

Tribhuvan University

Anti-Heroism in Camus' *The Stranger* and Bellow's *The Dangling Man*

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Abstract

Camus' protagonist Meursault in *The Stranger* and Bellow's Joseph in *The Dangling Man* suffer from alienation and estrangement from the society and the self itself. They can not adjust themselves to the social norms, and fail to assimilate themselves to their respective societies. Hence, they turn into social misfits and their existence is in crisis due to their anxiety. They feel alienated from the world because it provides a lucid experience of freedom which characterizes human existence as absurd. Meursault and Joseph are deprived of the actual justice that is synonymous to modern predicament. In such a chaotic world, their experiences can not cast off the veil of illusion to perpetuate life. Thus, they find themselves torn between these two polarities. Their temporal condition on the Earth is just to live through revolting against the absurdity and irrationality. They are the anti-heroes in terms of indifference, alienation, and existential crisis. Moreover, the anti-heroism or the lack of will to act gets intensified as they undergo alienation, frustration, and existential crisis resulting largely through their disbelief to social interdicts while pursuing for an autonomous self.

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I. Existential Crisis and Human Alienation

Albert Camus and Saul Bellow, the French philosopher and American Novelist from the minority Yiddish cultural background respectively, occupy the prominent place in the post war world literature. Both of them dig the beneath of the surface to reveal the inner restlessness, frustration, anger and anxiety of the modern man, spiritual decay and fragmenting and above all, the haunting sense of meaninglessness and existential crisis and individual entrapment in these forces. Inspired by Camus, Bellow deliberately selects the deformed and dangling human figures as 'heroes' to suggest the anti-life-the life without a pattern, a motif-of the modern human beings. Camus, one of the founders of the philosophy of Existentialism creates the characters—a type—typifying the failure the failure of heroic motives in their lives, and essentially entangled in the futile labour and hence the absurd condition. Both these writers create a world of their imagination where meaninglessness, futility, nausea, dread, suicide and angst are the only controlling forces for general human life.

Camus gave the world a new kind of character when *The Stranger* and accompanying essay collection *The Myth of Sisyphus* burst upon the literary scene in the year 1942. They were published in the dark days of World War II: France had surrendered to Hitler, the British under siege, the Americans were still recovering from Pearl Harbor, and the Russians were on the defensive. With such a background, the work and philosophy of Albert Camus was an appropriate response to the tension of resisting the Germans. The individual's resistance was the very definition of freedom. Camus believed, and many agreed with him, that the world was meaningless, absurd and indifferent. However, he also wrote that in the face of this indifference the individual must rebel against the absurdity felt by the mind and uphold traditional human values. *The Stranger* was an immediate

success and established Camus, incorrectly, as a representative of existentialist movement. When European models flooded American shores beginning in 1940s, it was mainly Kafka's presence, reinforced, somewhat incongruously, by French existentialism, the general ideas rather than precisely the fiction of Sartre, de Beauvoir, or Camus. Camus most popular novel, *The Stranger*, offered little new to the American sensibility; marginality, bizarre patterns of behaviour, and anomie had long been staples of the American imagination. European existentialism, whose various stands are not simple, was reduced and modified for American taste; but however diluted; it did have its impact on nearly every major talent.

Camus lived in a period of remarkable turmoil in the world—two World Wars were fought, and colonized countries began independence struggles—notably India and Algeria. There are, however, hints that racial tensions exist between French-Algerians and “Arabs”. From the first page the reader knows that the novel is set in Algeria. Therefore, it can be guessed that the events in the novel occur in a colonized setting. In addition, the narrator hints at the racial tension by telling the story as if it took place solely among some French people who happened to live in Algeria. Meursault is associated with French-Algerians, and the only people he names are French-Algerians. Then for no apparent reason, he shoots an Arab. The issue of race and colonialism is not an important theme to the novel because the novel is about the large concern of absurd individuality and existence. The protagonist consistently expresses his awareness of his own free will. In some instances, this might be interpreted as indifference, but Meursault is decidedly perhaps starkly, free. Meursault's desire to be indifferently static brings him to a mental crisis. This crisis is resolved when he comes to understand that utter meaninglessness of his individuality within the mysteries of life makes him anti-hero. Meursault recognizes the “truth” that life is meaningless. That

means life is just what one makes of it while being conscious of two certainties—life and death. In doing so, Camus argues, one would uphold traditional human values because they safeguard one's life.

Camus uses time and structure as a thematic device. Psychological self-examinations are common in French first-person narratives, but Camus's *The Stranger* gave the technique of psychological depth a new twist. Instead of allowing the protagonist to detail a static psychology for the reader, the action and behaviour was given to the reader to decipher. Camus did this because he felt that psychology is action, not thinking about oneself: The protagonist, along with a failure to explain everything to the reader, refuses to justify himself to other characters. He tells only what he is thinking and perceiving, he does not interrupt with commentary. By narrating the story this way, through the most indifferent person, the reader is also drawn into Meursault's perspective. Camus's success with his narration was immediately recognized to be extremely innovative. As language, while recognized similar to the American "Hemingway style", was seen as so appropriate to the task as to be hardly borrowed. The language style that Camus used was one of direct speech that did not allow much description. He chose that style because it backed up his narrative technique. The reader is focused on the characters through a reduction of their being to reactions and behaviour as they are related through Meursault.

Camus formally divided *stranger* into two parts, the first ending with the shooting to the Arab, and the second Meursault's tirade against the prison Chaplain. Underlying the formal division, there is a narrative division into three parts, the middle part ending with the conviction of death sentence. The division reinforces the importance of Meursault in the universe of the story. First part dissolves into chaos because of the murder and the

second part, which shows the force of law entering to re-establish meaning through the death of protagonist. The structure and the language, then, are technically at once related with the great theme of absurdity. The story itself is set around the city of Algiers and the beach. The time is always the day and the sun is always out. Curiously, in the universe to *The Stranger* there is no night, no darkness the mental obscurity. Such facts of the time emphasize the absurdity and indifference of Meursault; everything is meaningless except for the current state of the body in the environment. Thus, the novel presents the protagonists' philosophy as "nothing but a rationalization of his sublime indifference.

Meursault is a French Algerian clerk who learns that mother has died. He attends the funeral but remains unemotional and on the following day, goes to the beach. There, he meets Marie, with whom he begins a relationship. A neighbor invites him to the beach where they encounter some Arabs. Meursault shoots one of the Arabs for no apparent reason. He is arrested, tried and executed. Until the moment when the judge pronounces him guilty, Meursault is annoying indifferent to the activities of the real world. The Judgment jars him into an examination of life, at the end of which he concludes that life is absurd. He finds peace and happiness in this acknowledgement. This conclusion of his analysis, Meursault discovers, is liberating. Meursault possess a curious psychology whose activity is of more interest than the fact of his crime. He is an "outsider"—a person who lives in his own private world and maintains no interest in anyone else, especially how they view him. Meursault is convicted as much of his psychological indifference, his selfish and asocial behaviour, and responsibility for his mother, as for his crime.

Likewise, Bellow's first and most important novel, *Dangling Man* appeared in 1944 as the war continued and can indeed be called a war novel, though it is set in the battle field but in a denatured war time Chicago. Its central character, Joseph, waits to be drafted.

He is a marginal man whose aim is to know him. So it is concern with existential philosophy, freedom and the sense of identity which was much in vague at that time. During the modern period, from the eighteenth century on, a new moment within Judaism, Chasidism developed. This was a fold movement aimed to fill the spiritual needs of the times. In the mid- twentieth century, the ethical values of Judaism were severely attacked by Hitler and his Nazi philosophy. Hitler recognized that his war against the Jews was a war against twentieth-century humanism with the sole purpose of extirpating it at its roots: razing the humanism of Judaism and replacing it with a Nordic god of a Darwinism - Nietzschean -Wagnerian - Chamberlainian species. Jewish philosophy after the Holocaust and after Auschwitz, has become more theosophic and thanatosophic. Humanists and theologians are trying to come to term with the dichotomy of a God-centered universe and the Holocaust, which seemed to indicate for many the absence of God and the reign of nihilism. While the growth of Holocaust literature is burgeoning—diaries, testimonies, novels, and philosophic speculation-Saul Bellow’s writings epitomize the moral outlook that is an integral part of the Jewish world view despite the cloud of death that hovers over the Jewish people. One of the striking contrasts between Bellow’s philosophical stance and that of his contemporaries is that most of the writers of the twentieth century agonize over a nihilistic outlook of life, Bellow’s world view is refreshingly optimistic.

Bellow presents a consistent Jewish philosophical view which is all pervasive in his works. Bellow goes back to the original source, the Bible. His ethical optimism/monotheism is simplistic, yet sublime, capturing the essence of Jewish thought while suggesting a loss of historical-evolutionary process. The ethical monotheism in Bellow’s novels indicates that there is a belief in God, that God commands a way of life for man who is moral and humanistic. Although Bellow’s ethical monotheism is devoid of

all Jewish ritual on the protagonists' part, it remains in his memory and relates to another generation.

Saul Bellow's career begins as a writer within the context of social and cultural position of the Jews in American society. In his novels, in which, marginality plays an important role. The *Dangling Man* is characterized by the experience of marginality as Jews in American society to their pursuit of the ideal of individualism, which has traditionally been central to American culture and literature. Joseph's quests for personal freedom and autonomy can best be seen as attempts on his part to maintain his integrity in the face of pressures toward compromise and self-betrayal. Bellow's protagonists experience their not belonging fully to either Jewish or American culture. There are three aspects of the experience of marginality: the objective state of an individual not belonging fully to either of two cultures; and individual's marginal status in the eyes of others; and the personal, inner experience of being marginal. All of these occur in various configurations in Bellow's novel. However, the third aspect of marginality is a prominent characteristic of his protagonists. Although there are all reflective, sensitive individuals who are deeply affected by their marginality as Jews in American society, this manifests itself differently in each of them. The plot of the *Dangling Man* is skeletal and simple, it reveals to us no experience which find hard to share. After giving up his job, Joseph settles back to wait his draft number. Ostensibly, he is at work, amidst the general madness, on the reasonable philosophers of the Enlightenment. Actually, he is taking a crack at freedom, the freedom to be, to understand, to disengage him successfully from all that is conditioned. But nothing comes of it or rather, everything comes contrary to his expectations, which makes him indifferent, social misfit and his existence is in crisis. Bellow is usually considered to be one of the most important contemporary American

writer; his works, impresses one with its diversity of style, the profundity of its content, and its scope. *The Dangling Man* is a diary of a demoralized man who is left “dangling” with no real purpose as he waits for military service. Detached in tone, these restrained works followed “repressive” Faluberian formal standards. It is imaginative journal, set against fresh and vivid scenes in Chicago streets. He is musing on the past, his psychological reaction to his inactivity wave rages around him, while his uneasy insights into the nature of freedom and choice.

Joseph, a twenty-seven year old graduate, has resigned his Job as a clerk. He feels estranged and alienated from the rest of existence. As months go by, he quarrels with all his friends and relatives, lives off the earning of his faithful Eva, succumbs to fits of paranoia and anger, engages in desultory sexual affair, dispises his elderly neighbours and is hunted by death anxieties. He dangles because he is denied context; he is I-A, unemployed and employable waiting to be drafted into the Second World War.

This research work attempts to analyze the protagonists, Joseph and Meursault as the existential anti-hero in Saul Bellow’s *Dangling Man* and Camus’ *The Stranger*. It is the study of troubled persons Joseph and Meursault. The research is the testing of a tentative hypothesis that the anti-heroism is reflected in the characters of Joseph and Meursault as they under go alienation, frustration, existential crisis reflected by their opposition to social interdicts while pursuing for an autonomous self.

Both of these novels have received much critical appraisals since their publications. Different critics have viewed from different perspectives. Fredrict J. Hoffman, in his essay, “The Full of Experience: Saul Bellow’s Fiction”, seems to present the character of protagonist as a projection of marginal state, “Joseph in short, wishes to save himself from the taint of the ‘outside’. He exists in a marginal state. The very fact that he is dangling

waiting and no longer or ordinary world gives him a special character. He examines other people and himself” (83). Joseph is dangling. No longer has the ordinary world given him a special character. He loses his sense in himself. He suffers from a feeling of strangeness because his position is marginal in this world. He is considered as an “outsider”.

Similarly, Derek Rubin, in his essay, “Study of Marginality”, reads the novel from feminist perspectives and finds Bellow excluding female voice from it. He says:

The *Dangling Man* is written in personal voice of a protagonist whose principle domain is own sensibility and whose principle audience is himself. The text is striking in its exclusion of the female voice, its enactment of a homo-social male world, and the overt narcissism and misogyny of its protagonist, Joseph. (4)

Bellow’s novels are told in the first-person as monologues, rarely allowing any other view of the worlds described. His work is singularly lacking a real or vivid female character; where women appear as nympholeptic fantasies, peculiarly unconvincing. We mainly perceive them through the minds of his male protagonist who overshadows them. Narrators undergo various existential crises, the female character in comparison do not have the same depth of emotional, moral and intellectual complexity.

To some extent, N. Mukherji understands the characteristics of Joseph as an existential hero and visualizes his own individuality. He comments:

Joseph feels estranged and alienated from the rest of existence. His ex-friend does not recognize him. His moneyed brother Amos who keeps pressing his help on him thinks that he was wasted his life. His married life with Iva has also quite cooled off. Thinking of a painter friend he writes, through those art of imagination he connected with the best part of mankind

[...]. He has a community I have this six sided box [...], but closed,
hopeless Jail. (75-76)

Joseph is an isolated character. He feels estranged and alienated from the rest of the world. His friend does not recognize him. He breaks the relation with his brother. Even he has no good relation with his wife Iva. Indicating his painter friend, Joseph says that he has a community but he himself has only a closed hopeless jail i.e. six sided box. He does not find an autonomous self which becomes futile for him. He struggles for good life and freedom but does not get. He goes with the feeling of uneasiness and confusion.

While talking about the ironical aspects of the novel, Jo Brans says, “At the end of the novel, Joseph takes action which looks superficially like heroism, but his ironic description of it leaves the author’s meaning questionable” (167). Certainly everything in *Dangling Man* is filtered through Joseph, and the reader, like its hero, dangles because the book lacks an objective stand from which one can judge Joseph. He seems to present the character of the protagonist as the projection of an existential anti-hero. He further comments:

He is a marginal man whose aim is to know himself: “to know what we are and what we are for, to know our purpose, to seek grace”. But the world-politics, the city, human relations giving him no answers and withdraws into his private rooms, where ‘the perspective ends in the walls’. Joseph is an existential anti-hero, who finds his existence without essence in a hostile world. (170)

Joseph is very much curious to know about himself. He is searching for a grace or purpose. But politics, city life, human relations do not give him support. When he does not get any good purpose from these aspects, then he becomes an isolated character. All his desires end in

the walls. He enrolls himself his own private rooms. He sees the world outside as a hostile world.

On the other hand, many critics have their own views on the famous novel *The Stranger*. Friedrich A. Olafson comments on *The Stranger* as a nihilistic writing. He further admits:

In the character of Meursault, the “hero” of the stranger, this tension between Camus’ nihilistic vision and his ethical demands becomes particular clear. Meursault is presented as a man characterized by moral equivalent of achromatic vision [...] he stands, in fact, outside the whole moral world in a peculiar state that Camus describes as “innocence”, apparently because in a world that affords transcendental sanction for human judgment of right and wrong there can be no real guilt. (16)

In his view Camus, however, clearly wishes to persuade us that different aspect of Meursault’s character are not just consistent but intimately related to one another. He experienced difficulty in showing how a positive ethic of human fraternity can be generated by a nihilistic attitude of all values. It is said that it was the injustice and cruelty of man to man that aroused Meursault to action.

Similarly, Germaine takes Meursault, “as innocent victim; a stranger to the conventional moral code” (2). He will not lie about his feeling neither to give pleasure to other not to give them pain, nor to save this life. Another critic William M. Manly finds, “Camus as rigorous in his presentation of the psychology of Meursault and lax his presentation of the society which condemned him, thus denying the colonial reality in French Algeria” (323). He sees him as indifferent to the society around him, including its social oppression of colonized.

According to Mc Bride, the stranger has not only the theme of absurdity, but it has also the theme of human authenticity. He further says:

The absurd man is free. The revolt of which Camus speaks is, for him, a source of liberation: it frees Meursault from “the false hopes of an after life, the requirements of which would some how restrain the present life”, but also allows the freedom to live his life as benefits a man who is aware of absurdity of moral condition and of the absence of moral values. (49)

He clarifies that the absurd man who revolts in freedom and passion is, moreover, invariably innocent. He tries to justify Meursault’s innocence and authenticity of his revolt for freedom.

In the view of Carl A. Viggiani, “Meursault remains a cipher nearly to the story’s end dispassionate clinical, disengaged from his own emotion” (868). In his view the protagonist is a dispassionate, subconscious and senseless character. He further says “the Stranger implies that the main character, Meursault, has been viewed as a “strange” or “odd” person. The other possible meaning is that no one knows him. Meursault is a stranger even to those who think they know him” (869). According to him, Meursault is an anti-hero. His only quality is honesty, no matter how absurd it may be. In existential terms, he is “authentic” to himself. Meursault has faith only in what he himself can see or experience with other scenes. He is not a philosopher, a theologian or a deep thinker. He exists as he is, not trying to be anything more or less than himself. He also sees him as a prototype of modern man who thinks only his existence because of the loss of will.

Likewise, Linda Drajem explains Meursault, the hero of the novel *The Stranger*, as a metaphysical rebel. She says:

Is he an absurd hero? Is he a moral monster? Is he a rebel against a conventional morality [...] I believe he is the embryo of Camus' metaphysical rebel as articulated in the philosophical essay *The Rebel*. He is the man who says by his actions, "I will go this far, but no further". (1)

She tries to describe Meursault's rebellious nature in detail that she says he goes ahead step by step. According to her in the beginning chapters he was not same as he is at the end. He has been victimized because he has transgressed limitations, criteria, and at all a deep social taboo. Meursault's real crime was his honesty regarding his mother's death.

After observing these critical responses from different scholars, it has become more relevant to make on the issues of protagonists existences. Their differences, unanimously agree on the fact that Joseph and Meursault are isolated characters because of their existential anti-heroic qualities. They are very much curious to know themselves. They search for grace, freedom and autonomous self. But politics, city life, human relations do not give them full support. When they do not get good response from these aspects, then they become isolated character. They lose their sense of themselves. They suffer from the feelings of strangeness, alienation, frustration and existential crisis because their position is marginal in this world. They see the world outside as hostile. So, they can not adjust themselves to their respective societies. They transgress social taboos and become social misfit. Though, this research may not be an absolute study of *The Dangling Man* and *The Stranger* and anti-heroes: Joseph and Meursault; it can certainly be one more drop to the ocean of literary field, for it aims at finding out the elements and circumstances which makes them anti-heroes in the light of existentialism.

II. Existentialism, Existential Hero, Romantic Hero/Anti-Hero and Anti-Hero

Existentialism

After the two great world wars, 'Existentialism' came into prominence, particularly in Germany and France as a philosophical movement or tendency. These world wars give rise to widespread feelings of despair and separation from the established order. These feelings led to the idea that people have to create their own values in the world in which traditional values no longer reign. Existentialism insists that choices have to be made arbitrarily by individuals, who thus create themselves, because there are no objective standards to determine choice. Existentialism draws attention to the risk, the void of human reality and admits that the human being is thrown into the world in which pain, frustration, sickness, contempt, alienation, malaise and death dominate.

It was during the Second World War, when Europe found itself in a crisis and faced death and destruction, existentialist movement began to flourish. Existentialism as a contemporary philosophical trend reached its zenith in the year following the war, the time when Europe was in a despairing mood, perhaps not without the hope of social reconstruction but pessimistic and morbid enough to accept the existentialist outlook of lack of design and intention in the universe and the nausea of human existence and its frustration. The dark portrait of such sickness could be found even in the optimistic and confident nineteenth century in the works of authors as diverse as Karl Marx, Søren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche. Thus, the central idea of Existential theory is the idea of man being responsible for his own actions. Existentialism as a school of thought devotes to the interpretation of human existence. The term "existence" comes from the Latin root Ex "out" + Sistere "to stand" (Cuddon 316). Thus existence means to stand out in the universe. It takes human being as an isolated existent into an alien universe. The feeling of

despair and separation gave idea that people have to create their own values. Therefore, one has to make choices and create self. One exists up to the extent one makes choices.

Existentialism is less of an-'ism' than an attitude that expresses itself in a variety of ways. Because of the diversity of positions associated with it, no single strict definition is possible; however, it suggests one major theme; it lays stress on concrete individual existence, freedom and choice. As Ryan explains:

Hence there is no single existentialist philosophy, and no single definition of the word can be given. However, it may be said that with the existentialists the problem of man is central and that they stress man's concrete existence, his contingent nature, his personal freedom and his consequent responsibility for what he does and makes him to be. (639)

Existentialism focuses on the lack of meaning and purpose in life and solitude of human existence. Existentialism really concerns what authentic route people may take in the world where values and certainties are smashed into fragments how people can cope with negative aspects of human existence like depression, frustration, pain, anxiety, alienation caused by modern society.

Along with the consideration of the role of time and awareness of death, these questions seem to be the concern of existentialism. Existential philosophy is concerned with the existence of the individual's life and death. They do not go with traditional attempt to get the ultimate nature of the world in abstract system of thought. Instead, they search for what it is like to be an 'individual' human being in the world. Whether the thing is true or false, that depends on the decision the individual makes. What is true to one may be false to other. So, truth is subjective according to existentialism. The existentialists conclude that human choice is subjective because individual finally must make their own

choices without help from such external standards as laws, ethical rules, or traditions. Because individuals make their own choices, they are 'free', but because they choose, they are completely 'responsible' for their choices. Macintyre says, "Even if I do not choose, I have chosen not to choose" (149). The existentialists emphasize that freedom is accompanied by responsibility and in the world devoid of meaning, freedom becomes a curse; as Sartre says "We are condemned to be free" (56).

In fact, existentialism goes back to man's pre-philosophical attempts to attain self-awareness and understanding of existence. Sartre, the prominent figure of this philosophical system, found valuable philosophical material in Descartes' subjectivism, Husserl's analysis of consciousness and Heidegger's existentialist concepts of "thrown-into-being" and also borrowed the idea of an "individual conscious existence" from Kierkegaard; and from Nietzsche he takes the concept of the "death of God". As human existence is self-conscious without being pre-defined, we as autonomous being are 'condemned to be free' - compelled to make future directed choices. Every individual simply follows custom or social expectations in order to escape this angst; we have escaped the responsibility of making our own choices, of creating our own essence.

We are free to create our own interpretation of ourselves in relation to the world, to create a project of possibilities, of authentic actions as the expression of freedom. According to Sartre (*Existentialism and Human Emotions*), the individual has the potentiality to become more than what he or she is, "man is nothing else but what he makes of himself" (15). Each individual has to make his own universe with a meaning of his own, Sartre claims, "there is no reality, except in action" (32). Sartre divides living as authentic and inauthentic. He chooses authentic living stressing that one must choose and make a commitment to make better. Sartre makes a clear distinction between being-in-

itself (en-soi) and being-for-itself (pour-soi). En-soi applies to things; this means a thing is basically what it is. In case of human being, existence precedes essence. Therefore man is pour-soi: “The best way to conceive of the fundamental project of human reality is to say that man is the being whose project is to be God” (63). According to him we first exist, appear on the scene, make a choice and create our identity.

It is through our choices that we create meaning in our life. Since our involvement in the world creates essence, there is no predetermined essence to govern our existence. Thus, as conscious person, a man can shut being-in-itself. No God is needed to account for his being. So, Sartre connects existentialism with humanism, not in the sense of regarding man as the ultimate end, but in the sense of regarding man as the creator of all values.

French Existentialist Albert Camus reflects the loss of certainties in the post-modern world. In his view, each individual has a design in their own life as a project. The choice and responsibility of that project falls entirely on them. Camus was concerned with the freedom and responsibility of the individual, the alienation of the individual from society, and the difficulty of facing life without the comfort of believing in God or in absolute moral standards. His notion of existentialism focus on the apparent absurdity and futility of life, the indifferent universe, and the necessity of engagement in a just cause.

Camus thought that human existence is absurd. The modern world is full of injustice: millions work in repetitive exploitative jobs. He thought that we should rebel against the absurdities by refusing to participate in them. In *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Camus asserts that by refusal to surrender, Sisyphus the representative of modern man, can create meaning through a free act of affirmation in which he gives meaning to a situation which until then had none. Camus says:

I leave Sisyphus at the foot of the mountain! One always finds one's burden again. But Sisyphus teaches the gods and raises rocks. He too concludes that all is well. This universe hence forth without a master seems to him neither sterile nor futile. Each atom of that stone, each mineral flake of the night-filled mountain, in itself forms a world. The struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man's heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy.

(70)

To get liberation from the anxiety of the absurd world, one may go to the rules of God or he may submit himself to the hand of death. But either of these choices is ridiculous and bad for the absurd man. The living of the absurd man depends upon the maximum struggle against this absurdity.

The world is full of absurdity, but Sisyphus teaches revolt against action that offers freedom and justification of continuing life. Camus compares the situation of human life to that of the mythical figure Sisyphus revealing that our life is a series of meaningless actions culminating in death, with no possibility of external justification. According to Camus, the human future is unique and dreadful. As he evaluates modern man and his situation in the following passage:

A world that can be explained even with bad reasons is a familiar world. But, on the other hand, in a universe suddenly divested of illusions and lights, man feels an alien, a stranger. His exile is without remedy since he is deprived of the memory of a lost home or the hope of a promised land. This divorce between man and his life, the actor and his setting, is properly the feeling of absurdity. (*The Myth of Sisyphus* 13)

Camus believes that human being is an isolated existent in an alien universe. The universe does not possess any inherent truth, value or meaning. “This universe”, states Camus, “henceforth without a muster seems to him neither sterile nor futile” (Ellmann 852). Camus reached to a conclusion to declare the condition of man absurd when he realized that the speculative system of past provided no reliable guidance for life.

When the absurd man becomes aware of his futile living, he is naturally filled with anxiety and helplessness. Then one realizes that forlornness, anguish, despair are the characteristics of life. To get liberation from the anxiety of the absurd world if one chooses to submit oneself to the hand of god or death, for him, either of these choices is ridiculous. He believes that one needs to accept the challenge but not to commit suicide and bow before God.

Albert Camus lays emphasis upon choices. Sisyphus is given the choices. He does not surrender to God and makes a choice. He believes that choice leads us to absurdity but joy comes out of that absurdity. As Ellmann and Fieldelson remark, he sees man “arriving through admission of absurdity, at an affirmation of his own worth” (806). He focuses on struggle against absurdity for humanism and optimism.

Existentialists are obsessed with the meaning of life. They focus exclusively on the individual. Though life is very difficult and does not have any objective or universally known value, yet, existentialism attempts to find happiness and meaning in a modern world characterized by alienation, isolation, loneliness, frustration, inauthenticity and absurdity. Existentialism deals with man’s disillusionment and despair. This Philosophy maintains that man is full of anxiety with no meaning in life; just simply exist, until he makes a decisive choice because he creates his self by making self-directed choices.

Man's autonomy, assertion of his subjective self, his denial of traditional values, institution and philosophy, his exercise of choice and freedom, and his experience of the absurdity and the meaninglessness of life are some of the existential themes which are reflected in the writings of the exponents of it.

Classical Hero Vs Existential Hero

The word classical refers to the art, literature culture of the ancient Greeks and Romans, or their writers and artists. It is the characteristics of or derived from the literary and artistic standards, principles and methods of ancient Greeks and Romans. So, classical hero is the hero of the Greek and Roman literature. Hero is the main character of drama or fiction on whom all the events of Drama or fiction center. The hero is a man of great strength and courage favored by the gods and in part descended from them; he is often regarded as half-god and worshipped after his death.

Hero is a person especially a man admired for courage, nobility or exploits especially in war. A person normally becomes courageous by performing an extraordinary and praise worthy deed. A hero normally fulfills the definitions of what is considered good and noble in the originating culture. However in literature, particularly in tragedy, the hero may also have serious flaw which leads to a downfall. Such heroes are often referred to a tragic hero. Sometimes a person might achieve enough status to become courageous in people's minds. This is usually complemented by a rapid growth of myths around the person in question, often attributing him or her powers beyond those of ordinary people.

Some social commentators prescribe the need for heroes in times of social upheaval or national self-doubt, seeing a requirement for various role models, especially of the young. Such myth making may have worked better in the past: current trends confuse heroes and their heroic-worship with the cult of mere celebrity. In classical meaning the

hero should possess certain qualities. Any central character of any type of story and drama can not be an ideal hero. The classical scholars regard the tragic hero of Greek literature like 'Oedipus' an ideal hero who is incorporated with certain qualities. So the central character of comedy or a cosmic hero can not be an ideal hero, because what resembles with human situation and fate is tragedy not comedy for people give attention to the quality of the inevitable that we associate with tragedy and the tragic effect in the readers' mind gives a sort of relief.

The qualities requisite are that the function of tragic hero is to produce the 'katharsis' of pity and fear: pity being felt for a person who, if not wholly innocent, meets with sufferings beyond his desert; fear being awakened when the sufferer is a man of like nature with ourselves. Tragic character must be exhibited through the medium of a plot which has the capacity of giving full satisfaction of these emotions certain types, therefore, of character and certain forms of catastrophe are at once excluded, as falling either in whole or in part to produce the tragic effect.

In the first place, the spectacle of man eminently good undergoing the change from prosperous to adverse fortune awakens neither 'pity' nor 'fear'. It shocks us and repels us. The character in drama or fiction should possess the good quality and only the good produce a dramatic but a kind of realistic effect or only the tragedy of good character can move the heart of the reader and the spectacle. A play is just a representation of the events of human life. Pity and fear here are like wanting. Even the sense of justice is unsatisfied. The impression left by such a spectacle is, indeed, the exact opposite of 'pity', it is that which the Greeks denoted by the righteous anger or moral indignation excited by undeserved good fortune.

Pity and fear are closely linked, and this becomes still clear from the definition in the translations of *Aristotle's Poetics* by Humphrey House: "A sort of pain at an evident evil of a destructive or painful kind in the case of somebody who does not deserve it, the evil being on which we might expect to happen to ourselves or to some of our friends, and this at a time when it is said to be wear at hand" (107). Pity again is related to fear a little further on, where he says that pity turns into fear when the object is so nearly selected to us that the suffering seems to be our own, and we pity others in circumstances in which we should fear for ourselves.

In Aristotle's treatment pity is not an altruistic and disinterested emotion. Both pity and fear are derived from self-regarding instinct, and pity springs from the feeling that a similar suffering might happen to us. This is the basis of the very possibility of sympathy for the feeling of somebody else. When the good prosper we rejoice with them; when the good suffer we expect to suffer. We share their pains and fears, and that is pity. If we do not have a tendency of fear for ourselves we can not share the fear for others. Rash and presumptuous people therefore tend to be incapable of pity. And at the other extreme if we ourselves are already in terrible suffering and have nothing worse to suffer and fear, we also tend to be incapable of pity, because we are absorbed in our own fear and cannot share any more with others. Humphrey House in his translation of *Aristotle's Poetics* further says:

Ideally according to justice the two scales of goodness and badness and of pleasure and pain should be in harmony, so that the good have pleasure and bad pain. Tragedy illustrates a dislocation of this harmony; for it is of the essence of the situation which calls forth pity, that the misfortune and suffering are undeserved. Tragic pity is felt only for the good; it is therefore

not a patronizing or sentimental feeling by which we look down on the sufferer; we continue to look at him. (102)

Aristotle's pity and fear are sympathy for the good part of mankind in the bad part of their experiences. This is the emotional side of justice. He does not say that pity and fear have a 'painful element'; both of them are species of 'pain' or 'disturbance', therefore to get rid of the 'pain' would be to get rid of the emotion altogether.

The theory of Catharsis says that by tragedy pity and fear are to be purged of their "self-regarding" elements as if catharsis were some kind of process by which pity and fear were converted from being self regarding emotions into being authentic emotion. In his view, the perfectly blameless character is deemed unfit to be a tragic hero on the ground that wholly unmerited suffering causes repulsion, not fear or pity. We feel pity for one who is an innocent the highest sense sufferer. In this regard T. R. Henn in his book *Harvest of Tragedy* says:

In tragic drama or story the perfect character to the place of protagonist is rarely chosen. Blameless goodness has seldom the quality needed to make it dramatically interesting. It wants to motive which leads to decisive act of will, which impels others to action and produces a collision of force [...]. It has generally a touch of egoism, by which it exercises a controlling influence over circumstances or over the wills of minor characters that are grouped around it. (310)

In classical Greek literature, what we find inevitable is the tragic death of the hero, it is assumed the death is the natural termination of the tragic fact or experience of all experience death has the highest emotion potential. The death is the most satisfactory terminal point from the view of the tragic pattern.

The dramatist will emphasize the affirmation of values, the revolution of the wheel. Such new values are often certified, as it were by recalling the heroic qualities of the dead, in whom evil has been expiated. This celebration is now largely a social convention. It is clear that the emotions attaching to death in works of art or literature is highly complex. Anthropology tells us that the death of the king or hero has a perpetual ritual significance conscious or unconscious, with two aspects of values. He dies because there is concentrated upon him, as symbol, the necessities of Birth and Resurrection cycle of the year. He dies often, in his prime because virtues must not be impaired by old age; perhaps because of the belief that the souls of those who die in battle are purer than those who die of disease.

Catastrophe has to do a very important role in life of tragic hero. Examining the plot of *Oedipus Rex*, we may be tempted to regard its catastrophe as not inevitable but also inescapable. Aristotle saw the change of future as being caused by some 'error of judgment' a "great error", on the part of the hero. As stated in the *Elements of literature*, in defining this element of tragedy, "Aristotle clearly regarded the hero or heroine, and not some condition beyond woman controls responsible for imitating the chain of events leading to the change of fortune. Even a profound flaw in character, after all, is beyond human control" (788).

Aristotle described the tragic hero as an intermediate kind of personage in moral character, neither preeminently virtuous nor fast not afflicted by vice and depravity- as someone normally like ourselves in whom we can engage our emotional concern. Thus when we read tragedies such as *Oedipus Rex* or *Othello*, we should not regard their protagonist as victims of circumstances, but rather should seek to identify the sense in which they are agents of their undoing.

While we seek to understand the nature of their error, we should not forget that the most tragic heroes are genuinely admirable characters-persons, as Aristotle tells us, who deserved by enjoy “great reputation and prosperity”. And their reputation is function not simply of their social rank but also of their commitment to noble purposes. Oedipus is not merely a king but also a man committed to discovering the truth and riding his city of the plague. *Othello* is not only a military leader but also a man committed to moral purity in all action as well as in all his personal relations. *Romeo and Juliet* are not the children to a love that transcends the pettiness of family squabbles and political factions. Our response to them should thus combine judgment with sympathy and admiration. Once we make effort to discover their error, we shall find that we undergo and experience parallel to that of the protagonists themselves. We shall find that we are compelled by the process of events-by the turn of the plot-to recognize how they have undone themselves. The protagonist’s act of recognition is defined, because it entails a change from ignorance to knowledge. And the discovery as Aristotle recognized, is caused inevitably by a reversal, and incident or sequence of incidents that go contrary to the protagonist’s expectation. Reversal and discovery are crucial elements of the tragic experience, because they crystallize its meaning for the protagonist and for us. When events go contrary to their expectations, when the irony of their situation becomes evident, they and we have no choice but to recognize exactly how the noblest intentions can bring about the direst consequences. Thus in its discovery, as in its entire plot, tragedy affirms both the dignity and the frailty of man.

Fate plays a vital role in the life of the hero in Greek Literature. Greeks had great believe in fate. Fatalism is the “belief, that whatever happens is predestined” (Sophie’s world 52). We find this belief all over the world. We find that the belief in Ancient Greece that people could learn their fate from some form of oracle. The fate leads all the action of

the hero in *Oedipus Rex*. Oedipus did not want to kill his father and marry his mother but his fate forced him to commit the crime. Lee A. Jacobus says, “*Oedipus Rex* is known as a tragedy of destiny. It’s tragic effect is said to lie in the contrast between the supreme will of the gods and the vain attempts of mankind to escape the evil that threatens” (100). In most of the classical Greek literature, hero, who is an individual, has to struggle against divine.

Existential philosophers like Nietzsche and Camus do not agree in fatalism. They reject the ideas that our fate is determined and we can’t avoid or change it. Nietzsche rejected any interpretation that considered fate as a manifestation of benevolent divine providence. For him, fate is faceless and any individual is not victimized by it. It is blind coincidence from which we wrest meaning with our own actions. He doesn’t believe the idea that we can’t go beyond fate’s will and we have to surrender before it like the protagonist of *Oedipus Rex* and *Macbeth*. Nietzsche regarded fate as a contingency, an empty coincidence, and a necessity. He argues that the individual has a kind of goal and the course of the world is not intentionally oriented toward fate. Safranski adopts and naturalizes the ideas of Nietzsche regarding fate that it is a stable element, and freedom is the singular open and mobile element in this determined world. He called ‘free will’ is the highest power of fate which is realized in its antithesis, namely in the medium of freedom of will.

For Nietzsche, fate is not a compelling power, but it is an experience of free will. Through freedom we can experience fate. Free consciousness experiences this world as resistance, struggles to establish its own latitude within it, and in doing so experiences itself as “free will”. However, this will is free only in the self-perception of consciousness.

Safranski further considers about the interrelationship between free will and fate and determinism and adopts the views of Nietzsche as follows:

He reflected on the circumstance that reflecting reason is sufficiently free to allow the problem of freedom to emerge in the first place. Even the question itself -“How is freedom possible?” - Manifests a “free will”. Although free will does belong to the universe of determination, it is still free enough to be able to distance this whole world conceptually. To this liberated consciousness, the world appears as the grand Other, the universe of determination. Nietzsche called it “fate”. (37)

Nietzsche’s views on the mystery of freedom are parallel to the idea of fate. For him if the relationship between freedom and fate is constituted such that it depends on the individual to connect the two spheres in his own life; every individual becomes an arena of the world as a whole. Each individual is a case in point of the link between fate and freedom.

Camus also considers individual freedom. He thinks that an individual can make his own fate. He debates that the individual must not bow to God or authority and should neither negate nor objectify him. He worried about the false spirituality, religion, and authority. In *Myth of Sisyphus*:

It is Camus’s insight into the awareness of Sisyphus during the process- his insight into the fact that Sisyphus knows what he is doing- that gives Camus courage. Like Sisyphus, Camus tells us, human make their own fate, their own choices, and to that extent are in control of their own destinies. By defying the gods, Sisyphus made his choice and his fate. (The Creation of Knowledge 67)

Oedipus was alone to fight against the catastrophe prevailing there in Thebes; Plague that had ravaged almost all the city. The struggle between these two forces is evident in Sophocle's next play *Antigone*. Antigone was legally obliged to accept the state law i.e., not to bury her state claimed traitor brother Polyneices but she was more obliged to accept the divine law, on once it depends on the proper cremation of her brother Polyneices. This becomes the cause of the tragedy of Antigone. Jacobus further says: "The main conflict 'Antigone' centers on a distinction between law and Justice, the conflict between a human law and a higher law" (70). Antigone emerges as a heroine who presses forward in the full conviction that she is right. She must break the law of the states; she must answer to what she regards as a higher law. Thus, in the struggle between individual force and divine force, individual force seems very weak and the divine force remains always victorious.

Romantic Hero/Anti-Hero

The Romantic hero has become something of a stock figure of the literary scene. His Psyche has repeatedly been analyzed, his genealogy trace, his personal categorized into various prototypes, his relationship to society dissected and so forth. Heroism in the sense of the term the romantics were heirs to the eighteenth century. The youthful rebels, of the storm and stress in the 1770 have worshipped human greatness in all its manifestations: that of the creative genius, the thinker, the statesman, the religious leader, as well as the warrior's traditional heroism.

The attraction to its heroics also played an important part in the disproportionately fervid response to Ossian throughout Europe. With the French Revolution's fight for universal liberate, fraternity and egalite and the advent of Napoleon, it almost seemed as if the Ossianic world of heroism were to be realized in early nineteenth-century Europe. Peter L. Thorslev in his book *The Byronic Hero* views that: "Romantic period is such as to have

given rise to the contention that there was in the romantic moment a distinctive heroic tradition indeed that the romantic-age was our last great age of heroes” (185). The emphasis in that phrase should, however, lie on the word “last”, for the Romantic hero, notwithstanding his dominant position, stands already well on the way to the modern Anti-hero. Perhaps that was in fact one of the sources for the fascination he evidently exercised; essentially ambiguous as he was, he both reflects an appeal to a period of transition that looked at one and the same time backwards and forwards.

But from the outset there were signs of uneasiness with the heroic ideal. The protagonist of the storm and stress, such as Goethe’s *Gotz von Berlichingen* and Schiller’s *Karl Moor*, are already at some remove from the customary norms of clear cut heroism in their moral equivocalness. Nor does the behavior of Ossianic warrior stand up well than chivalry. And the living model of hero, Napoleon, soon proved a bitter disappointment to many, including Goethe and Beethoven who significantly changed the dedication of his *Eroica* symphony when Napoleon had himself proclaimed Emperor. The substitute phrase “to the memory of a great man” strongly suggests the demise of the hero in the early years of the nineteenth century. Moreover, Napoleon’s ignominious end in exile, in glaring antithesis to his glorious rise, seemed to confirm the hollowness of heroism in the modern world. Peter L. Thorslev further writes “I never know that you sophisticates call the man who too promptly obeys the dictates of his heart; for he certainly is not a hero; but he any the less for that?” (190). In some respects the Romantic hero does still fulfill the traditional heroic role.

The term “Romantic hero” is no longer entirely appropriate to the characters portrayed by the Romantics, nor is “anti-hero” in its modern connotation which is derived from Dostoyevsky’s *Notes from Underground*. Romantic period still wanted a hero, what it

actually got as some thing of a hybrid with features of both hero and anti-hero. In many respects, David Friedrich's programmatic picture *Mountaineer in a Misty Landscape* portrays:

A solitary figure of noble appearance, with back mysteriously turned, silhouetted against a landscape of mountain peaks enveloped in swirling mists. Poised on a craggy rock, surveying the scene [...]. Mountaineer is incongruously dressed in a tail-coat, trousers, light shoes, as for the salon with merely a walking-stick for equipment. (49)

Friedrich's picture illustrates attractive appearance, which often makes him something of a *homme fatal*. Almost invariably he is a gentleman a member of his leisured class at ease financially. Both his handsomeness and his freedom from mundane concern raises him to the level for an idealized glamorous figure sharply distinguished from the characteristic modern anti-hero with his pity, subsistence-level anxieties, his frequent physical imperfections, his embroilment in the grotesque messiness of day-to-day living. All this is alien to the Romantic hero who exists, as in Friedrich's painting, on a lofty mountain-top high above everyday reality.

Romantic hero's dominance stems not from his activity, but from the interest in his psyche, since his heroic assertion is the egocentric one of his own personality, far indeed from the hero's traditional commitment to a cause outside of himself. This reversal is, of course, the outcome of Romantic cult of the exceptional individual, who could be exceptional in the negative as well as the positive connotation, bearing traces of Gothic Villain and the mark of chain on his fateful physiognomy. The move away from the earlier concept of heroism was further reinforced by the replacement of the old ethos of duty by the new ethos of feeling its implicit trust in the instincts and impulses of the heart. Even

though the Romantic hero is undeniably “the hero” of the works portraying him, it is, so to speak, for the wrong reasons. His overwhelming presence is the expression of that of the work in which he appears-pivot entirely on his idiosyncratic ego. In such, egocentric self-assertation lies in one of the crucial turning points from hero to anti-hero.

The transformation of hero into anti-hero is a process of reduction, whose prime motivating factor during the Romantic period was the protagonist'. In this devolution from hero to anti-hero, namely irony and more specifically self-irony further plays a crucial role. Lonel Trilling advocates in *Sincerity and Authenticity* states: “to establish a disconnection between the speaker and his interlocutor or between the speaker and that which is being spoken about, or even between the speaker and himself” (120).

It is particularly in this last sense of a disconnection between the speaker and himself that irony is one of the acid tests of the anti-hero. This most advanced quintessential stage of anti-heroism remains by large foreign to the Romantic hero. He is still too filled with the certainty of himself to engage in a fundamental questioning of his own ego. Trilling further writes: “Romantic hero is incapable to embodying this desperate comic wit; irony is beyond his comprehension. He is in all things the sincere man; even in his disintegration struggles to be true to the self he must believe in his own” (52).

Romantic hero is a man of incipient alienation who has yet reached the full alienation of self-irony.

So, the Romantic hero stands unhappily betwixt and between. Far indeed from the firm commitment of the conventional hero, he has yet arrived at anti-hero's blasé alienation. He lacks ironic self-detachment and hence the ability to rise above his ills and those of the world with tragic-comic shrug of the down, we can but weep and go under. The modern anti-hero's defense mechanism is still beyond the Romantic hero's emotional

range. In his ambivalence the Romantic hero reflects an age whose idealism was rapidly inverted into “agony” and whose questing and questioning was to lead towards that fundamental revaluation of all values that form the ideological basis for the anti-hero. Unwitting perhaps the Romantic initiated to move long this reductive path; and so appropriately their hero pre-figures the anti-hero.

The Byronic heroes become not only destructive to those around him, but also innately self –destructive. In this sense, his heroes stand close to the anti-heroes. In contrast, however, to his twentieth century counterpart, who accepts the hopelessness and purposelessness of their lives with an ironic sense that already stands beyond hope, the romantic hero at least at the out set, still tends to cherish certain dreams. His hero believes as yet that salvation may come from communion with the beauties of nature, from the lust of women. Byron’s story follows initially the pattern of a quest in which the hero may reach moments of euphoria when he thinks himself to fulfill. But all too soon disillusionment sets in: this is an integral part of that process of reduction which Byron has identified as the transition from hero to anti-hero.

The Byronic hero has to face not just the thwarting of one particular wish: that nature can be cruelly unsympathetic, the woman of his desires beyond reach, and society unreceptive this experience proves climacteric in that it makes him aware of the fundamental futility of all willing and seeking. This signifies the failure of his entire deeper quest for the meaning of his life, a failure of self-realization, a drastic loss of hope, and of faith in him as well as in the world.

Existential Anti-Hero

In literature and film, an antihero is a central and supportive character that has some of the personality flaws and ultimate fortune traditionally assigned to the villain or

antagonist. They do have the heroic qualities so are capable of performing the heroic deeds but do not execute them properly rather they perform against the expectation of the reader or viewer. Anti-heroes can be awkward, obnoxious, passive, pitiful or obtuse but they are always in some fundamental way flawed or failed heroes. Comic books also feature anti-heroes, also known as “dark heroes” , who are characters fighting for the side of good but either with some tragic flaw or by some questionable means to reach their goals. A good character that is, within the context of a story, a hero but in another context would be easily seen as a villain or simply as unlikable. In the second half of 19th century novel heroes approximated more and more nearly too ordinary people and shed more and more of the qualities associated with traditional heroes in fiction. This tendency became common practice in early 20th century novels. The novel writers introduced non-hero rather than anti-hero.

The writing during this period focused on the common people but previously heroes of novels or dramas used to represent the higher class of society this new tendency marks the difference between the traditional type of hero and a hero of new generation. A. C. Ward further says:

Anti-heroes reject standards of conduct or social behavior formerly held to be essential in civilized society. Some deliberately revolt against those standards and regard the modern world as ahungle in which tooth and claw prevail, others again, having been educated away from their early environment became stranded intellectually and emotionally, turn sour and affect to despise what they can not grasp.(39)

From this remark we know that anti-hero is a character, doesn't follow the code and conduct of the society, he seems barbaric and uncivilized in his activity, and intellect,

strength, and wit are the things of distance for him. Irrationality of his character makes not only him to suffer but also to the others. J. A. Cuddon remarks:

Anti-hero is a non-hero or the antithesis of a hero of the old fashioned kind, who was capable of heroic deeds, who was dashing, strong, brave, and resourceful. It is a little doubtful whether such heroes have every existed in any quantity in fiction except in some romances [...].The antihero is a man who is given the vocation of failure[...].The anti-hero is a type who is incompetent, unlucky, tactless, clumsy, cack-handed, stupid, buffoonish—is of ancient lineage. (43)

Cuddon and Ward present similar view in terms of character, their action, society's view on them Such heroes deviate from the classical hero who has power, strength, intellect, and also has a public support. He is a man of noble birth and has a higher responsibility. M. H. Abrams says the anti-hero denies the qualities of classical hero:

The chief person, in a modern novel or play whose character is widely discrepant from which we associate with the traditional protagonist or hero. Instead of manifesting largeness, dignity, power or heroism, the anti-hero is pity, ignominious, passive, ineffectual, or dishonest. The anti-hero is especially conspicuous in dramatic tragedy, in which the protagonist had usually been of high state, dignity and courage. (11)

All anti-heroes are not same they differ in their character, nature and action. One type of anti-hero feels helpless, distrusts conventional values and is often unable to commit to any ideals, but they accept and often relish their status as outsiders.

Another type of anti-hero is a character who constantly moves from one disappointment in their lives to the next, without end, with only occasional and fleeting

success. But they persist and even attain a form of heroic success by steadfastly never giving up their goals. These characters often keep a deep seated optimism that one day, they will succeed. But in the end they still meet the ultimate fate of a traditional villain's failure.

There is also a type of anti-hero who starts the story with a few unlikable traits such as prejudices, self-centeredness, immaturity, cockiness or a single minded focus on things such as wealth, status or revenge. Thus the hero may actually begin the story as a not so likeable character. However through the course of events, as we get to know the character, "they row and change and may actually become popular" (Abrams 11). So Anti-hero is a principle character of a modern literary or dramatic work that lacks the attributes of the traditional protagonist or hero. The anti-hero's lack of courage, honesty, or grace, his weakness and confusion, often reflect modern man's ambivalence toward traditional, moral and social virtues.

The higher nature links the hero to the creative energies that seek to overcome negative states and reach higher states of being. It inspires him/her to seize the day to be creative and virtuous, courageous and just. It is a source of great power, and it motivated the hero to make sacrifice and to do great things. The lower nature links the antihero to his physical, animal side of his nature. It is an earth bound self that pursues earthly things. Hidden in the matrix of its seductive energies are the libido and the id-the source of our most basic instincts, appetites and drives, the one that control hunger, sex and aggression. They compete with the higher nature for influence over the hero and the anti-hero, and they are the principle registers of all positive changes. The hallmark of heroes is personal sacrifice. They personify the positive unselfish side of the ego, and their journey reveals the upside of the passage. The main objective of antiheroes is the antisocial act. They

personify the negative selfish side of the ego, the side that has given the word 'ego' a bad name and their journey reveals the dark or down side of the cycle.

Villains became anti-heroes when the story is about them, when we see the process they undergo to become villains. That's the only difference. They are both motivated by the same lower-self impulses. Whereas the hero represents that part of us that recognizes problems and accepts responsibility, the anti-hero is the will to power and insatiable greed, the materialistic, power hungry, tyrannical side of our natures.

The goal of the hero is to liberate an entity like a family, a country or a galaxy from the tyranny and corruption that caused a state of misfortune and to create a new unified whole. The goal of the anti-hero is to take possession of any entity and redirect it toward goals that fulfill its own desire and needs, which is to accumulate, control and enjoy everything it needs to satisfy its insatiable craving for sense object, security, wealth and territory. In modern terms, we're talking money, sex and power, psychologically; these are the appetites and desires of the lower self taking possession of the conscious self.

III. Anti-Heroism in *The Stranger* and *The Dangling Man*

The old values concerning human existence ceased to operate. In the evaluation of new vision, regarding man and his existence, no one is whole, rather one passes over a number of cross-fertilizing influences. Thrown into an incoherent, disordered and chaotic universe in which individual destinies were obstructed and torn apart by the Second World War, people, especially the philosophers and literates, could not believe in old concepts like unity, rationality, morality, value, and even in Christianity. In *The Dangling Man*, Joseph, a twenty-seven year old Wisconsin graduate, has resigned from his job as a clerk at the Inter-American Travel Bureau. He feels estranged and alienated from the rest of existence. As months go by, he quarrels with nearly all his friends and relatives, lives off the earning of his faithful Iva, succumbs to fits of paranoia and anger engages in destructive sexual affair, despises his elderly neighbors and is hunted by death anxieties.

Critics support that the idea of absurdity and purposelessness of man emerged in literature with the publication of *The Myth of Sisyphus* in 1942. While writing preface to the very text Martin Esslin admits: "In one of the great seminal heart – searching of our time, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Camus tried to diagnose the human situation in a world of shattered beliefs" (23). They saw the world totally absurd, incoherent, disintegrated, disordered, and chance and contingency. This feeling of an existence without justification became the main proposition of the twentieth century. Ellmann and Feidelson note that Camus sees the affirmation of individual's worth only through the acceptance of absurdity, repudiating the illusion of hope and ultimate meaning which enables the individual to recognize the peculiar meaning of his very condition: "In a hopeless and meaningless state, the individual is liberated to make commitment but his liberation only affirms the continual revolt against absurdity like Sisyphus" (806). In *The Stranger*, Meursault, the narrator

appears in ridiculous manner. His very first statement, “Man died today. Or yesterday maybe, I don’t know” (3) perplexes the readers that they can very easily guess Meursault, the character, as an anti hero. Joseph Mc Bride writes, “*The Stranger* deals not only with the absurd but with authenticity, the second major theme of Camus' philosophy” (3). Meursault is a young clerk at an export- import office in Algiers. Though he is dutiful and loyal to the boss and the office, his condition is getting worse day by day. He has left his mother as the village where she has been declared dead at the home. Meursault's absurdity can be observed when she has been declared dead at the home. When he comes home but shows no interest to see the dead body of his mother. His absurd feelings can be traced in the following lines:

The caretaker stuttered a little. 'We put the cover on, but I'm supposed to unscrew the casket so you can see her'. He was moving toward the casket when I stopped him. He said, 'You don't want to? I answered, 'No'. [. . .] He looked at me and then asked, why not? But without criticizing, as if he just wanted know. I said, 'I don't know'. (6)

Even in the question of love and marriage with Marie, his mistress, he responds in a perplexing and mysterious way. He goes towards the beach on the very next day of his mother's funeral, visits the former typist at his office, Marie Cardona by chance and swims with her forgetting everything about his past life, even the mother's funeral. Their bond strengthened to the extent that they almost became husband and wife because beside this, traditionally, there is no alternative. In a same way Joseph, the protagonist of the novel *Dangling Man*, is alone. He finds one alone even among the relatives. He says, “I am just that I man alone . . . in a single room” (10). Generally alienation occurs when an individual can't integrate into a social structure and custom. Joseph suffers from a feeling

of strangeness. He does not find any social structure and customs. He sees only open sky lying under a cloud. Sky is a roof and earth is a home for him. His older self says:

But for all that, Joseph suffers from a feeling of strangeness of not quite belonging to the world, of lying under and looking up at it. Now, he says, all human beings share this to some extent. The child feels that his parents are presenters; his real father is elsewhere and will some day come to claim him. And for other the real world is not here at all that is at hand is spurious and copied. Joseph's feeling of strangeness sometimes takes the form almost of a conspiracy not a conspiracy of evil, but one which contains the diversified splendors, the shifts, excitements, and also the common, neutral matter of an existence. (30)

Joseph's alienation bears the constant notion of having the feeling of a stranger or an outsider. Alienation generally means turning away or keeping away from associates or former friends. It is often used to name an individual's feeling of alienation toward society, nature, other people or himself. So it is the deviation of normal life. As the existentialist says all of our personal human relationship is poisoned by feelings of alienation from any 'other'. Alienation and hostility arise within the family between parents and children between husband and wife, between friends and relatives. Alienation affects all social and work relations and most cruelly, alienation dominates the relationship of love. Alienation is a theme which Hegel started for the modern world on many levels and in many subtle forms. The alienation that exists in society reflects upon the alienation of individual human beings who look for his own desires in estrangement from the actual institutions working of their society. Alienated from the social systems, they don't know that their desires are system determined and system determining. Joseph does not find the real world. What is at

hand is only copied. Joseph says that to some extent all human beings share a feeling of strangeness to the view of the existential man, even his parents are pretenders and he feels that his real father is elsewhere.

Meursault is utterly meaningless and worthless. For him, the killing of the Arab was “neither a sin nor a crime”. It seems that he equates life with death. If life is meaningless and absurd, killing is also the same. So, it is neither sin, nor a crime, just a meaningless etc. For Camus and for Meursault too, it is death which renders human existence meaningless. In his view, “first death must be annihilation. There is no god and therefore no possibility of immortality with him” (McBride 13). Meursault has been presented as an absurdist hero not only because his life is meaningless, rather it lacks a particular kind of meaning. For Meursault, “there is always the alternative; either annihilating death or something similar to the Christian heaven” (14). Suffering is only the rewards of life. No redemption is at hand. In this empty world the possible way of authentic living is to create one’s own image though right choice among many choices.

Human choice is subjective because individuals family must make their own choices without help form such external standard as laws, ethical rules, or traditions. As they are free, they are completely responsible too. In similar way, Joseph is also free to choose or not to choose. He denies the social norms and refuse to participate charismas dinner. He says: “I have two invitations to charismas dinner, one from the Almstads and another from my brother Amos. I am refusing both” (31). Since we make choices, we create meaning ourselves. Joseph is very much curious to know about himself. He searches a grace or purpose. But politics, city life, human relations do no give him support. When he does not get any good response form these aspects, then he becomes isolated character. He is just dangling not longer of ordinary world gives him a special character. He looses

his sense of himself. He suffers from the feelings of strangeness because his position is marginal in this world. He sees the world outside as hostile world. So he keeps himself within his own private rooms. Meursault also does not have desires aspirations, liking, and hatred and so on at this stage. He does not oppose others' proposal. He just accepts without caring about the future not for his own benefit but for other. Here whatever Marie proposes he goes on accepting to places her. In the same manner he replies to her from the prison too, “she shouted again, ‘you’ll get out and we’ll get married!’ I answered, ‘You think so?’ but it was mainly just to say something” (75). He doesn't show any interest even for his job promotion when he states:

Just then, my employer sent for me. [...] he wanted to discuss a project he had in view, [...] he was open a branch in Paris. [...] and he wanted to know if I'd like a post there. I said yes but that really it was all the same to me. He then asked in a “change of life”, as he called it, didn't appeal to me, and I answered that are never changed one's real life. Anyhow, one life was as good as another and that I wasn't dissatisfied with mine here at all. (41)

Camus sees utter meaninglessness even in the machinery of justice and law courts. He sees court hearings and verdicts as meaningless and corrupt. Meursault shows no interest in this matter also. Right after the murder of the Arab by him, Meursault has been arrested and presented to the court. He was asked by the examining magistrate if he had an attorney. He further mentions, “I admitted I hadn't and inquired whether it was really necessary to have one. ‘why do you ask?’ he said. I said I thought my case was pretty simple” (63). For Meursault, even a murder case is pretty simple. He doesn't have any motive of profit or loss. He sees the court full of “big flies”, which means “corrupt lawyers and judges”. Similarly, *Dangling Man* (1944), Bellow's first novel, is written in the personal voice of

protagonist whose principal domain is his own sensibility, and whose principal audience is himself. The text is striking in its exclusion of the female voice. It includes the homo-social male world.

The protagonist Joseph is would be writer and intellectual. He believes that intellectual and enlightenment can be attained by isolating himself within the confines of a room in cheap New York boarding house. Joseph, appears without surname and without even an identifying initial is keeping a journal while waiting for the military bureaucracy to approve his induction into the war time army. In the end, inevitably there is an explosion. When his landlord turns off his heat and electricity, the affronted Joseph beats him up. Joseph is saying in effect, “I beat you therefore you know I am, therefore I am” (59). At last Joseph enlists perhaps the war could teach me, by violence, what I had been unable to learn during that month in the room. Welcoming his submission to hard rule of a mass life confronting mass death, Joseph celebrates with ironic zest. . . “Long live regimentation!” At least wearisome dangling days are over for Joseph. Absurdity and meaningless, in Albert Camus’ writings, namely *The Stranger*, have no meaning in isolation. They have implications for the authentic being of the human world.

Modern man, especially after the break out of the Second World War, has been cast down on a deserted land. He has been abandoned and rejected not only from mankind in general, but also from his nearest and dearest ones. Almost all the writers who wrote in the existentialist trend focused more on this aspect. Albert Camus in *The Myth of Sisyphus* writes:

[...] in a universe suddenly divested of illusions and lights, man feels an alien, a stranger. His exile is without remedy since he is deprived of the memory of a lost home or the hope of Promised Land. This divorce between

man and his life, the actor and his setting, is properly the feeling of absurdity. (13)

There is direct connection between feelings of absurdity, consequence of alienation, and the longing for death. Meursault, the hero of *The Stranger*, is no more than the title suggests. Throughout the novel he has been presented as an alien, disillusioned, disinterested, irrational and ridiculous character. He is a clerk in Algiers where he has been living leaving his only mother at the home in the village. It was later clear that he left his mother alone because he was unable to take care of her. His salary was hardly enough only for himself. During the time of his mother's death too he received no sympathy from the boss. Even a two days' leave is high for him. We can imagine that because of such a view of society he is not ready to express or tell anything explicitly to anyone. Camus' words, "this very heart which is mine will forever remain indefinable to me. [. . .] Forever I shall be a stranger to myself" (24) in *The Myth of Sisyphus* are in parallel with the lines spoken by Meursault. Those people attending during the hearing procedures made him happy in the beginning, but later on he realized that they were there just to see him, and to be excited about seeing the ridiculous and annoying treatment of the criminal, Meursault at the law court.

The people in the law court were waving and exchanging and taking as members of the same club or a family. Among them Meursault found himself alone as a stranger, alienated and cast off person. The examining magistrate and the lawyers, except his hired one, were not friendly to him. They were not supporting him. Any how they intended to prove him culprit and a real criminal. He had been arrested in the case of murdering an Arab but he had been asked different unrelated and unnecessary questions about his childhood, love affairs, marriage, mother's death and his escape from his mother. He has

also been forced to repent for his past activities. His inner sentiment the court understands properly. Camus calls “this world is absurd and unreasonable” (*The Myth of Sisyphus* 26). At one moment Meursault recalls his alienated and lonely condition by comparing himself with the empty cab. He speaks, “The streetcars, packed a few minutes before, were almost empty” (22). Here the streetcar’s fulfillment earlier is parallel to his past life. Meursault mostly hates Sundays. On this day he really feels like an alien, discarded and worthless being in the world.

Only Marie’s infrequent visits make his Sundays meaningful but partially. He sees all happy except himself. It is obvious that Meursault here compares his estranged and alienated condition with that of the people he sees on the street through his windows. He seems more envious of them that they are with their friends, relatives and partners, but Meursault has been cast off alone in a narrow room. He has nowhere to go because he has nobody to go with. He is doubtless eager to defend himself, but he doesn't know why. The lawyers find his case difficult. Meanwhile he does not neglect to love, to eat, or to read his paper. Then he is judged. But the courtroom is very dark. He doesn't understand much. He merely assumes that he is condemned, but to what, he barely wonders. At times he suspects just the same and he continues living.

Like Meursault, Joseph has always been aloof. Christmas is spoiled by his selfishness. He rejects good and denies the Christmas party organized by his brother. So, Joseph tries to think his way clear. He asks questions about his self. He gradually narrows the quest of self from common humanity to single good life to self-knowledge. He has affected himself from the cycle of nature and the cycle of human life. He lives in a vacuum. His quest is the common human quest.

The anti-hero is not governed by the laws that the society has formulated. He has to create his own existence without taking care of institutional rules. For him the world lacks any inherent truth and no standard to judge human actions is absolute and truth, world is engulfed by injustice, corruption, suppression and oppression. Even if it may require risk of life, one can protest against social system to affirm existence. Alienated and frustrated with society and god, modern man has become impotent. He can do nothing to better his condition, so Camus in *The Myth of Sisyphus* writes, “there is no sun without shadow, and it is essential to know the night. The absurd man says ‘yes’ and his effort will hence forth be enchaining” (110). For him if there is personal fate, there is no higher destiny. Meursault, the modern Sisyphusian tragic hero, is consumed by a feeling of purposelessness, not believing even in the legal procedure:

‘Do you know what this is?’ in a completely different and cracked voice the examining magistrate shouted showing a silver crucifix. ‘Yes of course. I said. Speaking very quickly and passionately, he told me that he believed in god, that it was his conviction that no man was so guilty that god would not forgive him, but in order for that to happen a man must repent and so doing become like a child whose heart is open and ready to embrace all. [. . .] . At the same time I knew that was ridiculous because, after all, I was the criminal. (68)

The tragic heroes of the Greek stories had a hope of avenging their rivals till the end. They were assisted by god. The tragic writers affirmed the greatness of human spirit. No break of moral law went unpunished and every action was to be paid for. But in the modern sense, no pattern of justice triumphs, no moral laws work there. Even the court of justice is corrupted by the “big flies” as Meursault says in the stranger, as Joseph K. says “petticoat

–hunters” in the trail. The will to live and the love of life are slowly crushed by the unknown force of the court whose proceedings Meursault equates with the meaninglessness of his own trial:

I was about to tell him he was wrong to dwell on it, because it really didn't matter. But he cut me off and urged me one last time, I . . . I if I believed in god. I said no. He sat down indignantly. He said it was impossible; all men believe in god, even those who turn their backs on you want my life to be meaningless? he shouted. [. . .] His life would become meaningless. “Do you want my life be meaningless?” he shouted. [. . .] “I am a Christian. I ask him to forgive your sins. How can you not believe that he suffered for you?” (69)

Meursault, the anti-hero, seems from the very beginning to have lost his struggle. His existence is meaningless only in the sense that he opposes the traditional propositions like Christianity, Bible, redemption, surrender, god and faith. Like Sisyphus, Meursault is a rebel in the alarmingly insecure and incoherent world. He exists therefore he rebels. Rebellion is only the mark of his life, nothing beyond it. Likewise, Joseph confines himself within the six-sided box. Being unemployed he has lost his sense and security in the society like other young man of his generations, Joseph dangles because he is denied context; he is I-A, unemployed and unemployable waiting to be drafted into the Second World War.

As Nietzsche claimed the death of god and went on to reject the entire Judo-Christian moral traditional in favor of a heroic pagan ideal, in a similar way, even Joseph in the novel *Dangling Man* denies God. Here Joseph's own statement will be more relevant:

But what a miserable surrender that would be born out of disheartenment and chaos; and out of fear, bodily and imperious, that like disease asked for remedy and did not care how it was supplied. The record came to an end; I began it again. No. not god, not any divinity. (68)

Joseph Does not have faith in God. He says the world is full of mystery and chaos. He also turns away from his family and friends, thus rejecting another source of purposive and cohesive living. Joseph urges in this way:

My brother Amos, who is my senior by twelve years, is wealthy man . . . The family is very proud of him, and he, in turn, has been a reliable son, very much alive to his duties. Toward me he took a protective attitude at first, but he soon gave up, confessing that he did not know what I was after. He was hurt when I became a radical, relieved when he assumed himself I was one no longer. He was disappointed when I married Iva. His Wife dolly, had a rich father. He had urged me to follow his example and marry a wealthy women. (59)

Joseph refuses the offer of his brother Amos to help him out of his difficulties and does not feel impelled to renew contacts with his friends. Instead of keeping contacts with his friends and brother, he becomes more radical. His brother is very reliable son of the family. The family is also very proud of him. He is alive to his duties. But Joseph does not agree with it and can't be the example of the family like Amos. Just he gives hurt to his family. So Amos is totally disappointed with him as he becomes more radical.

In the same vein, Camus makes Meursault feel like a new passenger on a public vehicle where every one looks at him and tries to annoy and ridicule him as if there is something the matter with him. Meursault says that he had nothing funny or to be annoyed,

rather he was a culprit and the case was a serious crime. He himself speaks “there isn’t much difference between a new passenger on a public vehicle and myself in the court it was idea that came to me” (83). Here Meursault quotes the prosecutor’s saying in his own words:

He concluded by saying that his duty was a painful one but that he would carry it out resolutely. He stated that I had no place in a society whose most fundamental rules I ignored and could not appeal to the same human heart whose elementary response I knew nothing of. “I ask you for this man’s head”, he said, “and I do so with a heart at ease. [. . .]”. (102)

The verdict which is given by the court over the case of Meursault is meaningless. There is no chance for reformation and improvement. Only they can carry out death penalty. Nobody is in favor of Meursault and against death penalty except his lawyer. That is why in the end of the novel while talking to the chaplain Meursault speaks, “All I care about right now is escaping the machinery of justice, seeing if there is any way out of the inevitable” (108). At the home where his mother’s dead body has been kept, there too Meursault is treated as an outsider. He has not been given right to see his mother’s dead body directly. He has to wait for along time for the director’s permission. He knows nothing about his own mother’s funeral procession plan that the son, Meursault has been informed and invited there only for formality. Throughout the funeral ceremony many other people, especially Thomas Perez, his mother’s fiancé and one of her friends, weep but Meursault expresses no sadness. He is totally indifferent.

Similarly, for Joseph, what is true and what is false, what is right and what is wrong that depends on the Joseph's decision and thought. When for him, traditional values do not work, they can't govern the individual. If the value attempt to govern him, it is necessary

that he should protest. Commenting on this issue, Jostein Gaarder remarks in *Sophie's World*, “He thus sets the individual, or each and every man, up against the system” (379). For Gaarder, one should protest against the prevailing system and affirm existence. Bellow presents the protagonist who does not believe in social norms and values. Joseph takes his own decision so that he says, “I don't like what we are governed by I do not think about it” (83). Thus, Joseph does protest against the prevailing system to affirm his existence. In Greek tragedies, the protagonist faced the tragic end due to their own wrong doings. But in the modern scene, there is no such hamartia in character; rather the mysterious world itself is responsible for it. Camus' world reveals no glimpse of relief.

The feeling of dread is caused not because he has violated the laws of god, but because of the meaninglessness of the world. He properly knows the helplessness of his condition. He asserts his existence. Meursault, like Sisyphus, dares to revolt against the so called providence because he properly knows the helplessness of his condition. He acknowledges his guilt from the beginning but the feeling acts as a form of stimulant to revolt against the absurdity. The crisis teaches him the acceptance of his own reality, “there is no cure of dread, no god comes to help” said Meursault. He perpetually strives to justify the authentic. Individuality, freedom of mankind but at the end he is punished unjustly. Joseph also feels estranged and alienated from the rest of existence. He commits ex-friends do not recognize him. His moneyed brother Amos keeps pressing him for help. His married life with Iva has also quite cooled off. Goodness, love and harmony can be achieved in company but he is alienated:

Through those arts of imagination he is connected with the best part of mankind . . . He has a community. I have this six-sided box. And goodness is achieved not in vacuum, but in the company of other men, attended by

love. I, in this room, separate, alienated distrustful find in my purpose not an open world, but a closed. Hopeless jail. (91-92)

Joseph's day-to-day encounter with relative and friends and even with total strangers force on him the recognition that he too is earthy and common vulnerable to anger, suspicions and humiliation, often an object of pity. His maid servant arrogantly smokes in his presence which makes him feel that he is of no consequence. He flares up when an old communist acquaintance deliberately ignores him in a restaurant. He quarrels with his wife, when she asks him to cash her paycheck and suspects that she is making him run errands because she supports him. Accused by his niece Etta of attempting assault on her person, Joseph is struck by her facial resemblance to him and recalls with discomfiture that the mother of a boyhood friend had once called him Mephistopheles. Albert Camus evokes the modern man's condition as the perpetual trial and victim of injustice and irrationality. In this world engulfed by alienation, fragmentation, disillusionment, disintegration, frustration and the sense of absurdity and estrangement man is guilty by birth and the meaninglessness is the meaning of life. That is why only through the perspective of existential philosophy, this disintegrated and fragmented world, and the alienated and estranged man like 'Meursault' can best be studied .

Suffering is only the reward of life. No redemption is at hand because "God is dead". In this empty world the possible way of authentic living is to create god in one's own image through right choices among many choice. A murderer but innocent individual, Meursault, is put on trial" (Camus 96) and killing an Arab thereafter. The sudden verdict of 'execution' of the end is the reward of his life. His bright rights of individual freedom and to choose a free life are thwarted by the judicial authority, which instead, should provide justice to him. As Camus believes that human being is an isolated existent in an alien

universe, his famous *The Stranger* (1960) concentrates on the alienation of human being in the midst of silent universe. The universe does not possess any inherent truth, value or meaning. And it is absurd to seek meaning in this universe. We are simply keeping the illusion that the universe has a meaning. But there is nothingness in the world. So he states in the *Myth of Sisyphus*, “in a universe that is suddenly deprived of illusion and of light, man feels a stranger. He is an irremediable . . . This divides between man and his life, the actor and his setting, truly constitutes the feeling of absurdity” (68). In the same way, Bellow presents an isolated existent in an alien universe. Joseph's sense of guilt haunts him like an idiot ghost, forcing him to assume responsibility for sins not his own. Jeff Forman, a classmate of Joseph's whose plane was shot down in combat, provides Joseph with an objective occasion to accommodate his guilt.

By not participating, by not risking his life, Joseph had let others die for him. A self-conscious Dostoevskin, Joseph wants to enter the war, not to kill but be killed, to be purged of his guilt. Unable to bear the terrible responsibility of his nominal freedom, he gives himself up to the army, seeking redemption perhaps through death, seeking escape from the consciousness of his guilt through mindless action. Joseph writes: "Long live regimentation!" on this high-pitched irony, the novel ends. The post war writers wrote about the crisis of existence and human beings' perpetual sufferings, Albert Camus wrote and advocated more than that, “Almost all writing dealt with human suffering in living” (33). Concerning his suffering and the irrationality of the world, Meursault, “wanted to crush himself the mud, to re- enter the earth by immersing himself in that day, to stand in that limitless plain covered with dirt” (57).

In *The Stranger*, Meursault, the main character, murders and is condemned to death; and in some way, all of Camus ' heroes and heroines suffer or watch others suffer a

similar fate", Carl A. Viggiani writes the Camus world lacks justice, therefore ,it is tragic. Where there is no justice or compensation there is tragedy. Entangled in his own paradox, Meursault is engaged in perpetual trail of the mysterious force, which is represented by the law court. He confronts a meaningless world which, instead of giving proper and realistic replies to the questions he raises. Goes on creating new kind of bewilderment in him, that he wants to avoid every step. He wants fair solution to adverse situation when he speaks about the chaplain's pride, "what would it matter if he were accused of murder and executed because he didn't cry at his mother's funeral?" (121).

Joseph is alienated character who bears the constant notion of having the feeling of stranger or an outsider. This sense of alienation laid stress on the relationship between husbands and wife and friends and relatives. Thus Josephs is alone even among friends and relatives. Bellow portrays twentieth-century life as divisive and fragmented. Its celebrants claim that the fragmentation and disorder are finally too great to overcome. Bellow shows the ugly picture of the break down of society, mass culture and the senselessness and splintering of individual consciousness. People have lost their faith in 'man' and can only portray him as an important victim of overwhelming forces which are beyond his ability to comprehend or control.

Meursault is a lonely figure, - alone all alone, alone in the wide sea of life. Truly; he is a stranger, an outsider, an exile. He has no promised land; he has no fundamental rights and freedom. He is divorced from life and purpose. He recognizes the short comings of reason, rational systems of thought, in describing its real meaning. Thus he comes to feel isolated, alienated and estranged. The only reality is his own individuality when he says, " I would end up telling myself that the most rational thing was not to hold myself back" (113) and "Nothing, nothing mattered, and knew why" (121). The only certainly is

his own freedom. As *Waiting for Godot* and *The Myth of Sisyphus*, *The Stranger* is the parable of modern man's existence. Its hero Meursault is faced with a world in which he can no longer rely on the traditional "Props" to his existence; society is non-existent; brotherhood is meaningless; and religion brings no fulfillment. And so he does that entire he can.

The futility of human effort in incoherent world is felt from the very beginning of the novel such as the boss's indifference to grant him for a short leave, the director's permission to see even his mother's dead body, his and the lawyer's strives against the verdict in the courtroom and so on. Before the people attending the law court, Meursault finds himself as a new comer on a vehicle. He thinks this idea as funny that the attendants were not looking serious but funny. Over a matter or case of crime or murder, they had not to be so. Meursault further explains:

I sat down with the policeman standing on either side of me. It was then that I noticed a row of faces in front of me. They were all looking at me. I realized that they were the jury. [. . .] I had just one impression: I was sitting across from a row of seats on a street car and all these anonymous passengers were looking over the new arrival to see if they could find something funny about him. I knew it was a silly idea since it wasn't anything fully they were after but a crime. There isn't much difference though- in any case that was the idea that came to me. (83)

For Meursault, and for Camus, the state institutions stand as offensive and tortuous. Therefore is no sympathy and consolation for prisoners, or the culprits, or the criminals. Meursault goes on exploring his own possibilities. At heart, he has a realization of guilt in him, but outwardly he is not ready to surrender before so called judiciary because it is full

of corruption, perversion and false refinement. Though he has killed man, an Arab, in a subconscious condition, or in his own words “because of the sun”, he feels inwardly guilty. This feeling continuously provokes existential crisis. He is in request to be, to exist as an authentic continuously provokes existential crisis. He is a quest to be to exist as an authentic existent i.e. human being. He tries to create his true self by the will and efforts of his own.

Thus, we find that Meursault is trying to be authentic all the time acting in his own conscience instead of working as an object or an instrument. For him conscience is the own conscience instead of working as an object or an instrument. Joseph has even to meet with his acquaintances. He feels that they will express surprise at seeing at him and ask question. He says: "I am always afraid of running into an acquaintance who will express surprise at seeing me and ask questions" (14). Even he has the habit of changing restaurant regularly, he does not want to be familiar with sandwich men, waitresses, and cashiers. He says: “I have fallen into the habit of changing restaurants regularly. I don't want become too familiar a sight in any of them. Friendly with sandwich men, [. . .] and cashiers and compelled to invest his for their benefit” (14).

Bellow's hero Joseph is doomed to bear because the supporting structures of family and religion are no longer available to him. He has no option except to submit to the implacable judgments of his lost family and religious traditions. He is alone and fragmented because there is no other place for him. He is in the quest, for existence as an authentic being. He tries to create his true self by the will and efforts of his own. His concept of choice and freedom is concerned more with inner reality of the hero. His hero is more subjective, thoughtful and alienated. Whether his inner heart suggests, his character just does it.

Life is frustration and disaster. It means open feelings. It means love for oneself and for fellow human beings. This is Bellow's message which his hero conveys in his novel. Soren Kierkegaard writes, "the choice itself is decisive for the content of personality, through the choice the personality immerses itself in the thing chosen, and when it does not choose it withers its way in consumption" (Ellmann 829). Kierkegaard is of the opinion that "men can not create but choose himself" (823). Joseph in *Dangling Man* from the very beginning to the end is apparently seen as indulging in choice as said by Sartre, "What we choose is always better; and nothing can be better for us unless it is better for all" (835). Joseph has resigned his job at the inter-American Travel Bureau to answer the Army's call for induction. He says that he took such decision himself. It is his own choice. Here, Joseph's own words can be more relevant to clarify his choice. He says:

Nearly seven months have gone by since I resigned my job at the inter-American travel bureau to answer the Army's call for induction I am still waiting. It is a trivial seeming thing, a sort of bureaucratic comedy trimmed out in red tape. At first, I took the attitude toward it myself. (10)

First we exist, and then create essence ourselves. We are what we make ourselves to be in that sense we are in the state of becoming not in the state of being. We don't know what we become after all because we are constantly choosing and creating ourselves. It is not possible for us to be without choice. Even when we are not choosing, we are still choosing. In this context, MacIntyre says, "Even if I do not choose, I have chosen not to choose" (149). Since we make choices, we create meaning ourselves. Below also supports the choice and freedom. He says that the enjoyment and happiness depend upon our choice and interest.

To make out life as heaven or hell, it depends on our choice and responsibility. All our comforts depend upon the occurrence of external phenomena. It is our duty to confront with external phenomena and make our life meaningful. Meursault is in abnormal condition whereas Marie is normal. She has traditional, cultural and social realities within which she has been bound and she also wanted to bind Meursault with the same string. But the situation is not the same for these two characters. In Joseph McBride's view many passages in the novel can only be understood in terms of truth of being. They express, in other words, *the truth*; mainly that human existence is meaningless. The fifth chapter in part II is remarkable in this respect, for the good understanding of the novel, which centers on the hero's belief that death, the great leveler, is, in fact, the focal point of life's absurdity. McBride further admits, "Meursault's aim, in confronting the chaplain, is to tell him not merely how he feels about his life, but he thinks about his existence. And the meeting of the hero with the priest underlines Meursault's absurdity" (12). He says, "The tradition of what may be called humiliated thought has never caused to exist. The criticism of irrationality has been made so often that it seems unnecessary to begin" (27). Camus, in this context, writes:

Heidegger considered the human condition coldly and announces that existence is humiliated. The only reality is 'anxiety' in the whole chain of beings. To the man lost in the world and its diversions this anxiety is a brief, fleeting fear. (*The Myth of Sisyphus* 28)

Inevitably, Joseph appears to be moving toward the act of cutting himself off from life. It is not usual that he rejects his brother's help. Almost all of Bellow's novels contain such family circumstances. Even in *Dangling Man* the two brothers are divergently clashing each other and trying to reach across their difference to each other. Joseph says, "Several

times he has sent me checks for large amount, which I returned immediately” (60). It is a bit like Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground* and somewhat like Kafka's study of the self-debasing person who frightened stared out at the world.

In a few details as well it resembles Jean Paul Sartre's *Nausea*; both Bellow's and Sartre's heroes seek to cut themselves off from the past and to find an area in which self choice may become effective. Since, Joseph's consciousness is central to the novel, all else being peripheral; a valid approach to the theme can be made through an analysis of his view of himself. To himself, Joseph is the 'I'; the participant is experience and the source of contemplation, as well as the he, an object to be discussed and commented upon. This ability to view himself as a separate entity is both liberation and limiting in its range: it brings into perspective not only the two planes on which Joseph lives, but also the crippling inability of the viewer in him to remedy the sickness from which the viewed suffers. Saul Bellow presents the modern man's condition as the victim of injustice and irrationally. This vast world is engulfed by alienation, fragmentation, disillusionment and absurdity. The estranged man is guilty by birth.

Meaninglessness is the meaning of life. That is why the perspective of existential philosophy, this disintegrated and fragmented world, and the alienated and estranged man like Joseph, can best be studied. Suffering is only reward of life. No redemption is at hand because God is dead. There is not any divinity. In this empty world the possible way of authentic being is to create god any divinity. His protagonist, Joseph quotes the line of Goethe's poetry and life and says:

All comfort in life is based upon a regular occurrence of eternal phenomena.
The changes of day and night, of the reasons, of flowers and fruits, and all other recurring pleasures that come to us, that we may and should enjoy

them-these are the mainsprings of our earthly life. The more open we are to these enjoyments, the happier we are but if these changing phenomena unfold themselves and we take no interest in them . . . we regard life as loathsome burden. (18)

Joseph's consciousness is central issue of the novel *Dangling Man*. As in existentialism, the question of identity is central: basically, who am I? Sartre though that is my relation to the social and physical world. There seems to be something problematic in the relationship between individual and community as conceived in Sartre's existentialism. In existential process, life is useful, but when executed the death becomes more useful. Meursault was never attracted by the ready made happiness of the others; rather he accepted his own bitter reality. His refusal to see his mother's dead body, to hire a lawyer and to accept the proposal put by the court magistrate and chaplain are some of the example of his attempt to live the life of complete freedom. Meursault gives up all magnificence because he sees nothing worthwhile on the earth.

Meursault like Sisyphus in the legend, and Joseph K. in Kafka's *The Trial*, can do nothing to better his condition even if he wills. That reveals the absurdity of existence. Joseph commits act of violence one after another. The outer world represented by the war and its degenerative ramification. Joseph's profiteering brother Amos, his feeble-minded exhibitionist neighbor Vankers his cold-blooded intellectual friend Abt-has become sterile and brutal, brutalizing Joseph in its image.

Joseph aimless rages, through directed at particular objects, are really, Bellow indicates, aimed at himself. When his identify is denied, he asserts is by striking out in rage at the man who has ignored him. When a communist who know Joseph when he was in the party refuses to recognize him in a restaurant, Joseph confronts the man and makes a

public scene. When his landlord turns off his heat and electricity, the affronted Joseph beats him and Joseph is saying in effect, beat you, therefore you know I am therefore I am. In a finally rendered scene, Etta, who like her successful parents, identifies poverty with unimportance treats Joseph rudely refusing to let him listen to Haydn on her phonograph because she wants to hear Cugot. That she strongly resembles Joseph suggests that, in spanking her Joseph is beating what he finds detestable in himself, or rather (like Eventual with Albee), is beating the objectification of himself. Etta succeeds in further victimizing Joseph by letting her parents infer that Joseph's attack was sexual.

Joseph, victimized further by his own free floating sense of guilt is unable to deny it. When some one does not find his value or existence in the society, he tries to establish it by action. Bellow supports the idea that self realization of the individual comes when he takes full responsibility for his life like other existential philosophers. Most of the existentialists have insisted that personal experience and acting on one's own conviction are essential to the truth. Since Joseph's consciousness is central to the novel all else being peripheral, a valid approach to the theme can be made through an analysis of his view of himself. To himself, Joseph is I, the participant in experience and the source of contemplation as well the he, an object to be discussed and commented upon.

For Sartre, as well as for Camus, existentialism leaves to man a “possibility of choice” (Sartre 12). For them god is a costly hypothesis which never exists. Meursault, too, has same opinion that he doesn't concern with god and his existence. Meursault's view in the novel is similar to Sartre's *Existentialism and Human Emotions* “man is nothing else but what he makes of himself” (15). Meursault is sure only in his individuality and subjectivity. He opposes crowd which always misguides an individual as Kierkegaard declared in his *Individual and Crowd*.

As the existentialists show a fundamental existence of man unlike other beings, Meursault has nothing to consider about, but he all the time worries about himself and consequently the whole humanity. Joseph is the protagonist of Bellow's *Dangling Man*. His choice is subjective because individuals finally make their own choices without help from such external standard as laws, ethical rules, or traditions. What is true and what is false, what is right and what is wrong, that depends on the Joseph's decision and thought, then for him traditional values do not work. He takes his own decision and he is not governed by any social norms and values. So Joseph does protest against the prevailing system to affirm his existence. In this empty world the possible way of authentic being is to create god in one's own image through right choice among many choices.

The concept of anti-hero is related to the term alienation and absurdity and the self which is alienated from the world and from itself. This hero feels that the world itself is not brought into being through the grand design of the God but it come forth as utterly alien. This experience, basis to existential thought, contrasts most sharply with the ancient notion of a cosmos in which human beings have a well- ordered place, and it connects existential thought to the modern experience of a meaningless universe. The familiar existential themes of anxiety, nothingness and the absurd must be understood in relation to the concept of anti- hero. At the same time, there is deep concern to foster an authentic stance toward the human values without which no project is possible, a concern that gets expressed in the notion of engagement and commitment.

As a predicate of existence, the concept of freedom is not initially established on the basis of arguments against determinism self- consciousness. The evidence of freedom is a matter neither of theoretical nor of practical self-consciousness. The evidence of

freedom is a matter neither of theoretical nor of practical consciousness but arises from the self-understanding that accompanies a certain mood that is called anxiety or angst.

Both Camus and Bellow believe that phenomenological analysis of the kind of intentionality that belong to moods does not merely register a passing modification of the psyche but reveals fundamental aspects of the self. Fear, for instance, reveals some regions of the world as threatening, some element in it has a threat, in anxiety, as in fear, it grasps anti- hero as threatened, as vulnerable. The experience of anxiety fields the existential theme of the absurd, a version of what was previously introduced as alienation from the world.

IV. Conclusion

Meursault in *The Stranger* presents life as ruled by chance, contingency and unreason and interprets man as the helpless victim of the blows of evil. His chance of getting justices is no greater than Vladimir and Estragon's chance of encountering 'Goddot' in *Waiting for Goddot*. Abandoning all the uncanny inspirations Meursault is driven to search out the limits of being until he discovers that death is only the ultimate reality of mortals. He struggles in order to ensure his triumph of life, as did Sisyphus, though he overcomes at the end by the machinery of justices. He accepts his death as the sacrifice in order to defend the human effort on the way to freedom. His struggle is meaningless which cannot be justified. It is the measure and identity of his existence.

Likewise, Joseph in *The Dangling Man* is also a lonely figure. He finds himself alone even among the relatives. He suffers from a feeling of strangeness. Truly, he is a stranger, an outsider or an exile. He has no promised land; he has no fundamental rights and freedom. He gets divorced from his life and purpose. He sees only open cosmos lying under a cloud. Society is non-existent. Brotherhood is meaningless. Religion brings no fulfillment. So, whatever Joseph does is his absolute and intentionally done. The futility of human effort in incoherent world is felt from the very beginning of the novel such as his communist ex-friend does not recognize him, his moneyed brother Amos who keeps pressing his help on him thinks that he has wasted his life, his married life with Iva, has also quite cooled off and so on.

Anti-hero seems from the beginning to have lost his struggle, the monotony of completely futile events, which offers no hope, creates a condition which in fact becomes a means to understand life better. Joseph explores the possibility of existence even in the world devoid of meaning. His existence is meaningful only in the sense that he opposes the

traditional propositions like that of Christianity. Like Sisyphus, Joseph does protest in the alarmingly insecure and incoherent world. 'Existence precedes essence' as Sartre says, is true to Joseph. He first believes in existence, and makes the essence thereafter. He exists therefore he protests. Denial is only the mark of his life, nothing beyond it. For Sartre, as well as for Bellow, existentialism leaves to man a possibility of choice. For them God is costly hypothesis which never exists. Joseph, too, has same opinion that he doesn't concern with God. To define our identity we are free so we all bear the responsibility to find the answer to his existential riddle. Joseph keeps in his mind the vital existential question and searches for the value of individual freedom, the meaning of moral responsibility, and the demands of social contract. *Dangling Man* is about confrontation with these questions during the period of waiting which follows his resignation from his job in the American Travel Bureau to respond to the Army's call for induction. He seeks the answer of this question by submitting himself to a painful trail of loneliness and self security, discovering that all possible avenues of escape into life status, ideology aestheticism, religions, family and friends-have been barred to him. Thought the mysterious force of absurd is ready to execute him, he is under no illusion. Imprisoned in the chaos, he accepts the finite limitation of human being. He knows that human endeavors are limited like that of flies and he will ultimately be defeated.

Non-actions are the major themes with the anti hero. The hero has concept of free choice, has no concern with moral and immoral things. Joseph commits an act of violence one after another. The outer world represented by the war and its degenerative ramifications-Joseph's profiteering brother Amos, his feeble minded exhibitionist neighbor Vanker, his cold-blooded intellectual friend Abt-has become sterile and brutal, brutalizing Joseph in its image. Joseph's aimless rage gets directed, when his identity is denied, he

asserts it by striking at the man who has ignored him. A communist who knew Joseph when he was in the party, refuses to recognize him in a restaurant, so Joseph confronts the man and makes the public scene. When his landlord turns off his heat and electricity, the affronted Joseph beats him to identify himself.

In the same vein, Meursault is deprived of the actual justices that are synonymous to modern predicament. In such a chaotic world he experience, he cannot cast off the veil of illusion to perpetuate life. Thus, Meursault finds himself torn between these two polarities. Man's temporal condition on the earth is just to live through revolting against the absurdity and irrationality. Revolt gives life its value. Because of the weariness of life's shortcoming, Meursault dose not afraid of death, but he dies unrecognized with absurdity.

The Stranger like *The Dangling Man* affirms no principle of moral or spiritual transcendence; rather it presents the unjustified and unrelieved sufferings of modern men. In spite of Meursaut's silent protest and his lawyer's forceful striving, the verdict is execution at the public square because he didn't believe in god. Therefore, like Joseph, the vision of an alien and contingent universe is a permanent and inescapable condition for him. For Camus, the prospect of death in life and the quest for meaning in life go side by side. From both sides there is no justification. In such an unjustifiable condition dying is a meaningless and absurd as the passion for living.

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