

Historicizing *The Blue Flower* : An Introduction

Penelope Fitzgerald, an English novelist, poet, essayist and a biographer, was born on 17th December 1916 and died on 28th April 2000. She won a Booker Prize in 1979 for her novel *Offshore*. Judging her literary capacity, *The Times* has included her in a list of The 50 greatest British writers since 1945. She was from a good family-Knox. Her father was a *Punch* editor. In her life, she worked as a tutor, and a journalist. She worked for BBC during the Second World War.

After publishing a biography of Pre- Raphaelite artist Edward Burne –Jones in 1975, she began her literary career. Two years later, she published a joint biography of her father and uncle, *The Knox Brothers*. Her first novel, *The Golden Child*, was published in 1977. The novel, *The Golden Child*, has been presented in a museum and a mysterious murder context. She wrote this novel to amuse her husband. Within the other five years she published other four novels. Each of these novels has portrayed her own life- experience. She won the Golden PEN Award for her Lifetime's Distinguished Service to Literature.

The Blue Flower, Fitzgerald's final novel, exposes the eighteenth century German society. In this context, the central character, Fritz's life struggle has been presented. He has tried for different professions before he was fallen in love with a twelve years old girl, Sophie Von Khun. Further, it is a biographical novel, centered on Friedrich (Fritz) von Hardenberg and his struggles for achieving his needs and making a career. For this, he has been involved in different works in different parts of the country. Fritz has studied at the University of Jena, he has worked as an Inspector of Salt Mines among others. To his beloved, Sophie, he says dear philosophy and spirit's guide. Sophie is

presented neither as an intelligent nor as a beautiful character. Fritz has deep love and concerns for Sophie, despite their various differences.

Fritz began writing fiction and poetry at the energetic academic environment of University of Jena. The central character, Fritz, of Fitzgerald's, *The Blue Flower*, started working as an Inspector of Salt Mines for earning his living.

With his experience he learned the existential reality of men. In such a context, one has to live in whatever the cost he has got. The central character Fritz has to struggle for everything and he is ready to face it. Fritz is a typical 18th century character. The novel is written on the background of The French Revolution, touching issues of humanism and the enlightenment. Fritz –Sophie relation has made the first to realize the development of an individual self within himself.

The Blue Flower as a historical novel presents the social context of the time. Both as a romantic and a philosophical person, Fritz has undergone many ups and downs as a struggling and eccentric figure but his hopes and expectations are process leading him onwards.

In this context, Fritz is always looking for his 'self meaning' in the experience he has undergone. To live fully within the created context he has undergone his heroic impulse that has created him as a being. Many young girls have tried to be close with him but he is attracted towards a twelve-year-old, Sophie only. He is attracted to the girl of his choice- Sophie. Therefore, he does not give any importance to other girls' love towards him.

Fritz is an intellectual and renowned person though he chooses a twelve-year-old girl as his lover and he has further discarded the critiques on the issues of his selection from the society.

However, the girl he has chosen is not clever and attractive. In this way, this free choice of Fritz has raised a problem of how such things occur in one's life. Fritz is in struggle with society but he seems quite happy with the situation that he has to go ahead.

Fritz takes his ups and downs normally. He is happy with the choice- he makes or has made. Why a normal, intelligent and fully adult person gets infatuated towards a girl who is neither young nor beautiful is a big question. But the protagonist seems not to take notice of the remarks and comments made by the society in general in the text. The audiences feel sympathetic to his poor condition. He even does not pay any attention to Karoline who indeed loves him. Her love for Fritz becomes redundant and meaningless since that is not responded to. Most surprisingly Fritz is blinded by his mysterious and irrational attraction to Sophie. Why he loves her could be a great mystery to the common people.

The incidents Fritz has undergone have hinted at mysterious human life and its nature of free choice. It further suggests his determination and commitment. Fritz, a great philosopher and writer loves the girl, Sophie, who is not beautiful and intelligent to the public. But for him(Fritz), she is the most attractive one. He goes beyond all the phenomenal boundaries. But the public unnecessarily consider Fritz's choice as an exception and think it as an anti-social act and behavior. Fritz seems blind in love to the common people but he does not care about their blame. He simply loves and is ready to fight against all sorts of social challenges. Fritz is like Sisyphus in Albert Camus's *The*

Myth of Sisyphus who struggles to create his own fate. He does not obey the social dictation and principle of the German nobility of the time he belongs to. He does what he loves to do and persistently goes on respecting freedom. Thus, his quest for freedom and independent existence is continual at the cost of social prestige and good remarks.

Fritz, as a poet, is committed to the search for beauty, embodied in his beloved Sophie. He is firm enough in his quest for love. To him the search is more important than discovery and that becoming is more critical than being. He believes in the process and not in the completion of something.

The Blue Flower is Fitzgerald's final masterpiece. This text has been read from different perspectives by various critics. There are a number of critics who have analyzed this novel in different dimensions. *The Blue Flower* has invited many critics and their readings. Marie Antoinette says:

The novel certainly deals with the life of a genius i.e. Frederick von Hardenberg, more famously known as the German poet and philosopher, Novalis, widely accredited with the founding of the German romantic movement. The blue flower became the symbol of that movement after Novalis used it in his unfinished novel, *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, to symbolize desire, love, and the metaphysical striving for the infinite and unreachable. (18)

The extract, mentioned above, deals with the traits of the protagonist and what *The Blue Flower* stands for. The reach of love and desire as well as other such emotional drives is infinite and that cannot be limited to any criterion. *The Blue Flower* indeed represents the German Romantic Movement. The special features of the movement have been implied

through the symbolic representation of the blue flower. Hereby the critic, Antoinette touches the symbolic aspects of the text. In the same way Mona Knapp reads the novel and says:

Penelope Fitzgerald's ninth novel sets out to retell the tale of Friedrich. The effort is timely, since the book was published on the two-hundredth anniversary of the couple's first meeting. Hardenberg, who assumed the pen name Novalis after Sophie's death, was a member of an aristocratic family in Saxony. He studied philosophy with Fichte in Jena and left behind, in his brief creative years before an untimely death at age twenty-nine, a work that defines the philosophical and literary heights of German romanticism. In his novel *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* he created the symbolic blue flower, the essence of romantic longing that goes beyond all limits of time and space: I have no craving to be rich, but I long to see the Blue Flower. It lies incessantly at my heart, and I can imagine and think about nothing else. (371)

Knapp simply describes the different aspects of the text, *The Blue Flower*. His reading revolves the introductory act of the characters, especially of the protagonists: Fritz and Sophie. The symbolic representation of the blue flower crosses the limit of time and space. The essence of the blue flower if not into the phenomenal form, remains forever. Knapp emphasizes nothing seems more crucial than the blue flower that embodies a lot of fragrance.

Likewise-next critic-Richard Eder, views Fitzgerald's *The Blue Flower* in a very distinct way. His focus is on the romantic features of the text, *The Blue Flower* and mentions what sort of impact the romantic age left upon the entire Europe:

Deceptively small in size, *The Blue Flower* is a fictional evocation of the Romantic Movement that revolutionized Europe's sensibility at the beginning of the 19th century and of the contrast between the intellectual passions of any such large movement and the humbler, more permanent truths of human nature. Big subjects –and Fitzgerald does, in fact, start them in the laundry. A young man travels from Jena with his former fellow-student the Freiherr Friedrich von Hardenberg, later famous as the German Romantic poet Novalis. They arrive at the decrepit Hardenberg townhouse only to find themselves under a snowstorm of sheets, pillowcases, chemises and drawers pitched from the upper stories into the courtyard.(5)

The journey that Fritz accomplishes in his life course in the novel is carved out in the aforementioned reading. This study seems to have failed to touch the emotional aspect and existential flavor embedded to *The Blue Flower*. The dominant part of the novel is the relationship between the male protagonist, Fritz and the female one, Sophie . It must be incorporated in almost every reading which is left out in the Eder's reading.

Similarly, Jonathan Dee does seem to show the integral relationship of the novel, *The Blue Flower* with the German Romantic Movement. He thus says concerning marriage and romance:

The Blue Flower resurrects the true story of the great German romantic poet Friedrich von Hardenberg, known by the pen name Novalis.

Talented, cultured, ethereal Hardenberg, seemingly on the doorstep of a brilliant career (he died at twenty-eight; his work became well known only posthumously), at age twenty-two shocked his family and friends by announcing his intention to marry a twelve-year-old child named Sophie von Kuhn, a girl who was neither especially bright nor especially attractive. If there was more than mere artistic perversity to his choice, no one around him could divine it.

Jonathan Dee simply presents how the plot of the novel develops and what the key events there are in the main narrative. What happens, if a poet enjoying a brilliant career gets married to a girl of 12 who is neither attractive nor intelligent. Hence, Dee evokes the situation of surprise on this kind of Fritz's behavior and temperament. He very slightly touches the choice made by the poet.

Dagmar Herzog comments on the similar love affair basically focusing on the romantic and conjugal affair:

Based on the early life of Friedrich Fritz von Hardenberg, who later became prominent as the Romantic poet Novalis, *The Blue Flower* is about a few of those casualties. Its organizing mystery centers on why Fritz would suddenly plunge into head-over-heels infatuation with a young girl of twelve, Sophie von Kuhn, whom he has only met for fifteen minutes, but has already, asked to marry him. (6)

The above reading does not seem to have incorporated anything new. Whatever has been said is already mentioned in the novel, *The Blue Flower* in a very precise manner. The love affair that is very surprisingly there between Fritz and Sophie is highlighted in the Herzog's criticism.

These readings and criticisms do not seem to have touched the most prominent and crucial aspect of the text, Fitzgerald's *The Blue Flower*. Hence, this research intends to justify why Fritz loves Sophie despite many disparities between them. Though, Fritz love is not an essentialist love that could hardly be changed. It is because Fritz has adjusted himself with existential reality even after death of Sophie.

For this study, the research will use the theory of existentialism, especially the views of the existential theorists, Sartre and Albert Camus.

Fritz is making good progress in his career despite many ups and downs. This is the notion, embodied in Fritz, that existence precedes essence which is claimed by many existential theorists. An existential hero has to make his own choice as that of Fritz. The existential hero living with hope always fills the vacuum in life for happiness and her/his independent existence. The criticisms mentioned above have not touched this aspect of the text, and this is the reason why this study is going to be significant and relevant.

The objective of this study is to find out how some people who are different in thoughts and vision do things differently and derive a lot of pleasure out of their deeds. How they seek for meaning of the life in the meaningless and futile world.

The specific objectives of this research are of great importance in the sense that they will lead the readers to learn how to create her/his own fate and seek for independent

life. Indeed freedom is a great value to every living being. Freedom is cut off when the freedom seeker surrenders before the social norms and values. In order to please the society one has to lose her/his own freedom.

Life is after all the most precious thing to every creature. There are a chain of choices at every step of life and one has to choose out of many. Human beings in any case love to exist. And for this independent existence, s/he has to look for another alternative as Fritz does in the novel, *The Blue Flower*. Of course there are many challenges when a person for the sake of her/his freedom strives to accomplish a distinct and extraordinary task. S/he should learn to welcome the challenges as they help one enjoy the bliss from the independent existence. Fritz does whatever he loves though his actions and relationships developed so far do not lie on the hollow foundation of the society of the 18th century Europe. After all this study will help the readers to take a lot of risks and invite challenges for the sake of individual pleasure and choice.

In Fitzgerald's *The Blue Flower*, twenty two years old Hardenberg (Fritz) has to make choices about work and his future. He is all the time committed to face the challenge whatever comes in front of him. He is adjusted to the situation whatever comes to him.

This aspect of the novel connects to the existential theorists Sartre and Albert Camus' views on the human existence. How Fritz makes efforts to convert his life into a precious and valuable existence that is detached from the social interference and imposition is explicitly linked with the efforts and choices of the existential hero, Sisyphus in Albert Camus' *The Myth of Sisyphus*. Existentialism is quite a wide intellectual movement. The existentialist philosophers come out with a critique of

preceding philosophy, attempted to reinterpret radically not only the most important philosophical problems but the very mode of philosophical thinking as such. Thus, they claim to introduce their own unique existential way of thinking. This is how existentialism is usually viewed in the west.

In the course of history, these approaches seem to have become increasingly rooted in West European thought and culture in general. But the existentialists are equally anxious to show that their philosophical position is not only unique but also distinctively universal. For them the existential type of thought and world perception is something that always takes place in any human being, including the thinker, but for some reason tends to be concealed, rejected, or externally completely unrevealed.

Existentialism suggests about the independent human existence and freedom of choice. Basically, there are two schools of Existential thoughts. They are Theistic and Atheistic existentialism. It is clear that people create themselves on their own will.

Out of many prominent figures, Sartre's view is relevant here to bring into light. He mentions in his book *Existentialism and Human Emotions* about the individual and her/his potentials to become more than what s/he is, man is nothing else but what he makes of himself (15). To him human have immense potentials that they use and create their outstanding presence in the world they live in. Furthermore, he claims, there is no reality, except in action (32). Reality is the concern of action. There is no action, no reality. Reality and action are concerned with each other. They are relative.

Similarly, French existentialist philosopher, Albert Camus, reflects on the loss of certainties in the postmodern world. To him, each individual has a plan in her/his own life as a project. The individual is responsible for the choice and even failure of the very

design as well. Hence his concern is with the freedom and responsibility of the individual and their alienated state that is due to social mechanism and difficulty that one faces due to lack of belief and homage to the almighty. His entire focus is on the absurd life of individuals and their meaningless engagement in the materialistic acts. He thinks that human existence is futile. The modern world is full of injustice: millions work in cyclic way that is exploitative. Furthermore, he thinks that humans should rebel against the absurdities just by discarding to participate in such futile things. In *The Myth of Sisyphus*, he says that Sisyphus represents the modern people and creates his own fate though he knows the implication of his deed is no more fruitful. Camus says:

Leave Sisyphus at the foot of the mountain! One always finds one's burden again. But Sisyphus teaches the gods and raises rocks. He too concludes that all is well. This universe hence forth without a master seems to him neither sterile nor futile. Each atom of that stone, each mineral flake of the night-filled mountain, in itself forms a world. The struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man's heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy.(70)

To get released from the anxiety, depression and frustration of the absurd world, one needs to obey the dictates of the God or he should submit to death. But to the modern man either of the choices is ridiculous coward. Rather s/he prefers to live in the absurd world struggling hard. Sisyphus disobeys the God and creates his own fate though this fate is much challenging and complicated and similarly it represents the plight of modern people . They create their future which is dreadful and extraordinary. Fritz does create his future by marrying a girl Sophie much younger than him and forgets her after Sophie's

death due to tuberculosis and further gets engaged with another girl. Hence he makes choices for independent existence at the cost of social norms and values.

Due to limit in time and resources supposed to be consumed for the purpose of conducting research on Penelope Fitzgerald's *The Blue Flower*, the research paper is going to study how the protagonist, Fritz, seeks for opportunities to cultivate the milieu for his independent existence. There are always choices before him, and he makes the choice out of many that can please him and he gets to derive satisfaction from as well. As the research area is existentialism, this thesis paper will revolve around how the central character invites challenges to create his existence in the futile and meaningless world. So far the theoretical framework is concerned; Sarte and Camus whose focus is on the freedom of choice and the subject of hope on the part of human will be delimited as the theorists to carve out the thesis paper.

The first chapter, the introduction deals with the abridged biography of the author, the clarity of the claim and the synopsis of the text which is supposed to be analyzed in detail in the second chapter and the theory that is the lens to analyze the text through. The second chapter will be the textual analysis in the frame of the existential theory. The last chapter will be the conclusion that summarizes the primary issues of the previous chapters.

II: Fritz's Quest for Freedom in Prism of Existentialism

Freedom is the right to say or do something without any external pressure. So, it is a great value to every individual. For the sake of achieving this freedom, human beings are making efforts to reduce the degree of enslavement in their life course. Penelope Fitzgerald in her novel, *The Blue Flower* shapes out a beautiful picture of such a situation with a typical character named Fritz who attempts from his level best to yield the ground for living a free and carefree life. He struggles much in order to deal with each and every bit in the wheel of life. To understand the consequences of this freedom, Sartre first explores what freedom is and how man comes to have it. To him "Freedom itself simply means the ability to choose: man comes to have this ability thanks to his having consciousness. The statement existence precedes essence combined with man's freedom implies that the classical idea of human nature is false" (*Existentialism and Humanism* 7). Sartre associates essence to human nature; it is what human beings must be.

Further, human existence is associated with human identity so it is of great importance. The identity is clothed through different life courses which groups people to overcome the human spirit. One has to strengthen this spirit by being able to tackle hurdles. Indeed the male protagonist, Fritz, in the novel, *The Blue Flower*, has tirelessly endeavored to continue his journey of life course and most often does whatever his conscience commands him to do. He is a bold character who prioritizes his- self more than the social norms and values. On this ground he respects his existence.

Regarding this line of argument, existence means to stand out in the universe that is against us, and existentialism means "pertaining to existence" (Cuddon 316).

Regarding existential philosophy, Sartre further says in *Existentialism and Humanism*

...man, first of all, exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world-and defines himself afterwards... Man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself.

In the same line of arguments, the situation of Fritz can be observed through the lens of human existential condition. His life can be assessed as a dynamic and mobile life, observing its mobility and change. So, Fritz's journey of life runs from vacuum to open-ended meaning. He is obliged to coordinate with the different facets of society in *The Blue Flower*. His place is complex and he is engaged in searching the significance of his selfhood. He respects his desires too much. This is why he does what pleases him.

In this way, existentialism is used to describe “a vision of the condition and existence of man, his place and function in the world,” and his relationship or lack of it with God (Cuddon 316). It is a “very intense and philosophically specialized form of quest for selfhood” (Ellmann and Feidelson 803). Encyclopedia International defines, “Existentialism is near to life and death of people. Instead of concentrating on logic or science, existentialism is primarily concerned with human existence, especially with man's most extreme experience: the confrontation with death, anguish and anxiety, despair and guilt” (*Existentialism* 589-90). Existential philosophy represents a concept of strongest denial of any metaphysical ideas. Fritz in *The Blue Flower* does not believe in metaphysical power. He is not convinced by the sense that there is any predetermined destiny one suffers or experiences. Rather he thinks that one has to create his own fate. In this regard, Fitzgerald says, “I shall, I will, I must, I ought, I can stay here, who can do anything against Fate? I have decided that I am a Determinist. Fate might not be so kind another time” (77). Fritz sees many options before him. Hence, it is felt that he believes

in fate. However, he is not confident whether fate affects human life or not. This dilemma communicates him the energy for moving ahead.

Similarly, Jean-Paul Sartre, a leading existential philosopher, defines: “By existentialism we mean a doctrine which makes human life possible and, in addition, declares that every truth and every action implies a human setting and a human subjectivity” (*Existentialism and Human Emotions* 10). It gets clear that existential philosophy signifies a philosophy describing things as they appear, is a trend in philosophy based on ideas of Soren Kierkegaard and the German philosophers, Heidegger, Jaspers and others. Fitzgerald’s *The Blue Flower* does embody the similar issue which reflects through the central character Fritz.

Penelope Fitzgerald mentions Fritz’s attitudes towards human life in *The Blue Flower*, “Well, I have spent what I had on the necessities of life. There is the soul, and there is the flesh. But the old one too, when he was a student, must have had these necessities” (36). Fritz asserts that he has lived up with the basics of the human life which embodies both soul and body. And in fact every human being has got both. Hereby he is generalizing human possessions. Whatever a person does and belongs to regardless to her/his nationality, ethnicity, class, sex and religion is similar to each other in terms of human supremacy.

Fritz creates his own fate in the sense that he invites challenges in the life course himself. He does not care what the implications of his acts will be. Rather he undergoes the journey of life in a normal way. As he respects his self, he decides himself regarding what he has to do next. In this regard, Penelope says:

You are young and fiery, the Maiden is only fourteen and fiery. You are both sensual human beings and now a tender hour comes and you kiss one another for all you're worth, and when that's over you think, well, this is a Maiden, like other Maidens! (70)

These lines explain that Fritz is older than the girl he loves. Everybody comments his relationship with the girl, Sophie. He does not take notice of people's criticism. Rather he does what he thinks is good. The magnitude of love he has for the girl is highly appreciative. His entanglement with Sophie triggers the sleeping state of the society. He welcomes social commentaries about his emotions in an easy way. Hence he creates his fate himself. He is bold enough to face the consequence of the deed. His existence is much loving to him. In fact existence means to be alive, to be living. *The New Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* defines existence as 'the state or fact of being real or living or of being present.' It can also be defined as a "way of living" which 'is always under question. This identity under question can be observed in Fritz. Fritz is always under investigation of his identity. He passes through a number of ups and downs. Fritz is expelled from his school. He has done this or that. Especially, his love affair with Sophie is highly concerned with the issue of Fritz's quest for individual freedom. He continues doing whatever pleases him despite concerning social hurdles and obstacles.

Fritz is an extraordinary personality who goes beyond the limits and horizons of normal humanity. He is a visionary person who trusts in the intrinsic virtues of people rather than the tangible ones. His concentration lies in the inner beauty and philosophy an individual embodies in every respect of his life. The moment he introduces himself with Sophie, he mentions her age that is not significant to him in any way. It is mentioned in

The Blue Flower: “I am Fritz von Hardenberg,” he had said to her. “You are Fraulein Sophie von Kuhn. You are twelve years of age, I heard your gracious mother say so” (71). Fritz is identifying himself to Sophie confidently and highlights his knowledge about her age. The reason for bringing about the issue of age here is that he does not value the external phenomena such as age. He transcends the physiological beauty of girls.

Had he given importance to that physical charm, he would have developed relationship with young girls of twenty. But he is distinct in this regard. He is satisfied with his choice. He respects his love and relationship. He lives with the real world that is the outcome of his deeds. Existentialists do highlight the similar issues.

In the same line of argument, existentialism initiates with the assertion that 'existence precedes essence.' This phrase contains within it a radical meaning. To agree this idea is to deny the existence of human nature and to pave the way to true human freedom. Jean-Paul Sartre meticulously has examined the idea of freedom and determinism.

Similarly, for Kierkegaard, man is free to choose, yet if he does not like to go to prediction he must make an ethico-religious choice. The only way of tolerating the anxiety of existing is to submit oneself in the realm of God. He says that one can choose absolutely when he has not chosen to choose this or that but the absolute and this absolute is, “I myself in my eternal validity” (*Choice* 831). Regarding the choice, Kierkegaard demonstrates his dialectical concept in every choice and thus he writes:

Choice performs at one and the same time the two dialectical movements:
that which is chosen does not exist and comes into existence with the

choice; that which is chosen exists; otherwise there would not be a choice. For in case what I chose did not exist but absolutely came into existence with the choice, I would not be choosing, I would be creating; but I'd not create myself, I choose myself. Therefore, while nature is created out of nothing, while I myself as an immediate personality am created out of nothing, as a free spirit I am born of the principal of contradiction, or born by the fact that I choose myself. (*Choice* 832)

Hence, it is clear that we should choose things ourselves among contradictions and options. Regarding this choice he claims, "if you drive on any longer than you do not in fact choose the one essential thing; like the kingdom of God, it must be chosen first" (833). This philosophy implies that freedom is the highest human moral. It further suggests that such human values are exposed through choices and subsequent actions. Creation of sense of responsibility in man forms orientation towards action. Because one always faces a free choice in the world, he/ she does not have the excuses. This implies that choice or responsibility, are not always easy. Fritz seeks for independent existence by choosing things and persons he requires in his life. He is a creator of his own fate. He does not believe in the presumably determined things.

In fact, the recognition of responsibility creates what Sartre calls a feeling of nausea: man trembles before the weight of his responsibility; it is a crushing realization to understand that one is abandoned in the world and must take credit for both one's successes and failures (Killinger 309)

Having freedom infuse torture in the individual because it shoulders responsibility. To have freedom is to instill anguish in the individual. Sartre declares that

our freedom is a fact, that determinism of any sort is a lie and an excuse, and that the consequences of this reality are that man has both responsibility and dignity (Stephen 330).

Sophie is much young, though, Fritz is satisfied with her. He is a self-motivated person who paves the path himself. Freedom has turned a milestone in every respect of his life. He is a dynamic character who assimilates the changes and learns how to live with them in a normal manner. Existentialism relies on the fact that one has to compromise with the change in life. People learn to keep up with the currents of life journey. In the same vein of argument, Fritz does not regret what he has done before. Rather he loves the myriad ups and downs in every phase of his life. In this regard, Penelope says: "She is thirteen, she will be fourteen, fifteen, sixteen. It takes time. One would say that God has stopped his clock. But she is cold, cold through and through" (136). Fritz is an optimistic character who thinks of good things to happen in future. He is confident about the gradual change in everything. Thus he is much positive regarding the age of Sophie. There is a continual change in Sophie which is indeed due to the law of nature. This is a natural process which nobody can stop. It is God who lets things happen so.

However, Fritz does not show any serious concerns to those things which are beyond his control. Rather he wants to live every moment of life in a free manner. Thus freedom proves a soothing fact to his life. The conception of freedom that Nietzsche rejects is founded upon a mistaken view of the self that is the self is an inseparable, everlasting, monad or substratum that retains its identity through time. Nietzsche expresses this position in the following passage: "The subject interpreted from within

ourselves so that the ego counts as a substance, as the cause of all deeds, as a doer” (488). Further, he says:

And just exactly as people separate the lightning from its flash, and interpret the latter as a thing done, as the working of a subject which is called lightning, so also does the popular morality separate strength from the expression of strength, as though behind the strong man there existed some indifferent neutral substratum, which enjoyed a caprice and option as to whether or not it should express strength. (13)

On this view, free will and free choice are inherent with men. This notion has been presented with the central character Fritz in the novel *The Blue Flower*. In this context, Fritz is endowed with a simple faculty of free will and free choice.

In the similar line of argument, Sartre believes on action and commitment rather than in abstract thought. Sartre says:

In reality, things will be such as men have decided they shall be. Does that mean that I should abandon myself to quietism? No, first I ought to commit myself and then act my commitment according to the time-honored formula that “one need not hope in order to undertake one’s work”. Nor does this mean that I should not belong to a party, but only that I should be without illusion and that I should do what I can. For instance, if I ask myself “will the social ideas as such, ever become a reality” I cannot tell, I only know that whatever may be in my power to make it so, I shall do, beyond that I can count upon nothing.

(Existentialism and Humanism 91)

This spirit of Sartre has been tinged with the spirit of Fritz in the novel *The Blue Flower*. Fritz's commitments are noteworthy to remember in Sartre's line of action.

Sartre's deepest interest is in individual human being, his effort is to understand to form a general concept of human being which has nevertheless been heavily dependent on a number of other such conceptions. Fritz has got tremendous will that lies on the foundation of freedom. He desires things and makes efforts to fulfill them as well. He loves responding his desires through his mobility and deeds in the life course.

This is why he keeps moving in every direction to cope with all levels of challenges. Penelope in *The Blue Flower* says: "In his next letters to Sophie, Fritz called himself inexcusable, uncultivated, ungracious, impolite, incorrect, intolerable, impertinent, and inhuman" (147). Despite having these flaws, he is happy and has confessed the truth. He is an existential hero in the sense that he accepts the implications of his performance. He does not mind being uncultivated and impolite. He lives with the reality. He always strives to come out of pool of illusion. He does not lead his life in a hypocritical manner. Maintaining a balance between life pace and his true temperament, he lives his full-fledged life being carefree about the social criticism and commentaries. In denying free will Nietzsche is denying that the will or self is an entity existing outside the habit, desire, reflection, and act that together constitute the deed. For Nietzsche, action is everything. On Nietzsche's idea, the doer or subject and deed are one.

Nietzsche attacks the doctrine of freedom of will because he believes that, as traditionally conceived, it is internally inconsistent. It implies that we both are and are not accountable and punishable for our actions. His perspective towards freedom is a bit

confusing in the sense that he has not been able to present a clear picture of freedom. There is no consistency in his saying.

Sophie is a young girl, not even mature for her age, of little education and little beauty. However, this does not seem to matter to Fritz who loves her passionately and when Sophie is 13 years old, they get engaged. It is around this love that the story revolves. The dynamism of Fritz in terms of intellect and understanding is extremely admirable as he has been able to unveil the cover of human life. He lives with the bitter truth and does not seem to pretend what he is not. Fitzgerald characterizes him: "Fritz had been born a dreamy, seemingly backward little boy. After a serious illness when he was nine years old, he became intelligent and in the same year was dispatched to Neudietendorf" (18). He is living due to the mercy of God. He is a blessed one with the divine potency that has indeed helped him to survive. Thus, it gets clear that he is a struggling hero he has ever strived to overcome hurdles in the journey of life. He understands the transitory nature of human life which is the reason for seeing relevance and prominence in Sophie who does not seem charming to the usual perceivers.

The above mentioned Fritzean spirit is quite heroic in the sense he has accepted the social dynamism, change and struggle as his life's values. During his career Fritz has moved in different universities in Jena, Leipzig and Wittenberg. Previously, he was dispatched out from a primary school. Further, he was taught by a teacher at home to fulfill his primary education. As a continuation of this education he was sent to his uncles' home at Lucklum. He was sent to Tennstedt at Kreisamtman Coelestin Just's (K. C. Just) house to take training about running a salt mine. During this time, he was fallen in love with Sophie. He did a complete love with her despite society's will.

Due to his commitment Sophie and Fritz engaged and were ready for being married. Finally, a tragedy was fallen to them ,that is, Sophie died. It was a shocking tragedy for the young souls. It was difficult to manage the emerging situation. However, Fritz kept on his work. He managed him well and got married with Julie - the daughter of councilor Johann Friedrich von Charpentier, professor of Mathematics at the Mining Academy of Freiberg. After this situation, Fritz gradually started writing and became a writer. This situation is presented in the novel as such: In the February of 1798, he told his friends that in future he would write under an old family name, Novalis, meaning "clearer of new land." As Novalis he publish his *Hymns to the Night* and worked on a number of projects, some finished , some left in fragments (225).

Observing all these situations and conditions we can see an intrinsic strength and significance in Fritz. In this regard, Sartre emphasizes the significance of intrinsic beauty which is perceptible to the eccentric people. According to Sartre, man is not an object, but is a subject. This quality is what gives him his dignity, which derives from our freedom to choose. If man were trapped into a certain nature, then his choices would be mere chance bounded and not intentional. It is only through intentional choices by which a man can come to live a dignified life, granted that he made good choices for himself. This compels a value system to the existentialist: "Sartre urges self-determination and insists upon the equivalence of human dignity and autonomy of the will" (Olson 107). The idea forwarded by Sartre is relevant to the self-determining nature of Fritz that he chooses Sophie for the emotional shelter and he does not express any resentment regarding his choice. He is convinced with his choice. Thus, he derives pleasure out of that as well. He feels dignified as he finds himself free to decide what he should do.

Fitzgerald has formed a complete world of friends, family and lovers in the novel *The Blue Flower*. We can observe moral ambiguity and confusions about the course taken in some characters. But Fritz is always committed in his course of action in *The Blue Flower*. The novel further portrays the social and political turmoil of the era. Fritz is a typical character who represents the era in which tremendous efforts are made for exploring knowledge at the cost of precious things. Fritz, the heroic character undergoes social challenges for respecting his self that he believes should be given the first priority. He explores his genius at domestic life.

Fritz's family, his eccentric father and high-strung mother, his loving sister, Sidonie, and brothers Erasmus, Karl, and the preternaturally intelligent baby of the family, refer to always as sure obstacles in the course of his exploration of identity and freedom. Even his unlikely love affair with young Sophie von Kühn makes perfect sense as it does not look usual in the socially framed network.

Fritz explores the meaning of love, poetry, life, and loss. He is like Sisyphus who keeps rolling the stone purposelessly. He knows the consequence of his deed. However, he continues his attempts for the purposeless purpose in the life journey. Fitzgerald poses Fritz's situation:

I am glad that Fritz has recovered himself and got back on to the straight path, from which I certainly shall never try to remove him again. My way of life here is pitched too high for his young head. He was much too spoiled, and saw too many strange new people, and it could not be helped if a great many things were said at my table which were not helpful or salutary for him to know. (22)

The extract from *The Blue Flower* justifies that Fritz's condition is fragile in the sense that he is an intellectual who perceives phenomenal world differently. How he understands the world around is a bit amazing to the rest. He is an educated one. He does not remain pure or barbaric. He is a spoiled one that the people of his knowledge judge him. However, he is happy with his plight. He feels elated as he respects freedom more than anything does.

Fritz's existential spirit is like that of Sisyphus in "The Myth of Sisyphus". In the same vein, existentialism can be defined as an independent right to choose or not to choose—even from informed alternatives. Therefore, it is said that one is free to choose all the time. It is because life is a dynamic and constant choosing process from among the options provided. In this context, Fritz, in *The Blue Flower*, is free enough to choose what he should do next. He does not seem to worry about the changing waves of the wheel of life. Rather he feels delighted with the changing pace of every bit and respect of life. Happiness is the crux of his pursuit. He derives pleasure from his flexible nature, performance and accommodation in every corner of life.

As a matter of fact human is conditioned in a context which is dynamic. Therefore, human interest, desire, and demand are subject to change. So, life is always situational, contextual and therefore is a subject to change- in choosing from among different alternatives. We can see the constant change in Fritz's professional activities and his involvement in them. He is given various chances and choices along with the informed potentials of chances or obstacles. He maintains his caliber to select the better one. Fritz makes a conversation with his father stating:

On his next return to Weissenfels, Fritz said: ‘Father, I am young and, speaking with due respect, I cannot live like an old man. I have kept myself under extreme restraint in Leipzig, I have ordered one pair of shoes only since I have been there. I have grown my hair long to avoid expense at the barber. In the evening, I eat only bread. (36)

Fritz emphasizes that he would like to lead a vibrant life that expects a lot of stamina and zeal. He presents him as an energetic person before his father. This proves that he always revolutionizes every part of his life. His struggles in the family domain demonstrate his heroic spirit that is not compromising and tiring. He has been able to live even in the most intricate situation. His iron -clad commitment poses him an existential hero in the whole social spectrum. Albert Camus states that through choosing the better and informed choice one can achieve the self- freedom and happiness. The very theme can be perceived in Fritz. He does not want to agree upon the rigid and hypocritical nature of society. Rather he fights for independence and happy, free and dynamic life which makes sense to him.

In such a situation one has to struggle with difficulties to go ahead. We can see Fritz's free choice in the every phase of his life in Fitzgerald's *The Blue Flower*. We can observe his struggle for 'being' and 'self- identity' and individual freedom. The similar type of enthusiasm and complete devotion to action and his absolute right of his personal choice is distinctly evident in Albert Camus's essay "*The Myth of Sisyphus*". In "*The Myth of Sisyphus*", Sisyphus is constantly repeating the same task of rolling the stone up and down the mountain in an open-ended manner without any consequence. However, Sisyphus is happy with his fate. He understands that he is responsible for such

implications of his deed. Despite knowing the result of his deed, Sisyphus continues his attempt to roll the stone up and down the mountain. He is constantly involved in this process like Fritz's struggle to lead his life ahead. Thus, human condition can be observed in the extract below:

As a result, they gave him the task of pushing a rock up a mountain, and when he reached the top, it rolled back down the hill again. Then he had to push the rock up the hill again. Sisyphus knows what he is doing- that gives Camus courage. Like Sisyphus, Camus tells us, humans make their own fate, their own choices, and to that extent are in control of their own destinies. By defying the gods, Sisyphus made his choice and his fate.

The existential hero, Sisyphus, challenges the entire system of God. As the hero, Sisyphus accepts the result of his deed pleasantly; Fritz in *The Blue Flower* readily welcomes the consequence of his actions. No doubt, his destiny leads him to face complication and hazards. Fritz is the eldest son of a large noble family. Because of his social status of nobility he is restricted in choosing works. His father is compact about the profession of his son. Because of his profession education takes him to Jena and Leipzig. Though, everything is preplanned for his future, he does not confine his life to this periphery. Rather he crosses the boundary for giving due respect to personal desires and independence.

Sartre writes that man himself "As freedom, as possibility and openness to the future, as indeterminate potentiality. Man's nature is not 'fixed' as a stone's or a tree's is; he is a creature with the ability to choose, and decides what he shall become" (Killinger 304). This last part is the key to the consequences of freedom: man decides what he shall

become, and he is responsible for the choices which come to define him. Hereby Fritz decides what he shall become. He is the determiner of his future. He does not depend upon the grand design by his father for his future. Thus, he fully respects his free self and is prepared to tackle all sorts of difficulties in the course of this adventurous journey.

Initially, Fritz's relationship has remained secret even to his parents and family members. Although, because of Fritz's strong passion and desires for Sophie he has waited sufficiently to be engaged with her. Fritz's firm decision to wait Sophie reminds his tremendous love for her. Fritz is strongly committed on his pious love and free-thinking.

In this way, Fritz's attachment with Sophie has remained secret from his parents for some time. It is taken with some amazement by Fritz's friends and siblings. Later on Fritz's extraordinary passion for Sophie seems ridiculous, because he is firm and happy to wait Sophie until she is fourteen before they are properly engaged. This exemplifies passion for his love with Sophie. He maintains to restore patience in order for waiting Sophie which implies his zealous and pious spirit and tremendous pure love for her. He is a selfless and free-thinking person who seems to lose anything for the sake of his self-determination. This engagement implies Fritz's strong commitment and self-determination.

Fitzgerald focuses on the strange love affair that flourishes between Fritz and a twelve year old girl, Sophie. He falls in love with her at first sight, and manages to persuade his and her parents to allow them engaged when she is fourteen. But unfortunately a year later, Sophie dies, and Fritz expresses his grief through writing books. Hence he chooses writing as a means of self-satisfaction. He moves to writing

from his love affair with Sophie. This dynamic character of Fritz makes him an existential hero. He is independent in constituting the mode of life he has to live. Such twists and turns are always there in Fritz's life. He has faced with them and finally has carved his aim of becoming a poet/ writer.

Hence, Fritz's attempt for liberty can be connected with freedom that is entangled with responsibility because the conscious being, the being-for-itself or Dasein, has made the actual choice. Sartre offers many metaphors to elucidate this anguish. In one example, he offers the scenario in which a young man might either go fight for his country in war or stay home and care for his sick mother. Existentially, he is free to choose and must make a choice in the wake of time's passage. Both choices come with consequences; in the former he is a man who abandons his sick mother, in the latter he is a man who evades the dangers of war. The factual reality of the world has put the young man into an impossible position: he cannot be all of the things he wants to be. Forcing him to make a choice to define himself causes the existential anguish. Sartre portrays freedom with suffering and pain. Freedom seems almost impossible when there is no adventure and suffering in the process of attaining it. Fritz does feel released from the chains of society as long as he suffers different types of ups and downs. Fritz falls deeply in love with Sophie, a young daughter of an estate owner whose dreamy manner he ascribes to the depth of a romantic soul, as opposed to the shallowness of a simple mind that his friends and family see in her. It is his blind love that everyone in the society defines. He faces such reactions of his friends and especially family to this sudden but unshakable infatuation for someone who everyone feels is far his inferior. The conflict between the mental world of a German Romantic poet and the real world he has to live in come clear

at times painfully at every step of his life journey. Fitzgerald quotes regarding Fritz's suspending situation:

That was not a lie. She had not mentioned herself. But Fritz's generous sympathy and instant rush of fellow-feeling was very painful to her. What strong force had spoken with her voice and told him something which, after all, was a lie and intended as a lie? As the dear Fritz talked on, gently but eagerly, about the obstacles to happiness-the obstacles which drew them even more closely together-she saw that between them they had created out of nothing a new and most unwelcome entity. (74)

Fritz simply poses the obstacles both he and Sophie have been suffering in their pure and pious love affair. While talking he is gentle but eager implies that he is bold enough to overcome such reactions and obstacles. He does not mind being condemned in the social network due to his entanglement with Sophie. He talks gently for soothing and persuading Sophie. The world they have created is indeed unwelcoming as it is startling to the usual people. His freedom lies on the foundation of idiosyncratic acts which puzzle the common humanity.

Fritz's change after death of Sophie is an exemplary notion of an existential hero. He managed himself and married another girl. His heroic capacity to manage his situation is very existential in nature. Every human being is bound to exist even at the loss of many daring entities and relatives. Life is after all the issue of alternating the choices posed before people. Conditions and contexts determine our choice. Fitzgerald asserts in this regard:

In December 1798, Fritz became engaged to Julie, the daughter of Councilor Johann Friedrich von Charpentier, Professor of Mathematics at the Mining Academy of Freiberg. She was twenty-two years old. He was now doing well in the Salt Mine Directorate and had been appointed Supernumerary Magistrate in the District of Thuringia. (Afterword 225)

Now there is compatibility between Fritz and Julie in terms of their age. Here he derives extrinsic power and energy to drive his life especially in the domain of his profession. He takes shelter in her. He takes her as a substitute to satisfy his emotional drives. This is indeed dynamism on the part of the protagonist. He lives up with gradual change and demand of time and context. This is the real strength of his identity.

The base of existentialist thinker is that you must exist primarily as a person. The primary principle of existentialism is that man is only what he/ she makes of himself/ herself, in the beginning he "is nothing" (*Existentialism and Humanism* 10). Sartre movingly describes this process when he says "We mean that man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world and defines himself afterwards" (*Existentialism and humanism* 10). We can see it in relation to Fritz's dynamism. It is the man who creates his identity and shapes the type of future he is to live in. without experience everyone remains immature and uncultivated. Therefore, the pool of knowledge should be dug up through different ups and downs. When one encounters something of unfamiliarity, he attains additional information that ultimately leads to fight against hurdles in life much strongly and boldly. Fritz accomplishes a long journey of life and eventually he understands him and his surroundings.

The life gets complicated provided that people are not aware of their potentials and the proper use of them. Those who limit them to certain norms and values constituted by the society remain back in every respect of life and simultaneously cannot enjoy the free self. Freedom is highly essential to everyone. Fritz is adventurous in tracing the path for himself. He neither rejects social norms nor welcomes everything blindly. No doubt he is living for existential independence that is overwhelmingly presented in *The Blue Flower*.

Fitzgerald poses how the protagonist assesses himself: “Fritz did not disturb himself about his own appearance, or about the shabbiness of his horse, as long as they could get from one point to another” (44). Fritz is carefree and does not show much concern to the surface level. He loves spirit and intrinsic structure that is not perceptible to normal eyes. He is immensely influenced by the existential philosophy of Albert Camus and his legendary character, Sisyphus. Sisyphus invites challenges for the sake of his self-satisfaction. Fritz does not mind having a shabby house. He is happy with whatever he has. He does not worry about things that are beyond his control. This is the reason there is vibration in every aspect of his life.

Due to Fritz’s habit to respect other people and all levels and forms of human affairs, he imparts the fragrance to all human virtues. Concerning to this eccentric nature Fitzgerald says: “Fritz took out his pocket journal. Certain words came readily to him—weakness, faults, urges, striving for fame, striving against the crushing, wretched bourgeois conditions of everyday life, youth, despair” (46). Mostly people have the aim of changing their social status just by being famous and popular among the people of a particular sector. Fritz is a positive character who always thinks of good things to happen.

He does not lead a life of despair. He is optimistic in the sense that he is ready to enjoy all ups and downs in life.

According to Camus, human future is unique and dreadful. In human life we always find the conflict and diversity. This diversity or conflict within and among men and their life is properly due to the feeling of absurdity. Camus argues that the transcendence of absurd is only achieved through an intense struggle and continues with a process not through the passive acceptance of situation. In this line of argument, we can compare Fritz's struggle with Sisyphus.

When the choice is made or the absurdity of life is recognized then existence is felt as a value in itself then after he wants to exist. If his life is hopeless and meaningless, he is at once liberated and put in a position to exercise his freedom in a revolt against absurdity. Sisyphus has done the same process in "The Myth of Sisyphus". According to Camus, when the absurd man becomes aware of his futile living, he is naturally filled with anxiety and helplessness but he does not surrender himself in the mouth of death. Instead he acknowledges the consciousness of absurdity as a reliable guidance to revolt against the absurdity. In his opinion to rebel is to exist which is happier situation than before. About revolution Camus gives his opinion:

The theme of permanent revolution is thus carried into individual experience. Living is keeping the absurd alive. Keeping it alive is, above all, contemplating it. Unlike Eurydice, the absurd dies only when we turn away from it. One of the only coherent philosophical position is thus revolt. It is a constant contribution between man and his own obscurity.
(Absurd Freedom 845-852)

According to him man exists by creating his own human value in this Godless, absurd world for that purpose he has to revolt. But he rejects the destruction of human values in the name of revolution. Similarly, Fritz is a revolting character who revolutionizes everywhere. He respects changes and he does everything for drastic transformation in every respect of life. Therefore, he continually strives to revolt against the social norms and values. He discards the remarks made by the relatives. He does not live up with sadness and insolence. This line of argument is comparable with Fritz and Sophie's love affairs.

Human condition is essentially and ineradicably absurd and that condition cannot be avoided. We take birth and we die without our intention. Death follows us from our birth, it is inevitable. How much we try to get happiness from choosing the opportunities that often we fall in the ditch of problems. But we have to choose because it is necessary to choose and bear the responsibilities. None of our choices is perfect; all of them create meaninglessness and nothingness. Though the life is inside the wheel of obstacles we know, but we have to struggle until our death. Camus rejects the religion, realistic settings and logic as other existentialists do. There is always a gap in between individual and society or in man and his life. So, we have to try to make this gap minimum but this gap cannot be avoided because the world is absurd and meaningless. In this meaningless world, we are searching the meaning for our existence. Fritz loves every sort of truth. He sees meaning in his every effort and deed. Thus, his existence is of immense worth.

Fitzgerald's *The Blue Flower* carries the theme of the individual freedom. The protagonist Fritz tackles the primary problem that he cannot see the terms and conditions which have come being attached to his life: moral grace and social incompetence are

often in close proximity. He is terribly mysterious especially in terms of his love and affection for girls. Though there is a young woman living with her uncle and who becomes Fritz's best friend, he is incapable of seeing her love. He is only blinded by his mysterious and irrational attraction to Sophie. He seeks meaning in the meaningless world. His efforts for building the world of individual liberation are in which Fritz could feel the solace of life. -Fitzgerald points out to the Fritz's obsession towards love- as such: "Fritz suddenly stood still in the middle of the Unterer Markt, letting the others stagger on in ragged groups without him, and said aloud to the stars, 'I see the fault in Fichte's system. There is no place in it for love'" (29). He valorizes the place of love in every respect of human life. He sees the essence of life in heightening love and he has high respect for people he is entangled with. He shows much concern where he finds people lacking love.

Indeed Fritz is committed to live his life in an adventurous manner. Therefore, he rejects the trifle issues and boldly faces the situations with untiring zeal and courage. Fitzgerald states concerning the protagonist's attitude towards his life: "I do not think I could endure life as a copying clerk," said Fritz. Such occupations should not exist" (64). He does not want to lead a steady life that does not have any adventures and danger. He despises the cleric job as it is easy and luxurious that is unlikely to encounter any ups and downs. Despite his knowledge about rigid nature of the society, he seeks for radical change in every aspect.

Fritz's brother Erasmus says that Sophie does not match with Fritz in intellect. Though, she is of the good- nature. Fritz is a poet and a philosopher, whereas Sophie is just a stupid girl. Because of this disparity, Erasmus does not want Fritz to enhance his

relationship with Sophie. This family objection does not affect Fritz's iron-clad commitment and inclination anymore. This is why he ignores his brother's suggestion. He feels self-motivated and does not seek for any sort of advice from anyone. This is the very spirit of Fritz which is promoting him in search of his identity and personality. He has won over the struggles and has turned into an existential hero. So, he is in a committed search and journey of finding himself. Fritz is sure that his relatives are the common people who cannot see beyond the surface level. They love Fritz that's why they want him to have a safe haven in each and every respect of his life. He clarifies that he is not under the spell of beauty and charm. He loves her because he has to live with reality and thus he is determined that he is correct and his choice is justifiable in all aspects.

Why Fritz is entangled with Sophie is a great surprise to his relatives. None of the family members have been able to understand this. They simply hypothesize that it may be her happy innocence and joyful naivety that touches everyone. To them Fritz's inclination towards her should be her innocent look.

This reminds the mysterious and inexplicable nature of love. No one knows why people fall in love? To the public Sophie is merely a child, lacking womanly charm, or girlish charm.

Fritz's dramatic love with Sophie is one of the central aspects in the novel, which has presented the existential ethos in the central character Fritz. Because of his free choice of the lady, Sophie, Fritz has to undergo various problems. This implies the true love between Fritz and Sophie. After Sophie's death Fritz has been able to upgrade and adjust himself with the situation created. This is very existential character in Fritz.

Because of this, he has not lost into a tragic whirlpool of confusion but has gone a head like Camus' Sisyphus to accomplish his life with impulse of " Free Choice". As an existential hero Fritz has been able to adjust with whatever the situation has been created in front of him. In this capacity, lies his existential spirit and hopeful journey of life as that of Sisyphus in "*The Myth of Sisyphus*."

The dramatic love between a twenty two years Fritz and a twelve year old girl Sophie von Kuhn is a rather strange event in the novel. At that time, Fritz was a student of various subjects ranging from mathematics, biology, literature and philosophy. On the other hand, Sophie was a precocious child, "of ordinary looks", without interest or promise in any of these fields. The match between the two, is unlikely in terms of age difference, personalities and social status which is expertly described by Fitzgerald. The novel further presents the different modes of the young man's romantic obsession. But whatever the obsession is there with Fritz, he has constantly managed it and is committed with what he does. He is strongly hopeful for his future. In this reference, he says: Sophie I am a poet, but in four years I shall be an administrative official, receiving a salary. That is the time when we shall be married.

(71)

This implies commitment and responsibility in Fritz. However, he could not do it due to tragic and sudden death of Sophie. Anyway, his strong hopefulness helped him to manage his future even in Sophie's absence. He marries with another girl and lives a hopeful, free and happy life. This is very existential spirit in Fritz. His seriousness can be further expressed by the following lines clarified to Sophie as she asks why he comes

late to meet her: "I have to work very seriously now, he told her. If we are ever to get married, I must apply myself. I sit up late at night, reading". (136)

All these existential characteristics of Fritz implies his notions of strength and responsibility. This has been clarified from Fritz-and Sophies' sister, Mandelsloh conversation. It further suggests that Fritz would work even with another name to maintain their life, if it will be necessary. As such, Fritz's courage and commitment can be observed from these lines: Courage is more than endurance, it is the power to create your own life in the face of all that man or God can inflict, so that every- day and every- night is what you imagine it. Courage makes us dreamers, courage makes us poets.(157)

Finally, Fritz succeeds in achieving his goals due to his courage, and commitment, He worked as a Salt Mine Directorate. Further, he enjoyed life of Novalis and Thus, he turned in to an existential hero.

III Conclusion: Existential Protagonist

By presenting the story of an often changing and struggling hero Fritz, Penelope Fitzgerald has presented how the constitutive possibilities of human being are rooted in a context and situation. In such a context and situation, the option of free choice is inherent for an existential hero. This option of choosing is an everlasting process- in which one always goes for better option. This process of choosing for the better option makes one ready to exist in this world full of struggles. This glimpse of existential reality of life is explained by Darwin as “struggle for existence”. This struggle for existence can be observed in the central character Fritz in the novel *The Blue Flower*. This implies the situated-ness of human being into a particular time, context and culture. It has been vividly presented in the novel *The Blue Flower*.

As such, man is always free to choose the better options- just like Fritz in the novel- *The Blue Flower*. Fritz always has the options to follow freedom. This is a never ending process. So, life always becomes an option to choose and to go ahead or the otherwise . This essential character of life has been carried in Fritz's struggle of existence.

The novel, *The Blue Flower*, has presented the general scene of the then German society. It has presented the general family outlines, relationships and their ups and downs- in cases of Fritz's and some other families. The novel is set in 1970's Saxony, centered on Friedrich Von Hardenberg(Fritz),who achieved fame as a Novalis and as a poet. Fritz has fallen in love with a twelve year girl Sophie Von Kuhn. Despite comments from others- Fritz is firm in his love with Sophie. Through such activities, Fritz is making a quest upon himself. Despite his love, Sophie dies soon and Fritz is alone. Fritz succeeds

is coming out of this whirlpool of problems and he has chosen life ahead rather than being confused in the situation aroused. This exposes his dynamic characteristic.

These series of choosing by the central character Fritz is similar to Albert Camus Sisyphus presented in the *Myth of Sisyphus*. Sisyphus is all hopeful and is constantly acting for achievement just like Fritz in his struggles. Hope and positive action are the gods that has liberated Fritz as well as Sisyphus.

This Sisyphian spirit is the very spirit that has made him to win the obstacles and has paved the way for a physical level. This journey to knowledge is associated here with Fritz's journey with Sophie. Fritz addresses Sophie as "dear philosophy" and "spirits guide". Fritz's address to Sophie is also associated with the symbolic meaning carried by the title of the novel "*The Blue Flower*". This implies the symbolic meaning carried by the novel itself. *The Blue Flower* connotes the freedom, the knowledge and the free spirit.

Observing Fritz's association and separation with the society we can see the waves of his struggle in his life. Finally, he has achieved the self realization and has paved the way for future and has realized the meaning of life and its changing nature. He has realized life and its struggles in different situations and contexts. He has undergone in all these forms and contexts. Such changes of going ups and downs implies the journey of the existential hero, his quest for himself- just like a journey to knowledge and completion.

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