



INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES AND INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

(Peer-reviewed, Refereed, Indexed & Open Access Journal)

DOI : 03.2021-11278686

ISSN : 2582-8568

IMPACT FACTOR : 6.865 (SJIF 2023)

Existentialism and Absurdism

Parthiva Sinha

Department of English,
Bankura Sammilani College,
Bankura (West Bengal, India)

DOI No. **03.2021-11278686** DOI Link :: <https://doi-ds.org/doi/10.2023-44434223/IRJHIS2304015>

Abstract:

Two different philosophical concepts emerged in the preceding centuries that sought to address the effects of bloody conflicts, which resulted in destruction and human rights violations. These ideas, namely Absurdism and Existentialism, questioned the religious beliefs of people. One of these was the philosophy of existentialism, which was linked to Albert Camus and Jean-Paul Sartre, who became close friends during the Nazi occupation of Paris in the late 19th century. However, their relationship ended due to their opposing views on Communism. The goal of this paper is to analyze the differences and similarities between existentialism and Absurdism. It has been done through the comparison of the two plays, No Exit, and The Stranger, by Jean-Paul Sartre and Camus. The main difference between Existentialism and Absurdism is that the former provides a way of understanding humanity without relying on religious beliefs. It encourages individuals to find meaning within their lives, while the latter claims that searching for meaning in the world is pointless. The similarities and differences between existentialism and absurdism are revealed in the two works. In No Exit, the protagonist explores the idea of creating one's hell, while in The Stranger, the character is indifferent to society and the world around him. These two works show the varying ways in which existentialism and absurdism view humanity.

Keywords: Religion, philosophy, war, existential, absurdist.

Introduction:

Darwin's theory had a huge impact during the nineteenth century. His hypothesis was covered in his seminal work, On the Origin of Species. The debate about the nature of humans and the possibility of a greater power emerged. Religion and philosophy were pushed aside during this period due to the increasing number of scientific inquiries. However, after the two world conflicts in the 20th century, humanity went through tragedy and chaos. This led to a significant discussion about the existence of humans. A closer look at the works of the 20th century shows that the topic of human existence and survival became a crucial part of the discourse. The brutality of World War II was unlike anything the human race had experienced before. The events that occurred during the war

have left a lasting impression on the world. The Holocaust, as well as the indiscriminate bombing of cities such as Tokyo, raised questions about the morality and nature of mankind. How many individuals could have been complicit in the murder of countless innocent people? This and other questions also challenged people's moral responsibility and faith in humanity. Many writers discussed the idea of what it means to be a person in an era where the world seems to have lost its purpose. They talked about the importance of finding meaning in life and how resilient individuals can be. Others questioned if mankind could endure the immense amount of chaos and suffering that it has gone through. As a result, 20th-century literature explored the fundamental questions about human existence.

The discourse led to the formation of two major philosophical groups: Absurdism and Existentialism. The word "existentialism" was coined by Marcel Gabriel, a playwright cum philosopher hailing from France, and is associated with some of the most prominent philosophers such as Simone de Beauvoir and Sartre. The main concept of Existentialism is a rejection of conventional wisdom and philosophy that fails to address the complexity of life. Instead, it focuses on the individual's responsibility to act by their unique nature.

The concept of existentialism emphasizes the individual's responsibility for their actions and interactions with the outside world. It states that people's essences are not predetermined and that there is no universal truth. However, existentialists do not agree with certain concepts. The philosophy of existentialism emphasizes the individual's responsibility, freedom, and choice. It states that people are free to create their identities and decide what actions they should take based on their principles. According to existentialists, everyone has the possibility of creating meaning in their lives regardless of their external circumstances. One of the main principles of existentialism is that people are not born with a predetermined nature or a fixed essence. Instead, they can create their own identities through their actions and choices. This concept also rejects the idea that objective truth is a static and subjective construct. The concept of objective truth is rejected by Existentialism because it limits the freedom of individuals to determine their truth. Instead, it encourages people to accept a universal truth that is not imposed on them or by society. Although existentialists do not generally reject the concept of morality, they believe that it is not objective and can only be determined by individuals. They also do not reject the idea that personal identity can be defined by actions and choices.

Although many philosophers are focused on existentialism, some of them, such as Marcel, Jasper, and Kierkegaard, are "theists." Others, such as Sartre, De Beauvoir, and Heidegger, are "atheists."

The term absurdism is often used to refer to a philosophy that is related to existentialism, though it is different from existentialism in that it focuses on the absurd. In his 1942 essay, *The Myth*

of Sisyphus Albert Camus referred to absurdism as a type of philosophy. The Absurd philosophy talks about the difficulties of searching for meaning in life and the inability of humans to find it. The main figures who have written absurd literature include Eugene Ionesco, Samuel Beckett, and Albert Camus.

The paper explores the similarities and differences between the absurdist and existentialist perspectives of French author Albert Camus and French playwright Jean-Paul Sartre through their works, *The Stranger* and *No Exit*.

Brief Bio of Sartre:

Jean-Paul Sartre was a philosopher, playwright, and novelist. His contributions to twentieth-century thought were significant, such as his existentialism, which revolved around the idea of human dignity and freedom. His philosophy tackled various forms of existence, including politics, religion, and society.

Jean-Paul Sartre's works, including novels, plays, essays, and philosophical treatises, are all media that he utilized to present his ideas. He was uninterested in aesthetics, and his plays have been called "white and black." His thinking was more important than aesthetics, and he frequently shifted between different genres to accommodate his ideological needs.

As a child, Jean-Paul Sartre was not suited for playing with other kids because he had small and cross-eyed features, which would continue to follow him throughout his life. Due to his limited physical capabilities, he was able to develop a systematic and detached perspective during his early years.

He would often talk to his mother in the park to make new friends. When he learned that the kids his age weren't interested in him, he would often return home and start dreaming about his future. This was the background for his career, which would involve serious and profound thought and an artistic flair.

Born in 1905 in Paris, Jean-Paul Sartre was the child of a naval officer who passed away when he was only 15 months old. In 1916, his mother got married to a man whom he disdained. This caused him to feel dispossessed and abandoned. He later studied philosophy at the Superieure School of Arts, where he met his intellectual friend De Beauvoir. His first novel, *Nausea*, explores the concept of absurdity in existence. He also wrote *Le Mur*, a collection of stories that deal with the themes of sexual immorality, human relationships, and insanity.

After studying philosophy at the Superieure, Sartre met De Beauvoir, who would become one of his intellectual and personal companions. His first novel, *Nausea*, explored the concept of absurdity. He also wrote *Le Mur*, which tackled various themes such as human relationships, sexuality, and insanity. After World War II, Sartre was captured by the Germans and spent his time in prison. He would often write Christmas plays for his fellow inmates.

His first major literary achievement was *Nausea*, which was released in 1938. According to critics, it was his best work. The concept of experiencing a feeling of "nausea" while facing an irrational and meaningless universe emerged from the novel and inspired subsequent works by Sartre. Although different literary genres exist, the ideas that he presented in his works are similar.

Jean-Paul Sartre's pre-war work mainly defended human dignity and individual freedom, while his post-war writing heavily emphasized social responsibility. His growing admiration for Marxism also contributed to this development.

In 1943, Sartre debuted his first play, "The Flies," and then released his magnum opus, "Being and Nothingness," which became one of the most influential works of French literature. A year later he published another work, "No Exit," which sought to reveal his ideas on the human condition and freedom.

As a Marxist and an atheist, Sartre believed that commitment was an essential component of human dignity and freedom. He also believed that "scarcity" motivated progress. He often participated in protests and riots to verify his belief in the "revolution." During this period, the war had a significant influence on his thinking.

This work reinforced the basic ideas of existential thought that Sartre had previously announced. It also helped prepare him for a decade in which he would once again return to the theater to share his ideas with others. He wanted his audience to see the humanity in a way that reflected its current state. He believed that the theater suited this purpose. His plays show the raw emotions of people, and he argued that they don't exclude the idea of salvation.

In 1960, he published a highly complex and dense critique of Dialectical Reason. The essay "Search for a Method" is arguably the most complicated piece of intellectual property that he has ever written. It is regarded as one of the most influential works of philosophy and political science.

In 1964, Sartre was given the Nobel Prize for Literature. His autobiographical work "The Words" was regarded as one of the best of the twentieth century, and it was also praised by critics and readers. However, he refused to accept the award, as it was a cultural symbol that he did not desire to associate with.

During his final years, Sartre was working on a biography of French author Eugene Flaubert. He wanted to create a comprehensive picture of the artist through the use of various ideas, including those from Marx and Freud. Unfortunately, only three of the four planned volumes were completed before he died in 1980.

Regarded as one of the most significant writers and thinkers of the twentieth century, Sartre is known for his work on existentialism. Despite the time that has passed, his plays will remain valuable as illustrations of his philosophy. He chose to create visual illustrations of his ideas by composing them into a form that can be easily understood by readers.

While he resisted what he called bourgeois marriage, Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir were able to maintain a union that was a settled partnership throughout his life. Their memoirs, which were released in 1958 and 1960, provide an intimate portrait of his life.

He met many talented individuals at the *Cole Normale Supérieure* and the Sorbonne. Some of these included Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jean Hippolyte, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and Raymond Aron. From 1931 to 1945, he taught in various lycées in Paris, Laon, and Le Havre.

His teaching career was briefly interrupted twice, once in Berlin and once in 1939 when he was drafted for the war. He was imprisoned for a year before being released in 1940.

During his time in Le Havre, Sartre wrote *La Nausée*, which was released in 1938. The novel is about a certain person who experiences a feeling of revulsion when he is faced with the world of matter.

Critical observers regarded *La Nausée* as a pathological book, a kind of neurotic escape. Most likely, it will be regarded as an original and rebellious piece of literature, with several of Sartre's later philosophical ideas featured in its pages.

In addition to *La Nausée*, Sartre also contributed to the phenomenological method by taking over the work of Edmund Husserl. Through his various publications, including *L'Imagination*, *Imagination*, and *Sketch for a Theory of Emotions*, he was able to develop a deeper understanding of the concept of conscious experience.

In 1943, Sartre published *L'être et Le tre*, which was a remarkable work of intellectual originality and depth. He places human consciousness in opposition to thingsness and being. His message is a hopeful one, yet it is also full of tragic and pessimistic details. Despite the numerous implications it contains, Sartre's insistence on reminding us that human endeavor is useless and only produces useless results makes his book even more tragic.

Brief Bio of Albert Camus:

On November 7, 1913, Albert Camus was born in Algeria, and he was exposed to the harsh African sun and the Mediterranean Sea when he was young. These experiences inspired his various writings, including his novels and plays. His roots are a part of his values and ideas.

Early in his life, he was aware of the absurdity of humanity's complete isolation in a vast and beautiful universe. This concept, which he referred to as "In the beginning," is a recurring theme in his various writings. He refused to be misled by religious, social, and individual submissions that defied or ignored the fundamental truth about humanity's responsibility for its well-being. His works are a testament to his belief in the noble condition of humanity.

The death of Albert's father in 1914 occurred during the Battle of Marne. He was then taken care of by his deaf mother, who had no money. Albert spent most of his time in school, athletics, and part-time work.

A university degree was the most challenging goal for a poor student like Albert. Despite his enthusiasm for his studies, he was not able to finish them immediately.

During the 1930s, while he was studying philosophy at Algiers University, he almost died due to tuberculosis. He was then forced to support himself by working as a salesman and a police clerk.

He had previously been a Communist party member. In 1935, before he graduated from university, he established The Workers' Theater, which presented plays for the working class in Algiers.

In 1939, before his theater career ended, he published *L'Envers et Le'Endroit*, which explores the idea of death and man in terms of an unexamined universe. The mood pieces are written in a combination of ironic and lyrical language, and they describe humanity's isolation and defenselessness in a world that seems to have no rules.

In his essays, he encourages readers to live as if they have eternal worth. He also believes that mankind can only be saved from a nihilistic state by rebelling against its destructive nature.

Between 1937 and 1939, Albert Camus wrote reviews and essays for the *Algier Republicain*, a left-wing newspaper. Later, he took over the reins of the *Soir Republicain*, but only for a brief period. He was very critical of the French government and was left unemployed after the newspaper closed. After the Germans invaded France in 1940, he decided to leave Algeria and lived in Paris.

He worked for the *Paris-Soir* for a couple of years, but his career in journalism was once again curtailed when the Germans invaded France.

In 1942, after finishing his studies in France, Albert Camus decided to join the French Resistance. He then established *Combat*, which was a secret newspaper that he had been editing during the occupation. After the war was over, he continued editing *Combat* for four years. His works, such as *The Misunderstanding* and *The Caligula*, were presented during the war. In 1945, he toured the US and talked about the country's national power.

Both of his works, *The Misunderstanding* and *The Caligula*, were presented in 1944, but the former did not receive a good response. In 1945, he toured the US and talked about the country's national power.

In June 1947, he published *The Plague*, which was regarded as a major literary work. Both the public and the critics loved the somber and narrated allegory. Unlike other popular books, it did not have a strong romantic plotline, a captivating setting, or a compelling main character.

The Plague was a fitting depiction of the months that people went through during the war. They were able to relate to the author because he had faithfully recorded the suffering of those who were separated and exiled.

In 1949, Albert Camus went into total seclusion after he got sick following his trip to South

America. He only occasionally released more political essays and published a book about historical, metaphysical, and artistic revolt entitled *The Rebel*. The book was a controversial work that broke his friendship with Jean-Paul Sartre.

After returning to North Africa, Albert Camus started teaching at a private school for girls in Oran. While he was there, he continued to write and draw sketches for his other works, such as *The Stranger* and *Myth of Sisyphus*. He also worked on a new novel entitled *The Plague*.

The *Stranger's* initial sentences have become associated with ironic or absurd situations. Before, the public had never heard of a man like Meursault, who was so honest. He is an ordinary clerk who doesn't believe in God but is incapable of lying. He also believes in going to the movies and swimming. He was executed for killing an Arab, but he was also condemned for his indifferent attitude toward his mother's funeral. After being imprisoned, Meursault became aware of his happiness, which is like what the Oranians experienced in *The Plague*. He will be able to experience his final moments with a smile and an angry crowd around him.

After *The Rebel*, he began translating other works by international playwrights. Some of these included works by Caldern, Faulkner, and Buzzati. His political essays also appeared in more collections.

In 1956, he released a new novel called *The Fall*. It is about a lawyer who, after refusing to help a suicidal woman, begins to question his own actions. The novel is as polished as *The Stranger*. His confessions are rich with penetrating and precise views on modern society.

In 1957, he received a Nobel Prize for Literature. On January 4, 1960, he was killed in a car accident. His death has been regarded as an absurdity, with many eulogists commenting on its suddenness, lack of logic, and its uselessness. Although he was aware of the importance of his own life, he would often refer to his meaningless death as the main witness to his work.

Discussion:

Sartre's *No Exit* is regarded as a classic example of existentialist literature. Sartre's characters are locked up in a room in hell, and their every move is monitored by a guard. The characters try to explore various themes related to freedom, responsibility, and identity. The play also emphasizes how people are made accountable for their actions, and that they are defined by their choices.

The Stranger by French author Albert Camus is a great example of absurdism. It follows the life of a French Algerian named Meursault, who kills a man from an Arab background. The novel explores various themes like irrationality of existence, isolation, and meaninglessness. Meursault exhibits the absurdities of human life due to his indifference to the outside world.

No Exit was a single-act play that was performed in 1944 and released in 1945. The title of the play, which is also known as *Huis clos* in French, refers to hell as other people instead of God's creation. The play begins with the bellman welcoming three individuals into a room. These are

Garcin, who betrayed his cause; Inez, a predatory lesbian; and Estelle, a nymphomaniac. Each of these characters requires another person to define themselves, but they are most attracted to the one who is most likely to disassociate themselves from them. Their inability to escape makes them feel like they are in hell.

Garcin is a cruel and prevaricator guy. During the WWII, he fled the military and openly cheated on his spouse. He continues his affairs even when he is at home and demands his spouse to deliver coffee to bed sans showing any remorse for his spouse. He disappoints Inez since she is aware of his deficiencies and has feelings for Estelle. Even so, if she treats him like a man, which isn't the reality, he will feel macho, which isn't true.

The second character, Inez, a stubborn and intelligent postal worker, has been sent to hell due to her cruel and abusive behaviour toward others. When the valet brought her to the drawing rooms, she assumed that Garcin was her torturer. However, he quickly disproved this notion. Inez eventually learned that she, along with fellow inmates Estelle and Garcin, are supposed to inflict pain on one another. Garcin was stunned by Inez's revelation, and he suggested that everyone should refrain from speaking. Inez, on the other hand, was unwilling to keep to herself. When fellow inmate Estelle asked for a mirror, Inez told her that she would become her "glass." Even though she knows that Inez is trying to make her observations about her appearance, Estelle still doesn't like how she constantly stares at her. When she confessed that she wished Garcin would have noticed her, Inez blamed him for not being interested in her. After Garcin told them that they were sent to hell, Inez revealed that she had been working her way into Florence's heart. She managed to convince Florence to leave her husband after he got hit by a tram. Then, a few days later, she and Inez were killed when Florence accidentally turned on the gas stove while they were sleeping. As the three of them continued talking, Inez continued to resent Garcin. Garcin eventually realized that he wanted Inez's approval, and he tried to convince her that he was not a coward. Inez, however, refused to give him this relief. She said that he would always be a coward due to her wish. Inez was the only character who accepted her fate in hell.

The last prisoner who is frightened is Estelle. She is distraught because she just died of pneumonia, and she doesn't believe that she should be in hell. Inez tries to tempt her with the idea of having sex, but she insists that she needs a man. She also confessed to drowning her lover's baby. Garcin is briefly attracted to her, but he decides to focus his attention on Inez instead.

No Exit explores the intriguing concept of Hell. Unlike in real Hell, there is no apparent torture. Its setting is a room with only a single door and three couches, and it consists of a vast area that is devoid of any luxuries, human privileges, or mundane human activities. Upon entering Hell, the three realize that they have already died. The place begins to take shape as its essence begins to emerge.

The Stranger, which is the first novel by Albert Camus, is both a masterpiece and an illustration of his absurdist ideas. Set in French Algiers, it features the story of Meursault, who is a puerile man who works as a shipping clerk. The tale commences with Meursault receiving a telegram informing him about his mother's death. Although he was at his mother's funeral, his eccentric and detached demeanour caught the attention of everyone in attendance. A few days later, he met a beautiful woman named Maria, who became his new friend. They spend their time together watching comedy movies and sleeping together. When Maria first learned that Meursault had lost his mother, she was surprised. The next couple of weeks, which he spent in strange ways, seemed to have nothing to do with tragic events. The man whom Meursault kills is the brother of Raymond's mistress, and he is not someone he is interested in. He only used the weapon to kill him because, at the time, it was already taken away from Raymond. The oppressive sun that day made it even more unbearable. According to Albert Camus, the murder that Meursault committed seems random and senseless. He does not provide Meursault with a motive because he is simply a reflection of the universe's irrational and indifferent nature. Any attempt to find a reason behind the killing would be unsuccessful because it is meant to be absurd.

It was revealed during his trial that the court was more interested in his behaviour at his mother's funeral than the crime he committed. He was regarded as an odd, enigmatic, and misanthropic individual, and he was sentenced to death. A chaplain tried to convince him to seek pardon three times, but he still refused. He also stated that he doesn't believe in God and doesn't want to live anymore. Everything in his life is meaningless and useless. He was so annoyed by his behaviour that he tried to beat him. He also denounced God and Christianity. He wanted a new life, but he didn't believe in the afterlife. He said that everything in his life was meaningless, and he had no desire to seek pardon.

Camus does not optate us to cerebrate Meursault as a stranger who lives outside of his society, but as a man who is a stranger within his society. Had Meursault been some kind of outsider, a foreigner, then quite probably his acts would have been accepted as irrational evil. But Meursault was not an outsider; he was a member of his society—a society that wanted meaning behind action and demeanour. Meursault is confined for failing to cry at his mother's funeral. The hero is condemned because he does not participate in the game. Keeping this thing in view, he is an outsider to the society in which he lives, wandering on the fringe, on the outskirts of life, solitary and sensual. If we optate to get a more precise picture of his character, we must ask ourselves in what way Meursault doesn't play the game. Meursault doesn't play the game in the sense that he is relucts to prevaricate. Lying is not only saying what is erroneous. It is withal saying more than is veritable; it is verbalizing more than one feels. To make life simple, we all do it every day. The hero of the novel, Meursault, doesn't optate to make life simpler. He is a unique engenderment, flat but very natural,

resplendent but not sentimental, emotional, or feeling. He verbally expresses who he is. He relucts to obnubilate his feelings. Society immediately feels threatened. For example, he is asked to verbalize that he regrets his malefaction in a time-venerated fashion. He replies that he feels more exasperation about it than veritable regret. And it's this nuance that condemns him. So it can be verbalized that Meursault is an indigent and unclad man, in love with a sun that leaves no shadows. Far from destitute of all sensibility, he is driven by a tenacious and ergo profound zealousness, the ardency for the absolute and the veracity. This veracity is as yet a negative one, a veracity born of living and feeling, but without which no triumph over oneself or the world will ever be possible. The Outsider is the story of a man who, without any heroic pretensions, concurs to die for veracity. The inscriber Albert Camus has endeavoured to make his character represent the only Christ that we visually examine. In the middle of the widespread perspicacious and moral bewilderment that followed World War Two, Camus was a voice advocating the moral and convivial values of equity and human dignity. Though his vocation was cut short, he remains one of the most influential authors of the twentieth century, regarded both for the quality of his fiction and the depth and insightfulness of his philosophy.

At first, Garcin appeared to be a very nice and noble individual. However, as the play progresses, it is revealed that he despised his wife very much. He only remembered her when she got on his nerves. While talking about his life events, he told a story that mirrored his character -

Well, here's something you can get your teeth into. I brought a half-caste girl to stay in our house. My wife slept upstairs; she must have heard-everything. She was an early riser and, as I and the girl stayed in bed late, she served us our morning coffee. (Sartre,1989, p-25)

This narration reveals that he was a womanizer and a sexual deviant. He used to dominate and have sexual desires for other women. Although his words indicate that he had no sexual relations with his wife, she still wanted him. This is a fitting depiction of the theory of desire.

In the second example, the lovely Estelle is an objective individual who is only conscious of her appearance. She desires to be admired by men, even in Hell. When Garcin approaches her, she merely looks at him to become his center of attraction:

GARCIN: And you didn't want one?

ESTELLE: I certainly didn't. But the baby came, worse luck. I went to Switzerland for five months. No one knew anything. It was a girl. Roger was with me when she was born. It pleased him no end, to have a daughter. It didn't please me! (Sartre, 1989, p-28)

The murder and betrayal of her lover were the main reasons she went to Hell. She was so consumed by materialism that she neglected her lover's love and killed her daughter. According to Sartre's theory of sexual desire, physical activity is the best way to satisfy this urge.

Another example of Sartre's sexual perversion is Inez, whom he refers to as cruel. She desires

to be with Florence the same way that she did with her ex-lover, but she doesn't have any attachment to her.

Meursault's desire for Marie was more apparent than her feeling for him. Although he was imprisoned, we can also see that he misses his physical attachment to her. In all of the cases, the characters show their detachment from love by dealing with their partners as objects rather than people. They are slaves to their desires for sex, and they view it as an extension of their physical needs.

Sartre and Camus are of the view that the world is meaningless and that it is we who give meaning and interpretation. Their ideas can be seen in their work, as Inez stated-

To forget about the others? How utterly absurd! I feel you there, in every pore. Your silence clamours in my ears. You can nail up your mouth, cut your tongue out - but you can't prevent your being there. Can you stop your thoughts? I hear them ticking away like a clock, tick-tock, tick-tock, and I'm certain you hear mine. (Sartre, 1989, p-22)

The drawing room's setting supports the idea that a limited universe is empty and cannot attract people. It also indicates that the world is meaningless. Meursault is completely indifferent to the world around him. He is influenced by other consciousness' interpretations of it.

The other existential concept is "existence precedes essence," which allows man to choose his essence without being bound. The major idea that underlies this doctrine is the rejection of God. In the play *No Exit*, there is no obvious rejection, but the immoral actions of all three characters imply that they have no spiritual connection to the deity. On the other hand, being an absurd hero, Meursault has a very clear rejection of God and Christianity because he knows they are unworthy and beyond physicality. As he argued with the chaplain about the existence of God: "I explained that I didn't believe in God." (Camus, 72)

Deplorable faith is another notion of existentialism and absurdism which states that relying on others to engender your essence is the cause of lamentable faith because one is unable to take responsibility for his actions. Garcin and Estelle are prime examples of lamentable faith.

When the door opens, Garcin is not able to leave because he is unable to take responsibility for his actions and cannot face his decision to absquatulate from his army, which was a pusillanimous act. As a result, he closes the door once more and chooses to be judged by Inez, and allows her to create his essence, as he says.-

GARCIN: It's because of her I'm staying here.

[ESTELLE releases INEZ and stares dumbfoundedly at GARCIN.]

INEZ: Because of me? [Pause.] All right, shut the door. It's ten times hotter here since it opened. [GARCIN goes to the door and shuts it.] Because of me, you said?

GARCIN: Yes. You, anyhow, know what it means to be a coward.

INEZ: Yes, I know.

GARCIN: And you know what wickedness is, and shame, and fear. There were days when you peered into yourself, into the secret places of your heart, and what you saw there made you faint with horror. And then, the next day, you didn't know what to make of it, you couldn't interpret the horror you had glimpsed the day before. Yes, you know what evil costs. And when you say I'm a coward, you know from experience what that means. Is that so? (Sartre, 1989,p-42)

Like other people, Estelle relies on others. Although she doesn't accept the blame for her lover's suicide, she still believes that she is capable of self-expression. She also believes that Inez can tell her about a particular skin condition, which shows how Inez developed her. This concept of deplorable faith is availed by Sartre's verbalization that "Hell is other people." (Sartre, 1989,p-45)

Inez is not afraid to make her own decisions, and she knows how to control others. Like Meursault, Inez is honest about her past actions. Both are comfortable with taking responsibility for their mistakes, this being a major characteristic of Absurdism.

Both Garcin and Estelle can't stop thinking about their past lives. They still talk about their past lives and can't focus on their present. On the other hand, Meursault and Inez don't care about their past nor do they recall what happened to them. Inez's viewpoint is that all that matters is "here." She doesn't believe that she can justify herself by looking back on what she used to be. Instead, she chooses to live in her present and accept the reality of Hell as she is. According to Sartre, life begins on the "other side of despair."

Both Inez and Meursault share similar opinions on the subject. Meursault believes that no matter where you are in life, you will still find yourself happy. He was released from prison and despite his situation, he was still able to feel happy. He also stated that he wanted to live a full life and that he was close to death at one point, but he was still able to see life through the lens of his passion. He is conscious of what he does and gainsays that it is morally good or deplorable-

I was sure of myself, sure about everything, far surer than he; sure of my present life and of the death that was coming. That, no doubt, was all I had; but at least that certainty was something I could get my teeth into—just as it had got its teeth into me. I'd been right, I was still right, and I was always right. (Camus,p-74)

Because he is an absurdist, he does not believe in abstract things. He appreciates Marie's dress, body, and cachinnation because they are concrete, but does not probe for her profound appreciation. He does not mourn his mother's death, as grief is an abstract thing, and he does not possess it. He believes in what he can perceive, such as sunlight, which he regards as his adversary.

Existentialism and Absurdism: Difference -

We must revisit the fundamental principles of existentialism to comprehend the distinctions

between it and absurdism.

Existence Comes First:

We encounter things that we haven't seen before. Since there is no universal human being, everyone must develop their identities through interaction with other people. Aside from what we do, humans are only human until they act in a certain way.

Absurdity:

Human reasoning suffers from two problems: defective reasoning and the inability to account for certain elements of the universe. We tend to be driven by our desires and emotions, such as power and anxiety.

Alienation:

Science has shown that reason can artificially separate us from the world around us. We are separated from God, technology, nature, other men, and ourselves.

Angst:

We all have fears about the future, but we also have concerns about taking responsibility for our actions, such as the sorrow of Abraham. Each of us is different, and we can't be put below the universal moral code. Occasionally, we must make decisions that are not in line with the guidelines.

The Meeting with Nothing:

We are on the edge of the Void, and there is nothing that can be accepted or relied on.

In existentialist literature, including works by Albert Camus, the concept of the absurd is frequently explored. The conflict between the outside world's illogical silence and the needs of humans is the inspiration for this concept.

The term absurdism refers to a subgroup of existentialism that is focused on the absurd. Although it is often regarded as a subfield of the philosophy of existentialism, it does not necessarily imply that it is a necessary part of the group's work.

The difference between absurdism and existentialism is how they approach the concept of what gives life meaning. While existentialist philosophy holds that we must create our meaning, absurdism claims that the cosmos is meaningless. Existence comes before essence, according to the existentialist axiom; after being born, we exist before deciding to create our essence and purpose.

Contrarily, absurdism focuses on the conflict between a meaningless universe and our ongoing search for significance. The absurd emerges because of this tension. According to Absurdists, all of us are caught up in this tension, leaving us with three options: commit suicide, reject absurdity, seek solace in myths and religion, or accept absurdity. Accepting the meaninglessness of it all and moving on, to keep living and living well, requires embracing the absurd. Camus famously used the metaphor of Sisyphus dragging a boulder up a hill in his *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942) for all of eternity to demonstrate this. Camus says, "The body's judgment is as good as the mind's, and the

body shrinks from annihilation. [Humans] get into the habit of living before acquiring the habit of thinking” (Camus, p-7).

According to the epistemological and philosophical foundations of absurdism, there is no objective meaning in existence. This notion is the central idea of the work of absurdists, who are artists and thinkers. The existentialist philosophy is a positive one that encourages people to live their lives in unique and meaningful ways. It values free will and doesn't believe in the conventional idea of truth. This philosophy aims to help people become true to themselves and purge their lives of all the lies.

An existentialist is a person who believes that the meaning of life is only found in the individual. Despite the difficulties of life, which include loneliness, isolation, and frustration, existentialists try to find happiness in a world that is characterized by absurdity, alienation, and inauthenticity.

The existentialist philosophy focuses on the idea that man is full of anxiety and despair because he doesn't find any meaning in life. He merely exists until he decides on his own.

Wikipedia article states-

The term "absurdism" is most closely associated with the philosophy of Albert Camus. However, important precursors and discussions of the absurd are also found in the works of Søren Kierkegaard. Absurdism is intimately related to various other concepts and theories. Its basic outlook is inspired by existentialist philosophy. However, existentialism includes additional theoretical commitments and often takes a more optimistic attitude toward the possibility of finding or creating meaning in one's life. Absurdism and nihilism share the belief that life is meaningless. But absurdists do not treat this as an isolated fact and are instead interested in the conflict between the human desire for meaning and the world's lack thereof. Being confronted with this conflict may trigger an existential crisis, in which unpleasant experiences like anxiety or depression may push the affected to find a response for dealing with the conflict. Recognizing the absence of objective meaning, however, does not preclude the conscious thinker from finding subjective meaning in arbitrary places. (Wikipedia contributors)

According to Blackham, the concept of existentialism is a voice that expresses opposition to the absurdity of the concept of pure thought. It is a condemnation of the idea that the only thing that matters is the immanent nature of being. It also recalls the observer's journey from pure thought to conditioned thinking (Blackham,2).

The founder of absurdism, Albert Camus, was heavily influenced by existentialist philosophy, particularly the works of Jean-Paul Sartre. However, he ultimately rejected some of the key tenets of existentialism, such as the idea that individuals have complete freedom to create

meaning in life. Instead, Camus argued that life is inherently meaningless and that the human condition is marked by a sense of absurdity.

In his essay *The Myth of Sisyphus* Camus famously described the human condition as being like that of Sisyphus, condemned to push a boulder up a hill for eternity, only to have it roll back down again. Despite the futility of his task, Sisyphus must continue pushing the boulder, just as humans must continue living despite the inherent meaninglessness of their lives.

Existentialism emphasizes individual freedom and responsibility, and the importance of personal choice and subjective experience. Absurdism, on the other hand, rejects the idea that life has any inherent meaning or purpose and posits that humans exist in a fundamentally meaningless and irrational world.

Absurdism also emphasizes the importance of individual experience and perception, suggesting that the search for objective meaning and truth is ultimately futile. Instead, individuals must create their own meaning and purpose in life, even if it is based on a recognition of the absurdity and meaninglessness of existence.

While existentialism and absurdism share some commonalities, it is important to recognize the distinct differences between the two philosophical schools. Absurdism is not simply a branch of existentialism, but a distinct philosophy that has its own unique contributions to offer.

Conclusion:

The crux of *No Exit* is the notion that hell is other people. Difficulties are not as arduous as they become because of others. Our perception of the world is built by our circumventions. Every conception is shaped by the people with whom we reside. Their opinions form our opinions and even how we act and move in society. Only the sense of being looked over by others makes us conscious of ourselves. It places us in a position to be as impeccable as anything can be and not make a single error, for we are being optically discerned by others. The three characters in this play are bound to be in that room, and they cannot leave it. They wait for an executioner, but no one comes in. They realize, sooner or later, that they are being tortured by one another. The hell in which they are confined is hell because others are there with them. The door would not open, and even when it did, they would not leave for trepidation of the unknown. So, by "Hell is other people," Sartre means that we are unable to escape the watchful gaze of everyone around us. The denial of the essential basis of human freedom and responsibility is what Sartre refers to as "bad faith." Each character keeps lying to themselves even though they are already dead and have nothing to lose. Being true to oneself is one of the fundamental existentialist principles through the characters, Sartre explores the issue of existence and essence, which leads to his central thesis that existence comes before essence. An individual initially exists, and then via his actions, he makes himself (his essence); he is what he does. The complete accountability for one's conduct that comes with this freedom of choice gives

rise to worry. Because of their worry, a lot of people choose to act in bad faith by allowing others to make decisions for them, disregarding their freedom and responsibility.

No Exit supports the idea that mental anguish is worse than physical anguish. A person is reduced to the status of a question by the very appearance of other people. In Sartre's existentialism, being close to other people irritates a person since their appearance has the power to reduce that person to a protest. At that moment, in the action, eyes are weapons and judgements are bullets. The ability to categorize people based on appearances and judgements develops into a method of possession and control (Devaki, pp172).

Meursault exhibits a lack of emotion throughout *The Stranger*. He barely cried during his mother's funeral, and he was fixated on how the sun was beating down on the procession. He also showed little interest in Marie's proposal. He accepts that they can get the benefit of society's norms, but he also makes it clear that he doesn't care. This reflects his interest in the corporeal, and the various philosophical ideas of existentialism and absurdity are revealed throughout the book. Conceived as an attempt to impose rationality and meaning on an irrational and meaningless universe, absurdity is the central concept of the novel. Meursault's thoughts and behaviour reflect this concept. His external world is mainly controlled by his observations of his surroundings. Camus was among the most important authors of the 20th century, as is evident from his literary output. Camus wants us to understand that the universe you live in is not governed by reason; as a result, trying to defend every action it does would just waste your remaining time on this planet. He advises us to accept this and strive to make the most of our time here rather than being unhappy and miserable about it. Even if anything goes wrong, we should understand that there is no rhyme or reason to it and that anything can occur at any time. Janet Mcknight comments-

Camus famously built up this novel from the half-hearted joke that any man who did not cry at his mother's funeral would be found guilty of murder. From this quip beginning, Camus's novel ends beautifully with Meursault's outbreak of rage against a persistent chaplain, causing Meursault to feel washed clean of hope, and ready to open himself to "the gentle indifference of the world." With this, the reader is left to ponder their existence among the many possible strangers in the world, including themselves and the ideals that they shun or embrace. Are we as readers, as writers, as human beings, only able to discover the 'internal stranger' in ourselves once we become free from all hope? And for the legal minds of the group, we can wonder whether the journey of law itself requires a penchant for absurdity or for imagination, and which of these indulgences would be 'stranger' in real life than in fiction... (Mcknight)

The plays *No Exit* and *The Stranger* are highly significant in comprehending the ideas of existential and absurdist philosophy. Upon comparing them, the researcher has discovered that both

philosophies share almost identical concepts with a few differences. For instance, Inez chooses freedom to live in her own way and creates her essence by torturing others in Hell. On the other hand, Meursault also chooses freedom, but he does not create his essence; instead, he is free by accepting that "life is absurd," and creating essence in this world is also absurd.

Works Cited:

1. Blackham, Harold John. *Six Existentialist Thinkers*. United Kingdom, Taylor & Francis, 2012.
2. Camus, Albert. *The Stranger*. New York, Vintage Books, 1942.
3. Camus, Albert, and Justin O'Brien. *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*. New York, Vintage Books, 1955.
4. Devaki, V.. (2019). Jean-Paul Sartre's No Exit in Relation to Power and Torment. 12. 172-176.
5. McKnight, Janet. (2014). Stranger Than Fiction? That's Absurd! A Book Review of Albert Camus' *The Stranger*. 10.13140/2.1.4676.6882.
6. Sartre, Jean-Paul, and Stuart Gilbert. *No Exit and Three Other Plays*. Reissue, Vintage, 1989.
7. Wikipedia contributors. "Absurdism." Wikipedia, 29 Mar. 2023, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Absurdism#:~:text=The%20term%20%22absurdism%22%20is%20most,various%20other%20concepts%20and%20theories

