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## CONTEMPORARY WESTERN PHILOSOPHY AND ITS ROLE TO CREAT A NEW EPISTEMOLOGICAL APPROACH TO HUMAN EXISTENCE

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### Abstract

The study aims to analyze the nature of the new epistemological question of contemporary human existence, in Western philosophy represented in existential philosophy, as a contemporary trend posed by World War II, especially to reconsider the issue of the existence of contemporary human being and concern of his destiny. The epistemological question in contemporary philosophy has changed from a theoretical question that is concerned with man as a thing and substance, whose interpretation is guaranteed by the laws of matter, to the questions of human experience, essence, being and the self.

*Keywords: Western philosophy, human existence, existential philosophy, epistemological question, human freedom*

### Introduction

Contemporary Western Philosophy from the point of view of the history of philosophy is a complex. It was unable to present the new, but it's used her scissors to tear, sabotage and shape the Salaf (righteous) papers. The transition to the twentieth century was not easy and the last sixty years after the first cosmic war were neither ordinary nor normal by all standards.

Contemporary Western philosophy was born in conditions and different contexts from those in which modern Western philosophy existed. These contexts are manifested in the following:

- The conflict between Ideologies: is the conflict between two motives or desires, for example communism and liberalism, so that each of them favors eliminating the other and imposing its doctrine.
- The conflict between cultures and civilizations: is the last global conflict, the major divisions in these years and perhaps in the future will be cultural, and this conflict will be between nations with different civilizations, Western civilization, Indian civilization, Japanese civilization...
- The conflict between states and nations through the first World War and the Second World War.
- The crisis of values and the fate of Man, which continues to our present day: it was inevitable that the problem of values jumped to the center of attention after the bulk of the attention of modern philosophers turned towards "human". There is no doubt that the progress achieved by machine in recent years has led human being (the creator of this science) to think about his fate, work to save his values and interest in achieving the salvation of mankind itself. This progress necessitated a fundamental change in the way of human life, and Western philosophers had to re-examine what they used to take from the values. (Zakaria, 1968, pp. 17-18)
- The crisis of certainty: the crisis was associated with the crises faced by a group of sciences, mainly mathematics, physics and even biology. (Muhammad, 1973, pp. 16-22)
- The end of the age of reason: which was sanctified in previous philosophies, especially modern philosophy, to be replaced by other queens, namely the heart, imagination, inspiration, intuition, emotion. Examples of this are the crisis of the self and the crisis of philosophy; after the mind was a symbol of holiness and certainty, it will be compensated by doubt and possibility. The human beings have entered in what's called meaninglessness, as the German philosopher Edmund Husserl stated.

Human life, in its various fields and areas of preoccupation, is characterized by fluctuation and instability in a particular situation, and what constitutes the actual engine of this process is the continuous emergence of crises, in terms of a cognitive theory or a social process. The crisis is closely related to the human being and accompanies his existence, and his situation was true when the French philosopher of complexity described it. Edgar Morin described it as a crisis animal, which is a very significant description of the deep immanence that combines humanization with crisis. (Hamdi, 2022, pp. 31-32)

In short, contemporary Western philosophy existed in the most difficult human conditions (the first World War). To say that philosophy is Western does not mean excluding other civilizations in the history of philosophical thought, but rather that philosophy in the countries of the West has found factors and qualifications that make it present and enjoy continuity that enabled it to reach the Twenty-First Century and it is pregnant with philosophical thought that has opened wide modern and even postmodern horizons, due to its collision with epistemology, dominated by cognitive and scientific overlap with the ideological, which we do not find except in the West.

So these six wounds are added to the changing concept of knowledge in contemporary societies, which led to the loss of the actual meaning of human existence as constructed by the philosophical lesson of humanity as a whole. Man realized-for the first time-that it is not just a "thing" that the laws of matter are responsible for interpreting, but it is the "self" of any algebra that has to rise to determine its laws. This is what Max Schler meant when he said that "what distinguishes the era in which we live is that man has become a constant problem for himself. (Zakaria, 1968, p. 17)

Also, the Western rationalism that man believed in during industrial society, and turned it into an intellectual doctrine that we see in the contemporary time, has exceeded its limits, became a stronghold of idealism and utopia, and turned into a kind of mythology that controlled man and harnessed him to serve it. To move away from what it appeared for in terms of liberation and enlightenment, and there is a shift. A year from rationality to irrationality, not only philosophical discourse but scientific discourse itself, and this is what we find in the writings of many physicists, especially Paul Carl Feyerabend. (Kahli Muhammad, 2021, p. 126)

Contemporary philosophy constituted the decisive juncture in the history of philosophy, so that it reconsidered the issue of the existence of modern man and concern for his fate, through existential philosophy, which questioned the meaning of life, the purpose of its fate, and the significance of its value.

Thus, the interrelationship existing in the hamlets between philosophy and the crisis is determined, turning into an integration between them on the theoretical and practical levels. which witness the interactions of philosophical thought with the developments of the crisis event. It is a clear integration on the level of theory and the level of action, in an equal degree and not more than the other, as for philosophy. The importance in human reality, it is also in the cognitive theoretical aspect, and we cannot avoid moderation in judgment if we acknowledge that philosophy always expresses its vision in a theoretical manner, because even when it thinks in a practical context, this is done by means of critical theoretical diagnosis, as it descends its thoughts into spaces the society. This critical philosophical complementarity emphasizes the vitality that brings together crisis philosophy, and that the first constantly accompanies the second. We notice the constant presence of philosophy in times of crisis, and what is more, it is a pivotal presence that has the last word in ending the crisis and bringing the human being from a state of blockage to a state of openness and a renewed interest in life and its different and complex paths. (Hamdi, 2022, p. 32)

#### **The Problem of Study:**

The research paper comes to answer the following: How can contemporary Western Philosophy be defined? when was its birth in chronological terms? How did philosophy express the ontological concerns of human existence? what is the new epistemological project of human existence presented by existentialist philosophy? what was its aim?

#### **The Aim of the Study:**

The research paper aims to try to answer a human cognitive problem-that is, the crisis of man in his existence-that still resonates in contemporary philosophical thought to this day, developed following discussions of existential philosophy with some contemporary Western philosophies-philosophy of matter, philosophy of Thought, philosophy of life, philosophy of being, philosophy of being-these philosophies did not succeed in solving the questions they raised about man, his identity and Destiny, existentialism realized that man is not just a "thing" that the laws of matter are responsible for interpreting, but he is a "self", an individual who interacts and feels his existence, has freedom, has consciousness. The main logic here is that the human experience that man lives is the source of all knowledge, imprinted with the character of experience for Heidegger.

### **The Importance of Study:**

The study derives its importance from its topic, which addresses the value of man in his existence not by traditional philosophical questions, but by the priority of the epistemological question, and discussing the epistemological development of human existence in existential philosophy, so its motto has always been concern for Man and the core of his existence and life, expressing his concern, distress, worries, freedom and responsibility, and the reality that threatens his being, and almost loses his humanity. This is what Kierkegaard, the spiritual father of existentialist philosophy, as well as Jean-Paul Sartre and Heidegger, tried to show.

### **Method**

The study adopts the analytical approach, through which we will carry out an analytical study of the perception of contemporary philosophy represented by existential philosophy, about the crisis of man in his existence, based on the centralization of the priority of the epistemological question, the study of man, his existence and his destiny; that is, to carry out a very correct analysis of the topics of actual existence, existence in being, which is the focus of existentialism. In order to establish a new and more open theory of knowledge about man.

### **Findings**

#### **What is Contemporary Western Philosophy:**

There are definitions have been given to contemporary Western philosophy:

- It is the philosophy of the twentieth century and what came after. It expressed in new directions, principles, approaches and ways to address various issues and topics. It is philosophical trends and doctrines that emerged around the beginning of the twentieth century, which flourished in its land, and whose scientists lived a large part of their intellectual life in it, these distinguishes it from the philosophy of the XIX and XVIII centuries in particular, and modern philosophy in general, which began with the European renaissance in about the XV century. (Muhammad, 1973, p. 11)

Contemporary Western philosophy is the philosophy of Man (the center of its contemplation is man).

- Contemporary Western philosophy is a philosophy of crises. The philosophy of meaninglessness. The philosophy of catastrophe. It is a philosophy of despair, anxiety, and alarm.

According to Emile Brehier, the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century marked the end of all philosophical hopes' "nihilism". According to Nietzsche it was the result to which the historical march of Western philosophy ended, then this ending was the opening for the birth of contemporary philosophy. Hence the contemporary Western philosophy was a piece of nihilism. (Mufarrej, 2009, p. 07)

The most important definition given to philosophy in the twentieth century by modern philosophers is the definition of Habermas, where he defines it as "philosophy is communication."

Gilles Deleuze defines it as "the creativity of concepts" (Deleuze, 1997, p. 06)

Philosophy is no longer the knowledge of the 'first principles', and therefore it is based on the "creation of concepts and co-existence with them." (Muhaibel, 2007, p. 07)

He said: "I think that philosophy is a format, but the format should not be due to the identical, similar and similar, the problem of transcending philosophy or its death does not concern me at all, I feel that I am a classical philosopher, but the format should be in constant difference." (Deleuze G. , 2003, p. 338)

Logical positivism defines philosophy as "language analysis" (Rashwan, 1984, p. 152)

In the philosophical-logical treatise The Austrian philosopher Wittgenstein said that "the whole of philosophy is a criticism of language" (Wittgenstein, 1968, p. 31)

As for Edmund Husserl, he made the announcement of the birth of phenomenology as a philosophy that will re-introduce the beginning question, specifically the beginning of philosophy "thus, Phenomenological Research opened new horizons that made it one of the main sources of philosophical thinking of Western civilization in the twentieth century, as phenomenology came up with some critical - radical - views of the philosophies preceding it and claimed that it was the philosophy of beginnings." (Amina, 2012, p. 211)

It can be said that modern philosophers could not add new topics to philosophy that their predecessors had not been exposed to, except in a few rare cases, and this means that modern philosophers did not come up with new in the field of philosophical creation. Therefore, what is new for modern philosophers is the way they treat the same old topics, but in a new way, what is new for them is their new approaches that they used.

#### **The Birth of Contemporary Western Philosophy:**

In his introduction Nietzsche's book Philosophy in the Greek tragic age, Michel Foucault says that "there are three wounds in western culture: the wound caused by Copernicus, the wound caused by Darwin when he

discovered that man was born of a monkey, and the wound caused by Freud when he discovered that consciousness is based on the unconscious.” (Nietzsche, 2005, p. 08)

It can be said that contemporary Western philosophy was born in the twentieth century and precisely with the first World War in 1914. (Boshinsky, 1992, p. 19)

Contemporary philosophy, is the natural, logical and historical result of various epochs and philosophical currents preceding them, assigned itself to a major critical task, so that it found itself in front of a scientific, ideological and civilizational reality that is difficult to disassemble, but it was able to do so thanks to the accompaniment that it found by science and philosophy and the data of the hot reality that coexists with it, it was able to draw the contours of the March of humanity in all spheres of life. This is what we will observe with existential philosophy through this research.

It can be said that contemporary Western philosophy entered the role of a deep crisis at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. What will happen at this stage in political, economic and in moral-value terms What are the manifestations of these events on man in general and Western man in particular.

The stage was called the war stage and everything associated with it is a product of it, politically, economically and value-wise. From the economic point of view, destruction and ruin will spread throughout the rest of Europe, and therefore the center of power will change economically, after Europe was leading the world economy, this center will change to America beginning in 1929 (the economic crisis of 1929. Lasted ten years). Among the ideas that appeared at this stage are the ideas of despair, anxiety, alarmism, pessimism, absurdity and meaninglessness. The European man is faced with a difficult and complex reality and an unknown future (without hopes) and the moral values, the motto of which was previously the search for happiness and well-being, changed to a severe stage of blackness and doubt became the motto of the moral values of this philosophy. As for the political aspect, the emergence of totalitarian regimes (totalitarianism) or dictatorial regimes, the most famous of which are the Nazi regimes in Germany, fascism in Italy, militarism in Spain and China. (Boshinsky, 1992, pp. 33-34)

We conclude that this philosophy is an extrapolation and an expression of this extraordinary reality in the history of Europe. This emergence of these crises constitutes a phenomenon unparalleled in the history of human thought. In fact, these crises lead to a complete and comprehensive transformation of contemporary Western philosophy. (Boshinsky, 1992, p. 35)

We can also conclude that contemporary Western philosophy existed in a space full of political and military conflicts. At this stage, man entered dangerous moments of his existence, after the Western man was living in security and peace, this catastrophic stage (the stage of war) plunged him into an endless cycle of tragedies and tragedy (murder - Destruction-ruin), It is a black pessimistic stage of human life and after what this man was a sane being in the words of Greek philosophies, he became a crazy being in the words of "Michel Foucault". Because it was the cause of these wars and that is why contemporary Western philosophy can be defined: the philosophy of catastrophe, the philosophy of crises on all sides, but the most important definition remains that the center of its thinking is 'man'.

The criterion of the historical value of a particular philosophy is embodied in the extent of its theoretical and procedural effectiveness. If it is true that philosophy expresses the society that produced it, then it must do its part in society, generating some kind of change. the extent of the effectiveness of this philosophy in its society is the criterion of its historical value, and proof that it is not just an individual effort but a human experience to understand existence and change it. (Miloud, 2018, pp. 27-28)

The head of human liberation is philosophy , (Al-Jabri, 2007, p. 14) then philosophy wants to expose illusions and eliminate distortions that inflict man in society. Karl Marx said, "if we want to give up illusions about our situation, it means that we have to give up a situation that needs illusions." (Marx, 1976, p. 18)

Therefore, contemporary Western philosophy had an epistemological role in reading human existence in light of the various crises experienced by man, and one of the most important problems (crises) experienced by Western man is the problem of "human freedom", as many philosophies appeared at this stage calling for an epistemological reading of human existence, and calling for a reconsideration of Man and human existence.

Through his legitimate rights, the most important of which are: the right to life, dignity in existence, freedom of opinion and belief, first of all. One of the most important philosophies that advocated these values (the values of freedom and humanity) is the existential philosophy.

### **The New Epistemological Proposition of Authentic Human Existence**

Existential philosophy is one of the most famous and popular philosophies of the twentieth century in many parts of our contemporary world, because it is based on the principles of its essence of caring for "Man" and the core of his existence and life, expressing his anxiety, distress, worries, freedom and responsibility, and the reality

that threatens his being, and almost loses his humanity. It is more a philosophy of the 'self' than a philosophy of the 'subject'. (McCurry, 1982, p. 17)

### Definition of Existentialism:

Existentialism in the general sense is to highlight the value of individual existence. Existentialism is a philosophical current that tends to complete freedom of thought without restrictions, emphasizes the uniqueness of man, that he is the owner of thinking, freedom, will and choice and does not need a mentor. Existentialism has its roots in Soren Kirkegaard, Martin Heidegger, Karl Jaspers, and in France Jean-Paul Sartre, Gabriel Marcel, and others ... (Saliba, 1982, p. 565)

In French Existentialism is derived from the Latin root EX meaning what is external, being outside oneself, being objective, being concrete or being in kind. It is Stasia and its meaning is an inner or mystical existence such as malice, hatred, emotions. (Lalande, 2001, p. 388)

It was also stated in Lalande's philosophical encyclopedia, on the definition of existentialism "philosophy, marked by existentialism, does not consider reality as an object in the face of a knowing actor, as much as it considers an existence that friction transforms us, and it does not isolate in us the knowing Queen of the rest of our universe, as it makes the whole individual, with all his emotional and emotional responses to things, participate in Philosophical Research" (Lalande, 2001, p. 398)

As for the Encyclopedia of philosophy and philosophers by Abdullah Al-Hafni, existentialism is "the philosophy that says that existence takes precedence over what is, and that man exists first and then his identity is determined by his choices and attitudes." (Al-Hafni, 2010, p. 690)

Existentialism is a philosophy concerned with everyday human existence such as marriage, suicide, anxiety, anxiety, violence, freedom, decision-making and responsibility. They are subjects that form the essence of personal existence. (McCurry J. , 1982, p. 19) It is more than a pure philosophical theory: it is a philosophical - socio - political - psychological - absurd position, and it was undermined by a lot of influence in the second quarter of the twentieth century. (Judd, 1981, p. 140)

Philosophically, Sartre defines it as follows "existentialism is a human tendency." (Sartre, 1964, p. 07) .As he also defines it" existentialism is that existence precedes the self." (McCurry J. , 1982, p. 13)

"Existentialism is an optimistic philosophy because at its core is a philosophy that puts man facing himself, free, choosing for himself whatever he wants, and this is annoying that these people don't like (Sartre, 1964, pp. 09-10)."

This new humanistic direction (existentialist philosophy) appeared, which tried to rid man of the tyranny of the empirical materialistic direction, revolted against mathematical and scientific directions. The motto of existentialism was 'return to man'

It based its psychological foundations on the cognitive foundations of Soren Kirkegaard and Martin Heidegger, with extensions to Nietzsche, Marx and Hegel; then came the additions of Sartre, Camus, De Beauvoir and others, reflecting the social and psychological effects left by crazy wars and bloody clashes on Western society, when the Western philosophical question changed, from the credibility of knowledge and the type of certainty, to the question of the plight of man, his crisis and what he is in exchange for his existence besieged by all causes of oppression, after it turned out that the Western man lives inside a platonic cave once he leaves until he becomes nauseous. ( Al-Jabri, 2007, p. 232)

Existentialist philosophy has restored the value of Man, by considering that human life at its core is only a question of the meaning of existence. . (Mahmoud, 1996, p. 07) Existentialists agree that human knowledge cannot be reduced to a general or exhaustive knowledge of empirical facts. Existentialists agree even more in emphasizing the primacy of human knowledge, I mean existential knowledge.

This philosophy rejected the traditional view of philosophy that it must be neutral, and believes that one of its tasks is to form a mind enlightened by emotion, and believes that the universe has no meaning apart from man, as it is not the mere occurrence or possibility of something that is agreed to be there.. (Sayed, 2022, p. 81)

### Types of Existence:

Existentialists (Sartre) believed that existence must be declared to be two existences:" being in itself that surrounds us" and "being for the very being on which it is composed". (McCurry J. , 1982, p. 151)

– **Existence in itself:** is the unconscious existence, which is the existence of things, the world and the existence of phenomena, and is characterized as fullness. (Sartre, Existence and nothingness, 1966, p. 05)

Sartre says: "but nevertheless, we reject idealism, which has shown without a doubt that existence returns to the apparent, and that it is simultaneously with it, but it commits that serious mistake when it returns the apparent – and with-it existence - to the self." (Sartre, Existence and nothingness, 1966, p. 14)

It is a kind of emotionality, it is a subjective existence and cannot be influenced by the will to create what is objective, that it regains its existence beyond creation, that it is old uncreated, it is not active, it does not involve negation, it is always in the positive, it is not a bond of the self, but of itself, (Sartre, Existence and nothingness, 1966, pp. 42-43) "that it is a creature, it has no reason for existence, it has no relation to another existence, and therefore it is an increase in relation to the eternal" . (Sartre, Existence and nothingness, 1966, p. 45) This means, as Sartre said, that he is far from decay, that he is a synthesis of the self with the self, that he is isolated in his existence.

Through this we see that Sater has identified three basic characteristics of being in itself, namely: (existing is there, existing is in itself, existing is what it is).

So we have revealed existence - in every sense of the word, I mean 'being in itself' and in fact, we cannot accept Berkeley's view that the meaning of existence is to realize that existence cannot be returned to one or the other, it does not return to the person who is aware (or to consciousness) because the person who is aware also exists: there is also the existence of knowledge, which itself requires a basis, and if this basis does not exist, the sentence 'perception – cognize' collapses and falls into nothingness. Therefore, the existence-basis of perception should be the same as 'beyond what is apparent' since existence does not lead to the object being perceived, since from where it is, it also refers us to a conscious person who discovers its existence for us through this way as a feeling. According to Jean-Paul Sartre, "it is inevitable to say that knowledge simultaneously requires an existence beyond" (Jolivet, 1988, pp. 121-123)

#### - Self-existence:

It is the (authentic) human existence that each of us feels in his inner world, living it with all his heart. If existence in itself is static and not dynamic, then existence in itself is one of its characteristics, not a final state nor static, but a continuous transcendence of what each of us is, and therefore man, as Sartre says "man is before or after himself, but he is not himself at all". This means that man exists first, and this existence means the beginning of the material existential realized here and now, and this designation is represented by physical existence, Sartre says: "this being here is precisely the body" (Sartre, Existentialism is a humanistic doctrine., 1964, pp. 24-25)

The existence of the self is the existence of Man and the presence of the self, and this presence of the self is often counted as an attribute of existence, that it is not a conjunction that exists with existence, but it is the presence of the self and the extroversion of his existence, he is always at a distance from himself, because he constantly exceeds it paradoxically transcendent, and this non-existent distance that human existence carries over his existence is nothingness. (Sartre, Existence and nothingness, 1966, pp. 158-159). It comes into existence with a singular existence, and it is constituted as the object of human existence. (Sartre, Existence and nothingness, 1966, p. 16). It is, therefore, a lack of existence.

Through this, we can identify the basic qualities of existence for oneself as mentioned by Sartre, namely: (existence is it, it is the fundamental value underlying this existence, that it is a conscious correspondence with oneself is the existence of the other or contact with others).

Thus, self-existence refers to the self-conscious self and existence outside of it, and Sartre believes that man's existence precedes his being, unlike manufactured things, and therefore he is free to create or determine his fate and identity. (Sharoni, 2001, pp. 22-23)

This is why the glorification of action was one of the main principles of this doctrine: since there is no real reality except in action, and man only exists to the extent that he realizes himself, he is nothing other than the sum of his actions. Thus, the existential doctrine is a doctrine of optimism, because the fate of man is in his hands. It is not a doctrine that calls for discouragement, because it calls, on the contrary, for action and says that there is no hope except in action, and the only thing that allows a person to live is action. "Existentialism is the only view that gives man dignity, because it does not make him a means or a subject... The subjectivity that existentialism says is not necessarily an individual self, because realizing the existence of the self-entails at the same time realizing the existence of others... The unnecessary is necessary for my existence, and that it is not a thing unless others acknowledge it as a thing. Thus, my discovery of myself reveals to me at the same time the other, as a freedom placed in the face of me, who only thinks or wants for me or against me, and thus we reveal at once a world that we call intersubjectivity, and in this the world decides for a person what he is and what others are like." (fayssal, 2024, p. 42)

In this context, we find Dr. Abdurrahman Badawi mentioning that in the doctrine of Jean-Paul Sartre, an important fundamental point is the relationship or connection between oneself and the child of another, knowing that another person is nothing, and man is an object around which things are organized in the world. (Badawi, 1980, p. 226) Through deep analyses of the gaze, Sartre sought to prove that the gaze is the point and the basic condition in relations between us and others, and for every attempt to disassemble the world with the other, or

to prove its existence. (Mufarrej, 2009, p. 98), and in another passage what Sartre argued: "this existence, I - otherness, has begun for us as it can exist only if it guarantees no external existence that cannot be perceived" . (Sartre, Existence and nothingness, 1966, p. 984)

So, through the epistemological analysis of this central idea in existential philosophy, we note that this philosophy took care of human existence and restored the value of man through the following.

#### - The Essence Precedes Existence:

It is known that existentialism is considered a violent revolution against traditional philosophies, especially the rationalist and idealistic movement that began during the era of Descartes and ended with Hegel, because these philosophies:

First: it missed the realistic, personified human being: it was concerned with him as a concept devoid of any specification and not connected to reality.

The truth is that man, as Kierkegaard says, is "a unique individual that cannot be repeated and cannot be placed under a more general meaning"; Hence it is limited to an abstract meaning. The existence of man and the existence of things cannot be equal. (Soren, 1949, p. 149)

He also says, "The self is in a continuous state of becoming and formation," that is, the individual's movement continues on his way from one situation to another. The self here is not meant by the self in general, but rather by the concrete, individual human being. (Soren K. , 2010, p. 38)

Second, the traditional philosophies harmed the understanding of the truth of man, which is represented by the presence and continuity of feeling. Thus, moved away from the existence of truth, the existence of the self, and the existence of the individual. the existence of human and existence of things cannot be equal. This is why we notice how existentialism views science and accuses it of the most horrific accusations, such as generalization and objectification. Existentialists agree in saying that human existence is absolutely real, and it is a renewed reality at every moment, as we mentioned previously, that creates itself continuously. (Rashwan, 1984, p. 100)

Third, the traditional philosophies view existence as subsequent to essence and not precedes it, they missed the fact that this rule applies to things, not to humans. From here we understand why existentialism revolted against many traditional philosophies.

- Proving the statement that existence is prior to essence and react against the system of things:

The claim that existence is precedes essence is the basis of the existentialist position and the principle of their philosophy. Existence first, then essence, is the key that allows existentialists to open a completely different path in interpreting human existence and in its meaning and value.

But this distinction between existence and essence, and the claim of the primacy of existence over essence, has no meaning at all outside of man. Therefore, the precedence of existence over essence is a matter that concerns human alone. Thus, existentialism is not metaphysics, and if there is a metaphysics, according to Heidegger, it is a metaphysics that ends in the human being - the individual. (Judd, 1981, p. 151)

Existentialism therefore consists of a mantra, "existence precedes essence". Sartre sums it up like this: "Man is first of all nothing. It will only be afterwards, and it will be as it has been made." Self-construction causes infinite responsibility. For the man himself, first of all, but for everyone else too. Because by projecting his own image, he chooses that of humanity. Each choice, each act engages the universal, and with it the very value of existence. (Lemoigne, 2023, pp. 01-02)

Haman, first exists, is thrown, falls into this world, and then he to be. Sartre in the introduction to his lectures 'Existentialism is a Human Philosophy' said: "The definition of existentialism is very simple, but what complicates matters is the existence of two existential schools, each of which differs from the other, and thus the existence of two existentialists: ... and these two categories meet on the same level and agree that Existence precedes essence." (Sartre, J., Existentialism is a Humanist Doctrine, 1964, p. 41).

The existence of man therefore precedes all determination or distinction: there are no essences, forms, or goals that determine his existence in advance, and because there are no essences precedes the existence of man, then he is not governed by any necessity or inevitability: no God, no history, no natural determinism, etc.... There is no necessity. There is no determinism. (Judd, 1981, pp. 151-152)

Man is free absolute freedom, without limit, not subject to law, determinism, or necessary being. he creates himself; he is a project being completed, and human represents at every moment what has been accomplished from the project. Even the will itself, in the classical sense, disappears under the initiation of work, which is the most important.

"Not human" Sartre said in his lectures, "he is above all, nothing but a project. He is a project that lives by itself and for itself. This project precedes everything else in its existence. There is nothing that heaven can conceive or

imagine. Man is what he set out to be, not What he wanted to be". (Sartre, Existentialism is a humanistic doctrine., 1964, pp. 145-146)

In short, all beings have essence that precedes their existence, except for man. His essence will not be preceded his existence. As Sartre says - is a self-living project of existence, and there is no such project in the heaven of intelligible things, and man only exists according to what he intends and what he sets out to do, and with this free action with which he is confused by himself, he creates his own essence. (Sayed, 2022, p. 82)

This is how existentialism came to prioritize existence over essence, and to deny that there is one fixed essence. There are, as existentialists said, essences that differ according to individuals, and which consist of the existence of each individual. Existentialism does not care about essences, and pays attention only to what exists, or as they said, existence is what exists. Hence, it is said that this philosophy has revolutionized the study of humans epistemologically.

The word "existence" in this philosophy does not mean what we usually mean by it as a word. It seems difficult to provide a precise definition of existence here. Because existence, according to existential philosophers, is not an attribute added to constitute the essence of man, but rather it is the reality on which all attributes are based. If there is no existence, the existence of attributes is denied.

We do not perceive existence except through what exists, and existence cannot be perceived in isolation or on its own. It is also not correct to say that things exist, because things cannot exist without us. Things do not reach the level of true existence unless they occur to us in our experience and become objects of our knowledge and feeling. Hence, according to existentialists, true existence is a characteristic that distinguishes man alone. (Rashwan, 1984, pp. 104-105)

The existentialists opposed the "cogito": "I think, therefore I exist," which Descartes wanted to be proof of our existence. However, this "proof" only indicates the predominance of abstract thinking, and hence the existentialist philosopher "Haman" was right when he said, in contrast to Descartes: "I exist, therefore I think." Sartre said in the first person, "I think, therefore I was," meaning existence first, thinking and action second.

Rather, thinking contradicts existence, and this is what the father of contemporary existentialism, Kierkegaard, wished for when he said, "The more I think, the less I feel my existence." (Rashwan, 1984, pp. 105-106)

This means that my existence initially existed without essence; Just a project, and when I am born, I am incomplete because I am the only being whose existence lies in his freedom. As for rebellion against the system of things, this means that man is not like material things. He is distinguished by being rational, aware, feeling, expressive, and free, and because he is like that, he does not stop making choices.

Thus, came contemporary philosophy, represented by existential philosophy, with a new epistemological proposition that reconsidered the value of man or human existence, and by making human life possible. This is by considering the human being as a conscious being with a free and responsible will capable of expressing the core of his existence.

#### **Authentic Human Existence - Existence and Freedom:**

According to the existentialists, true existence is a privilege that only humans possess, because true existence requires choice and freedom. But since some people do not enjoy this choice, these people do not have a real existence, because as Heidegger says they do not exist in reality, because the one who truly exists is according to Sartre the one who freely chooses himself, and he who is himself, I mean, he who is of his own creation.

Existence, for them, is therefore synonymous with choice, and whoever stops free choice at a certain stage ends true, authentic existence. We only exist through progress and advancement towards an increasing existence that we achieve through freedom of choice. The end of choice is a betrayal of human existence, and must be abstained. In order for us to exist in truth, we must constantly distinguish between this being that we have achieved through a prior choice and the being that we want to be. It is not permissible for us to stop existing as if we have reached a final stage. Existence is always a constant elevation and a continuous transcendence over what we are at a certain moment.

Thus, we note that existence, according to them, is closely linked to human action and human action, and the actual exercise of human freedom of choice and behavior, (Éric Marquer, 2024, p. 58) and is not linked to existence, because no matter how much I think about my existence, I will not reach its definition or understanding, because existence is not one of the static things that I can reach with my thought, but rather it is an ever-renewing force that appears through my free choice on my path towards continuous progress. Because man is free, he therefore has control over his existence and destiny. He is responsible then. His responsibility, as well as his freedom, is an absolute responsibility: he is responsible for himself and all of humanity: "When we say that a person is responsible for himself, we do not mean that he is responsible only for his individual existence, but in fact, he is responsible for all people and all human beings... and thus our responsibility becomes much greater."



Which you can assume because it actually forces man to bear all of humanity” (Sartre, *Existentialism is a humanistic doctrine.*, 1964, pp. 45-46)

Now, if the essence of man is represented in his existence, and his existence is synonymous with his freedom, then the essence of man depends on his freedom, because he is the one who creates his own essence, which cannot exist in any other human being, and he is the one who chooses the human individual he wants. Therefore, Sartre decided that man, at the origins of his existence, is merely a project being accomplished. Sartre says, “Man is, above all, nothing but a project. He is a project that lives by himself and for himself. This project precedes everything else in its existence. There is nothing that heaven can conceive or imagine. Man is what he set out to be, not what he wanted to be” (Judd, 1981, p. 154)

Freedom, according to existentialists, is human existence itself, and not just a page added to this existence. In this, Sartre said, “Freedom is not an added quality or a characteristic of my nature, but rather it is the fabric of my existence.”. (Jabatar, 1970, pp. 158-159) Because freedom is the essence of existence, and even saying that a person exists simply means that he is free. Man is destined to be free, and he does not have the freedom to give up his freedom. We are condemned to be free, as Sartre said.

The choice here is not purely individual. Rather, Sartre states that when the individual chooses, he must keep in mind that all of humanity commits to this choice, without him committing himself to it alone. Hence, the matter required the individual person to choose the qualities that benefit him and other individuals, so it became the choice here represents a great responsibility placed on the shoulders of the individual who builds himself, because at the same time he also builds humanity in general. This is a responsibility that he bears, because when a person realizes himself abandoned, weak, powerless, and free, he realizes himself as the person who creates his own existence. (Jolivet, 1988, p. 201)

Man does not originally have a fixed essence. Human essence, as Sartre said, is subsequent to existence. He also emphasized that man is the maker of history and that the events of human society do not take place according to external will and deterministic laws, but rather stem from his inner self-feeling and from his relationships with others. Thus, Sartre rejected the extreme Marxist materialist debate and tried to make it a living human debate, in an attempt to develop existentialism. Increasing its fertility, and returning it once again to its place at the intellectual forefront on the scene of events in the second half of the twentieth century.

The world is not what I think it is in this or that way, but rather what I actually experience. This is what Merleau-Ponty tried to confirm in his book “*The Phenomenology of Perception*,” where he insisted that our being is physical beings necessary for our identity, which always has uniqueness, and therefore a special place. In time, therefore, we must not look at the human body as a thing, as it is a physical entity in addition to being a self, and on this basis, Merleau-Ponty began analyzing the depths of the self in this book *The Phenomenology of Perception* in a deep philosophical manner.

### Discussion- Conclusions

We can conclude that contemporary Western philosophy in all its dimensions has been concerned with humans, by creating a new epistemological proposal for human existence with existential philosophy. It was the focus of her work, whether in expressing his crisis and suffering, or in the field of proposing alternatives that would enable him to understand himself and how to coexist with his reality, and look to his future.

This new epistemological proposal led to several important results, including:

Sartre wanted to establish an ontology that would study the components of human existence in general, not just describe individual existence.

Human does not only exist as he imagines himself to exist, but as he wants himself to exist and as he imagines himself to exist after this soul has existed. human is the creator of himself because he alone conceives of it.

- Human existence is a free existence. Absolute freedom, without limit, not subject to law, determinism, or necessary being. And he makes himself. It is a project being completed, and it represents at every moment what has been accomplished from the project. Even the will itself, in the classical sense, disappears under the initiation of work, which is the most important.

Sartre did not stop at the “*Cartesian cogito*,” which determines the ego as a first principle and a first truth. As was done by the German philosopher Husserl. He does not transcend it into existence, but rather looks at the conscious ego and its object together in their inextricable relationship. Thus, Sartre's cogito is distinguished from that of other philosophers.

This is contemporary Western philosophy represented in existential philosophy with Sartre, as he is the great thinker in whom philosophy, literature, politics, and criticism embraced, because Sartre chose this embrace in defense of man and his rights. Existentialism came as a reaction to the objectivity sought by nineteenth-century philosophers, considering it to be the only possible and correct image of knowledge, including extremism towards

scientific materialism. Existentialism arose to oppose materialism by saying that the world, whose objectivity seems overwhelmingly complete, is the same "for man."

Sartre's teachings not only had an influence on existentialism, but he also had an influence on contemporary Western philosophy, which we can call the philosophical infrastructure.

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