

**TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY**

**Sense of Alienation in Goethe's *Elective Affinities***

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## Abstract

The main objective of the research is to explore the existential alienation of characters in Goethe's novel *Elective Affinities* from the perspective of existential philosophy. Characters in the novel make their own choices to create essence, which is a self-construct and has nothing to do in conformity with others. They try to evade compromise and contingency. Eduard, Charlotte, Captain and Otilie create their own world in their thought and remain committed to it. They live with other people but exist alone. They seek private truth and find it only in isolation from 'they'. Eduard compromises neither with Charlotte nor with Otilie. He tries his best to lead his life in romance but finally it proves to be merely sugar-coated romance because he can neither pass his life happily with Charlotte nor succeed in getting married with Otilie despite his all attempts and efforts. At the end, he not only loses Otilie but also his own life. His vigorous attempts to marry Otilie become like chasing wind as she commits suicide. Ultimately, after her suicide, Eduard finds nowhere to lean against. Therefore, he decides to be free from this existing hostile and demonic world. He takes suicide as his weapon to fight against the rude and chaotic world and therefore he commits suicide. Though the novel is a romantic text, it ends with the sheer alienation of characters. Death is the extreme form of human feelings and passions which results in the optimum sense of alienation of the characters in the entire novel *Elective Affinities*.

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## I. Introduction

Alienation occupies a significant place in the existential philosophy. The existentialists say that all of our personal human relations are poisoned by feeling of alienation. Alienation and hostility arise within a family, between parents and children, between the husband and wife. Alienation affects all social and work relations, and most cruelly alienation dominates the relationship of love. In the novel *Elective Affinities*, Charlotte seems to be spending her life in romance with Eduard. As soon as Captain came to their house, she shifted her love to Captain. Now, she can neither leave Eduard nor marry Captain. In such precarious situation, Charlotte feels more alienated which becomes us obvious as narrator narrates:

Charlotte was upset, hurt, aggrieved; she could not let go of the old, nor quite reject the new: but, decisive as she was, she at once called a halt to the work and gave herself time to think the matter over and came to her own conclusion. (144)

The alienation that exists in society reflects upon the alienation of individual human beings who look for their own desires in estrangement from the actual institutional workings of their society. They don't accept that their roles are system determined and system determining. And there is the alienation of those who do not identify with the institutions of their own society, who find the society empty and meaningless. Apart from my own conscious being, all else, they say, is otherness from which I am estranged.

Characters in the novel *Elective Affinities* are alienated. The major characters Eduard, Charlotte, Captain and Ottilie have their own individual perspectives to look at the world and value their 'self'. Eduard fantasizes to rise above the common herd of

society breaking his marital status with Charlotte and getting married with Otilie. Eduard never compromises with 'they' and even ventures to maintain his individuality by breaking down all the social set-up. Eduard is a passionate lover, loves Otilie deeply, indeed unconditionally, thus he becomes subservient to his passion. He lacks detachment and restraint. He neither can understand himself nor others, not even Otilie. Otilie's death is answer for erotic desire of Eduard. Eduard feels more alienated at the death of Otilie. On such condition, he finds this world uneven and hostile, he can not exist in such a disorder and cruel world. Therefore, to be free from this world, he chooses death as a proper means to accomplish his goal and finally commits suicide. Thus, he becomes able to meet his destiny in the company with death. "Great passions are a hopeless disease. What might, cure them is what really makes them dangerous" (274).

In the case of Otilie and Charlotte, as Eduard left home and went to the war to fight, they felt a strong sense of alienation in the core of their heart. Emphasizing her own alienation, Charlotte says: "women are fated to stand alone all their lives and act alone" (299). The complicated and compact case of them is well understood by Assistant and he says: "Consider a woman when she is in love or engaged to be married, or as a wife, house-wife, and mother, she is always isolated, always alone and wishes to be alone" (299).

Furthermore, even at the movement of love making and sexual intercourse Eduard and Charlotte are not solely united rather Eduard is thinking about Otilie and Charlotte is lost in the memory of Captain. Living and Sleeping together, they become alien and foreign to each other. Thus, sense of alienation strongly rules the depth of their heart regarding love and affection. They are frustrated and bored which led them towards alienation. Charlotte felt utter alienation on the sudden departure

of Eduard from her sleeping bed as they have spent night together talking and merry-making though the heart had no part in it:

They spent a part of night in all manner of talk and pleasantry which was the freer because, alas, the heart had no part in it. But when Eduard woke next morning in the arms of his wife the day seemed to look in upon him ominously, the sun, so it seemed to him, was illuminating a crime, he crept from her side, and she found herself alone, in the strangest way, when she awoke. (206)

Alienation is a choice. These characters choose to be alone. For them, only by serving one's own intentions, one can live intense life. Otilie follows her own inner calling and adopts death when she finds her 'being' at risk due to the burning erotic desire of Eduard. Eduard is true to his aspirations and dies for his own honor and glory. Both of them serve their private intentions. Because of all that, they become alien figures in the senseless and meaningless world. The world ever opposes them. When all the possibilities of choice to maintain their individuality close down, they repose to death. It is their choice and free will. So, death is a sheer alienation and a way of asserting freedom, individual choice and existence.

Eric and Mary Josephson define alienation in his book named *Man Alone: Alienation in Modern Society*: "Alienation is an individual feeling or state of dissociations from self, from the world at large" (13). Alienation as perceived by Eric and Josephson encompasses the three things: split between man's real "essence" and his actual "existence", meaning the self alienated man finds his actual existence not corresponding to his 'essence', conflict with others and with world at large. 'Essence' is a self-construct. It is not something in common with others. It is an individual choice. An individual finds 'others' in conflict with his 'essence'. He does not find his



individual identity in the crowd. He even finds the whole universe hostile to his aspiration. Thus, an individual is in conflict within himself, with the 'herd' and even with the world at large.

The novel *Elective Affinities* is especially suitable for the description of particular social problems, to depict the life of an individual who, inwardly isolated, is unable to find satisfaction in society. In the novel, the breakdown of married life is a symbol of the social institution of marriage itself and of contemporary society.

In Goethe's novels emphasis is, on the whole, laid on the reaction of the individual to the society. The novel shows us the complex vision of life. It illustrates nature, society religion, love, death and reality in different perspectives. The inner nature of man is described in terms of quality and development, and the course of natural change is depicted in terms of the process of the human personality. In *Elective Affinities* the hero is prepared to participate in the social life as long as he is happy; as soon as he despairs he is alienated from society. In the novel, there is no change in the social scene; close interchange between society and nature determines the structure and through its symbolism shows how profoundly society can affect personal life.

Eduard is existential hero who threatened society by breaking the marriage with Charlotte because marriage is the corner stone of culture and pinnacle of all society and civilization. The novel depicts that the force of love is absolute, and determines the fate of a human being.

According to Gwynn Nettler; "Alienation is a certain psychological state of a normal person, and an alienated person is one who has been estranged from, made unfriendly toward his society and the culture it carries" (672).

In *Elective Affinities*, the thought of death comes again and again, in accordance with the tragic spirit of the work, but a detached mode of narration prevails. In the novel, the main characters do not succeed in finding a satisfactory attitude to reality in their relation to one another. Goethe's view of the world is here more complex.

The novel supplies an answer to Romantic ethics by refuting the views of the Romantics on marriage and personality. The organization of *Elective Affinities* is much more complex. Goethe created a highly complex work of fiction, whose structure is akin to drama. The large number of incidents of details and of images which illustrate the development show the different states of mind of the protagonists and reveal how closely experiences and mutual relations are linked.

The novel takes place in a world of aristocrats and the characters as symbols revealing the shortcomings of the nobility. Eduard is undoubtedly a rich nobleman to whom life has not assigned to real activity and who does not know how to find one. Whatever he does, on his estate or in war, lacks a deeper meaning. His work in the garden and his music are the outcome of aesthetic playfulness. He finds the administration of his estate burdensome; so he welcomes the Captain from whom he expects advice and help. Yet he does not invite him primarily because he feels that the estate needs a manager, but rather because of his friendship for him, furthermore, though he does not dare to admit it to himself, he invites him because he is bored when alone on his estate with Charlotte.

Eduard is a representative figure: a nobleman who, in social questions, acts without deeper conventions, who enjoys a privileged social status without assuming its duties. When he is happy, he does not rebuff the begger as he did at an earlier stage when he was preoccupied, but gives him presents because he rejoices in his love

for Otilie, not from any real sympathy with him. As he treats him, so he treats himself. He goes to the war, not because this war appears to him a just cause or from any sense of loyalty, but merely to distract himself from his sadness.

Goethe's novels provide the profound predicament of modern age, namely, the problem of existential alienation of the individual. *Elective Affinities* deals with the existential problem of alienation. His protagonists carry with them sense of loneliness alienation that makes them an existential character. In the novel inner crisis like depression and despair is caused by alienation. Eduard enjoys the world of romantic idealism but ends with discovery of life consisting despair, pain, misery and agony. Through these characters the novelist presents the growth and maturity of individual making them realize the meaning of existence. So, existential alienation becomes the more dominant theme of the entire novel.

The novels of Goethe's are an exploration of individuals, their passion and emotions. Goethe has been able to portray the feeling of alienation of the character as they live in an incomplete, fragmentary and daemonic world.

His characters feel emotionally estranged from the family and environment. He sketches the basic human problems and the anguish of the lonely soul.

Such non-conformity to socio-cultural set-up of the person is alienation. Defining alienation, Murvay Lovin in *The Alienated Voter* writes: "The essential characteristic of the alienated man is his belief that he isn't able to fulfill what he believes his rightful role in society" (277). Because of the inability to fulfill one's rightful role in society, one loses his status in society, and he feels alienated. It is thanks to the individual losing the ground to maintain his dignity in the society.

Thus, Goethe's chief concern is human relationship. His issue is the existential predicament of the individuals projected through the problems of alienation. Though the characters are in company of other people but exist alone. They share the same milieu but lack the effective communication and harmonious existence.

Goethe's novel *Elective Affinities* is immensely dominated by existential problems and deals with existential themes. The major characters Eduard, Charlotte, Captain and Otilie are existential characters whose life is frequently haunted by sense of alienation, suffocation, anxiety, absurdity and meaninglessness, yet, they tried to lead romantic life. Ultimately, their attempts of spending life of integrity and unity turns to the absurd and futile and gravely become victim of utter alienation that caused them be frustrated, bored and feel extreme existential crisis. They are not determined by heredity, environment, or supreme force rather they act themselves. They make their own freedom of choice with responsibility. They act what they wanted to do or to be as Sartre says in *Existentialism and Human Emotions*: "Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself" (15). We find, major characters are suffering from feeling of anxiety, despair, loneliness, frustration, boredom and forlornness etc. Thus, Goethe presents daemonic and alien society in which characters tried hard to live happy and harmonious life but suffer a lot and became victim of utmost alienation and loneliness.

### **Literature Review**

The novel *Elective Affinities* has earned several interpretations and criticisms but many of them lack the complete understanding of the text. Goethe's novel is a complex and difficult novel. Therefore, any surface reading is not sufficient enough to see the compatibility of theme of alienation through existential perspective. Major characters Eduard, Charlotte, Captain and Otilie seem to enjoy the world of romantic

idealism but ends with discovery of life consisting despair, pain, misery, tension and alienation. Through these characters the novelist presents the growth and maturity of individual making them realize the meaning of existence. So, alienation becomes the more dominant theme of the entire novel. This thematic congruence is profound in the novel and I will probe into it. And this is of course not my first attempt to look critically into this novel. Many critics read this novel from their own perspectives and offered us several criticisms which are mentioned below:

Manguel writes:

*Elective Affinities* explores the dangerous but irresistible attractions that people, like chemical elements, hold for each other. The central characters, Eduard and Charlotte, are an aristocratic couple who, though they seem happily married, allow themselves to fall in love with other partners. (Eduard with his wife's niece, Ottilie, Charlotte with an old family friend known as the Captain). Like the aristocrats in La. Dispute, they assume that human relationship can be the object of experiments based on natural laws like those that govern science. (2)

Next Critic, John Ely explains this novel as a sexual and romantic text. He writes:

*Elective Affinities* for Johann Goethe meant a classical, mimetic balance between humanity and nature (as natural elements and rational compositions, natural affective gravities) and within human society (as romance or sex-friendship affects). (1)

In the same way, Deborah Young views this novel as a dramatic text. He writes:

"*Elective Affinities* contains more conventionally realistic acting than previous Taviani films, but theatrical gestures, like character abruptly throwing themselves at one

another's feet are unsettling" (2). He means to say that the novel is perfectly a romance and it provides romantic sense through dramatic performance.

Some critics and reviewers conceive the philosophic and moral flavour in the novel. Richard Block, another renowned critic writes, "The novel has to do with Goethe's ability to address and express a cultural philosophical concern in human living, namely the issue of self-consciousness" (4).

Fritman, JM says that *Elective Affinities* is a nostalgic novel. He writes:

Ricoeur fails to recognize that nostalgia possesses another, more radical and originary, sense. It is the weakness of nostalgia that makes possible the courage of the work of mourning. The work of mourning always is an exercise in nostalgia. There can be no question of arguing that nostalgia is weak only in appearance, and actually is strong.

Rather, nostalgia's weakness is its strength. (1)

Next critic, Tantillo views that "*Elective Affinities* demonstrates how instrumental Goethe was in trying to shape recaption of the novel, Otilie "Symbolized the victory of human free will over the passions and the lower realm of nature" (3).

One the line of Goethe's critics R.J. Hollingdale writes:

*Elective Affinities* reflects the conflict which Goethe felt between his high regard for the idea of marriage and his experience of spontaneous passion. Set in the German countryside of the early nineteenth century, the novel depicts the emotional turmoil into which Eduard and Charlotte are thrown by the introduction into their comfortably idle lives of two fresh faces. (4)

Other critic, Werner Schwan read this novel historically, regarding this novel he writes: "The novel as an 'ethical conception of the novel as a warning against the hazards of moral laxity and as a defense of the marriage bond on the one hand, and a metaphysical" (1).

Next Critic, K.W.F. Solger writes:

Goethe's novel *Elective Affinities* reflects tensions caused and problems raised by the end of the Reich and the pressures of foreign rule, by Napoleon's occupation and his code civil, by the internal struggles for power unleashed within and among the German particular states after 1806, and by memories, still recent enough, of the revolution in France. (4)

The existential alienation is well expressed in the text:

But in our case, Charlotte replied, 'no great prescience is needed to see how things will turn out, and this much, at the very least, and can be said here and now: that we are both too old to go wandering blindly where we either do not want to or ought not to go. We are our own responsibility, nobody else's; we must ourselves be friends and mentors to ourselves. Nobody is asking us to ruin our lives, nor to expose ourselves to censure and, very likely, ridicule. (228)

Here, Charlotte gives focus on individual choice, freedom and responsibility. We are what we do. There is no one to help us. We will be responsible to our life to make it good or bad. She is giving hints of possibility of utter alienation due to their own behaviours and activities.

Thus, several critics have tried to interpret this novel from different angles and perspectives. This novel has been analyzed from various points. But it is not complete yet. My attempt here is to see the existential alienation of its characters. These characters stand for the people of romantic period but they are completely isolated and alienated in various ways. I will make a detail study of this issue in the present research.

The aim of this thesis is to show existential alienation of characters of Goethe's novel *Elective Affinities* from the perspective of existential philosophy. The first chapter is Introduction in which thesis is stated and explained. The second chapter is Methodology in which analytical method is introduced and described. Existentialism is the basic approach by which the text is peered through. The third chapter is Textual Analysis in which the text is diagnosed critically. The fourth chapter is Conclusion in which thesis is restated and some major sub-ideas are highlighted.



## II. Alienation

Alienation is that state of awareness in which things become foreign or strange to consciousness. Feelings range from indifference and unconcern to a version and disgust toward objects, whereas before there may have been love, attraction, friendship and excitement about these very objects. Alienation is characterized by qualities such as lack of the desire to identify and participate with the object of consciousness; lack of commitment to the goals within social groupings; and detached viewpoint with no inclination for involvement. The source of alienation is found in living in a depersonalized social environment; an inability to personalize, or humanize, one's social and physical surroundings; a sense of helplessness and powerlessness about influencing bureaucratic, social, and physical events; the inability to make sense of one's existence; the feeling that one is alone in the world, without guidance, goals, or values that can produce direction and certainty in life; that one's existence has been thrust upon one without intent or choice; that the universe is ultimately indifferent to one's values, aims, wishes and desires. Thus, the term alienation has become immensely popular in the analysis contemporary life.

Despite its popularity in the analysis of contemporary life, the idea of alienation remains an ambiguous concept with elusive meanings, the following variants being most common: (1) powerlessness, the feeling that one's destiny is not under one's own control but is determined by external agents, fate, luck, or institutional arrangements; (2) Meaninglessness, referring either to the lack of comprehensibility or consistent meaning in any domain of action (such as world affairs or interpersonal relations) or to a generalized sense of purposelessness of life; (3) normlessness, the lack of commitment to shared social prescriptions of behaviour (hence widespread deviance, distrust, unrestrained individual competition, and the

like); (4) cultural estrangement, the sense of removal from the established values in society (as, for example, in the intellectual or student rebellions against conventional institutions); (5) social isolation, the sense of loneliness or exclusion in social relations (as, for example, among minority group members); and (6) self-estrangement, perhaps the most difficult to define and in a sense the master theme, the understanding that in one way or another the individual is out of touch with himself.

*(Encyclopedia Britannica 574)*

The term alienation has three broad concept-Marxian, Christian and Existential. The machine is an insuperable barrier between man and product in accordance to marxists. They believed that man is alienated from the products that he has produced due to the immense use of machine. The Christian believed that man is a sinner, therefore, man is alienated from the association to the God. Similarly, existentialist believed that burden of our individual experiences alienates man from his society and environments. He does not know how he can overcome the sense of apartness, and thus, unwillingly though he enters into his own shell, and creates a world within a world.

### **Causes of Alienation**

There are at least five causal theories concerning alienation: the economic, technological, sociological, philosophic-existential, and psychological. The economic theory is identified with Marx, for whom the epitome of evil was the property system and especially private ownership of the means of production. This economic root established the basis for the expropriation of the worker, both as a person and as a producer, and led inevitably to the alienation of man from man. It is an ironic fact of the concept's history, however, that the early philosophical Marx should be the one to whom we owe this account of alienation; in his later work (for instance, *Capital*) the

idea of alienation disappears, as such, to be replaced by the economist's detailed analysis of surplus value, exploitation, class relations, and the like. To what extent Marx, in fact, abandoned the idea of alienation, or simply transformed his interest in it, remains a debatable issue.

Those who emphasize technological sources or alienation (for example, philosophers Lewis Mumford in the U.S. or Jacques Ellul in France) are concerned not simply with the direct impact of automation but basically with the ascendance of the technological spirit. The argument is that man becomes alienated by being forced to adjust his life style to the machine.

The dominating sociological thesis today is that alienation is the middle term in a formulation that reads: the decline of the local community based on tradition and the corresponding emergence of a secular society based on large-scale and mass action leads to a sense of alienation (powerlessness, isolation, and so on), which in turn finds expression in a wide variety of disorders-including political apathy, intergroup hostility, and volatile social movements seeking direct influence on the political process. The inference that alienation has increased in the modern era is difficult to document and is probably based on a too romantic idea of the premodern community.

The philosophic-existential theories-either in the religious version associated with such men as Martin Buber and Paul Tillich or in the secular form of Sartre and Albert Camus-emphasize that alienation is inherent in the finite and isolated character of man's existence as a "stranger" in the world.

On the psychological side, two basic elements in Freudian theory combine to form an explanation of alienation: first, there is the principle of Oedipal conflict,

denoting a boy's unconscious hostility toward his father whom he feels to be a rival for the affections of his mother (or the analogous conflict involving a girl and her parents); second, there is the frustration inherent in civilized society (expressed most clearly in Freud's pessimistic *Civilization and its Discontents*). Both of these strands are incorporated, for example, in psychologist Kenneth Keniston's analysis of the "uncommitted" or culturally estranged college student, for whom there is an Oedipal drama in which the father is rejected for his inadequacy (his weak character and false values) and to whom the surrounding culture seems equally frustrating, fragmented, and inadequate. (*Encyclopedia Britannica* 575)

### **Historical Evolution of the Concept**

The roots of alienation can be found in the work of Plotinus and in the theology of St. Augustine and Martin Luther (expressed, for example, in the struggle to dissociate— or alienate—oneself from one's own imperfections by identifying with a transcendental perfect being). But it was Hegel who elaborated the concept of alienation philosophically for the first time. For Hegel, alienation was an ontological fact, rooted in the nature of man's existence in the world. There was an inherent dissociation between man as subject and man as object so that man's own creations— his art, language, science, and so forth stand outside him as alien objects— as objectifications of what is essential and prior, namely, mind and individual consciousness. In "History as the Self-Realization of Spirit", Hegel writes:

Spirit, on the contrary, may be as that which has its centre in itself. It has not a unity outside itself, but has already found it; it exists in and with itself. Matter has its essence out of itself. Spirit is self-contained existence (Bei-sich-selbst-seyn). Now this is freedom, exactly, for if I am dependent, my being is referred to something else which I am not, I

can't exist independently of something external. I am free, on the contrary, when my existence depends upon myself. This self-contained existence of spirit is none other than self-consciousness-consciousness of one's own being . . . . (457)

The view, rooted in German idealism and in a metaphysical perspective, became the basis for radical critique of society and its institutions by those philosophers who received Hegel's ideas and gave them a socialistic interpretation. Responding to the social crises of the 1804s, the German philosopher Ludwing Feuerbach and Marx in particular transformed alienation into a secular and materialistic idea. The evil that was alienation was no longer abstract and inescapable, for alienation was a product of specific forms of social organization.

For Feuerbach, the source of alienation lay in the institution of religion: the myths of divine power were merely ways in which man projected his own humanity outside himself, locating his own capacities and sensibilities elsewhere. Overcoming alienation required a humanistic religion of man not of God.

Karl Marx completely secularized the notion of alienation. For him, the alienation of man from his true being was grasped by neither Hegel's existential duality nor Feuerbach's religious projection. It was man's nature, Marx held, to realize himself in work, but the possibility of doing so was denied to him by the economic system. Thus, the key problem was alienated labour under capitalism: work was compelled rather than spontaneous and creative; workers had little control over the work process; the product of labour was expropriated by others to be used against the worker; and the worker himself became a commodity in the labour market. Alienation consisted of the fact that man did not fulfill his "species being" in work; the essence of man remained unrealized. According to Marx, man alienates from the products that

he produces himself. He also alienates himself from the very activity through which these products are produced from the natural world in which he lives, from other men, even he alienates from his own-consciousness. Marx further elaborates:

Man's species being, both nature and his spiritual being, into a means of his individual existence. It estranges man from his own body, as well as external nature and his spiritual essence, his human being. [. . .] An immediate consequence of the fact that man is estranged from the product of his labour, from his life activity, from his species being is the estrangement of man from man. When man confronts himself, he confronts the other man. What applies to a man's relation to his work, to the product of his labour and to himself, also holds of a man's relation to the other man, and to the other man's labour and object of labour. ("Alienation" 744)

The Marxian tradition, however, represents only one stream of thought concerning alienation. A second stream, considerably less sanguine about the prospects for de-alienation, is embodied in what has come to be called the theory of "mass society" observing the dislocations brought about by industrialization in the 19th and early 20th centuries, Emile Durkheim and Ferdinand Tonnies and eventually Max Weber and Georg Simmel as well-each, in his own way, lamented the passing of traditional society and the consequent loss of the sense of community. Modern man was isolated as he had never been before-anonymous and impersonal in an Urbanizing mass, uprooted from old values, yet without faith in the new rational and bureaucratic order. Perhaps the clearest expression of this theme is contained in Durkheim's notion of "anomie" (from Greek anomia, "lawlessness"), a social condition characterized by rampant individualism and the disintegration of binding social norms.

Whereas both Marx and the mass-society theorists secularized alienation by focusing on the mundane world of work and social organization, a third stream of influence retained the existential emphasis of Hegel. Soren Kierkegaard became severely critical of Hegel's philosophy and was not favourably impressed by it. Kierkegaard made a self-conscious revolt against abstract thought of Hegel. Kierkegaard says Hegel's whole philosophy is comic. Criticizing Hegel's whole philosophy, Kierkegaard writes:

What made Hegel comic was that this great philosopher had tried to capture all of reality in his system of thought and, in the process, had lost the most important element, namely, existence. The term existence was reserved for the individual human being. To exist, implies being a certain kind of individual, an individual who strives, who considers alternatives, who chooses, who decides, and who, above all, makes, a commitment. Virtually none of these acts were implied in Hegel's philosophy. (*A History of Philosophy* 450)

Furthermore, in describing the human existential condition Kierkegaard says:

There is a movement in one's life from one's essential to one's existential condition, a movement from essence to existence. The traditional explanation of this movement in theology is made in terms of the doctrine of sin, of the fall. (453)

Kierkegaard translated theological doctrine into a profound psychological analysis, in which he isolated people's anxiety over their own finitude as the cause of their estrangement or alienation from their essential being. Sensing their insecurity and finitude, people try to "do something" to overcome their finitude, and invariably what

they do only aggravates their problem by adding guilt and despair to their anxiety. According to Kierkegaard, existential condition is a consequence of its alienation from God. If, then, a person's actions drives him or her even further from God his or her alienation and despair are compounded.

Opposing Hegel's objective spirit and the objectivity of truth Kierkegaard gives focus on subjectivity. Kierkegaard asserted "Subjectivity is truth" or "Truth lies in subjectivity" (425). Kierkegaard found Hegel's system suffocating as it reduced the individual man to an insignificant item in the universe and left no real freedom for him. To Kierkegaard the individual person is quite unique in nature and cannot properly be known or understood in general terms. Secondly, the individual is never a finished product, but is always becoming or making himself. Highlighting the importance of subjective experience over objective knowledge Kierkegaard elaborates:

Being in its proper form is experienced in the case of the self-alone. It is then called existence. Birds and beats, chairs and tables, even mathematical objects have no doubt being in some sense, but they do not enjoy existence or being in its proper form which I experience in my own case. I do not experience myself as a thing having being (Seiende), but in experience myself I experience existence itself.

*(History of Philosophy Eastern and Western 428)*

Thus, Soren Kierkegaard, stressing the importance of subjective experience over object knowledge, held that attaining an adequate sense of self in a world dominated by purposelessness and despair was the central problem of alienation. The same theme, without the religious solution offered by Kierkegaard, continues into the recent



work of Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, and other existentialist philosophers. Hence, existentialists gave subjective and individual twist to the concept of alienation.

Alienation is existential loneliness. Alienation in this sense isn't only a feeling but, it is also an objective fact, a way of being. Alienation is a psychological feeling. It is an existential spirituality. Existentialist attempts to answer why we feel lonely, meaningless, anxious, guilty and insecure? Existentialism dealing with these psychological states asserts: Behind interpersonal loneliness, there is existential loneliness. Below incongruity and disharmony, there is existential absurdity. Behind the lack of meaning and order, there is existential meaninglessness. Underneath psychological depression, there is existential depression. Under ordinary losses and deprivations, there is existential void. Behind ordinary fears and worries, there is existential anxiety. Behind ordinary fragmentation, there is existential splitting. Below understandable pangs of conscience, there is existential guilt. Below ordinary insecurity, there is existential security. Behind ordinary disappointments, there is existential despair. Underlying the ordinary fears of death, there is ontological anxiety.

The symptoms of alienation occur in the physiological, the psychological-behavioural and the sociological realm-respectively.

As my thesis aims at probing the existential alienation of characters and tries to explore the causes behind their existential alienation. For that I will restore to the existentialism.

### **Existentialism**

Existentialism is the modern system of thought devoted to the interpretation of human existence. It takes human being as an isolated existent into an alien universe.

As a mode of thought, it has become prominent in the second half of twentieth century after the world wars. These wars shattered traditional values and gave rise to the feeling of despair and separation. This led to the idea that human beings have to create their own values in the world where the traditional values don't work. In the world devoid of any external significance, men are faced with the necessity of choice and know the continued burden of error. People are free to choose and they exist up to the movement they make choices. Thus, existentialism gives stress on concrete individual existence, freedom and choice. Regarding its subjectivity, individual freedom and choice, Ryan explains:

Hence, there is no single existentialist philosophy, and no single definition of the word can be given. However, it may be said that with the existentialist the problem 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. (*Encyclopedia Americana* 639)

Existentialism focuses on the lack meaning and purpose in life, and solitude of human existence. Thus, existentialism really concerns what authentic route people may take in the world where values and certainties is smashed into fragments, how people can cope with negative aspects of human existence like depression, frustration, pain, anxiety, alienation caused by modern society. Along with the consideration of the role of time and awareness of death, these questions seem to be the concern of existentialists. Thus, existential philosophy is concerned with the existence of the individual, with life and death.

There is no single definition of existentialism in for its principle theorists did not adhere to common body of doctrine. According to Sartre, existentialism has developed into two major trends: theistic and atheistic.

Jean-Paul Sartre divides existentialist thinkers into two groups– Theistic and Atheistic. The theistic or "Christian" group includes Martin Buber, Kierkegaard, Gabriel Marcel and Karl Jaspers. In the atheistic existentialist, Sartre group Martin Heidegger and the French existentialists, including himself. Obviously, Nietzsche is the forerunner and chief source of inspiration for them. The theistic existentialist believes in religious mysticism. The anxiety of modern man, they argue, can be entertained when one submits oneself to the will of God. The atheistic existentialists, on the other hand, repudiated the concept of God as an authentic shelter. They regard human beings as optimistically forlorn, free and support-less creature. In this helpless universe, the atheistic existentialists undertake to create a system in which the individual is paradoxically free and condemned to choose.

Atheistic existentialist negates the existence of God and his relation with people and the world. Along with German thinker, Martin Heidegger, Sartre categorizes himself to the group of atheistic. As Sartre says:

There are two kinds of existentialists, first those who are Christian, among whom I would include Jaspers and Gabriel Marcel, both catholic; and on the other hand the atheistic existentialists, among whom I class Heidegger, and then the French existentialists and myself. (*Existentialism and Human Emotion* 13)

Unlike the theistic existentialists this group maintains that human kind is God. Giving focus on subjectivity of Individual Sartre in his essay "Existence precedes Essence"

writes: "Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself" (827). All this function depends upon his choices.

Thus, though both of these groups focus on human existence but the relationship with 'God' differs. Unlike Kierkegaard and other theistic existentialist, Sartre insisted that existentialism (atheistic) begins with the treatment of an individual and not with God. Sartre's straightforward vision of existentialism lays emphasis upon the existence of individual. Atheists deny existence of God and stress man's absolute freedom to choose with resolving anguish and despair. Therefore, it is obvious that existentialism is opposite of idealism, abstract thinking and objectivity.

Existentialism got a distinct philosophical mode with the Danish Christian thinker Soren Kierkegaard who is the first thinker to call himself an existentialist. He, being a religious thinker is an existentialist because he accepts the absurdity of the world as fully as Sartre and Camus. His works were popularized by Martin Heidegger. Kierkegaard was the first to assert, "truth is subjectivity", that "all essential knowledge relates to existence, or only such knowledge as has an essential knowledge". Kierkegaard also emphasizes the absurdity, which is manifest in the doctrines of Christianity. Wiener in *Dictionary of the History of Ideas* writes: "The absurd is— that the eternal truth has come into being in time, that God has come into being, has been born, has grown up, and so forth, precisely like any other individual human being . . . ." (189).

He discussed man's essence with the existential predicament and limitation hope, despair, anxiety and so on. Kierkegaard takes human being as God's creature and offers many possibilities of being without reasons of heart or mind, Kierkegaard can get to God by a leap of faith: He believes only in existence of God, and not in any other doctrine. In *Sophie's World*, Kierkegaard says: "To think in existence means to

recognize that one is faced with personal choices. Human beings find themselves constantly in an existential situation" (450). This is Kierkegaard's central point that each person possesses an essential self which he or she should actualize.

Kierkegaard is critical of Hegel's philosophical system which analyzed being or existence in an abstract and impersonal way:

At least the prevailing view that Hegel's system not only gave us the highest knowledge of mankind but constituted the self-knowledge of God himself appeared ridiculous to him. Even the secrets of a finite personality, Kierkegaard found, could not be penetrated by any system of philosophy and it was nothing less than fantastic for a system to pretend that it could disclose the secrets of the infinite mind of God. He was against all closed systems and he particularly found Hegel's system suffocating as it reduced the individual man to an insignificant item in the universe and left no real freedom for him. To Kierkegaard the individual person is quite unique in nature and cannot properly be known or understood in general terms. Secondly, the individual is never a finished product, but is always becoming or making himself. It is always becoming or making himself. It is a question of continuous effort and it proceeds from his inner passion for freedom. (*History of philosophy Eastern and Western* 425)

Kierkegaard shows his opposition to Hegel also by his insistence on real possibles. According to Hegel, the world is the necessary unfoldment of the absolute idea and freedom is another name for rational necessity or necessity as seen or understood. According to Kierkegaard on the contrary there are real possibles, and it is left to our choice and decision to make them actual. For Kierkegaard, to exist is to be sinner.

Kierkegaard's basic idea is that personal existence cannot be comprehended in a system. He says: "Existence corresponds to the individual thing, and in such a system there is no room for the individual, only for abstract concepts. He believes that logical system is possible but an existential system is impossible" (Philip P Wiener 191). Kierkegaard has faith in God but he does not believe in any doctrines. Therefore, insisting the very notion in his essay "Faith by virtue of the Absurd" elaborates: "Christianity is, therefore, not a doctrine, but the fact that God has existed" (855).

According to Kierkegaard, real existence is possible only when one becomes aware of the paradoxical presence of God, Christianity and man, one in the consciousness and another in the external world.

While talking about human existence Kierkegaard frequently uses certain vocabulary such as "Subjectivity", "existence", "character", "pathos", "passion", "inwardness", "personality", "self" and "emotion" and so on.

Kierkegaard asserted "subjectivity is truth" or "Truth lies in subjectivity". To him God was infinite subjectivity. Man too has truth and becomes truth to the extent he becomes pure subjectivity or a spiritual person:

"Existence" (Existents) denotes the concreteness and individuality of a life lived in time and the requirements on personality that are implied by these features of selfhood, as contrasted with and contravened by the efforts of aesthetes and "pure thinkers" to conduct their lives abstractly *sub specie aeterni*, neglecting the particular self (one self !) to be formed in accordance with the noble concepts and chosen from among the interesting possibilities . . . . (*Kierkegaard* 178)

For Kierkegaard, educating the emotions is essential to "the inward transformation of the whole mind."

Kierkegaard says that "passions" is essential to the human being. "Essential passion" is required for all human beings. A passion integrates the personality:

Passion of the appropriate kind gives substance, shape, and direction to the self- in other words, its character. One might think that passion is "unruly", but unruly affections are not what Kierkegaard calls "passion". Being ethical or religious (a passion for the good and the true, "essential passion" produces and is produced by a strict sense of propriety . . . . (181)

Kierkegaard broadly talks about emotion and its nature. In human beings emotions are shaped (defined, given particular identity) by the "reason" that can be given for them – that is, by the thoughts in consideration of which the subject feels emotionally as he does. Some of these thoughts are false or unreasonable. Emotions are shaped by thoughts. Emotions are particular states based on one concern or another, mental states such as joy, hopefulness, anxiety, grief, gratitude, anger, pride, guilt, shame, nostalgia, and so on. These mental states vary with the circumstances, or more precisely, they vary with the subject's construal of her circumstances, how she "sees" them. But virtually, any concern (passion, interest, enthusiasm, attachment, involvement) can give rise to any or all of the whole range of emotions, depending on how the subject views the circumstances insofar as they impinge on the concern.

There are various nature of emotions. Some emotion are based on concern, some emotions are based on thought, some emotions are based on will, some emotions are based on perception etc.

We can note some of the facts about, the nature of emotions from Kierkegaard's writing. First, emotions are based on concerns (interests, passions, enthusiasms) that, as we have begun to see, are constitutive of character. This implies that emotions themselves (episodes of emotion) are, or can be, indicated or manifestations of characters. Second, emotions depend on thought. One implication of the thought dependency of emotions is that they may depend on spiritual outlook, thus there can be aesthetic emotions, ethical emotions, Christian emotions. Another implications of thought-dependency is that emotions are susceptible to the will; by choosing to think in one way rather than another about our situation, we can to some extent choose our emotions. However, since emotions are not identical with thoughts, there is no guarantee that by thinking in a certain way about our life or the world we can in any given instance make our emotions more virtuous. Yet another implication of emotions' dependency on thought is that they have a logic or "dialectic" the knowledge of which is a kind of moral wisdom. Kierkegaard's writing consist, to a large degree, in explorations of this emotion-dialectic, a "dialectic of existence" or dialectic of character. Since such exploration is a large and central task of "virtue ethic", Kierkegaard can and should count as an eminent virtue ethicist. Third, emotions are perceptual states of a certain sort and so give epistemic access to the moral and spiritual qualities of the situations they are about. Fourth, the moral and spiritual emotions have simulacra, which we might call "mere feelings", which can easily deceive a person into regarding himself as more virtuous than he is. And fifth, emotions can be dissociated from. That is, even though, in general, emotions are indices or manifestations of character, human beings have the capacity to stand back from certain emotions.



The concept of an emotion is central to Kierkegaard's thinking about subjectivity, inwardness, existence and character. Character is for Kierkegaard constituted in large part of dispositions to emotions-good character being dispositions to proper emotions, and bad character dispositions to improper ones. Human emotions incorporate thought as well as interest or concern for what the thought is about, thoughts that may be right or wrong. Thus, to exist well is to incorporate right thinking into a pathos-filled life.

Thus, the religious existentialists recommend us to go to the shelter of God or Transcendence to ensure the faithful existence.

Camus was a advocator of the absurdity of life. He compares the situation of human life to that of the mythical figure Sisyphus revealing that our life is a series of meaningless actions culminating in death, with no possibility of external justification. According to Camus, the human future is unique and dreadful. So, he evaluates modern man and his situation in his essay "Absurd Freedom" and writes:

A world that can be explained even with bad reasons is a familiar world. But, on the other hand, in a universe suddenly divested of illusions and lights, Man feels an alien, a stranger. His exile is without remedy since he is deprived of the memory of a lost home or the hope of a promised land. This divorce between man and his life, the actor and his setting, is properly the feeling of absurdity. (848)

Camus believes that human being is an isolated existent in an alien universe. The universe does not possess any inherent truth, value or meaning. "This universe", states Camus, "henceforth without a master seems to him neither sterile nor futile" (Ellmann and Fiedelson 852). Camus reached to the conclusion to declare the condition of man

absurd when he realized that the speculative system of past provided no reliable guidance for life. When the absurd man becomes aware of his futile living, he is naturally filled with anxiety and hopelessness. Then one realizes that forlornness, anguish despair are the characteristics of life. To get liberation from the anxiety of the absurd world if one chooses to submit oneself to the hand of God or death, for him, either of these choices is ridiculous. He believes that one needs to accept the challenge but not to commit suicide and bow before God.

Albert Camus gives emphasis upon Choices. Sisyphus is given the choices. He does not surrender to God and makes a choice. He believes that choice leads us to absurdity but joy comes out of that absurdity. As Ellmann and Fieldelson remarks, he sees man "arriving through admission of absurdity, at an affirmation of his own worth" (806). He focuses on struggle against absurdity for humanism and optimism. Human being should bear the torture heroically as king Sisyphus did in *The Myth of Sisyphus*. One should not feel hopeless rather should revolt against the absurdity by taking guidance from the absurdity itself and should make one's life meaningful out of these absurdities.

The technical formulation of the central doctrine of existentialism, that existence precedes essence was the work chiefly of Martin Heidegger. His ideas about being, existence and metaphysics have influenced all modern philosophy. For Heidegger, there is only basic question in philosophy: Seinsfrage or the question of being. Heidegger believes that we have been living in an incomprehensible, indifferent world. The universe is alien to us. For him, it is necessary to choose a goal, with the awareness of certainty of death and meaninglessness of one's life. For Heidegger, dread is concerned with death. It is dread that brings knowledge that life in its entirety is life-facing death. But, if we take the dread of death as an opportunity,

we construct our life unique, and our own. Heidegger developed a philosophy in which he argued that the nature of human existence involved active participation in the world. His philosophy focuses on existence than on essence, on Being than on beings, consequences of choices and mode of being. Heidegger's personal life was as an "active thinking being" which he loves for human beings. Heidegger's concern is with being in its unity and totality rather than with existence but his very concept about being gives the existentialist movement and important mode. Greeks and other philosophers too had talked about the meaning of being but Heidegger has attempted to find being not as a derivation from the individual existent but as being in itself, revealed in a context far more fundamental. He explained the distinction between beings and Being. "The oblivion of Being (individual) into the beings (group) has made us lost in the unreal existence" (Ellmann and Feidelson 889).

For Heidegger, being is not realized in normal situation. It does not occur all the time. It is realized in the state of boredom, anxiety or ill-at-ease. So, he writes in what is metaphysics? that:

It irrupts when one is bored, profound boredom drifting here and there in the abysses of our existence like a muffling fog, removes all things in man and oneself along with it into a remarkable indifference. This boredom reveals being as a whole. (4)

Dasein was analyzed by Heidegger especially in its temporal or historical character, for only there, he insisted, is its true nature to be found. Dasein, which is always My Dasein, an is indefinable and indescribable, must be radically distinguished from existent things, designated as "Vorhanden" or "at hand". The existent things always belong to a genus and have describable qualities. It is possible, therefore, to determine their essence. But with Dasein there is no essence. Dasein is being, or "being there". It

expresses only existence. It is not given; it is possibility. Man exists through his choices, and his being, therefore, is entirely indeterminate. Animals and inanimate things "are there", because they are localizations in space and time, but they do not "exist". Only man exists, because only man has a conscious awareness of his existence. To exist, to have an authentic being, is to reflect on oneself, to be concerned about oneself. True being is self being, involving not only consciousness, but responsibility and free decision as well.

The individual is aroused from inauthentic existence and achieves an awareness of his authentic existence in anguish and dread. Dread is an indefinite "feeling about", but not about any particular thing. It is not anything in the world, but the fact of being-in-the world that produces dread. Dread demands a choice between inauthentic impersonal existence and the genuine existence of self-determination; it demands of a man that he takes upon himself his own destiny. Here we are revealed as partial, relative, and finite—cast out upon a world in which all is worthless, homeless, hopeless, and forlorn beings that have no reason for being, whose existence is a "being for death".

For Heidegger, man is the being that knows he is going to die. He dies not only at the end of life, but every day of it. Death is certain, yet indefinite because it is inevitable it marks the contingency of life. Life is cast up between nothing and nothing. Death is its boundary and is its supreme possibility. To freely accept death, to live in its presence, and to acknowledge that for it there is no substitute and into it one must go alone, is to escape from all illusions and to achieve genuine dignity and authentic existence.

Dread is the experience of nothing. But nothing is not merely the negation of something. It can be experienced, and its experience is an experience of naked "is-

ness", being devoid of all meanings and free from all the disguises heaped upon it by the reason. In dread our Dasein projects into nothing, but it is only in the transcendence of Dasein as projected into nothing that pure being is revealed. As Heidegger writes in *The Essence of Truth*:

That is the mode of his existence [Existenz], the fundamental occurrence of his Dasein. Primordial unhiddenness is projective de-concealing as an occurrence happening 'in man', i.e. in his history. Truth is neither somewhere over man (as validity in itself), nor is it in man as a psychical subject, but man is 'in' the truth. Truth is something greater than man. The latter is in the truth only if, and only in so far as, he masters his nature, holds himself within the unhiddenness of beings, and comports himself to this unhiddenness. (55)

Levine in his essay "The Philosophical Quest" writes: "Man is possibility and his existence is in the choice of possibilities open to him. He keeps on choosing and gets new possibilities to face" (469). Heidegger insists that there is dread and anxiety in freedom that compels the human being to challenge death. Thus, he lays great emphasis on existence, choice, goal and boredom.

Sartre praises the freedom of individual human being to the largest extent. He lays emphasis upon the subjectivity of the individual. For him, the individual has a connection with others and when he becomes aware of himself that creates his whole being. Each individual has to make his own universe with a meaning of his own. S/he realizes the fact that there is no real meaning of anything in the world. Talking of this universe, Sartre claims, there is no reality at all but in action. The unused knowledge and potentialities do not count for the existentialist. Sartre is very much impressed by the contingency, irrationality and superfluity of all particular existences. Freedom

occupies a central place in Sartre's thought. He makes it one with our very being. As a conscious person I cannot exist shut up in being-in-itself, but in consciousness and in my acts I break away from this being, and exist as this break, as this transcendence or freedom. Freedom thus is not a doubtful achievement but a necessity for my being. "Man is condemned to be free", as Sartre says paradoxically. Giving focus on the very notion in *Existentialism and Human Emotions* Sartre writes:

Man is condemned to be free condemned, because he did not create himself, yet, in other respect is free; because, once thrown into the world, he is responsible for everything he does. The existentialist does not believe in the power of passion. He will never agree that a sweeping passion is a ravaging torrent which fatally leads man to certain acts and is therefore an excuse. He thinks that man is responsible for his passion. (23)

Man is the centre of his philosophy as Sartre says, "Man makes himself. He is not ready made at the start" (43). Sartre further says: "Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself" (15). Elaborating it he adds more and writes: "Man is nothing else than his plan; he exists only to the extent that he fulfills himself; he is therefore nothing else than the ensemble of his acts, nothing else than his life" (32).

Sartre believes that when people deliberately choose death that takes the form of suicide, they can assert their individuality. For the individuals death may appear with different meanings.

Death is ultimate isolation, an extreme form of human passion and emotions. It is the sheer 'alienation'. It is the manifestation of alienation.

To sum up, Sartrean existentialism gives focus on human subjectivity, individuality, freedom and responsibility etc.

In conclusion, Existentialism is a philosophical movement that deals with human freedom and tries to understand fundamentals of the human condition and its relation to the world around us. The world is in a state of chaos and disintegration due to the rise of Industrial Revolution, the race for armaments, large-scale manufacture of nuclear weapons and the greed of the political tycoons and satraps have shaken the very foundation of human existence. As civilization has advanced, culture has disgracefully declined. The traditional society is breaking up into fragments. Traditional values are in the melting pot. Man is on the edge of the abyss. Therefore, despair and sense of alienation are hunting the sensitive human soul. Man finds himself in a vale of tears an alien world, a darkling plain. Existentialism tries to explore the whole man. It disowns science and the myth of objective consciousness. Existentialism suggests that the healing of the malaise of agonizing alienation is possible through participation. Existentialism emphasizes human action, freedom and decision as fundamental to human existence. Existentialism is often associated with anxiety, dread, awareness of death etc. Existentialists view that society is corrupt, hostile and alien. The society hinders us to find out meaning in life. Therefore, through our own choice and action we have to find out meaning in this absurd and hostile universe. Thus, existentialists are obsessed with the meaning. They focus exclusively on the individual. Although life is very difficult and does not have any objective or universally known value, yet, existentialism endeavours to find happiness and meaning in the modern world which is characterized by alienation, isolation, loneliness, despair, agony, frustration, fear, inauthenticity and absurdity. Existentialism deals with man's disillusionment and despair. Existentialism says man's

life is full of fear, anxiety, despair and boredom which push back to human being in deep alienated situation in which s/he finds his/her self in helpless and hopeless situation. Hence, alienation occupies the immense place in Existentialism.

Existentialism broadly deals with the problem of alienation of mankind which are found reflected in the writing of the exponents of Existentialism. Hence, alienation is preponderant theme in Existential philosophy.



### III. Textual Analysis

#### Sugar-coated Romance

The novel *Elective Affinities* narrates the problem of existence of four characters Eduard, Charlotte, Captain and Ottilie. They are alienated and isolated in an alien, daemonic, hostile and absurd world from the beginning to the end of entire novel. They face the problems of uncertainty, unsettlement, meaninglessness, alienation, isolation and incommunication because of their failure to exist as valuable human life. They have freedom of choice with responsibilities. So, they make their own choice and suffer hard. They face existential crisis.

As the novel discloses, we see Eduard and Charlotte have regained their past lost love. As they were young, they were in love but could not get married with each other due to their family. They were married with others. But later Eduard's wife died and Charlotte's husband too died. Then, they felt utter alienation in this world. Eduard felt more alienated than Charlotte. He insisted Charlotte to get married with her so as to regain their lost love of their prime youth. As Charlotte gave way, they got marry with each other and it seems that they lead a happy married life. But in reality it was not what it seems to be. As they got married, they felt more alienated, especially Eduard. For sometime, they lead happy and harmonious life. But later, the novel shows that they suffered hard due to their individual turmoil and crisis. This becomes clear as the narrator narrates us the story between Eduard and Charlotte:

Room enough for the two of us, Charlotte replied. There is indeed, 'said Eduard, 'and for a third no doubt.' 'Why not?' Charlotte replied, 'and even for a fourth. For a larger company we shall make arrangements elsewhere'. 'Since we are here by ourselves', said Eduard,

'and won't be disturbed and our mood is so cheerful and tranquil, let me admit that for sometime no I have had something to say to you and have not been able to, although it is necessary that I should. (124)

These conversation between Eduard and Charlotte shows that they are unhappy and isolated human being who are alienated in this chaotic and disorder world where they are suffering from aloofness and estrangement. So they are going to make their own choice among many choices in this Godless world. As they make choice, they are condemned to be free as Sartre says in *Existentialism and Human Emotions*: "Man is condemned to be free" (23).

Eduard feels more alienated in company with Charlotte. Like Eduard, his friend Captain is also alienated which becomes us clear as Eduard says to Charlotte about Captain: "-all in all, my darling, his situation is an unhappy one and he feels it worse and worse, being so isolated" (125). It makes us clear that Captain is able, talented and knowledgable man but he does not find proper employment to support himself. It becomes more clear to us as Eduard says to Charlotte about his friend Captain. Eduard says: "You know how unhappy he, like many others, is placed now through no fault of his own. How painful it must be for a man of his knowledge, talents and abilities to find himself without proper employment and" . . . (124-25). It reveals that Captain is alienated from his environment. He is unemployed and jobless.

Eduard has a strong sense of loss. He feels alienated from others. This becomes us more obvious as Eduard says: "I wish to have him here with us" (125). This is his freedom of choice. He could invite him or not. But Eduard invites him which causes his whole destruction of his happy married life. Sartre highlighting the very notion writes:

Life has no meaning a priorie. Before you come alive, life is nothing: it's up to you to give it a meaning, and value is nothing else but the meaning that you choose. In that way, you see, there is a possibility of creating a human community. (49)

At the beginning, Charlotte disagrees with Eduard to invite Captain in their house. The arrival of Captain may not be good for them. Such view is well hinted in her dialogue with Eduard as she says:

Women, on the other hand, with an equal rightness attend more to the things that hang together in life, since a woman's fate and the fate of her family depend on such things hanging together and it is up to her to see to it that they do. Accordingly, let us look for a moment at our present and our past lives, and you will have to admit that inviting the Captain here does not wholly fit in with our intentions, our arrangements, and our plans. (126)

Charlotte knows it well that she is reunited with Eduard. To enjoy this reunification, she had sent her daughter and her niece Ottilie to the boarding school. So, she wants to be with Eduard alone. As Charlotte says: "Remember that our plans even concerning our recreation to some extent also depended on our being alone together" (128). Despite Charlotte's denial to invite Captain, Eduard invites him. It shows freedom is driving force to Eduard. He is egoist. It is clear to us as narrator narrates about Eduard: "Eduard was not in the habit of denying himself anything" (130). It highlights the subjectivity and individuality of Eduard. He does what he wills. Finally, Eduard decides to call Captain in their house.

Then after, Charlotte too makes her subjectivity and individuality clear as she utters, "I find myself in a situation similar to yours, and have already imposed upon myself just such a discipline as I expected you to impose upon yourself" (131).

Charlotte also conveys her decision of bringing her niece at their house who is suffering very much in the Boarding School. Eduard agrees with her opinion as he says, "You take Otilie, give me the Captain, and in God's name let us make a trial of it" (133).

Eduard and Charlotte appear to live happily together, but Eduard's inviting an old friend of his, the Captain, to stay with them interrupts their solitude. The Captain comes, although Charlotte is reluctant to have an outsider in their midst. Soon afterwards Otilie, Charlotte's foster-daughter, arrives to stay, as she is finding it difficult to fit into her Boarding-school. These two arrivals disturb the marital harmony of Eduard and Charlotte; Eduard and Otilie, and the Captain and Charlotte fall in love with one another, at first unconsciously, but slowly they become aware of their love. A count and a Baroness pay a visit. They are travelling together, but are unable to marry as their previous marriages cannot be dissolved. Their visit serves as a catalyst to make the two couples fully conscious of their feelings. Before admitting that he loves Otilie, however, Eduard succumbs to an impulse to spend a night with his wife, a deed which afterwards fills him with abhorrence, for imagination and physical reality had been at odds; he was thinking of Otilie when making love to his wife. Similarly, his wife was thinking of the Captain when in the arms of her husband:

By lamplight then, in a twilight, the heart's desires and the imagination at once asserted their rights over reality. Eduard held Otilie in his arm; now closer, now receding, the Captain hovered before Charlotte's soul;

and thus absent and present in the queerest fashion were intermingled, in excitement and delight. (206)

Eduard got married with Charlotte. But he was not happy with her because he quarrelled with her time and again. Being a son of wealthy parents he was egoist. He was not in the habit of denying himself anything. This becomes us clear as narrator narrates: "I am glad to hear it", said Eduard. "I see that in marriage it is necessary to that in marriage it is necessary to quarrel from time to time, for that way we learn something about one another" (131).

Eduard appears to be happy getting reunited with Charlotte but deep down in heart he is not happy with her. Therefore, he wants to call Captain in their house and also agrees to call Otilie. As we come to understand Eduard's views in these given lines:

Looking at it more closely, 'he went on, 'we are both behaving foolishly and irresponsibly, in leaving two exceptionally worthy people, for whom we feel such affection and concern, in unhappy and oppressive circumstances only in order not to expose ourselves to any danger. If this is not selfishness I do not know what is. You take Otilie, give me the Captain, and in God's name let us make a trial of it. (133)

Talking about their relationship, the narrator shares the existential alienation and isolation of characters through these lines:

This was a chance to discuss the estate and the things one might now, having had an overview, do with it more easily than when one's

experiments with Nature were isolated, haphazard, and on the basis of only casual impressions. (142)

Eduard is hunted with the sense of discontentment and hatred towards Charlotte. He expresses negative views towards her characters and behaviours. Eduard says to Captain about Charlotte: 'Admit it,' Said Eduard - 'You are not happy with the work. She has done" (142).

On the other, the arrival of Captain makes Charlottes feel more alienated in her surrounding. It is obvious to us as narrator narrates about Charlotte:

She was upset, hurt, aggrieved; she could not let go of the old, nor quite reject the new: but, decisive as she was, she at once called a halt to the work and gave herself time to think the matter over and come to her own conclusion. (144)

As we move in chapter four Eduard argues that business alienates people. He says to his friend:

And let one thing above all be agreed and instituted: keep everything which is really business separate from life. Business wants seriousness and a strict rule, but life capriciousness; in business we must be thoroughly consequential, but in our lives a certain inconsequentiality is often called for, is indeed delightful and heartening. If you are secure in the first you can move all the more freely in the second; whereas if you mix the two your freedom will carry your security away and end it. (148)

Though Eduard says he is not impressed with Otilie. But as days passed, he grew strong inclination towards Otilie as Charlotte was inclined towards Captain. As

Eduard rose an interest in Otilie, he doesn't like Charlitte's behaviours and activities any longer which becomes us clear that as he was reading, Charlotte came and began to read over his shoulder. He shows strong objection as if he feels bore in her presence in the following lines:

But then and evening, having seated himself carelessly, he became aware that Charlotte was reading over his shoulder. His old irritation revised, and he rebucked her in terms that were somewhat ungentle: 'Once and for all I do wish people would refrain from habits that are an annoyance in society. If I am reading aloud to someone is it not as though I were telling him something? What is written or printed stands in place of my own opinions and my own feelings, and would I go to the trouble of speaking if there were a little window in my forehead or in my breast so that the man to whom I was communicating my thoughts one by one and offering him my emotions one by one could always know far in advance what my direction was? Somebody reading over my shoulder always makes me feel I'm being torn in two.

(151)

Hence, it is proved that his happiness with getting reunion with Charlotee is nothing more than sugar-coated marriage and romance. Now, his mind is preoccupied with the sweet feeling of Otilie.

Eduard is egoist person. He makes us obvious that their unions and reunions, gatherings and parties don't give them real pleasure rather it gives them pains and troubles. Eduard makes it clear giving his view's like this:

It was an analogy which misled and confused you, said Eduard. "All we are concerned with here is earth's and minerals, but human beings are very narcissistic, they like to see themselves everywhere and be the foil the rest of creation. (152)

Eduard is of the opinion that he wants to be separated with Charlotte so as to get marry with Otilie as he decides to break his marital bond with Charlotte. His romance of getting reunited with Charlotte proves just to be sugar-coated romance. In this context, Eduard says:

Since you have asked us for explanations; Eduard replied, 'We cannot let you off so slightly, for the complicated cases are in fact the most interesting. Only through them do we realize the degree of affinity and how near, strong, remote, or slight the relations are. Affinities are only really interesting, when they bring about separations. (155)

Hence, their love and relation are merely sugar-coated romance.

### **Failure and Frustration**

The whole novel is the story of failure and frustration of characters Edward Charlotte, Captain and Otilie though it is said the story of romance ,marriage and love. The basic spirit of the novel is alienation of its characters. Due to the feeling of utter alienation, characters are extremely alienated and isolated in it. They try to live their life in integration, harmony and peace but it moves beyond their aspirations and hopes.

Eduard's story is the moving story of his failure and resulting frustration. At the end of novel, Edward fails to get the ground for his dream. He had made Otilie as a dream girl. He did all his best to get marry with her but all his attempts and efforts



turn into dust as Otilie committed suicide. "There has a terrible scream. Nanni rushed in, crying. "She is dying ! Miss is dying ! Oh, come quick !" (375). Due to this reason he is so much frustrated and alienated that he even fails his life on the earth and chooses the only one possibility death. He prefers death to life when life for him starts to mean the complex network of failure and frustration. Reading the entire novel, we hear the echoes of the lonely individual's failure, agony, anguish and frustration following the failure. Towards the end of the novel Edward's utter desolation and complete isolation is evident:

But from time to time he became restless. He called for something to eat again, began speaking again. 'Alas', he said on one occasion to the major, who rarely left his side, 'it is my deep misfortune that all my striving remains an imitation and a false exertion. What was blessedness for her is a torment to me; and yet for the sake of that blessedness I am obliged to take on that torment. I must go after her, and along this way. But my own nature holds me back, and my promise. It is a terrible task to imitate the inimitable. Now I understand that genius is necessary for everything, even martyrdom'. In this hopeless condition why dwell on the efforts in which, as wife, as friend, as doctor, Eduard's loved ones for a while exhausted themselves? At last he was found dead. It was Mittler who made the sad discovery. (381)

Hence, it is evident that Eduard's death is result of Otilie's suicide whom he had made his hope of life to get marry with her. But due to the loss of Otilie, he felt extremely alienated and isolated from the rest of the world. The entire universe became dark and daemonic to him. He could not exist in such hostile and chaotic

world. Therefore, he decided to create his own world and live there. So, to challenge this uneven, and unjust society, he took strong weapon as death and finally committed suicide. Hence, his suicide is the result of his utter alienation from others.

From the very beginning of novel, we know that Eduard and Charlotte were lonely figures though they were in love with each other in their prime of youth. Due to social reasons they had been compelled to marry someone else, but as soon as their partners were dead, they had married, because Eduard insisted on it. Eduard, a rich aristocrat, has married Charlotte, also of noble birth. For both of them, it is a second marriage. It makes us clear that their first attempt of getting marry with each other has become failure and that made them very much frustrated. They were hoping to regain their prime youth, love and romance getting reunited to each other:

It always gives me pleasure to think of us as we were in the first years. We were young, we love one another dearly, but were parted. You from me when your father, in his insatiable greed, bound you to a woman much your senior but rich; I from you when, my prospects being none of the best, I was obliged to say yes to a healthy man whom I did not love but could respect. We were set free: you first, your good lady leaving you a sizeable fortune; and my turn came just as your travels ended and you were home. So we were reunited. What a pleasure it was then to recall the past ! How we cherished our memories ! We could enjoy one another's company undisturbed. You were eager for a closer union, I did not consent at once: our ages being roughly the same, I, as a woman, had doubtless grown older than you had as a man. But at length I had no wish to deny you what you seemed to think your only hope of happiness. You wanted to recover,

by being with me, from all the unquiet times you had suffered at court, in the army, and on your travels, to compose yourself and enjoy life; but by being with me alone. (126-27)

The above description is towards the beginning of the novel, it shows us fact that Eduard and Charlotte had become victim of unjust and hostile society. Despite of their own intentions and aspirations to be united, they were separated from each other due to rude and daemonic social forces. They had felt extremely alienated from society. They were seriously frustrated due to the failure of their own attempts of getting union to each other. But later as they became able to defy strict social norms and values, they got reunited. They felt extremely happy and thought that they had regained their lost love of their prime youth.

But after some time, Eduard decided to call his family friend Captain in his estate. Charlotte opposed it and warned him that it may ruin their marital peace and harmony and even their solitude. "According, let us look for a moment at our present and our past lives, and you will have to admit that inviting the Captain here does not wholly fit in with our intentions, our arrangements, and our plans" (126).

Time and again, Charlotte requested very politely not to invite Captain in their estate. She tried her best to convince Eduard not to invite any outsider in their estate.

She says:

I was to see to our internal affairs, and you to the external and to whatever concerned our projects as a whole. I have arranged my life so as to accommodate you in everything, so as to live for you alone. Do let us try it for a while at least, and see how well we can manage together as we are. (127)

Again Charlotte tried her best not to invite anyone in their estate. She tells Eduard:

All well and good,' said Charlotte. 'But let us not fetch in anything which gets in our way or is foreign to us. Remember that our plans even concerning our recreation to some extent also depended on our being alone together. (128)

Despite all her suggestions and pleads, being egocentric and obstinate, he decides to invite Captain in his estate. Eduard makes her clear that they need a talented person like Captain in their estate to manage their life better. Eduard further reinforces his opinions telling: "The more I think about his predicament, the more I felt it, all the more keenly do I wish to have him here with us" (125). Eduard shows the urgent need of Captain to Charlotte as Eduard says, "I feel need of a man like him" (126). Thus, Eduard even becomes ready to quarrel with Charlotte to invite Captain and tells Charlotte: "I am glad to hear it', said Edward, 'I see that in marriage it is necessary to quarrel from time to time, for that way we learn something about one another" (131).

Eduard even fails to reconsider what Charlotte had further said; "That will need careful consideration, 'Charlotte replied. 'It will need to be looked at from more than one point of view' " (125).

Being a son of wealthy parents, Eduard was egoist and uncompromising. He is like a child, he is equally obstinate and self-indulgent, though he is capable of patience and cunning if it is a question of carrying through his plans. He thinks and acts as if the world were centred on him. His preoccupations are whims; his projects remain projects. He is, as we saw, a dilettante who does not wish to subordinate himself to any compulsion. He possesses an amiability which makes him sympathetic and charming. He intuitively chooses the appropriate means to further his pleasure.

His passion, however, overshadows this amiability. He loves deeply, indeed unconditionally, thus everything is made subservient to his passion. He lacks detachment; he is not aware of what he does. His intelligence is completely ruled by his sub-conscious, and he thus does not understand himself nor does he understand others, so that all his attempts becomes only destined to foil his plans:

Eduard was not in the habit of denying himself anything. Being the only child of wealthy parents, spoiled by them, induced by them into an odd but highly advantageous marriage with a much older woman and further spoiled by her then in all manner of ways (for she was grateful that he behaved himself and sought to make it up to him with an abundant generosity) and soon becoming his own master when she died, and travelling as he pleased then, making any diversion or alteration as it suited him, wanting nothing excessive but wanting a good deal nevertheless and a good deal of variety open, charitable, honest, brave what need be-what hindering of his wishes was he ever likely to encounter? (130)

Thus, Eduard denies all Charlotte's pleas not to invite Captain in their estate rather he allows Charlotte to call her niece Ottilie in their estate and says to Charlotte; "You take Ottilie, give me the Captain, and in God's name let us make a trial of it" (133).

Ultimately, Captain came to their estate as Eduard called him. In Captain's arrival, Charlotte felt more alienated in her surrounding. Her hope of spending her life alone with Eduard failed and she felt utter alienation in her family that resulted her unlimited frustration and agony deep down in the core of her heart:

Being now without this activity and amusement, and since the men meanwhile were pursuing their affairs ever more companionably-seeing the ornamental gardens and the glasshouses with especial eagerness, and in between times keeping up with the usual gentlemanly occupations such as hunting and the buying, swapping, breaking in and training of horses-Charlotte felt' herself daily alone.

(144)

Hence, Charlotte completely failed to achieve her goal of spending her life alone with Eduard together in romance and merry-making due to the arrival of Captain and Otilie. Before these two arrival, Eduard and Charlotte appear to live happily together, but Eduard's inviting an old friend of his, the Captain, to stay with them interrupts their solitude. The Captain comes, although Charlotte is reluctant to have an outsider in their midst. Soon afterwards Otilie, Charlotte's foster-daughter, arrives to stay, as she is finding it difficult to fit into her Boarding school. These two arrivals disturb the marital harmony of Eduard's and Charlotte's. Thus, Charlotte felt utter alienation that caused her unfathomable frustration into her heart so does happen in the case of Eduard too.

Slowly and gradually, Charlotte fell in love with Captain. This is evident to us as narrator narrates:

Thus Charlotte made use of the Captain's knowledge and energy in her own fashion and began to be entirely happy at his presence and to feel easy in her mind at whatever might ensue from it. She usually had questions to put to him, and since she was a person who valued life she sought to remove everything harmful and everything lethal. (150)

In the same manner, Eduard fell in love with Otilie. Then, Eduard began to show his irritation to Charlotte so as to leave Charlotte and get marry with Otilie. Eduard's irritation towards Charlotte becomes clear as Eduard says to Charlotte when Charlotte was reading over his shoulder. Eduard told her, "somebody reading over my shoulder always makes me feel I'm being torn in two" (151).

Being a passionate lover, Eduard grew much interest in Otilie then he decides to be separated from Charlotte so that he could unite with Otilie. Making his such notions clear Eduard tells, "Affinities are only really interesting when they bring about separations" (155).

Captain knows that Eduard is going to leave Charlotte and going to marry Otilie. It would be opportunity to Captain to get marry with Charlotte. Therefore, Captain reinforces Eduard's idea and says:

A separation and a new combination have come about and one even feels justified in using the term "elective affinity", because it really does seem as though one relationship here preferred to another and a choice made for one over the other. (155)

Thus, Eduard and Otilie and the Captain and Charlotte fell in love with one another at first unconsciously, but slowly they become aware of their love. A count and a Baroness pay a visit. They are travelling together, but are unable to marry as their previous marriages can not be dissolved. Their visit serves as a catalyst to make the couples fully conscious of their feelings. Eduard began to praise Otilie in front of Charlotte. Next morning Eduard said to Charlotte: "She is an agreeable and entertaining girl." (164).

Such inclination of Eduard's towards Otilie made Charlotte frustrated and bored because she doesn't like to be separated from Eduard. Charlotte began to become very much critical of Otilie. Charlotte strongly opposed the submissive and willingness of Otilie's towards Eduard. Charlotte comments Otilie's behaviours and tells her, "But it is not quite proper for a woman to show herself submissive and willing to be of service towards men in this way" (167).

Later, due to Otilie's good and affectionate nature and behaviours, Eduard became very passionate and mad in love with her:

She sought to further the things he desired and prevent those by which he might be irritated; to such an extent that before long she had become his guardian angel, he could not manage without her, and began to find it painful when she was not there. Added to that, she seemed more talkative and more open when they were alone together. (172)

On the other, Charlotte began to love Captain strongly. "Charlotte was surprised, moved, and she pressed the Captain's hand affectionately" (183).

Before admitting that Eduard loves Otilie, however, Eduard succumbs to an impulse to spend a night with his wife, a deed which afterwards fills him with abhorrence, for imagination and physical reality had been at odds; he was thinking of Otilie while making love to his wife. Similarly, his wife was thinking of the Captain when in the arms of her husband.

By lamplight then in a twilight, the heart's desires and the imagination at once asserted their rights over reality. Eduard held Otilie in his arms; now closer, now receding, the Captain hovered before



Charlotte's soul; and thus absent and present in the queerest fashion were intermingled, in excitement and delight. (206)

Thus, the marital harmony and bliss of Eduard's and Charlotte's smashed as a broken glass.

Charlotte, on ground of principle, doesnot want her marriage to break up. She controls herself and tacitly agrees to the Captain's departure. Eduard is incapable of self-control. Eduard forced Charlotte to divorce so as to get marry with Otilie. "In her heart she was strangely agitated, and she could not weep" (210). After the departure of Captain, Charlotte hopes to restore her own relationship with Eduard but she fails very badly to do so. Thus, she feels alienated from Eduard and feels much frustrated:

Charlotte hoped she would quickly restore her own relationship with Eduard and in her thinking she arrived at such a rational settlement of everything that she became more and more confirmed in the illusion that a return to an earlier and more restricted condition would be possible, that a thing now violently released could be brought back into confinement. (214)

Otilie objects to get marry with Eduard because it would hurt her aunt Charlotte badly. Eduard tries his best to convince Otilie that Charlotte is in love with Captain and is ready to give divorce to him:

Gentle insinuations, which escaped her occasionally, had no effect on Otilie since Eduard had persuaded her of Charlotte's affection for the Captain and that Charlotte herself desired a divorce which he was now intending to bring about, in a decent fashion. (216-17)

Finally, Eduard divorced with Charlotte to get marry with Otilie. Otilie being spiritual and moral girl, she thought that it would be injustice to her Aunt. Therefore, Otilie refused to get marry with Eduard. But Eduard insisted her hard to marry with him. She has no easy escape. So, she committed suicide to prove her pure and pious love to Eduard. This is her answer to Eduard's erotic desire. It was her great sacrifice in love with Eduard. Being passionate lover, Eduard could not understand her love. He felt sheer alienation and loneliness in her absence. He found this world hostile and daemonic. He took death as weapon to defy this unjust society. He got nowhere to lean against. Ultimately, he committed suicide. Hence, series of failure and frustration grew strong sense of desolation and alienation in Eduard, Charlotte, Captain and Otilie one after another' that resulted frustration into their heart.

### **Sheer Alienation of Characters**

The fictional characters of Goethe's in *Elective Affinities* are conscious of their individual destiny in terms of authentic existence. They try to measure their own 'selves' and fulfill their own expectations. They choose to be alone. Their interpersonal loneliness is existential loneliness.

The novel is a story of forbidden love and passion. The *Elective Affinities* are the connections made between the two pairs of lovers, whose real affinity cancels and overcomes their formal marital connection. The hidden power, the temptation and passion of love are presented here. The main themes of *Elective Affinities* are the relationships between two men and two women when Eduard and Charlotte, a married couple in early middle age, invite Otilie, a young girl, and a male friend of their own age to stay on their country estate. The title of the book relates to this situation and a scientific theory of the time and is explained by Goethe in the text.

Eduard lives far away from the rest of the society even from the beginning in the novel. But this distance became associated with his separation from Charlotte despite his love to her. Later he gained his lost love as he got married with her. As he was reunited with her, he transcended his hate, fear, and humiliation into existential mode through an act of celebrating and merry-making with her and was not able to win back the companionship of other common people. Therefore, Eduard intends to call Captain:

It concerns our friend, the Captain', Eduard answered. 'You know how unhappily he, like many others, is placed now through no fault of his own. How painful it must be for a man of his knowledge, talents, and abilities to find himself without proper employment and I will say at once what I should like for him. I should like us to have him here for a time. (124-25)

On the other, Captain was in the sheer alienation despite his knowledge, talents, and abilities to find himself without proper employment. This becomes clear to us as Eduard says:

His real misery is that he has no employment. It was always his pleasure, indeed his passion in life, to use the many different talents he has developed in himself daily and hourly for the benefit of others. And now to be idle, or to engage in further study and acquire new skills, being unable to use what he already possesses in such abundance—all in all, my darling, his situation is an unhappy one and he feels, it worse and worse, being so isolate. (125)

Eduard had thought Captain presence in their family does not harm their harmony and solitude of bliss:

I have, Eduard replied 'we can be sure that his presence here would bring us nothing but advantage and pleasure. We need not dwell on what he will cost me-certainly, it will be very little if he moves in with us. And nor will having him here cause us the least inconvenience. He can live in the east wing, and the rest will take care of itself. (125-26)

They appear to live happily together but Eduard's inviting an old friend of his, the Captain, to stay with them interrupts their solitude. The Captain comes, although Charlotte is reluctant to have an outsider in their midst. Soon afterwards Otilie, Charlotte's foster daughter, arrives to stay, as she is finding it difficult to fit into her boarding school. These two arrivals disturb the marital harmony of Eduard and Charlotte; Eduard and Otilie, and the Captain and Charlotte fall in love with one another, at first unconsciously, but slowly they become aware of their love. A count and a Baroness pay a visit. They are travelling together, but are unable to marry as their previous marriages cannot be dissolved. Their visit serves as a catalyst to make the two couples fully conscious of their feelings. Before admitting that he loves Otilie, however, Eduard succumbs to an impulse to spend a night with his wife, a deed which afterwards fills him with abhorrence, for imagination and physical reality had been at odds; he was thinking of Otilie when making love to his wife. Similarly, his wife was thinking of the Captain when in the arms of her husband. Charlotte, on grounds of principle, does not want her marriage to break up. She controls herself and tacitly agrees to the Captain's departure. Eduard is incapable of self-control. He wants a divorce so as to marry Otilie, but Charlotte refuses to agree to the divorce: her position is strengthened by the fact that she is expecting a child by Eduard. So Eduard

leaves home to fight in a war because, if he stayed, Otilie would have to return to her Boarding school. Charlotte says: "We are our own responsibility, nobody else's; we must ourselves be friends and mentors to ourselves. Nobody is asking us to ruin our lives, nor to expose ourselves to censure and very likely, ridicule" (228).

Even at the moment of love making and sexual intercourse they are not solely united rather Eduard is thinking about Otilie and Charlotte is lost in the memory of Captain. Thus, they become alien and foreign to each other even if they are sleeping and living together. Sense of alienation is hovering both of them. Hence, they are frustrated and sank in the flood of anguish and sufferings. Such anguish and frustration lead them towards sheer alienation. Charlotte felt utter alienation on the sudden departure of Eduard from her sleeping bed as they have spent night together talking and merry-making though the heart had no part in it:

But the present will not be denied its monstrous due. They spent a part of the night in all manner of talk and pleasantry which was the freer because, alas, the heart had no part in it. But when Eduard work next morning in the arms of his wife the day seemed to look in upon him ominously, the sun, so it seemed to him, was illuminating a crime, he crept from her side, and she found herself-alone, in the strangest way, when she awoke. (206)

Eduard is a passionate lover. He loves deeply, indeed unconditionally, thus everything is made subservient to his passion. He lacks detachment and restraint; he is not aware of what he does. His intelligence is completely ruled by his subconscious, and he thus does not understand himself. Nor does he understand others, not even Otilie, so that all his attempt to bring about his marriage to her appear only destined to foil his plans, thus resembling 'tragic errors', although he does not recognize these errors. "Great

passions are a hopeless disease. What might cure them is what really makes them dangerous" (274).

Emphasizing her own alienation, Charlotte says: "Women are fated to stand alone all their lives and to act alone" (299). Furthermore, Assistant understood the alienation of Charlotte and Otilie as he says: "Consider a woman when she is in love or engaged to be married, or as a wife, house-wife, and mother, she is always isolated, always alone, and wishes to be alone. Vain women are just the same" (299).

Otilie is alienated from the existing society. "But Otilie refused categorically to go where she would encounter what we call society" (355). As Otilie returned back to Boarding school, Eduard feels sheer alienation and filled with utter grief and anxiety that he could hardly bear it. "Eduard in deepest grief threw himself down on the threshold of Otilie's room, and wept. Perhaps lovers in such proximity have never spent a sadder night" (364). Eduard heart is full of emotional turmoil and alienation.

In the beginning of novel as Eduard and Charlotte were reunited Charlotte wanted to live alone with Eduard together and pleads not to invite any outsider in their estate. Despite her request Eduard makes her clear that urgent need of Captain to manage their life better. Eduard gives reason why then have to invite Captain. Eduard says to Charlotte, "He will be able to advise us in so many ways before we begin. I feel the need of a man like him" (126).

As Eduard has regained Charlotte in his estate, he could not be happy with her alone. Sense of alienation frequently hunted him. There is strong sense of isolation and alienation deeply rooted in his heart. As he invited Captain, Captain came. The Captain's arrival disturbs the equilibrium of Eduard's and Charlotte's marriage, while

Otilie's subsequent arrival quickly leads to the complete change in relationship culminating in the virtual break-up of Eduard's and Charlotte's marriage.

Charlotte inclined towards Captain as Eduard inclined to Otilie. She began to love Captain. Thus, she feels more alienated in her surrounding:

Charlotte felt herself daily more alone. Still more of her energies went into letter-writing also on the Captain's behalf; but there were lonely hours nevertheless. All the more welcome and entertaining, then, were the reports she had from the boarding-school. (144)

On the other hand, as Eduard began to love Otilie madly and passionately, he began to dislike Charlotte strongly. He did not like Charlotte's presence before him. This is obvious to us as Eduard shows his irritation as Charlotte was reading over his shoulder. Eduard says to Charlotte; "Somebody reading over my shoulder always makes me feel I'm being torn in two" (151). It shows Eduard strong discontentment toward Charlotte. As Eduard grew much interest in Otilie, he decides to divorce with Charlotte in order to get marry with Otilie. Eduard says: "Affinities are only interesting when they bring about separations" (155).

On the other, Captain began to love Charlotte. He knows all what was happening in his surrounding. He becomes alienated from his surrounding as he began to love Charlotte strongly. The Captain says:

A separation and a new combination have come about and one even feels justified in using the term "*elective affinity*", because it really does seem as though one relationship were preferred to another and a choice made for one over the other. (155)

Throughout the novel, Charlotte feels utter alienation. She tells, "that women are fated to stand alone all their lives and to act alone" (299).

Otilie is a spiritual girl who loves Eduard beyond limits but denies to get marry with him. Eduard, being a passionate lover insisted her to marry with him but she has no way out and finally commits suicide to be free from his erotic desire and to prove her pure and true love to Eduard. "She is dying ! Miss is dying ! Oh, come quick !" (375). Death for her is a tool to grasp love and humanity. As Eduard lost Otilie, he found this world empty and senseless. His condition became pitiable. He got nowhere to keep his heart. Finally he took death as weapon to fight against existing hostile and daemonic world. He committed suicide at the end. Thus, Death is the expression of sheer alienation hidden in the core of his heart.

Eduard never compromises with 'they' and even ventures to maintain his individuality by bringing down the all social set up. Alienation in the case of Eduard is the 'force of individuality'. He tries to erect his self-image among the people. He seeks his personal fulfilment in rising above them and being the saviour of the people. His aspirations keep him away from the normal course of life. Besides, he is fated to fail everywhere. He seeks out situation to recapture his lost image at jumping from Charlotte, but faces another failure. Eduard's relation to Otilie proves to be not only failure but also it leads him to meet death and destruction of his whole life. Eduard is uncompromising passionate lover who lacks self-restrain and control. He is egoist so he could neither understand Charlotte nor Otilie.

Eduard divorced with Charlotte so as to get marry with Otilie. But he fails to do that despite of all his attempts. Otilie also loves Eduard but agrees to get marry with him never. Eventually, the spiritual girl Otilie dies to prove her pious and pure



live to Eduard. But being passionate lover, he fails to understand her love and sacrifice.

Towards the end of novel, the feeling of alienation becomes profound in Eduard, Otilie, Charlotte and Captain. As Eduard became crazy about Otilie, he saw nothing but only the beautiful image of her everywhere. Now, Eduard is alienated from entire universe in the memory of Otilie:

The chief consideration in all this seemed to be that he must find, himself a wife of the same mind. Though he said nothing, Otilie was before his eyes and in his heart. Doubts arouse, but were then countered by certain favourable events. (302)

Otilie too is aware of Eduard's unlimited warmth and love to her but she finds herself helpless to fulfill his unquenchable passion and thirst. Otilie becomes quite sympathetic and affectionate to Eduard. She feels entirely alienated from Eduard and rest of her surroundings as she fails to accomplish the goal of Eduard. It is obvious to us as Otilie writes in her diary: "Let each retain the freedom to occupy himself with what he finds attractive, what gives him pleasure, what seems to him useful; but the proper study of mankind is man" (306).

Otilie's immense love to Eduard is apparent to us as narrator narrates: "Naturally she was most attentive to all the things Eduard loved best" (314). Otilie is entirely alienated from this hostile universe as she is lost in love with Eduard. Otilie knows better Eduard and his helpless situation. She feels extremely aloof and lonely among people:

In this description Otilie saw no one but Eduard, saw him too now deprived and suffering hardships, travelling the unmade roads, lying

under the stars in want and in danger, and amid so much precariousness and risk accustoming himself to being homeless and friendless and to throwing away everything so as to have nothing to lose. Fortunately then the company broke up for a while. Otilie found space to weep in solitude. None of her dull griefs had been so hard on her as this clarity which she now strove to make even clearer, as people will indeed torment themselves once they have begun to be tormented. (322)

Otilie thought that if she married with Eduard, it would be great injustice to her aunt, Charlotte. Therefore, Otilie left home to be free from Eduard. As she had left home, she is alienated from rest of the world. In her absence, Eduard felt that he is alienated from the whole surroundings. Eduard feels that the existing society is unfriendly and hostile to him. Regarding this situation Mittler tells: "What little he said seemed to imply that he would leave it all to them; the pain he was in seemed to have him indifferent to everything" (361).

Hence, in the absence of Otilie, the whole universe turned to be painful and unfeeling to Eduard. At the end as Eduard got consent of divorce from Charlotte so as to get marry to Otilie. But Otilie became never ready to marry Eduard. As Eduard found Otilie tried hard to convince her, she just remained silent and refusing him due to her vows to Charlotte and her moral principles. At that movement Eduard and Otilie are extremely alienated from rest of the world. Ultimately, in such Otilie's panic situation, Mittler says to Otilie "Thou Shalt not commit adultery" (362). Such harsh and rude speech of Mittler doubled Otilie's alienation and finally Otilie committed suicide to get rid of the evil society. Nanni rushed in, crying: "She is dying !" (375). As Otilie died, Eduard felt that he is completely isolated and alienated

from this world as he lost all his hope and happiness from his life as she committed suicide. "He had lost his life's happiness for ever" (377). Hence, Eduard could not exist in such daemonic and evil society which makes him isolated, deserted and alienated. Finally, Eduard committed suicide. Thus, their death is the result of their extreme aloofness, isolation and alienation. Hence, all of Goethe's major characters become the victim of sheer alienation. Death of Otilie's and Eduard's is the expression of utter alienation of Otilie's and Eduard's'.

Thus, Goethe's characters in the novel are extremely alienated, isolated and Frustrated.

### **Death: An Extreme Form of Human Passion**

The novel depicts the heart-rendering pain, anguish and agony of it's characters especially, Edward, Otilie and Charlotte. From the very beginning of novel, the loneliness and alienation of Edward and Charlotte is apparent. As they got reunited, they felt that they have regained their lost love. Then, they invited Captain and Otilie. Their arrival changed the marital life of Eduard's and Charlotte's. Charlotte began to love Captain and Eduard to Otilie. Eduard and Otilie loved each other passionately and madly. Despite all that, they could not get marry each other due to social norms and values. Eduard left no stone unturn to be united with Otilie. Even Eduard convinced his wife Charlotte to divorce with him. But Eduard faced one failure after another failure in chronological order. Due to his Chronic failure, he achieved frustration and boredom in his life. The entire universe cast daemonic and hostile glance at suicide as weapon to defy the challenges and hazards of his life. Ultimately, as he lost Otilie, he lost his all hopes and aspirations in life and committed suicide:

In this hopeless condition why dwell on the efforts in which, as wife, as friend, as doctor, Eduard's beloved ones for a while exhausted themselves? At last he was found dead. It was mittler who made the sad discovery. (381)

Eduard is a passionate lover. He loved Otilie passionately, madly and unconditionally. Therefore, he could not bear the loss of Otilie from his life as she committed suicide. "There was a terrible scream. Nanni rushed in, crying:, 'She is dying! Miss is dying! Oh, come quick!'" (375). Otilie death not because, she doesnot love Eduard but because she thinks that it would hurt her aunt Charlotte in excess. Otilie's love to Eduard becomes crystal clear in her utterance as she was dying:

She pressed his hand, hard, looked at him full of life and full of love, and after a deep breath, after a heavenly, silent moving of the lips: 'promise me you will live!' She cried out, sweetly and tenderly expending her strength, and at once fell back. (376)

Furthermore, Otilie's immense sympathy and love to Eduard becomes us more clear as she said to Charlotte regarding Eduard when Charlotte was very much critical to Eduard. Otilie says:

My dear aunt, she said, 'so that I shall not seem narrow-minded and obstinate, let me say something which in other circumstances it would be one's duty to keep quiet about and conceal. Any peculiarly unhappy person, even if he is blameless, is marked in a terrible way. His presence excites a sort of horror wherever he is seen and noticed. Everyone searches his appearance for traces of the monstrous fate

which has been laid upon him; everyone is curious and at the same time fearful. (355-56)

Being a true beloved, Otilie doesn't charge Eduard for his irresistible insistence to force Otilie to get marry with him rather she curses her poor fate. "Fate has not dealt kindly with me", said Otilie in reply, 'and perhaps whoever loves me cannot expect much better" (358).

It is Charlotte who hopes of restoring a former happiness sending Otilie far from Eduard's estate so as to reunite with Eduard. As Otilie was not found in the house, it doubled Eduard misery and pain. As Eduard told Mittler:

It is troubling me', Eduard replied, 'but I cannot hate it for doing so, since it reminds me of Otilie perhaps she is in pain herself at this very moment, leaning on her left arm, and doubtless more in pain than I am. And why should I not bear it as she does? (361)

The pain he was in made him indifferent to everything. Strong sense of loneliness rooted in the Eduard's heart in the absence of Otilie. His passionate love is transparent in his writing to Otilie. As Eduard writes:

Let me see you again, see you again joyfully. Let me put my beautiful question to you with the words of my mouth and you answer it with the beauty of your person. Come into my arms, Otilie, where I have held you once or twice and where you belong always. (362-63)

Later, Eduard found her, she read his letter but there was no change in her face. That made Eduard more painful. Again Eduard is isolated from Otilie. Otilie as inside the room and Eduard outside the room. In the absence of Otilie, Eduard feels sheer

alienation and grief that he could hardly bear it. "Eduard in deepest grief threw himself down on the threshold of Otilie's room, and wept" (364).

And next morning Eduard came in to her. He begged her to speak, to explain what she wanted. He swore he wanted only what she wanted; but she remained silent. Again, full of love and urgently, he asked would she be his. In the sweetest way, her eyes cast down, she shook her head in a gentle refusal.

As Otilie came back to house, she wrote to her friends that her intention to give up Eduard and go away from him was quite unqualified. Here, Otilie proves herself to be existential heroine asserting her self at any cost. She says; 'Let me be in your company, give me the joy of your love and the benefit of your conversation but leave my inner self to me" (368).

Now, Otilie is gravely grief-stricken and tormented hard from all her surroundings. Even in such her precarious situation, Mittler exchanged very harsh and rude statement to her. "At that moment Otilie came in. "Thou shalt not commit adultery," Mittler continued (375). Thus, the whole universe became more hostile, more daemonic to her life. Otilie couldnot live in such uneven society which punished her badly for the crime she did not commit. She wanted to be free from such rude and hostile universe. To meet her goal, she takes shelter in death. "Nanni rushed in crying: 'She is dying!" (375). Through death she attains meaning and asserts individuality. Death for her is a tool to grasp love and humanity. Otilie takes 'death' as weapon to be free. She feels that death can be more liberating and significant. Undoubtedly, she has been true in her deepest impulses of her individuality and personality. She yearns for transcendence. She desires to evade compromise and contingency. And she could find these healthy release only in death.

As Otilie was dying inside the room, Eduard reached to her and inquired her condition:

Eduard, dismounting, learned of her Condition, rushed into the room, threw himself down beside her, seized her hand and, never speaking, wetted it with his tears. So he remained a long while at last he cried: 'Am I not to hear your voice again? Will you not come back into life with a single word for me? Well then, I shall follow you over. (376)

After her death, Eduard's condition became pitiable. He felt great unhappiness and alienation. He got nowhere to keep his heart. He felt he is alienated from this world. People tried their best to console him but all their attempts turned into dust. "Step by step they managed to retrieve Eduard from the most violent level of despair, but only into unhappiness, for it was clear to him, it was a certainty, that he had lost his life's happiness for ever" (377).

After Otilie's death, Eduard heart is full of darkness and emptiness. He got nothing to console his deep passionate wound which is reluctant to heal, a heart which is afraid of recovering.

He lived by rote, seemed to have no more tears, to be incapable of any more grief. His participation in the talk, his appetite for food and drink, lessened daily. He imbibed some comfort still, a little, so it seemed, only out of the glass for all it had been a false prophet to him. (380-81)

Eventually, in utter alienation, he felt restless and hopeless in the absence of Otilie and committed suicide. Hence, Eduard's death is the violent expression of hidden alienation in the depth of his heart.

#### IV. Conclusion

In the novel *Elective Affinities*, all of the characters are extremely alienated. They are living in too difficult, harsh and unpleasant world where they try their best to find out meaning in their life but fail and are extremely frustrated and bored. They become victim of existential alienation. Alienation affects all social and work relations, and most cruelly, alienation dominates the relationship of love.

In Goethe's *Elective Affinities*, major Characters: Eduard, Charlotte, Captain and Otilie are surviving in problematic situation facing existential crisis, thanks to the deep hazard of alienation. They have faced meaninglessness and senselessness in their survival. Their hope and ambition for love, happiness and success ever get failure. Continuous and chronic failure in every attempt to rise results in the germination of the sense of alienation in their hearts. Ultimately, the sense of alienation grows rapidly and encircles their hearts. They find the surroundings around them bleak, deserted and hostile. They can not survive in such hostile world and make decision to fight against the repressive society. In order to do that, they take suicide as an ultimate weapon and Otilie and Eduard commit suicide. Hence, suicide is the expression of extreme sense of alienation strongly rooted deep down in their heart. Hence, major characters suffer extremely due to the problem of existential alienation.

The novel depicts the existential alienation of characters namely Eduard, Charlotte, Captain and Otilie though it is a romantic text. All the major characters try their best to spend their life in romance but utterly fail to do so and suffer a lot and face sheer alienation, isolation and aloofness. The novel narrates the story of marriage and love between and among characters but no marriage is depicted as happy one and love as fruitful and productive. Broadly speaking, the novel shows the individual's



pains, sufferings, agonies and traumas they have faced in the rude society. In the novel, we find interpersonal loneliness which is existential alienation.

Alienation is existential loneliness. It is not only a feeling but also an objective fact, a way of being. Alienation is a psychological feeling. All the characters feel extremely alienated throughout the novel. All the characters feel lonely, alienated, isolated, anxious, guilty and insecure.

At the outset of the novel, as Eduard and Charlotte are reunited, they seem to spend their life in peace and harmony. Their life seems to be spent in romance. But deep down their hearts, they feel utter alienation and isolation. In order to minimize their alienation, Eduard invites Captain and Otilie. Their arrival turns the marital life of Eduard and Charlotte into ashes. Charlotte begins to love Captain. On the other hand, Eduard begins to love Otilie. Hence, Eduard and Charlotte feel sheer alienation in that neither they completely break their marital bond nor can they spend it soundly rather sense of alienation hunts them frequently. They are emotionally alienated. There is a strong sense of isolation and alienation deeply rooted in their hearts.

As Eduard grows his passionate love towards Otilie, he becomes alienated from Charlotte even at the moment of love making and sexual intercourse. They are not solely united rather Eduard is thinking about Otilie and Charlotte is lost in the sweet memory of Captain. Thus, they become alien and foreign to each other even if they spend the whole night together. Sense of alienation is hovering over both of them. Hence, they are frustrated and sunk in the flood of anguish and sufferings. Such anguish and frustration lead them towards sheer alienation. Charlotte feels utter alienation on the sudden departure of Eduard from her sleeping bed as they had spent night together talking and merry-making though the heart had no part in it. "They

spent a part of the night in all manner of talk and pleasantry which was the freer, because, alas, the heart had no part in it" (206).

As Charlotte grows her strong attachment towards Captain, she is alienated from Eduard, Otilie and Captain. Now, she is neither with Eduard nor with Captain. She is extremely alienated from others. "In her heart she was strangely agitated and she could not weep" (210).

As the novel proceeds, Eduard insists Otilie on getting married with him. But, to escape from her dreadful situation, she commits suicide. As Eduard loses her, he finds this world empty and senseless. His condition becomes pitiable. He gets nowhere to keep his heart. Finally, he takes death as weapon to fight against existing hostile and demonic world. He commits suicide at the end. Thus, Death is the expression of sheer alienation hidden in the core of his heart.

In dealing with Eduard, his alienation gets more intense when nothing significant happens in his life except his worthless and purposeless journey. He further plunges into desolate isolation as he has no one to lean against. So, the feelings of hollowness and waste, and futility and nothingness grow in him. He fails in his every attempt to rise. His life is rocked by alienating forces so he can neither grasp nor grab anything in life. Eduard is away from Charlotte, Captain and Otilie and is living a lonely life with no responsibility. Thus, he slips away from responsibilities and decisions to be made in life, as a result, finds himself fragmented in the hostile world.

Eventually, Eduard finds nowhere to lean against. As Eduard loses Otilie, he sees this world as haphazard, chaotic, disorder and dreadful. He can not live in such hostile and complex world and decides to create another world where he can live the

way he wants. Therefore, he takes death as an ultimate weapon to fight against this existing world. He commits suicide. Thus, death is his choice and free-will. His choice of death is a sheer alienation, a way of asserting freedom, individual choice and existence.

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