but revealing as well. In the first instance all the existential philosophers make a categorical distinction
between human and non-human beings, and reserve the term 'existence' for human beings only. Heidegger says:

"The being that exists is man. Man alone exists. Rocks are, but they do not exist. Horses are, but they do not exist. Angles are, but they do not exist. God is, but he does not exist."

The human existence possesses consciousness that distinguishes him from other beings and places him higher than all beings in the sphere of whole existence. The basic categories of this existence, according to Heidegger, are feeling, understanding and speech. Dasein, viz. being-there, is the term, Heidegger has coined for this being, and such a being according to him is ontological whereas non-human beings are ontic. Sartre, in a similar manner, distinguishes being-in-itself from being-for-itself. Jaspers also likewise distinguishes existence (mundane existence) from Existenz, which means 'to stand out'.

The purpose of drawing this distinction between human and non-human beings is nothing but to show that although man is necessarily in the world he should not get lost in the world and sink to the level of ontic being. Thus, it is the first and foremost characteristic of an authentic existence to recognize this duality and realize that 'being-in-the-world' does not imply 'being-in-the-midst-of-the-world'.
Sartre's treatment of "Being" is an attempt to show that in the act of existing, man transcends his past self by making it an object of regard. Throughout his "Being and Nothingness" he has made it abundantly clear that 'man is not what he is and he is what he is not'. At the core of this thesis lies the fundamental dichotomy of 'Being-for-itself' and 'Being-in-itself'. Being-for-itself is human consciousness that is the revelation of that which is. Being-in-itself is the world as revealed to man. Both are inseparably intertwined with each other, but one cannot become the other. Their inseparability is explained by the fact that since consciousness is always conscious of something, there is, therefore no possibility of conceiving being-for-itself without being-in-itself. However, being-for-itself acquires knowledge only by negating being-in-itself, which means that it knows an object in the very act of negating what it is not. Sartre says:

"Being is the negation of knowing and knowing gets all its strength from the negating of being."²

In "Being and Nothingness", Sartre explains it in the following words:

"Man is not a cafe waiter or a soldier or a professor in the same sense as mountain is a mountain. Cafe waiter, soldier or
professor is the subject which I have to be... from which I am separated—separated by Nothing—which isolates me from it so that I cannot be it. I can only play at being it."

In another famous passages of "Being and Nothingness" Sartre says:

"We both are and are not our past-selves, we both are and are not our future—selves. Absolutely nothing stands between past and present. Our past history is what it is, we cannot alter it. Our future is however, absolutely open, undetermined and it is by for-itself that future comes into being."

On the basis of this distinction, Sartre maintains that man first of all exists encounters himself, surges up in the world and defines himself afterwards. Man, for Sartre, is not definable because he is grounded in nothingness. He will not be anything until he creates meaning for himself; then only he will be what he makes of himself. Man is not what he conceives to be but he is what he wills and makes of himself. It is in this sense that Sartre declares that man is responsible for what he is.

On the basis of his analysis of being and unfolding its different modalities Sartre develops his theory of freedom and authenticity. It is only an authentic existence
that can recognize his past. Recognition of one's past is essential, through knowing his past man transcends the past and attains freedom. Therefore, in order to be free one cannot be otherwise but authentic.

Sartre calls inauthenticity 'bad faith', and what is opposite of 'bad faith' is termed by him "the project of sincerity", which means authenticity. Sartre's bad-faith and Heidegger's 'Being-in-the-midst-of-the-world' or to use another Heideggerian term fallen state of man, are different names of the same inauthentic existence. By 'fallenness', however, Heidegger does not mean that there is some sort of 'primitive paradise' from which man has fallen. He simply means that there is a superior mode of being to which we must rise in order to render authenticity to our existence.

Heidegger explains his concept of 'fallenness' with the help of two opposite poles, viz. Pseudo-subjectivity and pseudo-objectivity. "Das Man" is also pseudo-subjectivity. Consciousness of an individual is controlled in this state of fallenness, by the public. He is continuously controlled and led by some such source which is neither known to him nor does he bother to find its justification. Likewise in pseudo-objectivity, it is not the public but the man-made artificial world, the world transformed into soul-less machine by technology, that controls his actions as well as his thoughts. Gabril Marcil is of the view that in such a
state of affairs man is reduced to mere functions. He has to work strictly according to a given timetable. Such a world has its own space and time and man acts only as a tool in it. A human being lost between the poles of pseudo-subjective and pseudo-objective cannot realize its ontological roots. There is no possibility of any existential experience in such a state. Man is lost in petty fears and neurotic anxieties. He is an inauthentic existence.5

Heidegger's distinction between 'ontological' and the 'ontic' existence and Sartre's distinction between 'being-in-itself' and 'being-for-itself' are similar to Jaspers' distinction between 'Dasein' and 'Existenz'. Jaspers reserves the term 'Existenz' for authentic existence only, which we have already discussed in II chapter of this thesis. However, the realization of one's authenticity, which is germane to Existenz only, is possible through the recognition of the basic existential categories. While for Heidegger the basic existential categories are feeling, understanding and speech, for Jaspers, these categories are situationality, change, guilt and death. These are the unavoidable and undeniable features of human existence which can neither be altered nor transcended. An authentic existence in Jaspers does not escape the boundary situations. He accepts them and bears them out. He takes over his guilt and admits his responsibility. He also accepts death as an evident limit
of every person. But to realize all these categories i.e. to become authentic, Jaspers was aware, is very difficult. In many ways this understanding is blocked and inauthenticity creeps in. That is why he says:

"The wonder of the wonder, the one and only true being, I can meet, is the man who is himself."  

In their pursuit of authenticity, nearly all the contemporary existential philosophers have attacked both the subjectivists as well as the objectivists. Objectivists, while recognizing that man lives in the external world, deny that he can transcend it. Subjectivists, while recognizing that man can transcend the world, deny that he lives in it. Kierkegaard points out that "despair of the objectivists is the despair of necessity... and the despair of subjectivists is the despair of possibility."  

Only existential thinkers in our age have tried to understand the basic mode of human existence, which is being-in-the-world, but at the same time transcends the world. It is not day-to-day being. If one's being is stuck in the world, it becomes inauthentic. For them self is present in the world, but it can neither be absorbed in the world nor can it be isolated from it. In the words of R.G.Olson:

"The subjectivist is no less guilty than the objectivist. The self cannot breathe pure necessity, but neither can it survive
in pure possibility. In one case it is suffocated, in the other it is vaporized.\textsuperscript{8} 

The man who is unable to make distinction between a real object and its image loses his connection with the world. He lives in a world of his own dreams. He lives an inauthentic existence.

Authenticity can be said to be an ideal which has to be attained through continuous existential struggle. Every claim to authenticity cannot be an authentic claim. Sometimes we misread our real nature and claim that our selfish nature is authentic. Kierkegaard has furnished a striking example in view of this prima-facie discord. All men, he says, ought to cherish and preserve the lives of their children. But Ibrahim is called by God to sacrifice his son, Issac. This calling, Kierkegaard maintains, is anguish, for Ibrahim is suspended between the fear of disobeying God on land, and his doubt regarding genuineness of the call.\textsuperscript{9}

From ethical point of view Ibrahim's act of sacrificing his son was a crime or an evil deed and from the religious point of view it was a sin. It could never have been the case that God ordered Ibrahim and he followed it without consulting his inner self. It is possible that the decision of one's inner-self may sometimes be in conformity with religious or ethical norms. But the decision of one's inner-self in a state of crisis in always an authentic decision of an authentic
existence. When one follows such course, it is always the right course. It is what Kierkegaard means by this dictum: subjectivity is truth and truth is subjectivity. Kierkegaard's subjective truth is synonymous with 'authenticity'. It is this subjectivity, the call of one's inner self, which Ibrahim should have, in-fact, followed.

Sartre cites another example to substantiate his conception of authenticity. A man who is the only son of an ailing old lady is called upon to defend his motherland that is attacked by an enemy. On the one hand he loves his mother and does not wish to leave her alone to die unattended. On the other his patriotism urges him to join army for the defence of his motherland. It is in such a predicament that man has to ascertain his true loyalty or stronger passion by listening to his inner self. Authentic self is realized in such critical situations.¹⁰

No rule or criterion has so far been discovered which could tell us what is ultimately most dear to man. Sartre says that we cannot decide an issue by merely obeying our inclinations and feelings, because we can neither measure nor verify them. It is ultimately, he maintains, the choice of our inner being that can decide the issue. The moment we choose we become responsible for our act, because it is our being that chooses to become what it has not been till now.
If we choose what our most inner being prompts us to do, we realize our 'project of sincerity', i.e. authenticity. If we choose in 'bad faith', we fall in the trap of inauthenticity.

Existential 'choice' does not mean to choose among various alternatives, such as my choice of a blue necktie from among a number of neckties. It is rather an attitude towards freedom and responsibility. It is an ontological decision and not a description of man's external conditions. Freedom, for Sartre, is the state of Being of the being-for-itself to which it is necessarily bound. Sartre says:

"We are a freedom which chooses, but we do not choose to be free. We are condemned to be free." 11

Thus Sartre's distinction between authenticity and inauthenticity of our existence is rooted in our attitude towards freedom. Recognition of one's freedom as the source of all values and accepting responsibility arising out of this freedom is authenticity and its denial is inauthenticity. In *Anti-Semite and Jew*, Sartre applies his concept of authenticity to a definite and concrete situation. He says:

"If it is agreed that man may be defined as a being having freedom within the limits of a situation, then it is easy to see that the exercise of this freedom may be considered as authentic or un-authentic according to the choices made
in the situation... And the Jew does not escape this rule: authenticity for him is to live to the full of his condition as a Jew; unauthenticity is to deny it or to attempt to escape from it."12

Anti-Semite is inauthentic, because:

"He is a man who is afraid. Not of the Jews, to be sure, but of himself, of his own consciousness, of his liberty, of his instincts, of his responsibilities... of everything except the Jews. He is a coward who does not want to admit his cowardice to himself."13

If inauthenticity is an attempt to flee from one's self, its mode of operation, in Sartre's terminology, is 'bad faith'. Sartre's characters in his novels and plays are often seen expressing this dread i.e. a desire to flee into bad faith and inauthenticity from their human condition and freedom. In "The Reprieve" Daniel says:

"If I had been an insensible stone figure, uncapable of sound and movement, blind and deaf-flies and earwigs and ladybirds would run up and down me, and I should stand, a fantastic, white eyed statue, devoid of purpose, impervious to pain— I might then have coincided with myself. Not so as to accept myself, heaven forbid! but thus become the pure object of my hatred... Just to be."14
'Just to be' what? Does he want to be rock like being-in-itself. Sartre has explained three modalities of being. As a being it is what it is not and is not what it is; always trying to project itself as being-for-itself. As a consciousness it wants to have the impenetrable density of being-in-itself. As nothingness it wants to have its own foundation by naughting the being-in-itself.

In view of these three modalities, man does not want to return to simple being-in-itself, nor to a state of being thinghood. His fundamental project, as Alfred Stern has rightly observed, "is to be at the same time in-itself, like a thing, and for-itself, like a consciousness; determined like a thing, but free like a man; solid and eternal like a rock, but consciousness and sensible like a soul." To be more precise, man's fundamental project is to become "in-itself-for-itself"—'a self-conscious cosmos'. And that is what Sartre means by authenticity of human existence.

A similar type of conception is emotionally found in Iqbal's philosophy, nevertheless he has not analysed the diversity of 'being' in such a way. But Iqbal's treatment of almost all the concepts, which are central to existential philosophy, particularly authenticity (which is called in his terminology egohood or khudi) is akin to that of existentialist philosophers. Iqbal's conception of khudi is also similar to Kierkegaardian subjectivity. Dr. Waheed Akhtar has rightly concluded in his paper, entitled
"Existential Elements in Iqbal's Thought":

"Iqbal's philosophy reconciles existentialism with a radically new idealism. He made an attempt to reconstruct religious thought in Islam from existential viewpoint before the advent of new Existentialist philosophy of religion. It would not be justifiable to regard Iqbal as an existentialist in the technical sense of the term. But it would not be unjustifiable to study and analyse his thought from existentialist viewpoint. Iqbal combined together the religious insight of theistic existentialism with the social and historical awareness of the humanistic existentialism."

All existential philosophers accept Kierkegaard's principle that 'truth is subjectivity—and that it is authenticity. Kierkegaard, as we know, saw in the tyranny of the church the danger of an all-encompassing pantheism. Iqbal was also averse to all forms of pantheism. This aversion of Kierkegaard and Iqbal was based on their desire to save individuality of human being. In other words it was aimed at preserving man's authentic existence. In our society, man has become merely a tool, a negligible part of the gigantic social machinery. Man is lost and deprived of his individuality. In such a world, which is totally computerized, individual is neither able nor is he allowed to see what is revealed to him through his inner experience.
It is almost an impossible task to define this inner-self. Psychologists maintain that there are layers in our self which represent our feelings, emotions and impulses. Freud divided these layers into Id, Ego and superego, i.e. subconscious, conscious and unconscious. Id, according to Freud, is the depth of man. Sartre has rejected Freudian analysis of human personality dividing it into such layers, and he called it a 'materialist mythology'.

However, Freudian notions are not meaningless. Some of them are even relevant to our present discussion. What is Id in Freud's psycho-analysis is subjectivity in Kierkegaard's philosophy. Dread in Heidegger's term, Jaspers call it "Existenz" and Sartre names it to be "Being-in-itself-being-for-itself". All these concepts, viz. "Id", "Dread", subjectivity Existenz, or "Being-in-itself-being-for-itself" mainly point to the achievement of that stage of existence which is called authenticity. One who realizes and faces death, according to Heidegger, is an authentic being. Similarly one who realizes a boundary situation, in Jaspers' term or subjectivity in Kierkegaard's term, and in-itself-for-itself in Sartre's term attains the level of authenticity.

But authenticity is not to be understood as a stage which one attains once for all. Sartre has explained that man is always in the process of becoming. Jaspers has fully
justified that Existenz is not definite—there is always a sort of fluctuation in it.

Authenticity thus conceived is one's capacity to hear the call of his innermost being in the stillness of solitude. "It wells forth from the depths of man's consciousness just like true love. The moments of authenticity are usually limited and in such moments one may even weep... but the tears he sheds are fit for purifying the angels." 17

Authenticity, commitment and freedom are inter-related concepts that are actually dependent upon and complementary to each other. Besides Sartre's philosophy, these conceptions occupy very important place in Sartre's theory of art. According to his analysis of art, and particularly literature, art is the expression of one's authentic existence and a quest for freedom, or freedom itself. Authenticity and freedom have no meaning without commitment to man's historic situation. This commitment, in its deepest analysis, is nothing but commitment to one's authentic free being. Thus all art is quest for authenticity and freedom with a profound and firm sense of commitment to one's self and one's historic situation. This sense is rooted in concern for man's freedom.

These Sartrian notions may appear exercise in philosophical jargon unless one studies Sartre's own literary works in the
light of these notions. These Sartrian conception may also prove to be of immense value if one studies all art and literature in this light. Sartre, in developing his theory of art, did not only provide tools of art-criticism, but also provided an insight into the spirit of art, that is man's most inner being.

***
REFERENCES


4. Ibid. : p. 105.


11. " " : "Being and Nothingness", op. cit.,

13. Ibid., : p. 145.


