CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

(i) A Critical Evaluation of the Views of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger and Sartre on the Image of Man

Existentialism as a philosophy of human existence has attracted the attention of people all over the world in diverse fields, with its exclusive emphasis upon the problems of human life. However, the existentialists do not form a particular methodology, and their standpoints are also different. In our comparative study of the existentialist thoughts of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger and Sartre on the Image of Man, we have come across the theistic, as well as, atheistic trends, and the ideological differences, aims and objectives, which evoke our admiration and also provoke critical comments.

Kierkegaard, the pioneer of the existentialist movement, is a staunch spiritualist, a strong believer in the spiritual values of life, a reformist of traditional Christianity, an ardent follower of religion as a practical way of life guided by faith, an upholder of the subjectivity of truth against objectivity, of freedom against determinism, of the primacy of passion against reason. In spite of our disagreement with certain aspects of his thought, we cannot but admire him for his valuable contribution to the existentialist thought in particular and to the world-thought in general, centering upon the image of man. In the words of R.C. Solomon, "Kierkegaard evidences the traits of the philosophical sophist and the confused philosophical novice as well as the traits of genius and sincerity which make him one of the great religious philosophers of modern times."(1)
In Kierkegaard's philosophy, psychology occupies an important place, in so far as he gives a detailed analysis of 'dread' and other passions in the most perceptive way, and points out the place of despair in human life. Thus his contribution to the nineteenth century psychology has been great; and his influence upon the subsequent existentialist thought has been noteworthy. The ideas of dread and despair form the key-note of all existentialist thoughts in respect of the obstacle-ridden human situation, as in the case of Heidegger's anxiety and Sartre's anguish.

Kierkegaard's credit lies in raising the question of the value of freedom which, in later existentialist thinkers, became the central problem of their philosophy. According to him, the worth of one's actions is determined by the existential value of freedom; that is to say, an action has existential value, if it is the result of a freely chosen commitment. Free choice is the mark of the truly existent individual. Freedom is valuable to an existent individual, rather than to a member of the crowd. Better to suffer the despair or anxiety which accompanies one's consciousness of freedom, than to be secure and comfortable in the happiness of an uncritically accepted set of values derived from the crowd.

His credit lies also in the re-interpretation of Christianity from the existentialist point of view, which puts emphasis upon the subjectivity of truth. Religion, for him, is a way of life, not a body of theoretical knowledge. According to his interpretation, God is the inner principle of every soul, and can be grasped inwardly through faith and self-sacrificing love.

Another contribution of Kierkegaard is the existential dialectic of the three spheres of existence, viz., the aesthetic, the moral, and the spiritual—which terminates at the spiritual level, the stage of man's absolute self-surrender to God.
However, in spite of the merits of Kierkegaard's existentialism, it has a lot of demerits and controversial points, which cannot be overlooked.

First of all, it may be mentioned that in his over-enthusiasm of putting emphasis upon the subjectivity of truth, he has done injustice to its objectivity, which is no less a fact. His view is prejudiced, being alergic to objectivity. But if truth is purely subjective, it will vary from person to person, and there will be no truth common to all, and as such, the universality of truth will be a misnomer. In fact, what is true is universally so, and is so eternally. Of course, what Kierkegaard means by saying that truth is subjective is perhaps that truth appears as subjective to the person who knows or realizes it, and beyond that, he has no idea of what truth is like. Still we have to admit that truth is something universal, whether it is or is not realized by all in the same way. R. C. Solomon observes, "However, it has often been claimed that this notion is itself incomprehensive, that truth is necessarily objective if it is truth at all. To speak of the subjective truth of mathematics or science is to speak utter non-sense; to speak of the 'subjective truth' of moral or religious commitment is not to speak of 'truth' all." (2)

There is a long-standing objection to Kierkegaard's defence of Christianity by his insistence on the absurdity or paradoxical nature of the Christian doctrines. It is argued that Kierkegaard fails to distinguish between paradox and absurdity, on the one hand, and flat logical contradiction and the utter non-sense, on the other. However, regarding this objection, R.C. Solomon says that according to Kierkegaard, 'paradox' refers to any notion for which rational explanations are not sufficient, and his paradoxes of ultimate choice and of Christianity are 'absurd' only in this sense that the orthodox doctrine of incarnation is absurd or incomprehensible, it does not violate any logical law. "It is true that Kierkegaard fails to use logical terms in their accepted
ways and that he fails to draw important distinctions; yet it does not follow and is not the case that his paradoxes make his philosophy explicitly inconsistent." (3)

Kierkegaard holds that faith is a necessity for religion, because the religious doctrines are absurd, and it is absurdity that makes faith possible—'there cannot be faith where there is truth'. But there are also other doctrines which are more absurd than the Christian. So says R.C. Solomon, "It often has been argued that there are doctrines other than those of traditional Christianity that are a good deal more absurd than the doctrine that Jesus was God-incarnate, for example, the doctrine that Pontius Pilate was God-incarnate. It is concluded that the absurdity of Christianity does not constitute its justification, for there are other doctrines more absurd." (4) However, according to Solomon, this objection misses the force of Kierkegaard's insistence on 'subjective truth'. "Kierkegaard does not argue that the justification of Christianity is the absurdity of its doctrine, but rather that the absurdity of its doctrine is a necessary condition for it to be a religious way of life. Kierkegaard insists that Christianity is not a set of doctrines, absurd or not, but a life of suffering and religious passion. Christianity is this way of life, and Kierkegaard claims that as such, it cannot be justified at all. The objection that there are more absurd doctrines is therefore to simply miss the point of Kierkegaard's conception of Christianity; it cannot be justified and is not defined by a set of doctrines." (5)

According to Solomon, there is not to be found in Kierkegaard's philosophy, any defence of his central value of freedom. He does not even recognize that there is a problem of the value of freedom. 'Kierkegaard makes virtually no mention of the "free-will problem," but simply assumes the reality of the individual freedom he values. (6)
In Kierkegaard's existential dialectics, the spiritual sphere is considered to be the most important; but in human society the moral sphere is actually more important. One may or may not be religious, but one must be moral, in one's social relationship to others. Kierkegaard being an introvert, a self-enclosed man, was unconcerned with society and social culture, living in his own world of inward divine passion and meditative trance. He took God as a purely immanent principle, without consideration of His transcendent nature. Hence, in his philosophy Man, God and the World cannot be related properly.

The image of man as depicted by Kierkegaard is one that has its eyes fixed on the inner sea of passions of divine love intent on uniting with God in the innermost depth of the soul, turning its back to society and the world. If everyone follows his ideal, there will be no society in its true sense, but only an atomic world of self-enclosed individuals like the world of Leibnitzian monads which are windowless and as such, unconcerned with one another. Thus, Kierkegaard leaves no room for inter-personal human relationship.

However, from Kierkegaard's own point of view, it may be said that he admits different stages of self-development and according to him, inter-personal relationship is a reality in aesthetic and moral stages of human life. Of course, Kierkegaard does not speak of any inter-personal relationship beyond the moral stage. But according to him, till the spiritual stage is attained, morality is an essential part of human life, which cannot be neglected in any way, and the moral life is based on the rational principle of authentic choice, the ideal of commitment and self-sacrifice, love and friendship, kindness and generosity, sense of duty and obligation and such other social virtues. It was not on moral considerations that Kierkegaard decided not to marry his beloved Regina, and refused her, although till death, he loved her as sincerely as he did ever before. According to him, one may be in the aesthetic or the
moral stage throughout one's life without being able to reach the spiritual stage. So, he does not in fact deny the world of sense and morality, but he glorifies the spiritual stage.

What impresses us most of all is Kierkegaard's idealization of philosophy and religion as a practical way of life rather than a mere body of theoretical doctrines. Live by doing, not by simply knowing—this is the ideal of Kierkegaard. An ideal man is one who is true to himself, who above all, transcending the moral, ultimately surrenders himself to God and lives a spiritual life in having union with God in the innermost depth of his soul.

To Nietzsche, goes the credit of initiating and directing the atheistic trend of existentialist thought, for which he is regarded as the second founder of existentialism. He exercised great influence on contemporary European thought. His motive was to bring philosophy close to man's instinctive beliefs and he looked upon the intellectual systems as series of abstractions. He was a strong individualist and believed in the concrete, rejecting all kinds of abstractionism. His declaration of the death of God is the starting-point of his philosophy, its basic principle; and it implies that any abstract concept like that of God is obsolete, which has no use or value to the life of a concrete existing individual. What is true is the concrete; the abstract has no truth or reality. According to him, "man is the valuing animal" and "without valuing, the nut of existence is hollow". He recognizes that life must be lived from within, from the standpoint of the person or the self. However, it does not mean introversion or subjectivism, what it means is that there is a crucial and inescapable distinction between authentic and inauthentic existence. "Man's task in life is to authenticate his existence and to the existentialist this can never mean the mere adherence to external moral codes, on the one hand, or the romantic's deification of passion and feeling on the other, nor even the vitalist's emphasis on the organic flow of life. Instead, it means personal choice, decision, commitment, and ever again
that art of valuing in the concrete situation that verifies one's truth by making it real in one's own life—in one's life with man and the world." (7)

Nietzsche was a non-conformist in his attitude to all religious beliefs and moral values of the past, and he held that man's will to power is the supreme principle of life. He has depicted an image of man, which was totally unknown to his ancestors. His concept of superman and his ideal of superhumanism is revolutionary in the contemporary western philosophy.

According to Solomon, "Nietzsche's philosophy of power could be translated into a philosophy of freedom, avoiding the harsh connotations of 'power' and bringing his moralizing into union with the respectable libertarian philosophies of Kant, Locke, and Mill."(8)

Nietzsche's credit lies in instilling self-confidence and self-dependence in man by his doctrine of Will to Power as the power of self-overcoming.

According to Nietzsche, the most valuable, interesting, uncontradicting and preservable object in any system of philosophy is that which expresses the philosopher's personality, his personal attitude. Aesthetics forms an essential part of his philosophical thinking which dominates his ethical and epistemological thought. The aim of mankind as a whole is the creation of a complete or perfect type of supermen, which is possible only in the atmosphere of high culture, but not at all in any state or politics which stands in the way of the dawn of genius and weakens mankind. Culture is like a pyramid: the more extensive and solid is its foundation, the more strong becomes its structure. As an advocate of the aesthetic ideal, he thought that man's salvation lies in the creation of a morally beautiful life by the exercise of his Will to Power, by subduing

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his lower animal instincts and by sublimating himself to the status of a superman.

Nietzsche's theory of the transvaluation of values is something unique and it has cast its influence on the subsequent existentialist thought. Nietzsche proclaimed that there is no pre-existent values established by God. With the death of God, man being left to himself, has to create his own values by himself.

His theory of eternal recurrence also plays an important role in modulating the human minds towards moral behaviour, lest one would be morally degraded and doomed for ever.

Side by side with the merits of Nietzsche's philosophy, we come across certain major points of demerit in his philosophy which deserve mention.

To start with, Nietzsche holds certain propositions, but he does not know how to justify them—such as, there are no facts, all theories are interpretations, and propositions are accepted on the basis of their survival value. In fact, Nietzsche gives us only a physiology of knowledge, but does not demonstrate whether we have right to such knowledge.

His arguments against the existence of God are not based upon logic, they are outbursts of an emotional agony. But any Godless theory, if not based upon logical argument, cannot have lasting effect.

Nietzsche's principle of the Will to Power has been claimed by him to be a universal principle, although he is against universalism and conceptualism, being essentially an exsitentialist and an individualist. Dr. M. K. Bhadra says, "the greatest objection to the principle 'Will to Power' is the universality claimed on its behalf. Such a claim gives it the inflexibility of Platonic idea and carries with it a denial of much that is characteristically Nietzschean and existential in
Nietzsche's thinking. (9) Again, his Will to Power represents different kinds of principles. "He uses the motive of power to criticise some moral principle (by using a questionable argument that the genesis of these values is in their desire for power) but he does not use this same principle as an explicit standard."(10)

Nietzsche's concept of Superman is vague, because, the Superman belongs to a distant future, and as such, he must transcend all actual knowledge. As R.C. Solomon says, "The doctrine of the Ubermensch is as inspiring, and as vague, as the Buddha's teachings of the true self." (11)

Nietzsche's concept of the Superman, on the one hand, and that of master-morality, and slave-morality on the other, are mutually inconsistent. His ideal of the Superman is that every man must become a Superman by overcoming himself through the exercise of his Will to Power; on the other hand, he says that there are two classes of men in society—the Master and the Slave. But in order to become a Superman, a man must be a master. Now, if everyone becomes a master, there would be none left to be slave, and in that case, the word 'master' would lose its sense. In Nietzsche's Society of Masters and Slaves no harmonious inter-personal relationship is possible, although he speaks of the cultivation of the four cardinal virtues—honesty, courageousness, generosity and politeness.

Nietzsche was dead against socialism and communism. He was against revolution and rising of the oppressed, which, according to him, is the signal for the danger of culture; because, he thought that there should be both masters and slaves in society for the sake of super-human culture.

Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal recurrence may be taken as a valuable philosophical metaphor, which plays an important role in modulating the human minds towards moral behaviour; but it is both logically and psychologically unsound. It is unsound
logically, because, there is no logical ground for believing that something will recur eternally without any scope for change or modification. If someone commits a mistake, it is not likely that he will go on committing the same mistake for ever; he is likely to correct it by himself or he may stand corrected by others. Psychologically also, one is not of unchangeable habits. Habits are formed as a result of performing the same act repeatedly. But in doing something one is not set at doing it recurrently till a habit for doing it is formed. Even habits are sometimes changed and new habits are formed in place of old ones. The doctrine of eternal recurrence is, therefore, a metaphorical truth, an offshoot of Nietzsche's imagination without any logical or factual basis.

Nietzsche's influence upon the 20th century German philosophy in one direction or the other was immense no doubt, but he himself is still very much a part of the 19th century against which he rebels. To quote his own words, "What does a philosopher demand of himself first and last? To overcome his time in himself, to become timeless.....I am less than Wagner, a child of this time: that is, a decadent." (12)

R.C. Solomon observes, 'His philosophical and personal failings give us an important model of what a philosopher can be. However, as with Kierkegaard, we are tempted to take "that individual" as one who strayed perhaps too far from the traditional modes of philosophy.' (13)

Thus, in spite of Nietzsche's honest intention to depict a secular image of man absolutely on the basis of his existentialist thought, he has failed to give us one that is logically coherent in minor details, although ideologically edifying and psychologically attractive and enchanting. However, he has undoubtedly opened up a new horizon before us, a new vista of the goal of humanity lying across it.
Heidegger's credit lies in bringing to a new light, the age-old problem of Being which troubled the philosophers a lot in the bygone days, specially the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle. Although an existentialist, Heidegger considered the ontological problem of Being to be of vital importance and he gave it the central place in his existentialist philosophy. According to him, the word 'Being' expresses the comprehensive mode of existence in which man enjoys a homeness with the whole universe; it is Being which gives foundation to all other existences and other entities which are called 'beings'. There is no being without Being. It is true also in the case of human being (Da-sein), to whom being reveals itself, and with whom human being, as well as, any other being has a relation of intimate inner unity. Thus Heidegger has analysed the concept of Being in such a way that both the universal Being and the particular being have been given their proper places in his system. A synoptic and integral treatment of the concept of Being is of great merit, so far as Heidegger's philosophy of Being is concerned, it is also something unique in the history of existentialist thought in general, as none else has dealt with the concept of Being in such a comprehensive way with such passionate interest.

Heidegger's importance has to be measured by the question he raised about being, not by the answer he gave. According to him, the pre-Socratic philosophers might have been unaware of the ontological difference between 'being' and 'Being', and unable to capture the real sense of Being, they gradually became forgetful of Being. According to Heidegger, the understanding of Being is the basic problem not only of philosophy, but of all human enterprises and of human beings in general. The tensions of modern culture are themselves based upon our failure to apprehend the problem of Being. The neglect of the problem and the consequent falling away from Being is at the root of the unhappy state of metaphysics, and of the decline of culture in general.
Language plays a very important role in our inter-personal communication of thought and personal experience, even thinking itself involves language, we think in terms of unexpressed language. Heidegger has done a good service to philosophy by drawing our attention to the fact that we cannot neglect language in our discussion of the problem of Being, because it is in language that we can express anything without reference to what is called 'Being'. According to him, it is the linguistic structure of our modes of expression which contains the key to the understanding of the unity of being with Being.

Side by side with the concept of Being, Heidegger has also dealt with the concept of 'Nothing', which is revealed to a being in the experience of dread. Temporality and death have also been discussed by him as related to the existential structure of Da-sein. In fact, Heidegger has considered all aspects of Da-sein standing face to face with Being. Till the realization of self-identity with Being, Da-sein passes through various modes of being like a traveller in his journey towards his destination. Human life is all along a missionary journey towards the Holy for a glimpse of Being, in passionate union with which alone man has real fulfilment of his life.

However, Heidegger's concept of man and his philosophical thought as a whole cannot be said to be entirely flawless. We may mention some of the major points of demerit in his thought centering upon his concept of man.

(i) Heidegger has been over-enthusiastic in depicting the image of man in the context of his concept of Being, but his attempts have not been quite successful as expected. Instead of making the concept of Being clear and distinct, he has rather thrown it into obscurity and mysteriousness. In his hand, 'Being' has become an abstract concept like Aristotle's Being qua Being, which can be thought of, but cannot be experienced like concrete objects of the world. Although Heidegger understands that it is
Being which gives foundation to all our existence and entities called 'beings', he has been unsuccessful in indicating the exact nature of Being. According to him, Being is infinite and all-transcending, which is incapable of being grasped by any particular experience. No human experience can cross its limitations for the merger of the Da-sein in the Being, because, Heidegger never says that Da-sein is of the essence of Being, as Śaṅkarācārya, the Advaita Vedāntist, says that Jīva is essentially identical with Brahman, or as Tagore, the philosopher-poet, says that a finite man is essentially identical with the Universal Man (Mānavabrahma).

(ii) Heidegger put emphasis upon the importance of language in dealing with the concept of Being, but later on, said that ultimately language must give way to silence for the realization of the presence of Being. But the silence becomes an unending process of waiting for the revelation of the Being to man who would be waiting for its grace in sincere gratitude for the gift of the Being.

(iii) In his discussion on Nothing, Heidegger says that our everyday experiences of the concrete cases of negation require a foundation which is Nothing, but we have no experience of such a thing as the foundation of all our particular experiences of negation or non-being. The whole world in the process of getting destroyed in our feeling of dread or anxiety is, of course, a case of particular experience; but that is not an experience of Nothing as such. Thus Nothing is nothing but a totality of the experiences of negation.

(iv) Heidegger has spoken of man as a being-in-the-world, as man and the world are inseparable. But man cannot understand his relation with the world without knowing what he is and what are the objects of the world. Even in his practical activities, man is aware of what he is doing, although it may not be an explicit awareness. So man has to assume the role of
a knower and that of a doer; he cannot be a doer without being a knower. As Dr. M. K. Bhadra says, "Heidegger had spoken of a knowledge in the level of practical activity and he calls it circumspection. But even circumspection is a case of knowing, though it is a case of knowing how. If we keep these things in mind, we cannot say that man's true relation with the outer world is that of inseparability, rather it is one of separable inseparability. Only we have to remember that separability should not be stressed too far, but relation between man and the outer world should be such, that man can always remain in touch with the world. Heidegger has reminded us of the dangers of abstract subjectivity, but we must also be aware of the fallacy of misplaced concreteness, so that subjectivity is lost and becomes reduced to a part of the non-living nature."(14)

(v) According to Heidegger's diagnosis, man's condition is fallen and his sense of guilt leads him to salvation, but God does not enter the process at any point. However, if the human predicament is as he describes it, one has no right to spend one's time over analysing its structure, one should rather do something about it, because, action is the sure remedy to it.

(vi) Heidegger's description of human life is one-sided, he has isolated certain aspects of it to the neglect of the life of the community and the society. Dr. B.N. Tripathi says, "He has in view not man in general, but man in urban society as we face presently in the West, surrounded by a mechanized environment. Attention is not focussed on the graces that adorn daily life. We come across a caricature of daily life instead of real portrait."(15) Man is, after all, a social being; but in Heidegger's image of man, the social aspect of human life is not given proper place, as in the image of man portrayed by Kierkegaard. His concept of Da-sein as being-with (Mitsein) is depreciative rather than appreciative, because it highlights the fallenness of man, the inauthenticity of his everyday life.
(vii) Man is also a moral being, and it is quite expected that in any image of man, his moral aspect must not be neglected. But in depicting the image of man, Heidegger has not given due importance to it. Of course, Heidegger makes a distinction between the authentic and inauthentic life, but the distinction is rather vague. A careful study of Heidegger's writings brings to light the devastating horror of death that ceaselessly disheartens man. Death for man is something more than the break up of the biological organism. Man is capable of anticipating his death, but the animal is not. Man dies as guilt, as one who has neglected one's opportunities of life.

(viii) Heidegger's over-emphasis upon death is accompanied by his striking indifference to birth. Life is intimately bound up with love. But there is perhaps nothing in the world that can be called sacred, as Heidegger sees it.

(ix) Heidegger's image of man creates the impression that man's ultimate destiny is only to become nothing. As R.K.Sinary observes: "Existentialism in the writings of Heidegger returns to the Greek wisdom of perceiving being as having limitless horizons and contours. His originality springs from his very idea of Nothingness. While in Kierkegaard one feels that human destiny is safe in the hands of God, in Heidegger one touches the absolute that is far above God and thence returns with a devouring emptiness, since what one eternally longed for is not there at all. Heidegger's existentialism is the philosophy of man's unmitigated desire to be nothingness itself."(16) Heidegger speaks of death as man's utmost possibility; but death is not a possibility, it is rather the end of human life. According to Dr. Margaret Chatterjee, "His thinking is not so much a thinking about life as a thinking about thinking." (17)

(x) Heidegger's concept of freedom also has its limitation; it lacks social, political and economic considerations; that is to say, he does not refer to social, political and economic freedom;
as according to him, "freedom is a participation in the disclosure of what-is-as-such." (18)

Still Heidegger's concept of man, so far as it goes, is one that deserves appreciation in view of the fact that "his analysis of man in Being and Time had become a kind of locus classicus for the existentialist concept of man." (19)

According to Heidegger, it is man who confers meaning on things. None has, perhaps, depicted the image of man so distinctly as he has done it, in contradistinction from that of the non-humans, as expressed by him in the following words: "The being that exists is man. Man alone exists. The rocks are, but they do not exist. The trees are, but they do not exist. The horses are, but they do not exist. The angels are, but they do not exist. God is, but God does not exist." (20) No doubt, his thought is predominantly metaphysically oriented; but in spite of that, he gives us a clear picture of what man, as a Da-sein, as an existent individual human being, essentially is, what are his possibilities along with his actualities, and how Da-sein as equipment can actualize his possibilities. Death is, in fact, the ultimate fate of man which is unavoidable. But so long as man is living, he must try his level best to realize his existence by all means. This is what Heidegger wants to say. Basically being a metaphysician and his thought being rooted in Christianity and having a poetical bent of mind, Heidegger might have turned his thought towards the Holy, keeping his existentialist standpoint in tact; but man as being-in-the-world, as an authentic being, as a Da-sein, has been depicted by him in the existentialist fashion, and his image of man, in spite of its alleged inadequacies, is truly an existentialist image of man indeed.

In the history of existentialist thought, Sartre is undoubtedly the most important figure, in whose thought, there is to be found the culmination of the development of existentialist thinking. He was at the crest of the existentialist movement,
and even in his life-time, he was crowned with formidable success for his extraordinary contributions to the philosophy of human existence. Existentialism is, after all, a philosophy of man, and Sartre is, truly speaking, a committed philosopher of man. He is the worthy successor of Nietzsche, in his denial of the existence of God and the elimination of conceptualism, in his rejection of the traditional moral values and absolutist ethics, and in bestowing upon man the blessedness of being the master of his own values and shaping his own destiny, by his authentic choice, free will and action.

Frederick Copleston says, "In a certain sense he seems to be committed to denying that there is any such thing as a universal concept of man, if that is to say, we mean by a universal concept of man a mental representation of definite fixed human essence or nature. For Sartre has defined the thesis that existence is prior to essence. There is no eternal essence of man, it were, which human beings instantiate. Man first exists and then defines himself. He makes or creates himself through his free choice. And what the individual becomes depends on himself. He is responsible for what he makes of himself." (21)

It God does not exist, there does not arise any question of there being an eternal idea of man existing in the Divine Mind; and no question of man's throwing on God the responsibility for what he is or what he becomes.

Sartre's concept of man as being-for-itself who is a self-conscious and self-determined being endowed with freedom of the will is far richer than Heidegger's concept of man in which man's freedom of the will has a narrower dimension; and Sartre's concept of Nothingness in comparison with Heidegger's concept of Nothing is more appealing and implicative, and at the same time, both logically and psychologically distinctive. The feeling of nothingness belongs to man as his natural characteristic, which he cannot get rid of, how much he may try
Sartre applies the Husserlian phenomenological method in his philosophy, but with certain reservation. As for Husserl, so for Sartre, consciousness is always intentionally active; but he does not, as Husserl does, believe in any transcendental ego or self. His analysis of human consciousness, for-itself, nothingness and bad faith is superb and commendable.

Sartre's concept of man is super-excellent mainly for two reasons: on the one hand, he has depicted the image of man as one who is condemned to be free, yet who is under the influence of bad faith, who has all the natural frailties of man, who displays emotional attitudes, and who is not confined to the quagmire of egoism, but thinks of the well-being of humanity as a whole. As he says, "What we choose is always the better; and nothing can be better for us unless it is better for all." (22)

Such existential humanistic attitude gives his philosophy a nobility of character that is something uncommon. Sartre was a philosopher of man and his destiny, and the image of man which he has depicted has a uniqueness that is not to be found in any other existentialist thinker.

Sartre has established a new brand of psychology as 'the Existentialist Psychology', by his existential analysis of consciousness, feeling and emotion; this is a great contribution to the field of modern psychology. His non-egoological theory of consciousness and the theory of emotion as perceptual are revolutionary.

Sartre, as an exception to others, has given a detailed account of his view regarding the relation of man and man as existent individuals, wherein we find an instance of his power of creative thinking and the subtlety of psychological analysis. To him goes the credit of the foundation of a new brand of psychological analysis, viz., the existential. He looks at everything from his own existentialist point of view, and
psychology also is not an exception to it. In dealing with the inter-personal human relationship, he stresses upon man's sexuality and love-relation. According to him, sexual orgasm is one of the means of being aware of one's own existence, and as such, sex-relation is the basic or primitive form of human relation. According to him, "it is only in certain moments of intensity.....in the sexual orgasm.....that man becomes aware of himself as an active existence not merely as an object that is always acted upon." (23)

Existence has diverse aspects and without having sexual orgasm, one misses the experience of the sexual aspect of existence, and thus one's experience of existence remains incomplete. It might have been that because of this belief Sartre himself lived with his friend Simone de Beauvoir as his unmarried wife, in order that he might have the experience of the sexual aspect of existence. He could not and did not neglect this aspect of human existence.

Sartre's contribution to social and political philosophy is also no less important. His very attempt to make a synthesis of Existentialism and Marxism, as found in his *Critique of Dialectical Reason* is epoch-making, irrespective of whether he has been successful or not in his attempt to do so.

In fact, Sartre has judged everything from his own existentialist point of view, and as such, his existentialist approach is all-comprehensive. He has painted an image of man in multi-colour, but all the colours used by him are given tonal finishing by the tinge of existentialism, and a simple look at the image makes one convinced that it is the image of none else than an existent man, being-for-itself, whose eyes point to his inner resolve to actualize his project of future possibility and translate his dreams into reality.
However, in spite of so many merits of Sartre's philosophy centering his concept of man, there are also some points which deserve critical consideration, because of their ambiguity and lack of clarity.

First of all, there seems to be a discrepancy in his thought when he says that man's existence is prior to his essence, and also that self-consciousness and freedom of the will are the two essential characteristics of man. If a man really exists, he must be essentially self-conscious and self-determined. So it may be rightly said that an existent man possesses the essential characteristics—self-consciousness and self-determination, without which we cannot speak of the existence of a man as a being-for-itself. Sartre's analysis of the for-itself can perfectly reasonably be described as an analysis of the essence of man. As Frederick Copleston says, "Suppose that I say with Sartre that consciousness is always ahead of itself, that man is always reaching out towards its possibility, that he is not determined by himself as something already made (by his facticite'), that he is defined by his project or operative ideal which may be different of course from his professed ideal, and that it is only with death that man relapses into being-in-itself (i'en-soi), am I not giving a description of nature or essence, as I see it of man, the human reality? The fact of the matter is that Sartre tried to show that freedom follows from the very structure of man. And if an analysis of this structure does not involve a concept of human nature or essence, I do not know what does involve it. The absence of a theological background does not seem to me to affect the issue." (24) Thus it cannot be denied that the concept of man involves the concept of essence. However, when Sartre says that man's existence precedes his essence, his intention seems to be that man exists first and only afterwards comes to know of his essence. But what he actually does mean is that man first of all exists and only afterwards acquires his essence by actually becoming self-conscious and self-determined. Here
the implication is that at first man simply is, and he gradually becomes existent by becoming self-conscious and self-determined through his authentic choice and self-efforts. So, there is a transition from the stage of simple being to that of existence proper. If it is so, then Sartre could have said that being precedes existence, that is to say, man, first of all, is, and exists afterwards, because, existence is something to be achieved, which essentially consists in self-consciousness and the freedom of the will to act. Man first knows his being only, not his 'essence'; and this 'being' is 'existence' in the ordinary sense, not in the strict existentialist sense. Thus, the precedence of existence as simple being over essential existence is a matter of transition from the non-cognitive to the cognitive stage, from the potential to the actual stage of existence. So, it follows that as a matter of fact, man is at first a potentially existent being and he becomes afterwards an actually existent being by his own efforts.

It is sometimes said that Sartre, in talking about nothingness as being introduced into the world by the for-itself, is concerned with profound metaphysics, or is representing nothingness as a special kind of something and thus falling victim to the bewildering influence of language. However, the experience of 'non-being' like the experience of the non-existence of Pierre in the restaurant where he was expected to be present at a particular time, certainly occurs; and Sartre does not say that because we use words like 'nothing' or 'non-existence', there must be realities corresponding to them. He is rather labouring the obvious, by talking about being and non-being. If non-being enters the world through consciousness, it follows that the non-being which, according to Sartre, is to be found at the heart of the for-itself, of consciousness, must be due to the agency of the for-itself. This is what Sartre means by saying that the for-itself secretes its own nothingness. But it is rather difficult to follow it. As Copleston says, "I must admit that this theory baffles me. I can see that if being-in-itself is as Sartre says it
is, it cannot be the origin of negation. But I would think it preferable to revise the concept of being-in-itself than to propose the very odd idea of consciousness secreting its own nothingness." (25)

Sartre denies the existence of any transcendental ego as the seat of consciousness; but the identity of consciousness cannot be maintained without any underlying unifying principle. Dr. M.K. Bhadra says, "Sartre has accepted the phenomenological method of Husserl, but he does not agree with Husserl in admitting the existence of an apparently unchanging ego. But if the different mental states have to be brought into harmony with one another, we have to accept some sort of identical consciousness. Otherwise, unity of man's experiences or his actions will not be established." (26)

Emmanuel Mounier criticises Sartre's concept of freedom on three grounds: (i) Since freedom is confined to the circle of subjectivity, to the condition of the for-itself, it never goes beyond its own subjectivity, to meet any real objective obstacles and it is objectivity that truly defines freedom. (ii) Sartre's concept of freedom leads to a form of idealism that excludes any meaning from the for-itself; (iii) His concept of freedom leads to a paradoxical theory of responsibility. (27) According to Maurice Natanson, "The essence of Mounier's three criticisms is that Sartre is espousing a form of idealism which, in isolating the pour-soi from the world and making of it a Nothingness, results in the failure of the pour-soi to attain those meanings which come only from real contact with the world. Freedom, meaning and responsibility are categories applicable to the pour-soi only to the degree to which they face objective existence." (28)

Mary Warnock has criticised Sartre's concept of freedom as extreme and unrestricted by saying that there is an enormous range of freedom for human beings who can not only do and feel as they choose but can 'be whatever they choose'. (29) But
as a matter of fact, her criticism is not well-founded. According to Sartre’s earlier concept of freedom, freedom is not freedom to do. He did not claim that human beings are omnipotent as she maintains. On the other hand, Sartre did not mean by freedom, freedom-to-do in the irrational manner as required by an indeterminist, because it renders the particular action as ‘absurd’. (30) His point is that when he speaks of freedom he does not mean a capricious, unlawful, gratuitous and incomprehensible contingency (31); and in opposition to the indeterminist, he claims that “to speak of an act without a cause is to speak of an act which would lack the intentional structure of every act.” (32) According to Dr. B. N. Tripathi, “For Sartre, our chosen ends operate as a kind of final cause. So our existence turns out to be what we freely choose to be, and is not grounded on any ideal essence...... In view of this active self-assertion of the human reality which is basically without ground or reason, man has even been described by Sartre as ‘a useless passion’.” (33)

Absolute freedom, no doubt, is a self-contradiction, because it is the freedom to do anything and everything; and if everybody starts exercising absolute freedom, then none will be in a position to have absolute freedom in practice. And there will be even freedom to negate freedom. Hence Sartre recognizes absolute freedom as situational. According to him, a man’s freedom is absolute only in the particular situation in which he has to choose all for himself. But still we have to admit that his exercise of freedom is subject to the situation concerned, which regulates and restricts it to a great extent, because he cannot apply his freedom beyond the purview of the situation in which he is placed. So in any case freedom cannot be regarded as wholly subjective and absolute.

So far as Sartre’s conception of value is concerned, he says that man is the creator of his own values, there being nothing
as absolute values. But in the absence of any universally obligatory moral law, man's social life would be chaotic, there being no uniformity of moral actions and value judgments. So in any case moral values are to be objective and universal. To this objection, it may be said in defence of Sartre that he, as a matter of fact, believes in situational ethics taking every moral decision to be based upon the situation concerned and one's authentic choice according to one's absolute freedom. If everybody acts according to his authentic choice in every situation, then even subjectivity will make room for objectivity and there will be no disorder in society. Sartre puts so much emphasis upon the authenticity of subjective choice that one's choice does not stand in the way of the well-being of others. As he says that in choosing for oneself, one chooses for the whole world. The implication is that one must not choose anything that is beneficial only to himself at the cost of harms to others. Thus there is a reconciliation between subjectivity and objectivity in Sartrean theory of values.

Sartre's concept of love and sex and his interpretation of inter-personal relationship on the basis of it are not amenable to reason and easy to understand. His psychology of sex is far removed from reality and outreaches even the Freudian Pansexualism in imaginative ingenuity.

Sartre considers love to be an impossible human relation, and masochism and sadism as natural rather than sexual perversions. But love is a factual desirable and pleasurable human relationship in the family life and social life. We cannot subscribe to Sartre's view that not pleasure but power over the other is the main purpose of the sexual relationship, and all relationships whatsoever. Instances of the happy sexual relationship and other kinds of inter-personal relationship are quite common to us. At the basis of such relationships, what is there is not possession of power over the other, but rather mutual

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understanding and the spirit of self-sacrifice. Thus, viewed properly, masochism and sadism are not natural, but really perversions of the sex impulse. If we accept such a view that the purpose of sexual intercourse is nothing but dominating over the other, then we have to admit that rape is an ideal type of intercourse, because in it one of the two persons involved in the act dominates over the other and the other passively suffers. Again, Sartre says that there is no love-relation in either of the two primitive human attitudes to sex, viz., masochistic and sadistic attitudes; but as a matter of fact, there is real love-relation in the masochistic attitude, because the masochist does not make any torture to his beloved, but indulges only in self-mortification. However, in the sadistic attitude there is no real love, because the sadist has no sympathy for his beloved and puts her to inhuman torture.

Sartre’s attempt to make a synthesis of Existentialism and Marxism is praiseworthy, but we have to remember that oil and water can never be mixed together and it is so with Existentialism and Marxism. It can only be said that Sartre wanted to attain the objective of collective human well-being and happiness through uniform authentic choices and efforts of the individuals, which Marx tried to attain by collective revolution of the proletariat against the bourgeois capitalists. But the fusion of Existentialism and Marxism is an impossible task, which Sartre tried to work out in vain. As Frederick Coplesten says, "In attempting a fusion between existentialism and Marxism Sartre shows, as one would expect, a great deal of ingenuity, even though he uses what is to my mind an unnecessarily obscure jargon, which makes the Critique of Dialectical Reason an even more difficult book to read than Being and Nothingness. As far as I know however, the Critique has not been completed. And though this may be due in large measure to Sartre's activities outside the field of theoretical philosophy, it seems reasonable to venture the hypothesis that
the intrinsic difficulty in effecting a real fusion is a major factor in holding up completion of the work. After all, it is no easy task to combine a philosophy which claims to present the objective dialectical structure of reality with one which regards all intelligibility as conferred by the self-conscious agent, man. One of the two has to yield to the other. Or both have to be revised in such a way that something new is created."(34) Again, "If we are prepared to regard provision of a revolutionary myth as a proper function of philosophy, we shall at any rate sympathize with Sartre's project, whether or not we believe that Marxism is the myth best adopted for the purpose. If however we do not regard the provision of revolutionary myths as a proper function of philosophy we may be inclined to think that Sartre has abandoned Philosophy for social and political action, and that his original contribution to philosophical thought lies in the phenomenological analyses of his earlier writings".(35)

(ii) The Prospect of Existentialism—the Making of 'Man as Becoming- unto-Death'

The existentialist outlook on human life and destiny has made existentialism a living philosophy of the world, and the existentialist Image of Man, a living Image. Existentialism has exerted great influence upon all branches of study concerning man and his world—psychology and education, literature and visual arts, ethics and theology. The problem of human existence occupies the central position in existentialist thought, which criticises everything that seems to threaten the possibility of authentic human existence. The existentialists are an exception to the professional philosophers, in view of the fact that they have concerned themselves with the concrete existence of man as a living being, as distinguished from the sub-human non-living beings. Man, in between birth and death, throughout the span of his life, is the sole concern of the existentialists, who have been absolutely dedicated to the understanding of man
and the development of his authentic existence, to the betterment of his living status in relation the the society and the world in which he lives, moves and has his being. In this respect, Existentialism, as a philosophical outlook, has a great prospective future.

In spite of its many defects and shortcomings, existentialism has contributed immensely to contemporary thought on human life and its multitude of problems, and as suggested ways of removing the sufferings and insecurities of human life by living authentically by his free authentic choice and self-conscious efforts. Truly it has been said by the existentialists that man is the architect of his own fate, the creator of his own destiny. Every man is what he makes of himself, what he becomes by his own efforts, the sole responsibility being vested on him as a free individual. Every man is in a constant process of becoming as distinguished from other beings, he is a becoming unto-death, and his true existence consists in becoming more and more perfect, having more and more authentic existence. Thus the existentialists are true guides to men in their journey towards perfection and sublimation of life. To the existentialists, life is action, not contemplation, and the more authentic it is, the more perfect it becomes. Of course, absolute perfection is an impossibility; and that is why, the existentialists say that the imperfections of man should be removed by all means as far as possible. The ideal of every man should, therefore, be the removal of imperfections and the eradication of evils from life to the fullest possible extent. If every man follows this ideal in his own way, on his own responsibility, in honest and sincere commitment, then the society as a whole would become more and more perfect, i.e., more and more free from imperfections, and there would be a heaven upon earth, an ideal, perfect place for the future generation, and none will have to worry, to suffer anxiety, while going out of existence, leaving the near and dear ones behind. Let us remember once more the immortal words of
Nietzsche: "That your dying be no blasphemy against man and earth, my friends, that I ask of the honey of your soul.... Thus I want to die myself that you, my friends, may love the earth more for my sake". (36)

Thus, in existentialism, particularly in the existentialism of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger and Sartre, we find an Image of Man which is nobler and richer than all the traditional images of man, and which can be a better guide to humanity ensuring a better prospect of life, in man's ceaseless becoming-unto-death for the realization of his authentic existence as a being-for-its­elf, giving birth to a new world of ideal human beings—self-conscious and self-determined, existent individuals, with self-commitment and self-responsibility, new hopes and aspirations, leading humanity to ever newer horizons of self-fulfilment and an ever progressive ideal society of authentically existent human beings. The Image of Man in Existentialism enlightens our minds with the vision of a future world of ideal human beings to whom—not pessimism, but optimism and meliorism would be the inspiring music of the soul!
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