

A Critical Review of Some Contemporary Existentialists in the Issue of Relationship between Religion and Science

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Abstract

In the issue of relationship between religion and science, there are some different approaches that –according to the view of Ian Barbour- include: 1.conflict, 2. Independence, 3. Integration, and 4. Dialogue. Also the approach of independence contains some points of views such as the view of Galileo, Kant and Wittgenstein. In this regard, we can count the view of existentialists -who believe in distinguish of the method and goal of religion and science, as one of the views of independence. In current study, we are trying to introduce the view of three main theist existentialists about their vantage point in the relationship between religion and science and also to explain what is the mechanism that they reach to the distinction in the method and goal of religion and science? In that case, here are mentioned Soren Kierkegaard, Martin Buber and Rudolf Bultmann. But this is not the end of the story and finally there will be present some criticisms about their view. Also it is mentionable that one of the advantages of these critiques is relates to the combination of Muslim philosophers and the westerns.

1. Introduction

Existentialism is one the most famous philosophical schools of thought in the west in these two recent centuries. This school of thought is a trying to making familiar the aspect of philosophy to the aspect of human in his routine life. In the view of existentialism, philosophy has to solve the problems of life, like other sciences such as physics, mathematic, biology etc. but in its view, it doesn't display this duty. Existentialism tries to show that philosophy can interfere in the common life of people and answer the usual problems of human.

It is written in the encyclopedia of religion:

Existentialism is not easily definable. Its protagonists have traced back to Pascal, to St. Augustine, even to Socrates. It has been alleged in our time to be the doctrine of writers as various as Miguel de Unamuno and Norman Mailer. At first sight, Characteristics of doctrine are almost as various.

That two writers both claim to be Existentialists does not seem to be the entail their agreement on any one cardinal point. Consequently, to define Existentialism by means of a set of philosophical formulas could be very misleading. Any formula sufficiently broad to embrace all the major Existentialist tendencies would necessarily be so general and so vague as to be vacuous, for if we refer to a common emphasis upon, for example the concreteness of individual human existence, we shall discover that in the case of different philosophers this emphasis is placed in contexts so dissimilar that it is put to quite different and incompatible uses. (Borchert 2006, 500)

In this regard, it is very hard to represent a definition of Existentialism with respect to the various thinkers. But if we want to show a brief of all main roots which many of them have consensus on them it will be possible and because of that the writer will spread his attempting to show a brief and compressed view of the generalization of this approach in the philosophy. H. J. Blackham asserts that:

Existentialism is not a philosophical "school" founded by these masters, „Kierkegaard and Nietzsche-. In any case, they are independent sources; they did not communicate. ... Above all, existentialism is not a school because it is not a system of philosophy which can be worked at and taught. Its exponents philosophise and incite others to do likewise. (Blackham 1972, 1)

The methodology of this investigation refers to analyzing main texts which are written in the topic by three mentioned thinkers, but with respect to the limitation of accessibility of some those texts in our libraries. But this limitation was not a main problem, because there are many books of intended thinkers in Iran which can make our researches fruitful. Thus the methodology of this research is a qualitative and interpretative methodology which tries to compare and analyze the texts and also vantage points of target thinkers.

Also the objectives of this study consist of:

1. A brief definition of *Existentialism*;
2. An introduction to three theist Existentialists who are Soren Kierkegaard, Martin Buber and Rudolf Bultmann;
3. Explaining their vantage point about how they believe in the distinction of the method and the goal of religion and science;
4. And finally to criticism of their view.

But, because our focus is in the main theory of distinction of religion and science according to the view of Existentialism, readers can refer for extra information to the detailed books about Existentialism, especially which are written by John Macquarrie by this name.

1.1 What is Existentialism

For giving a brief view of the definition of Existentialism, it is better to define its main roots and basic characteristics which many Existentialists have consensus on it. There are many of thinkers in the philosophy who have tried to present a way for mentioned point, and despite of differentiate between them in their view, they are similar to this some main points and roots which consist of:

1. The first basic characteristic of existentialism refers to the word *existence* which is taken by existentialists in its root sense of 'standing out'. If we take seriously this notion of standing out, then a little reflection shows that it is much more apposite to the kind of being that belongs to man than to other modes of being which traditionally have been called existence. It is true that all beings 'exist' in the sense of 'standing out' from nothing. But man exists in the further sense that among all the beings that may be observed on earth he 'stands out' as the only one that not only is but takes over its being in awareness of who or what it is and of who and what it may become.¹
2. The second basic characteristic of existentialism is to uniqueness of the individual existent. An existent is not an 'it'; the existent says 'I', and in uttering the personal pronoun lays claim not just to a unique place and perspective in the world but to a unique being. 'Mineness' is a term that sometimes been used to express the awareness that my existence is unique and distinct from the existence of everyone else. I am not just a specimen of a class. I am I. and this last statement is merely a tautology. It is an assertion of my unique individual being as an existent that stands out as this existent and no other. For instance Cox says:
This self-consciousness or self-reflection is a defining feature of human beings. Only monkeys, dolphins and octopi have anything approaching it. Each person is a being for him or herself. (Cox 2010, 36-7)
But some other thinkers are not agreeing with this uniqueness of the individual existence, because it can be led to a kind of relativism. Then, it will be hard to find any criteria for testing the reality. Thus, there are some views against this view; even it seems to be very hard for some of scholars to accept this view, because, in their view, it is very wondrous and incredible.
3. The third basic characteristic of existence is self-relatedness. This followed from the points already considered. We have seen that the existent is on his way as the unique person that he is. Either he is himself, he is existing as this unique existent, standing out from the world of objects and going out from any given state of himself, or he is not himself, he is being absorbed into the world of objects as just another object, he decide nothing for himself but everything is decided for him by external factors. The extraordinary complexity of existence and selfhood is implicit in sentences such as these. See (Macquarrie, *Existentialism; an Introduction, Guide and Assessment* 1972, 69-76)

In this regard they do not agree with self-estrangement. When John Macquarie asks:

How do we reconcile the fact that existential analysis reveals the fundamentally communal character of existence with the equally plain fact that existentialists philosophers are in many cases individualists? (Macquarrie, Existentialism; an

¹ For more information about the main elements of existentialism see (Macquarrie, *Existentialism; an Introduction, Guide and Assessment* 1972, 69-76)

Introduction, Guide and Assessment 1972, 118)

Cooper answers:

What this question really exposes is not so much a tension within existentialist thought as one within human life as described by the existentialist. We have found his assertion, on the one hand, that a person is free, meaning-giving 'existing individual'; and, on the other, that a person is necessarily a participant in a public, social world where he is the object of 'the Look', judgments and categorizations of others.

This tension is a crucial dimension of the 'ambiguity' of human existence to which Merleau-Ponty and de Beauvoir frequently refer... (Cooper 2000, 109)

Also there are some other roots which Kierkegaard, firstly, introduced² and then other existentialists followed him. Some roots and characteristics like the *individual and systems, intentionality, being and absurdity, freedom and choice, anxiety, dread and death* are in this category. See (Borchert 2006, 501-3) Also we can count some elements like *despair, guilt, creativity* in this category. See (Barbour, Issues in Religion and Science 1971, 120)

1.2 Three Main Theist Thinkers

Despite of establishing the foundations of existentialism by Soren Kierkegaard, the first person who called himself as the existentialist was Jean Paul Sartre. In fact, these two thinkers are in conflict in some views, but in the foundations of existentialism and the quality of seeing to human, they are similar. Thus there are many scholars who are not united in the theological views with Kierkegaard, but all of them can be counted as existentialists. In this regard, there are three types of existentialists:

- Theist existentialists who believe in God and religion; they are consisted of Soren Kierkegaard³, Gabriel Marcel⁴, Karl Jaspers⁵, Feodor M. Dostoyevsky⁶, Nicolai Berdyaev⁷, Martin Buber⁸ and Rudolf Karl Bultmann⁹.
- Atheist existentialists who don't believe in God and religion; they consist of Albert Camus¹⁰, Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche¹¹, Jean Paul Sartre¹², Ludwig Andreas Feuerbach¹³ and Frantz Kafka¹⁴.
- There is the third type of them by the name a-religious existentialists that it is hard to call them as an atheist or theist. For example there are some evidences about Martin Heidegger¹⁵ about their belief in God and also their atheistic belief and we cannot judge that they were in which category. In this regard it is better to call them as a-religious. See (Mahdavi Nejad 2005, 327)

There is a list of some important existentialist thinker with a brief review of their point of view:

1.2.1 Soren Kierkegaard

Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) - who many thinkers count him as the founder of existentialism, believes that the main topic of philosophy is knowledge to the human's existence and real knowledge to God in the way that we get able to live for Him and also die for Him. In his view, the real truth is not an abstract subject; rather it is a painful search in the heart. The real truth is not a subjective and individual thing which is catchable with intellectual thinking. This intellectual thinking maybe is possible in the area of objective means, but it is not true in the seeking of God. See (Mahdavi Nejad 2005, 330)

² There are many evidences that Kierkegaard had not the problem of relationship of religion and science, but after him some thinkers and some of his followers deduced a vantage point from his writings about this issue.

³ Danish philosopher and theologian (1813-1855)

⁴ French philosopher and scriptwriter (1889-1973)

⁵ German philosopher, Doctor and psychologist (1883-1969)

⁶ Famous Russian novelist and thinker (1821-1881)

⁷ Russian philosopher (1874-1948)

⁸ Austrian philosopher and Jewish theologian (1878- 1965)

⁹ German Protestant theologian (1884- 1976)

¹⁰ French writer, scriptwriter and novelist (1913-1960)

¹¹ German nihilist philosopher (1844-1900)

¹² French philosopher, scriptwriter and novelist (1905-1980)

¹³ German Materialist philosopher (1804-1872)

¹⁴ German Protestant theologian (1884-1976)

¹⁵ Great German philosopher (1889-1976)

He holds that:

Whether truth is defined more empirically as the agreement of thinking with being or more idealistically as the agreement of being with thinking, the point in each case is to pay scrupulous attention to what is understood by being and also to pay attention to whether the knowing human spirit might not be lured out into the indefinite and fantastically become something such as no existing human being has ever been or can be, a phantom with which the individual busies himself on occasion, yet without ever making it explicit to himself by means of dialectical middle terms how he gets out into this fantastical realm, what meaning it has for him to be there, whether the entire endeavor out there might not dissolve into a tautology within a rash, fantastical venture. (Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments 1992, 189)

In his view, the truth is transcendent of all kinds of logical and subjective questions, because of that are not being gained with object. He adds:

Philosophy teaches that the way of reaching to the truth is objectivity, and Christianity teaches that the way of reaching is subjectivity. (Kierkegaard, Anfosi Budan Haqiqat Ast 1995, 70)

He was not agreeing with the theory of Hegel in defending of Christianity, and as the foundation of existentialism distinct between philosophy and religion. He believes that Christianity –as a religion- is not a philosophical doctrine which should be understood with the logical theory constructions, because the Messiah was not a philosopher and apostles were not a minor group of scientists, and Christianity is not represented as a minor system of thought, which is not naturally even like the Hegel system of thought. See (Verneaux and Wahl 1993, 115)

Soren believes that the start point of Christianity is the final way of Hegel's Philosophy. In this regard it is a vain attempting to justify Christianity in order of logic, because it is caused of lack of faith. A person, who believes, does not need to the reason and argument. He was one of the radical devotees of *fideism*. In fact there is a deep relation between the distinction which Kierkegaard is trying to present and fideism, because when he justifies this kind of distinction between them, then for believing in a religion such as Christianity, in his view, he refuges to the faith without any argument –which he rejected before in the domination of religion- and justification. According to the fideism, when we say "there is a God", it means believing perfectly to existence of God without any dependent to any argument about Him. He believes reasonable and logical defense of Christianity is a sign of unreason and unfaithful. Faith doesn't need to argument and faith has to know the argument as its enemy. See (Mahdavi Nejad 2005, 332) Soren Kierkegaard holds:

There is not any faith, without any risk. (Kierkegaard, Anfosi Budan Haqiqat Ast 1995, 76)

It is written in the *Reason and Religious Belief*:

There are a very common and widespread view among religious people that in faith one "steps out beyond" what can be proved or rationally guaranteed, and that this "stepping out" with its attendant risk and uncertainty, is an important, even essential element in faith. (Kierkegaard, discussed ..., expresses this very powerfully.) of course this idea that faith must involve risk and uncertainty could be wrong, but it is common among religious people that it needs to be taken seriously. And if the idea is correct, then strong rationalism cannot be the right way to approach religious faith. (Peterson, Hasker, et al., Reason and Religious Belief; an Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion 1991, 35)

In short, the main key of Kierkegaard's philosophy is the individual human. And in his view, the certain proving neither is possible, nor desirable, because not only revelation is above reason, even it is in contrast of reason. And faith as the essence of revelation, not only need to the argument, even knows argument as its foe. Then the problem of philosophy is to try giving proof for defense of religion.

But here raises a question that in the case of persuasion to the religion, we need to reason. In this case, Kierkegaard, refuges to the risk and leap of faith. Here only bond and adoption to the religion can help us. We have to leap and lunge to the faith.

1.2.2 Martin Buber

Buber firstly divides between two kinds of *I*.

Hence the I of man is also twofold. For the I of the primary word I – Thou is a different I from that of the primary word I – It. ... the primary word I – Thou can only be spoken with the whole being. (Buber, Man va To 2001, 51)

By this division of the human's experience between two arias of *I – Thou* relationship and *I – It* relationship, he wants to provide a phenomenal and existential background for religious experience. *I – Thou* relationship is individual and

I – It relationship is not individual.

The I – It relationship belongs to the shallow experiences such as seeing things and people as a phenomena, but when we reach to the depth, can provide another relationship with the mentioned things and people which is called as I – Thou relationship. Here is the junction and visit with God. (Brown 1996, 238-9)

According to the Barbour view, the basis of all individual relationships is in the encounter of human with an absolute and infinite God. In fact we have, also here, two kinds of relationship with God. First, the relationship which is in the mind of human and it is imaginary; this is an example of I – It relationship. Buber doesn't count any worthy for this kind of relationship between God and human. Second, the relationship which is a real address with God from human, this relationship is counted as I – Thou relationship. This is an existential relationship between God and human. Because of that he says:

Many men wish to reject the word God as a legitimate usage, because it is so misused. It is indeed the most heavily laden of all the words used by men. For that very reason it is the most imperishable and most indispensable. What does all mistaken talk about God's being and works matter in comparison the one truth that all men who have addressed God had God himself in mind?

For he who speaks the word God and reality has Thou in mind, addressed the true Thou of his life, which cannot be limited by another Thou, and to which he stands in a relation that gathers up and includes all others. But when he, too, abhors the name and believes himself to be godless, gives his whole being to addressing the Thou of his life, as a Thou that cannot be limited by another, he addresses God. (Buber, I and Thou 1996, 99-100)

The real relationship of human with God, in his view, necessitates involving with heart to God. And because science is current the relationship of I – It, we cannot conform the scientific way of relationship with the world, to the religious relationship of human with world ' mentioned that is an I – Thou relationship. See (Mahdavi Nejad 2005, 335) and in this regard, Barbour explains:

I-Thou relationships, by contrast, are characterized by total involvement and participation of the whole self, directness and immediacy of apprehension and concern for the other person as an end in himself. (Barbour, Issues in Religion and Science 1971, 120)

1.2.3 Rudolf Bultmann

Despite of that the main view of Bultmann is about *Entmythologisierung*, that is very challengeable, 9for some challenges of his view see) (Nichols, Bultmann va Elahiate Vojudi 1995, 132) but we can know him one the famous existentialists. According to his view, existentialism is one of the closest schools in philosophy to Christianity among the western philosophical schools of thought, because it is more suitable than others for understanding, interpretation and explanation of the revealed data. He tried to make an agreement between religious experiences and thinking with the modern scientific findings. He tried, also, with presenting an existential interpretation of the message of Christ, redress the destroyer results of historical criticism of the bible. Thus, despite that he was a *neo- orthodox* in theology, we can count him as an existentialist in the field of philosophy. See (Mahdavi Nejad 2005, 335)

In the view of Bultmann, the relationship between existentialism and theology is deep and theology, in this meaning, is a phenology of faith, by the meaning that what is hidden in the Christian beliefs, can be explained in this philosophical approach. (Macquarrie, Elahiate Existansialisti 2003, 20)

In this regard, by form criticism¹⁶, he introduced the theory of *Demythologization* from Christian message. In his view, representing the message of Christianity is not comprehensive with the scientific sight in the new age and this leads the impossibility of understanding the real content and message of religion in this age. See (Fergusson 2003, 131-2) Nichols, in the explaining the theory of Bultmann holds:

Bultmann agrees with those scholars, particularly of the history-of-religions school, who think that the New Testament expresses the Gospel very largely in mythological terms, borrowed from both Jewish and Hellenistic sources. The New Testament wished to speak of transcendent realities, the relation of God to man, and the offer of authentic existence to fallen man. But the vocabulary at its disposal was not one that we should today consider appropriate for speaking about matters of that kind. Nor did it aim to use the precise vocabulary of philosophy. It therefore spoke in mythological terms, that is, it. (Nichols, Systematic and Theological Theology 1969, 180-1)

¹⁶ *formgeschichte*

But there are some theologians who tried to criticize the theory of Bultmann. For instance the Swiss theologian Fritz Buri asserts that Bultmann has adopted too little, not too much, of the liberal programme. In particular, he criticizes the prominence of the kerygma in Bultmann's thought, which he considered incompatible with his analysis of man and his existence. See (Nichols, Bultmann va Elahiate Vojudi 1995, 166)

In short, he firstly tries to choose the nearest humanistic philosophical school of thought to the Christianity, which is existentialism, in his view, and then according to existentialism represents an existential interpretation of the Christian message. But in this interpretation, he sees some teachings of religion in contrast with existentialism and he introduces that as the skin of religion and rejects this skin of religion, then, he supplies the essence of religion in the form of existential world-view after the demythologization. In this regard, he sees that exposition of true and affirmed propositions about God is impossible, because all of them are the interpretations of man himself. Only we can find God with our apocalypticism. Thus only it is the faith that can clear our understanding of ourselves and our existential being.

2. Explaining the Distinction between the Areas, Goals and Methods

2.1 Introduction

Barbour divides mentioned two types of existentialists and explains:

In existentialism the divergence between methods in theology and science arises primarily from the contrast between the sphere of impersonal objects. Existentialism is not a system of ideas, but an attitude or orientation finding very diverse expression among theistic and atheistic authors. (Barbour, Issues in Religion and Science 1971, 119)

In the existentialism's view, only we can find our original human existence, when we involve in a challenge, decide and then choose as an existence who understands the challenge with its body, blood, and all its existential being. We can escape from involving in a mass society, only when we are not like instrumentals. The most important issues related to the inner of human life are not accessible for science. Barbour asserts about their view of humanity that each human and person can be a case of creation and understanding:

Each of us is a unique creative subject who must resist being treated as an object in a system of ideas of in the machinations of a mass society. (Barbour, Issues in Religion and Science 1971, 119)

According to the Mahdavi's report: the variety dimensions of human can be cleared by commitment, decision and involving in the context of his life. In the existentialism, distinction between the circle of religion and science and their method is proceeding of the contrast of *personal subjectivity* and *impersonal objectivity*. We can recognize the *personal subjectivity* by subjective involvement and the *impersonal objectivity*, by objective detachment. This is one of the agreements in the existentialists; the theist existentialists such as Soren Kierkegaard, Gabriel Marcel, Karl Jaspers, Feodor M. Dostoyevsky, Nicolai Berdyaev, Martin Buber and Rudolf Karl Bultmann. Also the atheists of them like Albert Camus, Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, Jean Paul Sartre, Ludwig Andreas Feuerbach and Frantz Kafka. And even the a-religious existentialists, for instance maybe Martin Heidegger.

When we see the term of existentialism, it does not mean only the absolute being of human, rather its existence which is prior to its essence and quiddity. Albeit except human who its existence is previous of its quiddity, the essence of other creations are prior of their existence. Because of that it is not possible a perfect definition for human. The topic of existentialism is not only the human being itself, but the human concrete and real existence with all its limitations. This school of philosophy wants to answer the existential problems of human such as life, pain and death. See (Mahdavi Nejad 2005, 327-8)

In the respect of their view, the existential philosophers critique all philosophical systems from Plato to Hegel¹⁷ before existentialism. In all of these philosophies there is a distinct between subject and object which leads to the unready to hand of philosophy. In the philosophy we should not to use the subject, but vice versa we should let the existence to show its real and concrete face. Existence can show itself in the human soul without any trying to show in our subject and memory, because of that the mind is the start point of philosophy. As the result, we should shift the focus of the manifestation of existence from mind to the soul, because the soul of human is the best mean for finding out the mystery and secret of creation. Truly, existentialism is the philosophy of human soul and this philosophy has acted with

¹⁷ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, German idealist philosopher (1770-1831)

sympathy for understanding the reality and also the spiritual and existential problems of individual human, but other philosophies from Plato to Hegel, all of them, were disinterested and empty-hearted about the individual human and only have tried to solve the problems of general human. Existentialism, with all its branches, commands that we should desist of all kinds of philosophy and attend to the individual human and the way of gaining the knowledge to the position of human is intuition. The value of this knowledge is to show us the life style. See (Mahdavi Nejad 2005, 328)

In fact, because there are two types of existentialism –theistic and atheistic- and also there are many reports and assertions in the theory of existentialism, naturally, there are many different explanations about the distinction of religion and science. For example Karl Barth, the Swiss theologian, reduced the domination of religion in the treatment of some limited illnesses and distanced scientific issues from the realm of religion. Also Rudolf Bultmann believed that faith to the religious propositions only can be necessary for removing the spiritual phobias and humanistic anguishes. Jaspers knew the thinking of God only useful for establishing the discipline and harmony in the society. Martin Buber divided between relationship of person by another person and person by the objects, limited the relation of science to the second and religion to the first. See (Khosrow Panah 2011, 380)

Macquarrie describes:

The everyday world described in the preceding section is not the only world. It is indeed the world in which we live for the most part, in our everyday practical concerns. But existentialist philosophers do not usually believe that 'existence' fulfills itself most adequately in such everyday patterns of living. These tend to become routine, unthinking, and humdrum, so that in them the distinctive characteristics of existence tend to become obscured. (Macquarrie, *Existentialism; an Introduction, Guide and Assessment* 1972, 88)

But there are two criticisms from existentialism to the philosophy and religion which lead to the explanation of them about distinction of method of religion and science:

First criticism is regarded to the philosophy. As was mentioned, in existentialism, the originality and authenticity is related to the individual of human. It means that human is a specified world who has not any similarity with other things; and philosophy cannot analyze this individuality of human, because philosophy see human like other things and see in it as a general. Also, philosophy sees God as an absolute, whole and unresponsive, but existentialism sees God as receptive and He is the product of intuition of human.

Second criticism is related to the historical and formal religion. Religion, as has showed itself in the history, a collection of stiff and rigid jurisprudences and laws which is regard to the body without any consideration to the human soul and cannot answer the existential problems of human, because of that this formal religion like philosophy is lack of the transcending human and solving his problem. In fact, because most of problems of humanity are related to its soul, existentialism goes to recognize the reality of soul. In existentialism, the meaning of individual existence of human is hidden in the choice and finally in the philosophy of freedom. See (Mahdavi Nejad 2005, 329)

However, after this long introduction, it is the time of explaining the quality of distinction between religion and science, according to the existentialism's view:

2.2 The Explanation

Existentialism, firstly, is a reaction to the radical rationalism of Hegel. In this respect, existentialism is not a school of thought or a revolution with a general program against other schools of thought and it can be only an approach against the Hegel's view and the Protestant church which started by Kierkegaard and this approach guides us to a kind of distinction between religion and science in the method. In this regard, both existentialism and the theologian Christian view by the name *new orthodox* are very similar. Michael Peterson says:

The theological position known as neo-orthodoxy and the philosophical position of existentialism are very similar in holding that there is a sharp contrast between religion and science. Protestant theologian Karl Barth¹⁸ ... the celebrated exponent of neo-orthodoxy maintained that theology and science deal with radically different objects – the former with God's self-revelation in Christ and the latter with the natural world. Likewise, he held that the methods of the theology and science are utterly distinct. (Peterson, Hasker, et al., Reason and Religious Belief; an Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion 1991, 201)

Peterson continues that the existentialism's receiving of religion is different from science:

Existentialism has always maintained that scientific knowledge is impersonal and subjective. The objects of science are

¹⁸ Swiss Neo-orthodox theologian (1886-1968)

material things and their functions, but the objects of religion are personal and moral realities. (Peterson , Hasker, et al., Reason and Religious Belief; an Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion 1991, 201)

He adds about the distinction of these two in the method as Martin Buber believes:

The relation between a person and material objects is an I-It relationship, but that the religious believer's relation to God is an I-Thou relationship. (Peterson, Hasker, et al., Aql o Eteqade Dini; Daramadi bar Phalsapheye Din 2014, 367)

Existentialists assert that also, the goal of these two is divided and because of division in the goal, it is necessary to distinction of the method.

The aim of religious knowledge is actually the concerned reciprocity between two selves – the believer and God. Religion simply cannot be understood in the neutral categories of dispassionate science. And because their objects and aims are distinct, their method must be also be distinct: the detached, rationalistic posture of empirical scientist is very different from the stand of religious believer, which is that of intense personal involvement. See (Peterson , Hasker, et al., Reason and Religious Belief; an Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion 1991, 201)

3. Criticism

1. This kind of receiving of religion which reduces it only to a kind of functionalism is not enduring neither in the Christianity nor other religions such as Islam.
Also in the functions, one of the functions of religion can be explaining the relationship between person and the objects; not only the relationship of persons to persons. (Khosrow Panah 2011, 380)
2. When existentialists reject using arguments for religious faith, because of division in the method of science and the method of religion, he forced to refuge to the fideism, but the problems are:
 - a. Unconscious, they are arguing for needless of argument. For instance in many places of the books of Kierkegaard, we can find several arguments for this issue. He presents an argument by the name the approximation argument (Kierkegaard, Anfosi Budan Haqiqat Ast 1995, 66) and the postponement argument or (Adams 1995, 89) and also the enthusiasm or sentiment argument. see (Akbari 2005, 39)
 - b. One of the problems of Kierkegaard's view like other existentialists refers to reducing religion to the Christianity. In fact he was challenging by this religion as a historical and distorted and mutilated religion even in the many Christian researchers. There are some roots in this religion which are not justifiable and maybe necessarily Kierkegaard for this problem refuted to the fideism. On one hand he wants to be a real Christian, on the other hand he cannot justify some paradoxical roots of this religion. In this regard if there was a non-distorted religion such as Islam –in Muslim's view- he had not forced to be a radical fideism. Especially in the Shia version which is more rational and justifiable.
3. One of the most important existentialists, who can be counted as the founder of this school is Kierkegaard. And also one of the most important foundations of his view is to reduce or attenuate the role of reason against faith in the religion. If this reduction be accepted in some cases, which there is not any access by reason to that area, but the role of reason is respective in many functions, for example in the case of *choice*.
When a person finds in front of himself several ways and he needs to select one of them, so here the role of reasonable and logical approach can be cleared for selecting the best way. Also this approach is necessary for helping others to enter in the best way which is supposed the way of faith. And also we can imagine the necessity of third usage of this approach, when the systems which are in conflict with the system of faith, want to present some doubts about it. See (Mahdavi Nejad 2005, 333-4) in all mentioned cases and some others we cannot neglect the role of reason. Reason can be as the light for many places for religious man.
4. In the case of existential theologians, in fact, they are faced with some challenges in their time in defense of Christianity, which had forced them to refuge to the existentialistic thinking. Some salutations like fideism are counted among these types of reactions for defending the religion. Although it has been current in the history of theology, for example, as Macquarrie holds:

Aquinas was in challenge with the thinking of Averroism in the middle ages; Battler was faced with deism in the time of modernity and in this regard, some existential theologians like Bultman with Hegel's idealism and before that with liberal modernism. (Macquarrie, Elahiate Existansialisti 2003, 18)

Thus if we see the tendency of these theologians to the fideism and also distinction of the area of religion and science, one of the most important reasons of that was for defending of religion, despite that they knew that this solution has some disadvantages and problems.

But this kind of defense of religion is dangerous for religion, and maybe this problem is more dangerous than the mentioned challenge, because mostly this approaches lead to commitment to the humanistic philosophy and using it in the pure interpretation of religion, and in the end, it maybe leads to a kind of distortion in that religion. Also the biggest problem appears when some strange beliefs with religion penetrate in it from that humanistic and incomprehensive approach of philosophy. This problem has happened in the history of Christianity several times. John Macquarrie adds in the respect of this happening:

In the New Testament there are some phrases that apparently, they have come from Gnosticism. Early Christian theologians like Saint Augustine have used freely, in their theological books, the philosophical Greece sources especially Plato sources. Saint Tomas Aquinas has effected from Aristotle. (Macquarrie, Elahiate Existansialisti 2003, 17)

4. Conclusion

This chapter constituted a short view about existentialism, its definition, some great thinkers like Kierkegaard, Buber and Bultmann and finally, - which was the main part of this chapter- explaining the theory of distinction between the area of religion and science and its criticism. According to Cox's view we can summarize that:

In short, existentialism tells how it basically is for all of us in this tough, crazy world without bullshitting or pulling any punches. (Cox 2010, 14)

In this regard, according to the view of existentialists –who believe in a religion or do not- there is a distinction between the area of religion and the area of science, which we can name them, the area of *I-Thou*, that relates to religion and how we can make relationship between God and man; and the area of *I-It* that relates to science and also refers to the relationship of man and nature. In the respect of this relationship Roberts holds:

Existentialism can contribute significantly to our understanding of the vexed relationship between faith and reason. The movement has been often criticized for bringing about a sharp and quiet and unnecessary cleavage between the believing and the thinking self. (Roberts 1957, 336)

Although the distinction between religion and science which existentialists believe is not only related to the area; in fact it contains the distinction of the religious method and also the ultimate, but nonetheless all mentioned distinctions can refer to the main reason which is the area.

5. Future Research Directions

Firstly, this research is a short trying to justify the method of existentialists in the issue of relationship between religion and science. But for the future research directions:

1. As it is obvious, only there are mentioned three thinkers of them and we need to investigate more about the view of all philosophers who can be called as existentialist, one by one, in this issue. If a researcher counts all of them in one collection, it would be expected to become one or more volumes of a book.
2. There are many criticisms around their view, in both Islamic and western philosophy, that because of the limitation of article, four of them suffice here, but the researchers should try to count them as much as possible and think, are they true are not.

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