



An Examination of the Absurd in *The Myth of Sisyphus* and Absurd Drama

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Abstract

The philosophy of absurdity is predicated on the idea that the cosmos is meaningless and irrational, and that a person's quest for order causes them to clash with the universe. The purpose of the article is to examine the themes of absurdity and identify absurdity-related components in Albert Camus's work *The Myth of Sisyphus* and the idea of theater of absurdity.

Keywords: *Absurdism, absurd theatre, meaninglessness, human existence.*

Albert Camus, a famous philosopher who was born in Algeria in 1913, is most known for his concept of absurdity. Camus considers the challenging issues of life while living in Algeria and France. He has been described as an existentialist, reality seeker, journalist, spouse, and father. Camus, in my opinion, perceived the individuals he dealt with as kind, perceptive, and ordinary. Under Louis Germain's encouragement, Camus enrolled in a high school scholarship program in Algeria. He persisted in going to the University of Algeria to study philosophy and literature under Jean Grenier, his tutor. From the age of seventeen till the end of his life, Camus battled tuberculosis. At the age of twenty, he got married and later divorced. He started publishing his essays and literary/philosophical works in 1937, at the height of his career. Camus died in an automobile accident in 1960. An ironic example of the absurd is his untimely death.

In modern philosophy, religion, and the arts, the word "absurd" has grown to mean many diverse things because it represents the incapacity of morality to satiate human appetites. The word's derivation comes from the Latin phrase "absurdus-a-um," which implies irrational, out of place, foolish, ridiculous, discordant, etc. Consequently, something is deemed absurd if it blatantly violates reason, common sense, proportion, or consensus. It is that which is meaningless since it defies logic or is illogical. The absurdist concept is slightly related to existentialism and nihilism.

The first to explain existentialist philosophy's modern implications was the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, who developed it by addressing human crises (Solomon).

Life is full with absurdity, according to Albert Camus. But when one knows how meaningless and absurd life is, death is not always necessary. Even though we spend a significant amount of time hoping for a better day, this better day just helps to draw attention to the fact that death is the ultimate enemy of life on Earth. By doing

this, Albert Camus claimed that resorting to suicide as a means of escaping the absurdity of life would surely signify a total failure on the part of the individual. According to him:

“There is only one really serious problem , and that is suicide.”

This will therefore equal to surrendering to absurdity rather than giving life meaning. He therefore demands a full "revolt" against the absurd, despite the fact that there is no assurance that we will eventually triumph. Camus rejected existentialist explanations because of this. According to Camus, accepting absurdity is the closest one can get to being completely free, but freedom is unreachable beyond what the absurdity of existence enables (Camus). In order to deal with the realization of absurdity, he presents the concept of "acceptance without resignation." Human nature becomes as nearly completely free as is humanly conceivable in a world devoid of greater significance (Camus).

In The Myth of Sisyphus, Albert Camus explores the existential dilemma of why, given the folly of life, one should not end their own life. He used the perpetual suffering of Sisyphus—rolling a boulder uphill only to watch it roll back down—as a metaphor for the monotonous, seemingly pointless aspect of human existence. Camus contends that happiness can still be found in accepting life's absurdity and living passionately, even in the absence of a defined purpose, despite the seeming futility of Sisyphus' labor. Despite his seemingly never-ending battle, Sisyphus is able to achieve contentment because he accepts his fate. According to Camus, one can develop a greater appreciation for life itself by admitting the absurdity of existence.

In fact, Camus presents Sisyphus as a character who, in spite of his seemingly pointless endeavor, finds a kind of liberation and satisfaction in acknowledging the absurdity of his existence. He contends that there are still opportunities for contentment and satisfaction in a world without intrinsic meaning or purpose. Camus suggests accepting absurdity as a third alternative between giving in to hopelessness and turning to religion in search of false meaning. This means appreciating life's intrinsic instability and lack of ultimate purpose while still finding passion and delight in its experiences,

“ the feeling of absurdity does not spring from the mere scrutiny of a fact or an impression , but that it bursts from the comparison between a bare fact and a certain reality , between an action and the world that transcends it. The absurd is essentially a divorce. It lies in neither of the elements compared ; it is born of their confrontation.”

Accepting the absurd is living passionately in the face of uncertainty, rejecting the idea that life must have a fixed purpose, and embracing newfound independence from cultural expectations. Despite the lack of a distinct, overarching purpose, one can lead a full life by appreciating each moment and making the most of experiences. According to Camus's worldview, people should face life's absurdities head-on and find comfort and meaning in just being.

People have a feeling of confusion similar to skepticism when they confront the ludicrous. Camus and skeptics such as Descartes start off doubting everything and denying its intrinsic significance. Camus, on the other hand, welcomes doubt and promotes living completely within the absurd, whereas Descartes chooses religion or death to combat skepticism. Camus compares his method to existentialist philosophers like Kierkegaard and Kafka, who need leaps of faith to deal with the ridiculous. In the face of absurdity, these leaps avoid the intrinsic absence of truth. Camus, on the other hand, recognizes the limitations of human comprehension and embraces uncertainty. Hume's moderate skepticism, which admits questions but does not completely reject common sense, is consistent with this viewpoint. Camus contends that even in the lack of intrinsic meaning or purpose,

it is appropriate to enjoy life to the utmost, embracing revolt against suicide, freedom, and passion. Sisyphus, who represents acceptance of absurdity, takes satisfaction in doing the same thing over and over. Even though he knows what will happen to him, he returns down the hill feeling joyful. According to Camus, people can find purpose in their own seemingly pointless lives if Sisyphus can find contentment in his ridiculous lot.

A dramatic change in the literary scene occurred in 1953 when "Waiting for Godot" debuted at the Theatre de Babylone in Paris. This drama was so drastically unusual and enthralling that it effectively gave rise to the phrase "Theater of the Absurd." Related to Absurd, Camus says:

“ Like great works, deep feelings always mean more than they are conscious of saying .”

Samuel Beckett is the most influential person in this genre and is frequently referred to as its father or grand master. Even if other writers have contributed significantly to this movement, Beckett's impact is still unmatched. The Theater of the Absurd was not a planned, organized movement with well-defined philosophical tenets or coordinated recruitment campaigns. Rather, its principal playwrights, such as Arthur Adamov, Eugene Ionesco, Beckett, and Jean Genet, created their plays on their own. While the early plays of Edward Albee and Harold Pinter belong to this genre, they have also strayed from its core principles.

Expectations of logical storylines, psychologically grounded characterizations, and traditional locations must be abandoned while interacting with the plays of this movement. Rather, viewers are faced with mysterious stories, eerie environments, and a break from the cause-and-effect links and logical language communication of traditional drama. The authors use these confusing techniques to acclimate viewers to a new dynamic between theme and presentation, depicting an outside world that is familiar and unsettling, scary and poetic at the same time. Critics have categorized the plays as part of the 'Theater of the Absurd,' a classification influenced by Martin Esslin's influential work 'The Theatre of the Absurd.' This classification is rooted in the idea that these playwrights confront a profound sense of metaphysical anguish arising from the absurdity of human existence. In addition to the playwrights associated with the Theater of the Absurd, other notable writers such as Kafka, Camus, and Sartre have also delved into similar philosophical themes. The distinction between these writers lies in their approach; for instance, while thinkers like Camus engage in formal discourse to logically argue their positions, the Theater of the Absurd takes a different path by avoiding argumentation and instead utilizing concrete stage imagery to depict the absurdity of existence. Although there are overarching similarities, each playwright within the Theater of the Absurd movement has distinctive concerns and styles. These playwrights typically work independently, without manifestos or collaborations, and are often seen as solitary figures or rebels existing on the fringes of society. Therefore, it is important to evaluate Beckett's position within the Theater of the Absurd while acknowledging his individuality and the unique contributions he has made to this theatrical genre.

Conclusion:

In Albert Camus' *The Myth of Sisyphus* absurdism introduces us to a world where meaninglessness intersects with the human condition. The works present characters who find themselves in preposterous situations, serving as a reflection of Sisyphus's ceaseless task of pushing a boulder uphill. Through the absurdist perspective, we are confronted with the inherent absurdity of life, compelling us to confront the futility of our pursuits and the pursuit of grand narratives. It becomes evident that grappling with life's intrinsic absurdity may hold more significance than striving for elusive meanings. Despite the potential futility of seeking meaning, these works act as poignant reminders that the true value and richness of life stem from the struggle itself.

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