



## Exploring Absurdity in Myth of Sisyphus and Theatre Of Absurd

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### Abstract

Absurdity is a philosophy based on the notion that the universe is irrational and meaningless and that the looking for order brings the man or woman into conflict with the universe. The paper's goal is to investigate the themes of Absurdity and trace out the elements of Absurdity within the book the *Myth of Sisyphus* by Albert Camus and notion of Theatre of Absurd.

**Key words:** absurdism, meaninglessness, absurdity theatre

irrational, out of place, silly, ridiculous, discordant, etc., is where the word got its etymology. Therefore, something that clearly defies logic, common sense, proportion, or consensus is considered ludicrous. It is that which is pointless since it is illogical or logically conflicting. The philosophies of nihilism and existentialism are somewhat connected to the absurdist notion. Soren Kierkegaard, a Danish philosopher who created existentialist philosophy by addressing human crises, was the first to articulate its contemporary implications (Solomon).

### I. Introduction

The renowned philosopher Albert Camus, who was born in Algeria in 1913, is most known for his term absurdity. Camus spent his existence in Algeria and France considering the difficult questions of life. He has been referred to as a reality seeker, existentialist, journalist, husband, and father. In my perspective, Camus saw the people he interacted with as warm, sensitive, yet regular people. In Algeria, Camus became a high school scholarship student under the influence of Louis Germain. He persevered to study literature and philosophy at the University of Algeria under his mentor, Jean Grenier. Camus suffered from tuberculosis from the time he was seventeen till the end of his life. He got married when he was twenty and got divorced. In 1937, throughout the height of his profession, he commenced publishing his literary/philosophical works and essays. In 1960, Camus was killed in a car crash. His unexpected dying is an ironic instance of the Absurd

### The origin of the word absurd

The word "absurd" has come to signify a great deal of different things in contemporary philosophy, theology, and the arts, as it symbolises the inability of morality to satisfy human desires. The Latin term "absurdus-a-um," which means

### The purpose of life

According to Albert Camus, absurdity abounds in life. However, suicide is not always necessary when one realizes how pointless and ridiculous life is. Even while a large portion of our existence is based on the expectation of a better day, this better day merely serves to highlight our impending death, which is the ultimate foe of life on Earth. By doing this, Albert Camus said that turning to suicide as a way out of the absurdity of existence would undoubtedly indicate a complete failure on the side of the individual. Then, rather than giving life purpose, this will amount to giving in to absurdity. Therefore, even though there is no guarantee that we will ultimately succeed, he calls for a complete "revolt" against the ridiculous. For this reason, Camus rejected existentialist explanations. Freedom, for Camus, is unachievable beyond what the absurdity of existence permits; however, the nearest one could approach being absolutely free is by way of accepting the absurd (Camus). He, therefore, introduces the idea of "acceptance without resignation" as a means of dealing with the recognition of absurdity. In a world devoid of higher meaning, human nature becomes as close to absolutely free as is humanly possible (Camus).



### **Absurdity of life in camus' myth of sisyphus**

In Albert Camus' *The Myth of Sisyphus*, he delves into the existential question of why one shouldn't commit suicide in the face of life's absurdity. He explores Sisyphus' eternal punishment, rolling a rock uphill only to watch it roll back down, as a metaphor for the repetitive, seemingly meaningless nature of human existence. Despite the apparent futility of Sisyphus' task, Camus argues that happiness can still be found in embracing the absurdity of life and living passionately, even without a clear purpose. Sisyphus' acceptance of his fate allows him to find contentment in the midst of his seemingly endless struggle. Camus suggests that by acknowledging the absurdity of existence, one can find a deeper appreciation for life itself.

Camus indeed portrays Sisyphus as a figure who, despite his seemingly futile task, finds a sort of freedom and contentment in accepting the absurdity of his existence. He argues that in a world devoid of inherent meaning or purpose, there are still avenues for fulfilment and happiness. Rather than succumbing to despair or seeking false meaning through religion, Camus proposes embracing the absurd as a third option. This entails acknowledging the inherent chaos and lack of ultimate meaning in life, yet still finding joy and passion in the experiences it offers.

Accepting the absurd means rebelling against the notion that life must have a predetermined purpose, embracing newfound freedom from societal expectations, and living passionately in the face of uncertainty. By valuing each moment and maximising experiences, one can lead a fulfilling life despite the absence of a clear, overarching meaning. Camus's philosophy encourages individuals to confront the absurdity of existence head-on, finding solace and purpose in the very act of living itself.

When individuals confront the absurd, they encounter a sense of uncertainty akin to scepticism. Both Camus and sceptics like Descartes begin by questioning everything and rejecting inherent meaning. However, while Descartes opts for faith or suicide to counter scepticism, Camus embraces uncertainty and advocates for living fully within the absurd. Camus contrasts his approach with that of existentialist philosophers like Kafka and Kierkegaard, who resort to leaps of faith to cope with the absurd. These leaps evade the inherent lack of truth in the face of absurdity. In

contrast, Camus accepts uncertainty and acknowledges the limitations of human understanding. This perspective resonates with Hume's mitigated scepticism, which acknowledges doubts but doesn't entirely dismiss common sense. Camus argues that it's reasonable to live life to the fullest, embracing revolt against suicide, freedom, and passion, even in the absence of inherent meaning or purpose. Sisyphus, embodying acceptance of the absurd, finds contentment in the repetition of his task. Despite the certainty of his fate, he walks back down the hill with a sense of happiness. Camus suggests that if Sisyphus can find contentment in his absurd fate, then individuals can also find fulfilment in their own seemingly meaningless lives.

### **Understanding the theatre of the absurd**

The emergence of "Waiting for Godot" at the Théâtre de Babylone in Paris in 1953 marked a seismic shift in the literary landscape, introducing a drama so radically different and yet captivating that it effectively gave birth to the term "Theater of the Absurd." In this genre, Samuel Beckett stands as its preeminent figure, often hailed as its grand master or father. While other playwrights have made significant contributions to this movement, Beckett's influence remains unparalleled. The Theater of the Absurd wasn't a deliberate, organised movement with clear philosophical doctrines or concerted efforts to recruit adherents. Instead, its main playwrights, including Beckett, Eugene Ionesco, Jean Genet, and Arthur Adamov, developed their works independently. Although Edward Albee and Harold Pinter's early plays align with this genre, they have also ventured into realms diverging from its fundamental tenets.

In engaging with the plays of this movement, one must relinquish expectations of coherent plotlines, psychologically rooted characterizations, and conventional settings. Instead, audiences are confronted with enigmatic narratives, unsettling settings, and a departure from logical linguistic communication and cause-and-effect relationships found in traditional drama. Through these perplexing devices, the playwrights acclimatise audiences to a new dynamic between theme and presentation, portraying an external world that is simultaneously menacing and poetic, familiar yet disconcerting. Critics have classified these plays under the banner of "Theater of the Absurd" based on Martin Esslin's seminal work "The Theatre of the Absurd," which posits that these dramatists grapple with a sense of



metaphysical anguish over the absurdity of human existence. However, other writers like Kafka, Camus, and Sartre have also explored similar philosophical terrain. The distinction lies in their approach; while thinkers like Camus engage in formal discourse to argue their positions logically, the Theater of the Absurd eschews argumentation, opting instead to present the absurdity of existence through concrete stage imagery. Despite overarching similarities, each playwright within this movement possesses distinctive concerns and styles. Without manifestos or collaborations, they are solitary figures, often viewed as rebels existing on the fringes of society. Thus, it's imperative to assess Beckett's place within the Theater of the Absurd while recognizing his individuality and unique contributions to this theatrical landscape.

## II. Conclusion

As depicted in Albert Camus *The Myth of Sisyphus* and in Theatre of Absurd, absurdism takes us into a world where meaninglessness and the human condition meet. Characters stranded in ridiculous circumstances are presented to us in this intellectual and dramatic setting, reflecting the pointlessness of Sisyphus's perpetually rolling boulder upward. By looking at life through the absurdist lens, we are forced to face the absurdity of it all and discover that defying life's intrinsic absurdity might be more meaningful than chasing after big narratives. Though the pursuit of meaning by humans may ultimately be pointless, these media serve as moving reminders that life's richness and significance come from the fight itself.

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