

C H A P T E R- V

Section- I

CONCLUSION

A Comparative account of the place of intellect and emotion in the Philosophies of Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Sartre.

---

So far we have discussed the elements of intellect and emotion in Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Sartre's philosophy and we have seen that intellect plays a dominant role in drawing out their philosophical conclusions. Now we wish to undertake a comparative analysis of the place of intellect and emotion in their philosophy.

We have seen that existentialism is a revolt against the extravagances of extreme Rationalism. It is the revolt of life against thought, of passion and feeling against reflective contemplation. The existentialist philosophers are all anti-intellectualists, and for this reason they attach more importance to feeling or intuition and action than to abstract speculative thought. But on analysis, we shall see that the aforesaid philosophers could not carry out this

anti-intellectualistic trend all along their philosophical discussions, and the elements of intellect and emotion vary in their philosophy.

It will be convenient to begin with the method they applied in their philosophy. In the course of the discussion of Sartre's philosophy we have seen that he has adopted both the deductive and inductive method. His idea of 'bad faith' in connection with his discussion on human freedom, shows his philosophical method. He argues both from particular experiences to general one, and from general to particular. This method lies in his attempt to prove the existence of other minds. His atheism is the logical outcome of his idea of human freedom. God must not exist if human being is to be absolutely free. He argues, criticises, offers proof, compares, analyses, classifies in support of his conclusions regarding appearance and being, consciousness, nothingness, human existence, freedom, God etc. Nowhere we see him to make his stand on intuition or faith like Kierkegaard and Heidegger; everywhere, on the contrary, he is logical and rational. If we turn our eyes to the philosophy of Heidegger and Kierkegaard, we shall see that here also Heidegger and Kierkegaard adopt inductive method. Like Sartre,

they also observe particular facts and come to the general conclusion about human being. Heidegger speaks of intuitive method in philosophy, but in his discovering the inner meaning of Being he adopts analytical method. In fact, Heidegger's method is intellectual intuitive method. He has systematically rationalised his intuitive knowledge of Being. In his book, 'What is philosophy' ? , he opines that the task of philosophy is the analysis of Being and to formulate new and new concepts which will explain the concrete world. So we see that by his intellectual intuitive method he analyses the hidden meaning of Being, and his realization of human finitude and imperfectness, his idea of care, dread, anguish, nothingness etc. clearly show that he has adopted inductive method ( These are all meant for man in general ).

So far it is clear that Heidegger is rational and logical enough in his analysis of Being and the related notions or ideas like care, dread, anguish etc. He is an atheist. But his idea of 'Holy', the highest ideal of perfection which is the final end of human being, forces us to conclude that he has some faith in God, and this faith originates from his realization of imperfectness of human being.

Kierkegaard also has his stand mainly on intuition or experience, reason is not altogether discarded. We have seen that like Heidegger and Sartre, he also has adopted inductive method. When he says, 'subjectivity is truth', it is meant for man in general. He generalizes his own three stages of life upon human life, His faith in God, his realization of truth in the being of God, absolute happiness- all these elements of emotion are there. But reason is also present in his philosophical thought, as he critically considers the views of others.

So we see that in respect of philosophical method, Sartre adopts both deductive and inductive procedure, whereas Kierkegaard and Heidegger accept only inductive method in drawing their philosophical conclusions. Heidegger, in addition applies the analytical method in his task of analysing the hidden meaning of Being, though he speaks of intuition as a must.

As regards the unverifiable metaphysical objects, Sartre refuses to imagine behind consciousness any supporting mind, or behind things a separate existence. According to him, consciousness is the only reality that man experiences. He analyses

the characteristics of consciousness and draws logical conclusions therefrom, Sartre proves that our action necessarily implies freedom, and our freedom excludes the possibility of God's existence outright. His atheism is the logical outcome of his idea of human freedom. We see that Sartre has no faith in God. The idea of God is an outdated hypothesis to him.

On the contrary, Kierkegaard has a firm faith in God. According to him, one proves God's existence by worship, not by proofs, God exists only for subjectivity in inwardness. God, being a spiritual principle can not be realized except through faith and respect in God, worship and love of God, and fear and suffering for God. So, Kierkegaard's theism is based not on reason or intellect but on faith, fear, love etc, and these are nothing but personal feelings and emotions. In Heidegger also we find this element of faith which can be traced out in his idea of the 'Holy', the highest ideal of perfection, the final end which human being aims at through self-development. While Kierkegaard in his philosophizing was more passionate than rational, Heidegger and Sartre were more rational than passionate or emotional- they gave a rational analysis and interpretation of emotion in human life. So, in the end, it is clear that

of these three eminent philosophers, Sartre is thoroughly rational and logical in his philosophical conclusions, and in his philosophy, intuition is found to have been illuminated by reason. All of them give arguments in support of their views and try to refute the theories held by others, and are thus not quite faithful to their creed of irrationalism.

In this connection it should be mentioned that so far as the methodology of existentialism is concerned, Heidegger and Sartre followed the Phenomenological method of Husserl, but Kierkegaard did not. However, according to some scholars Kierkegaard's philosophical method may be taken as implicitly phenomenological to some extent, although as a predecessor of Husserl, the question of his being influenced by Husserl does not arise at all. The Phenomenological method of Husserl has many aspects of which descriptive analysis of consciousness is one- it consists in the description of the noetic and the noematic, i.e. the act of experiencing and the object experienced. Consciousness, by its intentional activity, always intends some object, i.e. directs itself towards some object in general, which is regarded as essence or meaning, that which is meant by consciousness.

" Though Phenomenological descriptions are found in the writings of the Existentialist philosophers, they have not taken over Husserl's phenomenology in the form in which he taught it. They have developed phenomenology to suit their own purposes and it is heard that Husserl was critical of the use to which Heidegger was putting his ideas. But we have already seen that Keirkegaard and Nietzsche had not heard of Husserl but as Ricoeur has shown, many of their descriptions are essentially phenomenological" . Although the existentialists, mainly Heidegger, Sartre and Merleau- Ponty have applied the phenomenological method in their philosophies, their approach is different from that of Husserl. This has been most appropriately pointed out by a renowned scholar of existentialism , Dr.M.K.Bhadra in the following words; " There is an important difference between Husserl and the Existentialist phenomenologists and it is that whereas Husserl lays stress on essence and thinks of phenomenology as an eidetic science. Existentialists like Sartre think that existence precedes essence, and according to many, man's existence generates his essence . In that case it makes no sense at all to suspend the question of existence. But they agree with Husserl in contending themselves with the description of the phenomenon as

it shows itself. Husserl insisted that consciousness is always intentional in the sense of being directed to an object beyond itself. But he wanted to absorb everything into consciousness. The Existentialists reject Idealism and they want to say that consciousness may not be confused with consciousness of objects. Such a confusion arises if we start from the thinking consciousness rather than from the total range of existence."<sup>2</sup>

S E C T I O N - I I

Existentialism is a synthesis of both  
emotionalism and intellectualism.

No philosophical study is possible without reason or intellect in other words every philosophical study is a rational or intellectual study. The existentialists philosophical study of human existence is also no exception to this. They have made a rational analysis of human existence. According to the existentialists, existence consists in self-consciousness and self-determination or freedom of the will. Again, self-consciousness and free will have also been rationally analysed and their natures have been explained by the existentialists. Their existential philosophy is established on the basis of intuition or experience and by means of reason or rational arguments. Just as in Indian philosophy we find a synthesis of both experience and reason, so existentialism may be understood as a synthesis of intuitional experience and reason. The truths visualized by the Vedic seers have been established by the followers of the six systems of Hindu Philosophy on rational grounds, otherwise Indian philosophy would have been merely dogmatic. So the existentialists have also supported by reasonings, the truths experienced or felt by them through intuition or

subjective experience. Thus both experience and reason have been synthesized in their philosophical thinking or investigation. Although in the writings of the existentialists we find frequent references to the emotional states and attitudes of human beings, the role of reason or intellect is not altogether neglected. Of course, the role of reason is not to be found in all the existentialists in equal degree, but it is to be found in all of them nevertheless. In the very inception of the existentialist movement in between the two World Wars, rational study of the various phenomena connected with human life had played an important role. Kierkegaard, for example, made a Critical observation of the facts of human life and came to the conclusion that so long human beings have been under the illusion of objectivity, from which they should be immediately made free upon leading themselves to their proper goals. The Existentialists are, in general, anti-objectivists, and in this sense, they are called anti-rationalists. But it is to be remembered that when they disfavour rationalism or intellectualism, they only discard excessive rationalism or intellectualism, not the whole of it. Kierkegaard objected to the absolute or objective idealism of Hegel, because that is a kind of abstractionism in

so far as according to Hegel. Absolute Mind, Thought or Idea is the basic or ultimate reality. Again he makes a rational analysis of the nature of human existence which was directly felt by him in his very being, as others also feel by themselves. It is one thing to experience something one self, and it is another to convey one's own experience to others; this can be done only by means of reason or language. Even the emotional states and attitudes are also studied rationally and analytically, so as to make others convinced of their faculty. When on the basis of experience, it is argued that all human beings are subject to such experiences, then there is a kind of generalization in the way of induction. Not that an Existentialist dogmatically says that all human beings must have like experience, but he says so on the basis of experience and reason, and hence any person can testify to the truth of such a statement about human nature. That truth is subjective is true not of one man, but of all men in general, and this kind of philosophy can not be merely emotional. It is also not true that only this or that person is under illusion of objectivity, but most people are under such illusion, and Kierkegaard being conscious of the evil effects of such illusion on human life, wanted to make people free from its spell, and in doing this he was not quite irrational.

When different mental states, feelings or emotions or wills are defined or characterised by the existentialists, they are dealing with concepts and concepts are always intellectual, there can be no non-intellectual or emotional or volitional concepts. So existentialism can not be regarded as something non-intellectual. Human emotions have a prominent place in Existentialism, but for that reason, it can not be mistaken for a kind of pure emotionalism. The existentialists have given an account of the feelings and emotions natural to man as an existent being, but they have not advised man to become only emotional and not rational. Therefore, Existentialism is neither pure intellectualism nor pure emotionalism, although in it both intellect and emotion have their respective places.

Section - III

The influence of Existential Intellectualism and  
Emotionalism on Literature,

In the previous section we have shown that Existentialism is a synthesis of Emotionalism and Intellectualism; now we are going to show that Existentialism, with its both elements has exerted great influence on world Literature, Art and Society. Existentialism is the philosophy of man, and every man is a combination of intellect and emotion ; and Literature, Art and Society - all are the creations of man; thus in all of these we can discover the role of human intellect and emotion. However, in Literature and Art the role of emotion is greater than that of intellect, while in society the role of intellect is greater than that of emotion.

EXISTENTIALISM AND LITERATURE

In the jungle of so many 'isms' Existentialism draws our serious attention both for its philosophical import and its immense ~~immense~~ literary value. No other philosophical system has ever given us such an acute analysis of the pain-stricken human heart, which is expressed in their philosophy and literature.

contd... 178. .

' In fact, it is the literary aspect of Existentialism that makes it all the more popular'.<sup>2</sup>

There is no denying the fact that the sources of great literature can be traced in man himself and his life from time immemorial. According to Aristotle, " No great genius was ever without some mixture of madness, nor can anything grand or superior to the voice of common mortals be spoken except by the agitated soul".<sup>3</sup> This agitation we find in this age of anxiety which has produced a literature and a philosophy. For example, we can cite the name of Existentialism which flourished in the continent in between 1940 and 1950, and this philosophical movement has exerted much influence in literature. In some cases this influence is direct and in others it is rather a spontaneous growth in a common soil.

From time immemorial, the philosophers have used literature as the media of their philosophical views. Albert Camus, Dostoevsky and Sartre are known to us as a novelist and dramatist more than as a philosopher. Nietzsche, the poet-philosopher Kierkegaard and Plato were eminent philosophers of their age, but their philosophical views supplied materials of literature. Likewise, the name of Rabindranath Tagore, the poet-philosopher of the East, may be cited. His philosophical views

are occasionally expressed in his writings, particularly in his poems and songs. Among the Existentialist philosophers, the name of Sartre tops the list as a successful one who has efficiently presented his philosophical views through his stories, novels and dramas. In the history of philosophy as a whole, no other philosopher has even been able to draw the attention of such a large number of readers.

The Existentialist reaction to our life and times has been extensive especially in literature. The basic existentialist categories are contingency, (tragic) necessity, (unlimited) freedom, ~~an~~ loneliness, anguish and absurdity. We are to see how and to what extent these Categories are used in literature. Existential literature in the nineteenth century starts from Dostolevsky ( Notes from the underground, 1864 ). The most prominent existentialist writers are Jean-Paul Sartre of France, Albert Camus of Algeria, Franz Kafka of Germany. Besides these, we can mention the names of Samuel Beckett of Dublin, Pinter and Hemingway of England and Norman Mailer of U. S. A.

Some of their writings will be considered here with a view to understand the impact of Existentialism on literature. We should note that the existentialist Philosophers are writers first. Their philosophical views are expressed through their

writings. Novels, dramas, notebooks, diary etc., written by them, are the mirrors which reflect their philosophical views.

To begin with, we shall start from France, as the existentialist novel properly speaking belongs to France. According to Margaret Chatterjee, " Existentialist theory and practice in literature provide much of the provinder for French literary ~~and~~ polemics. The problem of the relation between form and freedom, fact and fantasy, bedevils dramatist and novelist. "4

contd...181...

SARTRE

Now we shall consider some of the writings of Sartre with a view to find out the influence of Existentialism in literature. Though Kierkegaard, Husserl, Heidegger, Jaspers, Marcel etc. are called the pioneer of Existentialism, this philosophy owes much to Sartre for its wide popularity.

Rather we should say that Existentialism finds its expression in the hand of Sartre through his short stories, dramas, novels, lectures and various psychological and philosophical essays. Indeed, in the contemporary world Sartre is a matchless creative genius. Like many other philosophers, in the case of Sartre there is also the large body of literary writings which we can not divorce from his philosophical work. He lived in France when that country was under German occupation during the second world-war. The stringent conditions under which the Frenchmen were compelled to live during the foreign occupation exercised great influence over Sartre and moulded his philosophy of life in many respects.

In Sartre's philosophy, Man is nothing but futile emotion. The entire world is sick of 'nausea'. His philosophy is an expression of the disillusionment of our time - a

contd...182..

recognition of the absurdity of human life. This understanding finds its expression in his dramas, novels, stories and other writings. Of course, in his 'Critique of Dialectical Reason', Sartre modified some of his philosophical views. In his last long interview with B. Levi ( P. Victor ) in 1980, he said " The world seems nasty, bad and hopeless. That, that is the quiet despair of an old man. But justly I resist and I know that I will die in hope " <sup>5</sup> . This interview shows how Sartre's outlook on life and the world - some of his philosophical views, evolve with the age and gradually tend towards modification.

Out of his vast body of literary writings, we shall consider a short story ' The wall ', his first novel 'Nausea' and the play, ' Men without Shadows' to serve our purpose.

' The Wall ' ;

The back ground of the story is the civil-war of Spain in which most of the intellectual middle class group of Europe took part. ' The wall ' represents the 'facists' terrorism and the resistance of the 'International Brigade' which was formed by a great number of artists, literateurs,

contd...183..

critics and intellectualists of Europe. The story creates a peculiar type of reaction, an extraordinary feeling in the mind of the readers.

Besides this political background, the story throws some light on Sartre's philosophical view which is the most important. Sartre criticises Berkeley's 'Esse est percipi' and concludes that 'esse' is not 'percipi' and the objective world can not be denied in any way. There is the objective world commonly inhabited by all men - the world apart from which the very existence of man is inconceivable. This is because the Existentialists speak so much of the phrase 'man-in-the world'. Every individual has a definite role to play in the scheme of the universe. He actively participates in the universal world order; so that he can not afford to lose his identity as a separate individual subject.

Death occupies an important place in existential philosophy. We can be best aware of our existence as separate individuals, when our life is at stake. We also become conscious of the true nature of our existence and our authentic possibilities through the experience of the approach of death. Death always stares us in the face and casts its shadow over us.

This awareness of one's own existence before death and the phrase 'man-in-the world' is vividly depicted by Sartre in this story. In 'the wall', Sartre narrates the episode of three revolutionists, sentenced to death imprisoned in the same cell. The three prisoners, Steinbock (Tom) Pablo Ibbieta and Juan Mirbal are sure of their death - they are in peril. Each of them fixes on the horrors of death. Life on earth ceases to carry any meaning for them. Sartre gives us a vivid picture of the psychical condition of each of the prisoners in the cell. Such an accurate verbal formulation of human thoughts and feelings is rare indeed.

Little Juan can not think of anything more than the suffering involved in death. Premature death has snatched away from him all opportunity to develop himself. His only desire now is his death with least possible pains. He asks the Belgian doctor, "Does it hurt .... very long?"<sup>6</sup> And just before the execution he cries out bitterly: "I do not want to die. I do not want to die"<sup>7</sup>. He feels his true existence before death and opts for life. Pablo, who is sufficiently grown up with some attainments in life is equally conscious of the tragic end.

contd...185..

He thinks of his beloved Concha. He thinks of what he has already done as also of things yet to be done. He feels the cold touch of death in everything around him. For him, everything looks cold and dead. He says, " My life was in front of me shut, closed, like a bag, yet everything inside it was unfinished <sup>8</sup> ". Since each of them shall suffer the same fate, he thinks it simply meaningless to pity on himself or on his fellow-prisoners. He is forlorn in the world of his own thoughts. And it is on the eve of execution that his feeling of loneliness grows most intense. He is mentally upset. But he thinks, he should die like a man. Tom goes on talking to Pablo. He says, " I see my corpse, that's not hard but I am the one who sees it, with my eyes. I have got to think .... think that I ~~want~~ won't see anything anymore and the world will go on for the others <sup>9</sup> ". He also thinks of the pains of death. He declares himself to be a materialist who does not believe in the life hereafter. But he soon realizes that it is futile to think of all this at the moment. He is unable to make out anything of what is going to happen. He refuses to believe that death is so near. He says, " I wonder ..... I wonder if it's really true that everything ends <sup>10</sup> ". Thus we see that the three prisoners live together in the same cell and each of them is at the same time confined within his own world of thoughts peculiar to himself.

Like Tom, Pablo and Juan, we are imprisoned in the common cell of the universe as also within ourselves. All of us as separate existents feel alone. We can be best aware of our existence as separate individuals, when we are in peril. Being face to face with the same situation we can react differently like the three prisoners. This difference in outlook on life and the world constitute our individuality. But the world is the common platform without which our existence becomes meaningless.

### Nausea

The philosophical novel *Melancholia*, which Sartre's publishers changed to *Nausea* was published in France in 1938 and it was his first novel. Sartre presented this novel in a diary form. This novel shows how aptly he has applied philosophy in literature. It is a novel of the alienation of personality and the mystery of being. It presents us with the first full-length essay in the existentialist philosophy for which Sartre has since become famous.

This novel is basically a diary of Antoine Roquentin who lived in the Norman Port of Bouville. His only desire was

to write the biography of Mousieur de Rollebon, a nineteenth century aristocratic personality. All the necessary papers were concerning Rollebon, preserved in Bouville library. He stayed at the Cafe' Mably, went to the library regularly and carried on his research work on Rollebon.

Basically, Nausea is a clear statement of Sartre's philosophical experience and this experience is revealed to us through the experience of Roquentin which he gathered while travelling in Central Europe, North Africa and the Far East. In fact, it is Sartre who describes his experience in the guise of Roquentin. The diary begins just with the moment when nausea reacts on Roquentin.

In Latin, 'nausea' means 'seasickness'. While travelling on sea, a kind of mild sickness ( vomiting tendency ) grows due to constant movement of the ship. This sickness is called 'nausea' which reacts on the traveller painfully. With the motion and movement of the ship this nausea continues.

Like this sea-sickness, the different materials of this world create nausea, ~~uncertainty and~~ restlessness, anguish, dread and uncertainty in us.

Nausea is our most primitive and original feeling about the world, for we can not experience anything without experiencing this. The three feelings which we must all of us experience when we reflect upon the world are nausea, a sense of the absurd, or of our own superfluity, and anguish. Sartre intends us to understand that we actually and necessarily feel this nausea in our apprehension of the world. The reason for this is in the nature of the world itself. Nausea arises because the world is as it is.

Roquentin's Nausea was his own particular disease. His diary is a description of the condition of nausea which he had come to be familiar with. The insight to which Roquentin gives voice is put in a philosophical manner in Being and Nothingness, years later the diary was written.

Sartre's concept of Being-in-itself and nothingness is rooted in an experience which he described in his novel 'Nausea'. This is the world-shattering vision of a Chestnut tree. Sitting in the Municipal Park, Roquentin, the hero, finds that Being in general is de trop, contingent, unjustifiable, absurd. Sitting in the park he stares at the root of a chestnut tree.

contd...186.C.

It is what it is. There is no rhyme or reason about it. Roquentin says : " That root existed in so far that I could not explain it. Knotty, inert, nameless, it fascinated me, filled my eyes, repeatedly brought me back to its own existence. It was no use my repeating : " It is a root " ..... The function explained nothing. .... That root with its colour, its shape, its frozen movement, was beneath all explanation. Each of its qualities ..... flowed out of it, half solidified, almost became a thing ; each one was superfluous in the root <sup>11</sup>.

In the midst of spell he also felt that existence is not necessity. To exist is simply to be there, what exists appears, lets itself be encountered, but we can never deduce it. Existence everywhere, to infinity, superfluous. Every existent is born without reason, prolongs itself out of weakness and dies by chance. All of a sudden they existed and then, all of a sudden, they no longer existed ; existence has no memory, it retains nothing of what has disappeared, not even a recollection.

Sartre thinks that 'nothingness' is inconceivable without existence. To him, this huge absurd world is

contd...187...

undeniable, The world was present everywhere, in front, behind. There had been no moment at which it might not have existed. About the relation between nothingness and existence. Roquentin writes; ' in order to imagine nothingness, you had to be there already, right in the world, with your eyes wide open and alive ; ..... this nothingness had not come before existence. It was an existence like any other and one which had appeared after a great many others'<sup>12</sup> .

This idea of nothingness and its relation to being is fully discussed in ' Being and Nothingness' where he says, ' .....man is a being by which nothingness comes to things.'<sup>13</sup> Roquentin understands the real secret of existence. Being seized with nausea, he feels

that life is meaningless, existence has no inner significance. There is no past, no future. Only the present exists because we are only conscious of the present moment. Understanding the absurdity of the past, and realizing the implication of the present existence, he stopped writing the biography of Rollebon who lived in the 18th Century. Roquentin says, ' I have made up my mind : I no longer have any reason for staying at Bouville since I have stopped writing my book'.<sup>14</sup>

Roquentin and Anny now understand the real secret of existence. To them, existence has no inner significance. They feel repulsion on life and a sense of alienation grows in them. They feel that in this adverse world man is nothing but a dumb spectator. Man is alienated though he is in- the-world. Roquentin now understood his nausea ; nausea is what human beings can not help feeling

in the face of a world which is irrational, superfluous, and thus absurd.

He has already stopped writing the biography of Rolleston and now he decides to create something, a work of art, since art transcends the contingency of existence. He thinks that in artistic creation he will perhaps find a reason for living, and a way to redeem his life.

' MEN WITHOUT SHADOWS '

Sartre's play ' Men without shadows' ( Morts sans sepulture) deals with a group of Resistance fighters who are captured and tortured by the officials of Pe'tain's Vichy regime in collaboration with the Germans. The officials torture them (off-stage) with a view to learning the names and

lairs of more important rebels. Lucie, one of the captives is a young woman. She is raped by her torturers. But she looks upon them in such a way in the Sartrean style that they feel degraded for what they have done with her. She rejoins the prisoners and shifts most of the time in somber silence. Each of the accused thinks within himself as to whether he will be strong enough to resist the torture when his turn comes. They are afraid that the fifteen year old Francois, the youngest of them, will divulge the secret, being unable to bear the torments. So they agreed to strangle him to death. Although he is Lucie's brother, she assends to his death. And Francois is actually killed. Thereafter Lucie shrinks from the touch of her fellow-prisoners. At last, one of them, unable to bear the torture talks in return for the promise that all will be spared. But they are all taken out and shot dead.

In this play, Lucie's assent to the strangling of her brother Francois, for the fear that being unable to bear the torture he may disclose the name of their leader to the officials, is an instance of pre-dominance of reason over emotion, or it may be regarded as an instance of the predominance of patriotic emotion over the personal.

NO EXIT ( HUIS- CLOS )

In this play Sartre has dramatized the ideas expressed by him earlier in his 'Being and Nothingness', that other people are one's potential enemies and the look of them is one of the tortures of life. This play was produced at Paris in May, 1944. The story of the play runs thus ; Three people, each of whom has been guilty of 'bad-faith', refusing the choice of an authentic existence, find themselves shut up, after death, in a drawing room in hell. In course of their discussions they are trapped in an eternal vicious circle. The coward man loves the Lesbian, the Lesbian loves the infanticide girl and the girl loves the coward. One of them says, " Hell is other people", Thus one fails to define oneself by referring to other people. This is the crystalization of Sartre's view of 'bad-faith'.

THE ROADS TO FREEDOM

Sartre's three important novels namely, the "Age of Reason" ( L' Age de raison), ' The Reprieve' (Le Sursis ) and 'Iron in the soul' ( La Mort dans l'ame) are collectively entitled " The Roads to Freedom' ( Les chemins de liberte' ). In these three volumes there is to be found the depiction of the diverse and usually foolish ways in which the men and women of France had sought their intellectual, moral, or political freedom since 1938. The scene of ' The Age of Reason' is Paris, 1938, and the story revolves around Mathieu Delarue, aged 34, a professor of Philosophy. One feels tempted to identify him with the ~~author~~ author, but Sartre protests against such identification. Mathieu is a bourgeois liberal. He rejects bourgeois moral norms and marital bond, sympathises with radical interests, but does not commit himself to any of them. He values intellectual freedom about party discipline. He is an atheist, a cynic, sceptical of every doctrine, of both revolution and reform. He avoids marriage as contrary to freedom and reason, but takes Marcelle Duffet as a mistress, and let her live as his lady love. Through the novel, man is represented as a futile passion and life is depicted as absolutely meaningless.

The Second volume, namely, ' The Reprieve' is full of humour, but also deep with tragedy. It begins on September, 25, 1938, with the opening of negotiations between Hitler of Germany, Mussolini of Italy, Daladier of France and Chamberlain of England ; and it ends with the signing of the Munich Pact (Sept 29-30), which gave the western powers a year's reprieve from war. The early pages seek to convey the somber tension of Europe in those testing days. The novel shows Brunet hoping that the socialists of Europe, putting class above nation, will take a united stand against war. Day after day the excitement and the terror rise. Then suddenly the news blares out ; the pact has been signed, " Peace in our time" fills a hundred million hearts with joy, a million heads with doubts. Mathieu again teaches philosophy. Everything in France is as before, as safe and dull and meaningless.

In volume three of the trilogy, there is depiction of the French army in chaotic flight before the triumphant Germans, and Paris awaiting spoliation by rough teutons eager for French wines and slender women. While retreating some French Officers

ride off by deserting their troops, the privates curse them and loot the villages for liquor. As a private Mathieu is disgusted with their drunken vomiting, but finally he joins their caruse, hoping that they will gradually like him, but they do so unwillingly because of his education and polite vocabulary. Some of them admire the victorious Germans. In the final scene, when the fugitives resist the attack of the Germans, Mathieu learns to shoot and kill with a maiden rapture. Thus he frees himself from himself by commitment to his group.

ALBERT CAMUS

Albert Camus has been popular mainly as a novelist and a dramatist, but he is also no less an essayist. Allthrough his writings there is found an existentialist theme and he has developed a socio-political philosophy of his own from the existentialist point of view. His important novels are: 'The Outsider', 'The Plague', 'The Fall', 'Exile' and 'The Kingdom'; the important plays are: 'Caligula', 'Cross Purpose', 'State of sieze' and 'The Just'; and the important essays are 'The Myth of Sisyphus' and 'The Rebel'.

In 1938, Camus wrote and successfully produced the play 'Caligula'. It presents the conflict between a Government and the principle of morality. The main character of the play, emperor Caligula, discovers, in the demise of his sister and mistress Drusilla, that death loves status, that nature has nothing to do with morality or manners, that everything is meaningless. As a reaction, he gives up all moral restraints and commits inhuman cruelties. He argues that the date of a man's death is insignificant because everyone must die sooner or later, and moreover, the "only way of being equal with the gods.....is to be as cruel as they are." But at the end he admits with reluctance that "murder is no solution".

'The Outsider' (1942) is a parable which illustrates the philosophy of the absurd. It is not simply a narrative fiction. Meursault, the main character of the novel, is an unimportant office-clerk in Algiers. He lives a mediocre life. He attends his mother's funeral but sheds no tears, sleeps with Marie, a typist, but tells her that he does not love her,

and agrees to help an acquaintance in defending himself against an injured and vengeful Arab. He meets the Arab and kills him and is tried and condemned to death. It is a simple tale no doubt, but enclosed within it there is the totality of the world's absurdity.

To Meursault, even the fundamental values of our society are meaningless. Nothing remains for the absurd man. He only experiences a sense of revolt and irresponsibility. At this moment he even does not feel the necessity of justifying any incident. To him, everything is lawful, everything is possible, Camus' view of life is nothing but the seventeenth century classical pessimism which expresses itself in repulsion to life in indifference in nothingness, in meaninglessness of everything- the absurdity of human condition.

Meursault's indifference to worldly affairs, his sense of meaninglessness to the fundamental values of society is so deep that he even does not react at the news of his mother's death. The story begins thus ; " Mother died to day.

Or may be yesterday, I don't know. I had a telegram from the home ; ' Mother passed away. Funeral tomorrow. Yours sincerely ;  
That does not mean anything. It may have been yesterday" <sup>15</sup>

To Meursault, mother's death news does not mean anything. It is a fact among so many facts. The above quoted words of Meursault shows his indifference which is the outcome of his feeling of the absurd. ' In our society, any man who does not cry at his mother's funeral is liable to be condemned to death' <sup>16</sup>, says Camus. But Meursault does not play the game. His lack of reactions is a scandal in the eyes of the conventional. At the end of his mother's funeral, he rather goes to bed and sleeps at a stretch for twelve hours. He enjoys his life as before. For this, he is condemned. So he is an outsider to the society in which he lives. Again, to him, the words ' to love' are

meaningless and he finds no sense of seriousness in the word 'marriage'.

Death occupies a prominent place in the feeling of absurdity. The inevitability of death arouses indifference. Camus clearly depicts this indifference through Meursault, the absurd man, who is sure of his death. Meursault is accused of murder and is condemned to death. But it does not matter to him. Being asked by chaplain, who came to see him in his cell, how he was going to face up to that terrifying ordeal, his reply was : 'I'd face upto it exactly as I was facing up to it now ' . He has no belief in God.

In, a Godless world, being face to face with death, everything is meaningless and without any purpose to him. Now ' what did other people's deaths or a mother's love matter to me, what did his God or the lives people choose or the destinies they selected matter to me, when one and the same destiny was to select me .....<sup>17</sup> pours Meursault from the bottom of his heart. He continues, ' What did it matter if he was accused of murder and then executed for not crying at his mother's funeral ? ..... What did it matter that Marie now had a new Meursault to Kiss ? <sup>18</sup> .

contd...200..

To him, life is the only value. At that point, on the verge of death, he opts for life again. He says, ' For the first time in a very long time I thought of mother. I felt that I understood why at the end of her life she'd taken a "fiance" and why she'd pretended to start again..... so close to death, mother must have felt liberated and ready to live her life again ..... And I too felt ready to live my life again '19

So we see that ' Meursault is the prototype of the hero of the absurd. Meursault personifies twentieth century anomie ..... He is unable to react at his mother's funeral. His killing of an Arab on the beach is quite pointless. His only passion is his truthfulness about his lack of feeling .... He refuses to lie about his feelings.... Meursault is a stranger to his society and to himself ..... Meursault is a stranger in the world because the world is absurd ..... Even nature is no consolation..... He is at the same time a stranger among men because he accepts to live the absurd ..... He is neither good nor bad '20

The Myth of Sisyphus

The Myth of Sisyphus (1942) is a brilliant explanation of the central notion of absurdity, one of the chief existential concepts, which was developed artistically in 'The Outsider'. It probably reflects Heidegger's 'Being and Time' (1927) and Sartre's 'Nausea' (1938). He reviews the latter critically in the 'Alger Republican' (Oct. 1938). According to him, "The realization that life is absurd can not be an end but only a beginning. Life can be "magnificent and overwhelming".

The 'Myth of Sisyphus' is a story of futile labour. Sisyphus is the absurd hero. The gods had condemned Sisyphus to ceaselessly rolling a rock to the top of a mountain whence the stone would fall back of its own weight. His scorn of the Gods, his hatred of death, and his passion for life won him that unspeakable penalty in which the whole being is exerted towards accomplishing nothing. 'This is the price that must be paid for the passions of this earth' <sup>21</sup> - says Camus.

Sisyphus is conscious of his penalty which involved fruitless labour & endless repetition of the same task. The

contd...202...

'Myth' seems to be tragic, and if it is tragic, it is because the hero is conscious of his futile labour. But Sisyphus is not a pathetic figure. He has dignity. He is superior to his fate. He is stronger than his rock. His dignity lies in his ability to face reality. So we see that The Myth of Sisyphus is fully significant. Sisyphus stands for the absurd man, of the modern age of anxiety, and the task imposed on him by the gods indicates the mechanical nature of our day to day life. The difference lies in the fact that in our case, the task is undertaken mechanically, whereas sisyphus is conscious of his futile labour.

Like Sisyphus, we are also engaged in futile labour in most part, unconsciously. But one day the mechanical nature of our life brings the sense of absurdity. To quote from Camus ' Absurd Walls, ' It happens that the stage-sets collapse. Rising, tram, four hours in the office or factory, meal, tram, four hours of work, meal, sleep and Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, according to the same rythm - this path is easily followed most of the time. But one day the 'why' arises and everything begins in that weariness tinged with amazement. 'Begins' - this is

contd..203..

important. Weariness comes at the end of the acts of a mechanical life, but at the same time it inaugurates the impulse of consciousness. It awakens consciousness and provokes what follows .... at the end of the awakening comes, in time, the consequence : suicide or recovery !<sup>22</sup>

It is this rare moment of consciousness, which brings the sense of tragedy. Sisyphus is conscious from the very beginning, whereas our mechanical nature of life, the sense that time is passing - we are drawing near to death, and we are striving for nothing makes us conscious of the meaninglessness of life at the end of our act when weariness comes. The absurd man then contemplates on the consequence : suicide or recovery.

At this point Camus raises the serious philosophical problem : Does the absurd dictate death ? Camus' answer, in short, is this. There is no relationship between the absurd and suicide. Besides, contradiction lies in the idea of relationship between the two. To him, suicide or hope is to accept the absurd. He rather suggests revolt-true revolt against the absurd, and it is in continuing to live - to act.

contd...204..

Being confronted with the maningless life - the absurd, some of us commit suicide or have resort to hope, and others, like Sisyphus, revolt against the absurd. ( Of course. Camus speaks of personal revolt here ). The life of contemporary man in an absurd world is not without its dignity. Like Sisyphus, ' the dignity of man lies in his ability to face reality in all its senselessness, to accept it freely, without fear, without illusions - and to laugh at it ' 23

In dealing with the Existentialist influences in literature, we must not point to just vague and possibly accidental resemblances between the understanding of man found in the literateurs and that found in the Existentialists, but we must point to something more definite, restricting ourselves to those literary products where prominence is given to the ' recurring themes ' of Existentialism, such as freedom, decision and responsibility ; even more, finitude, alienation, guilt and death, and not the least, the peculiar and indefinable intensity of feeling apparant in most of the Existentialists. Thus considered, we can call Kafka an Existentialist Writer, but not Shakespeare. Perhaps, the Existentialists of the 19th

contd...205

and 20th centuries were aware of a crisis, a threat, a fragmentation and alienation, being something new in their chilling intensity. Regarding this sense of crisis, William Barrett has remarked, "The image of modern man lies in T.S. Elliot's line ; men are bits of paper, whirled by the cold wind"<sup>24</sup>. In the 19th century, two great Russian novels, introduced some of the themes of Existentialism- 'The death of Ivan Ilyitch' by Tolstoy and 'Fathers and sons' by Turgenev. Tolstoy studied death and Turgenev made a study of nihilism. However, in their time, the greatest literary exponent of Existentialism was Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821-81), particularly in his works 'The brothers Karamazov' and 'Notes from the underground'. According to Walter Kaufmann, Dostoevsky's 'Notes from the Underground' contains "the best overture for Existentialism ever written". He further says, "With immitable vigor and finesse the major themes are stated here that we can recognise when reading all the other so-called Existentialists from Kierkegaard to Camus"<sup>25</sup>

CAMUS-(La Chute ) ( 1956 ; The Fall )

' The Fall ' is Camus' last major work which is an autobiographical monologue. It is a series of talks by Jean- Baptiste Clamence, who had been a prosperous Parisian lawyer, proud of his virtues, respected for his defense of moneyless clients. One day, crossing a bridge over the Seine, he saw a woman leaning over the rail. As he left the bridge he heard a splash, then a cry ; the woman had jumped- or fallen- into the river. Should he turn back and try to rescue her ? He walked slowly away. Thereafter the memory of that cry haunted him ; the thought that he should have tried to save her destroyed his peace of mind. He began to think of himself as a coward. He wondered had not his virtues been a device for popularity and success. Having no religious belief, he could not seek relief by confession to a priest. He looked sceptically, then cynically, at all virtues as stratagems ; every " good " man, he concluded, was a calculating and secretly self-centered as himself. He began to despise civilization as a tissue of competing hypocrisies.

Franz Kafka

Franz Kafka ( 1883-1924 ) , the Austro- German novelist must be regarded as the greatest Existentialist writer of all. In his writings we discover the themes of Existentialism. Here also we see- that ' man ' who is thrown in the world, basic individuality, the alienation, insufficiency and impotency inherent in the very existence of ' man' and the resultant inevitable feeling of frustration and anguish, the meaninglessness and absurdity of existence- the most important category of Existentialism developed by Sartre and Camus in their philosophy.

It seems from ' The Trial' that the main character of the story is trial, not Joseph K- But the case is not so. Joseph K. stands for Kafka's own painful experience of alienation of existence. The story indicates that everywhere we are in uncertainty. We are moving in a labyrinth and there is no way out. There is also no means of knowing the happenings of our life i.e. we do not know whence or how do they happen. This uncertainty gives rise to 'angst' and 'uread'. Human life is just like a labyrinth. We are moving in it aimlessly and helplessly.

' The Trial '

Now we come to this novel, ' The Trial '. The hero of the novel is an employee in Pargue Bank. We know nothing about his past life. His ordinary routine-bound life goes on without any exception. Suddenly, one day, a very trifling incident breaks the tune of his life. That the incident is a trifling one is expressed in the following words with which Kafka's novel ' The Trial ' begins ; ' Someone must have been telling lies about Joseph K., for without having done anything wrong he was arrested one fine morning"<sup>26</sup> . He did not know the reason for which he was prosecuted. He was sure of his innocence, yet he had to defend himself. The case proceeds and the lawyers thought it to be a critical one. In the meantime, his usual life goes on as before. Joseph K. wanted a prompt decision of his case. But even after month's wait, he remains in the dark about his case. Here in also lies that uncertainty. To him, the entire trial system, the judge, the court- everything is mysterious, unknown uncertain, unintelligible and invisible. After a year or two, one day, suddenly two strangers came to Joseph K's house and very politely asked him

to follow them. The gentle men took him to the dirty deserted suburb of Prague where he should be executed. Before execution Joseph K. asks himself, was help at hand? were there some arguments in his favour that had been overlooked? Of course there must be, where was the judge whom he had never seen? where was the High Court, to which he had never penetrated? But by this time the murderers thrust the knife into his heart twice. With falling eyes Joseph K. could still see the two of them, watching the final act. 'Like a dog' he said; it was as if he meant the shame of it to outlive him.

With these words the novel ends and we leave Joseph K. before an unworthy brutal death of his existence-existence which he knew to be true so long.

In the novel, 'The Trial', we see how Kafka reveals to us the absurdity of human existence and unreasonable human relation, through the mysterious bureaucracy, through the death sentence from a judge who remains unknown to Joseph K. till his death for some indefinite crime; and through the meaningless and futile effort of K. to be freed from mysterious judicial bureaucratic labyrinth.

The absurdity here lies in the fact that is there any ground to be sentenced to death for some indefinite reason and it is meaningful to be involved in a futile labour ? Why this invisible trial ? In the trial everything seems to be real, yet they do not bear any meaning to us. If we try to find out any meaning our attempt will end in vain. In the writings of Kafka we see that both '.....'natural and unnatural, tragic, absurdity and logic are existing side by side, and this characteristic makes his writings serious and meaningful'<sup>27</sup> This outward contradiction and agony are the elements of absurd writing.

### The Castle

Kafka's another book ' The Castle' is also an example of the uncertainty which is found in ' The trial'. Here also the hero of the story K., is in a labyrinth. He is puzzled, perplexed and confused. He is trying to get in the castle but finding no means or way through which he could come in. ' The Castle' is the best picture of alienation of the present age. In this universe, man is like an

isolated unit. He is trying his best to come close to others, but in vain. He is removed from others' heart though he is among them and this is what our life is.

In 'The Trial', we see that we are confined in the world, there is no way out and our existence is absurd. But Kafka thinks that the world is not exactly so as it seems to us. Kafka sees 'hope' in this barren absurd world. In 'the Castle', we see how he brings 'hope' in a peculiar way. The aim of 'The Trial' and 'The Castle' is not the same. They are complementary to each other. The problem in 'The Trial' is solved to some extent in 'The Castle'. So, the journey from the one to the other is inevitable. One has to write first 'The Trial' for writing 'The Castle'. The first describes but does not end. The second explains to some extent'. The Trial investigates the disease, The Castle proceeds for remedy'<sup>28</sup>. The absurdity of death 'Like a dog', the meaninglessness of futile labour and existence in 'The Trial', become meaningful in 'The Castle'.

FRANZ KAFKA - ' The metamorphosis' ( 1915).

Kafka's stories are quite intelligible as stories they are simple and clear in plot and style ; but through that apparently transparent front the author has expressed or concealed his philosophy. The story runs thus ;

Gregor Samsa, a commercial traveler, turned overnight into a gigantic insect. Gregor has been a hard worker, the chief support of his parents and sister, but he has secretly aspired to replace his father as the head and lawgiver of the family. His suffering is multiplied by his retention of his human mind, feelings, and memories. Lying on his hard carapace back, convulsively wiggling his many legs, he recalls the monotony of his former life, and broods over the disgrace of his present state. His parents are horrified by hearing this insect talk like their son ; disgusted and fearful, they lock him in his room, and seldom look in upon him. His sister Greta pities him, daily brings him food, cleans his waste and pushes Gregor's armchair upto the window so that her transmigrated brother may climb upon it and look at the

passers by but she can not bear the sight or odor of him, and he, perceiving this, crawls under a sofa when she comes in. To support the family the mother takes in boarders, and the father, formerly retired, goes unwillingly back to work. Greta too takes a job and comes home so tired that she becomes negligent in feeding Gregor or cleaning his room. He grows thin and weak. One day the door is carelessly left open, and he creeps out, to the dismay of the boarders ; they leave ; the father throws some apples at Gregor, one hits and cripples him. Worse yet is the pain he feels when he hears his sister say, " We must get rid of him", He loses all will to live ; he refuses food and drink, grows thin and weak," Soon he made the discovery that he was now unable to stir a limb..... His head sank to the floor of its own accord, and from his nostrils came the last flicker of his breath", He dies, and a charwoman throws his corpse into the garbage can." Thanks be to God", says his father.

In 'The Metamorphosis', Kafka portrayed himself as transformed into an insect, dowered, however, with human

understanding and sensivity. He seems to have felt some justice in his father's rejection of him for refusing to carry on the family's economic enterprise ; he mourns that he can no longer support the family and let his father retire. But he curses of his father are too bitter to bear ; they are the missile that breaks his back. Nor can he forget how his sister's tenuerness has turned into revulsion and conuemnation. When the insect dies it is Gregor and Kafka lounging for the balm and absolution of death.

Ernest Hemingway ( 1898- 1961) was an American novelist. ' The way in which Hemingway's characters face their destiny through action has led some critics to class Hemingway among existentialist writers. John Killinger's study, " Hemingway and the dead Gods" (1960) is subtitled " A study in Existentialism" . But it does not mean that Hemingway had any direct contact with the Existentialist movement. However, it is not difficult to find out existentialist elements in Hemingway's novels. The hero in his novels achieves honesty in the encounter with death. Indeed Hemingway would have agreed with Heidegger's Characterization of man's being as being-towards-death. A man feels most free in extreme situations. He always prefers those who ' take a stand',

still his heroes often appear alienated from their environment and from their fellow-beings. This experience of alienation as described in his novels is typically existentialist. In his short story "A clean well-lighted place", one can discover the sense of 'nothingness'. However we shall discuss here ~~his~~ ERNEST HEMINGWAY 'S' The Old Man and the Sea"(1952),

It is too long to be a short story, too short to be a novel, became the literary event of the year. The story runs thus ; An old fisherman, after gently refusing an admiring boy, who asked to accompany him, rows out alone into the Gulf stream to make a last great catch, to set a mark for youth to match, and to test his aging strength of body and soul. A giant marlin takes his bait, pulls him far from sight of land, and gives him a full day's fight before dying. Night falls on the struggle. The merlin surrenders, but it is too heavy to be pulled into the boat. He can only lash it to the side. Sharks feed on it, he kills them one after another. More sharks come and feast on it. The old man becomes exhausted by struggling and rowing throughout the night reaches shore. By that time the merlin is reduced to its

bones. The fishermen become astonished and compliment him. With his last strength he climbs the beach to his cabin and into his cot, and he can not decide as to whether he has been victorious or defeated.

This story has been interpreted by the critics as a parable of man's struggle with the challenges of life. However, the author disclaims any intent of symbolism, but the allegory stands out and raises the book to significance by expressing anew Hemingway's chosen motive "The first obligation in life is to endure".

ENGÈNE IONESCO (1912 - ), a Romanian/ French dramatist, is well known as an avant-garde playwright. His 'The Lesson' (La Lesson) is a terrifying experiment in the theatre of Cruelty and of the absurd. His advanced theatrical techniques go hand in hand with rather conservative political views. His Rhinoceros (Rhinocéros) is a violent satire on all forms of totalitarianism, left and right, and he is equally hostile to the U.S.S.R. and to Sartre's theories on Commitment. His obsession with

death is most conspicuous in 'Exit the King' (Le Roi se meurt), while the more spiritual direction of his work, with its insistence upon the human need for love, found expression in 'Hunger and Thrust' ( La Soif et la faim).

If we turn our eyes to the modern Bengali literature, particularly Bengali drama, here also we can see the parallels of existentialist thought which made its entry at the end of 1940. The inflow of this philosophy in Bengali literature starts mainly through the writings of Jean-Paul Sartre. Magazines and papers like ' Group Theatre Patrika', ' Manab man', ' Anrinya' began to throw light on the philosophy of Sartre and Camus, and also went on publishing different discussions, translations and interview with them. In between 1960 and 1980 Sartre's famous plays like ' The Flies', 'The Respectable Prostitute', 'Men without shadows' etc.were translated into Bengali and also. staged in Calcutta successfully by the Group Theatre. All these indicate the increasing influence of this Philosophy on Bengali literature. The feeling of 'absurdity', an important category of Existential philosophy is the link between Existentialism and absurd drama. This feeling of the

'absurd' is being largely felt in the recent writings of the modern Bengali novelists and playwrights. We shall mention here a few of their writings as the task is a vast one.

SUDHINDRANATH DUTTA

It is Jibanananda Das, the eminent modern poet of Bengal, who first recognized Sudhindranath Dutta as the only Bengalee Existentialist poet in his time. He may be termed a metaphysical poet with existentialist outlook. We can enlist the name of Sudhindranath with the names of Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Sartre and Camus. To him, nothingness and existence are inseparable and synonymous. In his poems we find a wonderful co-existence of uncertainty and emotion, and a marvellous inter-mingling of existence and nothingness. The uncertainty, negation, query, nothingness and melancholy which enrich his poems are in accordance with the main themes of existentialism. Consciousness is self-sufficient, but it is encircled by uncertainty. He feels the existential uncertainty in consciousness, ~~in many~~ and many of his poems that are interrogative originate from this sense or feeling of uncertainty. We

can mention the names of his poems like 'Apachaya', 'Prashna', 'Orchestra', 'Bhavitavya' etc. in this connection. The poem 'Kasmai Devaya' expresses his feeling of negation best. Nothingness is an important concept in Existentialism. He has used this concept in his poems many times and in different ways. Mention may be made of his poems like 'Punarjanma', 'Anusanga', 'Kala' etc which deal with this important concept. He might have experienced nothingness in his personal life, and this experience might have been the origin of his philosophical thinking and that is why his poems are marked with the sense of eternal non-existence or nothingness from the very beginning to the end.

JIBANĀNANDA DAS

In the writings of Jibanānanda Das, another eminent modern Bengalee poet, we also find some existentialist concepts like loneliness, alienation, agony, death etc. But his philosophical thought is not fully expressed in his novels and short stories. We shall mention a few of his novels and short stories. The theme of his novel

' Mālyabān ' is about the unhappy conjugal life of Mālyabān and his wife Utpala. Their temperaments are contradictory and as a result, they suffer from a constant mental agony throughout their conjugal life from which there is no escape. His other three novels namely, ' Nirupama Yātrā ' 'Purnimā ' (Published in 'Pratikshan', 1984-1985) and ' Pretinir Rupakatha ' (1953) express a feeling of loneliness and alienation which the main characters of the novels feel. His short story 'Jamrultala' presents us a romantic picture of spiritual love between Hārāni and Abani. Death gives them a new outlook of life. Standing face to face before death Hārāni and Abani realized this world and life as a new one which they never experienced before.

In this connection, it is note worthy that the characters of Jibanānanda's novels feel and realize the crisis of modern mechanical civilization- the alienation and loneliness of life. They all accept it, but never revolt or never try to resist or overcome it.

However, Jibanananda should not be regarded as an absolute pessimist. He had a poetic vision of a distant

morning radiant with the light of hope, as it becomes evident from the symbolism through which the poet expresses his optimistic spirit in 'Suchetanā', one of his immortal poems : " Suchetana, by kindling light this way- only this way there will come the liberation of the earth ;

It is a task of the great men of many centuries .....how absolutely radiant with the sun light in this air ;

A good human society almost alike .At the hands of tired but tireless sailors like us .

Will be fashioned, not now, far off in the last dawn".<sup>36</sup>