

I. Introduction

This study attempts to analyze the guiding principle that forces the protagonists, to be the victim of failure of communication in the novellas *Notes from Underground* and *Metamorphosis*. The protagonists of both of these novellas undergo a similar destiny; both of them are the victim of consciousness. Their extreme realization of 'Self' in existential crises leads them to commit failure of communication. The experience, which these protagonists undergo, represents the overall condition of everyman; they are the emblems of human existence. So they deserve to be analyzed in existential line. Existential theory has been a major tool of analysis for this study.

Communication is generally taken as a part of linguistics. It is defined in terms of an interaction by the use of language. Webster's *New International Dictionary (Second Edition)* defines it as an "intercourse by words, letters, or messages; interchange of thoughts or opinions, by conference or other means, converse, correspondence" (541). This definition assumes three components of communication: participants who intercourse, thought/ideas and medium. Linguistics takes communication as a sort of speech act by presupposing "appropriateness condition" or "cooperative principle" as its requirement. In their book entitled *Linguistics for Students of Literature*, Elizabeth Closs Traugott and Mary Louise Pratte write, "Basically, the cooperative principle represents our knowledge that verbal communication is an activity in which individuals work together to accomplish shared, mutually beneficial goals" (237). According to this statement, communication is possible only under the circumstance that each of the partners shares mutual understanding. In lack of such mutuality, communication fails.

Moving beyond the linguistic definition of communication, this study examines its links to the human existence to answer the fundamental question "Is communication really possible?" Even in line to the aforementioned statements, which define communication as a sharing of ideas, it is unveiled that communication has its link to the human subjectivity. It is in the "Self" that the ideas are created. Since "Self" differs from person to person, communication can't be defined so easily. This study scrutinizes the "Self" and observes the causes of failure of communication. Given the predicament of the protagonists of the aforementioned novellas, this study ventures to justify failure of communication to be the predicament of human existence.

Published in 1864, Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground* dramatizes the failure of communication by means of its protagonist Underground man. Underground man's major problem is his consciousness. His tragedy begins when he comes to know about the guiding elements of his existence. As Edward Wasilok comments, Underground man is defined by "a hundred of institutions and a thousand of conditions" ("Dostoevsky" 411). Defined by others, he finds his 'Self' being contracted with existential crises. Revolting against this, when he tries to define himself, he commits failure. He wants to preserve his "Self" by establishing his own definition, but his "Self" gets collided all the times. His being conscious of absurdity, dread and despair always haunts him and so he escapes toward his subjectivity. Given his inability to cope with the objective world, he realizes himself as a weak personality. The initial sentences of the novella, "I'm a sick man . . . a mean. There's nothing attractive about me" reflect his realization of existential crises (90). The *Notes* records the causes of such realization. Divided into two parts, the novella presents the Underground man's perspectives in the first part and the real occurrences

in the second. The Underground man is Dostoevsky's mouthpiece who revolts against the rational assertions of human existence: "The Underground man refuses to accept the laws of nature" (Wasilok 411). Freedom for him is of utmost importance. Everybody possesses his own individuality so he deserves freedom. He says, "All man actually needs is independent will, at all costs and whatever the consequences" (*Notes from Underground* 110). However, his freedom is limited by other. While undergoing objective excursion, he finds that it is through other that he gets his identity. Existentialism defines this sort of human predicament as "inter-subjectivity". In his essay "The Common Condition of Man" Sartre has written, "The other is indispensable to my existence, and equally so to any knowledge I can have of myself" (863).

The cord that links *Notes from Underground* with the *Metamorphosis* might be traced into the subject matter which is furnished with similar thematic principle in both of these novellas. Existential crises foreseen by Dostoevsky as a cause of failure of communication in his *Notes from Underground* is also examined by Franz Kafka (1883-1925) in *Metamorphosis*. Like the Underground man, Gregor, the protagonist of *Metamorphosis*, also becomes the victim of failure of communication. Gregor, an ordinary hawker, represents the predicament of a lesser human being under the modern industrialized world. His "Self" is crushed under the mechanic world; he is simply an object, "a tool of the boss, without brains or backbone" (5). Given the unfavourable condition of the business, he is afraid of being fired by his boss. Dread of unknown future pushes him into the cyclone of existential crises. On the other hand he is compelled to perform the job for he is the only support to his family. Unable to cope with the complexities of the world, he turns inside his subjectivity only to find himself to have metamorphosed into a "monstrous vermin." The novella

describes the aftermath of Gregor's metamorphosis. All of his physical human qualities are replaced by that of 'beetle', which almost shocks his family members. His destiny is never understood and so he is confined into the dark room. None listens to his yelp and yelling for his voice is changed into the "voice of an animal." Kafka not only examines the existential crises but also points out the selfish nature of human being. Gregor, who used to be a loving son to his parents, has been a headache to them. Instead of sympathizing, his father throws "rotten apples" to his back which infects his paralyzed body. He can't express his agony, neither he is understood. Thus like the Underground man in the *Notes from Underground*, he becomes the victim of failure of communication and lies "dead as a doornail". Both Dostoevsky and Kafka have sketched the abstraction of the "Self" of an individual whose destiny has compelled him to be a social misfit. This is the predicament of everyman, which this study strives to justify using the tool of existentialism.

Existentialism deals with the existential crisis of human being. It is a "very intense and philosophically specialized form of the quest for selfhood" (Ellmann and Fiedelson 803). It examines the most fundamental and naked concern of human existence - -absurdity, dread, despair, anxiety, suffering etc., which are realized at a moment of supreme "crisis". Given its concern to the existential crises of human being, existentialism became a dominant theory in the war-laden modern world. Mass killing of the people in the two vicious World-wars in the twentieth century not only smashed the ideals of the rationalism but also raised questions over the existence of whole human being. Under the tumult of war, the old values like unity, rationality, Christianity became defunct. Having observed such terror, people began to think about the predicament of human existence. It was Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-80) to coin the term "existentialism" for the first time (Solomon 141-45).

Even though existentialism as a theory was propounded in the twentieth century, its root goes back to the history. "Its' protagonists have traced it back to Pascal, to St. Augustine, even to Socrates" (Macintyre, "Existentialism" 147). Numbers of writers from Greco-Roman period to the modern era of Kafka, Camus, and Becket have examined the human existence in their works. The philosophers like Nietzsche and Kierkegaard are supposed to be "influential in the development of the idea of existence" in the modern world (Ellmann and Fiedelson 803). Existentialism gives emphasis to the subjectivity rather than objectivity. The thinkers of this line negate the system and give value to an individual. In this regard, "Dostoevsky is often cited as a forerunner of existentialism" and of course his *Notes from Underground* as its manifestation ("Existentialism" 147). Dostoevsky is considered to be the pioneer for Sartrean thought: "Profound dilemmas of human existence are explored in the works of the Russian novelist, Fyodor Dostoevsky. His *Notes from Underground* particularly anticipates Sartrean themes" (Priest, "Sartre in the World" 2).

The period in which Dostoevsky was brought up and the life which he came up with were the great inspiring factors for him to turn into the "Self". Nineteenth century Europe was dominated by rationalists. They had the ambition of analyzing man as if in a laboratory to show the heredity and environment in the formation of the personality. Dostoevsky didn't like the idea that the self could be examined as a pure object. "Rather he wanted to explore what was hidden, unacknowledged even by the subject, with in the mind: he knew it, was capable either of recording or of interpreting and explaining what was really important in man" (Simon and Schuster 18). Moreover, his suffering in the exile in Siberia, death of his beloved and a massive debt also played a great role to make him concentrate into subjectivity. In his article "Dostoevsky as a Person", Boris Bursov writes, "Everything Dostoevsky

suffered from, became part of his inspiration. Even his debts. While never free of debt, he was not overwhelmed by debts, even though he invariably repaid them" (164).

Sartre has divided the existential thinkers into theist and atheist. (Existentialism 27). He has included the Christian thinkers like Kierkegaard, Karl Jaspers, Martin Buber and Gabriel Marcel in a theistic group. In atheistic existentialists Sartre has grouped Martin Heidegger and French existentialists along with himself. Obviously Nietzsche is the forerunner and chief source of inspiration for them. The theistic existentialists believe in religious mysticism. The anxiety of modern man, they argue, can be entertained when one submits oneself to the will of God without the intervention of Christian doctrine and ecclesiastical church. The atheistic existentialists, on the other hand, rejected the concept of God as an authentic shelter. They regarded human being as optimistically forlorn, free and supportless creature (Macintyre, "Existentialism" 147-149). Moreover what they have in common is, as Sartre writes, "existence comes before essence" (Existentialism, 27). Human being first of all exists and only after then he defines his essences, he has no predetermined essence, he is "free" to choose. He has to create his 'existence' himself. For there is no God, so he is solely responsible for whatever he does. Sartre says, "Man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself. That is the first principle of existentialism" (29). Gregor is responsible for his metamorphosis so is the underground man for his masochism which contribute both of these protagonists to be the victim of failure of communication.

With a brief description of the historical development of existentialism and its contributors, this study focuses on some specific terminologies like anxiety, absurdity, nothingness, and alienation, which cause the protagonists of aforementioned novellas to be the victim of failure of communication. The existentialists use the term 'anxiety'

to mean 'dread'. Being a Christian thinker, Kierkegaard interprets the dread in terms of original sin and urges the people to submit oneself to the mercy of God.

Kierkegaard takes dread as an opportunity to educate one's ownself with faith upon God. But he cautions, "If at the beginning of his education he misunderstands the anguish of dread so that it leads him to faith but away from faith, then he is lost" ("Dread" 841). Dread incites us to the eternal faith in God. Only those, who are honest to faith, can be great men like "Socrates", who accepted the poisoned goblet. However, Heidegger differs from Kierkegaard by taking dread as a "Nothing". He writes to be "dread of is always a dreadful feeling about but not about this or that" ("Dread" 838). Heidegger's opinion is more pragmatic for it reflects the condition of modern man. Gregor in the *Metamorphosis* is paralyzed because of the dread of his being sacked off from the job. The underground man also is running around due to the dread of identity-crisis.

The existentialists take alienation as a fundamental tenet of "Self". Alienation is taken to be "internally divided, split into at least two parts that have become alien to each other" (Petrovic 79). The self is divided into "in-itself" and "for other". The former is the subjectivity and the latter is the objectivity. According to Sartre the "other" is indispensable to an individual for his existence. He says an individual can't recognize himself unless "others recognize him as such" ("The Common Condition" 863). He means to say that the "I" always remains out of it. One has to project from the perspectives of the "Other" to recognize one's ownself. There is a conflicting nature between the "I" and "Other". Sartre writes, "Each attempt is the death of the other; that is, the failure of the one motivates the adoption of the other" ("Others", 227). Other holds the secrets of "I". It is through the other that one gets his identity. Since the other holds the secrets of "I", so an individual's existence also relies upon

others. Gregor is defined as a 'vermin' by others. Even after getting humiliated for a number of times, the underground man always runs after his friends because it is through others he is defined. This type of alienation also contributes in the meaning of language used. Both of these protagonists illustrate such sordid reality of human existence which this study will examine thoroughly.

Given their peculiar subject matters, both of these novellas *Notes from Underground* and *Metamorphosis* have been popular even these days. Both of these novellas have been read all around the world and are interpreted by numbers of scholars. Critics from different schools of thought including Psychology, Marxism, Linguistics and Nihilism have examined these novellas. In this regard, this study will carry a unique importance as it explores "failure of communication" from existential point of view.

Edward Wasilok has examined *Notes from Underground* as a portrayal of human condition. He gives emphasis to its protagonist, the very "underground man" who is a "Sisyphus" revolting against the so-called social boundaries. Wasilok writes:

The Underground man is Dostovsky's totally free man. He carries revolt against limitation to its extreme and raises it to a philosophical principle. Like the existentialists who were to follow three quarters of a century later, he is *en marge*; he is in revolt not only against society but also against himself, not once, not today or tomorrow, but eternally. ("Dostovesky" 411)

Notes from Underground has also been observed from psychoanalytical perspectives. Bernard J. Paris, a Michigan State University Professor presents a psychiatric analysis of this novella, in line to the psychiatric Karen Horney, who assumes an unfavourable condition to be the cause factor of human failure. In his

article called, "*Notes from Underground : A Horneyan Analysis*" Bernard mentions, "Perhaps the most striking indication of the severity of the Underground man's neurosis is the intensity of his self-hate. From beginning to end his notes are filled with incidences of self-contempt, self-accusation, self-frustration, self-torture and self-destructiveness" (518).

Bernard examines a psychological pattern in regards to the underground man's upbringing. He claims the underground man's being brought up in a helpless condition to be the major factors of his bizarre life. His analysis is a psychoanalytic generalization of an individual rather than the existential predicament of everyman.

Some critics have observed the symbolic presentation in the *Notes from Underground*. Presenting the "wall" as a symbol of a boarder line that separates the external and internal world of the underground man, Ralph E. Matlaw writes:

The most important symbol in the Notes, however is obviously the wall. . . . With the wall may be associated the crystal palace, the highest stage of human utopia, which is wall-like because it eliminates all possibility for man to show his individuality and free will. The wall, then, embodies a paradox, for it represents, those things designed to improve the lot of man, but in practice tending to destroy that which is most valuable of him. It symbolizes the positive, final views against which the narrator rails, and also stands as a barrier between man and his fullest expression of the Self. (107)

Dostoevsky's dramatization of the underground man as a totally free man has also been observed as his nihilistic vision. In this regards Dostoevsky is compared to Nietzsche who advocated freedom as a means for the "naked power of will". Freedom could be both supreme god and a supreme evil because "man is free to do

anything including illimitable destruction" ("Dostoevsky" 412). In this regards, *Notes from Underground* is taken as a manifestation of Nihilism. Joseph Frank has made comment in this line:

Dostoevsky assimilates the major doctrines of Russian Nihilism into the life of his underground man; and by revealing the hopeless dilemmas in which he lands as a result, Dostoevsky intends to undermine these doctrines from within. The tragedy of the underground man does not arise, as is popularly supposed, because of his rejection of reason. It derives from his acceptance of all the implications of "reason" in its then-current Russian incarnation- and particularly those implications (4)

Similarly the *Metamorphosis* has also received number of criticism regarding its theme, philosophy and value. Given its extraordinary setting and a shocking subject matter, the *Metamorphosis* has been a unique work ever since its publication. In a conversation with Gustav Janouch, Kafka has said "*The Metamorphosis* is not a confession, although it is –in a certain sense –an indiscretion" (qtd. in Corngold 75).

Critics have observed *The Metamorphosis* as a projection of identity crisis. Kevin W. Sweeney comments, "Personal identity is maintained by preserving the constituting social relationships. Failure to preserve them, even though an individual maintains psychological or material continuity, erodes personal identity" (147).

In the twentieth century more than any other century, human being faced perplexing questions about the nature of his identity as person. The overriding tension caused by the Capitalism and the dread of war were prevailed all around the West. Terrified of the war and ruthless killings, human being was loitering around for the preservation of his identity. *The Metamorphosis*, as Sweeney mentions, reflects the pangs of identity-crises.

Observing Gregor's metamorphosis as a metamorphosis of the metaphor, Stanely Corngold writes:

To stress the estrangement of the monster from his familiar setting in the metaphor –the dirty bug- is to stress Gregor Samsa's estrangement from his identity in the family. Gregor harks back to yet defiantly resists integration into the 'ordinary language' of the family. The condition of the distorted metaphor, estranged from familiar speed, shapes the family drama of *The Metamorphosis*. (88)

John Updike comments on *The Metamorphosis* regarding the power of imagination. He writes, "In this age that lives and dies by the visual *The Metamorphosis* stands as a narrative absolutely literary, able to exist where language and the mind's hazy wealth of imagery intersect" (1504).

Even though a number of critics have poured down their intellect upon these novellas, but the dominant aspect of the works "the failure of communication" has not been examined. So this study will make an in-depth study to justify that the major cause of the protagonists' failure to communicate is nothing other than their realization of "Self" in an existential crisis. Using the existentialism as a tool, this study will also make a comparison between these two works. For a better understanding, the tool will be elaborated with its historical implications. Since the study itself is a comparative observation, comparison and contrast will be taken into consideration.

2. Existentialism

Background

As the twentieth century advanced, the modern world found itself caught up in an overriding tumult. An untiring thirst for power pushed the world into the volcano of world-war thereby unveiling the acme of irrationality. The guiding principles of the world like rationality, unity and Christianity became defunct. Frightened of war-laden world, the people began to think over the existence of human being. As certainty of empirical rationalism could no more guide human being, he became a "meaningless speck in the modern world" (Tarnas 388). This uproaring predicament of human being was precisely embodied by existentialist writers. They examined the anguish and alienation of twentieth-century life by addressing the naked concerns of human existence that included "suffering and death, loneliness and dread, spiritual emptiness and ontological insecurity . . . the tragic impasse of the human condition" (389). Twentieth century thinking was long before conceived by thinkers like Kierkegaard, Dostoevsky and Nietzsche in the Nineteenth century, though the term "existentialism" itself was coined by Jean Paul Sartre (Solomon 141-45).

The idea of "existence" deals with human self. Existentialism means "pertaining to existence". So, the philosophers who come under existentialism explore the "self" and its relation to the world. It is "a very intense and philosophically specialized form of the quest of selfhood" (Ellmann and Fiedelson 803). Differing from the extreme objectivity of the rationalist, the existentialist thinkers emphasized on the subjectivity. Exploring the conflict between objectivity and subjectivity, the existentialist thinkers made an experiment of the themes like "individual and system; intentionality; being and absurdity; the nature and

significance of choice; the role of extreme experiences; and the nature of communication" (Macintyre 147).

Dealing with the sordid reality of human being, the existentialist philosophers also foregrounded its predicament laden with multiple choices; a man, as the existentialists observed, is condemned to be free. Tarnas observes, "He lived in constant ignorance of his future, thrown into a finite existence bounded at each by nothingness" (389). Devoid of meaning in the world where "God was dead", a man was abandoned on his own. "Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself." writes Sartre, "such is the first principle of existentialism" (*Existentialism and Human Emotions* 15). So a man has no alternative other than the struggle for his existence: "Struggle alone gave meaning" (Tarnas 389).

Kierkegaard gives much emphasis to "individualism". The concept of the individual for him was contrasted both with the concept of philosophical system and with the mass. According to Kierkegaard as Jostein Gaarder observes, "rather than searching for the Truth with a capital T, it is more important to find the kind of truth that are meaningful to the individual's life. It is important to find 'the truth for me'. He thus sets the individual, or each and everyman up against the system" (379).

Kierkegaard denounces an individual to be a part of social group, for this is to be a "specimen" in a crowd, which is equivalent to Dostoevsky's "an ant in an ant heap" (Ellmann and Fiedelson 803-4). The crowd is untruth and is coward since it pretends to have a finality that no human experience can possess. Kierkegaard writes, "For every individual who flees for refuge into the crowd and so flees in cowardice from being an individual. . . such a man contributes his share of cowardliness to the cowardliness which we know as the crowd" ("The Individual and the Crowd" 810). Nietzsche also rejects the crowd with its levelling gregariousness and its pursuit of the

"common good." He attacks to the pre-Nietzschean "free thinkers" along with Christianity, science and philosophy for suppressing individuality thereby converting the subjective being into a mere mirror of external things (Ellman and Fiedelson 804). An objective man for Nietzsche is "usually a man without substance or content, a selfless man" ("Subjective Will" 817). Subjective will and instincts, according to Nietzsche play a major role in shaping the ideas of an individual. The metaphysicians made dichotomy between good and evil, certainty and uncertainty, rational and irrational to find out the truth. For Nietzsche truth is not available in "this ephemeral, seductive, deceptive world" (818). So, Nietzsche forecasts the "second coming" of the new philosophers who will have "opposite tastes and inclinations than the previous ones" (818-19). He regards man of action as inevitable force to maintain the human existence.

Given its emphasis to the quest for selfhood, existentialism also has a "psychological subtlety" (Ellman and Fiedelson 803). As psychoanalysis also examines the human subjectivity like that of existentialism, the term "existential psychoanalysis" has been coined. "Existential psychoanalysis is a trend in psychology and psychiatry is a reaction against the psychologies based on natural science in general and of Freudian psychology in particular" (Needleman 156). In Freudian psychology emphasis is given to "unconscious"; meanings are reduced not to objectively perceptible spatiotemporal process, but to another kind of meaning, "instinctual meaning". But in Existential psychoanalysis human psyche, the very "self" is observed "from the point of others" which Sartre called in his essay Existential Psychoanalysis a "transcendental-transcendence" (*Existentialism and Human Emotions* 74). Discarding the subject-object split that defines the whole attitude of natural science and rejecting the very notion of "consciousness" the

existential psychoanalysis gives emphasis to "intentionality" and "essence". "The task of existential psychoanalysis is to apprehend the essence of each individual's like and world" (Needleman 156).

Roots of the existentialism can be traced to phenomenology and ontology. Its focus on the "intentionality" holds that everything depends upon the consciousness of an individual who perceives things other than himself as objects. "Husserl's phenomenology brackets the question of whether or not our experience points to anything beyond itself and sticks to analysis of itself" (Marino 2004). Similar to this, the ontological distinction between beings that live "for themselves" and the beings that live "in themselves" is essential in forming the ideas of existentialism. Heidegger, however criticizes the metaphysics for not raising the question properly, we live in the "Oblivion of Being." To recover Being, not as an objective fact but as a perennial question, is to go back into the ground of metaphysics, to find the roots of our existence ("Recollection of Being" 976).

Existentialism in this way examines the human condition from the perspective of "self" and subjectivity. The key issue for existentialism is the realization of existential crisis which awakens us to examine our own being.

Some Existential Philosophers

Kierkegaard: "Subjectivity"

Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855), A Danish born philosopher pioneered existentialism by emphasizing on its fundamental themes, like the concept of the individual, of choice, of dread and of paradox. Kierkegaard indeed, has propounded his doctrine in order to "expand and to defend what he took to be true Christianity" ("Existentialism" 149). He has been regarded as a theistic existentialist for his belief in religious mysticism. Along with Kierkegaard the theistic existentialists, like Karl

Jaspers, Martin Buber and Gabriel Marcel, argue that the anxiety of modern man can be entertained by submitting oneself to the will of God without the intervention of Christian doctrine and ecclesiastical church. Kierkegaard himself discarded the pretence of church and Danish Lutheranism for trying to objectifying the God (Macintyre "Kierkegaard" 336-340).

"Truth" for Kierkegaard is essentially subjective. By this he meant that only these truths are "true for me" (Gaarder, "Kierkegaard" 380). By choosing inward and personal character, one makes a leap of faith in God. Faith deals with "subjective reality." It can't be questioned either from "ethical" or from "aesthetic" point of view. "Faith is absurd or paradoxical in its form" (Ellmann and Fiedelson 806-807). It is absurd to reason on one's own "subjectivity." Abraham sacrificed his son because of his faith on divine summons; it was the truth for him. "General and universal rules can not aid him here; it is an individual that he has to choose" (Macintyre "Kierkegaard" 338). The Christian doctrine and its quest for objective truth have nothing to do with Kierkegaardian concept of Christianity. He believes only in the existence of God, and not in any doctrine, and insists that "Christianity is therefore not a doctrine, but the fact that God has existed" ("Faith" 857).

Kierkegaard confronted to the Hegelian "system of logic"; Hegelian system was for Kierkegaard an attempt to understand individual existence within a conceptual scheme of a kind that would exhibit a logically necessary connection between every individual part and the conceptual scheme of the whole universe. However, for Kierkegaard "concepts are necessarily inadequate attempts to grasp individual existence, which always evades complete conceptualization" (Macintyre "Existentialism" 147). The reality of concrete existence can't be translated into logic or language. All logical thinking employs "the language of abstraction" which

ignores the "difficulty of life." Kierkegaard writes, "The Difficulty that inheres in existence, with which the existing individual is confronted, is one that never really comes to expression in the language of abstract thought" ("Concrete Existence" 813).

So existence for Kierkegaard is to be aware of one's own "subjectivity" and only this is the "truth". For one's own existence can't be translated into language, it remains incommunicable.

Karl Jaspers: "Encompassing"

Karl Jaspers was one of the first philosophers to use the term "existentialist." Jaspers' philosophy is focused on the unlimited possibilities of "inner self", which he called *Existenz* and the outermost boundaries of the world. According to Jaspers, as Koestenbaum observes, existence is mysterious and is full of the binary dependence like those of freedom coexisting with dependence, communication with solitude, life with death; the one gives meaning to other. Likewise, the existence of one is revealed by other. "I am only to the extent that another *Existenz* reflects me" ("Karl Jaspers" 256). None can live in seclusion; the cord of inter-subjectivity might be communication. Jaspers describes true communication as the feeling that men have known each other since eternity. Jaspers says "The individual cannot become human by himself. Self-being is only in communication with another self-being" ("The Will" 867). In fact the search for existence cannot be accomplished in the abyss of absolute estrangement. "Unique individuals, in reaching toward each other, reach toward the universal human truth that is presupposed by all attempts to communicate" (Ellman and Fiedelson 807). Jaspers would postulate a Being that is the ground of existence which is also a transcendent absolute implied by all communication and every effective relation. Jaspers calls this "the Encompassing." Encompassing is a complete amalgamation of subjectivity and objectivity where "I and the world are identical with

encompassing; the severance between subject and object disappears. It is all beyond idealism, materialism and naturalism" (Koestenbaum 257). This is a situation where every boundary and horizon is broken. Jaspers writes, Encompassing is not a "horizon within every determinate mode of Being and truth emerges for us, but rather that within which every particular horizon is enclosed as in something absolutely comprehensive which is no longer visible as a horizon at all [. . .]" ("The Encompassing" 878).

The Encompassing is not easy to access; one needs to have a sincere devotion to have it. The way which lead a man to the encompassing, as Jaspers suggests is "Transcendence". He mentions the term "Transcendence" to mean man's personal, devoted and committed effort to reach the encompassing. Transcendence stands for the "Deity", which for Jaspers is the "real being" (879).

Martin Buber: "I – Thou"

Born in Vienna, this religious existentialist relates one's existence to other men, to nature and to God. The only question is "whether the relation shall be abstract (ed) by objective, an I to an 'It' or an immediate an 'I' to a 'thou' " (Ellman and Fiedelson 807). Buber coins the terms "I – It" and "I –Thou" as the "primary words." He writes, "Primary words do not describe something that might exist independently of them, but being spoken they bring about existence" ("The Primary Words" 870). The "I-It" relationship stands for the past and so it is not a "genuine" relationship. The "I" in such relationship is "Perfectly alone", as "It" doesn't respond me. But the 'I-Thou' relationship, instead is a genuine because it is between me and the "Thou" that addresses me. The whole universe is seen in the light of the "Thou", and not the "Thou" in the light of the universe. In the 'I-It' relationship only part of ourselves is involved. In contrast to this in the 'I-Thou' relationship, the whole being must be

involved. (Wyschogrod, 409-411). Being an objective relationship, the 'I-It' relationship is only for the past. This is so because all objective knowledge about a human being is knowledge about past. "In the 'I-Thou' relationship, we are genuinely living in the present because we are prepared for any and every response to our address" (410). Bubor's analysis is much significant, in the religious context. According to Bubor in the dialogue between man and God, each one is other's "Thou". Sooner or later, the "I-Thou" relationship turns into "I-It". But our "I-Thou" relationship with the God can never turn into "I-It" because God is Absolute.

Nietzsche: Subjective Will and Objective Truth

With his outstanding talent, Nietzsche holds the key of the Western intelligentsia. "He is the night watchman of the history of Greek Philosophy: one cannot enter it without obtaining the key from him" (Kaufmann 505). Philosophy gets refined and redefined in Nietzsche. He challenged not only the metaphysics but also announced the "Death of God". Exploring and evaluating the human "subjectivity" he thus contributed in formulating the existentialism.

Nietzsche, like Kierkegaard, emphasizes upon subjective intentions and activities of individuals; he rejects objective truth. An objective man, for Nietzsche, "is only an instrument –he is a mirror" ("Subjective Will" 810). The objective man for him "is something that wishes to be recognized and understood"(816). However it has been the tradition of the western intelligentsia to objectify the truth. They linger around the binary opposition. The real truth or the "Thing in itself" can't be objectified. Nietzsche reproaches the Christianity for objectifying the God. He says, "The Christian conception of God-God as a god of the sick, God as a spider, God as spirit-is one of the most corrupt conceptions of the divine ever attained on earth"

("The Death of God and Antichrist" 912). Even to think of God is to go against life; there is no God in the world.

As the pre-Nietzschian metaphysics couldn't value the human subjectivity, he handed over this responsibility to the philosophers of the future. Nietzsche expected them to say "My judgment is my judgment, to which hardly anyone else has a right" ("The Free Thinker" 814). The subjective will, indeed, can't be brought into "objective truth". The abyss between them remains untranslatable.

Heidegger: "Da-Sein"

Martin Heidegger is concerned to the question "What is to be?" (Greene 459). For Heidegger "to be" is "to-be-in-the world". "The hyphens are deliberate; they represent an effort to undercut the subject-object split" (Needleman 155). Heidegger looks upon the man essentially interrelated to the world. Just as consciousness is not a separate entity that subsequently relates to objects, so man is not a separate being who then encounters his world. He is his disclosure of world. That's why, Heidegger uses the term "Da-sein", which in German means "being there for human existence" (Marino 298). Heidegger differentiates "Being" with beings; the former as the determiner of the latter. He held the belief that man should "face explicitly the problem of Being; he has to determine his own existence, create his own possibilities and make choices and commitment" (Perry et al. 756). For this we need to understand the being of Da-sein, "for it is only in Da-sein that being of Being reveals itself. Da-sein is a being that relates itself to being in care and Concern" (Marino 298). Human being is always already in the world Human being exists as anticipation of its own possibilities; "it exists in advance of itself and grasps its situation as challenge to its own power"(Greene 459-60). The essence of man, for Heidegger, is appropriation of his essence, his making is his own.

The human world differs from the objective world because of the element of possibility which man is always equipped with. An object can never express the essence of man because that essence has yet to be his being as his own. So, as Jacob Needleman observes, "Human time and space differ from objective time and space in that they are essentially related to man's determination of himself and his world"(156).

Sartre: Multiplicity of Choices

Jean Paul Sartre is regarded as one of the avant-garde figures for developing "existentialism" to its maturity. Searching the value of human life in a Godless world, he himself put in the group of atheistic existentialist. What is important for him is not the God, but the "human subjectivity." Since there is no God, man himself has to define himself. In man "existence precedes essence." It means that "first of all, man exists, turns up, appears on the scene and only afterwards, defines himself" (*Existentialism and Human Emotion* 15).

According to Sartre there is none to control human being, he is completely free. As a free man, he has to take his responsibility himself. Since he has no pre-determined essence the man has to loiter around the multiple choices to make himself. "Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself. Such is the first principle of existence" (15). Man is responsible for what he is. The man can't escape from the multiplicity of choices, and when he chooses, he chooses for the whole mankind. Such grand responsibility imposed upon an individual generates "anguish", "forlornness" and "despair" to a man. In their writing about existentialism, Ellman and Fiedelson writes, "Though an authentic choice aims at the future and is constructive, in the moment of choice a man is forsaken –abandoned to his total freedom" ("Introduction" 805). For Sartre freedom stands for the freedom's sake; it is a will both to itself and to the freedom of others. He writes, "I cannot make liberty unless I

make that of others equally my aim. Consequently, when I recognize, as entirely authentic . . . that he is a free being who cannot in any circumstances but will his freedom, at the same time I realize that I cannot will the freedom of others" ("Authenticity" 842-843).

Thus Sartre clarifies the fundamental values of human subjectivity. "I" is the human-being and nothing else, according to Sartre, responsible for his existence.

Camus: Absurd Freedom

Grown up amidst the World War period, this Algerian borne philosopher Albert Camus stands in the line of existentialist thinkers with his deep meditation to search the meaning of human life. His philosophy deals with the untiring quest for the meaning of human life in this cold and fragile world. Gordon Marion puts, "It is this terrible combination of the human hunger for meaning and the indifference of the universe that casts formula for Camus' important and related concepts of the absurd [. . .]" ("Albert Camus" 439). According to Camus, life has no meaning; it is absurd like that of Corinthian king Sisyphus, who suffered an eternal punishment for disobeying the God. Even though Sisyphus is aware that his task of rolling up and down of the stone has no meaning, but he is condemned to do. Likewise the modern man also as Camus says, "works every day in his life at the same tasks and this fate is no less absurd" ("Absurd Freedom" 851).

Human being is accursed with "consciousness". This very consciousness brings absurd into life. So long as man is alive, absurd accompanies him. Camus says, "Living is keeping the absurd alive" (845). According to Camus, it is futile to think of freedom. There is no freedom as such; this is merely an illusion. Before a man is contracted with absurd, he enjoys flowery dreams. "But after the absurd

everything is upset" (847). He comes to know that he was not really free but the slave of his liberty.

According to Camus, when absurdity enlightens men that there is no future, they give themselves up to the God "by accepting his rules" or they acknowledge the consciousness of absurdity as a reliable guidance to revolt against it. "For if his life is hopeless and meaningless, he is at once liberated and put in a position to exercise his freedom in a revolt against absurdity" (Ellman and Fiedelson 806). Of course Sisyphus is a model for this. One has no alternatives other than struggle for the existence. "The struggle itself toward the height is enough to fill a man's heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy" ("Absurd Freedom" 852).

Existential Crisis

Our observation of existentialism so far shows that it is all about the existential crisis. Discussing the terms like dread, absurdity, anxiety, angst, despair, alienation and incommunicability etc. the existential thinkers put forth the existential crises of an individual. In this regard, Ellman and Fiedelson writes, "The distinctive existentialist vocabulary turning such categories as being, absurdity, choice, dread, despair, commitment is like a situational survey or map courageously drawn at a moment of supreme crisis" (803).

Anxiety, Dread and Nothingness

The term "anxiety" or "angst" is derived from the French word "angoisee" (dread) which is used by the existentialists like Kierkegaard and Heidegger to describe "the state of mind of a person who has begun to depart from habit and to understand his existential condition" (805). As soon as an individual is conscious of his existence, he is contracted with dread. So long as individual is educated and informed of the possibility of insecurity, Kierkegaard believes, "He must have honest

towards possibility and must have faith" ("Dread as Education of Faith" 840). Thus, Kierkegaard observes dread as an opportunity which educates an individual the essence of faith. But "If at the beginning of his education he misunderstands the anguish of dread", says Kierkegaard, "so that it leads him to faith but away from faith, then he is lost" (841). Dread incites us to the eternal faith in God. Only those, who are honest to faith, can be a great man like "Socrates", who accepted the poisoned goblet. Being a Christian thinker, Kierkegaard interpreted existential dread in terms of original sin and urged the people to submit oneself to the mercy of God.

Unlike Kierkegaard, Heidegger interprets dread in terms of the ground reality that is "Nothing". His dread is as Ellmann and Fiedelson comments "the presence of a negative infinity, a loss of both personal and universal being, an entry into positive Nothingness" ("Introduction" 805). Heidegger differentiates "dread" with "anxiety" and "fear". Anxiety is a mood that comes over us only too easily. Dread also differs from "fear" for "Fear of is about something" but "Dread reveals Nothing" ("Dread" 838). So fear reveals some region of the world as threatening, some element as a threat. In dread, as in fear the "I" grasps being threatened, but unlike fear, dread has no direct object, there is nothing in the world that is threatening. Thus the dread is beyond definition, "it represents the essential impossibility of defining the What" (838). When one is contracted with dread, he comes to face "Nothing" that is "Death". One is helpless and can not save his self from being collapsed. This experience of one's own death or "nothingness" in dread can act as a spur to authenticity that the real possession of life is death.

Absurdity

Human being is supposed to be superior to that of the animal because of his consciousness. But in the school of existentialism the very term "consciousness" has

been the major cause to bring tension to man. It is because of consciousness, the human being is always in peril. As he comes to know about the burden of life, the meaninglessness of activities and an unknown fear of death he gradually falls into absurdity. "If I were a tree among trees, a cat among animals, this life would have meaning [. . .]" (Camus 844). But as a human being accursed with consciousness he can find no meaning, and remain absurd. Condemned to be free, he has multiple choices but possesses limited power. "A human being is free but at the same time in bondage; a chooser whose power is politically and historically constrained" (Priest "Freedom" 181). If there was God, things would have different. Since there is no God, as Nietzsche announces, "We have killed him-you and I have killed him" ("Dead God" 29), freedom as such has no meaning. "The absurdity peculiar to this problem comes from the fact that the very notion that makes the problem of freedom possible and takes away all its meaning" (Camus 846).

Thus the absurd man realizes that he is not free. Haunted of dread, he tries to escape away but finds no way. For the objective world is not supporting enough; he turns inside himself towards subjectivity and goes on abstracting. He comes to realize his individuality and imagine its' absolute. But as soon as the subjectivity is confronted with the objectivity the former gets collapsed. The concreteness of existence can't be brought into the language of abstraction: "that is truly difficult" (Kierkegaard "Concrete Existence" 814).

Thus lingering into subjectivity also can't help an individual. So long as subjectivity doesn't apprehend the objective world or the objectivity itself can't be brought out into the language of abstraction; "I" is compelled to commit failure of communication. Absurdity is perilously haunting the modern people where the God is dead; human value and institution work no more and the hollow of war is always

terrifying the people. Failure is pervasive everywhere, there is no accepted integrated world picture; everything is meaningless. Human existence is an absurd existence as it is brought into light by Samuel Beckett. In Beckett's literature absurd existence is a play. As in his play *Endgame*, the life of modern people is fragmented, haunted with death and is incommunicable. Martin Esslin writes, "For a while the happenings on the stage are absurd, they yet remain recognizable as somehow related to real life with its absurdity. So that eventually the spectators are brought face to face with the irrational side of their existence" ("The Theatre of Absurd" 1095).

There is no dialogue; language is not ample or is ambivalent; it can't be the vehicle of delivering message. This absurdity is fostering into failure of communication.

Alienation and Masochism

Sartre observes the 'Other' as "being-for-others" in terms of alienation of self. Self-alienation or the estrangement of the Self both from the world and from itself has been a familiar existential theme. Petrovic puts it as a split of self into two parts; one belongs to essence and the other to existence. He writes, "The self-alienated man in such a case is a man who is not in fact what he is in essence : a man whose actual existence does not correspond to his human essence" ("Alienation" 79). Petrovic seems to say that one's own existence doesn't belong to himself, which indicates the essence of "Other". Sartre also holds the similar vision. He writes, "I cannot obtain any truth whatsoever about myself, except through the mediation of another. The other is indispensable to my existence [. . .]" ("The common condition of Man" 868). One's own existence is revealed through the intermediation of other. Even to know who he is he has to put out of himself in "Other". So long as he is engaged unreflectively in a certain practice he is nothing; he is absorbed in the world and does

not experience himself as having an outside. However, when he becomes aware of being looked at he becomes aware of being or doing something. So who he is, is a matter of his "being-for-others". Sartre says "The Other looks at me and as such he holds the secret of my being, he knows what I am. Thus the profound meaning of my being is outside of me, imprisoned in an absence" ("Others" 226). Even though one depends upon other, there is a conflicting nature between them. The failure of the one motivates the adoption of the "Other". In trying to define his own essence through the exercise of free choice his "I" strives to repress the freedom of "Other".

Simultaneously the other is doing the same. On the other hand, assimilation of "thing-in-itself" with the Other is impossible because the Other remains no more an "Other" as soon as it assimilates to the "in-itself". There remains a conflicting relationship between "I" and "Other". Sartre writes to justify this fact as "While I experience myself as an object for the Other and while I project assimilating him in and by means of this experience, the Other apprehends me as an Object in the midst of the world and does not project identifying me with himself" ("Others" 229).

So long as the "Other" is an object to "I", "I" also stands for the "Other" as an object. Freedom of "I" depends upon the freedom of "Other". "Other moulds my being and makes me be, it confers values upon me and removes them from me [. . .]" (230).

Sartre shows the conflict of "I" and "Other" even between the lovers. Love is a conflict because the love of the lover can always be withdrawn. Love is freely bestowed and freely withheld. To love freely implies the possibility of not loving. Likewise to be loved freely implies the possibility of not being loved. So for Sartre love is an "enterprise" which provokes "Conflict" and destruction. As to love, is to

wish to be loved. "The more I am loved, the more I lose my being, the more I am thrown back on my own responsibilities [. . .]" (241). Thus love destroys oneself.

Since one's own existence is relied upon other; "I" is nothing more than an object. As "I" realizes that its subjectivity as an obstacle, the "self" is not in its own access; and so "I" falls into despair. Surrender of "I" to the "Other" generates "shame in it and consequently "I" becomes "Masochist". Sartre writes, "Masochism, like sadism is the assumption of guilt. I am guilty due to the very fact that I am an object, I am guilty toward myself since I consent to my absolute alienation" (242).

Masochism is an attempt not to do by itself but to be done (by other). "I" must possess the "intuitive apprehension" of the object which is projected by the "Other", which in principle is impossible. So as a masochist "I" commits failure. "I" perceives the objectivity of the "Other" from its own subjectivity, which may not be "Other's" subjectivity; hence "I" fails to communicate.

This observation of existentialism so far has presented that the real communication is impossible. The aforementioned existential tenets all contribute failure of communication which this study will explore in the *Notes from Underground* and *Metamorphosis*.

3. Exploring Failure of Communication: A Textual Analysis of

Notes from Underground and Metamorphosis

Pangs of Consciousness

If I were tree among trees, a cat among animals, this life would have meaning, or rather this problem would not arise, for I should belong to this world. I should be this world to which I am now opposed by my whole consciousness and my whole insistence upon familiarity. This ridiculous reason is what sets me in opposition to all creation. I cannot cross it out with a stroke of the pen. What I believe to be true I must therefore preserve. What seems to me so obvious, even against me, I must support. And what constitutes the basis of that conflict, of that break between the world and my mind, but the awareness of it? If therefore I want to preserve it, I can through a constant awareness, ever revived, ever alert. This is what, for the moment, I must remember. At this moment the absurd, so obvious and yet so hard to win, returns to a man's life and finds its home there. (Camus, "Absurd Freedom" 844)

As observed by the school of the Existentialism, human being is doomed to be conscious and so to realize his own existential crisis. Tragedy commences as soon as "consciousness" infiltrates the "self". In line to the aforementioned opinion of Camus', Dostoevsky and Kafka also observe the vulnerability of human existence on the verge of consciousness. The underground man, the title character of Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground* is a victim of his being "conscious" of abject poverty which is similar to the destiny of Gregor Samsa, the protagonist of Kafka's *Metamorphosis*. Each of their struggles to defy this abject reality ends with the series of failures

justifying the absurdity of human existence. Feeling of insecurity is obviously there; dread of unseen future convulses them severely. Acme of consciousness is heightened in such a way that makes them experience to have metamorphosed into a "monstrous vermin" and a "mouse" respectively. The more they become conscious of their existence, the more they find themselves in crisis. Like the Underground man in *Notes from Underground* says, "too great a lucidity is disease", consciousness, indeed terrifies them (93). They have no alternatives else than remaining in silence or aggressive which can't help them to cope with the world, thus become estranged. Estrangement from the world is their sordid reality, which they experience time and again by coming across failure of communication.

Underground Mentality: An Exploration of "Self"

As soon as the protagonists of both of these novellas become conscious of the sordid reality of their existence, they imprison themselves inside their own subjectivity. The 'hole' in which the underground man hides himself and the closed room where Gregor is imprisoned suggest their subjectivity where they explore the 'self'. It is through his consciousness that the Underground man finds himself as a dismal man. He reveals his realization in the very beginning of the *Notes*, "I am a sick man...a mean man. There's nothing attractive about me" (90). Gregor also encounters the similar pangs of consciousness. His waking up from an "unsettling dreams" is suggestive enough for his being conscious of his existence under the mechanized world of Capitalism; he finds himself as an animal having human mind. Kafka sketches existential angst in such a way that portrays the pathetic condition of man. The inaugurating lines of *Metamorphosis*, which go like "When Gregor Samsa woke up one morning from unsettling dreams, he found himself changed in his bed into a monstrous vermin" (3), almost shock to the reader. Everything was all right

before these protagonists became conscious of their existence. But so long as they realize the absurdity, failure and dread of life, they feel despair and plunge down into the underground exploring the "self". Like the Underground man who says, "Now, then what does a decent man like to talk about most? Himself, of course. So I will talk about myself" the novellas unfold the bitter reality of failure, which these protagonists come across representing the destiny of human existence (93).

For the external world is not supporting enough, the protagonists have no way else than escaping inside the world of subjectivity and arbitrating in favour of the 'self' to consolidate it. Such escape obviously denotes their estrangement from the outer world. Since the concrete reality which Kierkegaard says "definite something" and abstract thought can't be brought together, failure of communication becomes obvious which is manifested in these novellas ("Concrete Existence", 812). The Underground man, like Shakespeare's Hamlet thinks too much but he can't materialize his thought. After colliding with a "six-footer husky" officer, he plans to revenge and so indulges himself in necessary preparation. He collects information about him and composes a short story caricaturing the officer and sends it to the *National Journal* but the story is not published. Obviously afflicted with humiliation, he is convulsed with the pangs of consciousness, which won't be calmed until his revenge is fulfilled. He goes on abstracting about his get-up, dialogue and duel. He says: "I even spent two or three sleepless nights thinking about it" (134). Pangs of consciousness lead a man towards unrest convulsing him with unlimited choices. Had the Underground man not been aware of being humiliated, he wouldn't have suffered. The only reason of suffering is consciousness. He loiters around his world with different projections of mind, but can't become satisfied. It is only in 'dreaming' that he gets success, the reality can't be apprehended and so he gets failed. When the moment comes to materialize his

abstract plan, to take revenge with the "husky" officer, he already shivers his feet. He records his experience as:

I closed my eyes and we banged hard against each other, shoulder against shoulder. I didn't yield an inch and walked past him as an equal! He never returned around, pretending not to have notice anything. But I know he was just pretending I'm sure of it to this day. Of course, I got the worst of the collision for he was much heavier.

(135)

Sense of humiliation keeps on pushing him to revenge the officer. He can't remain calm until he slaps on the officer's face. The underground man realizes Officer's throwing him away from the window as an effacement of his existence. This very realization of existential crisis inspires him to undertake a fight with the robust officer. But at a time, he is also aware of himself to be weaker than the officer. This conscience forbids him from materializing his plans. He is loitering around 'do' and 'Not do'. Since he himself doubts in his prowess, he fails to communicate his abstraction. If he had told the officer that he is hurt by the officer's behaviour, perhaps the officer would have begged pardon. But he can't say so because he is already garlanded with the feeling of "civilized" man. Being an intellectual man, he thinks the officer as inferior. However, he can't materialize his own superiority over the officer, but remains unexpressed closing his eyes only to get "the worst of the collision". Surprisingly, the officer is unaware of the event. Failure of communication inspired by pangs of consciousness is crystal clear in this event. It is only in the dreaming he can escape away from the pangs of consciousness. So, back at home, the Underground man sets for a dream for three months. Dreaming indeed is an underground mentality, which is accompanied only by the 'Self' of an individual.

The destiny, which the Underground man undergoes, is similar to the destiny of Gregor. His realization of being metamorphosed into a monstrous vermin is an example of abstraction, which symbolizes Gregor as a socially misfit individual. Gregor's awakening from the dream suggests his entering into consciousness. He doesn't transform into a bug himself, but he finds such destiny. A lesser human being living a difficult life under the mechanized industrialism, Gregor is a victim of the modern world. Not only Gregor, but whole of his family is dependent upon him. He was responsible to reimburse his parents' debt. A sales boy, Gregor does not have a favourable situation regarding the trades. The job was his compulsion, which has no charms. The following lines unfold his desolation of the job which he feels as soon as he finds himself being transformed into a bug:

Oh God," he thought "what a gruelling job I've picked! Day in, day out—on the road. The upset of doing business is much worse than the actual business in the home office, and besides, I've got the torture of travelling, worrying about changing trains, eating miserable food at all hours, constantly seeing new faces, no relationships that last or get more intimate. To the devil with it all! (4-5)

These lines clearly manifest the cause of his metamorphosis. The bug is a metaphor which he compares with his "self". As a sales man, he comes across the places, but finds no intimate relationship other than business. He is captive inside the wide range of business as a means of commodities. He is a dehumanized creature because of the unrest and unfavourable business, which is on the other hand, is his compulsion. Given his realization as a bug, he is estranged from the human society and thus his expressions are incommunicable to the outer world. He makes a continuous struggle to communicate, but none perceives him. Even the family members do not

understand his agony. The room in which he is imprisoned suggests the barriers of his responsibilities. Unless he is able to fulfil his responsibilities, he can't join the human world. The four-walls of his injured subjectivity barricade his words inside the room and so he fails to communicate. The whole novella is a presentation of Gregor's imagination about the destiny of a socially misfit man. The plot of the story can be analyzed in terms of one's own abstraction of his existence. Like the underground man Gregor also is a victim of his consciousness, but he is not as active as the underground man to strive for his existence. He remains paralyzed inside the dark corridor only to be "dead as a doornail" (40).

Dread: The Hunting Terror

Another burning element of the pangs of consciousness that paralyzes these protagonists is the dread. An unknown fear of uncertain future always convulses them. The underground man is always afraid of being dismissed from his social status, which he thinks as a "highly developed civilized man" (183). For he is aware that his social status belongs to the other, so he is frightened. Likewise, Gregor also is haunted with the dread of losing his job, which would ultimately mean death. Dread infiltrates his self as soon as he becomes conscious of an unfavourable situation of the business. Because of the unfavourable condition, he couldn't have performed well. Price of life depended upon his performance. Like the selling objects, he was simply a commodity. He would sell the commodities that would in turn determine his price. His sole existence depended upon the business. There was not any relationship with the boss other than business. "He was a tool of the boss, without brains or backbone" (5). As an object, he was subject to demolish in case of his ill performance. This is the dread, which Gregor is haunted with. In a way, his being metamorphosed into a bug can be taken as an entity of his heightened conscious of being kicked away from

the job. His dread is materialized when he hears his manager saying: "And your job is not the most secure. . . . Your performance of late has been very unsatisfactory . . . Mr. Samsa, such a thing cannot be tolerated" (9). These were the words, which Gregor was haunted most. The reality of unfavourable situation paralyzes him as a bug. The pangs of consciousness, which pierced the thorn of dread into his heart, strived to justify his metamorphosis. It is obvious that his being transformed into a vermin symbolizes his inability to cope with the world as a salesman. Gregor makes a pleas; he cries to forgive his mistakes, but "No plea of Gregor's helped, no plea was even understood [. . .]" (14). For his voice was the voice of a vermin which symbolically represents the destiny of a socially misfit man, his expression is not understood by the other. Thus he fails to communicate. Not only the society, but also his family members also behave him ruthlessly. His father throws rotten apples on his back, which inflames his injuries. His mother, who gave him birth, segregates him by evacuating his belongings from the room. And the sister, the only member to care him also declares him as a 'creature'. Such series of events can be observed as the result of the dread, which Gregor is suffering from. Dread not only paralyzes him but consequently detaches him from the human society; leads him to the failure of communication and ultimately causes his extinct from his existence. Gregor dies only after all means of communication, including the music, are barred from him.

Like Gregor, the underground man is also haunted with dread. He is highly conscious of his social status as an intellectual "civilized" man and is always terrified of losing his identity. Inability to maintain his identity as a civilized man would mean for him to live as a "nothing" which would be equal to death. This is the cause why, he boasts upon his friends, quarrels with them and remains restless all the time. He pretends to be superior than other, but in reality, he is haunted with dread. He is

terrified in such a way that, he unknowingly develops conflicting emotions. He boasts as a civilized man, and at a time he says himself to be a "mean" and "inferior" man. He talks out of emotion and convulses with remorse later on. Thus, being terrified with dread, he can't cope with the outer world and commits failure of communication. Victim of dread, he further wants to victimize other by poisoning dread. He weaves a thought-provoking story about a prostitute who died out of consumption to generate dread to Liza, a prostitute whom he meets in course of rushing to the brothel to take revenge with his friends. He pierces gold pins into her heart by lecturing homilies. He says to Liza, "You'll lose everything here, everything will go without return [. . .]" (176).

He poisons her with dread for two reasons: he wants to save his social identity, which he himself is dread of losing, and on the other hand, he wanted to lotion the burning wound of humiliation which he had got from his friends and since the friends had already departed from there, he wanted to take revenge by humiliating Liza instead. However, he exactly didn't know what he was speaking. Out of emotion, he pretends to be her real beloved and invites her to his house. But back at home, it becomes the haunting terror for him. The dread of her arrival nearly maddens him. Dostoevsky portrays the tension of being conscious of unlimited barriers. Man for him as Edward Wasilek puts, "is limited by society, economic conditions, laws, history, the Church, and especially by God. He is classified defined and fixed by hundred institutions and a thousand conditions" ("Dostoevsky" 411). To be conscious of such condition is the main reason of such dread. Liza's arrival would demolish his social existence because after all she was a prostitute, and on the other hand his abject reality of poverty also would be revealed that could further hurt his ego because he had boasted himself to be an elite one. Such pangs of consciousness make him lose

his temper; he shouts at his servant Apollon without logical reasons. For a time being, tries to tone down his tension by webbing positive imagination about Liza, that he would love her, teach her and enable her to have her social identity. But, it turns over within a moment. Upon her arrival he roars:

I have been shaking with fear these last three days because I thought you might have come. And shall I tell you what it was worried me most? The thought that I had tried to pass myself as a hero to you and find me in my lousy dressing gown, penniless and repulsive. I just told you I wasn't ashamed of my poverty. Well, I am ashamed of it more than anything else [. . .]. (196)

Such types of his expressions reflect the pangs of consciousness and also show how seriously he is injured with the dread, Haunted and terrified by dread, he can't maintain the shared environment between Liza and himself and thus commits failure of communication. He strives to escape from the reality, but the destiny compels him to plunge into it. He wants to preserve his "self" by effacing that of other's self, but he himself becomes its victim. Even at the last moment, he strives to maintain his boasting by providing some Kopek to Liza so as to withhold her into the status of prostitute, but finds himself failed for she doesn't accept the money. Since it was obviously a fake idea, which he had materialized to solace his injured self, so he fails to communicate and burst into tears.

Alienation of Self

The school of the Existentialism takes alienation of self as an essential predicament of human existence. The 'self' by nature is alienated between 'I' and 'Other'. To understand one's own self, an individual has to objectify his self. 'Other' is an indispensable element for human existence because it is through other's

intermediation that an individual comes to know about his self. In regards to this Sartre says a man "recognizes that he cannot be anything. . . unless others recognize him as such. One cannot obtain any truth whatsoever about myself, except through the mediation of another" ("The Common Condition of Man" 868). 'I' as a projection of 'other' is always prone to failure because the projection of one may not be realistic and accurate to the other. The underground man's finding himself as a 'mean man' and Gregor's observation as a monstrous vermin can be observed in terms of objectifying the 'self' as 'other', in the other words, they are observing themselves from other's perspectives. Since the projected self and the real self do not match to each other, they suffer a gruesome failure. On the other hand, as the 'other' holds the secret of 'I', there remains always a conflicting relationship between 'I' and 'other'. Sartre says, "Each attempt is the death of the other that is the failure of one motivates the adoption of the other. Thus there is no dialectic for my relations toward the other but rather a circle—although each attempt is enriched by the failure of the other" ("Others" 227).

Such hostile relationship between 'I' and 'Other' always leads individuals to failure of communication because there can't be shared environment between them. As soon as the underground man comes across other, he becomes hostile for he is motivated with the thought that his superiority gets maintained only through effacing other's superiority. But the 'other' is not ready to accept such of his boasting because the same rule is applied to the other. In a way it is a clash of 'ego' that generates failure of communication. One of such examples can be traced in the farewell party. As per his projection, he believes that he is the only superior "civilized" one in front of his friends which the others are not ready to accept. According to them he was a "coward" man, but he wanted to revolt against such projection. He "wanted to show

the lot of them that I wasn't the coward . . . dreamed of triumphing, conquering, forcing them to love me for, let's say, the loftiness of my thought and my incontestable wit" (148). He joins the farewell party to materialize his projection but immediately finds himself as an unwanted guest. The failure of his projection is manifested in the very beginning of the party when he comes to know that he had not been informed about the changed schedule of the party. He wanted to show his wit to them but finds himself to be stupid. The underground man further grinds the conflict asking an irrelevant question about Zverkov's "remuneration" to bully his friends. Each one is hostile to other. The one strives to efface other's existence so as to establish his own. Such hostile behaviour leads them to commit failure of communication.

The underground man undergoes the similar destiny while communicating with Liza. Given her involvement in a commercial sex working, he projects her that she has no wits to understand his ironical lectures. So he ridicules at her mocks over her and also poisons dread by pretending to love her. By demoralizing her, he could establish his superiority and also could find his moral existence which he was demoralized by his friends. However, here also his projection gets failed. The following conversation between the underground man and Liza manifests this failure:

By the time I came to the end of my speech, I was sincerely excited, and now my pride began to suffer. The silence continued. I even felt like nudging her.

"Why you. . ." she started, but cut off.

But I understood. There was something different in her voice, some new quiver; it was no longer harsh, coarse and resigned, but soft, and ashamed, so that I myself felt ashamed, and guilty.

"What?" I asked with tender curiosity.

"Why you. . ."

What?"

"Why you're . . . just like a book", she said, and I thought I caught a sarcastic note in her voice again.

That pinched me painfully. It wasn't what I expected. (174)

The conversation shows that each one is objectifying to the other but get fail to understand each other. Like Liza is an object to the underground man, he is also object to her. He boasts homilies to her, recites his poetic lectures to show his wit, but he is just an open book to her. A book comes to life only after someone reads to it. The dots are very suggestive which indicates the gaps of the participants to understand each other. Monologue is more prevalent rather than dialogue. Subjective projection can't be brought out to expression. Thus the failure of communication is a reality of human existence. All sorts of communications are fake communications, because the participants do not know each other's projection and roll around the illusion. Dostoevsky justifies this reality of human being by means of the underground man.

"Man is all the time outside of himself;" says Sartre, "it is in the projecting and losing himself beyond himself that he makes man to exist [. . .]" ("The Common Condition of Man" 869). The "self" is vulnerably dependent to the other. It is enlivened in the hands of 'other'. 'I' gets its identity the way 'other' defines it. Like the underground man presents the sordid predicament of the Self, Gregor Samsa also undergoes the similar destiny only to prove that human existence is full of failure. Gregor is the victim of 'others' definition to him as a 'monstrous vermin'. He knows that he is not a bug, but he is compelled to accept other's definition and so is detached

from human society. His inability to cope with the competitive industrial environment segregates him from society and subsequently from the family. He is projected merely as an object whose expressions are not communicable to the ordinary human beings.

The setting of *Metamorphosis* is suggestive enough to portray the human predicament. Gregor is imprisoned inside the room. It suggests his detachment from the society and on the other hand, it also suggests the absence of "other" which is essential for his existence. His detachment compels him to turn inside his subjectivity. Even though he is defined to be a bug, he still possesses a human sensitivity. He strives to defy other's projection towards him as a creature by pleading that he will come out the room very soon. He even pleads the manager that he will join the train, but his expressions are not understood by others. He projects them to be cooperative towards his pathetic condition, which he has undergone due to the unfavourable condition of business. But his projections are failed. As a business man, he was simply an object like raw materials and so he is kicked away given his ill performance. Likewise he was a supporting object to his family. By portraying the hostile nature of human being, Kafka also adds up the existential notion that there is no any family relationship. Every one is a single individual whose existence depending upon other. Gregor would get love and respects from his family members so long as he was able to provide them support. But such relationship is changed into enmity; he becomes the burden to his own family. He expects love and care from his family, but gets hatred and abhorrence instead. His agony is not heard, his injury is not realized. He becomes a scapegoat of failure of communication.

He struggles to his best inside the dark room. Times and again he wants to come outside the room to join the human society. But the more he tries to come out,

the more he is pushed inside the cell. He wants to say that he is their family member, but he is perceived as a gigantic creature, every one is screamed of him.

Music is understood to be the universal language of communication. Even after Gregor is perceived as a bug, he hopefully tries to convince the other that he can understand the language of music. So he crawls towards his sister who was playing a violin. But his arrival to the meeting room brings a blunder to the family members; he is misunderstood. The following lines manifest this misunderstanding:

"My dear parents" said his sister and by way of an introduction pounded her hand on the table "things can't go on like this. Maybe you don't realize it, but I do. I won't pronounce the name of my brother in front of this monster, and so all I say is: we have to try to get rid of it. We've done every thing humanly possible to take care of it and to put up with it; I don't think anyone can blame us in the least.

"She is absolutely right", said his father to himself. His mother, who still could not catch her breath, began to cough dully behind her hand a wild look in her eyes.

...

"If he could understand us", his father repeated and by closing his eyes, absorbed his daughter's conviction of the impossibility of the idea, "then maybe we could come to an agreement with him. But the way things are [. . .]." (37-38)

The family thinks that Gregor doesn't understand their problem that is he doesn't join the business and earn for the family. However, Gregor is misunderstood for not a single word of him is perceived. Eventually when he hears the family members talking about his extinguishing, he loses his ultimate hopes and his existence is demolished. Thus he becomes a victim of failure of communication.

Masochism: The Failure Principle

Gregor's metamorphosis into a bug and the underground man's craving for being a mouse reflect their masochistic characteristics. After passing through a gradual experience of alienation of the "Self", they surpass themselves into objectivity by transcending the subjectivity. Rather than plunging into the collision of alienation, they try to consolidate themselves by surrendering into the objectivity. However, since they can't escape from the very consciousness of their own subjectivity, they fail and so remain convulsive.

Gregor's recalling of the past unveils his realization of being merely an object. As a lesser human being struggling to survive in the highly industrialized capitalist society, his existence is nothing more than a raw material of the business company. Similarly, he is a supporting object to his family. Upon realizing such destiny of his self, he finds his existence being nothing important than that of a bug. He is loaded with the burden of debt; he must be able to pay the loan of his family. He says, "Well, I haven't given up hope completely, once I've gotten the money together to pay off my parents' debt to him-that will probably take another five or six years- I'm going to do it without fail." This sort of his expression shows the overburden of his life. He is forced to justify himself as a responsible member of the family. But the situation is not supporting enough to him. Business gets declining because of the unfavourable situation, which consequently may cause his displacement from the job. It is the business only which provides him his identity. He knows that his self is defined by "Other". For he can't perform well in the business, he is ashamed of himself. His subjectivity is burned up with such conscience and so it strives to efface itself by generating the masochistic experience of dehumanization. He surrenders to the "Other's" objectification which is metaphorically projected as a bug. Comparatively, the condition which he is compelled to undergo is nothing less than that of the bug.

The underground man, on the other hand, is suffered from the "Other's" misperception towards him. His subjective conscience for himself is that he is a highly civilized, intellectual man, which is quite contrary to that of other's perception. Wherever he goes, he finds his subjectivity being collided with the objectivity which is coarsely opposite to his imagination. He makes an effort to justify his civilized self by mediating the quarrel between the "husky" six-footer officer and a boy at a tavern. But the officer finds him as a troublemaker and so he throws the underground man from the window. Likewise, his old classmates also treat him against his will. They behave him like a "Nasty spiteful, creature" (154). He is defined by "Other" which is opposite to his own. He knows that his identity depends upon "Other" even though it is opposite to him. For he is unable to be defined in accordance to his desire, he gets contracted with the "pangs of guilt" and so he surrenders his subjectivity. It can be observed in his following expression:

The phase of petty dissipation was passing; a horrible nausea came over me. I had pangs of guilt, but I tried to stifle them, for they made me unbearably sick. Gradually, however, I got used to this state too. I could get used to anything-that is, I resigned myself, accepting things rather than really getting used to them. (135-36)

Like, Gregor in *Metamorphosis*, he also develops masochism by treating himself as an object. He begins to find pleasure in pain. He doesn't care of being humiliated. Because he has already projected himself as an "Other", so he thinks that it is not his "self" that goes afflicted but that is of other's. The farewell party again traces the element of his masochistic attitude. He knows that he is an unwanted guest to his friends and he also is aware of the fact that he will be humiliated. But he forces them to include him into the party. The result is obvious; he is not only humiliated but is prone to be kicked by them.

However, subjectivity can never be effaced, because human being is doomed to be conscious. Likewise, one can't realize the intuitive apprehension of the projected object. So masochism is obviously a failure principle. Even though, Gregor capitulates himself as a bug, but he can't escape from human consciousness. As an object, he realizes himself to be a bug, but he can't tolerate the agony which the bug itself undergoes. Trying to escape from alienation, he again falls in to it. As per "Other's" projection, he is a bug. But his subjectivity is not ready to accept this projection. The abyss between these two projections cause him commit failure of communication. The underground man also goes a similar destiny. Projecting himself as an "Other" he dares to be humiliated, but he can't tolerate it for his subjectivity infiltrates him. Even after joining the farewell party as an unwanted guest, he sets for another opportunity to be further humiliated by delivering the speech. However, he becomes the victim of his subjectivity and so he can't resist the humiliation this time. He can't tolerate the intuitive apprehension of the "Other". So he returns back to subjectivity to realize the split of his 'Self'. The more he tries to taste his objectivity, the more he gets submerged by the consciousness of his subjectivity. Mismatching of subjectivity and objectivity makes him a confused personality which is why he fails to communicate. He expresses his subjective intuition but they do not meet the reality of the object. Similarly, he objectifies his self according to the "Other" but can't resist its consequences. Given his objectivity, he invites Liza to his house, but at a time his subjectivity makes him reject her arrival to his house. In this way masochism leads both of these protagonists towards failure of communication.

4. Conclusion

This study so far has made an intensive analysis of *Notes from Underground* and *Metamorphosis*, focusing in the protagonists who undergo existential crises. Due to the realization of 'Self' in an existential crisis, each of these protagonists fails to communicate. The underground man wonders around his abstract thoughts which do not help him cope with the external world. Gregor in *Metamorphosis* undergoes a similar destiny; his perception of himself as a social misfit brings him to the imagination of transforming into a bug thus segregating from the outer world. At the core of such predicament of these protagonists, there remains a pang of consciousness. Human being is doomed to be conscious which is the cause of every suffering. Absurdity, despair and dread haunt severely causing them to escape into the subjectivity.

The underground man is haunted with the fear of losing his social identity. An unknown fear of being lost from social life always convulses him. His being conscious of such existential crises instead makes him a social misfit and so he fails to cope with the outer world. To escape from the dread, he has no ways other than to escape towards subjectivity or to make a fake lecture to the others. It is only in the dream in which the underground man gets peace, because plunging into dream means to escape from the consciousness of dread. However, the abstract imagination of dream can't be brought into expression. So he fails to communicate.

Likewise, Gregor also is afflicted with the dread of losing his job. Losing of job would ultimately mean death to Gregor, an ordinary sales boy. Given the unfavourable situation of business, he was assured that he would be kicked away from the job. The anxiety inside him haunts to its acme and culminates him with his transformation into a bug. Gregor's experience reflects the predicament of a modern

man who, under the industrial world, is compelled to tolerate. In this competitive world, what is valued is not a man as a 'being' but as an object. His existence is nothing more than a raw material to be used by the industry. In case of his being unable to work, he is sure to be kicked away because there are a lot of other men to replace him in the market. The God is already dead, none can save a modern man from dying hungry in the street. Future is unpredictable, only the thing which is predictable is death. Having no way to live a life means to fall into the pit of death. Such types of dread always haunt the modern man, of which Gregor is an emblem. The dread haunts Gregor in such a way that it paralyzes him. His transformation into a bug is an example of such paralyzing. Obviously, haunted with dread, he has no way other than escaping toward his subjectivity. The more he moves towards his subjectivity, the more he becomes estranged to the outer world. Because of his estrangement, his expression is not understood by the other. Even his family members do not understand him and so they talk to get rid from him. Finally failing to communicate his inner ethos, he dies like a 'doornail'. Had he been able to communicate his inner agonies, he would not have died. But already afflicted with dread, he can't express his experience. Consciousness of dread always haunts him; paralyzed to himself, he can't communicate.

Existentialism is the study of existential crisis of human being. Using existentialism as a tool, this study has ventured to explore the human predicament. Another existential notion which has been explored is 'alienation'. Alienation has also contributed to its best to cause the aforementioned protagonists to be the victim of failure of communication. Alienation is a realization of self in its divided form. Since an individual gets his identity only through 'Other', so alienation of self between 'I' and 'Other' is indispensable. Each one is other's projection. As the projection

differs, so the people fail to communicate. The underground man projects himself as a civilized man, but others think him as a coward and spiteful creature. He projects something and finds something else. His subjective self seeks for respect, but objectively he finds humiliation. Like wise, Gregor finds himself being transformed into a bug. He doesn't transform himself, but finds to have transformed. It shows that his metamorphosis is the projection of others, not of his own. Many a times, he struggles to defy such projection, but he can't, because it is the 'Other' who defines an individual. Since he is projected as a bug, so 'Other' takes his expression as that of bug. Thus the 'Other' estranges him from human society and he becomes its victim. Moreover, since the 'Other' holds the mystery of an individual, he always becomes hostile to the 'Other'. Loss of one is the victory of 'Other'. Such type of contradiction contributes an individual to suffer from failure of communication, for the communicating partners try to finish each other rather than sharing the common environment. The underground man makes quarrel with every individual to whom he comes across. Gregor's self is effaced by transforming him into a bug. This justifies the contradictory relationship of 'I' and 'Other'.

To realize one's own self as a production of 'Other', indeed, creates guilt to an individual. Afflicted with the split of self, the underground man and Gregor try to surrender themselves to the 'Other'. Rather than colliding between 'I' and 'Other', they want to integrate the 'Self' by absolutely projecting themselves as an 'Other'. The underground man takes pleasure in self-effacement and Gregor accepts his metamorphosis. They take their 'self' as an objective entity and so they become masochists. Masochism is an assumption of realizing one's own self as guilt. However masochism in itself is a failure principle because one can't undergo the intuitive apprehension of the projected object. Gregor is dehumanized as a bug, but

he is not able to undergo the tension which a bug has to go. Similarly, the underground man also strives to be humiliated by others. But he can't tolerate such humiliation any more. It is because man can't escape from his subjectivity. The more he tastes his objectivity, the more he falls into subjectivity. So he again falls to the pit of alienation. Confused of being mismatched into subjectivity and objectivity, the underground man fails to communicate. He doesn't know whatever he is communicating, whether it is his subjectivity or his objectivity.

As per our study, Fyodor Dostoevsky and Franz Kafka are found scrutinizing human predicament which is displayed in these novellas. Both of these protagonists represent the existential crises of human being. They show how an individual suffers from failure of communication after contracted with the consciousness of existential crises. To some extent, there are some differences between these protagonists in terms of the motif. Such as underground man seems to be a Sisyphean hero who, even undergoing a series of failures, strives for other similar events. While Gregor is obviously a paralyzed fellow, he represents a hopeless side of human existence. Likewise, dread is a prime characteristic in the *Metamorphosis* where as alienation contributes a lot in the *Notes from Underground*. However the predicament which they undergo is similar. Both of these protagonists fails to communicate due to the realization of existential crisis.

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