

ISSN: 2349-2147



Modern Research Studies

Editor-in-Chief
Gyanabati Khuraijam

**An International
Journal of
Humanities and Social
Sciences**

An Indexed & Refereed e-Journal

www.modernresearch.in

Title: POEMS

**The Lambs at the Altar
Existentialist Choices**

Author/s: M. JOHN BRITTO

**Volume 3, Issue 1
March 2016**

pp. 227–231.

Disclaimer: The views expressed in the articles/contributions published in the journal are solely the author's. They do not represent the views of the editors.

Email: editor@modernresearch.in
mrsejournal@gmail.com

Managing Editor: Yumnam Oken Singh

THE LAMBS AT THE ALTAR

- M. John Britto*

History speaks:

for the subjects' elation and needs,

no war was waged

but for the egocentric greed and glee

of the kings and the rich.

For their voracious wants and crisis personal,

the soldiers, the poor were the sacrificial lambs

slaughtered at the altar of the battlefield

to atone for their greed.

Glory and delight of the kings and the rich

turned into the creed of the populace wretched.

Of 'selves' of themselves,

the subjects could never even dream.

When the haves wage war,

it is the have-nots who die.

When the haves evolve schemes,

it is the have-nots who suffer.

EXISTENTIALIST CHOICES

- M. John Britto*

Uncanny often life is.
'Man is condemned to be free' —
Sartre's claim is exciting!
Among the existentialist choices,
vague, bizarre, dream-like,
apparently banal but intricate,
man is condemned to choose.

Look at them —the righteous,
the workaholics, the good-habited!
Bounteously blessed,
copiously rewarded here and now
like a blossom-filled tree in the spring!
In the world to come are the righteous
promised of a reward still greater. Natural,
and for what they deserve, we deem it.

Look! Look at them —the wicked,
the sluggish, the ill-habited!
sternly punished here and now. Natural
and for what they deserve, we term it.

But,
Look at those righteous and innocents
with heavy loads dumped
until are they crushed here,

but of a reward greater promised
in the world to come!
Look at them— those innocents!
How destined are they
with torments and tribulations!
Look! Look at those wicked
flourishing like a tree
on the bank of the river!
those sluggish with no efforts and toil
matched surprisingly with a life dazzling!

Notice the fate often inescapable!
Alas! How inopportunately matched
are the he-lambs with the she-vultures!
Alas! How lamentably matched
are the she-sparrows with the he-wolves!

Don't you witness them—
those with all habits ill,
impervious yet with a life fulfilled?
Don't you find them with a span too long
with all earthly rewards?

Don't you notice the humans
with all habits clean,
even infants blameless,
tainted with ailments deadly,
damned with existentialist angst
assigned with a span too short?

More happiness to one who has more;
lesser to one who has less.
The prodigal son is better rewarded

than the faithful one!
Antinomy! Antinomy everywhere!
No unambiguous routes! Too arcane!
To choose good or bad?

In alienation before dread and death,
Dasein is fallen into the world
to shape his destiny.
No choice absolutely
to his being-in-the-world

Into the stormy ocean
of the existentialist choices
man is ultimately thrown
to be or not to be
to be a dove or a hawk
to be the faithful son
or the prodigal one
to be Buddha or Hitler
to be Eliot's Philomel or Lil
to be Teresa of Calcutta
or the witches of Macbeth
to take the road accustomed
or the road not taken.

There are multiple choices.
Obligatory is the choice.
If you fail to make a choice,
the choice will choose you
and your destiny.

Though caught in turbulent waves
there is a sacred lifeboat

to bring you to the coast.
Of course, voyage in this boat
is intensely exigent.

***M. John Britto** is an Assistant Professor of English at St. Joseph's College (Autonomous), Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu, India. He is the author of the book, *Demystification of Franz Kafka's Works: A Hermeneutic Analysis in the Light of Existentialism*, and co-author of the book, *Literary Criticism: From the Pre-Platonic Critics to the New Critics* published by Lambert Academic Publishing, Germany. He is also an artist who paints on varied themes.