ISSN E: 2709-8273
ISSN P:2709-8265
JOURNAL OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND TESOL
JALT

JOURNAL OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND TESOL

Vol.8. No.4.2025

EXISTENTIALISM: PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS, THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES, AND IDEOLOGICAL CRITIQUE

Waseem Arshad
Lecturer, Department of Urdu, Lahore Garrison University, Lahore
Shahram Arshad
PhD Scholar, Department of Urdu, Lahore Garrison University, Lahore
Rabia Arshad
BS Urdu, Govt Islamia College, Gujranwala
Sadia Sanaullah
MPhil Urdu, Lahore Leads University, Lahore

Abstract
This paper examines the philosophical foundations and evolution of Existentialism, a modern movement that emphasizes individual freedom, self-determination, and human responsibility. It explores how existentialist thinkers such as Søren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, and Jean-Paul Sartre redefined the relationship between existence and essence, replacing divine determinism with human choice. The study also highlights the contradictions between individual and collective freedom, the tension between rationalism and faith, and the ideological conflict between Existentialism and Marxism. It concludes that while Existentialism deepened human understanding of freedom and authenticity, its excessive focus on individualism limited its transformative and social potential.

Keywords:
Existentialism, Freedom, Individual Responsibility, Meaninglessness, Anxiety, Marxism, Humanism.

Background / Introduction

Existentialism emerged as a major philosophical movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in response to the decline of religious authority and the crisis of human meaning in modern Europe. The aftermath of the industrial and world wars intensified the sense of alienation, despair, and loss of faith in traditional values. In this context, philosophers such as Søren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche introduced new ideas emphasizing personal freedom and the subjective creation of meaning. Later, Martin Heidegger and Jean-Paul Sartre developed these ideas into a comprehensive doctrine focusing on human autonomy, moral responsibility, and the quest for authenticity. Existentialism thus became both a philosophy of human existence and a critique of modern civilization, influencing literature, psychology, and political thought throughout the twentieth century.

Existentialism is a modern philosophical movement that emphasizes the freedom and autonomy of the individual. The term was first introduced by the French Catholic philosopher Gabriel Marcel in 1940; however, it was Jean-Paul Sartre who, in 1945, presented it as a comprehensive philosophical doctrine and an intellectual movement. The foundation of existentialism rests on the notion that *existence precedes essence*—that is, a human being exists first, and only later defines his or her essence through actions, thoughts, and lived experiences.

The roots of existentialism can be traced to the nineteenth-century philosophers Søren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche. Kierkegaard, working within a religious framework, gave central importance to individuality and the inner experiences of the self, whereas Nietzsche challenged traditional religious and moral systems and proposed the concept of the Übermensch (Superman).

ISSN E: 2709-8273
ISSN P:2709-8265
JOURNAL OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND TESOL
JALT

Both philosophers advanced the idea that human beings must become the creators of their own lives and should not remain subject to any external authority or predetermined destiny.

In the twentieth century, Martin Heidegger and Jean-Paul Sartre further developed existentialist thought. Heidegger's seminal work *Being and Time* offered a profound exploration of the concept of being, asserting that humans are not born into the world as purposeless entities but must discover their own reality through authentic existence. Sartre, on the other hand, in his essay *Existentialism is a Humanism*, made it clear that man is the creator of his own destiny and must accept full responsibility for his choices and actions.

Fundamental Principles of Existentialism

1. Existence Precedes Essence

The most fundamental principle of existentialism asserts that a person's nature or destiny is not predetermined; rather, individuals define themselves through their own actions and choices. This concept implies that human life and its meaning are not prewritten—each individual determines the purpose of their life through personal decisions and lived experiences. According to Jean-Paul Sartre, man is not merely a biological entity but a free and autonomous being who constructs his own identity through conscious choices.

This concept forms the foundation of existentialist philosophy and distinguishes it from traditional schools of thought, which maintain that human essence is fixed and predetermined. Classical philosophers such as Aristotle and Plato argued that everything in the universe has an inherent essence that defines its purpose. Existentialism, however, rejects this notion, claiming that human beings create meaning through their freedom to choose and are not bound by any external ideology, divine plan, or universal essence.

2. Freedom and Responsibility

In existentialism, the individual is granted complete freedom to shape his or her own destiny. This freedom not only endows a person with creative power but also imposes a profound moral responsibility, as every decision and action reflects the essence of one's own being. As Jean-Paul Sartre aptly stated,

"Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself."

This principle gives rise to a philosophy that celebrates human freedom and autonomy while simultaneously reminding us that we must bear full responsibility for the consequences of our choices.

Freedom, within the existentialist framework, occupies a central position because it grants individuals absolute self-determination. However, this very freedom is inseparable from responsibility. Every human being has the right to make personal choices, yet must also endure the consequences of those decisions.

According to existentialist thinkers, freedom is not merely a gift—it is also a burden, for it compels individuals to make conscious decisions about every aspect of their existence. Søren Kierkegaard observed that when a person becomes fully aware of his freedom, he inevitably encounters a state of existential angst or anxiety. This anxiety arises from the realization that every act, decision, and reaction has direct implications for one's life and identity.

Jean-Paul Sartre deepened this concept by arguing that since there exists no absolute truth or divine plan, the individual must create his or her own reality and define a personal destiny. This radical freedom can be terrifying, for it renders the individual solely responsible for both success and failure, compelling one to make life's decisions independently.

ISSN E: 2709-8273
ISSN P:2709-8265
JOURNAL OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND TESOL
JALT

Sartre maintained that a person who refuses to exercise freedom and instead lives according to the norms and expectations dictated by others leads an inauthentic existence. Conversely, one who accepts responsibility and consciously makes personal choices embodies an authentic existence. Authenticity, therefore, is the ultimate expression of existential freedom—an affirmation of one's individuality through deliberate, self-directed living.

3. The Meaninglessness of Life

This principle teaches that true human freedom is realized only when one takes full control of one's life and accepts complete responsibility for all outcomes—whether positive or negative.

According to existentialist philosophers, human beings are not born with any predetermined purpose; rather, they must discover or create the meaning of their existence through personal experience. Since there is no ultimate truth or absolute purpose in the universe, each individual must construct meaning through one's own emotions, choices, and conscious actions.

Albert Camus, in his philosophy of Absurdism, explored this idea in depth, arguing that life inherently lacks meaning, and this realization gives rise to anxiety and unease. However, he also proposed that this very confrontation with meaninglessness can lead to authentic freedom. Camus suggested that individuals must create their own values and construct personal meaning rather than conform to external ideologies or imposed doctrines.

For Camus, accepting absurdity is the first step toward genuine liberty. He insisted that instead of seeking a divine or external purpose, individuals should define their goals in alignment with their own experiences and priorities. His famous allegory, "The Myth of Sisyphus," perfectly illustrates this notion. In the myth, Sisyphus is condemned to roll a boulder up a mountain endlessly, only for it to roll back down each time. Despite the futility of the task, Sisyphus embraces his labor with joy. This symbolizes that even in a meaningless world, one can create personal meaning through persistence, acceptance, and self-defined purpose.

Thus, existentialism urges human beings not to await a preordained meaning, but to actively construct it through engagement with life itself.

4. Anxiety and Dread (Existential Angst)

Søren Kierkegaard and Martin Heidegger both emphasized that awareness of one's absolute freedom inevitably leads to a state of anxiety and dread. This existential anxiety arises when an individual recognizes the immense responsibility of being solely accountable for one's destiny. Every decision, no matter how small, holds unpredictable consequences, and this realization generates fear and uncertainty.

Heidegger termed this state "Existential Angst", describing it not as a mere psychological condition but as a profound philosophical awareness. This anxiety, according to him, is an essential part of the human condition because it exposes the individual to the raw truth of existence — particularly the awareness of mortality and finitude.

When a person becomes conscious of their transient nature and the inevitability of death, they experience deep existential anxiety. Yet Heidegger considered this awareness to be a necessary and transformative state. It compels individuals to confront the reality of existence and to strive toward a meaningful and authentic life.

Existential anxiety, therefore, is not simply despair—it is an awakening. It forces the individual to recognize that freedom entails uncertainty, and that living authentically requires courage to act despite that uncertainty.

ISSN E: 2709-8273
ISSN P:2709-8265
JOURNAL OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND TESOL
JALT

Kierkegaard's Concept of Anxiety and Freedom

According to Søren Kierkegaard, the awareness of freedom gives rise to two distinct psychological states:

1. **Dread:** This occurs when an individual realizes that they possess absolute freedom to make their own choices without any external restriction. This recognition often generates fear, as one becomes conscious of the limitless possibilities of action.
2. **Angst (Anxiety):** This state emerges when a person becomes aware of the immense responsibility that accompanies freedom — the understanding that every choice carries consequences.

Although initially painful, existentialism views this anxiety as a transformative experience. It propels individuals toward self-awareness and self-realization, compelling them to assume responsibility for their lives and to seek a deeper understanding of their own existence.

Major Existentialist Thinkers and Their Theories

Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855)

Søren Kierkegaard is regarded as the founding figure of existentialist philosophy. Primarily a religious existentialist, he emphasized individuality and the inner, subjective experiences of the human self. In his seminal work *The Concept of Dread* (1844), Kierkegaard linked dread directly with the notion of freedom of action, arguing that when humans realize their complete freedom, they become anxious about the possibilities that freedom entails.

Among his other major works are *Either/Or* and *Fear and Trembling*, in which he explored the relationship between faith, choice, and personal commitment. Kierkegaard asserted that individuals must make their own life decisions and that the search for truth, particularly in the religious sense, is an intensely personal and subjective journey. Relying on external authorities or societal norms, he argued, weakens the authenticity of one's faith and existence.

Kierkegaard also believed that uncertainty and anxiety are essential components of human identity. Rather than being obstacles, they are necessary stages in the process of self-realization. It is through the confrontation with dread and anxiety, he maintained, that a person attains true authenticity and selfhood.

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900)

Friedrich Nietzsche rejected traditional religious doctrines and famously declared that "God is dead." By this, he did not merely suggest atheism but emphasized that the foundations of Western moral and religious systems had lost their vitality in the modern age. Nietzsche argued that all values are human creations, historically and culturally produced, and that blind faith in inherited beliefs hinders personal growth and creativity.

At the center of Nietzsche's philosophy stands the concept of the Übermensch (Overman or Superman), an individual who transcends conventional morality and creates meaning independently of external authorities. The Übermensch embodies the ideal of a self-creating being, free from herd mentality and traditional ethical constraints.

Nietzsche also advanced the doctrine of moral relativism, contending that traditional morality was designed to control the weak and suppress individual potential. He introduced the idea of the Will to Power, describing it as the fundamental driving force of human nature — the instinct to grow, dominate, and actualize one's creative potential.

In Nietzsche's view, the Will to Power is not simply a desire for dominance but a creative energy that propels humanity toward higher forms of existence. Through this will, individuals can

ISSN E: 2709-8273
ISSN P:2709-8265
JOURNAL OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND TESOL
JALT

overcome nihilism and assert their freedom by constructing their own moral and existential frameworks.

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900)

Nietzsche's major philosophical works include *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, and *Twilight of the Idols*. In these writings, he urged humanity to create its own destiny and to give meaning to life independently of divine or external authority. Nietzsche rejected metaphysical and theological explanations of human purpose, advocating instead for a self-determined life founded on creativity, strength, and the will to overcome limitations. His philosophy inspired generations of thinkers to question established moral orders and embrace the courage of individual existence.

Karl Jaspers (1883–1969)

Karl Jaspers, a German philosopher and psychiatrist, believed that true consciousness could only be achieved through the experience of an existential crisis. He regarded human life as a continuous process of evolution in which the individual learns, grows, and moves toward an understanding of transcendence and the divine.

Jaspers emphasized that it is only when individuals confront life's boundary situations—such as suffering, conflict, guilt, or death—that they come to grasp their authentic being. For him, these experiences were not merely psychological but spiritual opportunities for self-transcendence, leading a person toward a deeper awareness of God and existence itself.

Gabriel Marcel (1889–1973)

Gabriel Marcel was a Christian existentialist who focused on the spiritual dimension of human existence. He argued that human beings cannot be studied as mere objects; rather, they must be understood through their inner spiritual and emotional experiences.

Marcel emphasized the importance of faith, hope, love, and interpersonal relationships as means to overcome alienation in the modern world. He maintained that the human self is not an isolated entity but one that finds meaning in communion—with others and with God. Thus, for Marcel, existence was essentially relational and spiritual, in contrast to the purely atheistic existentialism of Sartre.

Martin Heidegger (1889–1976)

In his monumental work *Being and Time (1927)*, Martin Heidegger provided a profound analysis of the concept of Being (Dasein). According to him, while all things in the world *exist*, only human beings are capable of understanding the meaning of their existence.

Heidegger proposed that humans are "thrown into the world" (*Geworfenheit*) without predetermined purpose or meaning and must discover their essence through conscious engagement with life. He argued that the awareness of death—*being-toward-death*—is a central aspect of human existence, compelling individuals to confront the authentic reality of their finitude.

Heidegger's thought shifted existentialism from a psychological and moral concern to a fundamentally ontological inquiry, focusing on what it means "to be."

Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980)

Jean-Paul Sartre transformed existentialism into a comprehensive and practical philosophical movement. His famous lecture, *Existentialism is a Humanism (1945)*, popularized the idea that *"Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself."*

Sartre asserted that since God does not exist, human beings are completely free and wholly responsible for their actions. This freedom, while liberating, is also the source of existential

ISSN E: 2709-8273
ISSN P:2709-8265
JOURNAL OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND TESOL
JALT

anxiety, for it means that individuals cannot rely on external values or divine plans to justify their choices.

For Sartre, authentic existence arises only when a person accepts this radical freedom and takes responsibility for constructing personal meaning. He criticized those who lived according to societal conventions as leading an "inauthentic existence", enslaved by external expectations rather than personal conviction.

Existentialism and Modern Human Thought

Existentialism profoundly influenced 20th-century literature, philosophy, and psychology. The movement deepened discussions of inner human conditions such as despair, alienation, anxiety, and freedom. Its philosophical spirit is vividly reflected in the works of writers like Fyodor Dostoevsky, Franz Kafka, Albert Camus, and Samuel Beckett, who depicted characters struggling with meaninglessness and the search for authentic identity.

Existentialism reshaped modern intellectual thought by centering the individual as a creator of meaning in an indifferent or absurd universe. It encouraged the reexamination of morality, religion, and social systems through the lens of personal choice and responsibility.

A Critical Evaluation of Existentialism

In the historical evolution of human thought, the French Revolution marked a significant turning point—a beacon of liberation against feudal oppression. Its intellectual aftermath, particularly the revolutionary doctrines of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, urged humanity to take control of its own destiny through rational action rather than divine fate.

When humanity chose *tadbeer* (human effort) over *taqdeer* (predestined fate), it initiated a transformation toward self-determination and social emancipation. However, this shift provoked opposition from the capitalist elite and intellectual defenders of the status quo, who sought to discredit and suppress revolutionary ideas.

History, however, cannot be halted or reshaped by the preferences of ruling or exploitative classes. The objective process of historical evolution continues regardless of human desire.As one philosopher notes:

"The theories of evolution and progress have taught mankind that man is not a passive prisoner of fate, but an active agent of advancement, and that human civilization is perpetually moving forward on the path of development."

Existentialism as a Reactionary Counter-Current to Marxist Thought

As Marxist teachings advanced intellectually and practically, reactionary forces—unable to halt their influence—began to propagate alternative ideologies, slogans, and philosophical movements across various disciplines. Within the realm of knowledge and literature, one of these ideological responses was the Existentialist movement. Alongside it emerged a range of trends—Anarchism, Liberalism, Modernism, Non-violence, and Secular Humanism—which, under the influence of thinkers such as Sigmund Freud, promoted secularism and individual freedom on one hand, yet paradoxically upheld class hierarchies and exploitative systems on the other.

Similarly, deviationist elements within socialism, such as Social Democrats, the Fabian Society, and followers of Leon Trotsky, either deliberately or inadvertently aided imperialist and capitalist structures while weakening revolutionary and national resistance movements. It must be noted that advocates of secularism, modernism, and bourgeois revolutionism across the world have consistently stood united in their hostility toward oppressed nations and popular liberation struggles.

ISSN E: 2709-8273
ISSN P:2709-8265
JOURNAL OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND TESOL
JALT

Even leaders of so-called humanitarian and non-violent movements—such as Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru—after attaining political power, preserved the Brahminical dominance of Indian society by keeping the Shudra and Dalit classes subjugated. This enduring caste hierarchy remains a dark stain on the fabric of Indian non-violence.

Just as those who wave the red flag often become its fiercest opponents, similarly, in developing or underdeveloped countries like Pakistan, the custodians of exploitative systems—feudal landlords, capitalists, and tribal elites—masquerade as champions of democracy and social reform. Yet, in practice, they align with reactionary religious and conservative forces to protect their personal and class-based interests, thereby preserving the existing socio-economic order.

Existentialism: A Philosophical Form of Skepticism and Abstraction

Philosophically, Existentialism represents an advanced form of skepticism, abstraction, and nihilism. In Europe, Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855) was the first to shape this as a distinct intellectual tendency. Fundamentally conservative in orientation, Kierkegaard propagated the meaninglessness of life, which, in turn, weakened revolutionary impulses against the existing system. For the emerging generations of capitalist societies, this philosophy provided a convenient ideological refuge—a form of intellectual escapism from social struggle. Consequently, the capitalist world actively nurtured and institutionalized Existentialism as a philosophical alternative to Marxism.

Later, thinkers such as Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, Karl Jaspers, Gabriel Marcel, Fyodor Dostoevsky, and Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980) further expanded and popularized existentialist ideas, presenting them as a distinct school of thought and, implicitly, as an ideological counterpoint to Marxism.

Through figures like Albert Camus and Franz Kafka, existentialist philosophy left a lasting imprint on modern literature and art, embedding its themes of alienation, absurdity, and despair deep within the artistic consciousness of the twentieth century.

Jean-Paul Sartre: Between Existentialism and Revolution

Jean-Paul Sartre attempted to shape his own version of existentialism and sought to distinguish himself from earlier existentialist philosophers by adopting a more progressive and activist stance. Unlike purely contemplative existentialists, Sartre aligned himself with global anti-imperialist and liberation movements, including those in Vietnam, Cuba, and Algeria.

His commitment to freedom extended beyond philosophical discourse into active resistance against colonial oppression. As one commentator observes:

"Sartre's opposition to imperialism was not confined to foreign lands. He consistently supported Algerian freedom fighters against the cruelty and violence of his own compatriots, the French colonial forces. He even went so far as to call upon French soldiers stationed in Algeria to abandon their duties and refuse participation in acts of oppression."

Through such actions, Sartre bridged the gap between philosophical humanism and political activism, illustrating that existential freedom could become a tool for social and moral resistance rather than an instrument of individual despair or detachment.

Sartre's support for oppressed nations, his struggle to reconcile objectivity and subjectivity, his opposition to imperialism, and his eventual rejection of both religious and dualist existentialism, combined with his refusal to accept the Nobel Prize and his partial acknowledgment of dialectical materialism, all contributed to deep divisions within the existentialist movement. These internal rifts weakened the unity of existentialist thought, leading to its eventual decline.

ISSN E: 2709-8273
ISSN P:2709-8265
JOURNAL OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND TESOL
JALT

As existentialism began to lose coherence, nationalism and communism gained renewed intellectual and political strength. The existentialist school became fragmented, characterized by more divergences than commonalities among its thinkers. Indeed, the movement never achieved consensus even on a single, universally accepted definition of existentialism. As one scholar aptly notes:

"Defining existentialism is not only difficult but also contrary to the existentialist viewpoint itself, for to define something is to express its 'essence,' while existentialism refuses to accept any pre-defined essence of human nature." (3)

Existentialism or "Maujoodiyat": The Linguistic Debate

In the South Asian context, Ali Abbas Jalalpuri pointed out an important terminological inaccuracy in the Urdu translation of the term *Existentialism*. He argued that the correct rendering should be "Maujoodiyat" rather than "Wujoodiyat."

"Some people have translated Existentialism as Wujoodiyat, which is incorrect. Being translates to Wujood, while Existent translates to Maujood. Moreover, in our philosophical tradition, Wujoodiyat is often associated with the Sufi doctrine of Wahdat al-Wujood (Unity of Being), whose followers were called Wujoodi or Wujoodiya. Therefore, the term Maujoodiyat would be more accurate in expressing the philosophical intent of Existentialism."

This linguistic distinction highlights how existentialism's philosophical import was often misinterpreted in Eastern discourse, especially when conflated with mystical or metaphysical notions.

Core Assumptions of Existentialist Philosophy

The existentialist movement rests on three foundational assumptions:

1. Human reason is limited — it cannot offer a comprehensive or universal solution to life's fundamental problems.
2. Man, having become separated from absolute truth, is trapped in a constant state of anguish and anxiety.
3. There is a fundamental disharmony between man and nature, resulting in an ongoing sense of meaninglessness; sorrow and despair, therefore, are permanent tendencies in human life.

These premises reflect existentialism's skepticism toward both rationalism and metaphysical certainty, portraying human existence as isolated, finite, and burdened by choice.

The Age of Reason and the Limits of Existential Thought

The twentieth century is often hailed as the age of human intellectual and scientific advancement, a period that celebrated the supremacy of human reason. The progress of philosophy, science, and the humanities transformed rational thought into a universal paradigm of verification and truth.

In contrast, existentialist thinkers sought to diminish the role of reason, presenting it as limited and inadequate for understanding the complexities of human existence. Yet, paradoxically, their own philosophical inquiries—whether accepting or rejecting religious, ethical, or metaphysical postulates—relied upon rational analysis as the very measure of truth.

Thus, while existentialists questioned the sufficiency of human reason, they could not escape employing it as their principal tool of inquiry. This inherent contradiction between existentialist doubt and the unavoidable use of reason became one of the central weaknesses of the movement.

Ultimately, existentialism's emphasis on individual despair and its rejection of collective and material realities made it less relevant in a century that increasingly valued scientific rationality, social justice, and collective human progress.

ISSN E: 2709-8273
ISSN P:2709-8265
JOURNAL OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND TESOL
JALT

The Contradictions within Sartre's Existentialism

According to Jean-Paul Sartre, *existence precedes essence*—a foundational principle of existential philosophy. However, in his interpretation of human existence, Sartre modifies this principle in a manner that contradicts the laws of material motion and dialectical development. By detaching human existence entirely from its essence, Sartre inadvertently empties life of objective meaning and elevates the individual above society.

This inversion—placing the individual over the collective—ultimately serves the interests of the capitalist order, which thrives on alienation and individualism. In such a framework, existentialism, despite its rhetoric of freedom, becomes a philosophy of isolation, discouraging collective struggle and weakening the movement for social and economic emancipation.

By presenting social transformation and collective struggle as threats to individual freedom, existentialist thought implicitly aligns with forces that sustain exploitation and preserve the status quo. Thus, the existentialist call for "freedom of the individual" paradoxically functions as a philosophical shield for capitalist structures, diverting humanity's focus from collective change to personal introspection.

As one critic insightfully observes:

"Great personalities attain greatness because they walk alongside the people of their time—sharing their ideas, desires, and aspirations. They succeed only when they align themselves with the collective will of society. History is shaped not by isolated individuals but through the combined intellectual and physical efforts of entire communities."

Conclusion

Existentialism, at its core, is a philosophy that emphasizes human consciousness, freedom, and individual responsibility. It teaches that life has no predetermined meaning; rather, man must create meaning through his own choices and actions.

For philosophers such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Søren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, and others, the resolution to life's existential dilemmas lies in self-awareness, intellectual reflection, and personal effort. Each of them, despite their differences, shared a commitment to exploring the human condition—its despair, its freedom, and its search for authenticity.

Yet, the existentialist movement's internal contradictions—between subjectivity and material reality, between individual freedom and collective responsibility—limited its transformative potential. While existentialism deepened the philosophical understanding of personal freedom and human anxiety, it often failed to address the structural and social dimensions of human existence that Marxist and humanist thinkers considered vital.

In the broader trajectory of modern thought, existentialism remains both a rebellion against metaphysical determinism and a reflection of the alienation of modern man. It invites humanity to confront the void, to question authority, and to construct meaning where none is given. However, its true philosophical contribution lies not in negating reason or society, but in reminding us that freedom is meaningful only when it contributes to the collective progress of humankind.

References:

Ahmed, N., Jawaid, A., Kaur, P., & Khalid, R. (2018). Dictionary using habits of electrical engineering students in Lahore, Pakistan. Language in India, 18(3). https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/85792814

ISSN E: 2709-8273
ISSN P:2709-8265
JOURNAL OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND TESOL
JALT

Ahmed, N., Yasmin, F., Jawaid, A., Javaid, H., Naqvi, S. M., & Sarfraz, S. (2019). Pronunciation challenges faced by graduates of the Middle East. International Journal of Scientific & Engineering Research, 19(2). https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334507442

Alvi, A. K., Jabeen, Z., Jawaid, A., & Kaur, P. (2020). Relationship of career success and organizational performance through the path of business strategy. International Journal of Economics, Management and Accounting, 28(1), 1–33. https://doi.org/10.31436/ijema.v28i1.675

Arshad, W., Arshad, S., Naeem, M., & Sanaullah, S. (2025). Existentialism: Theories and philosophical principles. Journal of Applied Linguistics and TESOL, 8(1), 41–47. Retrieved from https://jalt.com.pk/index.php/jalt/article/view/446

Arshad, W., Maqsood, A., Zaidi, S. S., Haroon, M., Qadir, U. M., Sultana, U., Arshad, S., Haq, M. I. U., & Sanaullah, S. (2024). Kalam-e-Iqbal: Current requirements and our priorities. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/384326267_Kalam_E_Iqbal_Current_Requirements_And_Our_Priorities

Arshad, W., Munawar, M., & Qadir, M. H. (2025). Urdu education in the 21st century: Modern requirements, the role of books, and teaching prospects Noor-e-Tahqeeq, 9(1). https://ojs.lgu.edu.pk/nooretahqeeq/article/view/2319

Arshad, W., Murtaza, H. G., Arshad, S., & Sanaullah, S. (2025, June 10). Challenges and prospects of Urdu language and literature in the 21st century: A cultural and linguistic perspective.

Arshad, W., Murtaza, H. G., Munawar, M., Arshad, S., & Sanaullah, S. (2025). The role of literary luminaries in the development of Urdu language and national thought. Contemporary Journal of Social Science Review, 3(2), 2763–2771. https://ojs.lgu.edu.pk/nooretahqeeq/article/view/2381

Arshad, W., Naeem, M., Sardar, N., & Arshad, S. (2025, February 12). Evolutionary stages of translation in the Urdu language. Al-Aasar, 2(1), 77–81. https://al-aasar.com/index.php/Journal/article/view/66

Attaullah, M., Ovaisi, M. A., & Arshad, W. (2023). Indirect contributions of the neocolonial era on Urdu language. Makhz (Research Journal), 4(3). https://ojs.makhz.org.pk/journal/article/view/152

Attaullah, S. (2014). Iqbal Nama: A collection of Iqbal's letters (p. 35). Lahore: Iqbal Academy Pakistan.

Awaisi, M. A., Attaullah, M., & Arshad, W. (2023). Modern Urdu fiction and Sufism: An analytical study. Makhz (Research Journal), 4(4). https://doi.org/10.47205/makhz.2023(4-IV)urdu-13

Javed, J. I., Munawer, M., Ahsan, S., Ali, M. S., Qadir, M. H., Raheed, M., Mumtaz, S., & Arshad, W. (2023). Allama Iqbal and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's thoughts and ideas about the existence and survival of the Islamic state: In the context of literary aspects. PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt / Egyptology, 20(2), 1239–1250. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/384326781

Jawaid, A. (2014). Benchmarking in TESOL: A study of the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013. English Language Teaching Journal, 7(8), 23–30. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v7n8p23

Jawaid, A., & Raza, M. (2018). The status of patients' satisfaction with outpatient hospital pharmacy. Gomal University Journal of Research, 34(1), 38–42. http://www.gujr.com.pk/index.php/GUJR/article/view/217

Jawaid, A., Batool, M., Arshad, W., Haq, M. I. U., Kaur, P., & Arshad, S. (2025). English language vocabulary building trends in students of higher education institutions and a case of Lahore, Pakistan. Contemporary Journal of Social Science Review, 3(1), 730–737. https://contemporaryjournal.com/index.php/14/article/view/360

Jawaid, A., Batool, M., Arshad, W., Haq, M. I. U., Kaur, P., & Sanaullah, S. (2025). AI and English language learning outcomes. Contemporary Journal of Social Science Review, 3(1), 927–935. https://contemporaryjournal.com/index.php/14/article/view/387

Jawaid, A., Batool, M., Arshad, W., Kaur, P., & Haq, M. I. U. (2024). English language pronunciation challenges faced by tertiary students. Contemporary Journal of Social Science Review, 2(4), 2104–2111. https://contemporaryjournal.com/index.php/14/article/view/361

Jawaid, A., Khalil, A., Gohar, S., Kaur, P., Arshad, W., & Mukhtar, J. (2024). English language learning theories and digital technologies of the 21st century: A systemic scenario. Journal of Applied Linguistics and TESOL (JALT), 7(4), 1660–1668. https://jalt.com.pk/index.php/jalt/article/view/369

Jawaid, A., Mukhtar, J., Mahnoor, D. P. K., Arshad, W., & Haq, M. I. U. (2025). English language learning of challenging students: A university case. Journal of Applied Linguistics and TESOL (JALT), 8(1), 679–686. https://jalt.com.pk/index.php/jalt/article/view/370

Jawaid, A., N. Sembilan, & Rabahi, M. (1998). Benchmarking in TESOL: Benchmarks of UK classroom management. KTG Education Group.

Kaur, P., & Jawaid, A. (2012). Inequality in decision-making and marital power among the Sikhs. International Journal of Sociology of the Family, 38(2), 149–160. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/43488398

Kaur, P., & Moghal, A. J. (2013). Women's resources and power dynamics in Sikh families in Malaysia. International Journal of Sociology of the Family, 39(2), 77–92. https://www.jstor.org/stable/43488407

Kaur, P., & Moghal, A. J. (2014). Lotus in the pond: The symbolization of women in Sikhism. International Review of Modern Sociology, 40(1), 65–81. https://www.jstor.org/stable/43496490

Kaur, P., & Moghal, A. J. (2014). The perceptions on gender equality among the Sikhs in Malaysia. International Review of Modern Sociology, 40(2), 45–60. https://www.jstor.org/stable/43499907

Kaur, P., Foong, C. N., & Jawaid, A. (2017). Recycling practices and perceptions among rural primary school children in SJK Chung Hua Asajaya, Samarahan, Sarawak. Journal of Borneo Kalimantan, 3(2). http://www.myjurnal.my/public/article-view.php?id=115126

Kaur, P., Jawaid, A., Bilong, I. U., Phillipus, J., Wei, P. S., & Sangaran, S. (2023). TikTok users among university students in Sarawak, Malaysia. Journal of Hunan University Natural Sciences. https://doi.org/10.55463/issn.1674-2974.50.7.11

Kaur, P., Jawaid, A., Johnraj, D., Sangaran, S., Myint, K. T., Haq, M. I. U., & Ramzan, H. (2022). Benchmarking framework for reading and knowledge growth: A Malaysian case. Webology Journal. https://openurl.ebsco.com/EPDB%3Agcd%3A16%3A25189104/detailv2

Kaur, P., Jawaid, A., Khairi, N. N. F. B. M., Singh, E. R., Singh, K. R., & Fern, E. G. C. C. (2020). Cultural adaptations of non-Malay silat practitioners in Malay silat Malaysia. Ilkogretim Online - Elementary Education Online, 19(3), 2520–2528. https://doi.org/10.17051/ilkonline.2020.03.735411

Kaur, P., Jawaid, A., Nathaniel, A., Thomas, B., Zulfazid, M., & Kong, R. (2021). Overspending on online game app purchasing among university students in Sarawak, Malaysia. Elementary Education Online, 19(3), 2510–2510.

Kaur, P., Jawaid, A., Saimon, R., Myint, K. T., Singh, E. R., Hassdee, H. B., ... & Aisyah Bt Samsudin, N. N. (2020). Technological Evolution of Streetwalker in Malaysia. Talent Development & Excellence, 12

Kaur, P., Jawaid, A., Ur Rehman, K., Alvi, A. K., & Chishti, M. F. (2019). Problems faced by children with cancer in Sarawak, Malaysia. Opción: Revista de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales, Extra(24), 689. https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=8155774

Kaur, P., Moghal, A. J., Pius, J. B., Phua, B., Ronald, S., & Seng, W. K. (2015). The vanishing beauties: The long-ears Orang Ulu women of Sarawak, Malaysia. International Review of Modern Sociology, 41(2), 177–185. https://www.jstor.org/stable/44510032

Kaur, P., Seh Jin, A. Y., Chi, L. W., Zoferi, N. A. N. B., & Jawaid, A. (2017). Adult day care provision in Kuching, Sarawak: Positive aging or social isolation? Journal of Borneo-Kalimantan, 3(2). https://doi.org/10.33736/jbk.632.2017

Naeem, M., Arshad, W., Sanaullah, S., & Arshad, S. (2025, February 13). "Chand Gehan, Daan Aur Daastaan" by Intizar Hussain: An analytical study. Al-Aasar, 2(1), 82–91. https://al-aasar.com/index.php/Journal/article/view/71

Najaf, D., & Arshad, W. (2025). Sarfraz Baig's novel Pas-e-Aynah: A critical study of migration and the issues of diaspora. Noor-e-Tahqeeq, 9(3). https://doi.org/10.54692/nooretahqeeq.2025.09032381

Nellikunnel, S., Rahman, A., Jawaid, A., & Sim, L. E. (2015). Generation Y male cosmetic consumption patterns: Regression modelling. International Journal of Modelling in Operations Management, 5(2), 154–176. https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/40876670

Ovaisi, A., & Arshad, W. (2024). The travelogue of Mahmood Nizami "Nazar Nama": Analytical study. Tahqeeq-o-Tajzia, 2(1), 1–14. Retrieved from https://tahqeeqotajzia.com/index.php/tot/article/view/18

Parveen, K., Jawaid, A., & Norizan, A. O. (2016). The impact of community-based tourism on community development in Sarawak. Journal of Borneo-Kalimantan, 2(1), 15–26. https://ir.unimas.my/id/eprint/13747/

Rabahi, M., Yusof, H., Awang, M., & Jawaid, A. (2020). Strategic considerations for kindergartens in leading learning of Orang Asli students. International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 10(7), 559–570. https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v10-i7/7458

Raza, M., Jawaid, A., & Ahmad, I. (2018). Association of dialysis with quality adjusted life years (QALY) in control group patients. Gomal University Journal of Research, 34(1). Retrieved from http://gujr.com.pk/index.php/GUJR/article/view/220

Raza, M., Jawaid, A., & Haq, M. I. U. (2018). The effect of interventions on quality adjusted life years (QALY) of dialysis patients. Gomal University Journal of Research, 34(2), 73–79. http://www.gujr.com.pk/index.php/GUJR/article/view/233

Safdar, S., Alvi, A. K., Jawaid, A., Kaur, P., & Yawar, R. B. (2020). Relationship between job burnout, interpersonal conflicts, and intentions to leave. European Online Journal of Natural and Social Sciences, 9(1), 1–12. https://european-science.com/eojnss/article/view/5869

Sanaullah, S., Shaheen, A., & Arshad, W. (2024). "Two letters of comfort" by Dr. Imran Zafar: Analytical study. Shnakhat, 3(3), 346–360. Retrieved from https://shnakhat.com/index.php/shnakhat/article/view/357

Shafaat, Z., Javaid, H., Jawaid, A., & Ahmed, N. (n.d.). Critical discourse analysis of Hassan Sheheryar's interviews: Pakistani fashion designer. International Journal of Scientific & Engineering Research, 10(2). https://www.researchgate.net/publication/334507345

Umair, J., & Jawaid, A. (2019). Connotations of psychological and physiological health in the psychosocial work environment: An industrial context. Work, 64(3), 551–561. https://doi.org/10.3233/WOR-193016

Yasmin, F., Ahmed, N., Jawaid, A., Javaid, H., & Tariq, J. (2018). Challenges to computer assisted language teaching at university level. International Journal of Language and Literature, 6(2), 188–197. https://doi.org/10.15640/ijll.v6n2a23