

I. Chuck Noland and Struggle for Existence in *Cast Away*

This research endeavors to explore and analyze the issue of human existence, individual dignity and freedom expressed in Robert Zemeckis' movie *Cast Away* (2000). In this process, this paper primarily centers on examining how an individual suffers both, physically and mentally in the process of achieving his free will. This study focuses upon the protagonist of the film, Chuck Noland (Tom Hanks) and on his consistent quest of defining his authentic existence. The universal sense of alienation, despair, depression, anxiety and meaninglessness that Chuck undergoes throughout the movie can be defined as an act of reconstructing his self amidst the absurdities of his life. So, the multitudes of pains and sufferings of Chuck in this movie are the symbolic dramatization of the common fate of modern man.

Cast Away brings forth the story of an individual living in the modern society. It deals with the issue of alienation and estrangement to show the struggle of an individual who is in the process of finding his inner self. The movie is the story of Chuck Noland, a high ranking official in multinational FedEx Company who is frequently obsessed in his work. He travels worldwide to resolve productivity problem of his company. In the beginning of the film he is shown to be indulged in his capitalistic world and is always busy in preceding the machinery of the hyper-industrialized first world economy. But this obsession of time and materialism betrays him while Noland is on the way to his new assignment. His plane crashes in a deserted area where he finds himself isolated on a remote and unpopulated island. He is shattered away from his family networks, compassion and love. Further, Chuck is forced to survive in the face of loneliness and despair. Ultimately, in this period of experiencing violent pains and hardships, Chuck understands the real meaning of life.

Zemeckis has divided the story of Chuck in different stages to depict the socio-economic reality of the late twentieth century society. By projecting the story of an individual who crushes and is compelled to live physically isolated and detached life from the human relational world, Zemeckis in fact is stressing upon the common problems of modern men in the contemporary society where they are compelled to undergo same sorts of problems and pains in the process of acquiring individual identity and subjectivity. To heighten this situation, in the beginning of the film Chuck has been depicted as a Federal Express (FedEx) executive, who travels worldwide resolving productivity problem of his company. He is too busy flying around the world taking care of business. He has so many obsessions upon time and his work ethics. His adherence to the industrial work and job in FedEx shows Chuck as a real devotee and true follower of capitalism. Moreover, Chuck is also in a long-term relationship with Kelly Frears (Helen Hunt). Although they want to get married but Chuck's busy schedule interferes with their relationship.

The story takes a different mode when Chuck faces a plane crash while flying to Malaysia in order to resolve a productivity problem. When they are flying through violent weather, his plane goes down in the South Pacific during a storm. The crew all die in the crash but Chuck survives and is washed up on a deserted island. He is driven by a desperate urge to survive in the face of isolation and loneliness. He is alone without food, personal contact, shoes or skills to survive in this type of environment. The crash left him to struggle for his existence amidst the absurdity and despair. He experiences multitudes of difficulties and hardships which finally help him to realize not only the real meaning of life but also to know his personal self and subjectivity. Zemeckis's *Cast Away* in this sense brilliantly exposes the inherent contradiction and absurdities of the modern man. Moreover, it also depicts how a

follower, a true son of capitalism himself meets different tragic situations and is compelled to face the state of complete physical and mental separation

When the movie was released in 2000, *Cast Away*, is well received by different critics and commentators. The film was nominated for Best Actor (Tom Hanks) in a leading role at 73rd Academy Awards for his performance (2001). Besides, it received the best performance award and Public Choice Award in best inanimate object (Wilson). The movie has been diversely interpreted by different critics in various ways. It has provoked vigorous discussion of a wide variety of cultural, social, political, and economic themes identified by different critics.

The movie critic, Rober Ebert considers Chuck as a time and motion man who is guided by the intense sense of time and schedule in the beginning stage of his life. Treating Chuck as a conscious man, Ebert states, “Chuck, the time-and-motion man, finds himself in a world without clocks, schedules and much of a future” (14). This statement makes us clear that though Chuck is a mechanized and conscious man about the time and work in the beginning but in reality his previous life led him to experience without any clock and schedule. He is forced to live a dark and disastrous life without any assistance and support.

Stephen Holden regards this film as a survival drama. He relates the story of Chuck with allegory of Robinson Crusoe. He claims, “The core of this contemporary Robinson Crusoe story is an unforgettably gripping survival drama” (13). Through these lines Holden is hinting towards the struggle and hardships that Chuck undergoes. According to him, Chuck’s story is similar to Crusoe, who too is deserted in an island after a plane crash and struggles for survival.

Similarly, Mick Lassalle finds *Cast Away* as “an uplifting tale of the human spirit” (13). Lassalle is focusing on the role of human spirit and determination of

Noland. Although Chuck has different ups and downs to face in his life but he remains firm and determined to accept the circumstances. The hardship and pains of Chuck uplifts the inner power and spirit of common people as well. In this sense the movie is an inspirational and encouraging story of a common man who is left to face the crisis of his life.

On the other hand, Jon Dunmore criticizes *Cast Away* as a retelling of Crusoe tale. He argues that the movie has nothing new to depict. It is the continuation of the similar type of stories that are told and retold time and again. He further argues; “*Cast Away* seems to be nothing new: we have seen and heard it all before with Crusoe, the Robinson” (57). Dunmore’s view is that *Cast Away* is not new and inspiring tale to talk about. The repetition of the story and issue of the previous adventure drama has made the film dull and stale.

Through the above mentioned criticisms on the film it is evidence that Robert Zemeckis’s *Cast Away* has been analyzed and interpreted from different critical perspectives. But none of the critic has analyzed it from the perspective of the characters’ freedom of choice and their crisis of existence in the alien land as their own predicament of life. That is to say none of the critics has observed it from the perspective of Existentialism. Therefore, the primary objective of this study is to bring forth Existentialist discourse in conversation while analyzing the representation of alienation, despair and absurdities of the protagonist in the film. Existentialism deals with an interpretation of human existence in the world by stressing upon the concrete subjectivity and individuality.

Existentialism as a philosophy is centered upon the analysis of existence and the ways human find themselves to exist in the world. In the field of academia, the concept of Existentialism is developed by Jean-Paul-Sartre, Albert

Camus and Martin Heidegger, Simone de Beauvoir and others. Existentialists are of two groups: the first are theists- a group who believe on god as a redeemer, controller and protector and the other- atheists who negate the existence of god and his relation with the people and the world. This group stress man's absolute freedom to choose. They reject the god and focus on man's responsibility for his own action. As Sartre says:

There are two kind of existentialist, first those who are Christian, among whom I would include Jasper and Gabriel Marcel, both Catholic; and on the other hand the atheistic existentialist, among whom I class Heidegger, and then the French existentialist and myself. What they have in common is that they think that existence precedes essence. (13)

As the above quote clarifies the modern existential philosophy resides upon the notion that existence precedes the essence. The value, meaning and significance of life are secondary to the existence. In this context, Sartre forwards the view that as an atheist, modern existentialists reject the intervention, control and domination of god in the life formation process. As mention earlier the film depicts the problem of modern man who works as a part of hyper-marketed world of American company who later faces the deep crisis of his existence. It portrays Chuck's existential struggle in the deserted island and the absurdity of life. It presents how Chuck strongly longs for his stable pattern of life when he is victimized by the life forces of his previous choice.

Existentialism can be regarded as the coherent development within the traditional philosophy. Existentialists take man as the central theme of philosophy. But the existentialist notion of man differs from the other philosophy. 'Man' in

existentialism mean the free, self-creating, self-transcending subject. In this sense, existentialism may be regarded as a revolt against absolute idealism, positivism, materialistic determinism, psychological determinism and against any form of philosophy which reduces man to an item in the physical cosmos. In this sense, existentialism rejects the traditional epistemology which excludes to man's inner life. Moreover, it attempts to ground human knowledge in the external world by emphasizing the subjective realities of individual existence, freedom, and choice.

Existentialism according to Ellmann and Feildelson is “A very instance and philosophically specialized form of quest for selfhood” (803). Furthermore, existentialism is a philosophy concerned with finding of self and meaning of life through will, choice, and personal responsibility. The individual is not detached observer of the world but he remains ‘in the world’. A person exists in a special sense in which entities like stone and trees do not. The notion is that human exist first and then every individual spends life time changing their essence or nature. That is to say for existentialists ‘existence precedes the essence’. One determines one’s life by choice and action. Human make what they are by choices the individual are free to choose their own path and must accept the risk and responsibility themselves.

Jean Paul Sartre the leading advocate of existentialism defines existentialism as “a doctrine which makes human life possible and in addition declares that every action implies a human setting and a human subjectivity” (10). It is a philosophy which gives priority to human existence, that is to say, subjective experience of the world rather than to abstract or objective structures.. Existentialism explores human existence in its hopes and fears, its fragility, its

conflicts and insecurities. It emphasizes freedom, angst and absurdity. It sees trust on pleasure, happiness, economic success, and security as a low, inauthentic existence. Thus existentialism is the reaction in favor of individualism, subjectivity and feeling. It is the pure philosophy of human situation not of other objects. Existentialism is the most dynamic and appropriate philosophical movement to define and interpret anxiety, uncertainties and absurdities of the people.

All existentialists are concerned with ontology, the study of being. The existentialists conclude that existence precedes essence. A man's self is nothing except what he has become; at any given moment, it is the sum of the life he has shaped until then. The "nothing" he begins with is thus the source of man's freedom, for at each moment it is man's will that can choose how to act or not to act. However, each such decision affects the future doubly- a man is or should be responsible for the consequences of his actions and each action necessarily excludes the other potential actions by limiting the potentialities for future actions.

Martin Heidegger makes the distinction between 'being' and 'Being'. He describes the being in terms of Dasein. He stress that man should face explicitly the problem of being. Thus, man has to determine his own existence create his own possibility and make choice and commitment. Man makes his nature by his own effort and that would determine his own essence. Heidegger focuses on man and his existence in this world. He considers man's being as a being in the world. Heidegger says:

First of all, man exists, turns up, appears on the scene, and, only afterwards, defines himself. If man, as the existentialist conceives

him, is indefinable, it is because at first he is nothing. Only afterward will he be something, and he himself will have made what he will be. Thus, there is no human nature, since there is no God to conceive it. Not only is man what he conceives himself to be, but he is also only what he wills himself to be after this thrust toward existence. (15)

It means existentialist first move is to make every man aware and responsible to himself. As existence is of two types: authentic and inauthentic. Authentic existence is search of totality of life. It is an essential forward drive to create and discover the true potential and to direct one's destiny. Each individual has to make his own universe with a meaning of his own. Authenticity is thus a condition of self making it indicates a certain type of integrity. In contrast the inauthentic life would be without such integrity. Man becomes inauthentic if he cannot create his self of his own. So individual should make his self by being isolated from the crowd.

Albert Camus presents the world that is absurd, void, meaningless and irrational. And for him modern men are living the absurd life like that of the mythical figure Sisyphus. The search for any purpose in this alien universe is meaningless, fruitless and futile. When the absurd man becomes aware of his futile living, he is naturally filled with anxiety and hopelessness but he does not surrender and attempts suicide rather keeps on struggling in the hope of resolving the conflict and to make meaning of his existence.

Thus, existentialism attempts to find out happiness and meaning in the world characterized by alienation, isolation, loneliness, frustration, in-authenticity and absurdity. Man simply exists to make choice and because of choice he creates

his self himself. Man's alienation, estrangement, his struggle, anxiety, absurdity, failure, frustration and betrayal are some instance of existential struggle. *Cast Away* also deals with the freedom of choice and existential struggle and the quest for the stable pattern of life. The protagonist, Chuck passes through ups and downs of his life by experiencing betrayal, victimization, dislocation, feeling of alienation, failure in material relationship, denial of social norms and values. But the strength of Chuck is that he takes all those circumstances with the optimistic view so as to create meaning and purpose of his existence, even from the absurdity of life.

On the basis of above mentioned existentialist theorists, I have targeted my project to analyze the human predicament, sense of alienation, anguish and anxiety as consequence of Chuck's own freedom of choice. Moreover, it explores the way Robert Zemeckis sketches his hero as made by his own 'choices' and therefore is responsible for all the results. The choice of Chuck of working as a apparatus of capitalist market structure turns out to be his curse, which ultimately brings the crisis in his existence. Chuck even in the time of alienation, despair and depression does not think for suicide, rather he faces the tragic life, which shows his full understanding of the absurdity of life. The protagonist has been spited into multiple identities due to his personal will, being dislocated, having betrayed, having sense of alienation, feeling of loneliness etc. In this regard, it will not be justifiable to analyze the text from the perspective other than Existentialism. In such ground of the movie, this research has been shaped by the analysis of the representation of Chuck within the existentialist framework in general and the concept of Jean Paul Sartre and Albert Camus in particular.

Besides considering existentialism as an interpretive epistemology, this paper has also been dealt with film criticism or film theory. In this process different scholars and film critics and their theoretical frameworks are also taken into consideration. Film critics like, Amy Villarejo and his text *Film Studies The Basics*, Alex Clayton and Andrew Klevan, Tony Schirato and Jen Webb and their book *Reading the Visual* as well as Edward Branigan in his text, *Projecting a Camera: Language-Games in Film Theory* has been taken into consideration while analyzing the different components of film.

As *Cast Away* focuses on the paradoxes of human life and struggle of an individual in the process of understanding his inner self or nature, issues of choice, freewill, suffering and alienation and understanding are correlated with the cinematographic techniques employed by the director Zemeckis. The brilliant use of choices of special setting, scenes, shots, colour pattern, lighting, costume, music as well as acting cohere and support and strengthen its theme of despair, alienation, and self realization.

To strengthen the concept of alienation and estrangement Zemeckis has chosen an isolated island as the physical setting of this film. Its protagonist Chuck Noland, who faces a plane crash at the beginning of the film, is deserted in a remote and unpopulated island. He is shattered away from his family networks, compassion and love, and forced to survive in the face of isolation, loneliness, and despair. Chuck had a strong faith upon the ideals of capitalism, work and timing. He was obsessed in his work and for that he even travels worldwide to resolve productivity problem of his company. But once he faces a plane crash, like a separate island, all of his ideals of previous life turn out to be meaningless and absurd.

Moreover, Zemeckis emphasizes upon the hardships, sufferings and physical ordeals of his protagonist. Chuck does not only face multitudes of problems in the island but for many times he even have to struggle for saving his life itself. His solitary experiences which are projected in the movie in fact are presented as the consequences he has to face due to his blind faith upon the capitalism and materialism. It is a great irony that a believer, a true son of capitalism himself has to search for food, water, shelter and even has to try hard to save his life. Zemeckis has brilliantly associated and shown his character engaging in each of these activities which further enhance absurd and paradoxical stance of life.

While talking about the movie shots, different types of shots are taken in the film. While showing the deep and intense pain and suffering of the protagonist Chuck, close-up shots as well as medium ling shots are used. To show minute details of different activities different close-up shots are used in the movie. These shots have helped to emphasize upon his painful experiences and sufferings. For instance, to show Chuck involving in different minute activities like preparing boat, collecting sticks, tying and binding them around close-up shots are taken. The “shallow focus” upon these activities and minute events has helped to bring forth realistic details in the movie.

Similarly colour pattern in the film too supports its theme. As most of the scenes are taken in the sea, its blue colour is heightened in the film. As blue is the colour of deep thoughts, utmost depth of the hardships and sufferings of Chuck correlates with this colour. Apart from blue, brown and gray colours are also focused in the movie. Brown and gray colours help to emphasize upon sterility, barrenness and unproductively of Chuck’s attempt. On the other hand, while taking night scenes;

dark colour has obviously come forth in the film which emphasize upon the gloomy, saddened and painful internal feelings of the hero.

In regard to the lighting, maximum night scenes are included in the film. The incorporation of the night scene is meaningful. These scenes have helped to project the darker aspect of life which has caused an individual to live a completely darker and isolated life amidst the unpopulated island. Similarly the maximum emphasis upon these scenes also shows the insignificance and worthlessness of time. It means time; either day or night it has same meaning, i.e. it is unproductive, and infertile.

Costume is another element which is properly used and selected in this film. In the beginning of the film Chuck is portrayed as a high rank official of the large company, well shaved, properly dressed. But when he comes to face the crash, gradually he becomes thinner, bearded, his hair grow longer and he is shown in loincloth. Thus the costume is properly designed in the movie which further helps to bring forth the realistic scenario. The change of the costume during the course of time can be regarded as the shift or the transformation of the protagonist from the meaninglessness of life to the understanding of the meaning of the life.

Moreover, acting of the hero has an important function throughout the whole movie. As Chuck suffers as well as struggles a lot in the unpopulated island. He struggles a lot to find food, water, shelter and even to learn new techniques to adopt himself in an unpopulated island. Beside all these survival strategy, Chuck creates a persona-an imaginary companion of a volleyball giving it a feature of a real person: hair, face etc. It becomes his companion to share his fears, concerns and hopes. Chuck suffers physically from starvation, pain and suffering and mentally he is alone, abandoned and deserted. Four years later, Chuck finally escapes the sea with full understandings of the real meaning of life. In this process, different cinematographic

elements like, scenes, shots, colour pattern, lighting, costume, music as well as acting are organized and selected in such a way that they support and strengthen its theme of alienation, despair, estrangement and the realization of meaning of the life.

The present research has been divided into three chapters .The first chapter is the introduction that has tried to introduce the issue and the hypothesis of the study. It presents the brief introduction of the character, his freedom of choice and futile suffering in the deserted island. Moreover, this section also attempts to show the appropriateness of its hypothesis as the workable one for the research project. It gives the brief introduction of the whole project with some information about the film with the critiques of scholars and the theory in which the study is conducted. The second chapter is the textual analysis which gives the overview of actual reading of the film through the elaboration of the issue of capitalism and alienation. While the third chapter is the conclusion of the entire project that restates the findings of the study.

II. Freedom of Choice and Realization of an Authentic Self in *Cast Away*

Robert Zemeckis in his movie *Cast Away* attempts to portray the existential crisis faced by the protagonist Chuck Noland as a result of his own freedom of choice.

Chuck as an individual is free to choose any of the profession or work to live his life. For this, as per his will, he chooses to work as an employee of FedEx- a multinational company. After choosing FedEx, Chuck does not only develop himself as an important part of his company but also cultivates an obsession over in his work, time, and scheduled life. But this obsession of time and materialism does not last long as it betrays Noland while he is on the way to his new assignment and is forced to survive in the face of isolation, loneliness, and despair. Moreover, Chuck is doomed to suffer in his forthcoming life due to his previous choice. This is how Zemeckis tries to depict the paradox of human life. He intends to mean that an intense sense of despair and loneliness are resulted out of the freedom of choice as it is obvious that in the life of every human being they are destined to suffer due to their own choice. Besides the crisis and struggle in the movie, Zemeckis also brilliantly exposes how such absurdities, hardships and existential struggles led a person to understand the real essence of life.

Zemeckis exhibits a strong sense of inclination towards the existential interpretation of the human predicament through his character Chuck in *Cast Away*. Chuck, like Sisyphus, is living with full of choices however ultimately that leads to the sufferings. Chuck before joining in FedEx, has full of choices to make himself. If he has not chosen that would also be a choosing of not to choose. But the fact is that he is destined to suffer to what he makes himself by choosing one from the multiple choices of his life. As Jean P. Satre in his *Being*

and Nothingness (1943) writes; “Man is condemned to be free; because once thrown into the world, he is responsible for everything he does” (35). In his freedom Chuck creates his own individual essence through the action that he has chosen, and nobody is responsible for all of those things happened to him but Chuck himself.

While talking about the general situation and human condition, Sartre in his *Being and Nothingness* (1943) argues, “we are free and create our own individual essence through our action, we are also responsible for who we actually become” (44). Sartre here means that human being is free to create his own individual essence through his action. Thus, he should be responsible for the consequences of an action he makes. He further says that there is no god to blame our suffering, “there is no human nature, since there is no God to conceive of it” (274). Human Freedom in existentialist view is concerned with nothingness and consciousness; it owes this status to its role as a formal property. It characterizes the metaphysical status of nothingness and the nature of reflexivity in consciousness. Consciousness is not what it is what it is not, since it cannot be what it is in the manner of a substance having properties.

The movie from the very beginning sheds the light upon the existential issue of modern people living in the present world. In the very first scene of the film, a cross road is shown. The symbol of cross road is that human being has multiple choices to make and they are free to choose any of the crossroads. The destination of our path thus is determined as per our choice of the path. In this process, Chuck chooses a path through which he is led to the FedEx. In the beginning of the film, Chuck Noland has freedom to choose a life of his will. For that he chooses to work as a high ranking official in FedEx Company. FedEx is a multinational company

where Chuck works as a system engineer. This is how his choice has made him a true follower of capitalist culture. He has a great devotion over in his work and time. He travels worldwide to resolve productivity problem of his company. Chuck has a girlfriend Kelly Frears (Helen Hunt) with whom he is in long-term relationship. Although both, Kelly and Chuck want to get married, but due to Chuck's busy schedule it remains incomplete. The symbol of crossroad in the film exemplifies the plurality of the choices in human life.



Fig.1. The crossroad: symbolizing Chuck's freedom of choice

The above picture suggests that human beings are free to choose any path from the multiple options of their life. This is to mean human beings make themselves in the process of choosing the different options, The present consequence is the outcome of the previous choices. But at the same time it is also unavoidable fact that the human predicament is that it leads him to confront with the absurdity of life wherever he goes.

As Chuck chooses to work in the FedEx, he does not stop himself within the boundary of his previous choice rather Chuck starts dreaming more and more

selecting other options of his life. He becomes an engineer of his office and starts living a life of busy man. He starts making plans, schedule and routine for his daily activities. When we encounter Chuck for the first time in the film, he is shown to be directing his fellow workers in Russia. He emphasizes on the time and scheduled way of life. He has build up a different perspective and philosophy of life. He considers time as everything and each worker of the office who has chosen to work in FedEx should work as a machine. Further he says:

I borrowed it! I borrowed a kid's bike and I got my packages delivered, and that is what you people are gonna have to start doing. You have to start doing whatever it takes because in three hours and two minutes everyone of these packages has to be on the big truck and on its way to the airport. (np)

Through these lines Chuck is guiding and directing his fellow workers. The above lines make us clear how Chuck is honestly following his previous choice. Chuck has obsession over his work and office. But the paradox of the situation is that Chuck is unaware of the forthcoming disasters in his life. Though at this very point he is guided by his freewill and also is making himself but it ultimately leads him to existential crisis where his own freedom of choice becomes a curse for him.

Sartre, one of the proponents of existentialism insists that “existence precedes essence” (qtd. in Gaarder 456). Sartre's straightforward vision of existentialism lays emphasis upon the existence of individual. First of all man exists, turns up, appears on the scene, and only afterwards defines himself. This means, for existentialists, man himself is responsible for his action and effect. Sartre says that “it is the feelings of freedom and responsibility that is the source of man's anguish” (15). Anguish is an emotion to all man's problems. Man though

feels that he is free to choose any of the options that he has in life but the paradox is, he suffers due to the same freedom of choice. Feeling of freedom and responsibility is the actual cause of suffering and unhappiness in the person's life.

The feeling of anguish and despair is resulted in Chuck's life due to his responsibilities and freedom in his life. Besides his profession in FedEx, Chuck has also engaged with another choice of his life. He has chosen Kelly as his fiancé. Although the couple seems to be happy with each other but they have not got married simply because Chuck is more occupied on his work and schedule. They rarely get free time to spend with each other. Chuck is often restricted by different circumstances to live a happy life because he is bounded by his responsibilities of the life. For instance, he is even deprived to celebrate Christmas with his family and girlfriend as he is called back to the work from his company.

Chuck's consciousness has been restricted by his previous choice of working under FedEx. Chuck in this situation even forgets his self and consciousness. At this moment Chuck's conscious choice is not simply affecting him but also to his girlfriend Kelly. Kelly wants to spend more time with Chuck but it is Chuck's compulsion which does not permit him to live his life as per his free will. In this sense, the movie also shows how the choice of a person affects the life of other. The dialogue below shows how the couple is spending their life:

Kelly Frears: Okay, I'll cancel Saturday.

Chuck Noland: No don't...don't. If I'm not here, I'm not. But if I am, well...then I am.

Kelly Frears: Chuck, it's canceled. But you gotta be here New Year's eve.

Chuck Noland: Malaysia can't be that bad. I'll be here New Year's eve.

Kelly Frears: What about our Christmas? I got a gift for you.

[looks at his watch]

Chuck Noland: We have to do in the car. (np)

The above dialogue vividly exposes the disgust, loneliness and the undercurrents of the sense of estrangement that Kelly has been undergoing in her life. Chuck being a busy man cannot provide or spend time with Kelly. Kelly wants to cancel her resolution for Saturday but Chuck says he cannot stay anymore with her. It is so pathetic that even the Christmas gift should be exchanged between them in the car. It shows that Kelly does not find what she has expected in her life. Due to this, she feels alienated from world with full of anxiety and despair. She faces a difficult time which leads her towards the problematic stage in her love relation.

Zemeckis's present movie portrays the condition of an individual being captivated under the circumstances of choice and desire. The movie does not only deal with the individual pains and sufferings but also shows how human life is constituted by the choices we make in our life. While talking about the relationship between Chuck and Kelly, Chuck too is desperate to live with her. Although he intends to share his joy and happiness like that of Kelly but the situation and circumstances are so pervasive and powerful that Chuck cannot escape from his responsibilities towards FedEx. For instance when Chuck was called back to the work when he was celebrating Christmas with Kelly, he does not seem to be happy to go but there are no options for Chuck except to follow the order. It is simply because his present is constituted or formed by the past decision. The picture below is a token of love from Kelly to Chuck. Chuck too shares his gift with Kelly. The souvenir is going to be the most valuable object to keep Chuck alive even in the time of despair and disappointment. The dark and deem background of the picture below symbolizes the

other darker moments being lined up on the way of Chuck. Moreover, it is further suggestive of the forthcoming disasters in his life. This is going to be the last moment with Kelly in his life as he is about to suffer a life of loneliness and solitude for a long time.



Fig.2. A memento given by Kelly to Chuck with her photo in it

The picture above is a souvenir of Kelly to Chuck. She has inscribed her picture in it. At that moment Chuck was enjoying his time with Kelly but was forced to go back to his work amidst the festivals. The incident hints as if Chuck has no private consciousness because he is bounded by the responsibilities and the promises he has made in his life. He should be ready at any moment to give up his personal happiness and joy. The present situation is nothing more than the consequence of choosing his life as a part of FedEx.

The situation of Chuck discussed above correlates with the thought expressed by Jean Paul Sartre. Sartre believes the freedom of choice inherent in man is in fact the curse for them. The passion, choice and emotions of human beings are self constituted entities that led any individual to face the life of betrayal and pain.

One cannot escape consequences of his actions. In his *Existentialism as Humanism* claims:

God does not exist, and that it is necessary to draw the consequences of his absence right to the end. We are alone without excuses. That is what I mean when I say that man is condemned to be free. There is no power of “beautiful passions” which propel men to their actions; we think rather, that man is responsible for his own passion. (72)

For human beings, to be free is not the blessing because it compels them to select the action from the multiple choices which ultimately makes them suffer in the world with full of anxiety, anguish and the loneliness. Anxiety has no object, it cannot be controlled, and there is nothing that can combat it. Whoever has to deal with anxiety has to allow it to run its course. It means while choosing the job in the company and Kelly as his fiancé, Chuck has done his best to choose the good, which is not only for him but for many others. However, the human predicament is that the things, chosen as better turns out to be worse and it brings the human beings towards the sense of alienation and despair.

As Chuck is on the way to his new assignment, his plane crashes in a deserted area where he finds himself isolated on a remote and unpopulated island. He is shattered away not only from his family networks, profession life but also from entire human community. He is forced to survive in the face of isolation, loneliness, and despair. It is the paradox of his life that his strong faith upon materialistic ideals and values ironically turns out to be the cause of separation and deprivation of life forces. Due to his previous choice Chuck is exposed to the condition of human alienation. The alienation which Chuck faces in this movie is a bitter reality of his life. He had

his free will but it does not last long as he is forced to suffer and betray by his previous ideals and values. Chuck Noland's estrangement results from his inescapability of previous choices.



Fig.3. Chuck's struggle during the plane crash

The above picture foreshadows the beginning of Chuck's arduous and terrible life of despair and loneliness in the island. Although he had strong faith and respect towards his previous life but the ironic reality is that he is doomed to suffer due to his choice. Chuck Noland has been nurtured and raised by his personal philosophy and ideals of his life. He might not have ever thought of experiencing such a situation in his life but it is so tragic that he is compelled to accept the consequence of his personal choice.

Existentialist proposition can further be substantiated in the movie through the analysis of Chuck's experience in the island. In contrary to Chuck's expectations of life, he is forced to live in an isolated island. Chuck is forced to live a deserted life alone. He does not have anything to eat nor to drink. At this moment Chuck undergoes the crisis of his existence itself. He in a sense is turned out to be a fallen man or a cursed man who is going to rely on the nature and the objects that he finds in

the nature. He is forced to live a kind of dehumanized and deteriorated condition in the island. To survive and to be adapted in the nature Chuck has to develop new survival strategies.



Fig.4. Chuck drinking dew drops to quench his thirst in the island

Chuck in this picture is drinking dewdrops in order to sustain. He is in fact learning to exist by adopting the principles of nature. The above picture clearly shows the complete turn of human life. Chuck once was a powerful man of his company living a comfortable life but when his plane is crashed he is left with no previous identity and individuality. He has to begin a new journey of life as does Sisyphus when his stone is rolled back down from the hill. The life of Chuck is turned out to be the dark and disastrous when he is left alone to suffer in the island. His life takes a different turn and Chuck starts realizing that his previous life in FedEx is nothing but mere service to material culture.

Chuck and His Quest of Authentic Existence

Chuck Noland's realization of his present condition in the island is important from the existentialist point of view. Previously Chuck was living an inauthentic

life but after the plane crash he struggles to make it an authentic one. The authenticity of life demands it to be made free from the previous choice which ultimately takes the responsibility for future. The existentialists give stress upon the subjectivity of the individual. In fact, the existentialists believe that the act of will of authenticity is required to transcend alienation. Thus the life of Chuck in the island is going to be the understanding of the real meaning and authenticity of life. Chuck does not only suffer physically in the island rather he too suffers mentally and emotionally. He experiences multitudes of emotional crisis in the island. All these incidents are important for Chuck because through each incident he starts learning the futility and nothingness of life.

Moreover, when he finds the dead body in the sea he takes it to the shore and laments over the death of him. At this moment, Chuck understands the futility and meaninglessness of his life. He even understands that he was exploited by capitalism for a long time. This understanding comes when he is alone in the island without any support and help from the capitalism and its agents. Chuck rally become upset and cries over the death of his teammate. The picture below shows the pathetic condition of Chuck. He is crying over the death of his teammate. It can be considered as the moment of Chuck's realization of the pitfalls of life. He now understands that life does not only provide material happiness and luxury but even forces people to suffer due to their own choices. The scene is very important in the film because it exposes the darker aspects of human life. Chuck understands there is not only joy and happiness in the life but it may also lead one to face death and devastation. Chuck's facial expression is important in the picture as it explicitly exposes the dreadful consequence of capitalism.



Fig.5. Chuck is crying in the sea after getting the dead body of his teammate. In the picture Chuck is lamenting over the death of his friend. It is the terrible thing about his life that before his eyes one of his colleague has been died. This incident is also important from the point that at this time Chuck is understanding the how futility and meaninglessness of life.

Chuck is experiencing the life of common man in the island. He is an individual who is thrown into the earth whose freedom of choice makes his essence. The existentialists believe that we human being are not born by our intention, we are born mistakenly so it is better to die, if we cannot die it is better to live a meaningless life. There is no way out than death for the human beings from their anxiety so finding the happiness around the absurdity of life is the only solution. So, to exist in a difficult situation, one must rebel. John Killinger puts forward the example of Meursault in Albert Camus's novel *The Stranger*:

The absurdity of man's situation is apparent to anyone who tries to exist as a subject in the world of objects. Like Meursault in Camus' novel *The Stranger*, he finds the world antipathetic and even hostile to the one who dares to affirm his selfhood. He becomes aware of the insane character of daily living; and in the instant that he is

divested of his illusions he realizes that he is an alien in the world. Authentic existence, for Camus, is for man both to accept and to rebel against this absurdity. He accepts it inasmuch as he is willing to maintain his awareness of it and not retreat into a disregard for the facts; but he rebels against it by loving existence and grip to life in spite of it. (310)

The quote above clarifies that man is usually doomed to suffer in the absurd world. It is unavoidable truth that one has to suffer to exist but the real meaning of life relies upon the action that we make to change our condition. One must have to rebel or act to understand the real absurdity of life. The acceptance and rebel against the present situation will lead people to know who they are. Killinger gives an example of Meursault in *The Stranger* who is aware of the absurdity of life in the one hand and the essence of life on the other.

Chuck has to rely on the nature and the objects that he finds in the nature. He even does not get water to drink on the island, for that he has to collect dew drops from the leaves. He feeds himself by the coconuts found in the island. In the beginning he even does not know how to break coconut but slowly and gradually he learns to break it as well. Chuck depends upon sea fish and crab to exist himself. Chuck realizes that the material self is not the real self. He has created a material self of industrial life, family rituals, places, and social self in his relationship with other. All these things have made the absence of his living self in all its potentials. The absence of his living self does not belong to his existence but when he is struggling in the island, he is desperately looking for strategies to survive and to protect his existence. In the beginning, When Chuck is isolated from

the rest of the human community and is left alone in the island; he starts considering himself as an isolated and alien being.

Chuck's hardship in the island is suggestive of the moment of realizing his inner self. Chuck's job in island is to look after the ways to protect his life or to exist. As Chuck has to live a very painful and terrible life in the island, he starts working or acting to save his life. In this sense existence is preceding the essence of Chuck. Now Chuck starts realizing that it is his destiny to suffer in the island and he is solely responsible for this because what Chuck is today is due to the act of choosing his previous life.



Fig.6. Chuck becomes happy after getting a crab in the sea

The above picture depicts Chuck's emotional experience in the solitary island. Chuck now starts to learn various tricks and techniques to exist in the earth. His struggle clearly hints towards the construction or the process of realizing his new and meaningful life in the island. The various obstacles and hurdles of life thus led Chuck to experience and realize the nothingness of life. He gradually learns to live a life for himself. Chuck has started to realize that his life as futile and meaningless. It is not predetermined and set as per anyone's will rather is constituted by our actions.

Chuck's previous life in FedEx was mere service to the other. He has never thought of his personal happiness and joy. Every time he merely concerned for enhancing the name and fame of the company. When Chuck is left with no schedule and compulsion, he starts learning the real charm of his life. Though he has to face multiple physical problems in life but Chuck has started to live a meaningful life being concerned for him alone.

Existentialism is a philosophy exclusively meant for viewing human beings and their existence in the universe not as a mass but as a collection of individuals. Existentialists like Kierkegaard and Sartre talk about individuals and their subjectivity. Sartre defines subjectivism in two senses: "Subjectivism means, on the one hand, the freedom of the individual subject and on the other, that man cannot pass beyond human subjectivity" (Jaspers 4). Thus, he focuses on human freedom and subjectivity. The way Jaspers defines is the way Chuck is seeking for freedom of choice. Chuck as an existential hero, feels free of expectation, of responsibility and acts as per the demand of the situation. Chuck as a man being hurled up in the world is in the process of creation himself and his identity. He is creating the meaning of every action in his life.

Most importantly, *Cast Away* presents the importance of human being and companions to live a meaningful life. It exposes how essential and vital is a human for another human. The brilliant example lies in the film in the making of a human face in an inanimate volleyball-Wilson. Wilson is projected as a human companion in the film. Chuck paints the human face in the volleyball out of his own blood and establishes an emotional relationship. The emotional relation helps Chuck to live in the isolated island to exist. It is how Chuck realizes the importance of human being and fellow feeling in the island.



Fig.7. Chuck is talking with Wilson, volleyball, his companion in the island

The above picture shows how important human companion is for each individual. Though it is a mere object, but it becomes a great companion of Chuck in the solitary island. Chuck speaks with this volleyball time and again and narrates his whole story to it. It becomes a silent listener of Chuck to listen his pains and sufferings. Moreover, Chuck expresses his love, compassion, anger, excitement, frustration, pain etc to this object. The most touching moment in the film is the moment when Chuck loses this companion in the sea in his return to the civilization. By stressing in the need of the human companion even in the deserted island, *Cast away* shows what does it meant to live without human beings and their love in the deserted island.

Similarly, another companion for Chuck throughout the film is a token of present provided by his girlfriend, Kelly. In this token Kelly's photo is engraved. Though it too is an inanimate object but it symbolically represents the token of hope for Chuck. Hence, the detachment of human beings from fellow members of the society is an aspect of alienation. As human being is a social animal, he cannot live without love, compassion and help of other fellow beings. Alienation which is the

most painful aspect of life is also the real way of understanding one's existence in the world.

Kierkegaard believes in "subjective truth". For him, search for objective truth is meaningless. There cannot be any truth that is universal, rather it is individual. Instead of single truth; there are many truths which are personal. Jostein Gaarder comments on the point as he says, "According to Kierkegaard, rather than searching for the Truth with capital 'T', it is important to find the kind of the truths that are meaningful to the individual's life. It is important to find the kind of truths to the individual life. It is important to find "the truth for me" (379). Real existence for him is possible only when one becomes aware of the paradoxical presence of despair and loneliness in the life. Suffering, observes Kierkegaard is born peacefully and happily.

Cast Away has incorporated the notion of subjective truths in the film. It shows the gradual understanding or the process of tackling the absurd situation of an individual. When Chuck arrives for the first time in the island he was unknown about the surrounding of the island. He did not know about the ways of adopting in the hostile environment. But Chuck involves himself in the process of acquiring the new techniques and skills to exist in the island. After his arrival he makes fire in the island as his great achievement. He learns to break coconut and eat. He is champion in catching fishes and sea creatures etc. Moreover Chuck collects sticks and branches of trees and makes a long rope to make a boat. He succeeds in preparing a new boat in his four years long stay in the island. As Chuck's struggle and hardship provides him knowledge now he can move to the civilization using his new skills of life.



Fig.8. Chuck is in the process of making boat for his final departure

The picture above shows Chuck's gradual transformation from an unknown dweller of the island to the skillful inhabitant of it. Chuck is going to make a boat to get rid of his arduous suffering in the island. He collects branches of trees, takes out the bark of small branches and makes a rope to prepare a boat. In this sense Chuck is creating subjective truths of his life. He is in the process of making new identity and subjectivity through the truths near around him. The action of Chuck is a mere service for himself where he is concerned in transcending his present situation.

For existentialism, the most important thing is the knowledge of the absurd existence, which awakens the human beings to freedom and choice, and therefore, presents us from being simply things. In this regard, Abrams has incorporated the notion of existentialism as:

Human being as an isolated existent who is cast into an alien universe, as possessing no inherent truth, value, or meaning and to represent human life – in its fruitless search for purpose and meaning, as it moves from the nothingness where it came toward

the nothingness where it must and as an existence which is both anguished and absurd. (1)

The above lines make us clear that human knowledge about the futility and meaninglessness of life is derived from the absurdity of life itself. The anguish and despair of moments of life teach us the ideas and skills to tackle them. Chuck comes out from the same situation of hardships and troubles by learning the real existence of his life in particular and about human life in general. The movement of Chuck in this regard too is from absurdity to knowledge; despair to success and from suffering to realization.

Robert Zemeckis anticipation of the existentialist notion heightens towards the end in the film. Zemeckis does not end his movie simply after Chuck's return to civilization rather he shows the unavailability of struggles and problems in human life. He dramatizes the existentialist notion that human being is not completely free from the burden, absurdities and futility of his life. As human being is always caught in the whirlpool of the life he cannot completely escape the forthcoming pains and sufferings. After the end of one problem in life the other problem awaits to test human patience and skill.

Zemeckis dramatizes how his protagonist Chuck is often prey to his truths. Once he has admitted them, he cannot free himself from them. His life, like Sisyphus, is full of tragedy, that lead him to understand the absurdity of life which lacks the meaning but one should live his life with the hope of meaning. Chuck's choice of Kelly as a lover and as a fiancé seems to have been a part of an unconscious attempt of Chuck to concretize his existence with the stable identity. From the very beginning, their relationship seems difficult because Chuck does not have much time to spend with her. Moreover, Chuck is even hopeful during

his time of disaster to meet and settle with Kelly later on in his life. Chuck never leaves the memento of Kelly. In fact he even claims that he exists in the island for Kelly. During his departure from the island he writes in the stone; “Chuck Noland was here for 1500 days, escaped to sea, Tell Kelly Frears, I love her” (np). As Chuck was not sure of getting the shore or another end, he writes in the stone that he loves her. It shows that Chuck was hopeful to settle with Kelly.

Chuck is unaware that even after his long hurdles in the island he is once more going to suffer. Chuck though gets rid of each problem in the sea but he did not know that Kelly was already married in his absence. Chuck’s choice of Kelly in his full freedom again turns out to be curse to him for which nobody is responsible other than himself. At end of the film when Chuck finds Kelly being already married he becomes more sad and depressed. In a conversation with his friend he says:

Chuck Noland: We both had done the math. Kelly added it all up, knew she had to let me go. I added it up, knew that I had...had lost her. Cause I was never gonna get off that island. . . The only choice I had, the only thing I could control was when, and how, and where that was gonna happen. So...I made a rope and I went up to the summit, to hang myself. . . And the weight of the log, snapped the limb of the tree, so I...I...I couldn't even kill myself the way I wanted to. I had power over nothing. That's when this feeling came over me like a warm blanket. I knew, somehow, that I had to stay alive. (2:08:32)

The dialogue above clarifies the sentiments and emotion of Chuck. He is more depressed and sad due to his failure of getting Kelly in his life. He says he has lost in island to lose Kelly. He was unaware of the situation of Kelly in the sea as it was not

in his control. He even tried to kill himself but he could not simply because of Kelly. He thought of keeping his soul intact and save his life simply for getting Kelly. As Chuck finds the situation in contrary to his expectations he becomes sad for some moment. Chuck's initial reaction over Kelly's marriage shows is never ending series of anguish and despair in life.

As per existentialists happiness and despair are continual forms of human life, Chuck realizes the disillusionment of life after knowing that Kelly being already married. He understands that he is continually being tested by his choice more than once in his life. Now, this experience once again leads Chuck to know about the futility of relationship. He accepts the reality of life and gets a new insight that what the present circumstance is unavoidable and inescapable. Chuck realizes the misery and pain of circumstances are the process of understanding the real meaning of life and the way of understanding the real value of individuality and personality. Chuck accepts the present circumstance to lead his life forward. He is ready to drift forward in the flow of time realizing the potentiality and hidden mystery of life. Chuck toward the end of the film states:

Chuck Noland: I had to keep breathing. Even though there was no reason to hope. And all my logic said that I would never see this place again. So that's what I did. I stayed alive. I kept breathing. And one day that logic was proven all wrong because the tide came in and gave me a sail. And now, here I am. I'm back. In Memphis, talking to you. I have ice in my glass. And I've lost her all over again. I'm so sad that I don't have Kelly. But I'm so grateful that she was with me on that island. And I know what I have to do now. I gotta keep breathing,

because tomorrow the sun will rise. Who knows what the tide could bring. (2:10:31)

The above quote shows the realization of Chuck about the meaning of life. It seems that he has become able to understand 'Nothingness' of life. He claims we need to breathe though there are no hope and dreams to fulfill. He tells though at present Kelly is not with him but he is happy and grateful that she once was with her during his hardships and suffering. She was there at the sea. Chuck is ready to accept the present and is also looking for another future which he state is uncertain and unpredictable. As an existential hero, Chuck states about the life and continuation of the similar predicament of life. He asserts tomorrow there will be sunrise again and same is the day after, what human being can do is simply to wait for another tide of life which can blow anyone upside down.

Zemeckis ends the film from the point from where it has begun. At last, he once again brings crossroad symbol. In this scene, Chuck returns from the ways that takes to FedEx, gets out of the car and stands in the middle of the crossroad, maybe to choose another option of his life. In the first scene of the film a FedEx cargo is shown to take its right turn after coming to the crossroad through which we are taken to FedEx office. It is the same path which was chosen by Chuck sometimes before. Now once again Chuck is back to the same crossroads of the life. Metaphorically it states that human life is a caught in the circle of choice and consequence, suffering and understanding. One cannot escape and avoid the happenings which are resulted out of his choice and free will.



Fig.9. At the end Chuck once again at the same crossroad of his life

The picture above brilliantly exposes the meaning of human life. An individual is free to choose any of the option available for him. He is responsible to face the consequence of his life as per his option or choice. The long range shot above is significant to show the condition of any human being. It seems that an individual in the earth is hurled to experience the meaninglessness and futility of his existence. Chuck in the picture is at the middle of the crossroad looking at the different direction than his previous path, symbolizing all human beings who are at the crossroad of their life to make a new choice in their life.

Cinematography and *Cast Away*

Amy Villarejo in *Film Studies The Basics*, considers film as a dynamic subject. He suggest this genre to analyze on the basis of different dimensions and according to the content and contexts. Villarejo further states; “Cinema’s dynamism, its capacity to arrange and rearrange time and motion, thus reveals its dimensions that are deeply social, historical, industrial, technological, philosophical, political, aesthetic, psychological, personal, and so forth” (9). Villarejo makes us clear that film

is not an isolated category rather it is a aggregate multiple dynamisms. Its relation is always with the political, social, cultural, economic and aesthetic aspects of the world. Film is arranged in time and motion which presents the different circumstances to its viewers. So, while analyzing the aspects of the film, different cinematographic techniques and skills should be focused.

In this sense, while talking about the visual qualities and cinematographic techniques in the film, *Cast Away* is brilliantly interwoven by the visual techniques. Visual techniques are constant features in *Cast Away*, including the use of color, contrast and symbolism. As the movie tries to depict an individual alienation and estrangement and quest of authentic identity, the theory of existentialism correlates with cinematographic techniques. To reflect upon the plight and sufferings of an individual this movie has used various cinematic techniques. Cinematic components of film like, setting, scenes, shots, colour, acting, lightening etc support the philosophy of existentialism.

Most of the scenes in the film are set in the deserted island. As Chuck is tested and experimented about his choice amidst the isolation, loneliness, and despair, the locale in the movie is appropriate to express the existentialist concern. In most of the scenes of the film a lonely hero is shown to be struggling to come across the sea. In this process the sea and the unpopulated island can be regarded as the best physical locale to expose the existential struggle and physical and mental upheavals of the protagonist. As Zemeckis has to emphasize upon the hardships, sufferings and physical ordeals of his protagonist, the physical setting in the film is appropriate to show the absurdity and paradoxes of human life.

Another important technique of cinematography is shot and angle. In this movie, different types of shots are taken in the film. To show the deep and intense

pain and suffering of the protagonist Chuck, close-up shots are used in a large scale. Similarly, to show the minute details of different activities different close-up shots are used in the movie. These shots have helped to emphasize upon his painful experiences and sufferings. For instance, to show Chuck involving in different minute activities like preparing boat, collecting sticks, tying and binding them around close-up shots are taken. On the other hand, multitudes of long range shots or telephoto shots are also used in this movie. These shots have served to emphasize upon the utter despair and estrangement of Chuck.



Fig.10. A close -up shot to show the happiness of Chuck after making fire

The above shot in the film shows Chuck's happiness of making fire after a long struggle. Through this shot we can realize how happy and jovial he is. To show Chuck's inner sense of joy and internal feeling close-up shot is appropriate to use. Thus camera movement and shots can be regarded as the way of capturing the theme and the motif of the director in the film.

To talk about colour symbolism in *Cast Away*, the colour pattern of the film too supports its theme of struggle, despair, alienation etc. As most of the scenes are taken in the sea, its blue colour primarily recurs in the film. As blue is the colour of deep thoughts, utmost depth and productivity. Chuck process of realizing and

understanding the real meaning of life is highlighted through the wider use of this colour. Blue colour correlates with Chuck's intense inner feelings and emotional depth. Chuck's journey of life matches with the colour used in the film. Lighting is another element in the film which supports the theme of existentialism. In regard to the lighting, maximum night scenes are included in the film. The incorporation of the night scene is meaningful. These scenes have helped to project the darker aspect of our life which causes an individual to live a completely darker and isolated life amidst the absurdities of life..

Music is another component of cinematography which too suits the theme of alienation, estrangement and self realization. When Chuck is in the island, music is heard being frequently played. This music correlates to the hardship, suffering and painful experiences of Chuck. It arouses deep and intense feeling upon the viewer. It further heightens interest and curiosity towards the next attempt of the hero. The regularity of the same music supports the intense and long hardship and suffering of the protagonist in the island. It is appropriately used in the film as it dramatizes the different kinds of difficult activities of the hero.

Acting of Tom Hanks as Chuck Noland is perfect as a victim of his choice. His performance further helps to intensify the theme or the message of the movie. Hanks has been seen fat as well as thin as per the demand of the situation. On the other hand, Costume is properly used and selected in this film. In the beginning of the film Chuck is depicted as an employee of the large company, well shaved, and properly dressed. But when he is left in the island, he becomes thinner, bearded, his hair grows longer and he is shown in loincloth. It shows the transformation of hero.



Fig.10. Chuck in loincloth, spare in hand

The above picture shows the change in the costume of the protagonist of *Cast Away*. It shows the change or the transformation of the hero from an individual who follows his freewill and responsibility to a man who seeks subjective truths in life, acting as per the need and demand of the situation. The change in the costume is also suggestive of the change in life, thinking process and actions of Chuck.

Hence, Like Sisyphus, Chuck is an existential hero who confronts absurdity of his life in the meaningless world. His choice to struggle amidst the meaninglessness and nothingness of life is very significant. Although Chuck at the beginning of his life, is caught in between the choice and responsibility of his life but when he faces a plane crash of his life, he is forced to face the loneliness, despair and anguish of life. Chuck at the end realizes his subjectivity, individuality and his responsibility towards the self. He happily accepts his present as he understands the paradoxes and anomalies of human life. In this process, different cinematographic elements like, scenes, shots, color pattern, lighting, costume, music as well as acting are organized and selected in such a way that they support and strengthen the discourse of existentialism.

III. Chuck Noland and the Common Predicament of Human Beings

This dissertation examines Robert Zemeckis's film *Cast Away* from the perspective of existentialism. This study has attempted to trace out freedom of choices in the protagonist, Chuck Noland's life and his gradual realization of the absurdity, meaninglessness and 'Nothingness' of human life. It is dramatized in the film that the choice of the character forms the essence of his life but ultimately the same choice brings crisis in his own existence. Moreover, the crisis of existence is important in human life because it leads us to the realization of the essence of life.

Chuck Noland reflects the common predicament of human beings who undergo the similar pattern of despair, agonies and anxieties of life. The sufferings and hardships are inescapable realities of life. One is always betrayed and cheated by his personal choices. The common destiny of the people is that they are forced to struggle throughout their life. The movie brilliantly exposes absurdities and contradiction of the modern man by emphasizing upon the multitudes of hardships and sufferings of its protagonist Chuck. As Chuck is deserted and left alone in an unknown land, he is left with nothing but various hardships and sufferings. He is shown to be struggling alone in the island for four years merely to sustain himself and to exist. In this sense, the complexity and struggle of life is unavoidable.

Zemeckis's protagonist, Chuck makes the free choice according to get the meaning of his existence, but is extremely depressed by his freedom of choice. Loneliness, alienation, hopelessness, betrayal, denial of social values, failure in love relationship are some instance of protagonist existential problems. He is seen as alienated, victimized, and depressed and is always in trouble. When his plane is crashed his life becomes so much tragic and pathetic. Even in such tragedies of

life with full of anxiety Chuck does not feel failure with the life rather determines to confront with futile suffering as human predicament. It is how Chuck understands the absurdity of life in meaningless world, which makes him an existential hero in real sense.

While focusing upon the subjective 'self' of his protagonist, Zemeckis says that individuality is not the quality, which can be superimposed outwardly but it can be acquired through the decision of a person. Moreover, the concentration on the individualism and alienation from the society has also been reflected throughout the movie. Through his hero Chuck, Zemeckis has obviously depicted a new dimension of subjectivity and freedom. The concern of existentialism, loneliness, estrangement, anxiety and choice encompass throughout the entire film.

Finally, *Cast Away* highlights the discourse of existentialism through the dramatization of the sequence of hurdles and troubles that come in the life of human being. The movie presents the bleak and ugly reality of life where each individual is forced to pass through the despair, anxiety and anguish in his life. Human being has the ability to choose thus he decides what he shall become. Even after his choice there is no certainty of finding the finitudes of the life. Moreover, man often finds himself amidst the chaos of absurdities and sufferings. In this connection, man is always in the eternal process of defining himself by grasping his authentic self and essence. Thus, one has to build up Chuck like tendency of confronting the absurdities of his life in order to understand the essence of the life.

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