

**Tribhuvan University**

**Revelation of Agony in Coetzee's *The Master of Petersburg***

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### **Abstract**

The present thesis entitled “Revelation of Agony in Coetzee’s *The Master of Petersburg*” emphasizes on the anxiety and frustrated situation of the protagonist, Dostoevsky, after the death of his young stepson, Pavel. It depicts the father’s pathetic condition of his life in the novel. The present thesis finds out that the father’s authentic identity is a mournful character in St. Petersburg in Russia throughout the novel which situation is created by him.

This research studies Dostoevsky’s agony through atheist existentialism perspective. The father, Dostoevsky wants to be free from the unexpected death as Jean Paul Sartre’s existential doctrine, freedom of choice. He always resists with the natural phenomenon, death according to Albert Camus’s resistance against meaninglessness. Similarly, he searches his authentic identity by reveling nothingness as Martin Heidegger’s being.

## Contents

	<b>Page No.</b>
Letter of Approval	
Acknowledgements	
Abstract	
Chapter – I: Introduction	1-11
1.1 J.M Coetzee and His Critics	1
1.2 Coetzee’s Life and His Works	8
Chapter – II: Existentialism: Theoretical Modality	12-30
2.1 Existentialism: An Introduction	12
2.2 Historical Development of Existentialism	18
2.3 Prominent Existentialists	23
2.3.1 Jean Paul Sartre: Freedom and Anguish	23
2.3.2 Albert Camus: Rebellion against Meaninglessness	25
2.3.3 Martin Heidegger: Being	29
Chapter – III: Textual Analysis	31-51
Revelation of Agony in Coetzee’s <i>The Master of Petersburg</i>	31
3.1.1 Resistance of the Protagonist	34
3.1.2 Frustration and Anxiety	38
3.1.3 Freedom of Choice	45
3.1.4 Sense of Guilt	48
Chapter – IV: Conclusion	52-54
Works Cited	

## Chapter – I: Introduction

### J.M. Coetzee and His Critics

This present research is an inquiry into J. M. Coetzee's novel *The Master of Petersburg*. The inquiry is basically related to the agony of the protagonist, Fyodor Dostoevsky. He reveals his agonizing situation in the abrupt death of his young stepson, Pavel. This research will prove that how the protagonist reflects his painful suffering, torture and agony along with the mental predicaments in the moment of unbearable situation of life. We observe his strange and horrible actions demanded by the time itself. This research makes inquiry why Pavel, the son of the protagonist leaves his stepfather's house and compels to live in the rented room. The thesis will specify on the atheist existentialism as a chief theoretical modality, so the existentialism will be applied in *The Master of Petersburg* and it will help to visualize how and why the writer has used such technique to elaborate the present situation of the Russian novelist Dostoevsky as the protagonist of the novel.

South African Nobel Prize-winning author J (ohn) M (axwell) Coetzee in 1994 published a novel entitled *The Master of Petersburg* in which he explores the grief of a famous Russian novelist, Dostoevsky. The novel which is based on the fictional biography of a Great Russian writer, Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky as the protagonist. He returns to St. Petersburg in Russia from Dresden in Germany after hearing the message of his stepson (Pavel)'s mysterious death from his friend Appollan Mayakol. He comes to there after the death of Pavel because he wants to inquiry and investigates the cause of son's death. He becomes so frustrated by the death and the novel, *The Master of Petersburg* presents a story of a bereaved father. The novelist, Coetzee has presented Dostoevsky's activities very dramatic way because an ordinary never act these actions for the recreation of dead son's life but he

does remaining in illusion which is an especial situation i.e. given in the novel. After arriving in the city of St. Petersburg in Russia, he lives in the house of Anna, who lives with her only daughter, Matryona or Matryosha. Fortunately, this room had been already taken by his stepson, Pavel in which Dostoevsky stays now.

The novel is divided into twenty chapters. All these chapters are full of Dostoevsky's grief and its consequences. The father always inquires the incident of his stepson's death and he communicates with the different characters like Anna Sergeevna, Matryosha or Matryona, Maximov, a counselor and Sergei Gennadervich Nachaev, a revolutionary leader and Ivanov, a beggar and police spy. Out of total seven characters, four characters are major and they have played the vital role to bring the complete meaning of the text. Within the novel, there are three parts of plot- the first part consists of grieved thought and reactions against the mysterious death of Dostoevsky's son. He has reacted and inquired to find out the real cause of the death. The second part is the conversation between the protagonist (Dostoevsky) and a revolutionary leader (Nachaev). The final part describes the out come of Dostoevsky's extreme torture after the sudden death of his son, Pavel. The father has been trapped by the reminces of Pavel due to such condition and he is compelled to express his tortures, sufferings and through his strange and abnormal behaviors. Before analyzing and exploring the text, it would be better to define atheist existentialism in short.

Coetzee's *The Master of Petersburg* builds the negative aspects of existentialism such as pain, frustration, suffering, torture, anxiety, predicaments, and depression. Existentialism is a method which studies human's reality, existence, search for authentic existence, subjectivity and tries to establish the real identity of human being. All 20<sup>th</sup> century existential exponents discard the logical reasoning, the traditional doctrines, philosophy, morality and religion. In this way, mainly atheist

existentialism denies the notion of God in human existence and accepts the declaration of God's death. The proponent of atheist existentialism is German philosopher Frederick Nietzsche. According to him, religion does not provide any single truth because the God is replaced by superman.

Recreation of Pavel's life is the main concern for the father, Dostoevsky in the novel. If possible, he wants a meaningful, happy and admiring life of his son. He drowns into hallucination, dream like vision to get an authentic existence in the society by denying the death of his son, Pavel because the father creates his own identity through revealing his agony. For the father, Dostoevsky, the death becomes the main obstacle to go ahead in his life .So he resists with the death of his son by doing different activities whatever the father likes to do. In the text, he never surrenders his fate in front of God and accepts the death as earth's rules; anyone has to die after the birth. That is why, Dostoevsky can be compared with Camus's well known hero Sisyphus because Sisyphus carries the stone to roll up on the top of mountain by rejecting the command of god but it falls from there. In the same way, Dostoevsky resists with Pavel's death in order to recreate his son's life which is not possible as usual way. This father's action is the action of modern man because modern man always insists on futile attempt. Sartre focuses on human existence which precedes the essence. It means that a human being exists before she/he has an essence. He is a prominent existentialist and the most famous modern, philosopher. According to him, human being should get freedom but it can not be got easily. He also focuses on responsibility, human's anguish, existence. Similarly, for the study of the existence, German philosopher, Martin Heidegger's theory about existence of human being becomes very important to prove the existence of Dostoevsky. Heidegger says that to get authentic existence, human being should reveal



nothingness. Heidegger, in his writing focuses on the question of being which a fundamental question of the philosophy is. So, this study goes through the major atheist existentialists like Sartre, Camus and Heidegger's key concepts of existentialism as freedom, anguish, responsibility, choice, anxiety, authentic existence and resistance and observe these elements in the situations of the protagonist, Dostoevsky in *The Master of Petersburg*.

Coetzee's novel, *The Master of Petersburg* is based on the fictional biography of Russian novelist, Dostoevsky. The entire novel is set in Russia and all characters are drawn from Dostoevsky's novels. Although the writer is South African, postcolonial but in this novel, he has focused on Dostoevsky's the existing contemporary context of 19<sup>th</sup> century Russia by comparing with his present condition. Dostoevsky is a well known Russian, atheist existential writer. He emphasizes on human existence and in the existence, the death becomes major obstacle. Similarly, Coetzee has been influenced by the style of Dostoevsky and he has applied the same technique in this novel.

The present research has been divided into four parts. The first chapter presents a brief introduction of the study. The second chapter tries briefly to explain the theoretical modality that is going to be applied in this research and it explains on existentialism, historical development and different existential philosophers with their philosophical ideas. On the basis of the theoretical modality outlined in second chapter, the third chapter analyzes the literary text *The Master of Petersburg*. The fourth is the conclusion of the research on the basis of textual analysis in chapter three.

While doing research on Coetzee's *The Master of Petersburg*, it is found that this novel has elicited host of criticism since its publication in 1994. Many critics,

scholars, and novelists have analyzed this novel from different perspectives like new historicism, deconstructionist, psychoanalytical and linguistic. These approaches no matter whether they are author oriented, or reader oriented or language oriented has tried to interpret it or invest this novel with meaning. The approach of the present research is a distinct one in the sense that the research analyzes from atheist existentialism perspective which deployed in the novel as a counter of traditional thought.

In this context, it is essential go through the commands of the critics. The critic like Gary Adalman compares Coetzee's *The Master of Petersburg* with Dostoevsky's *The Possessed* and says that only this novel is based on a biography of Dostoevsky. It shows the dramatic broken relationship between fathers and sons as well as is the gulf between life and death and he quotes it as:

*The Master of Petersburg* is not a biography any more than *The Possessed* a social realist text. It rivals biography dramatizes the broken filial connection, the gulf between fathers and sons, in a period of revolutionary change which might as well as be the gulf between life and death. It creates a dialogic texture [. . .] in terms of analogy.  
(353)

For him, there is an imbalance relationship between father and son before the death of son, Pavel. But after the death, the father becomes very obsessive with the life of his son.

According to another critic, Clive Barnett, *The Master of Petersburg* is a kind of literary pastiche of Dostoevsky's novels and he notes it as, "*The master of Petersburg* is considered a more literary pastiche of Dostoevsky's novel, is called to task for juggling dismissed as an act of literary terrorism" (293). He condemns

Coetzee as a literary terrorist because he has used all characters from Dostoevsky's novels and the novelist himself as the protagonist.

For another prominent critic, Marget Scalan, Coetzee's *The Master of Petersburg* is the rewriting of Dostoevsky's *The Demon (Devils)* and an argument between a writer and a revolutionary leader Sergei Nachaev and he quotes it as:

In *The Master of Petersburg*, making Dostoevsky as a fictional character as Nachaev allows Coetzee to bring the argument between writer and revolutionary into his own text and address it more explicitly than he has done elsewhere. In order to do so he pulls biological Dostoevsky, who in *Demon* so artfully conceal himself behind [. . .] he explores the private and psychological sources of Dostoevsky's art and politics. (464)

Coetzee uses Dostoevsky as a fictional character in his novel *The Master of Petersburg*. In this regard, his main aim is to explore about Russian novelist Dostoevsky's private and literary life.

The famous and permanent critic known as Dean Flower clearly presents the purpose of Dostoevsky while he is returning to St. Petersburg after the death of his young stepson Pavel whom he harshly knows. In the view of critic, J. M. Coetzee's novel, *The Master of Petersburg* portrays Coetzee's imagination upon the exiled Dostoevsky of 1869; his troubled his mind, gambling and marital problems and the expression of guilty. The critic describes about Dostoevsky as in the below:

He (Dostoevsky) comes to mourn for Pavel and for his own failures as a father but quickly loses control. He becomes obsessive about the boy, occupying his shabby room, smelling his clothes, growing enamored of the landlady who protected him, trying to win over his young daughter

whom Pavel befriended, getting entangled with the radical reformers and fanatics that Pavel knew, casting suspicion upon himself with the police. (488-9)

For him, Dostoevsky returns to St. Petersburg from Dresden to inquire and investigate the sudden death of Pavel. So he meets his son's former landlady Anna, her daughter Matryona who is the best friend of Pavel. According to Dostoevsky's thought they can help him to bring the reality of his son, Pavel.

Another critic, Frank Joseph warns the readers not to take Coetzee's *The Master of Petersburg* as the novelist original theme. Rather these themes are taken from Dostoevsky's novels. It is a book which is used poetic fantasias and notes it as:

*The Master of Petersburg* is written in a very similar register, and Coetzee makes no attempt to provide any realistic psychological motivation for his figures and their actions. Rather than a novel, one might use a musical analogy and call Coetzee's book a poetic fantasia on Dostoevskian themes; it should be read as such a work, and not approached with more conventional expectations as a work of fiction.

(Qtd. in <http://www.epnet.com>)

J.M. Coetzee's situation is analogous with Russian novelist, Dostoevsky because Coetzee himself is living in the South Africa under the repressive regime which is depicted in this novel *The Master of Petersburg* (1994) through Dostoevsky's situation. Critic Michael Vaughan mentions it in the following way:

Although an outspoken adversary of apartheid, he has criticized by leftist for giving prominence in his novels to 'a state of agonized consciousness' and subordinate attention to material factors of oppression and struggle in contemporary South Africa. (15)

According to the leftist critic, Coetzee's focus is only on agonized human beings in his novels rather than class conflicts in the matter of materiality and oppression.

### **Coetzee's Life and His Works**

The novelist, J. M. Coetzee has born in Cape Town of South Africa in February, 1940 A.D. His parents were both professional. His father was a lawyer and his mother a school teacher. His family spoke English Language as well as Afrikaans. During his literary career, Coetzee has won several prestigious literary awards, including the Prix Estranger Femina (1985) and the Jerusalem Prize (1987). He is the first writer to win the Booker Prize on two occasions. First time in 1983, this Prize has been awarded for *Life and Times of Michael K* and the second time in 1999 for *Disgrace*. Coetzee is an intensely private writer because he has published two fictionalized autobiography about his early year and during his time in *Boyhood* (1997) and in *Youth* (2002) respectively. He has received Ph.D. degree from University of Texas in 1969 and his Ph. D. dissertation is in Samuel Beckett's novels. From 1968 to 1971, he had taught at state University of New York at Buffalo. He became a lecturer at the University of Cape Town. Later, he was appointed professor of literature in 1972. Coetzee has lived in Australia with his partner, Professor Dorothy Driver since 2002

Coetzee is mostly influenced by many European philosophers and writers like Daniel Defoe, Dostoevsky, Kafka, Beckett, Hegel and Derrida in his literary profession. Coetzee's novels become very much complex because of the mixing of the complex European writer's thoughts and ideas, and his allusions are very much ironic. He has used the western tradition of writing in his literary text to explain the postcolonial moment by redrawing the relationship between master/slave and lord/bondman. His interest is in linguistics, generative grammar, stylistics, structuralism, semiotics and deconstruction. The dilemmas of his novels are based on South African reality but often presented in timeless meta-fictional form and carrying multiplicity of meanings. So he is sometimes

called an exponent of postmodern, postcolonial and post structural writer. However, Coetzee defines himself is reflected in the sophistication of his writings, subtle and allusive. Coetzee's criticism provides a set treatment of history and his writings elicit to resist against the domination of power and politics. For Coetzee, *résistance* is the chief element of his novels that is reflected on the relationship between literature and history.

Coetzee usually portrays his hero's self discovery or the discovery in his all novels. The discovery happens at the climax of any novel. Generally, it may make these discoveries during or after the completion of a lengthy journey. During the protagonist's journey, he is often a lonesome figure. Solitude or isolation is common theme to all of Coetzee's central characters especially this solitude is both spatial and social. These characters often live in remote farms, tiny islands, and frontier settlements and they do not enjoy normal family life. Although they are surrounded by husbands, wives, children, parents or siblings. This isolation is deliberately cultivated and it is revealed as imprisonment. For them, whether self imposed or not, particularly this isolation pays a central role in Coetzee's novels. In his seventh novel, *The Master of Petersburg* (1994), the protagonist is the famous Russian writer, Fyodor Dostoevsky, who tries to understand the death of his stepson, Pavel. Coetzee portrays him a lonely man who resists with the death of Pavel. Coetzee's focus is related with the search of human dignity, identity and peaceful life.

Being a postcolonial writer in his first novel, *Dusklands* (1974), Coetzee always depicts the problem of colonialism and how the traditional colonialist conducts their discourse to rule the African people under their control. Actually, this is not novel but it is two short novellas that share common theme; that theme is an exploration of power, or the lack of it. It consists of two novellas, one about America and the other about Vietnam. His next novel, *In the Heart of the Country* (1977), this novel is a farm novel. In the novel, the central character Magda is rebellious and sexually deprived of a sheep farmer.

His main concern is with a kind of discursive entrapment and there, possible resolution is glimpsed (declined). The protagonist, Magda is the narrator of the novel who narrates the extreme torture of colonialism up on farmers of South Africa. She creates love for the people, and not simply for the land.

Coetzee is an advocator of postmodernist writer. In his novel, *Foe* (1986), he has used a female character to redraw with the power of masculinity in Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. He has rewritten the history of Defoe's classic novel *Robinson Crusoe*. This novel is written from postcolonial perspective too. The main character, a woman named Susan Barton who shares the island with *Robinson Crusoe* and *Friday* in the novel. Similarly, the latest, his novel *Disgrace* (1999) is based on full of irony and reversal of whites' domination. This novel's main aim is to explore the present condition of white due to the long history of their superiority. The focuses on white academic and the daughter of white who raped by three black men whom they refuse to prosecute. In this novel, he presents two difficult issues. The first is the problems of black violence and the question of how whites are conscious of their historical complicity which they should face in the new South Africa. Similarly, in the second, he links this political dilemma with an intriguing investigation of ethics, and animal rights. It is a powerful dual focus to his treatment of suffering and humility.

J.M. Coetzee has been awarded Nobel Prize in literature in 2003. His famous novel *Waiting for the Barbarians* has selected for the Prize. The Noble Prize committee called *Waiting for the Barbarians* "a political thriller in the tradition of Joseph Conrad, in which the idealist's naiveté opens the gates to horror."

## Chapter - II: Theoretical Modality

### Existentialism: An Introduction

Existentialism, as a school of thought which has a great contribution to interpret human existence in the world. The term existentialism is rooted from the word 'existence' (narrower meaning) which is derived from "Latin language where ex = out + sister = cause to stand. These causes are which exists, which has actuality (being) and anything that is expressed" (*Dictionary of Philosophy*, 98). Asserting these inherent qualities, human beings have existence in the world. All existential philosophers emphasize on human's existence, man's vivid experience of the reality, man's power of creating self identity and capacity of taking responsibility to solve his own predicaments as the enemy of existentialism.

Mainly, this philosophy has been developed after the Second World War from European countries. After the war, many thinkers started to oppose the traditional doctrines that viewed human beings as manifestations of an absolute value. They did not believe in traditional concepts like rationality, mortality, unity, value along with the concept of religion and god. Many writers and thinkers have found that the world is completely absurd, incoherent, disintegrated, chaotic and disordered, not guided by the laws of god, but the present world is completely pure change, and contingency. In this context, Friedrich Nietzsche declares that "God is dead."

Those great wars separated mankind from their relatives and nearer one. So many thinkers have begun to express their frustration, anxiety, depression, alienation, loneliness, despair. It also brought disordered, devastation, economic depression, destruction, chaotic universe in which individual's hope, and happiness were stopped by the wars. As a philosophical doctrine, its most concern is with the human predicament and inner states such as alienation, anxiety, authenticity, dread, and sense of



nothingness and anticipation of death. Existentialists, therefore, explore such condition of human beings in their writings. After the Second World War, for human beings, the reality is actually loneliness and has to face the isolated existent. To quote this context, M. H. Abraham brings two existential philosophers: Jean Paul Sartre and Albert Camus, and their views:

A human being as an isolated existent who is cast into an alien universe to conceive the universe as possessing no inherent truth, value, or meaning, and to represent human life as it moves from the nothingness whence it came toward the nothingness where it must end, as an existence which is both anguished and absurd.(1)

From the above extract, it would be better to say that the main background of the emergence of existentialism is related with the ending of the Second World War because the war brought pessimistic feelings on human beings. In such context, Europe was totally lacked material resources and spiritual faith, and dominated by uncertainty. Existentialist thinkers, therefore focus on pessimistic feelings of human such as pain, frustration, sickness, death, dread, despair, solitariness, anguish which became the essential features of human realities. In this way, these philosophers emphasize on the lack of absolute truth and meaning, purpose of life and solitude of human existence. Sinha talks about human beings in *Introduction to Philosophy*, “the human being is a being is nothing. The nothingness and the nonexistence of an essence is the central source of the freedom the human being faces in each and every moment” (386). Nothing is the central force to exist in the world for human being.

Human condition in the world is really pathetic because he is living in domination, humiliation and unsuccessful. Albert Camus in his famous essay, *The Myth of Sisyphus* says that the modern world is void, meaningless, irrational and at

least absurd. Camus tells us about his hero, “Like Sisyphus, humans make their own fate, their own choices, and to that extent are in the control of their own destinies” (67). In the essay, Sisyphus rebels against God’s command to establish his individual identity. He creates his own fate to suffer in the charge of God that is his choice and ultimate goal of his life. Similarly, in his another work *The Rebel*, the slave refuses to obey humiliating order of his master. He demands respect for himself. Although modern man cannot decide their own responsibilities, thought and time. He stays in existential dilemma and still having a hope. In the same way, Shakespeare’s Hamlet, a renowned hero who hesitates to accomplish the suggestion given by the ghost. Being unable to decide in appropriate time, he finds confined in the existential dilemma whether to accept the prevailing reality or to die. He clarifies his problem in these few words, “. . . to be or not to be; that is the question” (*Hamlet*, 60). It is the tragedy and problem of modern man. Because of its weakness, he cannot declare his further way of life in time. He swings like pendulum between responsibility and duty as the character, Hamlet.

Basically, existence has two forms: authentic and inauthentic. The authentic form of existence is the existence of human being who can exist for it where as the inauthentic form of existence is the existence of things and existence of thing is called thing in itself. That is why, it is characteristically different between the existence of things and human beings. Things are determined, fixed and rigid where as human beings are free because they can create their own existence. They can add essence in course of their lives. The human beings do not live in pre-determined world; they are free to choose their own aim, their own actions and responsibilities. Therefore, the human beings have to take this freedom of being, the responsibility and guilt of his actions. They must be

responsible for their guilt. If human beings regret the false pretension, the illusions of their existence have meaning. They encounter the absurdity and are compelled to make a choice. Choice is the one thing that the human being must make. When one refuses to choose, the trouble comes and he can not realize his freedom.

French existentialist, Jean Paul Sartre divides all existentialist thinkers into two groups: theistic and atheistic. In the first group, he includes Martin Buber, St. Augustine, Gabriel Marcel, Karl Jaspers, and Kierkegaard whereas in the second group, Sartre includes himself, Martin Heidegger, Samuel Beckett, Albert Camus, Fredrick Nietzsche and Edmund Husserl. Although all existentialists talk about human being in individual with some common tendencies among them, and they have many differences and disagreements among them. Generally, they give their personal views on human existence and meaning of life. The following examples of Swami Akhilananda may clarify it much:

Thomistic existentialism is quite different from that of Kierkegaard and Heidegger, Sartre, Camus, Jaspers, and Marcell. There is a wide gap between the views of even these thinkers which can not be bridged. However, the modern existentialists all agree that existence is prior to essence. (236)

St. Thomas has not called himself as an existentialist. Later, he is known as a Christian existentialist by others. Certainly, there is a wide gap between atheistic and theistic existentialists because theistic thinkers believe in religion and God whereas the atheistic thinkers deny the beliefs on God and religion. In this context, the theistic existentialists believe the anxiety of modern man can be entertained when one submits oneself to the will of God. On the other hand, the

atheistic existentialists discard the concept of God and raises their question on the presence of God in human existence. To clarify these distinct philosophers' thought Viking Desk Encyclopedia helps as following:

Soren Kierkegaard developed a Christian existentialism in which anguished is relieved by transcendent faith in God. Martin Heidegger and Jean Paul Sartre, deny the existence of God and stress man's absolute freedom to choose, with resulting anguish and despair. (348)

Existentialism stresses on subjectivity, freedom and individuality of man. Unlike rationalism and idealism which define man's essential importance to reason and ideas, existentialism emphasizes on the subjective truth of human beings. So, human being's existence is based on neither idea nor reason. Regarding the freedom of the individual in *Sophie's World*, Sartre argues that, "man is condemned to be free" (457). Man has created his own burden, problem himself but however, he wants to be free from the trouble and the action. That freedom is not on easy task. In this context, *Encyclopedia Britannica's* description about limitation of human being presents, "Freedom is conditioned and hampered by limitations that could at any movement render it empty" (622). So human beings have to struggle to get their own existence.

According to Heidegger, man can exist but other things cannot. He says, "Man only exists, rocks are but they do not exist. Trees are, but they do not exist" (316). Therefore, existentialism is generally considered a study that clarifies the meaning of human being's existence. Moreover, it rejects the belief on God, meaning of life and it fully supports the freedom of human beings. To quote *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, "Existentialism is the theory that human beings are free and responsible for their own action in the world without meaning or God" (405). Men are responsible

for their action at all. The main motto of existentialism is the study of human condition.

The focus of existentialism is on being and subjectivity by opposing logical 'reasoning' and 'objectivity' which is based on individual experience rather than predetermined thought and knowledge. It is a set of ideas that stress on the existence of human being, passion; the anxiety and depression which are pervaded in each human's life. According to *Columbia Viking Desk Encyclopedia*, there are some basic beliefs which are commonly held in existentialism, "the problem of human existence is the major one reason by itself is an inadequate method of explanation anguish is an emotion common to men confronting life's problems" (348). Reason became an inadequate thing to interpret the existential problems of 20<sup>th</sup> century human beings. Therefore, all existentialists discard logical reasoning.

Existentialism has had an enormous influence outside philosophy, for example, psychology (Jaspers, Ludwig Binswanger, and R.D. Laing) and on theology (Karl Barth, Paul Tillich, and Rudolf Bellman). Although it is compatible with both atheism (Heidegger, Sartre, Camus) and with Christianity (Kierkegaard, Marcel) and these all philosophers talk about human's existence.

The theme of existentialism started developing throughout the history of western philosophy especially in Greek including Sophist thinkers like Socrates, and Protagoras. By placing man at the center of the universe, Protagoras says, "man is the measure of all things" and Socrates' imperative "know thyself" is equally important. Other thinkers have vital contribution in this philosophy as well. Though these pre-modern thinkers never address themselves as existential thinkers but their ideas play more important role in the development of existentialism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and 20<sup>th</sup> century. Obviously, they are profunder of this new philosophic al trend

because we could find some themes of existentialism in the works of Socrates, St. Augustine, and St. Aquinas, Pascal, Duns Scots, and others. Later on, they were followed by different existential philosophers like Fyodor Dostoevsky, Soren Kierkegaard, Frederick Nietzsche, Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Karl Jaspers, Jean Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Albert Camus, Samuel Beckett and others.

Existentialism arose as a reaction against both rationalism and idealism and against the traditional European philosophies. According to rationalism, reason has primary existence to be what I am. In this regard, Skeptic Rationalist, Rene Descartes says that "I think therefore I am" (*Sophie's World*, 238). For him thinking power determines what she or he is. In the opposition of his doctrine, an existential thinker, Sartre says, "I exist takes priority over what I am"(456). Here, existence determines first to be what she or he is. Therefore, existential philosophers deny the reason. Similarly, they also oppose the philosophy especially the philosophy of idealism because it believes on mind, spirit or consciousness as the ultimate reality; the absolute truth.

### **Historical Development of Existentialism**

The historical development of existentialism is based on different interests of the philosophers especially under the influence of pre-modern thinkers. These thinkers followed the diversity of interests like religious interest, the metaphysical interest, the moral interest and political interest. Moreover, this diversity of interests have drawn on existentialism with the relation of different sources. One of such sources is the subjectivism of 4<sup>th</sup> -5<sup>th</sup> century theologian, St. Augustine, who exhorted man not to go outside in the quest of truth but it can get within him. Another source is the Dionysian Romanticism of Nietzsche, who presented the human life is the most irrational and cruel features in this state but the proper quality of man exists beyond

good and evil. Similarly, another source is the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Russian novelist, Dostoevsky's nihilism. He has almost presented his characters in his novels that have continuously defeated as a result of his choices. As a consequence of the diversity of source, existential doctrines have focused on several aspects of existence like anxiety, suffering, and authentic identity.

Existential thought consists of the modes of existence, the condition of human beings, his relation to things to his body, to the society and or to other beings, the suffering of life. Though existentialism as a distinct philosophical and literary movement began and developed in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, its elements can be found in many works of pre-modern philosophers and writers. Existentialism goes back to man's pre-philosophical attempts to gain self awareness and understanding of existence in the world. While analyzing pre-modern and pre-philosophical thought, we can find many existential elements and can know that modern existentialists are only trying to re-establish those ideas. In ancient Greek, Sophists thinkers focus on man by placing in the centre of universe in their philosophical writings.

After about 450 B.C. Sophist thinkers emerged with new philosophical thought which focused on the individual and the individual's place in the society. They had replaced natural philosophers' concern about physical world and the history of science. These thinkers also refused the traditional mythology and fruitless philosophical speculation. Their main concern was, "man cannot know the truth about the riddles of nature and of the universe" (Gaarder, 62). So, they rejected the abstract thinking. Sophist thinker, Socrates (450-399 B.C) showed his concern for personal existence and said that "know thyself."

While analyzing the philosophy of existentialism, it becomes common to religious thoughts like ideal man being responsible for his own action. Later, these

thoughts have been contributed to develop the theistic existentialism. Mainly, theistic existentialism has been properly developed by St. Augustine and Pascal. In his work *Confessions*, Augustine has talked about human beings, their conditions, and their enslavement to the desires, their passion and their corrupted morality. Augustine argued that man is unable to make himself free from these deprived and helpless conditions through his own capacities. Like Socrates, Augustine says "know ourselves".

The Danish thinker, Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1853), is regarded as the founder of existential movement. The ideas of Kierkegaard have been influenced by the great theologians like Karl Barth, Emil Brunner and Reinhold Niebur. Being a religious thinker, he is an existentialist because he accepts the absurdity as fully as Sartre and Camus do. Kierkegaard is a critic of Hegel's philosophical system which analyzed being or existence in an abstract and impersonal way. Kierkegaard discusses that man's essence with the essential predicaments and limitations such as hope, despair and anxiety. He wants to place the particular human fact first as the priority to be pure being or pure essence. To him, existential standpoint is chiefly related with religious thinking. He emphasizes the concept of individual, of dread, and of the paradox and he mostly emphasizes on the value of individual given the views, "the existing individual is the primary object of his interest. The individual is distinct and isolated. The individual exists not from the metaphysical point of view, but each is for everyone, or every human being is for himself" (qtd. Swami Akhilananda, 236). According to Kierkegaard, every individual exists himself not depends upon others because human being is distinct, individual and isolated. Kierkegaard makes him troublesome. In his view, Christian life must consist of constant agony, torture and suffering. He throws human being into a horrible gloom over religious life itself.



Kierkegaard takes human beings as God's creatures and offers many possibilities of being without reasons of heart or mind. He can get to God by a leap of faith. So he believes only on God in the existence of human being and not in any doctrine. To him, man is a sinful character by his very nature. Although he has hope for redemption from his sin and it is possible for him. He became very much influential to later both theistic and atheistic existentialists.

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), German philosopher, poet and critic of culture, who became one of the most influential of all modern existential thinkers. Before him, there was the majority of theistic existentialist. He strongly opposes the traditional philosophy, religion and morality and declares the death of god. So, he is known as an atheist existential thinker. Nietzsche's view on the existence of god, existential movement got a new mode where human existence is perceived with a new conception. As other existential writers, Nietzsche had talked about human subjectivity and problematic situation of human existence. His response to the tragedy of modern man was of anger and disgust. He advocated for authentic living and insisted on the individual who must make his decisions entirely on his own.

Nietzsche as atheistic thinker called Christianity a "slave morality" and held that religion provides no truth because God is dead and Christianity has become the shelter of weak and disabled people. In the absence of God, he proposes the concept of superman who always tries to reach will-to-power, which is applied by all modern existentialists. The superman lies higher above an ordinary man with having courage to reach will-to-power.

The development of modern tradition of existentialism gets help from the works of German phenomenologist, Edmund Husserl (1859-1970). So the root of existentialism is related with the phenomenology. Later, he was followed by the

modern existentialists. 20<sup>th</sup> century German existentialism is represented by Martin Heidegger (1889-1979) and Karl Jaspers (1883-1969), French existentialism by Gabriel Marcel, Jean Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Albert Camus, Spanish existentialism by Jose Ortega y Gasset, Nikolay Berdyaev and Italian existentialism by Nicola Abbagnano. The most rebellious voices of existentialist thought are found in the works of the French existentialists: Sartre, de Beauvoir and Camus. In literary influence, the Russian novelist, Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821-1881), Austrian Jewish writer, Franz Kafka (1883-1924) and Irish novelist, Samuel Beckett (1906-1989) contribute significantly in the development of existentialism as a philosophic trend.

French existential philosopher, Jean Paul Sartre is considered as the most influential among modern existentialists. His existentialism became popular especially after the world wars. Sartre is one of the self-declared existentialists. He declares the core of the existentialism and says that existence precedes essence which idea many others existentialists have supported. In *Sophie's World* by Jostine Gaarder, Sartre said, "existentialism is humanism" (456). His main idea is about human's freedom that freedom is to act, freedom to value and freedom to make ourselves. His philosophy is seen totally against theist thinkers because he does not give any place for God in the existence of human being. He has derived such idea from Nietzsche's philosophy who has already declared "God is dead." He divides existentialism into two groups: theists and atheists. He also makes distinction between thing in itself and being for itself. He said that a material thing exists thing in itself but mankind exists for itself. Therefore, the being of man is different from the being of thing. According to his view, the existence of God is not necessary for the existence of the human being. He believes that we are makers of our destiny. For him, man's feeling of alienation in the world creates a sense of despair, boredom, nausea and absurdity. We human beings can

make our future choosing it as we are condemned to be free. Hence, the human being is responsible for what it is.

Albert Camus (1913-1960) was a journalist and philosopher. More than that, he was a literary writer who practises the themes of existentialism in his writings. His first novel, *The Stranger* (1940), is based on the theme of the absurd. His hero lives in moral wilderness and the man was unable to see life as a meaningful. Because of bad impact of 2<sup>nd</sup> world war, he writes such kind of literary writings by rejecting the beliefs of God. For him, this world is absurd yet man has to face it or accept it as his own destiny. This idea of Camus has presented in his most influential essay, *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942), Camus declares the condition of man is absurd, meaningless, and pathetic. Man forcefully has to believe on the futile world. It is the major problem of the modern man or the condition of man especially after the two world wars. Thus, he always portrays tragic hero like Sisyphus in his literary writings. He sees the traditional values had been weakened by war, lack of faith among people on God. So, he rejects the notion of God and addresses him as an atheist thinker.

### **Prominent Existentialists**

#### **Jean Paul Sartre: Freedom and Anguish**

French novelist, playwright and an exponent of existentialism, Jean Paul Sartre, acclaimed the freedom of the individual human being. He is of the opinion that the forlorn individual, in the threat of anguish and despair learns to confront the existence in the world without God. He also engaged himself in the contemporary sociopolitical situation. His philosophy mostly focuses on the personal philosophy. In this regard, Thomas Mautner says, “As the heart of his philosophy was powerful notion of freedom and uncompromising sense of personal responsibility” (379). Freedom is a central force to get success in the life of human being.

Although Sartre frequently talks about human's freedom. He never takes freedom as blessing but as a curse. For him, 'man is condemned to be free'. It is an essential one which encourages human being to choose freedom in the course of his life; he is responsible for his actions in life. Life always chooses to be free. According to Sartre, human being has such potentiality to accommodate in different condition. In this context, he says:

There are no accidents in a life; community event which suddenly bursts forth and involves me in it does not come from the outside. If I am mobilized in a war, this war is my war, it is in my image and I deserve it. I deserve it first because I could always get out of it by suicide or by desertion. (54)

The above extract clarifies that human being is able to deserve his capacity during the time of reacting against his obstacles. This type of capacity comes out within him not outside. Sartre thinks that if anyone wants to be free, he can struggle with up coming obstacles. The man who gets freedom after the completion of inner capacity.

Anguish, for existentialism, not all truth which is known through rational understanding; some are disclosed through an individual's moods. Anguish and despair are not simply painful psychological suffering that in the way, it is simply understanding one and about the world. The existentialists provide self-reflective model about human existence and anguish is defined as:

Anguish is a mood that reveals to the individual how her freedom makes her responsible for the values embodied in her actions. Anguish is unlike fear, which alerts her to danger in the external world; instead, anguish is anxiety before herself as she senses that nothing other than her own will make her choose how to act. (*Existential Literature*, 42)

As doctrines, existentialism has focused on the phenomena of the situation and especially this situation revealed through the negative terms such as man's dread of

death and the failure of his responsibility. Man's limit situation is described as death, the struggle and suffering which are inherent qualities of human being. As an atheistic existentialist, Jean Paul Sartre's anguish is compared with the agony of Kierkegaard.

In this context, Castell and Borehart argue:

The anguish of conscious decision in Sartre's godless world is like the agony of Kierkegaard's Abraham, the man of faith, summoned to sacrifice Isaac; but it is more extreme since the choice must occur without any superhuman context or reward. (805)

It is the belief of human's resistance against the obstacles. That is human's essential task to exist in the world. Human being never believes in the ultimate meaning/value of anything in the present time. Having extreme quality, human being can create his own destiny in his life.

Thus, Sartre's doctrine of existential freedom and anguish are important to create own individuality of human life. For him, freedom is an essential thing to exist in the society by resisting with the obstacles. So an individual exists only as a series of active choices and resistance. His anguish is the attainment of authenticity, which is the consummation of existence, and the basic for all judgment.

### **Albert Camus: Rebellion against Meaninglessness**

After the great devastation of the world wars, people confronted with the age of anxiety, despair and crimes. In modern period, people believed that the decline of religious belief. For him, the condition of man is absurd and his search for any purpose is meaningless and fruitless. The world does not possess any meaning, value or truth. Being an atheist thinker, modern man like Sisyphus engages in futile and helpless labor as the punishment of God. But for the hero like Sisyphus, it is done to rebel against the command of God. In his famous essay, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, he presents a character, Sisyphus who makes his own choice in the rejection of God's existence. When he has faced the punishment to roll up a rock to the top of mountain.

At the same time, the stone fall from that place and he has the feeling of absurdity but he happily accepts it. In this point, Camus says, "The gods had commanded Sisyphus to ceaselessly rolling a rock to the top of a mountain, where the stone would fall back of its own weight. They had thought with some reason that there is no more dreadful punishment than futile and hopeless labor" (67). The protagonist, Sisyphus has such capacity to bear the punishment of God by resisting the command of God to him. He tries to establish his own distinct identity in the world by doing so.

People make choice and such choices create the sense of absurdity in this meaningless and alienated world. Absurdity does not mean anything for Camus because the lot of happiness can find within futile activities like his hero, Sisyphus. So he says it as, "Happiness and absurd are two sons of same earth. They are inseparable. It would be a mistake to say that happiness necessary springs from the absurd discovery. It happens as well that the feeling of the absurd springs from happiness" (69). According to him, happiness and absurd are inseparable things. If we emphasis only on happiness of life, it will be great mistake.

Modern man's work is like Sisyphus because everyone works without having any meaningful purpose. The life is devoid of meaning in this world but Camus insists strongly on the man who can make a sense through his own attempt. He argues in *The Rebel* in this way:

I continue to believe that this world has no ultimate meaning. But I know that something in it has meaning and that is man, because he is the only creature to insist on having one. This would have at least the truth of man, and our task is to provide its justification against the fate itself. (18)

It says about the reality of human being in the present world because there is no ultimate meaning. We can find something within meaninglessness in order to exist in the society. So only human being can do but not others.

Rebellion is a kind of inner force to resist against difficult situation. Existential philosophers believe that it is a philosophical process. It is similar with the meaning of revenge of his action. Where revenge is the personal and human emotion but the rebellion or the revolt is universal. Knowing the valuelessness of life, man must rebel in this earth and accept the challenges of the absurd. If man has complete freedom, he can protest against the death, misery and the suffering. Man himself, not the god, bears his responsibility about his own destiny in the universe. Man is alone in the world and his rebellion against the meaningless command of God. That is called as a modern rational or conscious. As quoted in Albert Camus and the ethics of Rebellion, Harold A. Durfee writes:

Absolute freedom is authoritarian power. Thus, 'the logic of rebellion' is 'the logic of creation' such rebellion is a 'protest against death' and this in double sense. It protests against death and suffering in the world and therefore eliminates god, and it protests against the death which is but a part of modern rational and logical crime. (36-7)

Freedom is an authoritarian power. This power is very useful to protest against the death. It can be created by rebelling against death and suffering. By protesting against death, it helps to discard God's notion in the existence of human being. It is a modern man's thought and logic.

The transcendence of the absurd, according to Camus is not achieved without intense struggle. This is what Sisyphus does in *The Myth of Sisyphus*. Human being expects that the world is to be governed by rational principles but human existence is entirely without proper reason, and it also doesn't sustain possibly the pattern of justice. Life can neither be explained nor justified. The reality is mysterious and utterly unknowable. Harold A. Durfee further argues that rebellion is needed to protest

what human's destiny and he can be successful to establish real existence. He says, "Rebellion is the affirmation of our common struggle with our destiny and this is the bond and value that is the basis for real existence" (36). The revolt is a kind of power which forces its need in the real existence of human being.

Man has freedom to choose his own existence. He can create his favorable condition according to his will but man often meets the obstacles of an external world. Actually, these obstacles are indifferent to man's needs, and these warring forces can not easily be reconciled. In such a condition of unfulfillment, the fact of purposelessness emerges. If the demands are not fulfilled and the life is incomprehensible, then it is necessary to bring meaning into the world. Thus it affirms human's freedom for creation of meaningful situation according to his own will. Camus develops the idea of the rebellion against meaninglessness in his book *The Rebel* that reveals:

[A]nd I cannot doubt the validity of my own proclamation and I am compelled to believe, at least, in my own protest the first and only datum, that is furnished in me, within absurdist experience is rebellion. Stripped of all knowledge, driven to commit murder or to consent to it, I possess this single datum which gains great strength from the anguish I suffer. Rebellion arises from the spectacle of the irrational coupled within unjust and incomprehensible condition. (16)

In Camus's opinion, if man rebels against upcoming obstacles, he can truly exist in the mysterious world. For him, rebellion is a powerful force to exist in the world. His famous hero, Sisyphus rebelled against the absurdity of the situation. So he existed, not simply existed but existed with happiness because he writes, "One must imagine



Sisyphus happy” (*The Myth of Sisyphus*, 70). Without concerning the eternal punishment, Sisyphus is happily existed in that society.

### **Martin Heidegger: Being**

The German philosopher, Martin Heidegger presents the problem of Being and existence. He is often called the darkest person of existential school. For him, the universe is alien to us and we should face explicitly the problem of being. We have to create our own existence by using our choices. The Being is being of the world as a whole. It consists of Dasein and other things at once. He developed a theory of ‘Dasein’ which is a particular way of existing. It is different from the other ordinary existence of things because they are determinate and they have their distraction properties. As quoted in *Dictionary of Philosophy*, Heidegger shows the difference between Dasein and other beings:

The sort of being that I manifest is not that of a thing with properties. It is a range of possible ways to be. I define the individual I become by projecting myself into these possibilities which I choose [ . . . ] who I become is a matter of how I act in the contexts in which I find myself. My existence is always an issue for me, and I determine by my actions what it will be. (183-4)

Dasein has different quality which is created its own existence itself. This quality defines the value of individual into different possibilities of its own existence. For an individual man, he himself can create own existence in the society. Therefore, the existence human being can know through his own attempt.

Human being is thrown into the world and he has to face the feeling of dread. He is expended in time. That’s why, he has to tolerate a lot of problems. The redemption is possible only through freedom but that freedom can not be achieved without the manifestation of the nothing. In his essay "what is Metaphysics" Heidegger puts his ideas in the following statements, “without the original revelation

of the nothing, no selfhood and no freedom. With that the answer to the question of the nothing is gained” (6). For him, nothing is neither an object nor any being at all but it is necessary to show human’s freedom. It also does not come forward for itself or next to beings.

Heidegger criticizes the traditional idealists like Plato and Aristotle who place human being at the center of their inquiry. Although these traditional philosophers gave too little place about being of subject. J. Glenn Gray contrasts Heidegger’s view with the traditional philosophers and writes; “For him Being is neither God nor a world ground in the idealist German tradition. Temporality is of its very essence. And there is no dualism in the thought of reality and appearance, of unchanging form and protean matter” (216). Human being's existence is essentially temporal because he has the feeling of his experiences in guilt and fear about his future time. There is no doubt between reality of human experience and its appearance. So Heidegger’s being deals with reality and appearance of human condition by relating with time consciousness. The individual exists vary and his existence can be determined by the circumstances of his surroundings. This sort of existence is more authentic.

Therefore, Heidegger talks about human’s freedom, responsibility, individualism, identity and subjectivity as other existential philosophers and his contribution is necessary in existential criticism.

### Chapter - III: Textual Analysis

#### Revelation of Agony in Coetzee's *The Master of Petersburg*

Among the greatest novelists in the world, J (ohn) M (axwell) Coetzee is one. He has been awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 2003. In his literary career, he has also received the Booker Prize and *The Master of Petersburg* has won Irish International Fiction Prize in 1995. He is a well known South African novelist during postcolonial era. He usually portrays the issues of racial discrimination and the effect of Apartheid policy in his writings. These issues are particularly institutionalized in South Africa during his literary career but he sometimes fictionalizes the history and character. Unlike his other novels, the present novel, *The Master of Petersburg*, Coetzee has brought a renewed Russian novelist, Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky, as the main character. He fictionalizes and twists the biography of Dostoevsky and historical event of Pavel, his son's death in the novel. He has given more emphasis on grieved father (Dostoevsky) and the father has inquired upon the mysterious death of his dearest son, Pavel.

After hearing the news of his son, Pavel's death, Dostoevsky returns to St. Petersburg of Russia from Dresden of Germany with a false passport. . He has drowned into a heavy debt in Russia in his previous life. He uses the false passport because he is afraid of arresting him and to be thrown into debtor's prison from the threat of creditors and secret police and he has fled to Germany with his second wife. His present journey can be interpreted as a mission. From such context, it is a mission because he returns to Russia with a purpose. This purpose is to be investigated and inquired his son's mysterious death. In addition to it, he tries to know the death of his son as either murder case or a suicide one. He can be taken as a representative character of the world because he comes to Russia to fulfill his responsibility. Being a loving father, he is there to make a detail inquiry about the accidental death of his son.

It is the responsibility of all guardians in such situation, and he represents the people of the world.

From the beginning of the novel, Dostoevsky is portrayed as a grieving father and his reaction against the death. He has married with two women in his whole life but he has been spending unhappy and miserable life due to the tragic suffering, which gets fallen in his life. Pavel's mother who is his first wife. But he remarries another woman named Anya after the death of his first wife. Though Pavel is his stepson, he comes into his house at the age of seven with his mother. After that, he has been brought up in the warm lap of his stepfather and then his life goes on smoothly till he is nineteen. His stepfather takes care and he loves too much before his second marriage, but slowly and gradually his father ignores him and at last he is totally indifferent about his son's future. Pavel's real father had already died before the marriage of his mother with Dostoevsky. After the death of his mother, the son becomes an orphan and his life becomes quite miserable and pitiable when he was at the age of fifteen.

The marriage of Pavel's stepfather himself is responsible to break their happy and harmonious life, and it invites conflict between them. So, there is no good relationship between father and son, and son and stepmother. Due to it, Pavel spends a frustrated life. By observing the existing situation of Pavel, anyone can imagine about his insecure and loveless life which is not safe and loving in Dostoevsky's house. Hence, he ought to leave his stepfather's house and he lives in the rented room.

According to chronological history with the years given in the novel, Pavel dies in the October of 1869. At that time, he used to live, in Haymarket district of St. Petersburg of Russia, at Sixty Three Svechovoi Street in Anna's house. When Dostoevsky finds Anna's house and room of the dead son, the father enters into the

room to examine the circumstances. As he knows, his son has lived there since April of the year 1869. At first, he pays the remaining rent of the room there. For this purpose, he gives twenty roubles to Anna and he wants to occupy the room till the next month. In this way, he gets some vital information from there.

The protagonist, Dostoevsky himself cannot investigate every thing of Pavel as he wishes as his bereaved situation is mentioned in the novel side by side. For the further inquiry, the other characters are like Anna, a former landlady of Pavel, her young daughter Matryona or Matryosha, and Maximov who is a judicial investigator in Pavel's case. Anna, the female character, says, "He was a lodger here since April . . . His room is as he left it, and all his belongings, except for some things that the police took" (3). The father knows that some Pavel's papers are taken by police and the remaining things are in the room. She informs him that Pavel has lived there since April. She also says that her daughter Matryona and Pavel were good friends when Pavel was alive, "Matryona and Pavel Alexandrovich were good friends" (14).

After knowing the information of Anna, he decides to go to the police station in order to pick up Pavel's confiscated papers. There, Dostoevsky is informed of Pavel's connection with the Nachaev's conspiracy. He succeeds to know that in the papers of Pavel contain a list of people condemned to execution by Nachaev's revolutionary group. The judicial investigator suggests the father that Pavel's death must be occurred as a conspiracy rather than an accident or suicide. In fact, Pavel who was murdered by the Nachev's group. The judicial investigator expresses his deep sympathy without returning back those papers. He says, "My sincerest condolences, Mr Isaev. Isaev. Time to makeup his mind" (31-2). Maximov and Anna are the most important characters of the novel, who kindly help Dostoevsky to depict the reality of

Pavel's death. Maybe if his son died in his early childhood, it would not suffer his father as now and he could forget it easily.

All these characters are more helpful than Dostoevsky's expectation and they actively take part to find out the reality of his son's death. They also contribute their help to emerge his grief and sorrow as complete manifestation in front of Russian society's mirror. For his help, they never feel any regression and selfishness. Actually, they themselves can feel and understand his pathetic condition in the sudden death of his son, Pavel. Thus, they have contributed their help to be investigated the causes of mysterious death.

Dostoevsky is presented as a bereaved and mournful character in the entire novel. The novelist's attempt is to depict much stressed situation and to ironize his all activities against the death of Pavel. Due to extreme torture, he behaves like completely empty minded and unconsciousness man. In the same way, his entire attempts are ironical because he tries to recreate his son's past life by resisting with the natural phenomenon. For human being life is unpredictable and indefinable but both death and birth are very important to change the life cycle of living things. In the absence of one, life cycle can not regulate as constantly. In other words, life can not be separated from death and vice versa. Therefore, it occurs in all the living things as usual.

The research work attempts to analyze this text with the theoretical modalities from existentialism perspective.

### **Resistance of the Protagonist**

Dostoevsky is presented as an obsessive man in the entire novel because he always wants to keep his dead son as alive being. He never surrenders his fate of suffering by relating with the God's creation. Instead, he tries to recreate his son's life

by resisting with natural phenomenon. According to natural law, death and birth are inseparable entities for human life. It occurs in any living creature turn by turn as the two sides of the same coin. In the present novel's protagonist's case if he accepts the law of life cycle, he can persuade himself by forgetting the death of his son. The death which happens or occurs in living creature without distinguishing whether young or old. No doubt, any one has to face it in any time and any place but the protagonist does not accept the reality as usual way. The fictional Dostoevsky is depicted as an obsessed by Pavel's death, and in some obscure way refusing to surrender him (Pavel) to the oblivion of grave. He wants to keep his son alive by opposing with natural phenomenon. Therefore, his all activities are seen to be futile attempt but he lives in this situation happily like Camus's hero, Sisyphus.

In the novel, the father begins to show his strange behavior when Dostoevsky enters into the rented room of his son, he sniffs the smell of Pavel's clothes. The father always refuses the unpredictable and indefinable death of his son. He wears unbuttoning clothes in order to distinguish him from other people of that society and to create his own distinct identity because he deeply suffers from the death of his dearest son. Resisting with the grief, he acts strangely:

Unbuttoning his coat, unbuttoning his jacket, he kneels, and then pitches awkwardly forward till he lies flat up on the mound, his arms extended over his head. He is crying freely, his nose streaming. He rubes his face in the wet earth, burrows his face into it" (9).

It shows his bizarre personality of Dostoevsky due to extreme sadness. The father chants the word, "Pavel" barely breathing. At the cemetery, he begins to cry, yet a part of him is bemused by the spectacle he is making. Dostoevsky kneels down before the grave and pitches forward, lying flat upon the mound, burrowing his face into the

wet earth to resist with unexpected death. Building up grief, becoming a grieving father, makes a powerful lens for enlarging other emotion. It can not be done by an ordinary man for long time to recreate dead body's life.

Adding convection to Dostoevsky's resistance takes a great deal of seeking the justice for his son. For it, nature also plays vital role to resist with the father's grief, anxiety and suffering. In this condition, the day is not bright rather a gloomy and Dostoevsky's eyes are still searching the image of his dead son. It is expressed:

It is nearly noon. He cannot bear the thought of returning to his room. He walks east ward along Sadovaya Street. The sky is low and grey, [. . .]. A gloomy day, a day for trudging with the head lowered. Yet he cannot stop passing figure to next, searching for the set of the shoulders, the lilt to the walk, that belongs to his lost son. By his walk he will recognize him: First the walk, then the form. (48-9)

Nature herself starts expressing unhappiness since the death of Pavel. No longer, the father bears the agony of the death and the nature shows his unpleasant situation and upset mood through symbolically. Thus, the day is gloomy and sky is low and grey. The father persists to exist in the society without feeling dignity and pride since the news comes of his son's lost. So, he tries to fell dignity and pride by resisting with the death.

Because of the son's unexpected death, the father Dostoevsky forgets all things except his bitter memories of his son. He reveals his bereaved thought and heart-breaking shock in which he wants to go to his son's grave which is situated on Yelagin Island. His unbearable grief demands:

To have been an object of pity all the time! he goes down on his knees, rests his forehead against the bed, tries to find the way to



Yelagin Island and to Pavel in his cold grave. Pavel, at least, will not turn on him. On Pavel he can rely, on Pavel and Pavel's icy love. (67)

These lines truly depict his anguish in the abrupt death of Pavel while he is resisting with such his unbearable suffering. At that time, he no longer wants only to remember the dead son but he also tries to find out the way to grave. This struggle is not with the death one but with the conventional society. According to conventional norms of the society, human being has to perform ritual and funeral ceremony after the death, i.e. the last activity for the dead person but he has thought that if he goes to the graveyard, he will be successful to resist with the death.

He has suffered too much. He can not endure the unbearable situation and his emotion starts bursting into a great groan. He weeps too much by covering his face with his hand, at this time his tears run over his fingers. There is actually a scene of mournful revelation of Dostoevsky. He has a hope to establish his own real identity. So Dostoevsky struggles against the existing society. He expresses his despair:

He gives a great groan of despair. What I am to do? he thinks. If I were only in touch with my heart, might it be given to me to know?

Yet it is not his heart he has lost touch with but the truth. Or-the other side of the same thought-it is not the truth he has lost touch with at all: on the contrary, truth has been pouring down upon him like a waterfall, moderation, till now he is drowning in it. (82-3)

It shows Dostoevsky's rebel against the son's death. His desire is to keep Pavel alive being in his memory and his guilty despair experiences his failure responsibility of a good father. That is why, he becomes quite tedious after son's death. He evaluates himself what he does right and wrong in this moment. Indeed, he shows his pathetic and gloomy moments by pouring down the tears as the waterfall of some brook.

Dostoevsky has been presented as the rebellious character in the city of St. Petersburg. He always struggles with the death of his son, Pavel i.e. the only obstacle going on in his life. No one can persuade him easily. He is an extraordinary man. So he resists in order establishing his own real identity. In this way, he makes his own identity as mournful character in the novel.

### **Frustration and Anxiety**

As one feels oneself helpless and alienated, the sense of frustration and anxiety enters in the mind. Since hearing the news of son's death, Dostoevsky becomes very much frustrated and anxious. He spends every moment by remembering his son, Pavel's past life. He feels anxiety and he even abandons his present familial, pleasant and luxurious life. Due to extreme torture of son's past memories, he has shocked extremely. He becomes unable to think about others except the bitter experience of the death. In this situation, the father becomes too much frustrated and helpless because he has thrown into the world to face such condition. He can not avoid it as his wishes. So he becomes very much restless, exhausted and reluctant to exist in the present life. Being a grief stricken man, Dostoevsky is completely confined in the territory of his dead son. He is very busy to search the life of his dead son drowning into the great illusion. He is always guided by such motif. Dread and anguish fill in his heart as he suffers from the ignorant fate of the beloved son. The death brings unavoidable suffering and misery in the present novel and the novelist foremost attempt is to present the father's agony observed in every activity.

The protagonist, Dostoevsky expresses his suffering, pain, anxiety through weeping too much. He starts revealing his agony after listening about the premature death that is Pavel's death. The much unexpected thing is that the father himself tries to identify with his dead son. So he moves into son's room. He observes the

solitary and quietness with object inside the room. As a result, he feels helpless and agonizing. The traumatic separation between father and son is revealed in the entire novel. The father can not get any solace by doing anything whatever he likes to do. Wherever he goes, he suffers from the memory of his son. Because of the past bitter experience, the father becomes senseless. He presses his forehead too with white suit to show his insane fury upon the death. Among his son's intimate objects, suitcase is the most valuable thing which is given by himself in his son's birth day. So the value of suitcase is the most precious for him. Regarding it, "He lifts the suitcase on the bed. Neatly folded on top is a white cotton suit. He presses his forehead to it. Faintly the smell of his comes to him. He breathes in deeply, again and again: his ghost, entering me " (3-4). There, the lamentation of father has no limitation. It shows that the father's strong desire is to search his son's intimate objects and his intoxication on every Pavel's belongings. The father also tries to find out what happens in the life of Pavel after leaving his house. Now the father's quest is to find out the prematurely departed soul of his son. To achieve such a goal, he spiritually joins with Pavel through the imagination of recreating him as only the novelist who can create his beloved character. He always thinks of Pavel's ghost entering into him and he understands more.

The father, Dostoevsky, loves Pavel very much during his childhood. His love for son, which can not be compared with other's love i.e. especial parental love. There is no any selfishness and it is a kind of pure love in which, Pavel never thinks him as his stepfather and the father also. In the surface of his love, no one can distinguish him as his stepfather. When Pavel dies suddenly at the age of twenty one, after then the father falls lonely, anxious and frustrated. The father starts expressing his lamentation on his son's previous life and he says, "I brought up Pavel Isaev as my

son and love him as my own flesh and blood. In that sense we bear the same name, or ought to. Those a few papers he left behind are precious to me. That is why I am here" (30). It is the most pathetic expression of the father upon his son's death. When Pavel was child, at that time, their relation was like bone and flesh of the human body. We can imagine the relationship by comparing with the example of blood and flesh, how it is significant for human being and the same case happens in their harmonious life. In this sense, it would be better to say, any one can not separate them easily in their relation like the stepfather and the stepson. The text proves that their relation is similar to flesh and blood of human body. Their love and affection plays crucial role to bind into such relation. So in the absence of his dearest son, the father feels too much hurt and shocked and he wanders in Russia to find out the reality of the death by collecting his son's private papers. For him, these papers are very important to know the hidden truth of his son's sudden death. He denies separating his son from his speaking. In other words, it can be said that both of them are one in two. Whether father or mother for Pavel, Dostoevsky is only one. Dostoevsky claims, "I am his mother and father, I am everything to him, and more!" (16). The father is only one nearest and dearest person for his son.

Anxiety of death goes with the father when he suffers from the memory of his son. At that time, he utters his son (Pavel)'s name continually. He forgets his usual activities like eating and sleeping and his son's memory always hinders his usual schedule. While he looks to the chair continuously, he can not breathe easily because of bitter memories of his son. He observes the presence of darkness everywhere. His abnormal behavior is shown as follows:

He is not hungry. Fully dressed, he lies down, folds his arms, and tries to sleep. But his mind goes back to No. 63, to his son's room. The

curtains are open. Moonlight falls on the bed. He is there he stands by the door, hardly breathing, concentrating his gaze on the chair in the [. . .] a darkness of presence. Silently he forms his lips over his son's name, three times, four times. (5)

The above lines are depicted painful suffering which Dostoevsky shows after his son's death. When the father remembers his son's room, he has no feeling of appetite and he cannot sleep properly. In the same way, he gazes to the chair where his son used to sit and the father feels so difficult. He sees the darkness pervade everywhere. He cannot accommodate with others. Thus, his action depicts the strong attachment with his son by denying the traumatic separation between them. He attempts to persuade a spell of grief, "This heavy head, these heavy eyes: lead setting into the soul"(4). Because of son's death, he never feels comfort and relief as physically and mentally, he cannot do and think properly

As bereaved father, Dostoevsky tries to recreate his dead son's life through his all activities. Although he is suffering from anxiety of Pavel's death. Still he has a hope to recreate Pavel's past life. So he goes to Pavel's room and looks towards the white suit which is found on the bed. After this, he wears Pavel's clothes but these clothes are not fit and suit him. His activities are given in the text, "He takes off his clothes and puts on the white suit. Though the jacket is loose and the trouser too long, he does not feel clownish in it" (19). It explores the father's obsessive thought upon the death of Pavel. He becomes so weak which is shown his physical by comparing with the clothes of Pavel. He does it to show his physical weakness under the intolerable anxiety because his wearing of these clothes does not show him any humor and pleasure and he can not be a happy. Rather it shows him too anxious and frustrated. So his attempt fails to reflect the exact physical appearance of his son.

Dostoevsky who is very intoxicated with the life of his son. Even after his death, his wish is to merge in the identity of his dead son. He tries to identify him completely with his dead son. Therefore, he always engages in a futile attempt to be reconciled with his stepson, or the ghost of his son. There is nothing which can be so simple, and such desire is expressed in the text as following:

His son is inside him, a dead body in an iron box in the frozen earth. He does not know how to resurrect the baby or - what comes to the same thing - lacks the will to do so. He is paralyzed. Even while he is walking down the street, he thinks of himself as paralyzed. Every gesture of his hands is made with the slowness of a frozen man. He has no will; or rather, his will has turned into a solid block, a stone that exerts all its dumb weight to draw him down into stillness and silence.

(52)

It shows that the father's absurd thought which is presented as the form of abnormality. His son is inside of iron box, he is dead and motionless. Although the father is alive, he thinks as motionless being. He has a hope to be merged with the departed spirit of his son. At other times, he feels that Pavel is an alien being whose mystery he can never solve. His mind can not think anymore as he is paralyzed. Being a paralyzed man, he compares himself with motionless being. His mind cannot think anymore as it is paralyzed and it begins to numb the physical body too. The growing intensity of pain has no its limitation on him and it reveals the father's absurdity.

Man is only living creature that he is conscious of its own existence. We, human beings are preferred to live in peace and happiness. So Dostoevsky searches his son Pavel's objects because these objects give him a kind of consolation to his burning heart, bereaved soul shocked by the sudden his son's death. At this moment,

he uses his free will and he is curious to reconstruct his son's life. For this purpose, he has used to read Pavel's papers. In examination of Pavel's papers, the father finds that his son Pavel has harsh reality to come out from there. While reading Pavel's papers, he wonders from words to words because it mentions the reality and these words become so difficult to read for the father. He denies uttering these words which is potentially revealed:

This is the third time he has sat down to read Pavel's papers, what makes the reading so difficult he cannot say, but his attention keeps wandering from the sense of the words to the words themselves, to the letters on the paper, to the trace in the ink of the hand's movements, the shadings left by the pressures of the fingers. There are movements when he closes his eyes and touches his lips to the page. Dear: every scratch on the paper dear to me, he tells himself. (216)

It shows his habit of reading his son's papers. He frequently reads it to recreate his son's Pavel's life. He cannot avoid dead son's image from his mind. So he always focuses on the futile attempt which he can not achieve in future life. He forever drowns into the great melancholy in the death. His wretched mind is depicting to struggle with the stunning.

After the death of his loving son, Dostoevsky's mind is deeply rooted in frustration and madness. He becomes helpless having no strength to resist with the death of Pavel. At that time, he has a disbelief in everything what he does. So there is nothing and he expresses his doubt in his suffering in the novel as in the below:

This is not lodging - house of madness in which he is living, nor is peters bur a city of madness. He is the mad one; and the one; who admits he is the mad one is mad too. Nothing he says is true, nothing is

false, nothing is to be trusted, nothing to be dismissed. There is nothing to hold to, nothing to do but fall. (235)

He falls in depression due to monotonous memory of his dead son's life. Every time he wants to reconstruct Pavel's life in his all activities which become futile hope and faith on the resurrection of his son. He knows that neither his lodging house is mad nor Petersburg city but only he himself is a mad due to extreme torture. Whatever he does to recreate Pavel's life, his attempts become meaningless and valueless with hollowness and hypocrisy and he reveals nothingness in his futile attempt.

The father, Dostoevsky is living in the extreme grief of son's death. He loses his memory power due to immense torture and horrible situation which is occurred in him. He forgets even his belongings and even the clothes and shoes to wear; he can not distinguish those things. His abnormalities are expressed:

He picks up his hat and leaves his lodgings. He does not recognize the hat, has no idea whose shoes he is wearing. In fact, he recognizes nothing of himself. If he were to look in mirror now, he would not be surprised of another face to loom up, staring back landing at him. (250)

It happens at the concluding part of the novel. It shows the consequences of Dostoevsky, son's death. His past memories have suffered his mind as well as physical strength that the father can not resist with his bitter experience of his son's death. The memory of his son frequently occupies his mind. So, he becomes unable to recognize his own wearing clothes. He exists in the society being a senseless man. Such situation is used to express his immense pain and suffering. Observing this situation, no one has courage to imagine his predicament or torture and it can not be expressed in any visible words and even if it is tried to express, it remains incomplete. Thus, he never feels as relief and can not get rid of his suffering, rather whenever he



tries to forget, it raises high with the growing intensity of pain. The person like Dostoevsky who thinks nothing of himself, goes on beyond from peace and rest.

Dostoevsky is an isolated existent. Anybody cannot do whatever he does like this for his dead son as in the novel. He has separated his identity from others. As a bereaved father, his mind feels extremely torture, suffering, predicament, anxiety through the memorizing and remembering Pavel's life. His wretched mind always denies separating him from his son's identity and his ultimate efforts are to merge with his son's identity.

Thus, the existential pathos of Dostoevsky is guiding now towards solitude life. In the sense that, he has been thrown into the world by birth to face misery, suffering, torture, pain which he cannot avoid himself as his wishes. As he ponders the misery and despair around him, the father is remained the life of the son. That is why, he is an isolated man from that society and this situation is imposed upon the father to reveal his inner predicaments. Though he can not forget the death as an ordinary man, he always swings like a pendulum in the territory of the great suffering and agony. His wretched mind refuses to separate from his son rather he tries to identify completely with the son. In this way, Dostoevsky finds himself in a very complex situation; frustration arises in him, and it leads him to the world of anxiety and suffering. He expresses his extreme torture, suffering, predicament, and anxiety in the entire novel. He reaches to the pathetic condition when he finds himself alienated from the world around him and all the difficulties which he has to face himself alone.

### **Freedom of Choice**

Freedom of choice plays vital role in the existence of human being and it cannot be separated from existence. Where there is no freedom, there is no existence in real sense. Existence does not mean the same as being alive. All living creatures

including plants and animals are also alive but they do not exist as Heidegger's existentialism because of distinct properties. A person can maintain his way of life being an active rather than remaining passive. So human being has freedom of choice, and has to determine one's existence. Here, Dostoevsky uses his freedom of choice fully to create his own distinct identity in the city of St. Petersburg in Russia.

The protagonist, Dostoevsky is isolated character in the novel. He does not have a concern about what he has to do rather he himself chooses his way of life. Although he suffers from his son's death, the father indulges in the smiling face of his son during his childhood. That is his freedom of his choice. More actions are taken place internally as he follows his grief to examine issues of youth and age, fathers and sons, reason and passion, truth and deceit. For these purposes, he creates a rich mental picture of his son in his imagination. His son's image is created by the father as in the novel creates:

At this movement the clearest of visions comes to him, a vision of Pavel smiling at him, at his peevishness, his tears, his histrionics, at what lies behind the histrionics too. The smile is not of derision but on the contrary of friendliness and forgiveness. He knows! he thinks: He knows and doesn't mind! A wave of gratitude [. . .] his way back to he table, buries his head in his arms, and lets loose howl after howl of grief. (28)

The father thinks that he becomes free from the grief when Dostoevsky imagines the smiling face of his son. That is his freedom of choice in the novel. He manifests his total freedom during his extreme torture created by the death which is not attained easily.

The father is victimized by the death of son. At that time, he not only laments for his failure responsibility upon his son, but he also involves creating exact mental picture of Pavel in the imagination. He has created the image of son's happy married life that is his freedom to think whatever he likes. In the course of time, he even sinks into futile illusion during the few weeks are covered by this novel, Dostoevsky as generally agonizing. In the relation of his plight, his mind can be created some sort of grim humor. The text explores such intolerable predicament of the hero in the form of freedom of choices that is shown in the following sentences:

His head is swimming, he is suddenly exhausted. Behind closed eyes he has a vision of Pavel walking towards him. There is a girl at his side, a girl he has chosen to be his bride. Pavel is about to speak to introduce the girl and he is about to think to himself: Good, at least all these years of fathering are at an end, at last he has other hands to fall into! (96)

It shows Dostoevsky's hallucination and disillusionment. By using freedom of choice, the hero deeply sinks into hallucination and dream like vision to create clear image of his son and his son's bride whom son has chosen to marry her. He also imagines that his son comes with her and he introduces her with his father. The novelist sometime uses humor to add in the bereaved activities of Dostoevsky to express his freedom. So these lines have the same purpose and these are used to create some humor while the reader reads the novel.

He often expresses his suspension about himself. He even doesn't distinguish him what actually he is speaking and doing. These memories never occur in chronological order and complete form. It comes in fragmented form. In such

memory, he sees the image of child and child's mother. Probably these two images are his son and his first wife respectively which is expressed romantically:

He believes and does not believe what he is saying. A fragment of memory comes back to him, of painting he has seen in a gallery somewhere: a woman in dark, severe dress standing at a window, a child at her side, both of them gazing up into a starry sky. More vividly than the picture itself he remembers the glided curlicues of the frame.

(140)

It presents Dostoevsky as a forgetful character. It may happen due to his choice not the cause of external force. He always suffers from the vivid picture of his dead son. For this purpose, his mind is compared with the art gallery. In this context, son's death is not any more other thing because of it, the protagonist can create artful image in his imagination that is used to express his freedom of choice.

Anyway, Dostoevsky, the protagonist of the novel is found suffering a lot through out his life, he finds himself as an isolated existent in the world when he is in strict confinement of the death. He faces all these problems because of his choices which he makes. It is mainly to get freedom from that burden of his life and to maintain his true existence, which is prior to anything else.

### **Sense of Guilt**

Guilt means the unhappy feeling caused by knowing or thinking that anyone has already done something wrong upon the others. When any one realizes his mistakes, he starts expressing his guilt. The protagonist, Dostoevsky, realizes his own mistakes upon his young son, Pavel, after his death in the novel. The father feels regression on his own previous behaviors upon his dead son. The protagonist explores his guilt himself completely. Being a responsible guardian of Pavel, Dostoevsky repents upon the youth who has already demised and he says, "I am his guardian in

low and he was twenty one, getting on for twenty two, at the time of decease" (34).

The father, Dostoevsky expresses that he cannot fulfill his responsibility upon the son, Pavel, who is died at the age of twenty one.

Dostoevsky's second marriage brings even more tragic situation in their happy life and it also breaks their harmonious relationship. According to his guilt, the marriage is responsible to bring such situation in their life. Actually, there is increased immense height of jealousy in his son between Dostoevsky and Anya's relation. So that this marriage is changed into problematic case in his house and, Pavel and his stepmother always dispute each other. Remembering such incident, the father feels his regression and guilt which are manifested in the father's grief. At that time, Pavel not only hates his stepmother but also warns her to follow his father, Dostoevsky. He can not compromise with his parents to live there. He is alienated in the house and compels to live in the rented room. In this regard, the character becomes a homelessness and lack of parent's love and affection. The father recalls such incident in below:

My wife and Pavel are of much the same age for a while we lived together, the three of us in an apartment on Meshchanskaya street. It wasn't a happy time for Pavel. He felt a certain rivalry with my wife. In fact, when I told him she and I were engaged, he went to her and warned her quite seriously that I was too old for her. Afterwards he used to refer to himself as the orphan 'The orphan would like another slice of toast'; the orphan has no money and so forth. (64)

It is regretful thinking of Dostoevsky after the unexpected death of his son. The regression of the father shows the pathetic condition of his son after the father's second marriage. At that time, Pavel can not feel comfortable rather it hurts him even more.

Pavel, the only son, becomes frustrated due to his father and Anya's relation. The son can not accept Anya as his stepmother when his father marries her. The marriage brings a great trouble in Dostoevsky's house hold life which can not solve easily because the father loses slowly his responsibility towards his son. Instead his son, he only engages with his new wife. Thus, there is a family tussle because of the father's discriminatory behavior between his new wife and son, and Pavel obliges to leave the house. Being a bereaved father, he recalls his guilty behavior while he is suffering from the sudden death of Pavel as following:

Pavel was nineteen, yet obstinately would not accept that she, Anna Grigoryevna, would henceforth share his father's bed. For the year, they all lived together Pavel maintained the fiction that Anya was simply his father's companion as an old woman may have a companion: some one to keep house, order the groceries, attend to laundry. When-perhaps after an evening game of cards- he would announce that he was going to bed, Pavel would not allow Anya to follow him he would challenge her of rounds of cribbage . . . (108)

It shows the jealousy nature of Pavel to his Stepmother, Anya. Pavel is condemned to be free in the burden of his father's marriage. Hence, he threatens his stepmother not to be the companion of his father. For a short time, he used to live with his parents to maintain a fiction.

In the exploration of Dostoevsky's guilt, the female character of the novel, Anna actively takes part to explore the pathetic condition of Pavel. She informs that he is alone and lonely man in her house when he lives there. He always struggles with his hardship of life to find out the happy life. She also says that her daughter Matryona is his best friend. So she requests him to ask her to know the details activities of Pavel before his death. She speaks:

I was very fond of him, Fyodor Mikhailovich. He was a good and generous young man. As your son, he was a good and generous young man. As your son, he did not have an early life. He was lonely, he was unsure of himself; he had to struggle to find his way. I could see all of that. But I am not of his generation. He could not speak to me as he could to Matryona. He and she could be children together. (142)

The above extract gives us the information about Pavel who lives in Anna's house. She admires him as a laborious and honest man. He faces with the harsh reality of his life. In the expression of her, the father feels guilt in his son's hardship and problematic situation because it is created by the father himself. However, Pavel struggles to find out the easy way of life. Because of Anna's description, the father realizes his mistakes to exist in the society.

Anyway, the father realizes his guilty behaviors upon the dead son, Pavel after his death. He explores his guilt in order to get redemption from his mistakes. He has a hope to establish his own distinct identity by depicting his guilty feeling upon his son, Pavel even after the death.

### Chapter -IV: Conclusion

This research work attempts to trace out the issue of revelation of agony in Coetzee's *The Master of Petersburg*. In the novel, the protagonist, Dostoevsky, suffers from the severe sense of guilty, anxiety, after his son's death. He has experienced bitter memories of his son's past life. So his bitter memories always hurt and hunt him too much in his present life. His mind has got to experience quite unexpected and sudden death of Pavel. After the tragic separation between the father and the son, the protagonist is ready to give up his relation with his second wife, Anya. He has suffered deeply shocked of the sudden death of his young son. Therefore, he is frustrated and alienated and his identity becomes a mournful character in the novel.

Moreover, Dostoevsky resists the unbearable death of son to reconstruct Pavel's life by doing different activities because he has used to show his freedom of choice as Sartre's views. Though these activities appear as meaninglessness, it goes on him and nothingness prevails. He has faced the great shocking of separation between the father and the son respectively. Here, the death is an inevitable entity for the father in order to explore mournful activities and create his distinct identity.

The protagonist, Dostoevsky is thrown into misery and suffering of the death to face the reality. So he has suffered from the expected son's death. Although he has drowned into illusion to recreate Pavel's past for so many days after the death that reveals the nothingness of human existence. He shows total commitment in his action but Dostoevsky can not accomplish his goal. Whatever he likes to do during his extreme suffering shows or creates abnormality in the character, Dostoevsky. Dostoevsky himself is responsible to create such situation in the novel because he can not maintain his hold life and good relation between his wife and his son. The novelist, Coetzee has provided him such difficult situation to act out the drama where



the protagonist himself has chosen the role to create his distinct identity in the society of Russia. He is a modern man because he wants even more suffering/ tragedy in his life like Shakespeare's hero, Hamlet. He lives in the society without fulfilling his own responsibility towards his son. So he has a sense of existential dilemma and the tragedy happens in his life to maintain balance between destruction and defeat or victory. The father remains himself in dangerous circumstances, and tries his best being alter to his optimistic life. He denies his self destruction and hopelessness and being a good follower of Sisyphus, who is happy even after eternal punishment.

Coetzee has depicted the theme of isolated individual throughout his novels. Generally his characters can not be happy in familial life. Rather they themselves choose to suffer even more in their real life situation. Dostoevsky creates his own stance and he has isolated from his luxurious life in the novel to stay within the hostile and strict confinement of his dearest son's death. He has presented his strong will to explore his strange behaviors. He stands as a rebel, an active protester of the natural world and becomes totally indifferent towards religious belief like Nietzsche's declaration of the death of God because he has resisted with the death which is a natural phenomenon and he has not surrendered his fate by offering God's help to redeem from his great suffering in this present novel. Coetzee's isolation represents Heidegger individual who finds his life as meaninglessness. He does not get proper way to go to human happiness like Coetzee's protagonist Dostoevsky. He is surrounded by difficult situation which he cannot avoid himself but he has to confront it with a full of conscience, patience and courage.

The issue, revelation of agony is laid in the core of this novel. Agony, for Dostoevsky is not only hurting entity but compulsion because it crates his distinct identity in the society. He has struggled with meaninglessness because he can not

recreate his son, Pavel's life which can be compared with the resistance of Camus's hero Sisyphus. In the same way, the death of son is not taken silently by the father in the novel but it is an important instrument to protest against the conventional society. With its existentialist emphasis on courage and perseverance in the face of inevitable defeat and death, one has to perform courage in the fight and stoicism in death. The protagonist reveals his agony to depict his identity as mournful father of Pavel. The father has not persuaded his son's death as natural phenomenon because the novelist compulsorily imposed such incident upon the father to inquire about his agony in the novel. Thus, the novel is basically explored the protagonist's agony in the different terms of existential philosophy such as meaninglessness, nothingness, emptiness, guilt, frustration, anxiety, resistance, alienation and freedom of choice.

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