5.1 INTRODUCTION

The fifth chapter of the thesis is attempted to deal with the notions of 'death' and 'transcendence' and a possible analysis of it from an existentialist - phenomenological perspective. The fact of death and the experience of transitoriness induce the present age with purifying considerations. Modern man realizes that the fact of death alone gives true depth to the question as to the meaning of life. In other words, life in this world has meaning because there is death. Man's last hope is connected with death. This may be the greatest paradox of death. Plato was right in teaching that philosophy was the practice of death. The only trouble is that philosophy as such does not know how one ought to die and how to conquer death. The philosophic doctrine of immortality does not show the way. Looked at in this perspective it might be said that ethics at its highest is concerned with the problem of death rather than with life, for death manifests the depth of life and reveals the end, which alone gives meaning to life. Life is noble only because it contains death, an end which testifies that man is destined to transcendence, to a higher life.

5.2 TRANSCENDENCE AND THE TRANSCENDENT

The two concepts, transcendence and the transcendent, though formed terminologically from the same verb - one as abstract noun and the other
as adjectival concrete noun - are quite apart in their application in the present day. The first has become more widely acceptable than the second. The transcendent is said to have one dominant meaning, namely ‘the beyond’, standing for a higher reality than the visible world and as such is very much under question today. Traditionally the concept of transcendent has stood for the problematic of a higher reality. This higher reality is understood to be concealed from our ordinary human consciousness.

In the modern Western philosophy, while the transcendent is under eclipse as a result of the rejection of traditional metaphysics, transcendence continues to enjoy some importance because it has become part of some new ontologies as in Existentialism and Phenomenology. German philosophy frequently uses the term ‘Transcendent’ to mean something which goes beyond the irreducible subject - object dichotomy of every day experience. The function of the transcendent is then to unite the two - consciousness and world; subject and object. This is so in Hegel, Fichte, Kant, Husserl and others. What Husserl mean by “Transcendental Phenomenology” is the analysis of the universal ‘self-and-world-consciousness’ that comes to light after the first epoche brackets out the external world as object and the second reduction razes off the particularities of the individual consciousness. In this doubly transcended viewpoint, Husserl seems to believe that we transcend the irreducible subject - object duality to seize the unitary reality of universal self-and-world-consciousness.
The term "Transcendence" means "climbing across" or "going beyond". The term does not refer to an object away from the pale of mundane things, but to an activity; the activity of going beyond or climbing across something. Husserl conceived transcendence as 'a movement across from the natural straightforward living towards objects to a reflective attitude in which we do not focus on the objects of our perceptual and other intentional attitudes. Instead, we pay reflective attention to the intentions and more exactly to ourselves in forming and having them.'

In other words, transcendence, for Husserl, is a movement away from the natural to a change in attitude. It is the adopting of a new attitude in which we 'pay reflective attention to the intentions and more exactly to ourselves in forming and having them'. But this, indeed, is only one aspect of transcendence.

The insight of St. Thomas that all creatures manifest a tendency to perfect their being by operating and that this tendency is an ongoing one can help us to understand the meaning of transcendence distinctively, for, 'transcendence' refers to the act of overcoming one's limitations and perfecting one's being by operation.

Transcendence is not an other worldly reality infinitely distant from human life. It occurs within the fabric of man's historical life with others. It
consists in man's growth from ego-centricism to 'other-centredness', so that the
more one overcomes self-centredness and finds identification with the 'other', the
more one attains transcendence.

5.4 THE ECLIPSE OF TRANSCENDENT IN MODERN THOUGHT

The 'Transcendent' as an object of philosophic question has gone
under eclipse in modern thought. Modern thought's disinterest in the
'Transcendent' stemmed from several causes. It may be said that Immanuel Kant,
who in dealing with the problematic underlying the thought about reality left a
legacy with regard to the question of the transcendent. It is well known that he
rejected through criticism the claimed capacity of pure reason to obtain
knowledge of the real as such. His hope was to pave way for that which is
ultimately real i.e. the eternal, to be held as the unconditional reference for
moral life, on the one hand, and as the object of faith on the other. On the
other hand, in so far as what we can thematically know was felt to be limited to
mere appearances. By rejecting 'transcendent insights' as a possibility of reason,
Kant closed the high road of metaphysics to the problematic underlying thought
about ultimate reality.

5.5 TRANSCENDENCE : THE BOUNDLESS ASPECT

The human being is understandably a 'boundary being'. To be finite
and self-conscious is to be aware of one's 'finis', one's limit. He is not infinite.
He is not only locked into so many boundaries of time, space, of limits to
knowledge, of gravity, of death, limits of power, of vulnerable to suffering, of sickness and so on but also consciously and subliminally aware that one is so locked in. And yet this finite, bounded limited being has within itself an in built impulse to break through all barriers - to overcomes his bounds and limitations, to break the bounds of death by seeking the life that overcomes death. The human being is thus a boundary being in both senses - that he is bound by boundaries and that he/she strives to break through these boundaries.

This may be understood as real transcendence - not the Kantian but Husserlian transcendence where the ego shifts its usual stance and looks away from the external world to look inward upon one’s own subjective consciousness. Human transcendence then means also not simply going beyond the four dimensions of space-time, but breaking through every barrier, even the barriers imposed by rationality.

5.6 CONCEPT OF TRANSCENDENCE IN EXISTENTIALISM

5.6.1 Transcendence: The Existential Experience

I.M. Bochenski, writing on the general characteristics of existentialist philosophy, remarks: “Existentialism addresses itself of what are today called the ‘existential problems of man - the meaning of life, of death, of suffering and of transcendence to name but these...’ and “the common characteristic among the various existentialist philosophies of the present is the fact that they all arise from so called existential experience. If the innermost nature of such an
experience” is ontological, then all the existential school ventures to do is to frame an ontology of being that would bridge the prevailing subject-object dichotomy. There can be little doubt that modern existentialism has touched the domains of our consciousness which, for centuries past were considered to be the darkest and most mysterious.

All existentialists argue that there is no disparity between human existence and freedom. According to Kierkegaard freedom can never be concern without a reference to man’s inner relationship to God’s individuality. For freedom signifies an act of creation and transformation not in the event of an encounter with objective alternatives, but in the spirit of one’s inwardness itself.

That is why man’s appropriation of the inwardness of his existence constitutes ‘existential’ freedom. No truth is possible without freedom. When the divine element casts a spiritual trance upon the whole life of man and he is awakened or impassioned, the first act of authentic choice is made and it is here that the thinker posits himself as pure ‘freedom’.

“By turning inwardly”, writes Kierkegaard, “man discloses freedom - and for him freedom is his bliss, not freedom to do this or that and become king or emperor, or the exponent of public opinion, but freedom to know of himself that he is freedom”.

By freedom we annihilate the distance between the finite and infinite in us. Every man can act freely only in relation to and in pursuit of
God, but with regard to the things ephemeral he is like a rung in the process of time and space. We cannot translate his freedom devoid of an existential axis. The self revelation of an individual, in which freedom is finally attained, therefore comprises the actualization of his relationship to the infinite.

The act of transcendence is the necessary order of human freedom. To be free is to be transcendental. To put it negatively, the essence of man’s life consists in its impossibility to be free or to be deprived of its self-determination. Marcel believes that in order to transcend the temporal, one must sink within oneself and do what one wills, not in a sense in which one may remain an indifferent spectator of one’s own life but by becoming wholly gravitated towards ‘the act of living infinitely’.

The mystery of Being is unfolded in the process of transcendence. Human reality is an eternal perfection, never submitting itself to any finite end but always running ahead of itself and generating the very finitude of its being. It need not be supposed that the actual realization of Being is the last stage of the chronology of events in the life of a person. Man lives in his Being because he is its expression. And there can be no better testimony to this than the fact that there is nothing in the domain of beings whose significance in the eyes of the existing individual is absolute. “For me freedom is possibility of doing what I will,” and I, as a self-determining substance can call nothing, save my true Being, that is, myself. “Being...is expectation fulfilled”.4

159
5.6.2 Kierkegaard

Kierkegaard’s own study of transcendence starts from the fact that even if we observe uncritically we can distinctly mark man as a being striving for perfect happiness. This striving which in all intensity is the very nucleus of human life, encounters its ideal in the being of God.

According to Kierkegaard, the feeling of pathos is not due to the divorce from divine reality. Therefore, however lost or derelicted human existence in the world may be, there is always a hope that it will at last unite with its original source and deliver itself from all finiteness.

Man’s life for Kierkegaard, is not ‘une passion absurde’ of Sartre or a ‘frightful maze’ of Kafka, but has a positively good aspect. Hence the basic hopelessness and absurdity which some of the existentialists emphasize as the very outcome of worldly human existence, is totally rejected by Kierkegaard. All limitations would fade out when the ‘being’ of the existent realizes the pure ‘Being’ so to say God. It is through the existential spheres that the experience of pathos becomes a truism and whatever may be the actual derivatives of this experience the attainment of transcendence produces its extinction.

The path toward transcendence is so complex that while feeling a moral disposition, man’s inwardness is already pierced by religious fervor. A life lacking in divinity and perfection, a life of false relationship which the aesthetic individual leads, is a fruitless and mechanical waste.
The morally mature individual repeatedly regrets his ephemeral past, and a hunger is born in him to offer himself at the feet of the Almighty. "When I despair', speaks Kierkegaard, 'I use myself to despair, and therefore I can indeed by myself despair of everything, but when I do this, I cannot by myself come back. In this moment of decision, it is that the individual needs divine assistance.'5 "The despair of finitude is due to lack of infinitude," write Kierkegaard, "and the lack of infinitude means to be desperately narrow - minded and mean - spirited".6

The act of man's profound longing for the infinite is responsible for his struggle against the finite. When a man turns inwards, he becomes aware of his finitude before God. In fact existential freedom and guilt are discovered at the sametime when a persons turns inwards and despairs.

5.6.3 Heidegger

Heidegger, similarly, examines the ontological aspects of the existence of the human being in its various modes of manifestation. "There is no subject which can be severed from Being which, indeed, is the foundation stone of all individual and universal experiences."7

It is the unique capacity of man's existence to project itself into 'pure nothingness'. At least in this capacity this finality as the innermost potency (of Dasein) through whose realization everything that is phenomenological and ontic is apprehended as the manifest expression of Being. Dasein's advance beyond itself and towards its own finality, is transcendence.
His phenomenology bestows upon transcendence a meaning which is different from that of Kierkegaard. “It is enough to note here that transcendence in Dasein, according to Heidegger, has nothing religious in it, since its culmination point is not anything like God or Pure Being. Dasein’s self-revelation or transcendence is the eternal act of its self-nihilation, in the sense that the transcending ‘Dasein’ feel like floating in a dreadful emptiness where everything appears to fade away and is ultimately ‘nothinged’. The vacuum of Being is now become so intolerably encompassing that Dasein is made to experience a sinking depth in toto. Our crude existence is thus originally the existence of ‘Nothingness’.8

Our authentic existence, unlike the unauthentic one, assumes eternity of the act of our becoming. And once it is affirmed that authenticity, ultimately has its genesis in the transcendental nature of ‘Dasein’ since ‘Dasein’ finds itself environed by the world and persons, negatively becomes a disposition of human existence towards that which happens to be their ideal. He has not only made nothingness superior to thought but also offered it a place where it figures as the final aim of Dasein and through which it ultimately achieves transcendence. Like André Malraux, therefore, Heidegger tells us that through death man “interiorizes” or individualizes his being and becomes strictly unique.

5.6.4 Jaspers

On the other hand for Jaspers ExistenZ itself established the
authencity of human reality since his philosophy is profoundly rooted in a different aspect of transcendence. Existenz implies transcendence from the state of 'Dasein', which virtually, is an awakening to the realm of pure Being. What man really is, is not a 'Dasein' in the world of transitory phenomenon, but in Existenz, a life endowed with 'encompassing consciousness, eternity and freedom.

It is the nature of human reality to transcend itself. According to him, freedom is the action of my sole freedom. Is it not that freedom involved in my very act of questioning freedom? It is hard to imagine that man's being would ever interrupt itself, had it not been an inner possibility of transcending itself. As there are moments when man's inwardness expands into a vastness "not in the sense of a fundamental origin", there are decisions taken in the course of life when the absolute consciousness of a 'free existence' is limitlessly manifest. Jaspers writes, "The question of knowing whether I am free has its origin in myself which wishes it to be there,...as a personal being, I do not uphold the possibility of not being free... Either freedom is nothing, or it is already in the question put on it"?

Freedom, says Jaspers, is the movement of Existenz towards the transcendental. Without much differing from Kierkegaard, he emphatically maintains that a true philosophy always aim at understanding man, not as he is in a given situation but as a tendency advancing ahead of itself. "If I fetch myself back to my authentic being, in the obscurity which can only be thinned, and never completely, with my original will, I can only reveal myself being there
where I am my own totally, I am no more than myself”. Thus, in existing authentically, human reality stretches itself not only towards the entire realm of transient beings but also towards its transcendence.

On the one side, as an existing subject I am involved in a milieu - an objective canvas of changing circumstances but, on the other side, I am inexhaustible by whatever I appear to be, and transcend all the happenings reckoned by history. My historicity is the infinity of my freedom in time.

According to Jaspers, it is in the act of transcendence that the certitude of our ‘pro-jecting’ towards Being is grounded. “...there is nothing inside or outside ‘transcendence’ which can serve to distinguish it. If it is conceived distinctly it is transcribed in any shape whatsoever, it is no more that”. However, there is always an experience in my being there that lifts me up the plane of suffering, struggle and death. The being of Existenz is shrouded in mystery, and through no empirical representation does it disclose its transcendental wholeness. Moreover, no phenomenological possibility of Existenz is conceivable unless it itself points to and mirrors the transcendental.

What, as a matter of fact, Jaspers suggests by describing of human experience is in the transcendent God, having a personal aspect. Such a God is ‘ascertained existentially’ and therefore, transcendentally. In Jaspers, God and Infinite are integrated within a whole whose nature is akin to Being. ‘Being’ is ‘Transcendence’ only for ‘Existenz’, and unless one transcends to the level of
Existenz he cannot experience being as Transcendence. Transcendence emerges not only as the transcendent mode of the world, but also it comes to realization in the illumination of ‘Existenz’ as a proper object of ‘Existenz’: indeed as the only object in relation to which ‘Existenz’ can be to itself. Transcendence emerges as the condition for the possibility of Existenz. Although no cognitive account of this realization is possible, ‘Existenz’ understands itself in relation to being as transcendence.

This non-objective existential encounter occurs in what Jaspers styles the unconditioned character of ‘Existenz’. The chief phenomena involved in this are his concepts of the ‘boundary-situation’, ‘absolute consciousness’ and ‘unconditioned action’. One thing I cannot change, the fact that I am always in a situation. Living in a world and being in a situation are identical. Of course, I can naively be in a situation without realizing it. Only when my being-in-a situation comes to conscious awareness does it become a boundary-situation. In such a situation I grasp my freedom, my limit, my unjustifiability. And I see that either there is Transcendence or all is absurdity. Boundary situation must be lived through. When this happens one recognizes them to be bound up with one’s very being as ‘Existenz’. To him they are objective in the sense of being inescapable situations which give life its existential quality and enable one to encounter Transcendence. There are specific ‘boundary-situations’ in which the very meaning of Existenz is put in question. They are death, suffering, conflict, and guilt.
According to Gabriel Marcel, even the phenomenon of death is looked upon as one of the worldly happening, 'a fall into uselessness'. Instead of cloistering himself in his inner Being, the modern man, having already equipped himself with the technical knack, searches for a solution of crises. "The characteristic feature" of our age, Marcel thinks "the man in whom the sense of the ontological - the sense of Being - is lacking, or to speak more correctly - he is the man who has lost the awareness of this sense".12

Is there no meaning then in the life that we live and in the diverse engagements that keep us persistently pinned down to the world? Is nothingness the ultimate reality through which the void of all that is, is presumed at the very start? Why does man hope? Why does he act? Why is he at all?

Is there a way out for man from his fallen state? The question of Being - the most mysterious question of all - occupies unique place in the philosophical works of Marcel. Being is irreducible to thought. Its position is like that of a 'self-present' postulate which constitute the background of every speculative process.

Hence, in the act of interrogation, man's being is completely bound by the all embracing transcendent Being. It 'stands firm against the test of trial of life'.

166
Man’s existence involves individuality, or as Marcel puts it, an ‘act of creation’ whose nature is not only transcendental but also spiritual. Existence taken in this latter creative form, is equivalent to the affirmation of “the act of faith”.

“It is necessary to recognize that if I am to grasp the entirety of my life, the mystery of my being, I can do so only by being ‘inward’, that is, by identifying myself as myself above all possible judgments and representations by becoming profoundly myself which can unfold the riddle of what I am.”

The mystery of myself is the mystery of Being, in which the answer to the problem of my existence lies. Being is too inexhaustible to be grasped fully. It is a plenitude, a profusion, the ultimate response to all human actions. No rational attempt can contains the whole of it. “It is necessary that there be Being, that all is not reduced to a play of successive and inconstant appearances; in this Being, I avidly aspire to participate in some manner and, however rudimentary it is, this existence (my existence) itself is perhaps, to some degree, a participation.” I am not what I have, because what I am is ontologically prior to all my havings. My experiences take place within Being and are predisposed to Being.

Hence, ‘Being’ transcends the opposition between the inner and the outer. In the course of my very activity of living, I intersperse myself with Being and predetermine what I am going to be. Embedded, therefore, as I am in Being,
it is but natural that my decisions are in themselves absolutely free and an expression of my authencity. It is inherent in man to inherit his vocation, to go infinitely beyond his state of composedness, to realize that to live is 'to live for. Thus the mystery of Being is unfolded in the process of transcendence.

5.6.6 Sartre

The notable existentialist dictum that the 'being-for-itself' is in itself at stake, is confirmed by Sartre in his argument that nothingness inherent in the relation of man to himself constantly expresses itself through anguish and self -interrogation, both of which form the basis of human transcendence. “We discover non - being as a condition of the transcendence toward being”.16 The consciousness of freedom is the consciousness of being less than what one can be. In existence, I overgrow my actual state of being, that is, I go beyond what I am and yet below what I long to be.

Thus, I cannot exist without being free, for being the source of all 'negatites' in order to be, I have got simultaneously not to be. This means that freedom evolves from my being a living paradox. “I am condemned to be free” says Sartre, “..... no limits to my freedom can be found except freedom itself, or.... that we are not free to cease being free.....”.

Freedom is the fundamental project of man. It is that which makes all possibilities possible in him. Taken in its simplest form, it is identical with what Sartre calls 'the being which has to be what it was in the
light of what it will be’. It is correct, therefore to say that for human reality to be free is an inevitability “..... the freedom of the ‘for-itself’ appears as its being”. and “man is nothing else but what he makes of himself”.

It is indeed a paradox that man has lost himself and craves for a re-establishment of himself, but cannot reach the end since there is no end. Man’s disposition of advancing towards an ideal around which all of his wills assemble explains the transcendentality of the ‘for-itself’.

Consciousness, by refusing to remain stable, transcends itself to become what it is not; but, simultaneously, it receives as if a tug from the in-itself and tends to be converted into ‘dead’ something. The being of human consciousness constantly escapes itself, runs between sincerity and insincerity, being and non-being, at one and same time.

The characterization of the upsurge of human reality as a value-transcendence conveys accurately the sense of the psychic phenomenon of ‘anguish’. Speaking generally, the for-itself entertains multiple possibilities in its relation to the world because of its natural incompleteness.

However, it is in its act of desiring that the for-itself organizes itself as a project or transcendence. Desire desires itself. For what can human reality desire except the desiring of being itself? Since it is within itself a ‘missing in itself’, the for-itself desires to surpass itself in order to realize the state of a complete ‘lackless’ whole.
There are limits to my life because there is freedom “... the resistance which freedom reveals in the existent, far from being a danger to freedom, results only in enabling it to arise as freedom”. Man does not encounter obstacles outside the domain of his possibilities. The for-itself everywhere is exposed to resistances and obstacles because it is originally a free upsurge, an exclusive projection.

Nothing can interdict me from being what I have planned to be. My situations are the fulfillment of my existence. I am because I am free, because I constantly refuse to be an ‘in-itself’, because I am ‘to-be-free-to change’. Naturally the exercise of freedom implies the prevalence of obstacles. Whatever discrepancies my environment may offer me, I am the author of them all. This world is my world, and I am responsible for what it is.

According to Sartre, man’s inability to transforms his existence into pure ‘nothingness, or full ‘somethingness’, to make the impossible possible is the evidence of his freedom. Freedom without a need to surmount the contingency of birth, of disease, of death, and in short, of the ‘situation of freedom’, is no freedom at all. It is because freedom is condemned to be free i.e., cannot choose itself as freedom.... that there are things...”.

The limitations of freedom lie deep in freedom itself. “The only limits which freedom can encounter are found in freedom”. As an individual I am free to shatter the restrictions of my birth casts on me. It is wrong to
suppose, likewise, according to Sartre, that the inevitable phenomenon of death imposes a limitation on human life. Life cannot be dominated by anything except itself. For Heidegger, to die is to realize one’s own being-towards-its-own-death, that is, to comprehend one’s freedom to die.

According to Sartre, however, death is neither within or author the project of the for-itself. In each of its projects the human reality is constantly thwarted by death. But, significantly enough, death has nothing to do with life. The being-for-itself can neither wait for death, nor realize it, nor project itself toward it.

My subjectivity remains totally untouched by death. This obviously does not mean that mortality constitutes no resistance to my being free; but since I can never pass through death or survive it, it remains only an ‘unrealizable to be realized: I am not ‘free to die’. Really speaking, the projecting consciousness is only destined to die in the sense that death is its conclusive term. It is because I make wholly myself that there is no place for death in my free being. The life of freedom is the life of immortality or so to say transcendence.

Further for Sartre, the existence of other entails one’s fear of objectifiability. Human reality is an emergent being-for-itself. And this being-for-itself has established itself in face of a being which is evidently alien to it. There is no possibility of my objectification in absence of the other. In our worldly life our encounter with others is an inevitability.
My spatial and temporal dimensions change. "... being-seen constitutes me as a defenseless being for a freedom which is not my freedom". In the presence of the other I cannot act as the sole ruler of the world. When I experience the other, I experience him as an infinite freedom. The moment the other dawns in my universe, I am disconnected from my own being.

The being of man is necessarily incarnate. My body is the link between me and the world. My body is the world, I as an incarnate being, exist for others. My body is different to me from what it appears to the other. But so is the other's to him. And it is by a kind of flight from myself that I can realize the flight of the other from himself. The other must be exploring himself and me by a leap beyond himself.

The very upsurge of my being is in the presence of the others. Although, actually, the distance between my body and that of the other is a handicap, to the extent that I am a 'transcendence' transcended. I can surpass the other's body and 'know' him.

5.7 Transcendence - An Aspect of Finiteness

In existentialist thought, human existence is tied to finiteness of being that is estranged with transcending. To go beyond finiteness appears as an unjustified and unprofitable undertaking. Transcendence is to be found only as a human aspect in finiteness itself. It 'constitutes selfhood'. But precisely this
transcendence is meant to add weight to the positivity of finiteness. Indeed our understanding of being is “the most finite thing in the finite world”. Since “transcendence itself develops ontologically, we must speak of “finite transcendence” of a “finite self” and regard that all metaphysics is based “on the question of finiteness of man”.23

In Sartre, such finiteness becomes the centre of his philosophy. Man is condemned to freedom; man must make his decision without any antecedent value or goal. First there exist finite man, only later does he freely gain his positive essence. “Transcendence means establishing a relationship with the other”.34

According to Heidegger ‘Transcendence’ is enacted in ‘finiteness itself’. “The word transcendence is derived from transcedo and means the crossing (or “stepping-over”) from what is to “founding” being, which makes possible such a thing as (human) existence. Heidegger always uses the term in this sense, so that transcendence always remains within the confines of this world”.25 Such transcendence or transcending is possible only through the distinction between the ontic entity of a concrete ‘what’, which we may call the foreground and the ontological being (Sein) of a ‘how’, the background. In this ‘philosophizing...there happens transcendence’. Thus transcendence becomes ‘the project of the world’. “The design or ‘project’ of the world springs from ourselves, from the ‘ground of the ground’, from the ‘freedom’ of human existence, which Heidegger’s principal work, ‘Sein und Zeit’, is meant to show up
as a 'revealing design of transcendence'. For him it is certain that transcendence 'is rooted in the essence of time', revealing itself as temporality, and that the 'innermost essence of finiteness' belongs to it. In this sense man is to be understood as 'existing transcendence'. The fact that he surpasses the world of entities 'we call transcendence'. Further he says that for the goal of 'the transcendence of Dasein' is to 'develop and establish the projecting-dispositional understanding of being'. This establishing, Heidegger calls 'ontological truth'. Thus transcendence, Dasein, being and truth are most intimately linked together. The question whether Being will ever show up a relation surpassing finiteness beyond transcendence does not arise with Heidegger. Transcendence serves precisely to reveal finiteness through the 'nothing'. But this inner-human 'transcendence forms (itself) the being of all that is'; probably almost in the sense of an idealistic transcendental philosophy. Accordingly transcendence expresses the essence of the subject, the fundamental structure of subjectivity. "Being is transcendence as such. And just such a kind of being exists, and exists necessarily only where finiteness has become existent".

5.8 DEATH, TRANSCENDENCE AND THE STRUCTURAL ORIENTATION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Death when appropriated existentially as my death or experienced as the death of one with whom I have been in communication, rather than just as an objective event which happens to people, raises the question about the significance of life and the destiny of personal existence. Death points up the
finitude of our being. We can irretrievably lose ourselves and die without ever having lived. In the light of an honest appropriation of death rather than self-deceiving attempts to flee it we are stimulated to sort out the important from the trivial and to decide between them. Consequently death is a limit or boundary to Existenz. The experience of the boundary of death forces us to admit the nonfulfillment of Existenz in the world and to transcend or despair. Thus we are brought to a brink: we must decide how to take it, what to do in the face of death which points up the fact that we must give our lives meaning and quality, that it is not written objectively in the scheme of things. Death presents a challenge to living: we are called upon in its presence to determine how we shall live considering that we die. Yet death is a threat as well as a challenge: hence our decision is in the face of that which possibly negates all meaning. In reaction to death I may fail to bring about the actualization of myself as Existenz. I may instead dissipate my life in redoubled efforts to cover up death and secure my life in the world. Or "I can, transcending, recognize myself as transcendent to my own empirical modes and thus in relation to Transcendence which gives life a meaning beyond its immanent structures. It is freedom which comes to the fore in the face of death. Similarly conflict, suffering and guilt function as boundary-situations which limit and reveals the inability to achieve finality in temporal extension".  

Beyond the boundary ultimately means in absolute consciousness and unconditioned action. Absolute consciousness says Jaspers, "is the most
comprehensive signum for the consciousness of Existenz. In it as the consciousness of authentic being out of an unconditioned source, I find support and satisfaction while as empirical existence I am without support and searching; I find rest for the restlessness of existence; reconciliation for the strife and tension; decisive answers to authentic questions."  

Absolute consciousness is a sense of fullness of feeling, of peace beyond all the clamorings of existence. Having experienced the boundary situations, where the impossibility of support in finitude is existentially realized, Existenz in absolute consciousness lays hold of unconditioned being in a sense of the presence and eternity of being. "Transcendence is an object only for absolute consciousness". Absolute consciousness is thus individual consciousness at the level of Existenz with its own commitments, choices, and the necessity of its own action. It can never be reduced to law or universality. "It transcends them as it secures a relation to Transcendence in historically determinate form. Thus, its fulfillment takes place in love and faith and fantasy." Love is the relationship of one individual to another in their modes of transcendence. I love a person (or thing) not when I represent him as only a possible ally or obstacle, as something to be manipulated, but when I see him as open to Transcendence. Likewise, faith and fantasy are modes of absolute consciousness because in them a relation to being is expressed beyond the expectations and assurances of immanent consciousness. By their means one is aware of being as Transcendence.
Though I am free, responsible, transcendental to my elements, I still am not through myself alone. I am given to myself, and in that situation am responsible, under obligation to become myself. This rootedness in being and uniqueness of Existenz gives rise to dynamic attitudes and postures which Jaspers calls "Existential Relations to Transcendence". They are dialectical relations where Existenz asserts itself, yet comes back to relate itself to Transcendence. The very names suggest this dialectical quality: Defiance and Surrender, Descent and Ascent, and the Opulence of the Many and the One. In each set of polarities the singleness, uniqueness, and freedom of Existenz (Defiance, Descent, Many) and the oneness of Transcendence (Surrender, Ascent, One) work themselves out in a subject-object relationship which reveals concretely the rootedness of Existenz in Transcendence, yet its accomplishments only in decisive individual action.

5.9 THE NATURE OF SELF-TRANSCESSION

Self-Transcendence has two features that are immediately evident. The first is that self-transcendence presupposes the existence of a consciousness or subjectivity toward which man tries to reach out. The poet who meditates on nature, seeks not only to expand his ego to the size of Mother Nature and to become one with the larger entity, i.e., 'Nature', but also looks for a consciousness or subjectivity that resides in nature and confronts his own inwardness. In his contemplation of nature he seeks to confront and respond to the subjectivity that resides therein.
The second feature of self-transcendence is that it demands otherness. Man needs the presence of an ‘other’ to realize himself as a concrete and distinct human being. Man needs the refractory otherness of the world around him for his existence. The unremitting need as well as the pervasive presence of otherness contradicts the demand for expansion and appropriation that is inherent in the primary urge for self-transcendence. That contradiction is experienced as a tension and a paradox in the life of the self-transcendence being. When the process of self-transcendence advances smoothly, then its expansive tendencies are fulfilled and its conquests achieved. This achievement is, however, possible only by a confrontation with an otherness.

Man’s awareness of his own finitude and his quest to transcend his limiting situation places man on the path of self-transcendence. Self-transcending man tries to possess the infinite or become infinite. Man seeks to attain the ultimate, for being and having coincide in the ultimate.

The ultimate satisfaction of human striving is possible only in the Infinite. Chandogya Upanishad expresses this in the following way, “In the Infinite is bliss, in the finite is no bliss”. Bliss is the state of equilibrium where all strivings come to an end. Attainment of the Infinite Being is the final achievement of all human cit and sat. All of man’s strivings find their ultimate satisfaction in the Infinite Being. Hence the religious man leaves behind all things and beings including its own limited being and seeks Infinite Being which alone can provide him ultimate satisfaction. Yet this Being is not given to man
just like other beings, for it does not exist as other beings; it exists as the goal of man’s self-transcendence.

Man’s self-transcendence is thus oriented to the fullness of Being. However, given his limited nature man never reaches this goal. The desire to attain the fullness of Being always remains as a hope, and a possibility which animates his being. Therefore, we may speak of self-transcendence as an open textured process for it does not stop at finiteness but is aimed at Being Itself. The process of transcendence can come to its fulfillment only when man reaches Being Itself, which, of course, is said to be impossible because of man’s bounded situation. This is the paradox of human existence: he is a being that remains always a becoming; he is a project that will never find completion; his existence is a quest that never finds what it seeks.

The human situation, however, is not totally hopeless; man is able to slowly but steadily move towards his ultimate goal, the awareness of the existence of which is an immediate datum of his consciousness. Man sees it in his imagination as a future possibility and strives to attain it.

5.10 TRANSCENDENCE AND HUSserlian PHENOMENOLOGY

It is understandably possible to state that many human beings accept the limits and bounds to live within the boundary without chafing. But what we regard as outstandingly human is the outstandingly boundaries-breaking. The questions is: Can the Husserlian methodology deal adequately with the
understanding of transcendence? Only if such transcendence is innate in consciousness is the answer. For Husserl, "Only transcendental subjectivity has ontologically the meaning of Absolute Being, because it alone is non-relative, that is relative only to itself".34 Transcendence ends, for Husserl, with the Transcendental 'I'. 'I', the transcendental, absolute 'I', as I am in my own life of transcendental consciousness, but besides myself, the fellow-subjects who in this life of mine reveal themselves as co-transcendental, within the transcendental society of 'ourselves' which simultaneously reveal itself".35

This is the transcendental Absolute Being that Husserl has to offer us — the inter-subjective community of 'self-and-world-consciousness' revealed by the 'epoche' and the reduction. In the realm of Being thus revealed, there is "a separation..... between two radically opposed and yet essentially inter-related regions of Being".36 One is the world of real objects and the other is the world of consciousness with its noematic and noetic structures. Both noemata and noeses are interdependent and inseparable; both are eidetic; the former noema, is innate in consciousness; noeses is an intentional act, thetic and directed.

Transcendence for Husserl arises also out of the provisional inadequacy and possible revision of meanings, especially when the object is not 'reel' or thingly. "When the dator intuition is of a transcending character, the objective factor cannot come to be adequately given; What can alone be given have is the 'Idea' of such a factor, or of its meaning and epistemological
essence, and therewith and a priori rule for the well ordered infinities of inadequate experiences".37

We suggest that the phenomenological method is intrinsically incapable of apprehending the radically transcendent. It only appears to get around the problem of the transcendence of the thing. On the other hand, in clarifying the distinction between Transcendence and Immanence, he acknowledges the Kantian discovery that the 'thing-in-itself' cannot be immanent in consciousness in principle and therefore belongs to the realm of the transcendent. In Husserlian Phenomenology, then ego consciousness is necessary and absolute for transcendence. In this consciousness of 'self-and-world' which is for Husserl Absolute Being, and which is the result of two transcendences, first in the 'epoche' of change of standpoint, second in the 'eidetic' reduction of consciousness from its individual peculiarities. The question is: is there any room for further transcendence?

According to the Indian tradition there is chance and which lays emphasis on a 'third' transcendence. According to the Indian tradition, the real transcendence occurs only at the point where consciousness as 'consciousness-of' is itself transcended to become 'consciousness-in-itself', where all dualities of consciousness and its objects are finally overcome in the unifying vision. It asks for a radical resolution in the human consciousness which puts an end to all thinking as such and recommends 'Upasana', initiation and 'Sadhana' or discipline leading to realization. When the ultimate realization finally dawns, it is
no longer fruit of thought but an experience that transcends all *apara - vidya*, all conceptual - intellectual activity.

5.11 CONCLUSION

"The dynamic reality of human existence, on the one hand exercises freedom, will, decision, creativity, setting goals and striving for their attainment and on the other hand is seen in his ‘thrownness’ - a being of care and temporality - and finally abandoned to death, so that his taste for the infinite is anchored to a radical finitude".38 Man never gives up the quest for wholeness, and even the most extreme among the existentialists seem to stop short of a doctrine of a sheer absurdity and of nihilism.

There are profound conflicts and tensions in existence itself, so there are great differences among the existentialists as to how the threatening and destructive tendencies in man can be overcome. Some right wing existentialists are just as despairing of the human conditions as are atheistic ones. Certainly the Christian existentialists believe that they pass beyond it, and the atheist too looks for at least a partial salvation.

According to Kierkegaard and Heidegger the attainment of true selfhood come from very different areas of the existentialist spectrum, the former, appealing to faith and grace, the latter considering man in his autonomy. For Kierkegaard, there is no human solution, man’s finitude and his sinfulness make it impossible for him to effect his own salvation. Thus for Kierkegaard
authentic existence i.e. transcendence is attained in the moment before God, which is also the moment of self-knowledge. It is also the ‘moment’ before God - the moment in which eternity impinges on time.

This does not mean that the believer is delivered from time and its conflicts, but it does mean that there is a dimension of eternity in his life. As Martin J Heineken has expressed it, “the individual in his existence as the synthesis of time and eternity is constantly still on the way in the process of becoming what in another sense he already is”.39

In contrast to the Kierkegaardian view, for Heidegger, it is not the ‘moment before God’ but rather the ‘moment before death’ that is decisive. “Death is not merely a negative phenomenon. To anticipate with resoluteness is to find a certain wholeness in it. It sets a boundary to my existence and so makes possible a unity of existence”.40

The expressions ‘moment before death’ in connection with Heidegger’s view and ‘moment before God’ in connection with Kierkegaard, have eschatological overtones. But the eternity beyond time of which Kierkegaard speaks of, in Heidegger, makes a kind of eternity within time. It is a kind of infinity or eternity in the midst of time.

Kierkegaard seems very close to Heidegger when he writes “The temporal is a snail’s face, spreading out in time and space, the eternal is the intensive which hurries to meet death”.41 It is an ‘ultimate concern’ that finally
There is in existence an inexhaustibility and a transcendence. Just as man's finitude and historicality, he can never have a final view. Yet the existentialist refuses to join the positivists. Some glimpses of reality, is granted to men, however fleeting and fragmentary this glimpse may be. The existentialist is in fact more realistic than the positivist. Despite positivist's prohibition, the human mind ventures out beyond the empirical phenomenon, towards transcendence. It may be an underlining faith which says yes to 'being' without seeing anything concrete and which could conquer the 'non-being' in death.
REFERENCES AND NOTES


8. Ibid. p.66


17. Ibid; p.441 ff.


20 Ibid; p.509.


22. Ibid. p.267.ff.


26. Ibid p.27.
27. Ibid. p.27-28.


29. Ibid. p.142.

30. Ibid.p.142.

31. Ibid.p.142.

32. Ibid.p.144.

33. Ibid.p.144.


35. Ibid. p.21-22.

36. Ibid. p.359.

37. Ibid. p.397. (Italics original)


