



## A Comparative Study on the Notion of Alienation in Buddhist and Existential Philosophy

Chow Samching Manhai

Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Sri Jayawardenepura, Sri Lanka

### Article Info

Article History:

Received 22 Aug 2023

Accepted 29 June 2024

Issue Published Online

01 January 2024

### Key Words:

Alienation

Existentialism

Buddhism

Authenticity Purification

\*Corresponding author

E-mail address:

saokumbanda2016@gmail.com



<https://orcid.org/0009-0005-2892-2976>

Journal homepage:

<http://journals.sjp.ac.lk/index.php/vjhss>

<http://doi.org/10.31357/fhss/vjhss.v09i01.16>

VJHSS (2024), Vol. 09 (01),  
pp. 238-247

ISSN 1391-1937/ISSN  
2651-0367 (Online)



Faculty of Humanities and  
Social Sciences 2024

### ABSTRACT

*The issue of alienation arises when subject and object are confused in today's environment. Significant advances in science and technology have given rise to this problem. The concept of alienation was clarified in modern times by philosophers like Karl Marx and Hegel. The idea was later investigated in greater detail in the twentieth century by the schools of phenomenology and existentialism, which featured theorists like Martin Heidegger and Jean-Paul Sartre. Many authors have discussed alienation in their works. Buddhism and existentialism have recently raised awareness to this problem. Existentialism and Buddhism both address comparable questions about life, even if they developed in separate historical periods and with distinct approaches. In existentialism, the dissociation of humans from their own existence or identities is referred to as alienation. Individuals reflect on themselves as the lost things among the crowd. A feeling of meaninglessness is brought about by life events like boredom and anxiety. Buddhism views the issue of estrangement as a means of comprehending human suffering. To end life's suffering, one must identify its source. The three main causes of suffering in life—craving, hatred, and ignorance—have been discovered by the Buddha. He has also discovered the three roots of happiness in life, which are non-ignorance, non-hatred, and non-greed, in opposition to these three factors. These two philosophies aim to liberate people from all forms of enslavement. This paper aims to bolster the idea that the central idea of both Buddhism and existentialism is the consciousness of oneself as a real person.*

## 1. Introduction

The word alienation refers to estrangement, which implies a relationship between the subject and the object. A variety of factors can break a relationship, including alienation between an individual and their community, environment, self, or even God. G. W. F. Hegel initiated the idea's significance in the nineteenth century, and Soren Kierkegaard and Karl Marx further developed it in different directions. The schools of phenomenology and existentialism, which included thinkers like Martin Heidegger and Jean-Paul Sartre, further explored the notion in the twentieth century.

Originally, philosophers used the term "alienation" to describe an insane person. As a person loses his sense of self, he is perplexed about the nature of life in light of his own experience. Hegel and Marx later used this term to refer to self-estrangement instead of insanity (Erich Fromm, 1956). Karl Marx defines alienation between individuals and social classes. Hegel posits that human consciousness experiences alienation from itself, rendering it incapable of comprehending its inherent essence. Erich Fromm asserts that the irrational passions of an individual can apply alienation to both the relationship with others and the relationship with oneself. A person's lust for power influences him, causing him to become a slave to his possessions and fail to understand his limitations.

The notion of alienation originated due to different categories of social and political divisions. There are various kinds of alienations: (i) Powerlessness: This refers to a lack of self-awareness about the nature of life; (ii) Meaninglessness: This refers to a lack of purpose in life; (iii) Normlessness: This refers to a lack of ethics, rules, and principles of social behavior; (iv) Cultural Estrangement: This refers to a separation from societal values; (v) Social Isolation: This refers to a sense of loneliness in social relationships; and (vi) Self-Estrangement:

This refers to a person who is out of touch with themselves (Augustyn, 2022).

Prominent writers and scholars from various fields have expressed their perspectives on the concept of alienation. In his book *Tangles and Webs*, Padmasiri de Silve mentioned alienation by comparing the views of modern philosophers with Buddhism. Jackie Nowparvar, in his paper *The Comparison of Existential Psychology and Buddhist Spirituality*, stated the importance of ontology, suffering, and death in both groups. This suggests that both Existentialism and Buddhism have addressed this issue comprehensively in the present era. They discover that a humanistic perspective can overcome alienation.

According to Existentialism, alienation is the separation of human existence from oneself. Human beings lack self-awareness and instead conform to the rules and regulations of their surroundings. They seem to have lost themselves in the collective presence of a crowd. Life experiences like boredom and anxiety lead to a sense of meaninglessness. Existentialists clarify that human institutions also separate us from ourselves. Individuals do not experience or comprehend these processes. We dwell in a world of alienation from our own institutions. Existentialists described these types of analogies as manifestations of alienation. Sartre (1905–1980) refers to a waiter who has identified himself with a role. Kierkegaard (1813–1855) refers to the loss of self. Heidegger (1889–1976) analyzes the inauthenticity of human beings.

Buddhism holds that understanding suffering is the primary goal. Given the existence of sufferings in life, the primary objective is to identify their underlying cause, enabling their cessation. The Buddha has found the three roots of dukkha: craving, hate, and ignorance. In contrast to these three factors, he has also found the three roots of eliminating dukkha: non-greed, non-hate, and non-ignorance. Buddhists describe four factors that enable

human beings to live peacefully and harmoniously with all creatures in this world. They are loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity. By applying these four qualities, all humans can respect each other, help one another, and define themselves as one class of social beings.

Thus, alienation is understood to be an inauthentic state that arises from an objective side. In this respect, Existentialists and Buddhists emphasize to be an authentic being by focusing on the subjective side.

### 1.1 Research Problem

We recognize alienation as the boredom, anxiety, and misery that unconsciously create meaninglessness in our daily lives. Existentialism and Buddhism emphasize understanding this matter and being consciously free from it. According to Existentialism, alienation is the separation of human existence from oneself. We don't expect human beings to be themselves, but rather to be mere objects that adhere to rules and regulations. He is lost in the crowd's mass existence. There are various crises in life, such as boredom, anxiety, and bad faith. So, existentialists believe that life is a meaningless existence. Human beings are also separated from human institutions. Human beings lack the ability to perceive and comprehend these processes. He lives alienated from his own institutions. Thus, existentialists believe that the subject is the truth and the object is an alienation. In Buddhism, the problem of alienation is to understand human beings' suffering. There are sufferings in life, such as birth, sickness, old age, and death. Like existentialists, Buddhists also believe that life is full of dissatisfaction. However, Buddhists can overcome any challenges by changing our physical and mental attitudes. The Buddha has found the three roots of suffering, such as covetousness (*lobha*), hate (*dosa*), and ignorance (*moha*). In contrast to these three factors, he has also identified the three roots of happiness, such as non-greed (*alobha*),

non-hate (*adosa*), and non-ignorance (*amoha*). Thus, Buddhists believe that the attachment between subject and object creates alienation. So, the problem with the research is that existentialism defines alienation as a meaningless state by separating subject and object, whereas Buddhism explains suffering as a meaningful state to understand the mundane and supramundane levels. Moreover, existentialists try to understand alienation by saving the idea of 'self', whereas Buddhists try to eradicate suffering by eliminating the notion of 'self.'

### 1.2 Objectives

- I. To study the differences between authenticity and inauthenticity in existential philosophy.
- II. To study the crises of human beings such as anxiety, bad faith, look, in existential philosophy.
- III. To study the differences between the purity of mind and impurity of mind in Buddhist philosophy.
- IV. To study three wholesome roots and three unwholesome roots in Buddhist philosophy.
- V. To identify the existential idea of meaningful and meaningless lives.
- VI. To understand the Buddhist view of mundane and supramundane levels.

## 2. Materials and Methods

This article aims to compare the notion of alienation in Existentialism with the notion of suffering in Buddhism. Both define a relationship to reality that cuts the cleavage between subject and object. They both agree that the modern world's power over nature has resulted in man's estrangement from nature and himself. Although both have similar issues, Buddhism never faced difficulties with the division between subject and object, whereas Existentialism seeks to overcome this dichotomy. Therefore, I have

implemented the following steps in this paper:

### **2.1 Research Design**

Descriptive research is a methodical strategy that aims to portray the specific qualities and attributes of a phenomenon or subject being studied. Scientific inquiry relies on it as a fundamental instrument for researchers seeking to observe, document, and evaluate the many intricacies of a certain subject. This approach offers a comprehensive and intricate analysis that facilitates comprehension, classification, and interpretation of the topic. The use of descriptive research design is prevalent in various domains, with its main aim being to methodically observe and record all variables and conditions that impact the phenomenon.

Descriptive research can be conducted using three basic methodologies. The three methods are: observational method, case study method, and survey research. In this respect, the researcher used only the observational method. The observational method is the most efficient approach for conducting this research, as researchers utilize both quantitative and qualitative observations. Here, the researcher utilized the qualitative observation to observe the qualities of the phenomena.

Qualitative observation is a method of gathering information that does not require quantifiable measurements or numerical data, but rather focuses on monitoring and describing the features of a subject. In this scenario, the researcher engaged in distant observation of the respondents.

Given that the respondents are situated in a conducive setting, the observed qualities are both authentic and impactful. Within a descriptive study design, the researcher has the option to assume one of four roles: complete observer, observer as a participant, participant as an observer, or full participant.

### **2.2 Sample Design**

The researcher employed nonprobability sampling in this study. Non-probability sampling is a sampling method that does not use random selection and does not allow for the calculation of the likelihood of obtaining a specific sample. Nonprobability samples are not suitable for making statistical inferences about the overall population. When the study's goals or purpose do not require external validity to be highly important, researchers may choose to use nonprobability sampling. Researchers may opt to utilize iterative nonprobability sampling for theoretical objectives, prioritizing analytical generalization above statistical generalization. Qualitative research frequently employs nonprobability sampling methods. Nonprobability sampling encompasses several methods, such as convenience sampling, consecutive sampling, snowball sampling, judgment sampling, and quota sampling. The researcher used the convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is a non probability sampling method where units are selected for inclusion in the sample because they are the easiest for the researcher to access. This can be due to geographical proximity, availability at a given time, or willingness to participate in the research.

### **2.3 Data Collection**

The methods of data collection were influenced by various sources, including primary and secondary sources. The study is based on library research. The study collected data from a variety of external sources. These sources included books, journals, newspapers, magazines, libraries, theses, and the internet. Researcher prioritized the library and the internet as additional data sources. Researcher gathered sources that were trustworthy and genuine, and completed the study by analyzing, criticizing, thinking creatively, discussing, and evaluating the information collected from various sources.

## 2.4 Data Analysis

We understand that existentialism and Buddhism emerge from distinct backgrounds, each defining the challenges of human existence. Western society in the modern period shaped the former, while eastern society in the ancient period shaped the latter. So, there are divisions between 'our culture' and 'other culture'. Our culture means Buddhist methods of dealing with suffering, whereas other cultures refer to existentialist techniques of handling anxiety.

Existentialism describes that there is alienation due to man's contingency, vulnerability to nature's calamities, sickness, and death. Kierkegaard brings out the central connection between freedom and anxiety. Anxiety includes conflict, as well as a desire for what one dreads. Sartre sees a close link between human expectation and anguish. Conscious beings, in his own terminology, bring "non-being" into the world. Heidegger makes the same distinction between man's existence and that of a natural object. A material object is neither capable of caring nor incapable of not caring. However, man's very being is care. Heidegger asserts that we embody care, and that care is the essence of the human being. It is a way of being in the world, in relationships with oneself and others. Thus, Kierkegaard, Heidegger, and Sartre agree that contact with dread and anguish is the only path to authentic living. We notice that the existentialists are dealing with boredom, melancholy, despair, etc.

Buddhism examines the distinction between the wholesome states of hiri ottappa (shame and dread of evil) and the condemned uddhacca-kukkucca (restlessness and worry). Kukkucca (worry) is caused by remorse and guilt, whereas uddhacca is caused by restlessness. They are referred to as hindrances to the mind's development. Shaking the water in a pot prevents one from seeing their own reflection. When an individual seeks to find their own reflection, they are unable to see it. Worry and

restlessness distort self-knowledge in the same way. We should cultivate shame and fear of evil as constructive and beneficial mindsets. In this context, we observe that existentialists often experience feelings of dread and anxiety. While a gloomy and melancholic focus on life's anxieties can be detrimental, a healthy appreciation of life's tragedies can serve as a catalyst for a more religious life.

Thus, existentialism arises directly from western man's anxiety, estrangement, and conflicts, and is indigenous to 'our' culture. So, it does not seek answers from 'other' cultures. Instead, it seeks solutions to its own problems, rooted in historical and cultural crises. In this regard, Buddhism strives to diagnose the existentialist's encounter with dread and nothingness.

## 3. Results and Discussion

Here, I would like to distinguish between Existentialism and Buddhism regarding the view of alienation, which is the problem of life faced by modern man. Existentialists define boredom as the problem of existence whereas Buddhists teach dukkha as the problems of samsara. Both emphasize individual problems and attempt to show the path to freedom.

### 3.1 Existentialists' Perspective on Alienation

Existentialism holds that institutions like government processes, political parties, business corporations, and religious organizations estrange individual beings. According to Erich Fromm, in the twentieth century, man is alienated from his own personal being in a vast mechanical culture dominated by technology. As he recognizes himself as a mere object, man finds himself alienated from his own essence. Because he is unaware of his own authenticity, he has detached himself from his own personality traits, such as feeling, willing, loving, and caring. As he forgets his own being, he defines

himself like a machine (Erich Fromm, 1955). As a result, he becomes a slave to his own activity, which is his power. He obeys and worships his actions, which he treats as divine.

First of all, we should analyze how Hegel and Marx defined the effect of alienation. Hegel defined alienation as the failure of the individual's will to identify with the will of society. When man notices that society's institutions appear meaningless due to their lack of effect on him, he can become alienated. Alienation is the condition when a person cannot identify himself with the public morality and institutions of his society (Hegel, 1977). Marx defined extreme exploitation of the socio-economic system as alienation. Therefore, the processes within a society dominated by capitalism lead to alienation. Marx identified four types of alienation that are related to the relationship between a man and his work. (1) the worker from his work. (2) The worker from the process of the work; (3) the man from his species; and (4) the man from himself (Marx, 1844).

Soren Kierkegaard stated that an analysis of human existence relates to the notion of anxiety. He explains the connection to alienation. He presents three different kinds of anxiety. Firstly, we regard anxiety as existing in a state of innocence. Secondly, we describe anxiety as a relationship with freedom. Thirdly, there appears to be a connection between anxiety and the philosophical doctrine, which asserts that a person consists of both mind and body. (Johnson, 1974). Therefore, anxiety has been a constant source of tension for man. Kierkegaard describes the human being as being in his "middle state," which combines sense and intellect, body and mind, the given and the possible.

Therefore, only the individual can attain the loneliness, courage, and doubtlessness of a religious man answerable to God. (F. H. Heinemann, 1979).

Furthermore, he accepts that a man's intellectual culture represents a sphere of estrangement. Losing the identity of a human being results in an individual ceasing to be a man. Thus, Kierkegaard defined alienation as an anxiety. Then, anxiety can be transformed into despair, which can be the sickness of death. He asserts that despair reveals the imbalanced connection between the self and oneself. A person who lacks a sense of self has no connection to God and lives in a state of deep despair. People hold human beings accountable for their emptiness and sinful state, as despair prompts them to examine the void they face. As a result, a person who is depressed about himself implies voidness that cannot be accommodated by ethical rules.

Martin Heidegger defined alienation from the perspective of ontological sense. Heidegger described human beings as generally falling into their own modes. There are phenomena such as idle talk, everydayness, and the "they." Society discusses these topics as part of its daily routine. Because there are no new topics to discover, humans often talk about subjects that are already known. This idea of falling has been contrasted with his concept of authenticity. Heidegger asserts that an authentic discourse can overcome alienation. As Heidegger says, "Idle talk is the possibility of understanding everything without previously making the thing one's own." (Heidegger, 1927). Therefore, one attains an authentic understanding by transforming this concept into their own self-perception.

Heidegger describes how human beings tend to lose themselves in things when they project meaning. However, this anxiety stems from his desire for self-identification. As he embraces his tendency to project, he succumbs to a feeling of meaninglessness. In order to escape this condition, he has to project a sense of meaningfulness. Heidegger described the three articulations of care about man's being: existence, thrownness, and fallenness. Existence describes man's

nature, which is projecting. Thrownness is about putting oneself in the project. Fallenness elucidates the experience of losing oneself in the world. Thus, existence leads to thrownness, and thrownness leads to fallenness. "Dasein is fascinated with its world." Thus, the world absorbs Dasein (Heidegger, 1927).

According to Sartre, existence is defined as meaningless, senseless, and purposeless because everything in this world seems miserable. The experience of nausea is a sense of being completely different. Because they are different from us, they encroach on and threaten us. Inanimate objects are vaguely repulsive because of their alienation. "You should not touch objects because they are not alive. You use them, put them back in place, and live among them; they are useful, nothing more. However, their touch is unbearable to me" (Sartre, 1938, p. 19). The feeling of nausea typically originates from the outside world. It is a sense of being trapped within a world of meaninglessness, and there is no escape from it. "The nausea is not inside me; I feel it out there in the wall, in the suspenders, everywhere around me. I am the one who is within it." (Sartre, 1938, p.31). For Sartre, the reality of alienation is the separation of being from meaning. Existence for him is being without being, or existence without essence.

Sartre has explored the concept of alienation through the lenses of being and nothingness. Being is defined as bondage, and nothingness is defined as freedom. Being is contrasted with nothingness. "Being is that, and outside of that, nothing." (Sartre, 1943). It brings nothingness into this world, as well as alienation. Internal relations link these two, providing a negative explanation. Sartre thus distinguished two types of beings: (i) being-in-itself (unconscious) and (ii) being-for-itself (conscious). Being-in-itself is unaware of its own existence and has the inability to change, while being-for-itself is aware of its own existence and has the ability to change.

Being-for-itself, lacking a predetermined essence, finds itself compelled to construct itself from nothingness (Sartre, 1943).

Moreover, Sartre also discussed the form of alienation in "bad faith." Sartre believed that bad faith is an escape from anguish. When individuals cannot take responsibility in life, they try to run away from their freedom. Therefore, it is known as self-deception or lying to oneself. According to Sartre, individuals experience alienation in life when they attempt to be inauthentic rather than authentic. But when individuals realize that there is no external power for their failures and successes, they rely on themselves for everything. Therefore, to have good faith, individuals must acknowledge that man consists of both facticity and transcendence.

### 3.2 Buddhist Perspective on Suffering

According to Buddhism, the most important aspect of life is the emphasis on the diagnosis of human suffering. Therefore, the key to overcoming this alienation lies in identifying the cause of human suffering. It is the craving for sensual pleasures, beings, and non-beings. These three factors are common between human beings and animals. However, human beings have the ability to completely eliminate them when they develop wisdom to eliminate ignorance. Buddhism always defines suffering, along with three features: its cause, its cessation, and its paths to cessation. So, it is not sufficient to say that life is full of suffering unless he or she clearly understands the three paths. Each path has significance for the other three paths. Therefore, Buddhism defeats the fire of *lobha*, *dosa*, and *moha* with the weapons *silā*, *samādhi*, and *pañña*.

The Buddha shows the three roots of unwholesome actions that cause suffering: covetousness (*lobha*), hate (*dosa*), and ignorance (*moha*). (i) Covetousness is translated as *lobha*. It manifests as an absence of charity. Its proximate cause is to seek pleasure, which leads to bondage in life.

Covetousness, with its two mental defilements, *ditthi* (wrong view) and *mana* (conceit), is responsible for extending the cycle of life. (ii) Hate is translated as *Dosa*. Its purpose is to disperse negativity throughout life. Its primary source is irritation. Normally, when one encounters an undesirable object, greed arises, and when one encounters an undesirable object, anger or aversion arises. (iii) Ignorance is translated as *Moha*. It manifests as a lack of the right perspective. Its proximate cause is unwise attention. It blinds our mental eyes, and we cannot see the arising and perishing of mentality and materiality. (Bodhi, 1993).

In order to eradicate these three roots of unwholesome actions, there are three roots of wholesome actions: non-covetousness (*alobha*), non-hate (*adosa*), and non-ignorance (*amoha*). (i) The concept of non-covetousness, known as *alobha*, stands in opposition to greed. Its function is not to hold. It manifests itself as detachment. Greed makes one selfish, whereas non-greed makes us selfless and benevolent. We practice *dana* to develop *alobha*. (ii) Non-hate, also known as *adosa*, stands in opposition to hatred. Its function is to remove annoyance. It is manifested as agreeableness. It is the most constructive element, whereas anger is the most destructive element. To develop *adosa*, we practice *sila* and *metta*. (iii) Non-ignorance (*amoha*) is opposed to ignorance. Its function is to illuminate life's direction, like a lamp. It appears to be non-confusion, like a guide. We practice *Bhavana* to develop *amoha*. (Bodhi, 1993).

Self-alienation arises in a person when there is an excessive domination of the personality by greed for money, power, sex, etc. As one forms attachments, he develops obsessions that overpower his personality due to greed. When a person believes that their actions are motivated by self-preservation, such as a desire for power, fame, or glory, they inadvertently cause self-alienation. When a person compares himself to others in many

ways, self-glorification can arise. Buddhists explain three types of self-conceit: superiority (*seyya mana*), equality with others (*sadisa mana*), or inferiority to another (*hīna mana*). It can arise in many ways, such as the comparison between powers, wealth, status, beauty, etc. Cravings incorporate all these concepts. The elimination of cravings brings to an end not only comparison but also peace in society. The Dhammapada asserts that a man's addiction to reckless living fosters a desire that spreads like a parasitic vine. (Narada, 1963). We must use the knife of wisdom to cut off and remove this alien growth.

Buddhism also provides four key elements that can help individuals overcome their negative attitudes and adopt a positive outlook. Different races, faiths, and religions exist in society, each with their own unique mental attitudes. In this state, we should strive to bring humanity into harmony. To bring harmony to society, Buddhists formulate four factors. They are *Mettā*, *Karunā*, *Mudita*, and *Upekkhā*. These states are called illimitable (*appamaññā*) and divine abodes (*brahmavihāra*) (Bodhi, 1993). (i) Loving kindness (*mettā*) is wished for the welfare and happiness of all living beings. Its goal is to remove anger. (ii) Compassion (*karunā*) is defined as helping when others are suffering. Its goal is to alleviate others' suffering. (iii) Appreciative joy (*mudita*) refers to the joy that arises when others achieve success and prosper. Its goal is to remove jealousy over the success of others. And (iv) Equanimity (*upekkhā*) is the state of mind that does not shake under any conditions. Its goal is to remove pleasant and unpleasant states.

The mind is believed to be pure and natural. The Anguttara Nikaya claims that the Buddha compared the mind to a piece of gold ore temporarily disfigured by the defilements of iron, copper, tin, silver, and lead. When the gold ore is purified its natural lustre emerges. "This mind, O monks, is luminous, but it is



defiled by adventitious defilements. The uninstructed worldling does not understand this as it really is; therefore, for him there is no mental development. This mind, O monks, is luminous, and it is freed from adventitious defilements. The instructed noble disciple understands this as it really is; therefore, for him there is mental development." (Bodhi, 2012).

Buddhism asserts that dependent origination conditions a human being. The following twelve variables collectively describe the general principle of dependent origination: 1. Ignorance (*avijja*) causes mental formations (*sankhara*). 2. Mental formations cause consciousness (*vinnana*). 3. Consciousness causes name-and-form (*nama-rupa*). 4. Name-and-form creates the six sense faculties (*salayatana*). 5. The six sense faculties cause contact (*phassa*). 6. Contact causes feeling (*vedana*). 7. Feeling causes desire (*tanha*). 8. Desire causes grasping (*upadana*). 9. Grasping causes becoming (*bhava*). 10. Becoming causes birth (*jati*). 11. Birth causes old age, death, grief, sorrow, suffering, lamentation, and despair (*jaramaranasoka*). This is how life begins, exists, and persists. It is the natural law.

Generally, there are five laws of nature, such as (i) the physical (inorganic) law (*utu niyāma*), (ii) the physical (organic) law (*bija niyāma*), (iii) the mental law (*citta niyāma*), (iv) the natural law (*dhamma niyāma*), and (v) the moral law (*kamma niyāma*). These things do not define him, but they can influence his life. The truth is that he possesses the power of free will (*attakara*) or personal endeavor (*purisa-kara*) to alter both his own nature and his environment (K.N. Jayatilleke, 1969). In this sense, a man is the master of his fate (*atta hi attano natho*). Therefore, in the Buddhist context, we should mention this kind of duality when discussing alienation.

Basically, Buddhism distinguishes between two kinds of realities: conventional realities and ultimate realities. When we refer to men, women, dogs, cats, etc., we mean the

conventional truth; when we refer to consciousness, mental factors, and materiality, we mean the ultimate truth. (Dr. Mehn Tin Mon, 2015). Essentially, numerous defilements label ordinary humans as 'worldlings' (*puthujjanas*). Blinded by defilements, we cannot observe the true nature of sense objects. We consider all animate and inanimate objects to be permanent, pleasant, and beautiful. We suffer in this world due to our misguided perceptions. All living beings consist of consciousness (*citta*), mental factors (*cetasikas*), and materiality (*rupa*). All the ultimate realities are shapeless and formless. We call them "impermanent" (*anicca*) because they are constantly arising and perishing. We call every impermanent thing "suffering" (*dukkha*) because it is unsatisfactory. We call all conditioned and unconditioned things "not-self" (*anatta*) because they lack a self, soul, or person.

#### 4. Conclusions and Recommendations

To sum up, alienation is a form of experience in which the person perceives himself as an alien. He has estranged himself from himself or the world. Buddhism and Existentialism both emphasize that choosing authentic paths can overcome alienation. In existentialism, understanding oneself as a true being is the only way to ensure de-alienation. In order to understand man's potential and activity, we must know his nature. Existentialists conclude that human choice is subjective; individuals must make their own choices without help from such external standards as laws, ethical rules, or traditions. Thus, existentialists make distinctions between authentic and inauthentic levels of life. In Buddhism, it is the level of the human mind that creates an alienation or de-alienation. Defilements blind the minds of worldlings (*puthujjanas*), preventing them from seeing the true nature of sense objects. So they regard animate and inanimate things as permanent, pleasant, and beautiful. However, the arahants' minds remain completely devoid of defilements. So

with wisdom, they can see the true nature of things. They always reflect the impermanent sufferings and non-self of all things and beings. Thus, Existentialism and Buddhism eradicate alienation from a humanistic point of view. They believe that human freedom is an essential instrument for defining oneself. They want every individual to transcend inauthenticity to authenticity.

#### 4. References

Blackham, H.J. (1961). *Six existentialists thinkers* (1<sup>st</sup> ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203046678>

Blocker, G. (1974). *Meaning of meaninglessness* (1<sup>st</sup> ed.). Springer Dordrecht. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-010-2033-6>

Bodhi, B. (1993). *A comprehensive manual of abhidhamma: The philosophical psychology of buddhism*. Buddhist Publication Society. <https://www.bps.lk>

Bodhi, B. (2012). *The numerical discourses of the buddha: A translation of the anguttara nikaya*. Wisdom Publications. <https://www.kusalassaupapasampada.com>

De Silva, P. (1974). *Tangles and webs: Comparative studies in existentialism, psychoanalysis and buddhism* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.): Lake House Investments Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1397989>

Fromm, E. (1955). *The sane society* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203820179>

Garcia, A. (2017). *Buddhism and existentialism: Not self, nothingness and being*. XLIBRIS. <https://www.amazon.com>

Hegel, G. W. F. (1977). *The phenomenology of spirit*. Oxford University Press. <https://www.goodreads.com>

Heidegger, M. (1927). *Being and time*. Blackwell Publishers Ltd. <https://www.goodreads.com>

Heinemann, F. (1953). *Existentialism and the modern predicament* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). Adam & Charles Black. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0031819100036494>

Jaeggi, R. (2014). *Alienation*. Columbia University Press. <https://doi.org/10.7312/jaeg15198>

Jayatilleke, K. N. (2010). *Facets of buddhist thought*. Buddhist Publication Society. <https://www.bps.lk>

Kierkegaard, S. (1981). *The concept of anxiety: A simple psychologically orienting deliberation on the dogmatic issue of hereditary sin*. Princeton University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400846979-002>

Marx, K. (1844). *Economic and philosophic manuscript*. Progress Publishers. <https://www.marxists.org>

Narada, V. (1963). *Dhammapada*. Buddhist Cultural Centre. <https://www.bps.lk>

Nowparvar, J. (2004). *The comparison of existential psychology and buddhist spirituality*. University of Northern Iowa. <https://scholarworks.uni.edu>

Sartre, J. P. (1938). *Nausea*. Penguin Books Ltd. <https://doi.org/10.25159/2958-3918/15679>

Sartre, J. P. (1943). *Being and nothingness: An essay on phenomenological ontology* (1<sup>st</sup> ed.). Routledge.

<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429434013>

Mon, M. T. (2015). *The essence of buddha abhidhamma*. Mya Mon Yadanar Literature.  
<https://dhammadownload.com>

Wettimuny, R. G. D. S. (1978). *The buddha's teaching and the ambiguity of existence* (1<sup>st</sup> edition). M. D. Gunasena & Co. Ltd.  
<https://archive.org>