

## Existentialist Concepts of Freedom and Morality: An Appraisal

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In the last century, especially after the Second World War, existentialism strongly influenced our culture and literature, and its impetus is still found with interest, as we have not been able to resolve some important things about human freedom and autonomy, authentic creativity and loneliness, responsibility and personal integrity, even about human solidarity. For our present societies, though blessed with amazing advancement of technology, are still not sensitive enough to the needs of self-expression. Though, several writers and thinkers who lived before Kierkegaard, tend to have been concerned with existentialist thought, Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855), a Christian existentialist, to whom all existential thinkers acknowledge their indebtedness, is considered ‘the very trunk of the tree of Existentialism of which the roots perhaps go as far back as Socrates, and the branches spread in modern times.’<sup>1</sup> He accepts fully the absurdity of the world, but unlike Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980), he does not begin with the postulate of the non-existence of God. It is believed that Kierkegaard emphasizes the concepts of the individual, of choice, of dread, and of paradox. He is, thus, credited to have introduced a great deal of salient themes of existentialism.<sup>2</sup> Existentialist thinkers are primarily divided into two groups: theistic and non-theistic. Kierkegaard, as he approaches his existentialist views, is consistently claimed to have fallen in the former group, while Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980) whose thought is founded on the non-existence of God as implying the non-existence of pre-assigned value, falls within the latter. However, theistic or atheistic, the allure of existentialism of any sort lies in its ability to grapple, in a non-trivial way, with so many common aspects of inner experiences of human condition, some of which are anxiety, anguish, dread, despair, boredom, guilt, loneliness, forlornness, lack of meaning, self-deception, suicide, death, suffering, finitude. This paper endeavours to critically examine the concepts of freedom and morality as found in both theistic and atheistic existentialist thoughts of Kierkegaard and Sartre respectively, while reviewing the latter’s position of ‘secular humanism’ in juxtaposition with his counterpart.

Existentialism can be defined as a movement or tendency against traditional philosophical system. But why is this movement? Generally speaking, a strong protest against idealist and rationalist philosophy on the one hand, and an attempt to build up a new phase of life by recovering freedom and individuality of man lost in a steady pace of scientific and technological exploration on the other, gave birth to this philosophy. “It is a revolt against authority—against the church and the many forms of religious authoritarianism that tend to destroy the inner spiritual development of the individual.”<sup>3</sup> The realization of philosophers that individual man of flesh and blood is not merely an idea or concept, nor an abstract reality manipulated by a machine or an instrument, but an independent human being experiencing anxiety, dread, fear and despair was the first and probably the foremost principle for which they boldly declared that man’s real significance rested on his consciousness of own existence and freedom. It seems that non-existence is an essential content of existence, because the necessity of one’s own existence is realized from one’s suspicion and inquisitiveness about own existence.<sup>4</sup>

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Classic forms of existentialism can be traced not only in philosophy, but also in literature, art, films, etc.<sup>5</sup> Existentialism typically exposes a dismissal of abstract theories, emphasizing the subjective realities of individual existence, individual freedom, and individual choice. Thus, 'man exists' means he has an individual reality and freedom which leads us to claim that every individual man is a probable of potency. Since free, he makes his own personality by his own independent choice for which he is solely responsible. Even, non-choosing is a form of choice, as he chooses 'not to choose.' The key themes are the individuals and systems, being and absurdity, the nature and significance of choice, the role of extreme experiences, and the nature of communication.<sup>6</sup> Individuals rather than the universals, and more clearly inner existence of the human individual, as inwardly experienced, are the primary concepts with which existentialists are concerned.

Kierkegaard, who first used the word 'existence' seems to have brought about 'the Copernican revolution' and sets the new vogue.<sup>7</sup> Kierkegaard holds that man cannot have full power of using his freedom at random, although he claims that man is free. His ultimate aim, often argued, was to favour a set of cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith and he thus held God responsible for the root cause of man's freedom. For him 'man is free' means to return freedom to God unconditionally, though God has created man as free in the world.<sup>8</sup> Since, according to Kierkegaard, man's destiny is pre-determined by God, it is argued that whatever decision man makes by free-choice is nothing but God's pre-planned divine design. Man chooses what God wants him to choose. Kierkegaard, as a matter of fact, intends to bring changes in society as a strong protest against the bourgeois social system by reviving one's sense of individuality and to implement in the world the edicts or injunction of God with a view to synthesizing individual originality and freedom with theological unsteady belief as well, and this provoked him to claim free-action to be responsible. So he cannot say that individual freedom is self-willed. He advocates to abandon the aesthetic stage of man's existence as he expressed it to be irresponsible and self-willed.<sup>9</sup> In this stage, man ignores his responsibility as he is prone to frustration, indecision, agitation and breaking of commitment. But when in this way he culminates in frustration, he makes decision with sincerity and importance in line with his pledges. As a result, this decision turns to responsible action. This is the ethical stage of existence in which such factors as concentration, devising and mental preparation lead a man to make him responsible.

According to Kierkegaard, there is in human being no responsibility that can be considered limited and specific, for man desires to outdo himself and to be other than what he himself is. From this point of view, a thing, or an object, is different from a human being. A stone, or an object, 'is' but it has no 'existence', because it has no possibility of becoming other than what it is in-itself. Contrarily, there is no limit, no boundary for a man; he is a man of an eternal world with unlimited freedom of choice, and every moment he can decide to be what he desires but the very fact is that he does not know what exactly he will become. There is an uncertainty, or a fear of danger, in that it is very difficult for a man to determine a thing to be good. Of course, it is plausible to argue that man cannot succeed in life unless there is no risk, no uncertainty, no fear of danger, and the like.<sup>10</sup> So, reality, or truth is to be searched for into one's own existence, not in abstract thought, and to that end, we must be subjective and we are to know ourselves – our core identity. Kierkegaard holds that knowing oneself is the best process of being unified with God and by his own conscious effort man can transcend his unlimited uncertainty waited before him; at the same time, it is possible for him to be something specific. In this way man reaches his religious stage of existence and his sense of responsibility is awakened, because

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Kierkegaard points out that in the case of performing religious purpose one can oppose morality even for a moment.<sup>11</sup>

The foregoing discussion of Kierkegaard hints that man is a unique, uncommon being whose real nature can never be known. For an individual man is not a self-contained being, he builds up himself every moment accepting the best one out of numerous phenomena. Man never ceases to build up himself in life until death comes to put an end all of his actions. In this way man's sense of responsibility gradually escalates since he feels compelled to abide by the rules and regulations in order to set himself free from anxiety, despair, etc. He is subordinate to commitment of his own action. For this reason, a conscious man with responsibility and sense of values seems to be a person with a real sense of morality. So, the exact meaning of freedom is commitment to action that helps man to build up himself as a man of full sense of liability. As to the three stages of existence Kierkegaard points out that man is neither bodily, nor spiritually distinct rather than a combination of the both. In the same vein, man is both temporal and eternal. But there is a third element to synthesize these two, which Kierkegaard calls spirit.<sup>12</sup> To Kierkegaard spirit in nothing but real self and that it is the self which is related to itself.<sup>13</sup> In addition, Kierkegaard is found to have expressed that this synthesis can be possible only in Christian way of life, i.e, it is God who creates man with the third element (spirit) to synthesize between the two opposite elements.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, it is man who has full responsibility of realizing and establishing the spirit given by God.

'Kierkegaard', as Dr. Datta remarks, 'revolts against Hegel's panlogism which fails to fathom the depth and wealth of inner ethical and religious experiences and reduces them to some static and abstract categories of Reason.'<sup>15</sup> He shows an anti-metaphysical attitude and a practical interest, not theoretical in his philosophy. He intends to discover God in himself, not in an external world. What we learn from his views of freedom is that his notions of ethics and religion are related to subjective or inner consciousness of one's own existence. Like Socrates he seems to find the only absolute certain truth in subjective, inward existence. Subjectivity is sometimes called the core point in Kierkegaard's philosophy. This subject, which is apart from knower of an object, is an ethical subject which Kierkegaard distinguished from the aesthetic subject with the marked difference that it is engaged in enjoying rather than knowing the objects.

In his writings like *Either /Or, The Sickness Unto Death, Concluding Unscientific Post-Script*, we can trace his ethical and spiritual approach with which he was deeply concerned. In what was perhaps his earliest major work *Either/Or* (1843), he suggests that people might effectively choose to live within either of two 'existence spheres'-- the aesthetic and the ethical. In aesthetical sphere man lives in search of such things as pleasure, novelty, and romantic individualism, which would eventually tend to decline and lead to boredom and frustration. In ethical stage a man complies with a sense of duty, but such a life would also involve much compromise of several genuinely human faculties and potentials. He, therefore, suggests a third, 'religious sphere' which enables man to live with aspirations that he would be individual before the Eternal. If man follows this truth he will achieve a full unity of purpose with all other people, living, individually, in the same truth. While distinguishing three broad spheres of existential transformation, he seemed to have put stress more on religious stage rather than those of ethical or aesthetic. Since associated with society, family and setting, man confronts various conflicts that stem from his surroundings and thus he takes a leap to the religious from the ethical life.

This is what he called 'leap of faith', a way of belief in God.<sup>16</sup> To have faith in God one must transcend rationality and this is what is known as doubting. Thus, Kierkegaard stresses that doubt is essential for belief in God and that it is not possible for one to have certain knowledge about religious doctrine. What he seems to express in the religious life is an effort to maintain a universal morality on the one hand, and to express one's own individuality in terms of universality, on the other.

Kierkegaard's view of freedom is completely religious as well as determined. He considers God to be the only source of all freedom. But if that is the case, is there any man who can be considered free completely? If Kierkegaard holds that the real meaning of freedom is to be a good Christian, or to return his freedom to God, then does he really possess freedom? As a matter of fact, if one's freedom is controlled by God, his freedom is obstructed like glass-ceiling, and how can he be free if he is required to surrender himself to the will of God? In this context we can also assert that man can have no liability if we concur in Kierkegaard's view that whatever man decides is already previously determined by God. If his destiny is so, then whatever is done by man is actually chosen by God and man can have no action of his own for which he is to be responsible.

Jean-Paul Sartre, the French existentialist playwright-philosopher, differs from Kierkegaard in terms of freedom and responsibility. Sartre, while defending his existentialism as humanism, mentioned that '...we can begin by saying that existentialism, in our sense of the word, is a doctrine that does render human life possible; a doctrine, also, which affirms that every truth and every action implies both an environment and a human subjectivity.'<sup>17</sup> As an individual human being, we cannot claim our actions are determined by forces exterior to us; for man is 'condemned to be free.' So, freedom is a basic factor of human existence. Sartre says we are 'doomed to freedom,' just as Heidegger says we are 'thrown into freedom'. Avoidance of any action is also performance of an action, a choice, chosen only by himself. 'Man is free' means he is a non-being, for man is born as having fully nothing (like *tabula rasa* of Locke) and he cannot have any universal nature of his own. Since non-being or nothing, he decides for doing something in this world, and his nature is made up from that moment. Man is completely alone and unaided when he makes his decision, and he himself is responsible for what he does and what he is today. Thus, man is nothing more or less than what he makes up of himself.<sup>18</sup> This leads Sartre to claim that there is no God, or ultimate reality, who can determine man's destiny to be regarded as good or evil. God is not required for man to become what he wants to become. In this sense, it is man who himself is responsible for the consequences of his choices.

The cardinal feature of Sartre's view of existentialism lies in his famous statement 'existence precedes essence,'<sup>19</sup> which means that man exists first and in that existence man defines himself and the world in his own subjectivity. Man is born as a single and unique being devoid of all nature, for 'man is nothing.' He says there are no essences that follow from the nature of the world, 'for human reality essence comes after existence.'<sup>20</sup> Man creates his own character and his own personality from the time of conception in womb, and in this way he builds up himself. He chooses his own future, which is obviously uncertain from which his tension, in his words, anxiety flows. It is, thus, said that a man can still become what he is not, or he was not before, or has not become yet, by his own activity. So, the best way of defining a man is: 'he is what he is not, he is not what he is.' Man is free with an unrestricted possibility; he can even become God, as he puts it, 'Being a man is equivalent to being engaged in becoming God', for man is always incomplete. No one is complete until death, when choosing ceases. And in

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choosing 'man is alone', as no one, not even God, can help him to choose, or intervene with his free choice. Sartre, actually, is of the opinion that individual man makes his existence and nature out of an endless world of possibility and innumerable problems for which he alone is responsible, since God or any other man cannot choose for a man on behalf of him. Man must blame himself, not others, for the consequences (desirable or undesirable) of his actions. So, I am responsible for only what I am and what I am not. From this point of view, Sartre seems to have claimed that we do not need God, even if He exists. He is, in Sartre's words, *de trop* to human being.

According to Sartre, man's action, though decided freely, can never be self-willed, since man must be responsible whenever and whatever he chooses for himself. And there should be commitment behind all actions of man, because he is responsible not only for himself, but for the whole of humanity as well.<sup>21</sup> Sartre, indeed, believes that we cannot escape responsibility even if we adopt an external moral system, because that moral system is, in fact, chosen by me, implicitly or explicitly, and for which we must take full responsibility. As a matter of fact, Sartre holds that as a human being his responsibility is for the whole mankind because all good or evil of mankind depends upon what an individual man adopts as a maxim of his action. Freedom does not mean, Sartre insists, to acquire what one wants but to determine one's own desires, even if they remain unfulfilled,<sup>22</sup> which does not mean that one chooses the world but that one chooses oneself in the world.<sup>23</sup> We might argue that Sartre's ethical view rests on this kind of concept of freedom. Man, being condemned to be free, carries the weight of the whole world on his shoulders; he is responsible for the world and for himself as a way of being.<sup>24</sup> Thus everyone chooses for the whole mankind through his own choice, and one frankly makes oneself that which one wants all mankind to do. As Sartre puts it:

I decide to marry and to have children even though this decision proceeds simply from my situation, from my passion or my desire, I am thereby committing, not only myself, but the humanity as a whole, to this practice of monogamy. I am thus responsible for myself and for all men and, an existing a certain image of man as I would have him to be.<sup>25</sup>

Every individual man in this sense has to be regarded as determining his own criteria, for we have no universal, or a priori moral standard, in our consciousness. Thus, morality is created by only individual man. This is very much akin to the formation of art. But Sartre, as we have seen, never says that morality can be created by individual as ego-centric; rather, he applies it to the whole mankind since man's duty is to consider before doing anything for himself whether it will be accepted to be good for all either. Man confronts anguish, because whenever I make a decision to be good, my sense of responsibility becomes conscious. In this sense, 'choosing' means to suffer from one kind of anguish and despair.

This view of Sartre clearly states that there is nothing in human life that can be considered as predetermined destiny. We control our present, and our future depends only upon our present criteria of act, because, Sartre argues, 'no signs are vouchsafed in this world'. Man has to find his own way out, as he is alone. We have already seen that Sartre never considers man's freedom to be self-willed even though he treats it as undetermined, nor does he separate it from sense of responsibility; rather, he imposes the burden of responsibility of the whole mankind on the shoulder of individual man. With this burden of responsibility Sartre lays stress

that everyone should admit that a man with commitment must have the right to act in such a manner by which the whole mankind would be benefited. But he who does not admit it really dissembles his anguish.<sup>26</sup> In addition, this kind of anguish is pure and simple to all those who possess responsibilities.<sup>27</sup>

Sartre's view makes us believe that man bears his burden of freedom and responsibility until he has a chance of self-passing. If all desires of man are fulfilled, he will turn into an object like a cauliflower devoid of freedom of choice, responsibility, etc. Freedom, therefore, survives in the strife of 'is' and 'is-not' (being and non-being), and its end is only in death. But in fact, Sartre does not affirm death to be man's free-choice, nevertheless, he claims that man is to be responsible for his life as well as his death.<sup>28</sup> But, Sartre can be challenged. How can I be responsible for the action that is not chosen by me? In addition, if death is undetermined, uncertain, or undecided, we have to admit that death necessarily impairs our freedom. If I am responsible for my own freedom of choice, I must consciously determine my desires, because, if my willed-act is not determined by me, I can never be responsible for that action. Sartre holds that if anybody throws a part of burning cigarette unwillingly, or unconsciously, for which any fire can be occurred, then the man should not be regarded to be liable as his action is considered here to be undetermined. On the contrary, a man is fully liable for hurling a bomb anywhere as he wills to do it for which his act is undoubtedly considered to be free.<sup>29</sup>

This poses to claim that a man is responsible only for that action which is caused by himself. And in this regard, his character, personality, and settings in which he lives work as pre-conditions of his action. Therefore, freedom, or self-willed action is subject to determinism, and this determination is influenced by our consciousness as well as directed by heredity, practice, environment, and so on. So, can we legitimately claim that we are completely free? Moreover, Sartre contends that involuntary action is irresponsible. If we accept this to be correct, it then demands a further interpretation of Sartre as to the subject of responsibility. As a matter of fact, I am responsible for causing a fire by throwing a burning cigarette as I myself decide to do it. In this connection, we go on to argue that if it is not self-willed, or intentional, I cannot be free at all. This suggests that both freedom of will and obstacle to it be affirmed in Sartre's philosophy. Furthermore, Sartre says that free-act is self-willed. But it is difficult for a man to count his action as free while he is to be accountable for all men. How am I free if other's good or evil depends upon my free-act? We argue that not only my right is deprived but there would be an interpose on my freedom as well, for Sartre maintains that as a free being he has the right to choose only that which will benefit all men.

Sartre bases his existentialism on humanism with an ovation as a decisive point of freedom.<sup>30</sup> He argues here that since he could create himself, his values should be invented because of his individuality, self-dignity as well as his freedom of choice. The crucial fact that leads him to raise this point is that he seems to have never accepted any a priori values.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, Sartre seems not to care about the fact that values are indeed manifold with hierarchies, and that values in our life are interconnected. For example, artistic values and social values depend on physical values, because we cannot do artistic or social activities without our lives or bodies. Sartre does not distinguish amongst the numerous types of values, such as political values, social values, legal values, cultural values, moral values, religious values, educational values, scholastic values, industrial values, values of life, values of language, technical values and emotional values, etc. As to humanism he perhaps intends to efface the despair, or dark side, of human life with a view to brightening it up. In his lecture styled

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“Existentialism and Humanism,” Sartre points out that ‘it cannot be regarded as a philosophy of quietism since it defines man in terms of his action; nor as a pessimistic description, the destiny of man is placed within himself.’<sup>32</sup> While explaining man’s freedom of choice, Sartre contends that every individual man necessarily gets engaged in extreme despair since we can no longer escape it as an outcome of our free choice about uncertain future. For man can probably hide his anguish from other, but not from himself. But if we concur in Sartre’s this point, it will be impossible for us to judge his doctrine to be humanism since, as we have seen before, despair, or anguish, fastens man firmly. It is probably right to say that man has complete freedom to go beyond his present situation since he has no pre-assigned, or pre-fixed nature of his own, and similarly, it is possible to attain emancipation from frustration, or despair. But unfortunately, Sartre could no longer ignore dread, anguish and despair of human life, as a result of which, emancipating from despair seems to him to be an impossible task. Because he emphasizes that whenever man chooses for being something other than what he is, he plunges in despair at that moment.

Sartre tends to set man’s action free from the control of God, or any external power, and put the burden of liabilities upon every individual man. To this end, he begins his philosophy with an atheistic approach. Furthermore, he regards human being as ‘nothing’, or ‘devoid of universal essence’. But can man be born being completely ‘nothing’ as a unique being at all? It is really difficult to agree with Sartre’s view of ‘nothingness’. However, it is understandable that he could not admit God’s interference with human being since his aim was to unveil the possibility of man’s fair freedom and development. Sartre cannot avoid admitting this atheism, as his aim was to defend the point that every individual man is unique, free, and self-dependent.

To sum up, existentialism has gained its recognition as a movement as it expedites the social progress through a series of changes in person and society as well. Søren Kierkegaard is widely recognized as the fountainhead of existentialism,<sup>33</sup> while Jean-Paul Sartre is arguably the pivotal figure of its development to the most influential philosophical movement in the mid-twentieth century. Both of them disagreed on some fundamental issues. Kierkegaard is called a Christian Existentialist in virtue of his ‘leap of faith’, while Sartre boasts of being an atheist in his approach. Kierkegaard chooses for himself a life fully aligned with faith in which God is the source of human freedom. Sartre opposes this view, as his philosophy is explicitly atheistic and pessimistic. God has nothing to do with human freedom and moral standards. Kierkegaard seems to be interested in the immediate experience of the individual as singularly exposed to eternity, whereas Sartre always situates individual experience in the context of social world. Kierkegaard’s existentialist philosophy developed into Christian convictions, while Sartre turned it into secular humanism. However, there are some commonalities between their views. Both of them raise their voice against what they call false social and theoretical totalizations that are at odds with authentic individual decisions. Both Kierkegaard and Sartre renounce the identification of human reality with reason and thinking. For they affirm the unalienable freedom of human existence prior to essence. They emphasize the inescapable character of making choices and bearing responsibility, and their views demonstrate a very strong bent for literary expressiveness. Kierkegaard accepts subjectivity against objectivity as the key point of individual identity with the common aspects of human condition, such as anxiety, anguish, dread, despair, etc. Sartre does not find any trouble with this. With regard to morality, they say that it arises from the fact

that all choices affect others, physically and emotionally, for social responsibility results from the interdependencies of individuals.

Sartre's notion of freedom can be criticized as indeterminate since it lacks specific criteria. There is no standard for morality in his doctrine, as he denies any objective standards on which our values can be based. The question is, if we create our own values and interpret the environment to suit our choices and personalities, then, to become 'anyone' other than what we are would be justified, *viz*, a man with justice and righteousness may justify of becoming a notorious criminal, if the latter position comforts him.

Since for Sartre all human existence is free by definition, his notion of freedom seems more indefinite than that of Heidegger, as the latter distinguishes between the free and the non-free. Sartre rejects a hierarchy of moral values found in societies and humans. His philosophy is a severe blow to the traditional philosophy, and a good example of his notion of morality is found in his denial of the Kantian formal distinction between free and non-free acts. Sartre's thesis is clear enough to explain that we have no meaning, or purpose, of our life other than what our freedom can create. So, man must rely on his own resources. In his novel *La Nausée (Nausea)*, published in 1938, Sartre contends that man as existent is a mystery, a paradox and his nature and purposes cannot be summed up neatly in any formula. Roquentin, discovers in *Nausea*: 'the essential is contingency. I mean that, by definition, existence cannot be identified with necessity. To exist is to happen without reason...Every thing is purposeless. This garden, this town and myself.'<sup>34</sup> Here Roquentin is immobilized by the feeling that his own life as well as all the world is meaningless. This signifies that he construes the individual's world as completely different from that of his fellow men. Therefore, his doctrine seems to fail to make a close connection with the actual moral concept of freedom, and in this sense, his view reflects what Engels said that there is no human activity in which individual consciousness could not play a part. Notwithstanding, his philosophy is an excellent attempt to motivate man to get engaged in action with complete reliance upon one's own strengths and resources and to re-establish the neglected individuality and dignity of individual being lost in traditional philosophical systems. His thesis that humans are free individuals capable of creating their own world by rejecting authority while accepting personal responsibility with complete commitment to themselves and the whole mankind, unassisted by social norms, traditional morality, or religious faith makes him a secular humanist.

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<sup>1</sup>Datta, D.M., *The Chief Currents of Contemporary. Philosophy*, Calcutta: Bharati Printing Works, Calcutta University Press, 1961, p. 508

<sup>2</sup>Edwards, P., (ed), *The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, vol. 1, New York: Macmillan Publishing Company & The Free Press, 1967, vol. 3, p. 150

<sup>3</sup>Datta, D.M., *op. cit.*, p. 509

<sup>4</sup>Bandopadhyaya, Anil, Kumar, *Western Philosophy of Twentieth Century*, Calcutta, 1984, p. 181

<sup>5</sup>The central themes of Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky's novels reflect his existentialist thoughts. Some of them are *The House of the Dead* (1860); *A Nasty Story* (1862); *Notes from Underground or Letters from the Underworld* (1864); *Crime and Punishment* (1866); *The Gambler* (1867); *The Idiot* (1868), etc. Sartre also expressed his existentialist views in novels and plays, some important of which are *Nausea*, 1938; *The Wall*, 1939; *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions*, 1939; *The Imaginary*, 1940, *The Flies*, 1943; *Being and Nothingness*, 1943; *No Exit*, 1944; *The Roads to Freedom*; *Baudelaire*, 1947; *Situations*, 1947–1965; *Dirty Hands*, 1948; *The Devil and the Good Lord*, 1951; *The Game is Up*, 1952, etc. In the 1930s and 40s the French films 'Le jour se lève', 'La Grande Illusion', 'Les Misérables', 'Les Enfants du Paradis', and Hollywood movies 'The Big Sleep', 'The Maltese Falcon', 'Casablanca', 'Double Indemnity', 'The Postman Always Rings Twice' are some of the films that incorporate existentialist thoughts. In recent time classic films 'Chinatown' and 'Five Easy Pieces', 'Run, Lola, Run', 'The Sand Pebbles', 'Silence of the Lambs', 'Apocalypse Now' and 'Hannibal' are well worth viewing as they contain moral codes, individual freedom, relationship, truth and social structure depicted in the light of existentialism.

<sup>6</sup>Edwards, P., (ed), op. cit., p. 147

<sup>7</sup>Swenson, D., *Something about Kierkegaard*, Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1948, p. 126

<sup>8</sup>Chakma, Niru, Kumar, *Existentialism & Individual Freedom*, (in Bangla), Dhaka: Bangla Academy, June, 1983, p. 35

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 44

<sup>10</sup> Bandopadhyaya, Anil, Kumar, op. cit. p. 193

<sup>11</sup>Kierkegaard, Søren, *Fear and Trembling*, trans., Robert Payne, London: Oxford University Press, 1946, p. 90

<sup>12</sup>Kierkegaard, Søren, *The Concept of Dread*, trans., Walter Lowrie, Princeton, 1957, p. 37

<sup>13</sup> Kierkegaard, Søren, *The Sickness Unto Death*, trans., Walter Lowrie, Princeton, 1941, p. 17

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, P.22

<sup>15</sup>Datta, D.M., op. cit. p. 510

<sup>16</sup> Hannay, Alastair and Gordon Marino (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to Kierkegaard*, Cambridge University Press 1997, p. 112

<sup>17</sup>Sartre, Jean-Paul, *Existentialism and Humanism*, trans., Philip Mairet, London: Mithuen & Co. Ltd., 1987, p.24

<sup>18</sup>Ibid, p. 28

<sup>19</sup>Ibid, p. 29

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<sup>20</sup>Sartre, J. P., *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Hazel Barnes, New York: Philosophical Library, 1956, p. 468

<sup>21</sup> Sartre, J. P., *Existentialism and Humanism*, op. cit., p. 29; *Being and Nothingness*, op. cit., p. 553

<sup>22</sup>Sartre, J. P., *Being and Nothingness*, op. cit., p. 483

<sup>23</sup>Sartre, J. P., *Being and Nothingness*, op. cit., p. 521

<sup>24</sup> Sartre, J. P., *Being and Nothingness*, op. cit., pp. 533-4

<sup>25</sup>Sartre, J. P., *Existentialism and Humanism*, op. cit., p.30

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 32

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p. 32

<sup>28</sup> Sartre, J. P., *Being and Nothingness*, op. cit., p. 532

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p. 433

<sup>30</sup> Apart from Nietzsche and Sartre the "humanist" aspect of existentialism can also be found in the works of Jaspers, Dostoyevsky, Kafka, Malraux, Camus and Beckett.

<sup>31</sup> Sartre, J. P., *Existentialism and Humanism*, op. cit, p. 49

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p. 44

<sup>33</sup>Kierkegaard's thoughts influenced subsequently and concurrently many philosophers; some prominent figures of them include Karl Barth, Simone de Beauvoir, Martin Buber, Rudolf Bultmann, Albert Camus, Martin Heidegger, Abraham Joshua Heschel, Karl Jaspers, Gabriel Marcel, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Franz Rosenzweig, Jean-Paul Sartre, Joseph Soloveitchik, Paul Tillich, and so on.

<sup>34</sup>Sartre, J.P., *Nausea*, Penguin Modern Classics, 1966, p. 238