

**SUICIDE AND ABSURD LIFE IN THE MYTH OF
SISYPHUS BY CAMUS****Aseel Abbas Khudhair**Ministry of Education/ General Education Directorate of
Babylon, Iraq
aseel.abbas87@yahoo.com*Received: Apr 04, 2024; Accepted: May 03, 2024; Published: Jun 22, 2024;*

Abstract: The subject of research into suicide constitutes a fundamental link in the topics of the humanities and social sciences, in addition to the fact that the permanent and inherent obsession in humans is death, and thus this proposition imposes itself in the contemporary period as it coincides with the global crises that threaten human existence. In addition to learning about the ideas of Albert Camus and identifying the factors that produced this absurd thought. The research concluded important results, as there is no meaning behind life, unless a meaning is determined for it. One must accept the absurd instead of rejecting it in order to be able to live in peace. . So one must imagine the happy Sisyphus that Albert mentioned in his work. Suicide is not an easy matter, and the matter should be taken seriously because human existence creates life and not the other way around

Keywords: Absurdity, suicide, meaningless, existence.

This is an open-access article under the [CC-BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) license**Introduction**

When suicide is the solution and resorting to death, which remains unknown no matter what is said about it, and the life that a person knows and lives is abandoned, does this mean that life is not worth living? This is what research is looking for in it, as Albert Camus puts the problem of how to live at the center of his thought and says in his book *The Myth of Sisyphus*: “There is only one important philosophical problem, and that is suicide.” (3) Is life worth committing suicide? For many people, a life without meaning is not worth living. Camus understands this and addresses the problem head-on. He concludes that suicide is not good for human, as death cannot have more meaning than life, and turns to the question of what makes life worth living.

Therefore, thinking about Albert Camus and his existential questions about the value of life, its essence and meanings, came after the intensification of the economic crisis and the increase in the number of people who end their lives after taking excessive doses of severe disappointment, overwhelming anxiety, severe depression, and a lot of despair that kills every pleasure in existence. The spectacle of the end of life becomes the only relief from its hardship.

In this search, there is no room to explain the four types of suicide identified by the sociologist Emile Durkheim, which are: selfish, altruistic, non-normative and fatalistic suicide, and Durkheim

links them to a sociological explanation. However, the spread of suicide in the world, especially Iraq, and the increasing number in recent years, is a dangerous matter that is affecting people in all age groups. Given the importance of this topic in existential philosophy regarding the problem of suicide and death and how to address it. It includes a special vision in Albert Camus's thought that contradicts the ideas of his predecessors from his own starting points and references.

If this is the picture of life, then one can conclude that it is a terrible or a fun time for every human being to refuse to perform his role according to rules of his own choosing without caring about his innate nature. That is, either a person is steadfast and clings to life, or he is evading confrontation with it, and therefore Camus defining his position on it, not surrendering to the absurdity of life or its reasonableness, but on the contrary, asserting with determination that life must be lived and only a person should enjoy his life to the end.

Camus acknowledges that life is unreasonable, but at the same time it has inestimable value for each one of human, and he increases its value and his refusal to subject it to human understanding. Therefore, rejecting the limits that a person sets to end his life, and considers suicide, for example, as an escape from confronting the absurdity and meaninglessness of life.

Some of them may find this matter to be a clear contradiction, as Camus acknowledges the feeling of the absurdity and meaninglessness of life, and here death must be the inevitable end to salvation from that feeling, but at the same time he is keen on it and gives it the right to live, as if by doing so he is extracting the optimistic situation from this pessimistic situation because he fights absurdity and does not surrender to it.

There were a few reasons to choose the myth of Sisyphus as the book to analyse. The primary motivation was the mind-set of the author. Camus tends to view everyday activities as something to enjoy rather than something to despise, a conclusion drawn from his concept of embracing the absurd. When reading the myth of Sisyphus for the first time, the book seemed like it needed careful dissection, with different ideologies included and lots of references to other great authors. All these reasons lead to the fact that would be enjoyable to analyse.

Albert Camus

Albert Camus was one of the most well-known French philosophers, political activists, and authors. He was born in 1913 in Drean, Algeria during the French colonization. He was raised in the Algerian capital, Algiers by a poor working family. His father died in the First World War one year after Albert was born. Albert was mostly raised by his illiterate and half deaf mother and his grandmother. Before the outbreak of the Second World War, Camus served his apprenticeship as a journalist for an Algerian newspaper. He started his literary career in his native Algeria. After moving to France during the war, he became active in the resistance and served as an editor in chief for a French newspaper. He was known because of his work in the political press and because of his novels and articles in the forties of the last century.

Most of his works were centered around existentialism and finding the purpose of existence, he was mostly labelled as an existentialist, but he himself had disowned the label multiple times. Although most of Camus' works entered philosophy, he thought of himself as an artist rather than an existentialist and repeatedly rejected the idea of being known as a philosopher.

Albert Camus succeeded in translating his philosophical vision onto the stage and interacting directly with the reader and viewer. For Albert Camus, theater was life, not just a means of escape. He remained focused on his humanistic approach to theatre and he took advantage of this stage to interact with the audience.

He wrote *The Myth Of Sisyphus* in 1942 at the age of 29, he used the myth of the Greek king, Sisyphus as a metaphor to express the futility of human life, and that life purpose can be obtained from simply pushing a rock up a hill just for it to roll back down, then to push it back up repeatedly, as Sisyphus was condemned by the gods.

It was then translated to English in 1955 by the American professor Justin O'Brien. Camus received a Nobel prize in literature at the age of 44 for his significant literary production making him the second youngest recipient in history, two years before his death in 1960 at only 46 years of age.

An Absurd Reasoning: Absurdity and Suicide

Camus starts with a statement. Questioning whether life is worth living comes first and foremost before any other question, he finds other questions irrelevant or at less importance demanding that one must not seek them answered.

Then, he answers his own question, by stating that life gains meaning only when we assign it one. He addresses those who find purpose from fallacy, and those who judge that life is merely pointless and choose escapism by suicide or other means, expressing the futility behind these conclusions, believing neither the former or the latter is worth the risk of death.

“as a philosopher, to deserve our respect, must preach by example”(3) he says critically about the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, who shows in many of his works to believe that death is simply ceasing to be physically alive and nothing further. Camus believes that the matter of life and death should not be taken as lightly as that, stating that one must practice what he preaches, inquiring that Nietzsche should lead and give an example of he speaks of, which is more of a sarcasm than it is an advice.

He gives an example of the scientist Galileo Galilei expressing fondness and endorsement. Galilei claimed that the earth rotates around the sun which lies motionlessly in the centre of the galaxy. Although Galilei held a valuable scientific fact, these facts threatened the beliefs of people during the time of the discovery, which is the reason why he was accused of heresy by the church and the general public, causing him to drop the research in fear for his life. What Camus aims by mentioning the Galilei dilemma, is to demonstrate that life is the most precious, that no scientific fact or achievement can be equal to its relevance.

Camus goes to repeat the drastic statement that discovering the meaning of life is more urgent than anything else. He then gives a simple explanation of the two main methods of thinking on this topic, the method of La Palisse and the method of Don Quixote, where one expresses logical thinking and truism, if one finds no purpose in living, he might as well die (La Palisse), and the other expresses delusional thinking and imagination. He explains the method using an example of a novel character called Don Quixote who lives in his own hallucinations, creating meaning from the meaningless to the point of absurdism. But Quixote was aware of this self-made persuasion, he found happiness in these hallucinations. Although their contradiction, both could be as equally happy or as equally miserable.

Camus then goes to define suicide as recognizing the uselessness of suffering, and states that, deprivation of reason is the main cause of suicide, supporting his previous statement.

“Schopenhauer is often cited, as a fit subject for laughter, because he praised suicide while seated at a well-set table”(7)

He mentions others' condemnations on the German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer for claiming that suicide is a right granted to everyone, and is a legitimate thing to do. Schopenhauer is often regarded to not have experienced true sorrow and while not having led a life of misery himself, many believe that he has no right to speak of the topics as he pleases. But Camus believes not, he believes that people should take Schopenhauer's statement as seriously as they do others. The reason behind this endorsement is because Camus believes the human emotions and imagination can go past and beyond, Schopenhauer needn't experience it to be able to imagine it.

Logical thinking is certainly a way to live, not to leave any room for so called 'futile' problems in the eyes of objectiveness. But Albert Camus does not believe that objectiveness can take one too far, it's very seldom that logical thinking does not cause an existential crisis or even suicide. Camus having disfavoured the former option of objectiveness (method of La Palisse as mentioned before), leaves only the other option which is to live in delusion as Camus does.

“This limitation leads me to myself, where I can no longer withdraw behind an objective point of view that I am merely representing, where neither I myself nor the existence of others can any longer become an object for me”(9)

He goes to reference the philosopher Karl Jasper, in aim to criticise the entirety of traditional philosophy and philosophers who came before him, whom he believes waste their time to “constitute the world as a unity” and search for (non-existent) objective in the world, trying to comprehend it and trying to find (pointless) meanings, just to end up realising it never and will never exist. These claims and perspectives are mainly why Camus considers himself not to be a philosopher; not to be included in a category he finds dissatisfactory showing clear disapproval.

Whether someone chooses to live in delusion, or in reality. Whether he chooses to commit suicide, or tries to grasp the point of existence. Whether he is conscious about it, or is oblivious about it all. All of these mortal matters end to prove their absurdity. Everything is meaningless and futile in the face of the absurd.

An Absurd Reasoning: Absurd Walls

The passage starts with the explanation that all humans lack inherent meaning, the absurd is deeply embedded into all. No human emotion is irrational or unreasonable when they are all equally as irrational as others, most people only focus on what's physical and what exists as a way to seek salvation, but in reality the irrationality of such things is inevitable, one must simply embrace the absurd and live on and forth.

Camus sees life as a metaphysic and a state of mind, believing that nothing truthfully matters, and it's all in people's heads. He gives five stages of awaking to the absurd. (1) the soul is filled with nothing but void, a man only lives to perform daily gestures, such as awaking, the journey to work, hours of work, meal, resting, and the cycle continues.

(2) The man becomes weary of this repetition and reaches his limit, then realization begins and the chain is broken, the question "why" arises, accompanied by shock and amusement.

(3) Consciousness is awoken, and the eyes are opened, the man becomes conscious of every act around him.

(4) Realizing that there's little to nothing he is able to do about it. So he returns back to his routine and performing daily gestures.

(5) the consequences of consciousness which are inevitable attack the man very suddenly. It ends in either suicide, or recovery.

Therefore, exploring the estrangement and strangeness that humans may feel around them, and existential dilemma. He makes two main points: The perception of death is only fictional and theoretical, ignorance wraps around the topic of death most times. And this ignorance is due to the lack of knowledge in what comes after. He sees inherent opposition laying beneath familiarity and fondness, a familiar world is an inhumane world, this inhumanity could either be natural or created by men themselves. He aims to objectify the fact that our perceptions are mere illusions once again.

Camus makes can be explained using simple words. To distinguish between what's false and what's true, one must understand first, and to understand, above all is to unify. In order to understand one must believe that all possibilities are true. We can ask the question 'are all assumptions possible?' to easily demonstrate the point Camus is making. To that question, there are two answers, either yes or no, on the contrary of each other, both answers are wrong and both answers are correct at the same time. Let's give a simpler example of the two. All assumptions are true and all assumptions are false, claiming the former supports the latter statement, and claiming the latter falsifies both the former and the latter. This demonstrates that when all assumptions are true, the assumption of all assumptions being false is also true, and when all assumptions are false, both assumptions are false.

Camus gives examples of people who dealt with the topic of absurdism long before he did, and collects them in one category. The category to refuse rationality and reason, he aims to oppose these themes and believes these feelings should be experienced and lived. Zarathustra, the founder of the first religion (Zoroastrianism) (1000BC), Søren Kierkegaard, a Danish poet (the first existential

philosopher) (1813-1855), Karl Jaspers (1883-1969), Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), Lev Shestov (1866-1938), and Max Scheler (1874-1928).

He then goes to explain, and highlight the strengths and weaknesses in the philosophical perspectives of each, shedding light on their respective ideologies.

1- The German philosopher Martin Heidegger claims that anxiety arises out of being in the world as a whole. 'this anxiety seems to him so much more important than all categories in the world that he only thinks and talks of it' (17) Camus concludes from the entirety of Heidegger's philosophy.

2- Karl Jaspers' scepticism towards existence originates from the loss of naiveté. He acknowledges the futility of striving for knowledge and acknowledges failure as the ultimate fate of human understanding.

3- The Russian philosopher Lev Shestov, whom Camus believes strains towards the same conclusions throughout his works. Camus states that Shestov refuses reason by any means, interested in only one fact, the irrationality of the human thought in a rational world. 'He refuses the reason, it's reasons and begins to advance with some decision only in the middle of that colorless deserts where all certainties have become stone' (18) is a metaphor Camus uses to demonstrate how Shestov decided to live in uncertainty by choice, rejecting rationalism.

4- Søren Kierkegaard is often referred to as the father of existentialism. He not only acknowledges the absurd but embodies it. His rejection of absolute truth and embrace of contradictions demonstrates his deep understanding of the impossibility of human existence. Kierkegaard chooses to be vocal and confronts the absurd.

After explaining the ideologies behind all these men, Camus then dives into his own existential dilemma, desiring to find a single meaning behind the world. He claims that though these men have the same aspects to an extent, and having experiences supporting one another's, they vie with one another in proclaiming the same point, causing chaos.

An Absurd Reasoning: Philosophical Suicide

Firstly, Albert Camus begins by defining the Absurd; it's the impossible, the comparison between the consequences of a certain act and the prior perspective. The absurd cannot exist in a certain individual or a universe alone, it can only exist within their harmonic existence.

He then goes again, implying that a man's reality is his choice, and that people choose their own destiny.

In the next passage, Albert Camus gives complex explanations on a few philosophers' perspectives on transcendence* and religion borrowing their themes. He starts by criticizing the German psychiatrist Karl Jaspers for the third time, finding inconsistency and paradoxes in Jaspers reasoning. In the passage, he explains Jaspers struggles and failures with transcendence. Despite Jaspers' failure to comprehend the concept of transcendence, he views it as the essence of existence and the unnatural meaning of life. Camus describes Jaspers' view as unjustified and without logical

preparation to support the idea. But Camus does not only criticize Jaspers, he acknowledges Jaspers' dedication to conflict with existential themes such as transcendence and the absurd.

He gives an even longer explanation on the Russian and Austrian philosophers Lev Shestov and Edmund Husserl, he more so endorses Shestov's perspective on the unfettered faith in god, he highlights his rejection to rationalism, and the emphasis reliance on god for the impossible. He examines Husserl's phenomenology expressing scepticism towards his perspective regarding the existence of eternal truths, he questions the significance of Husserl's concepts of the concrete universe* , inquiring that it's of no significance, it only changes the order of perception while the entire idea remains unfettered and unperturbed.

Camus mentions Søren Kierkegaard as well. Kierkegaard shares the same perspectives as Shestov but approaches it from a different angle. He sees religion as the embodiment of the absurd. Kierkegaard's philosophy mainly aims to grapple with the tension between reason and faith and the contradiction between the two.

“what Kierkegaard calls for quite plainly is the third sacrifice required by Ignatius Loyola, the one in which God most rejoices: “The sacrifice of the intellect.”” (26)

The sacrifices Camus refers to here, are the sacrifices proposed by Saint Ignatius Loyola, to lead into void and to devoid one's self of both intellect and reason in the faith of god.

An Absurd Reasoning: Absurd Freedom

Albert Camus speaks of the nuisance which comes with understanding the absurd. And he, as many philosophers do, desires to be a tree among trees or a cat among animals to escape the burden of trying to understand the complexities of existence.

He gives a splendid description of his own existential dilemma. He claims that he was doomed to drown in the sea of the absurd, and to never reach eternal freedom due to the hunting thoughts of the absurd. He is a slave to these thoughts with no possible salvation, he had lost the sense of hierarchy and freedom, the only freedom he ever wishes to acquire is to escape from the absurd and trying to grasp the meaning behind existence.

But he does not believe life should not be experienced nor does he feel despair, this realisation * only enlightens him. The reasoning behind this enlightenment could either be because Camus believes feeling despair is futile and of no use, to serve your purpose as a human before your death, and to rest in peace after is the human duty, or could be because he acknowledges the fact that questioning existence till the bit end will reach him nowhere.

Camus used the term 'leap' a few times e.g., “is one going to die, escape by leap, rebuild a mansion of ideas and forms to one's own scale?” (35) “he is asked to leap, all he can reply is that he does not fully understand, that it is not obvious.” (35) “suicide, like the leap, is acceptance at it's extreme.” (36)

The literal meaning of the term is to spring, to move suddenly and forcefully. But the usage of the term by Camus aims to define the spring into the dark of ignorance purposefully to achieve self-satisfaction.

Escape from absurdity

The feeling of futility puts a person face to face with life and its difficulties, death and its mystery, and this is what always puts a person in a state of seeking to escape from “futility.” The most famous way is what is called suicide. By asking the question: What is Camus’s position on the issue of suicide and how did he respond to it?

“Man himself is ignorant of it. One evening he pulls the trigger or jumps.” (4) Albert Camus adds in a sense, as in melodrama, killing oneself is a kind of admission that life is very difficult or incomprehensible. Or, in simpler words, life is not worth playing for. In another statement, Camus says: Of course, living is not easy. You continue to make these “gestures” imposed on you by existence for several reasons, the most important of which is “habit.” To die voluntarily means to have realized, even instinctively, the absurdity of this custom, the absence of any essential reason for living and the futility of suffering.

Therefore, Camus gave two ways through the problem of life and the absurdity in it, where Camus believes that to get rid of the absurdity is for the person or human to believe in the afterlife; he points out that knowing the absurdity may lead instead to eliminating the mind through a type of mental suicide, Camus later called this suicide, especially with some Christian existentialists, “philosophical suicide.”

For a person to turn to spirituality and cling to life and believe in it, and for him to turn to another path or path, which is suicide, through which he ends his life. The experience of futility follows the desire of some people to destroy themselves through physical suicide.

Lack of confidence makes a person lose what Camus calls logic, which ultimately leads him to annihilate his existence through physical suicide. By this suicide, the person has surrendered to the absurdity and unreasonableness of life, and this is due to his sense of despair and boredom.

He believes that a person must cling to this life despite its absurdity, as this adherence makes him overcome all the barriers that stand as an obstacle in his life. Suicide is not a solution. That is, a person’s acceptance of this suicide and committing it is the result of that person’s rejection of the meaning of life.

However, in most cases, committing suicide is a difficult issue, for a clear reason, which is fear. The body has its own opinion, as Albert says, and often it will oppose, with all its might, annihilation. It is anybody governed by a set of instincts that always push it towards more life and more survival, and this is what it opposes. Awareness and a soul that has become tired and exhausted by life and absurdity. As a result, a better solution has emerged that preserves human life and thus spares man from this confrontation with death, and at the same time helps man escape from absurdity, and this solution is religion

Absurdity and rebellion

Absurdity is the result of the uncomfortable confrontation between one's search for meaning and the absence of meaning in life, and he advises his readers to accept this. Realizing the limitations of life, one should live his life to its fullest; Therefore, premature death by suicide is an obstacle rather than a solution. Camus acknowledges that he cannot define the absurd in words, but should rather count the sensations involved in the absurd and the situations that arouse it: for example, when he stares at a rock, this roughness, the “strangeness” of this world, that is the absurd.

Camus sought to convey man's feeling and sense of the necessity of rebellion, based on his belief in the fate of humanity and its right to life, happiness, departure from the ordinary, and freedom from all restrictions that determine human capabilities.

Camus's absurdity is our guide to rebellion, and it is the starting point for entering into his concept of rebellion, as Camus dealt with absurdity in all its details in his first stage of writing, extracting all his absurd ideas from the myth of Sisyphus, expressing everything that surrounds that concept absurdity from Suicide leads to the death of the individual, an idea that Camus strongly rejected and expressed his love for life despite its plausibility.

Camus took it upon himself to search for the appropriate solution to that absurdity, and to search for the solution that he proposed to confront the absurdity after he rejected the idea of suicide and death, he found that the appropriate solution that he saw was the rebellion that Camus reached as a result of the absurdity or rejection of An idea or complaining about a familiar reality, as he says, “I extract three results from absurdity: my revolt, my freedom, and my passion” (64) for life.

In the myth of Sisyphus, rebellion was not known in its true form, which refers to a protest against an unjust, incomprehensible fate. The rebel here was not protesting, but rather he was enduring, not revolting, but stubborn. In the myth of Sisyphus, rebellion has not yet reached the level of true rebellion that makes him face the familiar reality that he rejected.

He changes it, proposes a new idea, or follows a method different from what it is. Thus, rebellion was internal in the myth of Sisyphus, locked inside the individual himself. Rebellion was nothing but defiance, stubbornness, and a rejection of tampering and what constitutes a burden on the individual, but this rebellion remains internal without being able to change the state of affairs. Or he presents an idea, but it does not come out from within the individual and reach others.

The difference between the concept of rebellion in The Myth of Sisyphus and The Rebellious Man was not only in meaning and nature, but it included many ideas that Camus frankly pointed out as being contradictory in his Myth of Sisyphus and did not carry the true meaning of rebellion, so he tried to change them. In The Rebellious Man, which is considered a more mature stage of the myth, especially with regard to some of its unsatisfactory results, his ideas in The Rebellious Man have changed for the better, according to his belief, as he witnessed some ideas, especially ideas related to the morality of the absurd.

Camus tried to replace the negative rebellion in the myth of Sisyphus into a positive rebellion that confronts the absurd reality with an actual confrontation, not just a sensory one, that responds to

man's moral needs and is compatible with the era in which he lives, and rejects everything that does not suit him through this rebellion.

The Absurd Man

The first thing Camus does is quoting Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, "my field is time", Camus interprets this as an expression of absurdity because time, being an infinite and an undefined concept, cannot truly be a field of study. Then he goes to define the Absurd man; he is a man who acknowledges the Absurdity of existence with enlightenment and embraces the concept.

'The absurd means that everything is permitted and nothing is prohibited' is a common misconception which Camus addresses in the passage. Though the absurd treats all actions as an equal, morality is a reasonable concept that exists for a reason. He implies that the consequences of certain actions must be wisely considered beforehand. Camus claims that the absurd does not recommend crime, and urges people not to use it as a reason to excuse certain actions.

The Absurd Man: Don Juanism

Don Juan or Don Givanni, is a character who appears in the Spanish play *El burlador de Sevilla y convidado de piedra* by Tirso de Molina in 1630. He is often portrayed as a man who pursues women indiscriminately. In act I scene I, where Don Juan encounters Isabelle, a lady whom he seduces and then abandons. During their encounter, Isabella expresses her feelings towards Don Juan and declares that she made him feel love, Don Juan laughs at her declaration dismissing her feels, demonstrating his deceitful nature. Camus believes that Don Juan did not move from a woman to another due to the lack of love, but he loved all his women equally with passion, claiming that love should not be felt rarely to be acknowledged. He does not leave them because he has ceased to desire them, but because he desires change.

Camus then goes to compliment the play and the character Don Juan, saying that his character is a theatrical masterpiece. Albert Camus was known to have appreciated theatre and enjoyed it, which is ironic because the plays which he has written were the most disfavoured of his work.

He then refers to another character by another author, Manara by Czeslaw Milosz. Manara is portrayed as a man who damns himself in desire to be a saint, Camus aims to show the contradiction between the two characters, because Don Juan, unlike Manara does not concern himself with moral matters, but only interested in pursuing pleasure. He relates Don Juan to the absurd, because he acknowledges and is conscious of being a seducer.

Camus defines love as a mixture of desire, affection and intelligence. He believes that love is not eternal and only stands on mutual benefit supporting his ideology that Don Juan is not selfish for acting upon his personal desire when love itself is a selfish act.

He acknowledges the collective desire for Don Juan's punishment by Franciscans* and everyone else in the play for his excesses and blasphemies. People claim that Don Juan's birth assured him impurity, but in reality his mere living assured him innocence.

While Don Juan was preparing to seduce his next victim, Donna Ana, he is discovered by her father, the commander. Don Juan is then challenged to a duel by the commander, which ends in Don Juan killing the commander and escaping. Later then, Donna Ana's fiancé Don Ottavio is set to capture and punish Don Juan. Days later, Don Juan passes by the tomb of the dead commander, and he hears a voice coming from the statue situated on the tomb, the voice informs him that he shall be punished for his sins. Don Juan, unfazed, jokingly invites the statue to have dinner with him. But later that evening, Don Ottavio arrives at Don Juan's house at the promised time. 'the statue' offers it's hand to Don Juan to take him to a different banquet, when he takes the statue's hand, he is caught by its freezing unbreakable grip. A pit then opens and drags Don Juan to hell.

Camus gives a different perspective to the story, he believes that when Don Juan was trying to seduce Donna Ana, the commander never arrived and Don Juan was never challenged to a duel, rather Don Juan was filled with shame and regret for this actions, leading him to his own demise in order to repent.

The Absurd Man: Drama

Albert Camus deals with the essence of theatre, the role of the actors in the play, and the fame of the actors and the play. He starts by quoting Hamlet's famous line "The play's the thing" demonstrating the role of the play of capturing people's attention and conscience. He claims that the main task of an actor is to capture the fleeting conscience, barely noticeable to the everyday man who enjoys not to tarry.

He compares the actor to a writer, though the writer's name and his work might turn into dust after a few years, his writing could be considered as evidence of who the writer was, which is seen in lots of writers who only became famous after their death e.g., Franz Kafka, Emily Dickinson, and Søren Kierkegaard. But an actor on the other hand, might succeed or not succeed, his acting, his gestures, and his silence will be buried as he his.

The actor needs to immerse himself in his imaginary form in order to perfect his role "transfusing his blood into their phantoms" (52) is a metaphor Camus uses to demonstrate that.

Camus uses an example of Shakespearean drama specifically the play "King Lear". He refers to the characters as "madmen" to demonstrate their disordered bodies.

Overall, Camus' analysis expresses the importance of physicality and emotional intensity in great drama, particularly in the portrayal of complex characters and the exploration of profound themes such as madness and human suffering.

The Absurd Man: Conquest

This part consists of a speech given by a fictional character created by Camus. By the name of the chapter, and the name of the character, it can be easily seen that he is speaking from his own experience as a member of the French resistance during World War II.

He is mostly focused of rebellion and resistance rather than world conquest. To the absurd man, all struggle is futile and no victory is eternal, but the struggle without hope is what defines his life.

This part of the essay shows Nietzsche's influence on Camus' work the most, he borrows some themes from Nietzsche. The German philosopher places significant importance on the idea of "self-overcoming", and the examination of Nietzsche's ideology can further explain Camus' perspective in the context.

The theme of self-improvement is mostly shown through the conqueror's reflection on the nature of human existence. The conqueror asserts the importance of clear thinking and firm belief, implying an acknowledgement of the need for self-reflection and personal development. This theme is very similar to ideas Nietzsche has implied in his work before;

"Yes, man is his own end. And he is his only end. If he aims to be something, it is in this life. Now I know it only too well. Conquerors sometimes talk of vanquishing and overcoming. But it is always 'overcoming oneself' that they mean. You are well aware of what that means." (57)

"What is good? All that heightens the feeling of power, the will to power, power itself. What is bad? All that is born of weakness. What is happiness? The feeling that power is growing, that resistance is overcome." *The Antichrist* by Friedrich Nietzsche. (50)

This is an example of the similar themes implied by the two philosophers. They both speak of overcoming weakness and fears to achieve true power. Camus says the importance of the rebel's struggle is not that he overcomes others but that he overcomes himself. After all, victory is as futile to a conqueror as fame is to an actor.

The reason why Camus presents this idea in the first place, is to relate the concept to the absurd and the French resistance. The conqueror can be portrayed as a man who prefers not to be involved in political issues, but has the duty thrown at him either way. With the oppression of the French people under the Nazi occupation, the freedom of speech and expression are made limited. And struggle is the only sensible thing one could do.

Absurd Creation: Philosophy and Fiction

Camus speaks of his own perspective of war, that it ought to be faced, lived, and experienced. It is not something that can be negated or escaped. War influences all in at least one way or more.

He then moves to the topic of comparing between the artist's experience and his work. He specifically mentions the novel *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. He argues that his art shows only a peak of the true experience, criticizing works that strive to explain everything, which he describes as pretentious and overloaded. He claims that true art arises from a wealth of experience and a filling of uncertainty.

He then goes to describe the intersection of thought, creation, and art. He relates philosophy with literature arguing that philosophers, like Immanuel Kant, are creators in their own right. Creating characters, plots, and systems to approach their philosophy. Camus disapproves of the classical

opposition between philosophy and literature, implying that most of the greatest novel writers are philosophers themselves. E.g., Honoré de Balzac, Marquis de Sade, Stendhal, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Marcel Proust, André Malraux, and Franz Kafka.

Absurd Creation: Kirilov

Kirilov the possessed is a character from the novel *Demons* by the famous Russian novelist, Fyodor Dostoevsky. He is an engineer who believes if life has a meaning he is the meaning of it, and if it has no meaning he must commit suicide, he then later concludes that life has no meaning and decides to commit suicide, which indicates that he was an absurd man.

“I decided last night that I did not care. I shall kill myself on order to assert my insubordination, my new and dreadful liberty” (68) Kirilov says before he finally kills himself.

Camus concludes that the motive behind Kirilov’s actions is to satisfy his inner desires; he kills himself to become the meaning of life and escape mortality to achieve immortal transcendence.

Kirilov is often portrayed as a ‘madman’ but he performs his gymnastics every morning to preserve his health. He is stirred by the joy of Chatov recovering his wife. On a sheet of paper to be found after his death he wants to draw a face sticking out his tongue at them. He is silly, passionate, and sensitive. Camus believes that Kirilov is not mad. And if he was, that means Dostoevsky is the one who’s mad.

He goes to complement Fyodor Dostoevsky’s philosophes and system settings, claiming that Dostoevsky has given an absurd world familiar and tormenting charms. He calls Dostoevsky an existential novelist rather than an absurd novelist, because he does not simply confront the absurdity of existence without seeking meaning or resolution. His works, specifically *The Brothers Karamazov* thus align closer to existentialism.

Absurd Creation: Ephemeral Creation

In the last part of the book, Camus addresses all the works he had previously mentioned. He deals with the role of art in expressing the absurd, claiming that all works are like whether it was a negative thought or a creative idea.

He implies that great work comes from the undefined and the incomplete once again. At last, Camus honors the diversity in art and thought. He highlights the importance of art in sculpturing the human destiny and discovering the meaning of existence.

The Myth of Sisyphus

At the end of the book, Camus tells the story of Sisyphus. It can be briefly explained as the following. Sisyphus, who is a character in Greek mythology, was a tyrant and a trickster who faked his death more than twice. And tricked Aegina by telling her father, Aesop, her secrets.

The second time Sisyphus dies, he finds himself in the underworld. Sisyphus pleads and persuades the Greek god Hades to bring him up again, after Hades does what he was asked for, Sisyphus escapes willing never to return to Hades.

Later then, Sisyphus dies again. But for his many blasphemies and tricks he was punished by the Greek god of war, Zeus to roll a rock up a hill over and over again for eternity.

Camus portrays Sisyphus as the hero of the absurd, through his character, his actions, his hatred for death, and his mockery of others. He claims that Sisyphus has chosen this destiny, conscious of all the means which led him to this fate. The rock is Sisyphus' world, and just like anyone who has found their meaning in life, Sisyphus is happy.

Conclusion

The concepts presented in the book and the author's ideologies are notably what attract the reader and are most worthy of credit rather than the presentation itself, which is sensed to be somewhat less chaotic with connected perceptions and careful analysis of everything implied by the author. The implication of this theme was not first done by Camus. Similar themes can be seen in other works by other authors, but Camus gave the most realistic demonstration and the best explanation.

The idea of embracing the absurd and acknowledging the meaninglessness of existence are obviously what is preached in the book. It would make more sense if looked at through Camus' point of view, but less sense if done otherwise. Everything is, in fact, pointless. No passion, goal, or dream can be justified if not regarded as an immersion in mortal warmth and loveliness. That is why there is a coherent reason for the contradiction and the existence of paradoxes between the perceptions of Camus and other philosophers. In the eyes of the everyday man, the conclusion to be able to live on and forth drawn by understanding the absurd and not the opposite (the decision to die) feels reassuring.

It is almost as if, even if Camus likes to admit otherwise, he still fears death and wishes to make sense of this desire to continue living. But it makes sense; he cannot force himself to overcome the fear of the undefined following death. He is not senseless enough to abandon the human emotions which are able to make him feel happy, proud, and satisfied even if they were another form of mortal loveliness.

Ultimately, the concept of embracing the absurd is only a reason made by Camus to excuse his desire to continue living and his dislike towards the idea of suicide. Which is why his ideologies differ from traditional philosophers. But finding his excuse reasonable; if living and dying could be put on even ground, they would be equivalent.

Hypothetically speaking, if someone was to believe that life means nothing and will always do, and he desire to cease this pointless existence, what good will suicide serve him? it would consider it a mere foolish method to escape what one cannot understand. It is not just foolish, it's also ridiculous. How could someone act as if they can understand death more than they do existence? If

somebody was to choose between what they have experienced and what they are totally ignorant of, they would choose the former. Despising the absurd gives no better results than embracing it.

Now that I have set my points clear on what views I show approval of, wish to address what I show disapproval of. The main theme I think was unnecessary yet was included by Albert Camus was the clear sarcasm he shows to the perceptions of other people. Even though Camus claims that to understand is to unify, he shows very clear distaste for other possible angles to the idea he's implying. I mentioned in the analysis that Camus believes Martin Heidegger only thinks and speaks of the anxiousness he acquires through living, but I find Camus' criticism on the topic extremely hypocritical when he himself only thinks and speaks of the absurd. Camus also claims that Lev Shestov remains drawing the same conclusions whilst rejecting all sorts of rationality. He says that while he himself also keeps colliding to the same conclusion, that we should live in delusion in order to obtain true satisfaction. Which is ironic because Albert Camus was labeled 'the closest philosopher to Lev Shestov' for palpable reasons.

Most of the authors Camus speaks of were either well past their 40s or dead when the -26year-old Camus wished to show his dissatisfaction towards their ideas. I do not think he can possibly believe that he acquires enough knowledge to be able to speak from their perspective. I am not saying that Camus is merely immature when addressing these people; I only believe that he should consider the possibility of him not being able to understand their experiences and which he shouldn't speak lightly of. With that point included I don't think Camus is able to speak from an equal ground when discussing their perceptions in his book if he fully believes that he can understand the experiences these philosophers are trying to demonstrate in their works.

Overall, I find Camus' works very enjoyable to read with his delightful ideas and the claims he makes which I think are the closest to the minds of the everyday people. Camus' emotions can be easily felt through his works, and his personality can be easily predicted when understanding his perspective. The ideas he usually demonstrates are a reflection of his own experiences and thoughts. Although having led a life of a misery, he remains trying to enjoy the delights and the sorrows he faces in his everyday life.

References

- [1] Alain, Systemedes Beaux. Arts, Gallimard, Paris, 1962.
- [2] Camus, Albert. The Myth of Sisyphus. Published in the United States by Alfred A. Knopf, 2018.
- [3] Camus, Albert. The Myth of Sisyphus, and Other essays. Trans. Justin O'Brien. New York: Vintage Books, 1961.
- [4] Camus, Albert. The Rebel. Trans. Anthony Bower. New York: Vintage International, 1991.
- [5] Foley, J. Albert Camus: From the Absurd to Revolt, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2008.
- [6] Lottman Herbert R. Albert Camus: A Biography. Publisher: Gingko Press, 2013.
- [7] Mélançon, M. Albert Camus: Analyse de sa Pensée, Fribourg: Éditions universitaires. 1976.
- [8] Miiller, Jeffrey. Albert Camus: Philosophical Suicide, Physical Suicide, and the Absurd. Published in Strawm*n, 2019. Sagi, A. Albert Camus and the Philosophy of the Absurd. Amsterdam: Editions Rodopi, 2002.
- [9] Sherman, D. Camus, Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008.

- [10] Skrimshire, S. A political theology of the absurd? Albert Camus and Simone Weil on social transformation. *Literature and Theology*. Published By: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- [11] Srigley, Ronald D. *Albert Camus's Critique of Modernity*. University of Missouri, 2011.
- [12] Todd, O. *Albert Camus: A Life*, New York: Knopf, 1997.