

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Constitutive Use of Anxiety in Albee's *The Play About the Baby*

**A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in English**

By

Bhumi Prasad Khatiwada

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

April 2010

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY
Central Department of English

Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled "Constitutive use of Anxiety in Albee's *The Play About the Baby*" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Mr. Bhumi Prasad Khatiwada has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee:

Internal Examiner

External Examiner

Head

Central Department of English

Date: _____

Acknowledgements

It was the most exhilarating moment in my life when I was permitted to work on this dissertation. I would like to express my great sense of gratitude to my respected research supervisor Harihar Jnawali, Lecturer at the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, for his invaluable supervision, constructive help and guideline, which helped me to give the final shape of this thesis. Had there not been his help and guidance, this dissertation could not have been appeared in its present form.

I am deeply indebted to Prof. Dr. Krishna Chandra Sharma, Head of Central Department of English, Mr. H.L. Pandey, and all other respected lecturers of Department who played vital role in the completion of this dissertation.

I also owe the highest level of thankfulness to my father Mr. Dilli Ram Khatiwada and mother Ambika Khatiwada, who were always there promote me towards positive aspects of life and were ever present by me in all ups and down of my life.

I also take this moment to thank my sisters, brothers, friends and relatives, Durga, Ganga, *Badi*, Lata, Tekendra, Yog Raj, Uma *dai*, Bhuwan, Parshu *mama*, Rajiv and all my friends and colleagues for their moral and academic support.

April 2010

Bhumi Prasad Khatiwada

Abstract

Albee takes the characters who are suffering in the absurd world. To show the suffering of the characters, he gives pain and agony to them. Through this, he wants to show the ruined lives of characters to highlight the existential angst of human beings. Human beings realise their existence only by scars and wounds. Here, he tries to explore the existential consciousness through the excessive use of anxiety given to the characters. The pain, torture and anxiety help characters to realise their real existence or identity, their use is highly constructive and constitutive. Through this constitutive anxiety, in *The Play About the Baby*, Albee forces characters to think that life is not only pleasant but also a part of tragedy.

Content

	Page No.
Acknowledgement	
Abstract	
I. Existential Consciousness in Albee's <i>The Play About the Baby</i>	1-7
II. Existentialism, Freedom of Choice, and the Angst	8-24
III. Constitutive Use of Anxiety in Albee's <i>The Play About the Baby</i>	25-39
IV. Conclusion	40-41
Works Cited	42-43

I. Existential Consciousness in Albee's *The Play About the Baby*

This present thesis is based on American playwright Edward Albee's *The Play About the Baby*. In the play, Albee tries to explore the existential consciousness through the excessive use of anxiety given to the characters which is constitutive. Albee has played the politics of anxiety, pain and agony in characters so that he can explore the consciousness of existence in this present world. In the play, by the mouth piece character Man, Albee is saying each and every time that without broken heart no one can know his or her existence. Human being realise their existence only by scars and wounds. To show that existence, the dramatist creates the unexpected problem in the drama. When the younger couple, Boy and Girl lose the baby, they are extremely hurt by this situation. At last, through excessive pain, the characters are forced to think that life is not only pleasant but also the part of tragedy. In this way, in the play, the old couple has made young couple conscious on about the existence of life through constitutive use of anxiety.

The Play About the Baby is Albee's post modern burlesque. The play reprises ideas and themes from earlier plays, albeit in a synthesis that makes it stand a part from the works from which it borrows. It's central conceit, a baby that may just be a figment of the characters, imagination, seem a self conscious nod to *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* and is reinforced by the pairing of a younger and older couple. At the same time, the free-form absurdism of the play calls to mind Albee's debut *The Zoo Story*, with it's escalation to an act of dramatic provocation to shock a character out of complacent frame of mind.

The Play About the Baby is an absurdist black comedy - reminiscent of burlesque in it's high spirits and banter - that grapples with such issues as reality and

the games we play to defit it, the ambiguity of existence and the agonizing bonds between parents and children.

A fresh young couple - Boy and Girl have a new baby, whom an older couple, man and woman, steals. Because as a man says "If you don't have the wound of broken heart, how can you know you're alive ? If you have no scars, how do you know who you are ? Have been ?" (61). Brutal loss - the loss of child or childhoodself has been a recurring Albee's theme.

Albee has presented this play interestingly. In the play, there are four characters named Boy, Girl, Man and Woman. In the starting of the play, Boy and Girl appear on the stage. They both have seated in two chairs which are placed oppositely. Girl is pregnant, she is going to have a baby. Certainly, they go outside and come with baby. That means, they have a baby. Girl and boy are passionately in love with each other. They even love their baby.

While Boy and Girl are talking, Man and Woman, the other characters, enter in the stage. They talk with Boy and Girl and sometimes address to the audience. Sometime they exit from stage while Boy and Girl being onstage. Boy and Girl talk about their past life also. Boy talks about his broken arm while he was in gym center. Suddenly, they shift topic of their talks to non important things in quite funny way.

Man, in the play, always asks the Boy and Girl to know the existence of life. Without wound, no one can know his/her existence. Boy and Girl again talk about the delivery of baby in hospital which they have already faced. He had pretended to be her brother in hospital so that he had given permission to lay near to her. They even talk about the Gypsies and their behaviour. They tell that Gypsies steal babies.

Boy asks unknown man and woman reasons to come there. At that time Man suddenly forecasts that they come there to steal the baby. When Girl does not find baby in sleeping and feeding place then she cries.

After this, Man and Woman who first claim to have taken the baby, then proceed to call the baby's very reality in question. While the young couple plead for the return of their child, the older couple taunt them with word games, false memories and similar challenges that hinder the younger couple's ability to prove who they are and the reality of their child. The play ends with them agreeing - possibly under emotional duress, possibly faced with irrefutable proof - that there is no baby.

Thus, *The play about the baby* has drawn the attention of numerous scholars and critics since its production and premiere in 1998. Some critics view it as the second part of *who is Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* While some others view it as the absurd drama, the influence of Beckettian theatre. In this connection critic Steven Drukman asserts:

More than locus - pocus, though, Albee has written harrowing and hilarious four character play, pristine in structure pure intent even Beckettian -- may be his *Godot*. *The Play About the Baby* combines playful self-reflexive commentary with wicked humour while tapping the existential terror of lost youth and passion's inevitable demise. (16)

Drukman explains that the play is shocking and funny too. Although it is humorous while hitting the existential angst but quite morally bad in nature. The play is very successful to combine self-reflexive commentary.

Another scholar Kate Kellaway focuses on about character and conversation of the play. He writes:

The play about the nature of characters and conversation. Albee tries to give as an x-ray of both. If you strip conversation in sensible context, you reveal something about the absurd mechanics of all conversation. If you strip people of context -- names address, their past -- they are also reduced to naked absurdity and anguish too. Albee is master of revealing non sequitur. Wires are crossed to make something new. And the playful refrain of this play is itself a deliberate muddle: what a wangled teb we weave. (41)

Here, in this assertion, he says that characters and their conversation in this play are highlighted to reveal absurd mechanism of the life. He again says that the dramatist is very success in his mission to give as a x-ray of both nature of characters and conversation.

Similarly, Thomas P. Adler explain the play as a chamber piece. He says:

The play shows Albee at his wittiest and builds on distillation of trademark ideas in his dramas, including the notion that individual reality is shaped by needs, and the rapeutic value of an act of cruelty to save people from the illusion that focus their life. (65)

Alder finds that the play is perfect in making Albee as good dramatist and helps to build trademark in his drama.

In the same way, Brain C. Dauth talk about Albee's vaudeville in the play. He says:

The Play About the Baby is Albee in vaudeville mode. The characters - - Man, Woman, Boy and Girl -- in habit a timeless space where they engage in games of love, loss, pain and memory. The most obvious precursor here is Albee's own *who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf ?* (18)

However, in this, Dauth explains that instead of hyper-naturalism of earlier play, Albee goes for vaudeville this time.

Nina Plank talks about tear and pain in the characters. Plank asserts that :

There is plenty of fear and pain for the young couple. Man and Woman conspire to undermine Boy and Girl, to drive them mad with grief and then mad with doubt. The two couples are different: one scarred full of history; the other untouched except by love, hope and the magic of parent hood. As they begin to learn the ways of older couples -- how to communicate, how to deal with jealousy -- they are at least dimly aware of their innocence. When the cruelty mounts, Boy pleads for mercy: I can take pain and loss and all the rest -- later. But now we're happy. We love each other. I'm hard all the time. We don't even understand each other yet. (62)

Nina Plank explains the difference in two couples. One couple has had the history of the wounds while other is untouched by such traumatic history.

Plank finds the life of the characters fraught with anxiety but does not analyse the playwright's politics behind the anxiety given to the characters. Therefore, partly agreeing with her, the present research undertakes to unfold the reasons behind its use, with the contention that Albee explores the existential consciousness of his characters in *The Play About the Baby* through the constitutive use of anxiety.

In the play, Albee has politicised the anxiety as a means to explore the existential consciousness. Human have two parts of life one good and other bad, one comedy and other tragedy, happy and sorrow, etc. If a person is gone through both of these parts then he can know the existence of life. If a person knows only one part then he is unaware about other which is unhelpful to know about life. If a person is

unknown about the trauma and pain of the life, then he would not give any importance to that god-gift life. We have to struggle and should go through each and every ways either it is fine and fit or scornful. This is, what is, actually existence of life. In the play also, we feel the same case. Albee has taken two couples one older couple and other younger. By the help of older couple, younger couple is forced to think the existence of life. After losing baby and by realising meaninglessness and absurdity of life, at last of the play, very restlessly Girl says, "No; no; we don't have one; we don't have a baby. Please, please, no baby, I can't ..." (91). And Boy also says "No" (91) in the same manner. In this way, younger couple is forced to face both the part of life either it is romantic or tragic.

Thus, the present text is analysed in the light of existentialism with special reference to Soren Kirkegaard, Fredrich Nietzsche, Albert Camus, Jean Paul Sartre, Martin Heidegger etc. Existentialism is the modern philosophy to interpret human existence. It takes human being as an isolated existence into an alien universe. It opposes the doctrine that human being is a manifestation of absolute truth. It has become prominent mode of thought especially after the two world wars. This deals with the idea that human beings have to create their own truths and values in the world where the traditional values do not work. The certainties and scientific reasoning that ruled the nineteenth century smashed into anxiety, absurdity and uncertainty. As people experienced untold suffering into an incoherent, disordered and chaotic universe, they did not believe on the concept of unity, rationality, morality, values, and faith on Christianity. There was nobody to accompany each other and to share their problems. But they were free and responsible for their own actions. Nobody was there to guide and help them. Therefore, one has to make choices to create the self. One exists because of the freedom of choice.

The present research has been divided in four chapters. The first chapter introduces the objective of the research including literature reviews and discussing on the property and significance of topic and its hypothesis. The second chapter deals with the theoretical modality which evolves around existentialism. It seeks to engulf the given texts, hypothesis and objective. The third chapter applies the theoretical tool in text to prove hypothesis. It brings forth the writer's tendency of politicising of anxiety on characters in order to explore the existential consciousness. Finally, the last chapter summarizes the major contention of the research.

II. Existentialism, Freedom of Choice and the Angst

Existentialism as a philosophical movement or devastating came into prominence in Germany and France after the two great world wars. This modern system of belief started opposing the doctrine that viewed human being as manifestation of an absolute value. Precisely, because of nuclear holocaust of the Second World War, the certainties and scientific reasoning that ruled nineteenth centuries smashed into fragments, further proving that human rationality no more worked. The wars gave rise to the feeling of despair and separation from the established order. Anxiety, absurdity and uncertainty ruled the fragmented world where as the old concepts like unity, rationality, Christianity faded. Then the terrified western people began to think the role and activities of individual; the wide spread feeling of despair and separation led to the idea that people have to create their own values in the world in which the traditional values no longer reign. Existentialism insists that choices have to be made arbitrarily by individuals, who thus create themselves, as there are no objective standards to determine choice. It draws attention to the risk, the void of human reality and admits that the human being is thrown into the world in which pain, frustration, sickness, contempt, malaise and death dominate. It insists on concrete individual existence, freedom and choice.

Existentialism is a revolt against traditional philosophy which seeks objective and universal truth. The existentialists go against the traditional attempt to get the ultimate nature of the world in abstract system of thought. Instead, they search for what it is like to be an individual human being in the world, whether the thing is true or false, that depends on the decision the individual; what is true to one may be false to another. So, the truths are subjective. Jean Paul Sartre defines existentialism as "a doctrine which makes human life possible and, in addition, declares that every truth

and every action implies a human setting and human subjectivity" (10). Here, Sartre focuses that existentialism is mostly related to human life and human subjectivity.

The writers of the time experienced that they could not escape the situations like loneliness, frustration, anxiety and absurdity. So, they captured the feeling of human loneliness, suffering, frustration, meaninglessness and uncertainty in their works. In this regard, Richard Tarnas comments:

The anguish and alienation of twentieth century life were brought to full articulation as the existentialists addressed, the fundamental naked concerns of human existence- suffering and death, loneliness and dread, guilt, conflict, spiritual emptiness and ontological insecurity; the void of absolute values or universal contexts, the sense of comic absurdity, the frailty of human reason, the tragic impress of the human conditions. (389)

The concept of 'Death of God' and the holocaust of the World War I and World War II obviously brought the sense of alienation, the spiritual emptiness, sense of insecurity and cosmic absurdity.

An individual is free to choose and create truth for himself to exist up to the moment of choice. What is true to one may not be the same to others. One creates truths from the freedom of choice. Thus, an existentialist stresses on concrete individual existence, freedom and choice.

Existentialism emphasises the freedom. Unlike the renaissance thinkers who took freedom positively, the existentialists take freedom as a curse as Sartre says: "We are condemned to be free" (qtd. in Tarnas 56). This existentialist conception of freedom and value arises from the view of the individual. Sartre in his book *Existentialism and Human Emotion* says, "since [...] we are ultimately alone, isolated

island of subjectivity in an objective world, we have absolute freedom over internal nature and the source of our value can only be internal" (23). However, existentialists and renaissance thinkers talk about freedom and human beings but not about God and cosmos. Due to this freedom there is no one to dictate us what to do and what not to do.

As a school of thought, existentialism is devoted to the interpretation of human existence. It lays stress on concrete individual existence, freedom and the choice. John Ryan explains:

There is no single existentialist philosophy, and no single definition of the world can be given. However, it may be said that with the existentialist the problems of man is central and that they stress man's concrete existence, his contingent nature, his personal freedom, and his consequent responsibility for what he does and makes himself to be.

(639)

Existentialists do not take them with the traditional attempt to get the ultimate nature of the world but they really concern with the problem of men. They focus on man's concrete existence, his personal freedom and his responsibility for his choice.

Existentialism focuses on the nature of truths by saying that what is true to one may be false to another because individuals finally make their own choices without any help from external standards as laws, ethical rules and traditional philosophy. In this sense, individuals are free to choose and are completely responsible for their choices. In this regard, Tarnas says: "Even if I donot choose I have chosen not to choose" (149). So existentialism concludes that human choice is subjective and an individual is free to choose for his authentic existence.

Elements of existentialism can be found in the classical philosophy, although it got its full fledged shape in the post world era. Protagoras expresses the idea of subjective truth as Gaarder says: "man is the measure of all things" (62). Socrates focuses on the need of the self instead of the whole cosmos. For him, self was prior to everything. In this context, Richard Tarnas in *The Passion of Western Mind* comments:

In Socrates' view, any attempt to foster true success and excellence in human life had to take account of the innermost reality of human beings, his soul and psyche. Perhaps on the basis of his own highly developed revere of individual selfhood and self control [...] He affirmed the Delphic Motto 'know thyself' for he believed that it was only through self knowledge; through an understanding of one's psyche and its proper condition, that one could find genuine happiness [...] Happiness is the consequence not of physical or external circumstance, of wealth or power or reputation, but of living a life that is good for the soul. (33)

Thus, he made people responsible towards the self by supporting individuality and subjectivity. To understand the self was primary need to know other things. The problem of what man is in himself can be perceived in socrates' imperative "know thyself" (qtd in Tarnas 33).

Although the medieval age was highly dominated by religion and belief in God, existential elements can be found in the philosophy of Saint Augustine. He talked about the self awareness and believed that truth should be searched from within. Richard Tarnas remarks:

Augustine's self-consciousness as volitional, responsible, moral agent was acute, as was his awareness of the burdens of human freedom [...]

Augustine was the most modern of the ancients: he passed an existentialists self-awareness with his highly developed capacity for introspection and self-confrontation, his concern with memory and consciousness and time, his psychological perspicacity, his doubt and remorse, his sense of solidarity alienation of the human self without God, his intensity of inner conflict [...] Augustine who first write that he could doubt everything but not the fact of the soul's own experience of doubling. (143-44)

St. Augustine asked man not to go outside himself in the quest of truth. He affirmed the existence of human ego in the soul. He gave importance to the individual self. In this way, the seed of existentialism was growing in medieval ages.

The existential elements can be found in the Renaissance philosophy too. The writers of that time showed their concern to the human being not to the God. Humanism flourished, to a longer extent, during this period. It emphasized on human potentialities. Man became the centre of every things. It was believed that human being would exist through choice and freedom but not through any pre-determined essence. The writers and the artists of the period concentrated on the issue about the self. For them individuality was important and tried to explore the self in their works. In this reference, talking example of Montaigne, Charles Van Doren in *The History of Knowledge* remarks:

Montaigne, at least could speak for himself. He could say what he was what he wanted, what he feared, what hurt him, what amused and pleased him, what struck him as a vain and foolish in other men. Thus

he placed himself at the center of things, believing that even if his attention might seem self-centred to some people nothing would prove more interesting. (145)

Analyzing above mentioned genuine ideas, it can be concluded that the idea of existentialism has been continued from the time Greek/classical history and did not arise in the literary world dramatically or accidentally, rather it has the connection with different ages, although, the term existentialism, was not coined then.

Existentialism is a distinct and well known philosophy which began with Danish Christian thinker Kierkegaard in the first half of the nineteenth century. He was infuriated by Hegel's philosophy which stressed on rationalism which according to Kierkegaard, "obscured the individual's responsibility for his own life" (377). Therefore, Kierkegaard thought Hegel and Romantics were "tarred with the same brush" (377). Kierkegaard thought of personal choices and responsibility which count a lot. Objective truth has nothing to do with the human life. He advocates that individual existence is prior to every thing. Supporting this view, Jostein Gaarder in *Sophie's World* comments, "Kierkegaard had a sharp eye for the significance of the individual. We are more than the children of our time. And moreover, every single one of us is unique individual who only lives once" (377). Gaarder further makes comment on Kierkegaard's determination about individuality. He remarks:

According to Kierkegaard, rather than searching for the Truth with capital 'T' it is more important to find the kind of truths that are meaningful to the individual's life. It is important to find the 'truth for me'. He thus sets the individual, or each and every man, up against the 'system'. (379)

Kierkegaard emphasizes on individual choice at a moment. Most of the existentialists follow him in this respect. He thinks that man makes free decisions and choices to project himself. Taking example of Kierkegaard, Ellmann and Feidelson remark:

By choosing, even by choosing wrongly it that is done with earnestness and struggle, we become new selves that could not have existed until the choice was made. [Choice in relation to God] Beyond ethical choice religious choices is the use of freedom to surrender it back to divine giver. (805)

Thus, one cannot remain without making decisions. On making decisions, he goes on establishing his existence. There are two options for the individual to choose either he has to choose God and get redemption from the angst, an ethico-religious choice or he has to respect God and go to prediction, and atheistic choice.

The Christian doctrine and its quest for objective truth has nothing to do with Kierkegaardian concept of Christianity. He believes only in the existence of God and not in any doctrine. He argues, "Christianity is therefore not a doctrine, but the fact that God has existed" (857). So, unlike Sartre and Nietzsche, he categorized as atheistic existentialist. He does not agree with the idea that 'existence' means being alive. In this reference, Thomas Mautner explains, "Existence, according to Kierkegaard, is not just being there but living passionately choosing one's own existence and committing oneself to a certain way of life" (224).

Kierkegaard believes that one is free to make choices. And one exists upto the point of making choice. The concept of 'subjective' truth is dominant in his writings. Any systems, rules and regulations cannot determine an individual and his freedom. Instead of single truth, there are many truths which are personal. What is right and what is wrong depend upon one's own decisions and thoughts. The traditional norms

and values do not work. Because of such genuine thoughts, he was followed by other existential philosophers. They followed him in stressing the importance of individuality and freedom of choice.

Modern existentialism is very much indebted by the works of the German phenomenologist Edmund Husserl. Phenomenology emphasises on the self or subjectivism. It studies human consciousness. The world is as it appears to us. So, it lays emphasis on subjectivism. Husserl talks about phenomenology in this way: "Phenomenology itself learns it's proper function of transparently human living from an entire relationship 'self' [...] Phenomenology is not less than man's whole occupation with himself in the service of the universal reason" (qtd in Tarnas 15). Thus phenomenology stresses individuality and subjectivism. It rejects the idea of the objectives. There is no absolute thing in the world. Things are as they appear to us.

Friedrich Nietzsche, a German philosopher has criticised Western philosophy and Christianity. According to him, both western philosophy and Christianity both were corrupt since they taught abstraction. The Western education system tries to prepare the historically educated/learned man but historical knowledge doesn't serve life, rather it corrupts. Then, people become purposeless. Such knowledge cannot provide happiness to people because they become like pendulum in the chain of history where as man has to face the present for happiness. For Nietzsche, the education should be for the sake of human life and existence. In his essay, "On the Use and Abuse of History" he says that we need education for life and action, not for a comfortable turning away from life and action or merely for glossing over the egoistical life and the cowardly bad act. According to him, "history is useful only in so far as it serves living" (152).

He also doesn't believe in the thought of absolute truth that controls an individual. Man is the product of his own action. Since, God is Dead; there is nobody to govern an individual. So, he is the master of himself. For Nietzsche, as Blackburn Comments in the *Dictionary of Philosophy*, "No moment is more important than the present in which one has the opportunity to make active choice that influence the character of the whole" (292).

He also denounces the existence of God and further says even if there is God, he is dead. Therefore, there is nobody to determine our existence. He also calls "Christianity a shelter only for the weak, sick and disabled and, at the same time, it possesses a slave morality" (912).

Nietzsche seems to be quite positive towards suicide because it is also one of the choices an individual makes. He takes suicide as a solution. So, suicide is not surrender but a means to achieve goals. It also makes fulfilment. Thus, he takes it positively.

Another important German existentialist philosopher Martin Heidegger was influenced by both Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. His work has exerted a major and enduring influence not only in philosophy, but also in the theology, political thought and aesthetics. Although, he claimed he was not an existentialist, his influence on Sartre and existential movement is unavoidable. Deeply influenced by Husserl, his ideas constitute to the basic characteristics of existentialism.

He believes that man is thrown into the world, into the midst of other beings, so in order to project himself, he must exist among them and utilize them. Being thrown means for man, being abandoned to the whirling flow of things in the world and to their determinism. This happens inevitably, according to Heidegger, in

inauthentic existence that is, day-to-day and anonymous existence in which all behaviour is reduced to the same level, made official, conventional and significant.

He made a distinction between beings and Being. To consider the individual as only the representation of the mass is a recurrent mistake of metaphysics, according to Heidegger. He held the belief that man should face explicitly the problem of Being; he has to determine his own existence, create his own possibilities and make choices and commitment. Heidegger used the term 'Dasein' for designating human reality in its totality. 'Dasein' is always particular and individual.

Heidegger argued that humanity finds itself in an incomprehensible and indifferent world. Human beings can never hope to understand why they are here. Instead, each individual must choose a goal and follow it with passionate conviction, with the due awareness of certainty of death and the ultimate meaninglessness of one's life.

The feeling of anxiety and the confrontation with death leads man to real 'Being'. According to Heidegger, "the angst manifests the freedom of man to choose himself and take hold of himself ... since he now faces the potentiality of authentic being" (801). People struggle to transcend the feeling of dread or angst in existential crisis for authentic living or to construct unique life.

Heidegger accepts that one cannot escape the historical context because he is always bound by conditions and outlooks inherited from the past. He considers human existence as tied by temporal dimension. The Heideggerian concept of time moves not from past through present to future but from future through past to present. He obviates that we experience the past in guilt and anticipate the future in dread. The time is my own time because I myself experience it and it is finite because my death

is certain. In this way, my destiny is surrounded by a temporal context from which I cannot run away, but can confront it with full conscience.

Heidegger's another best work is *The Essence of Truth (Vom Wesen der Wahrheit 1988)* which attempts to offer the thorough explanation of the most fundamental and abiding theme in his philosophy: the difference between truth as 'the unhidden of beings' and truth as 'the correctness of proposition'. The essence of truth does not refer to anything static, but to an 'occurrence' within which the human being is actively situated. In his later works, we find him being interested in the history of concepts in language.

Though Heidegger rejects the label of atheist, he also denies the Being of which he speaks the essential qualification of divinity in as much as it is not the ultimate cause and the God.

Jean Paul Sartre, a French philosopher, was the learning advocate of existentialism, who was offered Nobel prize for his contribution in literature in 1964, but he made the existentialist choice of refusing it. The key word in Sartre's philosophy is existence. He said that a material thing is simply in itself, but man kind is for itself. The being of man is, therefore, not the same as the being of things.

Sartre in his master piece work *Existentialism and Human Emotions* tries to defend existentialism against some charges which have been brought against it, particularly the charges made by communists and Christians. The basic charge was that they (existentialist) put the emphasis on the dark side of human being. Logically, he addresses those charges centering on his concept of existence of human being and further developing ideas.

He says that man's existence takes priority over what every he might otherwise be. The fact that I exist takes priority over what I am. Sartre says, "existence precedes essence." He writes:

First of all, man exists, turn up, appears on scene, and, only afterwards, defines himself. If man, as the existentialist conceives him, is indefinable, it is because at first he is nothing. Only afterward will he be something, and he himself will have made what he will be. Thus, there is no human nature, since there is no God to conceive it. Not only is man what he conceives himself to be, but he is also only what he will himself to be after his thrust toward existence. (15)

Man is nothing else but what he makes himself. Man, as Sartre explains, first exists, that is, the man first of all is the being who hurls himself toward a future and who is conscious of imagining himself as being in the future.

Sartre studies man, not in the context of convention and ready-made doctrines which might help him to live, but stripped naked and brought face to face with his stark destiny and with the human condition. Sartre put himself in the group of anti religious existentialists and described existentialism as a means of facing the consequences of a world that is devoid of any absolute power like God.

According to Sartre, man lives totally not by any single action or commitment but by the actions he chooses to carry out in his life. The authenticity of life demands that man make a free choice, regardless of pre-established social values. To think about social or moral duties is to indulge in self-deception or -"bad faith". But, to be careful, Sartre does not isolate the freedom of the individual from the total commitment to the community. The contradictory nature of Sartre's philosophy lies in-that he, on the one hand, gives total freedom to the individual and insists that he

should not choose his freedom in accordance with the values or dogmas of society, but on the other hand, he leaves the individual's freedom in relation with the freedom of his community so that the community's freedom directs him to act in a certain way.

About the difficulty in choosing freedom, Sartre mentions:

We will freedom for freedom's sake, in and through particular circumstance and in thus willing freedom, we discover that it depends entirely upon the freedom of others and the freedom of others depends upon our own. Obviously, freedom as the definition of a man does not, depend upon others, but as soon as there is a commitment I am obliged to will the liberty of others at the same time as my own. I cannot make liberty my aim unless I make that of others equally my own authenticity. (842)

Ultimately, it shows that Sartre is being conscious of a system that seems more powerful than the total freedom of an individual. He is creating another system of human existence by negating the common social system, as people understand it.

Reality, in Sartre's view, is a product of human consciousness. He says: "Since all reality is accessible to us only through consciousness let us study only consciousness" (52).

Sartre rejects the existence of predetermined values and demands that values be created. Rene Marill Alberes in *Philosopher without Faith* writes: "Flung into a world he did not desire, born against his will, unjustified in a situation he did not choose man is for Sartre, sheer creation, summed up in the possibility of making decisions with respect to a given situation" (114).

In the above assertion, it is implied that there is no wisdom of the ages to serve the future, nor past experience value. For Sartre, the existentialist condemns universal

as such, holding that there are no congealed essences to be revered but only a perpetually renewed existence to be ceaselessly justified anew.

To sum up, he views that first of all man exists and then only creates meaning or defines himself that means- "existence precedes essence" (15).

Though the 20th century multidimensional personality, Albert Camus understood the nihilism of many of his contemporaries, he also argued the necessity of defending such values as truth, moderation and justice. Olafson asserts, "Camus believes in fraternity and humanism rather than nihilism".

Nihilism in the ordinary sense means disdain for tradition and authority, great faith in reason, commitment to a materialist philosophy. It has anarchistic and revolutionary fervour. It also denotes a mood of despair over the emptiness or triviality of human existence. A nihilist could lose the sense that life has a meaning and, therefore, tends towards despair and suicide.

Camus presents Sisyphus, the Corinthian king, as a martyr and teacher to all modern men. He disobeyed God for his passion for life and suffered eternal torture heroically. According to Camus, when the absurd man becomes aware of his futile living, he is naturally filled with anxiety and hopelessness but he does not surrender himself in the mouth of death. Instead, he acknowledges the consciousness of absurdity as a reliable guidance to revolt against his absurdity. Sisyphus continuously rolls the boulder up the hill that makes him happy because he is fully aware of his absurd task. Camus makes this explicit while he writes:

Suicide is repudiation. The absurd man can only drain everything to the bitter end, and deplete himself. The absurd is his extreme tension which he maintains constantly by solitary effort, for he knows that in

that consciousness and in that day-to-day revolt, he gives proof of his own only truth, which is defiance (*Absurd Freedom* 846).

The metaphysical revolt, according to Camus, anticipates either suicide or demonic desire to destroy the world (Olafson, Camus) but Camus hated the destruction of the world and mankind. To get liberation from the anxiety of the absurd world, one may go to the rules of God or he may submit himself to the hand of death. But both choices are ridiculous and bad for the absurd man. The living of absurd man depends upon the maximum struggle against this absurdity. Thus, Camus' philosophy is not pessimistic and anti humanistic but optimistic and humanistic

In 1942, Camus published his philosophical essay in which he, with considerable sympathy, analysed contemporary nihilism and a sense of the absurd. He was already seeking a way of overcoming nihilism and his second novel, *La Peste* (*The Plague*, 1947), is a richly symbolical account of the fight against an epidemic in Oran by characters whose importance lies less in the (doubtful) success with which they oppose the epidemic than in their determined assertion of human dignity and fraternity.

In his preface to *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Camus explains the subject matter and his intention thus:

The fundamental subject of *The Myth of Sisyphus* is this : it is legitimate and necessary to wonder whether life has meaning; therefore it is legitimate to meet the problem of suicide face to face. The answer, underlying and appearing through the paradoxes which cover it , is this: even if one does not believe in God, suicide is not legitimate.

(Preface to *The Myth of Sisyphus*)

This essay, thus, declares that even within the limits of nihilism, it is possible to find the means to proceed beyond nihilism. This essay urges one to live and create even in the very midst of the desert.

Sisyphus' scorn of gods, his hatred of death, and his passion for life won him that unspeakable penalty in which the whole being is exerted towards accomplishing nothing. This is the price one must pay for the passions of this earth. Happiness and the absurd are two sons of the same earth. They are inseparable. There is no sun without shadow, and it is essential to know the night. Sisyphus, thus, teaches the higher fidelity that negates the gods and raises rocks. The struggle itself towards the heights is enough to fill a man's heart. Camus writes "One must imagine Sisyphus is happy" (111). Camus dismisses the nihilistic view and announces his intent to prove the value of a life that has no meaning beyond itself. The absurd hero like Sisyphus, is always passionately wedded to life. He is the enemy of death. He is not without hope in life itself. He is not without faith in the reality of his experience within the prison walls, nor he is without joy. Life offers him in exhaustible possibilities, which, within the limits of his mortality, he is free to accept.

Suicide, according to Camus, is not a solution to the tension between life and death. To commit suicide for Camus is to admit tacitly that death does have a meaning. But in human term death cannot have a meaning. Our only certainty is our life. Logically, it is precisely because our life has no meaning beyond itself that we must violently reject any thought of coming to terms with death. Revolt against death is the only possible human attitude. As humanist, Camus put all his strength into: going beyond the point at which humanism is supposed to break down into despair, as Raymond Williams quotes Camus: "Real despair means death, the grave on the abyss.

If despair prompts speech or reasoning and above all if it results in writing fraternity is established, natural objects are justified, love is born" (176).

Camus' Sisyphus, who conquers an unintelligible and cruel fate by consciously scorning it, reinstates the dignity of suffering mankind by assuming an attitude which is both absurd and heroic. Sisyphus teaches us that superior form of loyalty that negates the gods and lifts rocks. Sisyphus' greatness as well as his happiness comes from the fact that he cannot allow the rock to lie at the bottom of the slope. Sisyphus is now a moral hero, a stoic who is convinced that in spite of the gods, man's dignity requires him to struggle towards the summit. Sisyphus, a metaphor of modern man's condition, corresponds to the general climate of Camus' thought that life is infinitely valuable to the individual. Camus has provided his Sisyphus with the unequivocal strength to stand alone a rock among rocks, yet stronger than his environment and distinguished from it by clarity of his mind. Neither anguish nor ambiguity is allowed to enter his soul. Camus concludes:

If his myth is tragic, that is because it's hero is conscious Sisyphus, proletarian of the gods, powerless and rebellious, knows the whole extent of his wretched condition; it is what he thinks of during his descent. The lucidity that was to constitute his torture at the same time crowns his victory. There is no fate that cannot be surmounted by Scorn. (109)

Analyzing the above mentioned leading existentialists, we come to the conclusion that they share the common views to maintain our existence. The common elements found in existential philosophy are existence, alienation, freedom of choice, individuality, humanism, absurdity, boredom or anxiety, identify and protest.

III. Constitutive Use of Anxiety in Albee's *The Play About The Baby*

In the play *The Play About the Baby*, Edward Albee tries to explore the existential consciousness of his characters through the excessive use of anxiety. Since the pain, torture and anxiety help characters to realise their existence, their use is highly constitutive. The play takes its characters and setting from the day to day world. The characters and setting of the play focus on the human anxiety, pain, torture and sufferings.

An allegory about the loss of innocence, the play pits an older couple here called simply Man and Woman against a younger one. Girl and Boy parent their first child in the play's opening moments. Girl very noisily gives birth just offstage, returning seconds later completely slim and nursing her infant enjoying happiness with her man-child husband. Right there onstage, Boy takes his own turn at her breast. And later, he chases her in a childish game fueled by lust.

Man and Woman arrive to offend them psychologically, though in a highly entertaining way. Unlike Boy and Girl, Man and Woman speak directly to the audience, engaging us, soliciting responses and a kind of complicity in the worldly wise idea that they are just, after all, going to show these kids how life inevitably wounds everyone.

The sudden entry of other characters, Man and Woman, make the play more weighty. Man comes in the stage with one saying, "If you have no wounds, how can you know if you're alive? If you have no scars, how do you know who you are?" (61). Woman appears as a supporting character to Man in the play. These two characters talk with Boy and Girl, along with the audience. Girl was already shocked by the behaviour of Gypsies while she was in hospital. She complains Boy about the surprising behaviour of Man and Woman. Man argues in the support of Gypsies. At

the end, Man declares that he and Woman have come there to take their newly born baby. When the Girl does not find the baby in the feeding and sleeping place, automatically, she enters the stage with loud cries. This incident takes the play in climax.

Boy and Girl beg the baby with Man and Woman. They start to give pain and torture again and again to younger couple Boy and Girl in order to create anxiety and obstacles in their existence. Man repeats the same dialogue again and again that one should have broken heart, scars and wounds too in order to understand the real existence of life. Younger couple is much more haunted by this act. While the younger couple pleads for the return of their child, the older couple taunts them with the word games, false memories and similar challenge that hinder the younger couple's ability to prove who they are and the reality of their (younger couples) child.

The play ends with them agreeing possibly under emotional duress that there is no baby. However, at the very end of the play, Boy and Girl pretend to hear the noise of the baby.

From this, *The Play About the Baby* is an absurdist black comedy-reminiscent of burlesque in its' high spirits and banter-that grapples with such issues as reality and the games we play to defit it, the ambiguity of existence and the agonizing bonds between parents and children.

Being an absurd play it lacks good setting. The play has outlandish setting where character in use to talk with audience too. In the play, the characters perform their role in the stage. In the stage, two chairs identically placed not far from centre slightly diagonally toward one another. There is a walking space between them. The stage has nice light with neutral background. This is t he exact setting of the play where four characters Man, Woman, Boy and Girl perform their role very nicely.

In the play, Man, Woman, Boy and Girl are the major characters. The dramatist is very smart to convey the real story of all type men, all type of women, all type boys and girls from single play. Thus, he has given the names like Man, Woman, Boy and Girl to his characters. The dramatist does not want to take the story of the play from particular part of the world but wants his play to be the representative of this present world. As a whole, he wants to share scars and wounds of the characters to whole world's audience.

In the play, Albee brings the characters who are suffering in this present world. To show this suffering, he gives them pain and agony. The dramatist has played the politics of anxiety on characters. For example, Boy and Girl suffer by the loss of the baby. Thus, here, the dramatist shows the ruined life of characters to highlight the existential angst of human beings.

Creating unexpected problem, that is, loss of baby the dramatist becomes very smart to take out the present burning issue. He also tries to depict the whole world how this world's human beings are facing the real existence of life. Through the mouth piece character Man, the dramatist already claims that one (human) should have tragedy or should bear anxieties. This play focuses on the meaninglessness and absurdity of life.

Mostly existentialists use this term 'absurdity' in relation to the existence of life. Accordingly, our existence is absurd. The life does not have meaning really what we think it as but life has meaning in this meaninglessness. In an essay of Kafka, Ionesco defined his understanding of the term, "Absurd is that which is devoid of purpose ... cut off from his religious, metaphysical and transcendental roots, man is lost, all his actions become senseless, absurd useless" (23). In gist, in absurd play each dramatist presents a critique of modern society by showing the total collapse of

communication. The technique used is that of evolving a theme about communication by presenting a series of seemingly disjointed speeches. The accumulative effect of these speeches is a devastating commentary on the failure of communication in modern society. In the same manner, we can feel the absurdity in the present play, *The Play About The Baby* in some contexts.

In the play, when Girl re-enters from left, already feeding the baby; she sits again, chair right. Here, Girl and Boy talk each other but they are not concentrate each other's saying.

Girl. Very hungry.

Boy. I'll want some remember.

Girl. (Slightly ironic) Line up!

Boy. ((Matter-of-fall) I'd come from the Gym and I was pumped.

Girl. (Look down) V ... e ... r ... y hungry. (9)

These above dialogues create the failure of communication among the characters. Girl does not join with Boy's words and Boy also does the same.

In another incident of the play, Man one-sidedly speaks his dialogues and exits from the stage. He speaks "(Out smile) Hello there ! (Gestures off left). Boy, girl? Yes? [...] Do you follow? Yes? No? Good. (Shrugs) whichever. (Begins to exist) woman" (13-15). Man comes and speaks in the stage as like he is talking with somebody. But, Girl and Boy near him are not concentrating on his dialogue. This hints the failure of communication in the play. In the same manner, Man is conveying one message to Boy and Girl "If you have no wounds, how do you know who you are?" (61). But they do not take it serious. This also forecast that the text has failure of communication among characters.

According to Camus, human reason cannot comprehend the universe properly. He further says, "man tries to get something which is irrational so, there is clash between human need and the unreasonable science of the world (reason) which gives birth to the absurdity" (25). This situation can be hinted in the play. The two main characters of the play Boy and Girl, most of the times indulge in the sexual activities. Sexual desire is one of the basic human need. Here, even these characters are not worried about their existence of life. The following dialogues help to understand this situation:

Boy. I like being on you.

Girl. (Nice) I've noticed.

Boy. I like being on you. (Quickly) you've noticed; yes, I know.

Girl. Yes.

Boy. I like "sleeping with you".

Girl. Yes.

Boy. (A smile) I like sleeping in you.

Girl. Yes. (24)

This conversation proves that Boy and Girl are not serious on their duties. They indulge in the sexual activities. As above mentioned, this type of irrational activities leads to the absurdity.

Absurd plays show the audience with the picture of disordered world that has lost its meaning and purpose. This type of absurd world can be seen in the present play, especially when the madness has been depicted. There is no any mutual co-operation between four characters. Boy and Girl are talking about unnecessary things. Man and Woman become mad on conveying their one advice - one should have broken heart then only one can understand the existence of life. They repeat the same

until the play's end. This reminds us of Albert Camus's absurd hero Sisyphus who repeats the same task over and over again. Sudden loss of baby makes their (Boy and Girl) world disordered and disturbed. There is no right to steal newly born baby by any one but one of the character proudly announces this work.

Boy. (Still level, in harder) why are you here ? What do you want ?

Man. (Cheerless smile) What do we want. Well, it's really very simple.

We've come to take the baby.

Boy. What do you mean! ?

Man. (Flat) we've come to take the baby.

(Shorter Silence) (47)

Without any hesitation he declares to steal the baby. No one has right to make obstacle on anyone's world. It indicates that the play's world is disordered and undisciplined world.

Loss of faith is another characteristics of the absurdity. In the play, we can feel the loss of faith in every moment of the development of the play. Older couple is not faithful to younger one and younger also not faithful to older. As the appearance of Man and Woman creates a great shock to Girl, she asks, "Who is that man ! Why are there so many strange people around here ?" (36). Even the audience are shocked when Man declares that he and woman have come there to steal baby. So, the loss of faith in each other creates absurdity in the play.

At the end of the play, Man and Woman convinces that younger couple did not have baby before. And at last they accept this situation. This clearly hints that it is meaninglessness to lament over the baby. This is depicted like this:

Man. Tell someone: you have a baby ?

Girl. (Long pause; finally, rather shy) No; I don't think, so.

Boy. But ... ?

Girl. (To Boy; begging) No; no; we don't have one; we don't have a baby. (Varying intensities and tempi) please, please, no baby, I can't ...

Boy. (Rage) I was with you when it was born !

Girl. (Flat) No. (91)

At last, older couple succeeds in its mission. They convince Girl, the one who delivered the baby, that she didn't have baby before. Absurdity becomes rampant when the parents are forcefully convinced to believe that they had not begotten a child. But according to Boy and Girl the crying of baby is again heard in stage. This also helps to argue that the play is very much indulged in absurdity or meaninglessness.

In the same manner, human beings do not have choices, they are condemned to choose without choice. They have unlimited desires but have limited choices. They must accept whatever is at hand Human desires always contradict with available choices and freedom. No freedom can grant the full fledged of human choice. Human beings are forced to follow the ongoing natural process, the social development and its alienation in this world. Man is the being thrown into this unknown and alien world without choices. The play shows the plight of human being in the hands of time and situation. The characters do not have any choice but have to contend with their provisions. Though they are free to choose, they do not have choices. Their freedom is narrowed in the realm of limited choice.

The dramatist has, from the beginning, constrained the characters by responsibilities and duties which automatically limit the choices and absolute freedom. The two main characters Boy and Girl are forced to struggle in that limited freedom and choices. At the beginning of the drama, younger couple delivers the baby

and taking responsibility in it's (baby's) caring. But when they try to engage in romance, the crying of baby awakens them in their duties:

Girl. As I remember.

Boy. I broke my arm before I knew you. Did you know that ?

Girl. Not that I remember.

Boy. Yes. Well, I did (Sound : Cry of baby offstage left)

Girl. (Rises) Feeding time

Boy. In here.

Girl. All right (Exists left, behind Boy). (8)

Younger couple's freedom and choices are restricted in the name of duties and responsibilities. They can't enjoy the full fledged freedom.

Man and Woman frequently intervene the freedom of younger couple. First they interfere in their talks and at last by stealing their baby. No one has right to interfere in anyone's world. But due to the cruel nature of some people, some others have to live in such traumatic situation. Not only has old couple given physical torture but it has also given mental torture to younger couple. The older couple taunt them with word games, false memories and similar challenges that hinder the younger couple's ability to prove who they are and the reality of their child. They force to make younger couple on acceptance of no any baby before.

Boy. Yes.

Man. No.

Girl. No?

Boy. No.

Woman. No.

Man. No.

Girl. No.

Boy. (Pause) No. (93)

Boy is forced to accept 'No' baby before but Girl to whom already convinced and persuaded by older couple with such bad word games of mental torture.

The choices of the human beings are limited. We are forced to choose because we are endowed with no options but only one. In spite of our freedom, we are given only option. Freedom, thus, is meaninglessness and absurd in such human condition; our predicament is to be condemned, dominated, tortured and subdued in the hands of unseen, unknown and invisible powers. Because of these human predicament, the characters of *The Play About The Baby* suffer with various types of anxieties. Their predicament thus paves the way for existential consciousness with 'no choice'.

Anxiety is the pain and agony. Anxiety leads life in tragedy. Therefore, the term 'anxiety' denotes not the positive connotation but negative. There are various types of anxieties, some are physical, some are mental, etc. However, the dramatist of the present play, *The Play About The Baby*, Edward Albee has politicised anxiety to explore the existential consciousness in the play. He has given much anxiety to his characters to make them conscious about the existence of life.

In the play, the existential anxiety can be hinted from the beginning. When Girl delivers the baby, she and her husband, Boy start to talk about pain. The pain of Girl makes Boy think his traumatic history. This means Boy consciously starts to express his own painful history.

Boy. (Turns to her) Did it hurt a lot ?

Girl. (Touches her dress at the knee) They say you can't remember pain.

Boy. Aha.

Girl. (pause) Yes; yes, it did.

Boy. You can, then.

Girl. As I remember.

Boy. I broke my arm before. I knew you. Did you know that. (7-8)

The pang of childbirth makes him think of the historical incidents. The baby itself is the symbol of pain for them because they (Boy and Girl) were living happily before but now they have to do and think many more things for baby. Here, the dramatist forces Boy to think the anxiety or pain of delivering a child comparing Boy's own broken arm before.

In another incident, anxiety has been politicised very interestingly.

From above, we come to know that baby itself is torture or anxiety for those younger couple, Boy and Girl. When they bear the baby they start to talk about the strange group of people called "Gypsies". Here, Girl narrates that, when she has delivered the baby in hospital, she is very much shocked by the nature of such people. There is rumour that Gypsy would steal baby. From this what we can understand that Boy and Girl are very much conscious about sustainable existence of life. They want to make their future life comfortable. They want to clarify whether such people are really thief or not. The following illustration helps to know more about this:

Boy. You bet your life saving it is. So, you don't take the baby to Gypsies.

Girl. They'd steal it.

[...]

Man. (Pops in) It you're not careful you're going to have the society for the prevention of cruelty to Gypsies after you. (Exits abruptly)

Boy. (To where he was; non plussed) why ? What would I ?

Girl. Who is that man ! why are there so many stranger people around here ? (35-36)

As the Boy and Girl talk about the strange people like Gypsies, Man enters and supports Gypsies who are badly treated by society just like them (Boy and Girl).

Again, when Girl sees Man, a strange person, she is very worried because she thinks that Man like person might be Gypsy and might steal the baby.

The main problem or existential anxiety of the play is loss of baby. Man and Woman, at once, proclaim that they have come there to steal baby. And Girl also does not find the baby in the usual place. She and Boy both are worried. They realise what the life is. With man, the mouthpiece character, dramatist always involves in this case. He is always saying in every mode and scenes of the drama "if you don't have the wound of broken heart, how can you know you're alive?" Here, the main focus of the dramatist is to aware the characters about the existence of life through the tragedy of life.

Human plays double role in the same stage. When he is pained by anxiety he would come in his surface. He tries to clarify his existence. When Man declares that he has come there to take baby and starts to tease them (younger couple), Girl begs for the child but Boy uses obscene language.

Man. (Demonstrates) We've come to take it.

Boy. I don't....

Man. (Very explicit; impatient) Away; away.

Girl. (Re- enters from left; hysterical) WHERE'S THE BABY ?? !!

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH THE BABY ???! (Silence)

Man. What baby ? (silence)

Woman. Yes; what baby ?

Man. (Out, then in) There we are ! Here we go /

Girl. WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH MY BABY ???!

Boy. (Gathering energy; clearly about to lunge) Look, you motherfucker, what have you done to....

Man. (A stopping hand up; very loud) STOP!! (BOY freeze). (53-54)

Obscenity is another part of anxiety. When human is hurt by somebody or when he gets anxiety from something, he forgets his ordered and disciplined world and try to normalise his anxiety with obscenity behaviours. Here also, Boy shows such behaviour with Man.

Again, the same case can be observed in the play in another incidents. When someone gets anxiety and pain, then he again starts to tell his whole history and biography. Telling history to someone means expressing his existence. In the same way Boy is expressing his every thing related with him to another character Man.

Man. (sighs) Time; time, the great leveller. (To Boy; sweet) Tell me about you, tell us your history (whispered aside; out) Exposition

Boy. (Confused) Who ? me ?

[...]

Man : Boy

Boy. Boy-yes?-boy, and I'm married to her, the light of my life.

Woman : Your destination.

Boy. (Confused) What ?

Woman. (Cheerful) your destination! Don't you remember ?

Man. (To Boy) I thought it was you and me: that time you touched me.... (Gestures) here, and put your to my.

Boy. (Loud enough to lover) THE LIGHT OF MY LIFE. (66-67)

This above conversation illustrates that, if some one is pained by the anxiety one expresses the life history. Boy tries to express his life history and even his destination. This is the result of loss of baby. No one would be ready to accept his existence without anxiety. Here, the dramatist uses the character Man to awaken Boy in his real existence with the weapons of existential anxiety. When Boy does not want to tell his reality of life, Man uses the weapon of baby. He even tells Man about the minute things of Girls. Man tries to know all the things about them and makes them conscious of existence.

Woman. (Attorney; to Girl) Did you not take pregnancy to ... to get him for yourself ?

Girl. No! No! I didn't ! we married and then I got pregnant !

Woman. (Out) They all say that.

Boy. (Quietly) she was a virgin.

Man. (Tiny Pause; to Boy) when ?

Boy. When I married her; when I met her. (69)

In the same way older couple is interviewing younger and tries to know/grasp all things about them. They try to know all life history and younger couple go on telling about their life like an open book.

Girl is shocked by the nature of Boy when Woman and Man claim that Boy was lover of Woman before. From this what we can say that when woman get hurt from some-one, she would start to doubt on her faithful person. Here, without any evidence, Girl start to doubt on her husband, Boy. This is the real picture of our present world. No women wants to divide her husband to other and they want his (Husband's) good history also.

Man. You remember. He was only one of your lover, no?

Woman. Hm? oh! oh!, right. (To Boy) you were a splendid lover, though... slow, patient, thoughtful, but always in command, and driving.

Girl. (To Boy; still weeping) you know her !

Boy. (Pounding his fists on his knee) I don't ! I do not know her ! (74-75)

Here, the dramatist tries to depict the real picture of modern absurd world through the medium of torture or anxiety. When Girl is tortured by the loss of baby she even doubts her husband Boy who is always with her in every moment. Girl is not even faithful to her husband.

After that the older couple start to taunt them with word games like they didn't have baby before. They start to give more anxiety and torture through the false memories, word games and false history. They at last become success in their mission that one should have broken heart. Boy and Girl restlessly accept that motto of existence. The younger couple are conscious of life-existence by anxiety of loss of baby. At last, they claim that they are hearing the crying of baby. This proves they accept this absurd and meaninglessness of existence of life.

Boy. (More a wish than any thing) I hear it crying !

Girl. (Please) No; no, you don't.

Boy. (Defeat) No baby.

Girl. (Begging) No. may be later ? When we're older... when we can take... terrible thing happening? Not now.

Boy. (Pause) I hear it crying.

Girl. (Pause; same tone as Boy) I hear it too. I hear it crying too. (lights fade) (94)

The loss of baby is the existential anxiety for the younger couple and so called crying of baby is the existential consciousness come in their mind.

Thus, the existence of a modern man is largely determined by existential anxiety. Tragedy is one part of life that gives consciousness. When there is consciousness one is aware of his/her existence . Here, Albee has demonstrated the meaninglessness and absurdity in the existence of life through the constitutive use of anxiety.

IV. Conclusion

Existential anxiety in Albee's *The Play About the Baby* is grounded on mainly two characters' escape from reality and their lack of performances in their respective duties. Albee tries to explore the existential consciousness through excessive use of anxiety given to the characters. In the play, the old couple has made young couple conscious of its existence, stealing their newly born baby. Mostly, the two characters run away from the reality of broken heart and tragic part of life. One should have broken heart and no one can exist without broken heart is the main spirit of the play.

The play is the depiction of common man activities of this post modern society. It is an attempt to search for existence by the help of anxiety even in small and trivial thing; we common folks perform each day. Albee aims to rejuvenate the essence of living and life, by presenting the plot from supposing insignificant human view point through the harsh pains and anxieties.

The play tries to show no any person is faithful in this world. There is failure of communication in the human beings. In the same manner, human beings have freedom of choice. They are free to do whatever they like and free to comprehend their desires. But unfortunately, the choices are few; we are left with limited or in a sense, with no options. This is the human predicament and the existence of every human beings. Our only choices makes our lives meaningless and absurd, though we are condemned to exist, we must in this alien and absurd world controlled by the unseen and unavoidable powers.

However, in the play also two characters Boy and Girl are trapped in this alienated world and become victim of this modern society. The dramantist use Man and Woman as weapon to interfere in their freedom. These people interfere in their beautiful world where Girl and Boy have to become puppets in their hands. Boy and

Girls have no choices in their hands. Even they are unable to use their own right to use in full fledged democracy. Here, Albee is very successful to show the failure of communication among these four characters.

At last, in the play, anxiety, angst pain and agony are the main weapons used by the dramatist to awaken the human beings in their absurd world. Use of anxiety that means bearing and loss of baby makes conscious on Boy and Girl about the existence of life. Without anxiety no one has a tragic or miserable life and without tragedy and pitiable life no one comes in his existence. This is the real life of real existence. One must bear anxiety to awaken the existence of life. In this case, with help of excessive use of anxiety which is highly constitutive, the dramatist is very successful to make conscious of existence.

Works Cited

- Albee, Edward. *The Play About the Baby*. Woodstock and New York: The Overlook Press, 2003.
- Alder, Romans P. *Critical Survey of Drama*. New York: Salem Press, 2003.
- Blackburn, Simon. *Dictionary of Philosophy*. New Delhi: Oxford Up, 1994.
- Camus, Albert. "Absurd Freedom." *Background to Modern Tradition*. Ed. Richard Ellmann and Charles Feidelson, New York: Oxford, 1965. 845-50
- "The Myth of Sisyphus." *Essays on the Creation of Knowledge*. Ed. Shreedhar P. Lohani, Rameshwar P. Adhikari and Abhi N. Subedi. Kathmandu Ratna Pustak, 1996. 66-70.
- Dauth, Brian C. "Albee's Vaudeville." *The New York Times*. 16 March 2003: 18.
- Doren, Charles Van. *A History of Knowledge*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1992.
- Drukman, Steven. "Won't You come home, Edward Albee." *American Theatre* 15.10 (Dec. 1998): 16-20.
- Esslin, Martin. *The Theatre of the Absurd*. London: Penguin Books, 1962.
- Gaardner, Jostein. *Sophie's World*. New York: Berkely Books, 1996.
- Heidegger, Martin. "What is Metaphysic ?" *Critical Theory Since 1965*. Ed. Hazard Adams and Leavy Searle. Tallahassee: Florida Steet, Up, 1986. 543-58.
- *The Essence of Truth*. Trans. Ted Sadler. New York: Continuum, 2002.
- Kirkegard, Soren. "The Individual and the Crowd." *The Modern Tradition: Background of Literature*. Ed. Ellmann and Feidelson. New York: Oxford Up, 1965. 809-11.
- "Choice." *The Modern Tradition: Background of Modern Literature*. Ed. Ellmann and Feidelson. New York: Oxford Up, 1965. 824-34.
- Kelleway, Kate. "Baby Talk." *New Statesman*. 127.4402 (Nov 1998): 41-42.

Mautner, Thomas. *A Dictionary of Philosophy*. Cowley: Blackwell, 1996.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. "The Use and Abuse of History". *Critical Theory since 1965*. Ed.

Hazard Adams and Leavy Searle. Tallahassee: Florida Street, Up, 1986. 150-

52.

Planck, Nina. "Too Young to Suffer ? Edward Albee latest play is dark and witty

story of innocence and life's painful scars." *Time International* (14 Sep. 1998):

62.

Ryan, John. "Existentialism." *Encyclopedia American*. 2nd ed. 1996. 639.

Sartre, Jean Paul. *Existentialism and Human Emotions*. Trans. Bernard Frenchman,

New York: Castle, 1948.

..... "Authenticity." *Background to Modern Tradition*. Ed. Charles Feidelson and

Richard Ellmann. New York: Up, 1965. 827-28.

Tarnas, Richard. *The Passion of Western Mind*. London: Cox and Wayman Ltd.,

1991.