

Chapter 1

Camus and *The Outsider*

In the year 1913, the great literary artist, Albert Camus, was born in Algeria. At the very young age, he began his journey to discover the meaning of life and spent his entire life in contemplating the difficult questions of life. He continued to study literature and philosophy at the University of Algeria under his mentor, Jean Grenier. He is credited for his works which contributed to the rise of the philosophy of existentialism and absurdism.

Most importantly, he presented his views about the life of the absurd. He discussed about the absurd condition of man's existence almost in his all of his literary works. Master says that through his writings, Camus gives respect to human beings, he realizes the tragic nature of human's fate, and that his writing is intended to console people's that they will not be misled by any hopes of myths or deities (2-3).

Camus incorporates all his thoughts and struggles with the absurd not only into his journals, but also into the characters of novels and essays such as *The Stranger*, *The Plague* and *The Myth of Sisyphus*. All of his creations are the best literary creations of the century written in the philosophy of Absurd. Some of them are even translated in different languages as Camus has written in his own native language; French. One of the very renowned translated version of his novel is '*The Outsider*' by Sandra Smith. He chooses to write about the philosophy of the Absurd because he believed that, "for a thought to change the world, it must first change the life of the man who carries it. It must become an example" (126). Perceptually, he intends his novels to become successful examples of the Absurd so that, man could learn about the world and how to react to it just as he did throughout his life.

The Outsider depicts a young French Algerian in a populated town. At the

beginning of the novel, Meursault, the young man, experiences the death of his mother. He attends the funeral and meets Perez who is his mother's best friend in the elderly home. Meursault lives alone in a high-rise, but daily encounters his strange neighbours, Salomano and Raymond, over several hot summer days, he is befriended by Raymond, a neighbourhood pimp, who utilizes Meursault to escape the enmity of the Arab brothers of an Arab prostitute he recently beat-up. Unknowingly, Meursault becomes involved in heated battle between Raymond and the Arabs. While visiting some of Raymond's friends at their beach house, Meursault is attacked by the hostile Arabs. Under the influence of the sizzling hot sun, Meursault returns to the site of the ambush and is mesmerized into shooting the Arab brother, not one, but five times. He claims that sun's glint off of the Arab's knife and the pounding pressure of the sweltering sun causes him to fire the five shots. Meursault undergoes imprisonment after a trial in which Camus parodies the prosecutor. During the trial, his other friends testify for him: Coleste, the owner of his favourite café; Marie, his girlfriend of a few weeks; the doorkeeper from the elderly home; Raymond; Salomano; Perez; and Masson, the beach house owner. The novel concludes one year after Meursault's imprisonment, where he still awaits his execution-decapitation in the public square; nevertheless, he finally realizes what is important to him right before his death: happiness, the approach of death, and the realization that nothing exists, not even God, other than the simple pleasures in nature.

The novel explores the mental image of the Absurd, to demonstrate how man tried to find meaning in life. It motivates people to face Absurd through the medium of the protagonist's life. It also bound people to recognize our fate and reality.

The novel deals with Meursault journey of his attempt to get enlightenment on the meaning of life and its significance. In this regard, Kalu states, "Meursault moves

beyond the pale of conventional society to these conventions, in order to understand each sensation and moments of life" (120). As a non-believer on hypocrisy and pretension, Meursault represents himself as a man who wish to face the Absurd and contains a passion towards it. He does not even entertain feelings or ideas that most people enjoy. This protagonist subscribes wholly to the notion of the Absurd.

Meursault is an irrational, unintelligent child, a 'juvenile delinquent' (Girard, 531). In his view, he is indeed a derelict; he has no intellectual life, no love, no friendship, no interest in anyone or faith in anything. His life is limited to physical sensations and to cheap pleasures of modern mass culture.

Philip Thody calls this novel a very controlled piece of work in which each idea and event has a unique and independent existence of its own (114). *The Outsider* is the best example of highly dramatic novel that enhances the Absurd ideas and behaviours to provide people a mental image of the Absurd. It demonstrates the protagonist's motivation to face the Absurd and how human beings try to find meaning in life against the Absurd.

This research attempts to explore the absurdist aspect centered on the life and the journey of Meursault, the protagonist of the novel. It makes an attempt to emphasize man's freedom, a freedom where no good or bad choices can be made and also compels one to understand the value of self decision and determination. It brings forth the importance of 'confession' or 'self-analysis' out of the conventions and accusations. Meursault's instinct to better today with the indifference towards the universe and the implication of the principle system of absurdist motivates people to evaluate the significance of their life and its meanings.

The protagonist Meursault, a young French Algerian, with indifference attitude and moral ambiguity the life of his own freedom that will let him live with

great deal of cherish and contentment. But, in process of the same absurdist mission, he goes through million of lows, social hardships and sufferings. Despite being in that condition, he never regrets it and embraces warmly anyway. This attempt creates for the curiosity in the novel. Why does Meursault remains so that much indifferent to the world despite all his sufferings, social dislocation and isolation?

The major objective of this work is to spot and elaborate Meursault's absurdist living in the novel. The central point of this paper is centered on the life that Meursault is living and his indifferent nature to his life and the world. It also shows vividly how a man bravely faces the world of the Absurd.

Different critics have analyzed the novel, *The Outsider* from different perspectives since its publication. Some of the views regarding the absurdist approach of *The Outsider*, the ultimate quest to life and indifferent nature of the protagonist and the writer of the novel are mentioned in this section. On the same regard various intellectual and philosophers have given different perspectives to study this novel and its protagonist.

Regarding the absurdist approach in the life of Meursault, Adele King states, "Meursault is not the immoral monster that society says, but only a man who decided not to explain or discuss that which cannot describe clearly love, hate, any emotion" (50). As an absurdist being with indifference, Meursault states facts without comment or analysis. He appears to be an outsider in the community, and he spends time nothing tiny intricate details or nature; sensory impressions.

Talking about the theme, Jean-Paul Satre beautifully describes the Absurd of *The Outsider* as:

The Outsider a work detached from a life, unjustified and unjustifiable, sterile, momentary already forsaken by its author abandoned for other

present things. And that is how we must accept it, as a brief communion between two... the author and the reader, beyond reason, in the realm of the absurd. (111)

He further says that Meursault is the "stranger confronting the world, man among man and man against himself his mind, and the universe" (112). He represents a man who in the face of the Absurd contains a passion. He does-not desire to commit suicide; he wants to live. He acknowledges no future, certainty, hope, or abstract feelings, yet he goes on. Death is a passion for him, and this is what liberates him.

Philip Thody calls this novel a very controlled piece of work in which each idea and event has a unique and independent existence of its own (114). The specific literary techniques that Camus uses throughout the novel relay very precise meanings. He chooses these techniques in order to enhance the absurd ideas and behaviors, to provide man a mental image of the Absurd, to demonstrate how man tries to find meaning in life against the Absurd and to demonstrate the protagonist's motivation to face the Absurd.

In the same context, Thody marks Meursault as a rebellious one besides being taciturn. Meursault revolts against bourgeois society because he holds a lack of illusions and rejects the "emptiness of human pretence" (116). Meursault is paralleled with other characters who are also protagonist that revolt and say society should be constructed on the values they hold. However, no one can compare to Meursault's revolt and purity (118). Meursault's approach to life is rare. Meursault does no strive for social/economic ambitions because these goals assume man wants to better himself, and that insinuates a meaningful existence.

Literary critic Edwin Moseley further says, "Meursault represents the antagonist to all the characters who represent saviors" (198). Meursault rejects other

saviors such as the Magistrate-who offers a crucifix to hi; the prison Chaplain-who attempts to convert Meursault to Christian beliefs; and Perez who acts as a substitute father figure and is symbolically separated more and more from Meursault during the long funeral procession.

The Outsider has a twofold meaning that is paralleled with the Christ and antichrist figures. Christ like figures usually are strangers and aliens to the society. Meursault is a stranger to the emotional, god-filled lives of society; on the other hand, he is never viewed by others as the savior. So, Meursault is a stranger not only to society, but also to life where he is recognized by no one. In this manner, he represents the antichrist figure.

Meursault is conscious of the absurdity in life, but cannot understand society's zealous and ridiculous beliefs. Meursault condemns society, and is condemned in return; however, in spite of his unjustified execution, he remains resolved until the end where he clings to life and the truth of it so somehow, it is only version of Christ for the reader.

According to Peter Kalu, Meursault is an unconventional believer in infighters and meaning listeners of life who doesn't bother on what the world ground him says or believes in. Kalu states the emotional detachment of the protagonist, Meursault in a given way:

Meursault displays on emotional honesty that can shock: examples range from Meursault not dwelling particularly on his mother's death to being relatively unperturbed by the thought of his impending execution, for his killing the man and not dwelling particularly on act nor feeling particularly guilty about it. In thinking, in this manner Meursault moves beyond the pale of conventional society around him-he makes

himself a stranger to these conventions, in order to understand each sensation and moment of life. (120)

As a non-believer in hypocrisy and pretension, he presents the world as one can live with the choices of one's own being indifferent to others. Having no intention of being with mother and having less emotional attachments with his beloved Marie exposes him as a man who lives a life of complete alienation, indifference and freedom.

Regarding the absurdist approach, René Girard labels Meursault as an irrational, unintelligent child, a "juvenile delinquent". In his view, he is indeed a derelict; he has no intellectual life, no love, no friendship, no interest in anyone or faith in anything. His life is limited to physical sensations and to cheap pleasures of modern mass culture.

Until he commits the improbable murder, "for all practical purposes, Meursault is a little bureaucrat devoid of ambition" (523). His character is very humble [...] he does not view himself as a man with a mission; he has no visible pretensions... His fate is not tragic because nothing in his personality leads us to expect him to commit murder or to find his act of murder convicting. Meursault epitomizes the insignificant "little bureaucrat" whom society invariably ignores (528). Meursault's "egoistical martyrdom" and "ultra-romantic conception of the self" bear many similarities to this modern psychopathology. (531)

Among many critics of *The Outsider*, one sociological critic Henrik Loodin explores psychological analysis and status in the novel. In his view, he is neither the hero nor the antihero. He tries to make progress in the society of which he is part; he orients himself among... Even though he makes sense of these situations, they are later used

and turned against him. The "social", rather than he himself, becomes a Dark Continent that influences how his future life will turn out (98).

His fate is determined as though he has nothing to do with it; others decisions intervene in his story and he becomes a stranger for himself. This characterizes the complexity of his future life, neither that his mother is dead nor that he killed a man, but his indifference to these facts, and not showing any grief. It seems as if everything is the same for him, the whole situation, as well as following events, become absurd to him (99).

Camus' protagonist in *The Outsider* has been described as the only Christ we deserve who is a simple man with the figure of dignity. Meursault is a man who has his idea of honesty; being true to his immediate impressions refusing to exaggerate or give consistency to his emotions, refusing to say more than what he knows. He lives by this one principle, which has nothing to do with the behavior that society expects. He is true to his belief, Meursault is judged as a monster by society and is condemned to die. He accepts this role; like Christ he dies for his belief (85, Gnnasekaran).

The Outsider has been considered one of the best novels written in French during the twentieth century. This dissertation has shown not only the psychological interpretations of the novel but also constructed the positive vision towards the absurdity. The way in which Meursault tells his story expresses his personal vision of life. As an unheroic exemplar of the sensibility of an era, Meursault has an enduring place among the characters of world fiction (Gnnasekaran, 86).

Meursault through his life teaches a lesson to each people; to face the absurd situations in life with a perseverance. He shows each moment are worth living in itself. Man must not search for a transcendent meaning; he must be content to live each day. Meursault overall motivates people to reach "a tranquil" homeland where

every moment is worth to live, if you live on your own legacy. Because society is always ridiculous and jealous it obstructs you one or another way. So, the only way to avoid it is being indifference and self focused.

This study is divided into four chapters. The first chapter introduces the background of the study. It introduces *The Outsider* as a novel dealing with the theme of absurd life of the protagonist. It presents the brief introduction of the novel list and his contribution in the literary canon. It introduces the thesis statement, its argument the objective of the study and the tools the research opts to use. The literature review is also included in the chapter. It shows what other critics have opined regarding this novel, its creator and the perspective and critical theory they have used in order to study this novel. The views, ideas and criticisms of some critiques are used to show what they agree or disagree on the issue the thesis raises and also to support the major argument of this thesis.

The second chapter focuses on the theoretical model of the thesis. It is a major tool to be used in the study. It shows how absurdist and absurdist living is created. Attempting to vividly reflect the concept of absurdism is the major concern of this chapter. It examines the background of the theory of absurdism and its overall development. It includes the critiques who contributed in the establishment and development of absurdist theory. It defines the perspectives that are to be used while going through the incident of the novel.

The third chapter analyzes Camus' *The Outsider*, using absurdist philosophy and its perspectives. The extracts from the novel are taken for presenting the arguments with proofs. The absurdist living of the protagonist is highlighted in this chapter with its effects in the life of the central character. The novel is thoroughly studied and the necessary lines are textually analyzed with the focus on the

protagonist's choice of life his indifference, alienation, quest and the breakdown of social and moral laws and conventions.

The final chapter is the concluding portion of the thesis. It shows the protagonist's effort to attain the absurdist living and the difficulty he has to go through in that process draws the conclusion that the novel exhibits the meaninglessness of human and life in this world.

Chapter 2

Philosophy of the Absurd

The Concept

The term absurd is derived from the Latin word 'absurdum', meaning, 'discordant' or 'contradictory.' Absurd actually means 'out of harmony', in a musical contest. In common usage 'absurd' may simply mean 'ridiculous'. In an essay on Eugene, Ionesco says, "Absurd is that which is devoid of purpose...cut off from his religious, metaphysical and transcendental roots, man is lost; all his actions become senseless, absurd, useless" (3).

The Absurd is a conflict between the human tendency to seek inherent value and meaning in life and the human inability to find any. The universe and the human mind do not each separately cause the Absurd, but rather, the Absurd arises by the contradictory nature of the two existing simultaneously.

As a philosophy, absurdism furthermore explores the fundamental nature of the Absurd and how individuals, once becoming conscious of the Absurd should respond to it. The absurdist philosopher Albert Camus stated that individuals should embrace the absurd condition of human existence while also defiantly continuing to explore and search for meaning (2).

Absurdism shares some concepts and a common theoretical template with existentialism and nihilism. It has its origins in the work of the 19th century Danish Philosopher Soren Kierkegaard, who chose to confront the crisis that humans face with the Absurd by developing his own existentialist philosophy (3). Absurdism as a belief system was born of the European existentialist movement that ensued, specially when Camus rejected certain aspects of that philosophical line of thought and published his essay *The Myth of Sisyphus*. The aftermath of World War II provided

the social environment that stimulated absurdist views and allowed for their popular development, especially in the devastated country of France.

Absurdism, in a sense is a theoretical analyzing tool that stands against existentialism. Existentialism believes and proves that existence of any creature has meaning whereas absurdism says that human suffers from his over consciousness. Absurdism and existentialism present two views that are view of nothingness and view of meaningfulness respectively. It views human existence as melancholic, meaningless and whimsical Absurd literature mainly opines and projects the irrationalism, haplessness and absurdity of life in dramatic forms that rejects realistic settings, logical reasoning or a coherent evolving plot. Absurdity, through absurdist view, in fact is a by product of human metaphysical and absurd condition. It lights the havoc, rain, destruction of human existence, ambiguous birth and futile attempt to live exist in the world.

In fact, absurdism in literature commenced when people realized the uncertainty of life due to cruel and devastating wars. Both of these wars had left a horrible consequences in entire world, especially in Europe which was threatened with the strong prevalence of materialism and people started to face spiritual crisis, doom and decay, mostly, absurdism came into rise in France and Germany with the world wars bringing the negative human feelings and emotions into the thoughts and acts of the people. The world wars gave rise to widespread feelings of loneliness, despair, pessimism and frustration. All these arousing feelings gave rise to the thinking that the world is meaningless and purposeless as Europe was facing crisis, death destruction and demolition. The absurdist movement started to flourish with the focus on the absurdity of human beings, the lack of purpose and meaning in life and the solitude of human existence. Absurdist philosophy is based on individual experience.

so, it came up with the idea that 'A philosophy based on the belief that the universe is irrational and meaningless and that the search for order brings the individual into conflict with the universe. (5)

Despite having much in common with the philosophies like nihilism, absurdism is more a reaction against the traditional school of thoughts as rationalism, positivism and empiricism that search for the order and concrete universal meaning. Absurdism as a movement is described as of those who refuse to belong any philosophical school of thought repudiating the adequacy of any body of belief system of philosophy.

Absurdism focuses on the issue that indifference is a compulsory tools to find oneself and its meaning which may cost with alienation. According to absurdism, humans historically attempt to find meaning in their lives. Traditionally, this search results in one of two conclusions: either that life is meaningless, or life contains within it a purpose set forth by a higher power a belief in God, or adherence to some religion or other abstract concept. As per the absurdism, every individual must live every moment fully with complete freedom and passion that gives the hope which has been rejected. On the same occasion, Camus states in *The Myth of Sisyphus*: "thus I draw from the absurd three consequences, which are my revolt, my freedom and my passion. By the mere activity of consciousness I transform into a rule of life what was an invitation to death, and I refuse suicide (20). The individual becomes the most precious unit of existence, representing a set of unique ideals that can be characterized as an entire universe in its own right. In acknowledging the absurdity of seeking any inherent meaning, but continuing this search regardless, one can be happy, gradually developing meaning from the search alone.

As absurdism developed with the view of meaninglessness, dislocation,

indifference are its major properties. In this arena, modern people are extremely suffered from meaningless existence and futility. People are isolated in mass, lonely in crowd and dead in life. All their attempts of significant values are proved to be failure. Human works until death but gets nothing significant. A Alvarez clarifies the view of absurdism in such a way:

According to thus, time is the poison, condition we are born to, constantly changing us without or knowing, finally killing us without our assets. We are doomed to time because we have committed the original and eternal sin... of having been born. We expiate that original sin by living, which Beckett considers a painful business and we mitigate the pain of living by habit, which is another word for Beckett's own apathy. (24)

Thus, even we live time functions on its own way, by making people indifference, alienated and futile. However, they keep on try to create meaning in the meaningless world through his free act for affirmation.

Existentialism, Absurdism and Nihilism

Existentialism, Absurdism and Nihilism, all three have their origin with the philosopher Soren Kierkegaard, who sought to discover how one can live as the individual. Comus, Nietzsche and Sartre were all heavily influenced by Kierkegaard.

Understanding existentialism is often difficult, because its ideas conflict with other trends in the thought of western and eastern philosophies alike. Many people consider existentialism to be a dark and pessimistic philosophy, void of hope. However, the opinions of existentialist thinkers were often optimistic about the future of human beings. Overall, it is a philosophy of the individual and its struggle through life a focus on the subjective life that we all actually live, rather than a search for

objective truths external to us.

The idea of the absurd is a common theme in many existentialist works, particularly in Albert Camus. Camus considered himself more of an Absurdist than a true Existentialist. Absurdity is the notion of contrast between two things. As Camus explains it in *The Myth of Sisyphus*. Similarly, Nihilism is another type of existential philosophy that belief all values are baseless and nothing can be known or communicated. It is often associated with extreme pessimism and a radical skepticism that condemns existence.

Existentialism and Absurdism

Existentialism is an individualistic philosophy that emphasizes on the existence of an individual's freedom and choice. It is a view that humans create their own meaning in life. They try to make the rational decisions despite having lived in an irrational world. Existential philosophy highlights the question of human existence. It believes that there is no purpose and explanation at the center of human existence that human beings are living in the world of nothingness and the only way to encounter the nothingness or finding the meaning in life is by creating the existence of own with the life of choice, individual freedom and responsibility. So, existentialism is "Very intense and philosophically specialized form of quest for selfhood." (803) It focuses on the human existence board on the selfhood and independent life. The choice that human kind makes for the existence is given more priority in the existential philosophy.

The term "existentialism", means pertaining to existence or in logic, predicating to declare as true existence. Philosophy, it now applies to a vision of the condition and existence of humans, his/her place and function in the world, and his or her relationship or lack of one with God.

If we throw a glimpse on the history, then we can witness that existentialism emerge after the two devastating world wars. During the Second World War, Europe was threatened with the strong prevalence of materialism and people started to face the spiritual crisis, doom and decay. The world wars gave rise to widespread feelings of loneliness, despair, pessimism and frustration. These feelings gave rise to the thing that the world is meaningless and purposeless. As Europe was facing crisis, destruction and demolition, the existentialist movement started to flourish with the focus on existence of human beings, the lack of purpose and meaning in life and solitude of human existence. Existential philosophy is based on individual experiences. So, it came up with the idea that "Existentialism is a set of philosophical ideas that stress the existence of human being, the anxiety and depression which pervade each humans life" (Lawine 322). People began to think the guardian organizations life state and church declared and promoted wars and mass killings instead of working for the betterment of human society as a whole.

Existentialists advocate that human being is concerned to be a free being because he or she is thrown into the world. Humans must take the freedom of being, responsibility and result o their actions. The actions and choices negate the actions and choices, resulting in the serious consequences. So, humans must be completely accountable and responsible to their choices without any excuses. Human beings must take responsibilities and make efforts to survive. The world is meaningless. So, the responsibility of the humans being is to exist and keep on trying to make essence of it.

The concept of human existence is given another turn around by another French existentialist and absurdist Albert Camus. He is concerned with the freedom, choices and responsibility, the loneliness and struggle of the individual for existence in the society. After the Second World War, the uncertainty aroused in the world and

it was reflected by the twenty century existentialism and absurdism. The works of Camus are somehow concerned with existentialism because of the universe, and the necessity of the engagement in a just case.

Camus believes that human existence is absurd. For him, the world is full of injustice and repetition of same jobs and activities. He advises the mankind to rebel against the absurdities by refusing the participation in those activities. While Satre and Nietzsche agree on the point that meaning of the world is create by individuals as alone or in social elation, Camus views this as "the source of anguish, he points that we long for the meaning conveyed by the universe that cares but discover only an empty slay. What are we to do in the absurdity of this situation?" (Flynn 47). Camus offers humans the existential comfort in his interpretation of the Greek Myth off Sissyphus. Human is the mortal who is condemned by the god to push a stone up a mountain only to see it roll back down repeatedly for all eternity (47). The absurd job handed to Sissyphus continuously repeats the same job to keep his existence.

Camus thinks that the modern problem of anxiety, despair and crime have emerged after the First World War and the Second World War. For him, the decline of religious belief in the modern day was forced people to realize the dilemma of Sissyphus.

Despite having much in common philosophies, existentialism is more a reaction against the traditional school of thoughts as rationalism, positivism and empiricism that search for the order and concrete universal meaning. Whereas absurdism is a way, concept, a advise about how to face absurdity; meaninglessness and create the meaning and essence in this rather meaningless and absurd universe.

Absurdism and Nihilism

Nihilism is the belief that all values are baseless and that nothing can be

known as communicated. It is often associated with extreme pessimism and a radical skepticism that condemns existence. Nietzsche, the father of Nihilism; aesthetic existentialism brings forth the concept of the will-to-power. He believes that the man who searches for general truth accepted by the culture and community is an objective man and a self-less object like mirror who waits for others' recognition and subjective will. So, the action of human being is an unavoidable force for human.

Fredrich Nietzsche, a prominent philosopher comes forth with the announcement of 'the death of God'. He focused in the non-existence of God. In his famous saying of philosophical history, 'God is Dead', he opposes religion and Christianity and comments Christianity as 'slave morality'. He, in his essay "Death of God and the Anarchist", states that Christianity has become shelter for weak and disable people.

Nietzsche speaks about the loneliness of the individuals who have risen above the herd. Referring to Nietzsche, Flynn remarks:

Today... when only the herd animal is honoured... the concept of 'greatness' entails being noble, wanting to be oneself, being capable of being different, standing alone and having to live independently, and the philosopher will betray something of his own ideal when he posits. He shall be the greatest who can be the loneliest, the most hidden, the most deviating, the human being beyond good and evil.

(25)

Nietzsche linked himself to Spinoza, a seventeenth century Dutch philosopher who was excommunicated from Synagogue for his unorthodox thoughts. Nietzsche states that the error of free will is the belief that choices rather than physiological and cultural forces are the basis of our judgments of moral approval and disapproval. he

remarks that "the evil acts at which we are most indigent rest on the error that he who perpetrates them against us possesses free will that is to say that he could have chosen not to cause us this harm" (34-40). So, the choices should be the more prior things in human life rather than the social and physiological forces as the veils occur when one chooses not to choose. If one fails to chose, one fails to live an authentic life.

For Nietzsche, God is a human construct and a means of exploitation and domination. God does not matter for the powerful ones but he is shelter for the powerless. Individuals are compelled to surrender against God. So, the existence is subjected to God and believing in God is against humanity and life itself.

Even though absurdists deal about subjects that seem depressing and full of despair, they deny that they represent pessimism. On the same context, Camus said pessimism "lies not in acknowledging the injustice, cruelty and absurdity which governs the world, but in giving one's assent to them" (Master 2).

With reference to Camus, Olafson states, "Camus believes in fraternity and humanism rather than in Nihilism" (12). In the view of Camus the condition of the modern man is similar to that of king Sisyphus who is the master of all modern human. He suffers in the world because of his disobedience to God and the passion of life as a hero. Olafson further states that, "this universe, here forth, without a master, seems to him neither sterile nor fertile" (352). Finally, Camus concludes that human's condition is absurd as he realizes that there is no guidance of past, and no guarantee of the future life and also the lack of foundation of human values. Despite the anxiety, absurdity and hopelessness, Camus appeal human being to act bravely like Sisyphus and create meaning and essence in this rather meaningless and absurd universe. Some criticize Camus anti-humanistic and pessimistic. Defending Camus and his philosophy, Ellmann and Fiedelson remark, "He sees man arriving through admission

of absurdity at an affirmation of his own worth" (806). The living of absurd people depend on the maximum struggle against the loneliness and absurdity. So, Camus philosophy is optimistic and humanistic and pessimistic and anti-humanistic as it focuses on struggle against absurdity for humanity and optimism.

Chapter 3

Meursault as an Absurd Man

The novel begins as if it was a diary entry or a monologue between Meursault and himself. "My mother died today or may be yesterday, I do not know I received a telegram from the old people's home: Mother decreased funeral tomorrow. Very sincerely yours'. That doesn't mean anything. I might have been yesterday" (Camus 3). Unusual chapter beginnings are accompanied by a lack of transition between thoughts and days, for one day begins and another ends without discussion.

Meursault's use of past tense insinuates that he is reflecting back in his life. By reflecting his past, he demonstrates how the Absurd in his life is always present.

The first sentence, therefore, represents the closeness of Meursault to his mother. The second sentence suggests something different when he is not sure whether it was today or yesterday that his mother passed away. Therefore, Meursault is not presented as a son mourning for his mom rather as a one who is peculiarly speaking up his mother's death.

Meursault's senselessness and indifference to everything except physical sensations are noticeable. He even refuses to see his dead mother's face for the last time, something that is usually done by children before burial. He smokes during the funeral. When his mother's friends decide to keep vigil for her, he cannot stay awake, and falls asleep. All of his behaviours are considered inappropriate by his mother's friends, and he looks like a stranger to them. Then, he soon returns to Algiers to take a long nap, actually sleep plays what seems disproportionately large part in his life.

The next morning, he goes to the beach and meets Marie Cardona, a former typist at his office. They go boating and swimming. Meursault touches her breast and puts his arm around her waist, when he sees that she does not mind. Even his mother's

death cannot lessen his strong physical sensations. Meursault seems strange to Marie, too, when she sees his black tie and asks about it and gets to know that his mother died the day before. It does not matter to him, so he even invites Marie to go to a movie, a comic one, a day after his mother's death, and right after that he invites her to his flat and sleeps with her: "The movie was funny in parts but then got really ridiculous. She pressed her leg against mine. I stroked her breasts. Toward the end of the movie, I kissed her, but awkwardly. After we left, she came back to my place" (18).

Meursault, as a whole is a complete detached figure who shows complete detachment with the sentiments, emotions and the universe. Camus presents him as the protagonist who does not reflect on the higher meaning of life. Not transcendence occurs; no goals are set or discussed; the protagonist does not search his soul or contemplate the religious possibilities of the universe. In other words, Camus presents man with a day by day situation that he can understand without presenting any emotions, sentiments, or reflections in his protagonist to which man can relate.

He even accepts an invitation to dinner from Raymond, his next-door neighbour, who is reputed to be a pimp. What they will say about him if they know that he has accepted his invitation. He accepts Raymond's invitation for a simple reason: it saves him having to cook dinner. Then in all, Raymond speaks about his Arab girlfriend who lived with him in the same flat, free of charge. Moreover Raymond paid for her food and expenses, but she lets him down. Raymond reveals his plan to Meursault, about how he will punish her by sending a letter and persuade her to come back, and then spit on his face and throw her out of the room. He asks Meursault to write the letter even though he does not have any rational reason. "I more or less improvised, but I tried to write it in a way that would make Raymond

happy because I had no reason to make him happy" (30). Meursault, in this way, possesses more complicated feelings than might appear from his detached method of narration. He is not the immoral monster that society says, but only a man who decides not to explain or discuss that which he cannot describe clearly love, hate or any emotion.

Meursault does not show any excitement at his boss' offer to transfer him to Paris. He says, "I didn't care one way or the other" (38). His reaction to the job promotion is peculiar for the boss, so his boss tells him that he "lacked ambition", whereupon he justifies his heritation over job promotion by saying, "one never changed one's real life; anyhow, one life was as good another and my present one suited me well" (48). Meursault believes that the choices one makes in one's life is unimportant. He continuous, "when I was a student, I was very ambitious about having a career. But when I had to give up my studies, I realized quite soon that none of that sort of thing mattered very much" (38). So, the purport of Meursault's indifference is not congenital but it is a drastic experience of an undisclosed nature.

Meursault never complains about the tediousness, emptiness or difficulty of his work. On the contrary, one of all the reasons why he dislikes Sundays is probably he is not doing his routine job. Accordingly, although this everyday routine is dull and superficial, it gives many people a sense of security so they can avoid posing difficult questions about the meaning of life, their loneliness and despair. Yet, on the basis of *The Myth of Sissypus* this everyday monotony is the source of feeling the meaninglessness of one's existence, not an issue to protect one from suffering from loneliness.

Meursault reveals his sense of indifference and dispassion many times as the story develops:

That evening, Marie came to see me and asked me if I wanted to marry her. I said that it was all the same to me and that we could get married if she wanted to know if I loved her. I replied as I had once before that didn't mean anything, but said I was pretty sure I didn't love her. Why marry me, then? She asked, I explained that it was no importance whatsoever but if that was what she wanted we could get married...

She then wondered if she loved me. (38-39)

Meursault talks to her frankly. He is not pretentious, and he refuses to say something that he does not believe and feel, though he knows that his honesty is revealing his true feelings to Marie may hurt her and cause him to lose her eventually. He says to Marie that he likes her and is happy with her, yet is not emotionally attached to her. In this regard, a person like him, with his conventional ideas about love, marriage and job promotion, is seen as an outsider by society. He antagonizes society, by choosing Raymond as friend and above all, by not shedding tears at his mother's funeral. He is called bizarre by Marie, it does not apply how he lives, yet it applies to his unconventional views on love and marriage. Meursault is a hedonist who is on the surface by life's currents, unconcerned by the question of what, if anything is to be found in depth.

Meursault's Indifference to Life

Meursault represents an indifferent, non-judgmental person. He is being judged and questioned, based on what he did in his life, since he was jailed in charge of killing an Arab. His lawyer tells him that an investigation about his life has been made, and that it is clear that he showed "great callousness" at his mother's funeral. Then, the lawyer asks him whether he felt grief when losing his mother. He is displeased when Meursault explains about the physical condition at a particular

moment in which he was "fagged out and only half awake" (69) during the funeral. His lawyer wants him to avoid saying things at like this to the magistrate and the trial session. Meursault's indifference during the funeral is enigma for the magistrate too. The magistrate is curious about whether Meursault was able to love someone in his life, when he had not show any pity on the day of his mother's funeral.

The reason that why he fired four more times into the Arab's inner body was also another crux for the magistrate. He gets angry when he asks his question and is faced with Meursault's silence and positivity in defending and justifying himself. Therefore, he changes the issue from what Meursault did to what he believed. Gradually, he distances himself from the main point. It is a shock for the magistrate when Meursault tells him that he simply does not believe in God. The magistrate has no mercy for someone whose thoughts and beliefs break the society's norms. He expects him to cry and ask for divine remission like other criminals. At the end of the interview, he questions Meursault about whether he regretted what he had done. He answers, "... rather than feeling genuine regret I found it all rather tedious - I had the impression that he didn't understand me" (63). That is why magistrate labels him "Mr. Anarchist" (64). His ideas and behaviours are not understandable to respectable Christians, he is labeled as an anarchist and considered as an incarnation of evil by believes.

In the prison, during his first and only visit with Marie, there is a young prisoner who is utterly depressed and never says a word to an old woman who has come to meet him and who gazes him all the time. Meursault moves his look away from them, when Marie shouts at him that they should not lose hope. This hope is a key concept for an absurd man like Meursault and should be revised conceptually. Meursault and should be revise conceptually like Sisyphus, whose fate is groom as

long as he hopes for something better, Meursault too cannot be happy if he hopes for an alternative. He must learn to accept his current situation in order to overcome his deep despair. He symbolizes an absurd man, is able to find happiness even in his cell, and to be stronger than his fate. Thinking about going to beach swimming, the sound of ripples at his feet, and the pleasure of feeling water on his body are all sensual matters of which he has been deprived in prison. He feels that he must be free, so prison is deprivation, a punishment. He is kept away from where he belongs. It takes a few months for him to think like a prisoner: "I often thought that I'd been forced to live inside the hollow trunk of a dead tree, with nothing to do except look up at the sky flowering There were people who were worse off than me" (69).

In the first part of the book, Meursault is a person who is indifferent towards societal values. His indifference is mentioned over and over again. He is a man without any rational judgement. Yet, in the second part, deprivation of what he likes becomes an imposition on him. He makes himself busy by reviewing his memories and thinking about his life philosophy, which never happened before his confinement in prison. Therefore, a change gradually appears in a man who has got used to living in the present. Meursault begins to be reminded of the past and to think about it. He remembers what his mother told him long time ago, that "in the long run one gets used to anything" (80), which means the ability of adaptability and to carve one's essence. At the beginning of his imprisonment, he is also obsessed by a desire for women. This desire is not just limited to Marie, but to all the ones he has made and made love to. Like Don Juan, Meursault tries to satisfy himself with memories of and passion for them, rather than seeking ideal love. However, all the faces of the women he imagines serve merely to kill the time and overcome his deep boredom. He gradually learns to live without any physical stimulation. He is changing and is no

longer captured by sensational factors. In this way, lack of freedom is no longer a problem for him, he admits that he is not unhappy. "Later on I understood that it was also part of the punishment.... so it was no longer a punishment to me (70). Like Don Juan, eventually, Meursault is not so melancholy, because he is aware and does not hope. People are melancholy, because they are not aware, or they hope.

On the day of his trial, Meursault finds himself in the world of people who look at him as a stranger, and want to judge him; however he has never questioned or judged them. It is hardly believable for him, when he faces the number of people who come only to see him. He is mostly known and treated as a stranger rather than a criminal. The entire trial is managed so as to conclude that Meursault is a man who is a danger to society. It is clear from the beginning that the trial is not just for the act of murder, but is for someone who has ignored the masses' values. All the questions are about his comportment during and after his mother's funeral, rather than focusing on the crime in order to determine what actually happened. The entire trial is conducted as if no crime had occurred, as if Meursault is there to be judged in his life. The prosecutor's questions are meticulously planned to convince the jury that Meursault is a threat to society, and causes Meursault to have a strange feeling that he has never before in his life, "for the first time I felt ridiculous desire hated me" (1). This marks a serious change in Meursault's state of mind.

By using witness declaration, the prosecutor eventually concludes that Meursault is "an inhuman monster wholly without moral sense" (87). His lawyer tries to deviate from trial's focus on Meursault's comportment during and after the funeral and says, "I this man on trial for having buried his mother or for having killed a man?" (87). Despite that, the prosecutor turns it back by declaring, "I accuse this man of having buried his mother with the heartlessness of a criminal" (87). Meursault, in

fact, is not on trial for killing the Arab, but for his amoral character and his defense could offer no redeeming testimony.

The prosecutor arranges his evidence in such a way as to come to his own prearranged conclusion. Firstly, he questions Meursault's comportment during the funeral. Secondly he focuses upon Meursault's relationship with Raymond a pimp. Finally, he draws a conclusion about how the crime occurred from his own judgemental view, that Meursault went to the beach intentionally to kill the Arab. He shot the Arab and to make sure he did his job well, he fired four more times into the Arab's inert body.

Finally, the prosecutor concludes that Meursault is empty of soul and that there is no humanity or moral substance in him; therefore, he is a "menace to society" (91). He depicts monstrous picture of Meursault who will have evil intentions for the future and must be stopped soon by the court.

The last chapter of the book is unquestionably the most salient one. Meursault's personality develops through looking at the both life and death philosophically. He turns his attention from his execution and the to somewhere else; however, he is aware of the inevitability of the machinery of his execution and the guillotine being no way out of it. Whenever he tries to divert, his mind says, "... finding out of it is possible to escape the inevitable... I've been put in a different cell" (98). The inevitability of his prosecution is the most powerful evidence of the absurd. It is deeply said for him that he is going to die soon.

Although prison is Meursault's last home, dead end, his eyes are still looking for the beauty in life, especially, when he says, "The sounds of the countryside drifted towards me. The scent of the night, the earth and the salted air cooled my temples" (110). On the last night of his life, Meursault admits that he is ready to relieve

everything. He does not only appreciate life in the face of death, but the notion that death could free him is appreciated as well.

Meursault is eventually forced to believe in God with the great hope. In some circumstances he even believes in God as the creator and director of life and its significance. At this moment, he seems to give some values and meaning to his life, but cannot hold that belief for a long as he realizes that if there was such divine power, he would not suffer. He refuses to accept solace from the transcendent world and reaffirms his life as it is like the absurd hero, he rejects divine consolation and opts for the meaning that could be achieved without the interference of the world.

At the end of the novel, he expresses his view about the meaningless of his life in these words:

Nothing, nothing mattered when I knew very well why. He also knew why. From the depths of my future, throughout all this absurd life I had lived, a gathering wind swept towards me, stripping bare along its path everything that had been possible in the years you by, years that seemed just as unreal as the ones of other people or a mother's love matter so much? Why should I care about his god, the lives, the destinies we choose when one unique destiny had chosen me, and along with me millions and millions of privileged others who, like him, called themselves my brother. (109)

To sum up *The Outsider* is a novel of development, Meursault reaches some realizations and recognitions at the end of the novel that he was not aware of in the beginning. Meursault, in fact, rebels against the conventions of society. In the first part, he is not aware of his rebellion. He keeps on trying to live his life and enjoys his each moment and indifference act in a way he likes and enjoys. Later, especially in

prison he begins to think about his life philosophically, and he shifts to being an absurd hero when he becomes aware like Sisyphus. His trial and his loneliness in the prison ask some philosophical questions about the proper state of his existence in mind.

He rejects the rational definition of men and woman that is proffered by the legal system; he rejects suicide as an escape from life's irrationality; he affirms the value of an individual life; and finally, as a consequence of his failure to accept any philosophic system that seeks to eradicate the fitness of existence, he recognizes the absurdity of life.

Chapter 4

The World and the Legacy of Meursault

Camus expresses his ideology of absurdism throughout the novel. It can be witnessed that his development of the absurd is progressive as his protagonist Meursault finally becomes able to establish his own legacy.

Meursault is not concerned about moral and immoral things or goods or evils. His acts can be seen as both goods and evils. But, whatever he does, that is the choice he makes for his living and to create essence for him. Rejecting the morality, he accepts to live with complete indifference being detached with all sorts of emotions. He emphasizes more on what pleases him rather than what society thinks good or evil.

The Outsider is a novel that confronts with the question of absurd. Throughout his life, Meursault rebels against the conventions of society and tries to make lives in his own way. For his refusal to the world, he is considered as antagonist and hedonist. He goes through the trails of pain, suffering, hatred, loneliness, fragmentation and hopelessness. Despite going through all these problems and seeing the world as a meaningless place, he struggles hard to discover his own self. He realizes that meaning of life exists in the moments of identification of oneself and in unity with nature.

Throughout the novel, he lives the life of complete detachment, isolation and alienation. He faces absurdity by being absurd himself. He is a conscious human being who is aware of some philosophical questions about the proper state of his existence in his mind. But, as a consequence of his failure to accept any philosophic system that seeks to eradicate finiteness of existence, he recognizes absurdity of life. However, in this process, he finds his life full of anxieties, boredom, conflicts, despair and disillusionment. But, later in his life, he realizes the harsh absurdity and vagueness of

the world and life itself. However, he does not give up. He rejects suicide and also the rational definition of human being and embraces the world with complete detachment. He challenges his own legacy and meaning of life in his meaningless world.

Meursault creates his own legacy in the conventional community by being completely indifferent to the world and makes himself an absurd figure who lacks emotional attachment. He is in a journey to find himself and the meaning of his life but he finds the world lonely, hopeless and meaningless. He commits a great effort to find happiness and meaning in the world of absurdity, isolation and dislocation. He struggles for his existence and overcomes the sufferings by resisting the world of absurdity by doing the absurd acts. In this way, Meursault is a true absurdist being who lives a complete indifferent life in order to find meaning of life in the meaningless world. Despite his dreadful imprisonment and sentence to death, he lives in the best possible way that creates his legacy. Even at the last moment of life, he is not able to find the meaning of his life.

Work Cited

- Alvarez, A. *The Collection of Short Plays of Samuel Beckett*. 2nd ed. London: Fonana Press, 1992. Print.
- Beckett, Samuel. *Waiting for Godot*. London: Faber and Faber, 1959. Print.
- Camus, Albert. *Le Mythe De Sisyphe*. Paris: Gallimard, 1942. Print.
- . *The Outsider*. Translated by Sandra Smith, London: Penguin Classics, 2013. Print.
- Esslin, Martin. *The Theatre of the Absurd*. London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1962. Print.
- Eugene, Ionesco Martin Esslin in "The Theatre of the Absurd". London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1962. Print
- Flynn, Thomas R. *Existentialism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford UP, 2006.
- Girard, Rene. *A Theatre of Envy*, New York: Oxford UP, 1991. Print.
- Gnanasekaran, R. "Psychological Interpretation of the novel. The Stranger by Camus. India": *Academic Research Journals*, Vol. 2, no. 6, 2014, pp. 73-86. Print.
- Gorelik, Mordecai. "The Absurd, Absurdists". *The New York Times*. Section 2, Aug. 8, 1967. 1-3. Print.
- Gullette, Alan. "Death and Absurdism in Camus' *The Stranger*." New York: University of Tennessee. Spring, 1979. Print.
- Kalu, Peter. "Book Review: The Outsider by Albert Camus." Web. 21 Jan., 2018.
- Kierkegaard, Soren. *The Sickness Unto Death*. Princeton: University Press, 1941. Part I-3. Print.
- King, Adele. *Camus*. New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1964. Print.
- Lewine, Edward. *Death and the Sun*. New York: Houghton Milfflin, 2005. Print.
- Loodin, Henrik. "The Absurdities of Mental Illness. A Narrative Inquiry into Psychiatric Diagnosis." V. V. Issue I.(2005-2009). Web. 21 Jan. 2018.

- Masters, Brian. *Camus: A Study*. London: Heinemann, 1974. Print.
- Mc. Graw-Hill. *Encyclopedia of World Drama*. Mc. Graw-Hill, Inc, 1972. Print.
- Metiman, Eva. *Samuel Beckett. A Collection of Critical Essays*. Edited by Martin Esslin. Eaglewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall Inc, 1965. Print.
- Moseley, Edwin. *Pseudonyms of Christ in the Modern Novel*. New York: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1962. Print.
- Olfason, Fredick. *A American The Absurdist Moment in Contemporary Literary Theory*. University of Wisconsin Press, 1976. Print.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul. "An Explication of the Stranger." *Camus: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Ed. Payne, Melisa. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1962. 108-121. Print.
- Smith, Sandra. *The Outsider*. London.: Penguin Classics, 2013. Print.
- Thody, Philip. *Albert Camus: A Study of His Work*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1957. Print.