



Thesis Report
on
**“Lives of Absurds: A Comparative Study of Social Rejection
in *The Outsider* and *The Metamorphosis*”**

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Declaration

I, Lamia Binta Kabir, ID:213-10-789, declare that this project report titled "Lives of Absurds: A Comparative Study of Social Rejection in The Outsider and The Metamorphosis.", is my own work. This project paper has been completed under the supervision of **Mr. Md. Ariful Islam Laskar**, Assistant Professor, Department of English, at Daffodil International University.

I have completed this report for my academic purposes. This is for the completion of the course - Project paper with Internship: Course code: ENG-431 of the BA (Hons.) program. This project paper has been submitted to the Department of English. The report is based on my practical experiences.



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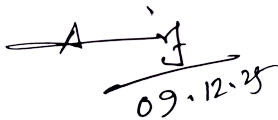
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Letter of Acceptance

I am glad to certify that Lamia Binta Kabir, ID 213-10-789, has completed the thesis report, entitled, "Lives of Absurds: A Comparative Study of Social Rejection in The Outsider and The Metamorphosis" under my supervision. I appreciate her efforts, hardwork in completing the work. To my knowledge, she has not submitted this report to anywhere else. I wish her endless success in both her personal and professional pursuits.

I hereby grant her permission to submit the thesis report as part of the requirement for the course ENG 431: Project Paper and Internship and I wish her absolute success in her academic and professional journey.



09.12.25

Mr. Md Ariful Islam Lasker

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Abstract

This thesis analyses social rejection and absurdity in two of the world's renowned literary texts: Albert Camus's *The Outsider* and Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*. It is about studying how societal norms, socialization, and expectation dictate individual alienation, which goes to an extremity of existential pain. Meursault and Gregor Samsa both protagonists are socially excluded and alienated yet the type, results and the philosophical significance of their exclusion vary significantly. In *The Outsider*, Meursault's purposeful indifference to the social world and Gregor's involuntary metamorphosis in *The Metamorphosis* demonstrate how rejection (or failure) to adhere to social norms identifies them as "absurd". Hence, in them, the society finds it easy to do away with. Through a comparative literary reading informed by Camus's absurd philosophy and Kafka's modernist depiction of alienation, this study analyzes how the spatial dynamics of the juridical and the domestic construct illusionary order over personal liberty, taking shape as instruments of social control, ethical surveillance and material commodification rather than systems of social justice and mechanisms for safeguarding social wellbeing. It also underscores the factor of language and miscommunication – which becomes the focal point in alienation, as silence, misinterpretation, emotional separation reveals the boundaries of social understanding.

This paper contends that the Meursault's acknowledgment of absurdity is an existential autonomy against social repression, whereas Gregor's humiliation and his ultimate demise at the end reveal the extent of social dehumanization. In the end, the study highlights that in a way the dynamics of social conformity, moral judgement and existential alienation examined through literature. Hence enriching analysis of the outsider in relation to the characterisation of social order and its questioning through philosophical explorations of absurdity.

Lives of Absurds: A Comparative Study of Social Rejection in *The Outsider* and *The Metamorphosis*

Chapter1

1.1 Background of the Study

After the waning of traditional value systems and the rise of modern social formations, social isolation and the perception of life's futility became dominant themes in the literature of the twentieth century. Both Albert Camus's novel *The Outsider* (2019) and Franz Kafka's novella *The Metamorphosis* (2014) depict characters whose separation reveals how societies control people's behavior, emotions, and even identities through the imposition of bureaucratic mechanisms and strict cultural norms.

Meursault in Camus's story is not condemned for the crime he committed but for his failure to show the socially expected emotions. Camus situates Meursault in the absurd's perspective of the world, where man's search for understanding is met with a senseless world that does not (and cannot) give any answers (Camus, 1955). The blow of the absurd against the societal expectation is brought about through Meursault's reductive, childlike honesty. In his mother's funeral, he was asked if he wanted to see her face one last time before the burial, Meursault replies, "I didn't feel like it" (Camus, 2019, p. 6), an reply which makes him morally reprehensible in the eyes of others. His later statement when the murder charge is being brought against him, "I had no wish to lie" (p. 121) shows how even honesty can be the reason for his being condemned. That society blames Meursault not for the crime but for his indifferent attitude and his rejection of the emotional and moral norms of society implies.

In another way, Kafka criticizes the society. The transformation of Gregor to an insect further highlights the absurdity of the human activities and illustrates how the society renders people as objects in the family and work relationships. As an insect, his primary concern when he woke up was that he was not at work: "What a tiring job I have chosen!" (Kafka, 2014, p. 4). His family gradually began to distance themselves, first by putting him away and then concluding that they should "get rid of it" (p. 48). Gregor's value was his work and at the time he stopped being able to work, he lost his value. This is an indication of how the value of the modern person is defined by what they can do and how well they follow the rules.

The emotional expectations in both of the text with the economic systems within which they exist, along with the institutional and domestic pressures placed upon them, create an outsider identity for their respective protagonists. While these systems of constraint create suffering, this research is mainly concerned with how social processes create these norms and determine how an individual's inclusion is allowed or excluded from society.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

This study examines the fundamental problem of how societal structures, norms, and scrutiny actively generate individual suffering, particularly for those individuals who fail to perform expected emotional, moral, or functional roles within the society. In both Albert Camus's *The Outsider* and Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*, the protagonists become "outsiders" not because of their inherent corruption or wrongdoings, but because their way of existence disrupts collective social expectations.

In *The Outsider*, Meursault's condemnation rests largely on the trial's moral interpretation of his emotional detachment—especially the prosecutor's assertion that "he had not wept once" for his mother (Camus, 2019). His authenticity is reframed as depravity. In *The Metamorphosis*, Gregor's shift from provider to dependent burden makes him socially illegible. His father's violent response "kicking him back into the room" (Kafka, 2014, p. 38), signals how quickly affection collapses once utility disappears. Therefore, the problem is not merely social alienation of the individuals but much more cruel. It is the structural production of suffering and dehumanization through judgment, surveillance, and ultimately social exclusion.

1.3 Significance of the Study

The study is important as it brings to light the evolution in the portrayal of characters in literature. It shows how characters that are not subjected to violence, and have not committed any moral wrongdoing, but are emotionally and socially nonconforming, are pushed to the margins. The metaphorical examination of *The Outsider* and *The Metamorphosis* together, unravels the research of Camus and Kafka on how societies hide the subtle ways in which they judge, discipline, and reject those who do not conform to the established norms. This work opens a new chapter in literary research by interweaving existential, absurdist, and modernist philosophies with current psychological theories of ostracism. Hence, it accords the rejection experience as one that is both philosophical and social in nature.

The research goes beyond the limits of literary criticism and holds wider implications. It appears to disclose how being emotionally expected, productivity demanding, and pressuring one institutionally or familiarly contribute to the formation of human identity in modern life. The research, by uncovering the manner in which Meursault and Gregor are sidelined just for being themselves, prompts questioning of the way communities set the standard of "normality" and treat "differences". The interdisciplinary insight supplied by this is like a stepping stone to studies on alienation, social conformity, and the human need for recognition.

1.4 Research Objectives

- This research is to find out the effect of social rejection on the characters Meursault in *The Outsider* and Gregor Samsa in *The Metamorphosis*, and how much the society is responsible for their fall. One of the main points is to study the reasons for these characters being thrown out in the end. Along with this, the investigation aims to determine to what extent law and institutions like the court and the family house can be considered places where: social standards are maintained, deviation is observed, sentences are legalized.
- The study also aims to analyse the wider function of society in both texts, asking whether it operates mainly as a mechanism of regulation, restriction, and denial of individual freedom rather than as a nurturing community. Particular attention will be given to the role of cognitive and emotional behaviour in shaping each protagonist's status within their contemporary social structures and to the personal and existential cost of non-conforming to an apparently "happy" and orderly social life. Moreover, the study attempts to find correlation between the narrative voice, language, and miscommunication to reader's perception of social rejection: Meursault's first, person narration is in stark contrast with Gregor's third, person mediation which not only shapes the reader's access to the characters' inner worlds but also to the judgment that is being imposed on them.
- The study also considers the effect of narrative voice and miscommunication on the reader's perception of rejection: Meursault's first, person detachment is quite different from Gregor's third, person mediation, thus it determines how their alienation is recognized. In the end, the research is intended to demonstrate that the individual tragedies of both works are closely related to the social forces that not only define but also erase the outsider.

1.5 Hypothesis of the Study

This research work argues through its hypothesis that the character of Meursault in *The Outsider* and Gregor in *The Metamorphosis* are not the ones who are at fault for their tragic end in the first place, instead, the societies that surround them are the ones that create their downfall. The expectation is that the two novels will demonstrate how the communities around them depend on certain unspoken norms of the way a person should behave, feel, or contribute.

Another hypothesis states that the main organs in each story, the court in *The Outsider* and the family house in *The Metamorphosis*, are the ones that not only determine the fate of the protagonists but also influence it considerably.

The study also expects that a miscommunication will be one of the reasons deeply behind each character's loneliness. Meursault's short and impersonal manner of speech and Gregor's inability

to express his thoughts leave people in the dark as to who they really are, thus, silence or simplicity become the source of supposed guilt or threat.

Finally, the research assumes that the two works will uncover a greater social inclination towards order, clarity, and usefulness. Those who are not able to fulfill these requirements, be it due to their nature or situation, will probably be portrayed as the ones who are going to be a burden to the society and thus, their exclusion will be made to seem as the most natural thing within their worlds.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

This research is based on a theoretical framework that is multidisciplinary in nature and combines existentialism, absurdism, modernist thought, social ostracism, and psychological theories of rejection. One of the key points of Camus's absurd is the conflict between man's need for meaning and an indifferent universe, and this is the main idea of the analysis. Meursault by not pretending to have socially acceptable feelings, is in a way the only one who faces the world with his honesty and thus he is condemned. Through the use of the modernist lens Kafka's viewpoint is further elaborated to show how characters in the story become locked in both harsh social and family structures cutting off their relationships for the sake of freedom. The change of Gregor thus symbolizes the process of losing one's humanity and being reduced to just a function.

Sartre's existential humanism (Sartre, 1946) highlights the struggle for individual freedom against socially imposed identities thus explaining why both characters are the ones who suffer as a consequence of their resistance to the roles given. On the other hand, Foucault's notion of power holding the means of discipline (Foucault, 1977) enables us to see the court and home as places where conformity is coerced through the observation of norms and, thus, control over deviants through exclusion. The suggested theories in psychology namely research conducted by Williams on social ostracism (Williams, 2007) and Baumeister's article on meaning (Baumeister, 1991) deal with the emotional and cognitive effects that come from being rejected by the group. Altogether, these points of view create a logical system through which the study of how social groups make outsiders, how the different groups and agencies create and deepen the division, and how the people who suffer the alienation stay alive becomes possible.

1.7 Methodology and Scope

This research utilizes a qualitative, interpretive, and comparative literary methodology to analyze the role of social rejection in *The Outsider* and *The Metamorphosis*. The study is based on close reading, thematic interpretation, and theoretical integration. By comparing Camus and Kafka, the research discovers the common themes of alienation, institutional judgment, and societal scrutiny in both works, but also differences in philosophical and cultural aspects that distinguish their works. The method used in this research emphasizes the importance of texts, story analysis, and

the socio, philosophical contexts in which the works were created. The range of this comparison goes far beyond the mere contrast of characters; it delves into the societal mechanisms that define deviance, enforce norms, and cause suffering. Although the research is mainly concentrated on the two primary works, the study of Meursault's and Gregor's imprisonment in the social structure is deepened through existential, absurdist, Foucauldian, and psychological perspectives.

1.8 Structure of the Thesis

The organization of this thesis undergoing is through seven chapters where every chapter is aiming to provide a reasonable and progressing view of rejection, absurdity, and power in *The Outsider* and *The Metamorphosis*.

Chapter 1 sets the stage upon which the whole study will be built. It talks about the background, unveils the main issue, and explains the importance of looking at social rejection in these writings.

Chapter 2, The literature review of the previous studies. The chapter brings together scholars who have already written about Camus and Kafka and discusses their similarities and differences as to the subject of social alienation and clarifies what is not yet done in the research. Thus, the chapter places the study at the intersection of academic discussions going on and at the same time emphasizes the need for a comparative approach to institutional and societal rejection.

Chapter 3 discusses the theoretical foundations that support later analysis in detail. It includes the concepts from Camus's absurdism, Sartre's existential humanism, Kafka's modernist vision of alienation, Foucault's theory of disciplinary power and psychological models like ostracism and cognitive dissonance that are the key concepts in the analysis. Together these theories will make up the later chapters' analytical tools.

Chapters 4 and 5 give the same kind of analysis to *The Outsider* and *The Metamorphosis*, respectively. Each chapter studies the role played by social standards, emotional expectations, communication barriers, and institutional systems in the downfall of the main characters. The focus will be on narrative voice, symbolic places, and the ways through which society created and punished nonconformity.

Chapter 6 undertakes the comparative study. This chapter also highlights philosophical contrasts between Camus's and Kafka's worldviews. It synthesizes insights from earlier analyses to evaluate similarities and differences presented in both text.

Finally, Chapter 7 offers concluding reflections. It summarizes the key findings, discusses the implications of society's role in generating individual suffering, evaluates the philosophical contributions of both texts, and identifies potential directions for further research.

Chapter:2

2.1 Previous Studies on *The Outsider*

In several previous studies scholars of *The Outsider* widely agree that Meursault's estrangement begins not with the murder but with his refusal to display expected emotions. Islam (2019) notes that his behaviour at his mother's funeral like his honesty, stillness, and refusal to feign grief marks him as deviant. Camus highlights this early tension at the first line of the novel when Meursault says "Maman died today . Or maybe yesterday, I don't know" (Camus, 2019, p. 1). His indifference towards his mother's death and other emotional conformity later shapes the trial, where he is condemned less for taking a life than for failing to perform the emotions society associates with morality (Islam, 2019).

Other researchers interpret Meursault through Camus's absurdism. Shobeiri (2018) argues that his rejection of religious comfort and his final recognition of the world's "gentle indifference" (Camus, 2014) reflect an existential clarity that aligns him with the absurd hero. Moreover, many critics use ideological frameworks to understand his stance. Saeed, Saleem, and Khan (2018) suggest that his emotional detachment resists the identities society imposes. "The condemnation of Meursault comes from the fact that he refuses to mold his life into the socially acceptable narratives" says Straehler-Pohl (2017) in an elaboration of his observation.

The previous research studies depict collectively the character of Meursault whose alienation works on different levels: philosophical, psychological, and ideological. They prove that the novel *The Outsider* criticizes the means that society uses to discipline individuals who do not conform to its emotional and moral standards, and thus the condemnation of Meursault is seen as a reflection of social intolerance rather than of existential emptiness, which is a viewpoint important for the subsequent comparison with Gregor Samsa.

2.2 Previous Studies on *The Metamorphosis*

The metamorphosis of Gregor Samsa in Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* as defining an alienation, rather than as the reason for Gregor Samsa's suffering, has been reviewed by many researchers. They do not consider the alteration as a rapid shift but rather as an intrusion of the outer world's conditions that have been probably grinding Gregor into the mere identity of a money earner. Deligöz (2019) observes that the worth of Gregor to the Samsas is totally based on his being a provider and the very moment he cannot work, he loses even the scant recognition he had at the most. Thus, his physical change is a part of the already existing process of emotional and social withdrawal that only the surface of society has been revealed so far.

The argument depicted in Marxist interpretations of the text fits for a presentation of Gregor as a worker suffering under capitalist labor conditions whose distress is caused by the system. Gregor is a symbol of the dehumanization of a worker whose body and identity are the by-products of

economically exploitative demands and, eventually, consumed. For them, Gregor's gradual loss of speech, mobility, and dignity represents the psychological decay of individuals who derive their self-worth from labor only. His transformation becomes a means of expressing the alienation of the modern worker, the loss of autonomy and being reduced to a mere utility object.

Psychological research gives more details about Gregor's mind. Deligöz (2019) emphasizes that Gregor's agony is very much dependent on the separation of the love from his family, besides his changed body. After the family members and sisters decide to avoid, hide, and at last imprison him in his room, Gregor feels more and more ashamed and like he doesn't exist. His room becomes a metaphor for social loneliness.

These examinations represent Gregor Samsa as a character whose change throws light on the vulnerability of identity under the influence of repressive social, economic, and domestic forces. The majority of the critics agree that Kafka employs Gregor's change to indicate how human value is gauged in the modern societies by the standard of being useful, and those who are unable to do so are very quickly discarded.

2.3 Comparative Approaches

Comparative analyses of *The Outsider* and *The Metamorphosis* sometimes bring out how both books show the profoundly marginalized human beings but in a very different manner and with different ideologies. The main focus of such comparative research is on the difference between the idea of the absurd developed by Camus and the "Kafkaesque" world of entrapment, as coined by Kafka. Straehler, Pohl (2017) stated that by placing the characters in bewildering and suffocating systems, Kafka makes whereas Camus in his novel gives a picture of a lonely character confronting an indifferent universe quite knowingly. Meursault on the absurd is very transparent, while Gregor gradually dissipates in his baffling circumstance

Another vital point of comparison between these two works is the origin of alienation of the protagonists in each story. Meursault turns into an outsider as a result of his rejection of emotionally and morally expected behavior, but on the other hand, alienation of Gregor is a consequence of his metamorphosis and his family's detachment from him. Academic literature suggests that Meursault's alienation is to some extent voluntary, while that of Gregor is entirely forced. Consequently, Meursault attains in the end some sort of existential liberation, whereas Gregor experiences tragic identity loss.

Comparative critics investigate also the symbolic places of the two works. The investigation of Meursault's trial exposes societal judgment not of the act of murder but of emotional nonconformity. Gregor's room turns into a place of imprisonment wherein both physical and emotional rejection is performed. Narrative style is also a decisive factor in the two works comparison. Direct access to the main character's detached worldview is given through Meursault's first, person narration. With Gregor's third, person narration, the writer creates

distance and hence the confusion is emphasized. Researchers believe that this has an impact on how the readers perceive social rejection: In the case of Meursault, societal hypocrisy is exposed sharply, while in the case of Gregor, social isolation is depicted in terms of fragmentation and despondency.

Comparative research, on the whole, points out that although both works delve into the issue of social rejection, Camus treats it as a stage to be passed on the way to existential enlightenment, whereas Kafka shows it as gradual breaking under socio, familial pressures.

2.4 Studies on Social Rejection and Existential Freedom

Academic research into social rejection and existential freedom offers an important initial basis of comprehension regarding alienation of Meursault in *The Outsider* and Gregor Samsa in *The Metamorphosis*. These analyses reveal that rejection is not just a feeling experienced by one, but it is a social process that influences and changes identity, behaviour, and a person's sense of meaning. According to Williams (2007), ostracism parallels physical pain in terms of the neurological systems it engages, thus the exclusion of a person from social activities becomes a real and serious psychological injury. This information is very helpful to understand the reason why both Meursault and Gregor perceive the situation as a source of profound existential suffering instead of merely a kind of simple interpersonal conflict.

The research on meaning adds more weight to this viewpoint. Baumeister (1991) states that people create meaning through purpose, coherence, values, and belonging, aspects that were taken away from the two protagonists. The trial of Meursault takes away his social identity because he is judged for his lack of feeling while Gregor's metamorphosis ruins the economic role that he played and thereby leaves him without the sense of purpose. In fact, in both cases, the lack of meaning is what constitutes their existential crises.

Existentialism and absurdism studies also relate to these ideas. According to Shobeiri (2018), Meursault's indifference and embrace of death can be seen as the traits of existential freedom. However, the Marxist interpretations like Öztürk and Çipe (2020) indicate that the capitalist and family, related factors that pressure Gregor limit his liberation by giving him the identity of being only the efficient one.

Moreover, Foucauldian theory helps to show how institutions through their discipline, judgment and normalization strategies control individuals. Foucault (1977) states that courts, families, and workplaces are the main agents of behaviour changes as they endorse conformity through rewards and oppose deviation through punishment. This makes it easier for Meursault's courtroom to stand for the place of moral control and Gregor's home symbolize a space where family authority is merged with the enforcement of social norms.

On the whole, these investigations indicate that social rejection acts as one of the causes of psychological harm and also as a philosophical challenge to human freedom. They bring out how the situations experienced by Meursault and Gregor unveil the bigger systems which not only create, regulate, but also ultimately reduce individual autonomy.

2.5 Research Gap and Rationale

While numerous research works have been presented on *The Outsider* and *The Metamorphosis*, the majority of them have focused on these works separately by dealing either with Camus's absurdism or Kafka's modernist alienation. Generally, research on *The Outsider* accentuates Meursault's emotional detachment, existential awareness, and his function as an absurd hero (Shobeiri, 2018; Islam, 2019). Articles related to *The Metamorphosis* frequently consider the dehumanization of Gregor with the help of Marxist concepts of labour alienation and also the themes of psychological breakdown (Deligöz, 2019; Öztürk & Çipe, 2020). Although these pieces provide plentiful insights, they scarcely engage in the dialogue about how two different worlds, the courtroom and the family home, can be viewed as systems that not only reject but also isolate. This absence of direct comparison between the two forms the main issue around which current research is centered.

Another aspect that has received little attention is the work that connects psychological theories of ostracism and meaning with existential or absurdist readings of the novels. Williams (2007) gives the example of the pain of social exclusion, and Baumeister (1991) talks about the loss of meaning; however, these concepts are rarely jointly applied to the comprehension of Meursault's and Gregor's psychological states. Many literary works understudy the philosophical side while forgetting the psychological impact of rejection. Also, the application of Foucauldian disciplinary theory in comparative analyses hasn't been that extensive. Though Foucault (1977) illustrates the molding and punishing of behaviour by institutions, only a handful of works argue the court scenes in *The Outsider* or the Samsa household in *The Metamorphosis* to be the parallel sources of control and normalization.

Moreover, even comparative study that opposes Camusian and Kafkaesque absurdity (Straehler, Pohl, 2017) largely treats philosophical themes as separate from the social aspects of rejection. These works seldom think about the fact that both characters' emotional and structural sufferings are intertwined. This research fills such openings by mixing existential philosophy, absurdism, psychological theories of social rejection, and Foucauldian analysis. The idea behind it is to demonstrate not only how Meursault and Gregor are the victims of rejection but also the rationales behind societal creation of outsiders. It proceeds by revealing what this indicates not only about the precariousness and the confines of social order but also, eventually, about existential absurdity.

Chapter 3

3.1 Introduction to Existentialism, Absurdism, and Modernism

Existentialism, absurdism, and modernism are three major movements that profoundly altered the understanding of human identity, of the search for meaning, and of one's place in society. They supply a bedrock for reading the disoriented state of Meursault in *The Outsider* and of Gregor Samsa in *The Metamorphosis*. While each of these theoretical systems has its own priority, they nevertheless share the concern of alienation, the issue of freedom, and the fall of the age, old systems of support.

Existentialism was born as a reaction of sorts to a world of less and less godly authority, of major changes in the industry, and of a general feeling of disenchantment in the first half of the twentieth century. Kierkegaard and Nietzsche argued in their works that people should not avoid facing the facts of choosing and being responsible in a world where there is no absolute meaning. Next, Sartre consolidated this conception and defined it in a very precise manner. Namely, he said that human beings “exist first and then define themselves” and that they have to come up with meanings themselves through their deeds (Sartre, 1946). The reason behind Meursault's act of noncompliance against the prevailing sentiment and the consequent punishment that he received becomes clear with this. Conversely, through his work, Gregor gets hold of a different sort of existential fixation.

Absurdism is a philosophical attitude best exemplified by the works of Camus. It dwells on the tension of the issue of human longing for meaning versus the seeming lack of it in the indifferent universe. Camus (1955) states that the source of absurdity is this discrepancy. Meursault stands for the absorption of absurdism and he goes by it in the way he rejects faith, based reassurances and embraces the fact as it comes (Shobeiri, 2018). On the contrary, the absurdity of Gregor lays bare the dependence of affection on certain conditions and the monstrous side of society that is based on utility.

Modernism involves such features as disintegration, insecurity, and being impersonal while subjected to bureaucratic and economic forces. The writings of Kafka could be used as an example of this movement. The change and alienation of Gregor from the familiar due to modern society's mechanistically reductionist approach of squeezing out the most of a person's use thereby leaving the individual powerless and confined is what is depicted in the transformation (Deligöz, 2019). Coupled with these theories, one might come to the conclusion that Meursault and Gregor not only have a crisis of self but also are under the immense pressure of the society around them which interacts with them in a way that different social groups react differently to those who are non-conformists.

3.2 Camus's Philosophy of Absurd

One of the major ways that Albert Camus's philosophy of the absurd helps us understand Meursault's behavior and his final fate in *The Outsider* is by providing a different point of view. According to Camus's philosophy, the main idea is that humans continually look for and want a definite sense of life in the world, while the universe, being indifferent, keeps its cold silence. The difference between these two is what Camus calls the "absurd" (1955). It is not a far, off theoretical position, but rather an experience which becomes visible when one's usual explanations are not enough, and one finds oneself confronting the contrast between what was expected and what is actually there.

In *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Albert Camus asserts that after grasping the absurdity of existence, people must take a stand on how to act. He disallows faith, fake hope, and any kind of effort to create an artificial meaning. By contrast, he allows the existence which is characterized by the traits of awareness, revolt, and personal freedom to be the essential one. Revolt involves the rejection of despair and the promotion of a courageous confrontation with absurdity, while freedom is the realization that one has to make and not find the meaning of life.

Throughout the book, Meursault is the embodiment of these ideas. His not putting up a show, his being so honest to the extent that he even says "But I remember just in time that I had Killed a man" (Camus, 2019), his not sucking to religion for comfort, and his embracing death as he says "Well, then I'll die. Sooner than Other people, obviously. But everybody knows that life isn't worth living" (Camus, 2019) are all proof of him being a logical follower of the absurd. Authors like Shobeiri (2018) are of the opinion that it is in jail that Meursault attains his most profound insight and discovers the indifference of the universe. Although, his genuineness is likewise a danger to the societal norms which thus vilify him for the refusal of the performance of expected emotions. The last moment of his life reveals the Victor Hugo's notion that such a double effect of living can result in existential freedom on one side and social rejection on the other one.

3.3 Kafka's Modernist Alienation and Dehumanization

Franz Kafka's contribution to the Modernist Literature is largely based on his deep concentration on isolation of an individual, the power of bureaucracy, and the loss of the individual's sense of self. His writings are full of situations which are uncertain, fearful and thus the characters are out of their control, these are the experiences that later came to be known as the 'Kafkasque'.

In *The Metamorphosis*, Kafka sets forth one of the most straightforward images of taking away one's humanity. Gregor's change into an insect uncovers the psychological and social downfall which had been already going for quite some time even before the physical side of the change. Most of the scholars take the transformation as a mere projection of the alienation which Gregor has endured for years.

Kafka's modernist alienation is a result of economic pressure and family dependency that in turn lead the characters to fall victim to the rigid system of moral values. Gregor's character is fully formed around the fact that he is the financial breadwinner. His tiring work, perpetual debt, and lack of liberty speak volumes of the capitalist system that turns him into a mere source of income. As Gregor points out at the very beginning of the story, "I would have left a long time ago if it weren't for my parents" (Kafka, 2014, p. 4). The Gregor insect is just a metaphor of the already existing dehumanization inside him. After he is no longer able to perform his work, love quickly turns to hate with his family.

Gregor's being shut in his room is an allegory for the decreasing of his social life. It is apparent that the room, being more and more overcrowded and ugly, mirrors his dying of his right to be and of his sense of belonging. The fact that he cannot talk is underlined by the narrator who says that Gregor's voice becomes a "painful squeaking", thereby bringing forth the total destruction of dialogue and authority.

Gregor's degradation is Kafka's way of showing the world valuing people just in terms of their output. The *Metamorphosis* is a resounding revelation of the dominating institutional machinery that kills the human spirit in the modern age and consequently demonstrates how readily a person is cast aside when they don't fulfill the economic requirements.

3.4 Research Design and Analytical Approach

The present research consists of a qualitative, interpretive, and comparative research design that aims to investigate social rejection, alienation, and existential crisis in Camus's *The Outsider* and Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*. Close reading of the texts is analyzed in conjunction with philosophical, psychological and socio-theoretical frameworks to provide a more comprehensive interpretation of characters' emotional, cognitive and social lives. Existentialist and absurdist thinkers, namely, Camus (1955) and Sartre (1946), are the ones who lead us through the analysis of Meursault's encounter with the triple concepts of meaninglessness, freedom, and detachment. For Gregor Samsa, modernist views on alienation and dehumanization, with references, uncover the impacts of the dual pressures of capitalistic society and family.

Psychological theories of ostracism and meaning reveal the internal consequences of social rejection, whereas concepts of Foucault such as discipline and normalization are used to explain how institutions like the court and the family impose conformity on individuals. The comparative method runs throughout, underscoring that the different writing techniques and philosophical points of view not only affect but also determine the parallels in the social exclusion of Meursault and Gregor.

Chapter 4

4.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the main areas of *The Outsider*. One of the major themes it discusses is the social rejection experienced by Meursault as well as his construction as an absurd individual and a social outsider. It starts with the examination of how societal norms regarding emotion, morality and acceptable behaviour influence the community's reaction to Meursault's character.

The chapter proceeds to study the courtroom as the main authority of judgment that illustrates how institutional mechanisms depict and support the expectations of society. Moreover, the chapter addresses the importance of language and communication, arguing that Meursault's straightforward, indifferent and unemotional speech is in stark contrast with the use of language by legal and religious authorities which is highly symbolic and moralising.

Furthermore, the chapter brings in theoretical ideas, such as Foucault's concept of disciplinary power and Camus's absurdism, to explain the wider philosophical and social forces. In essence, this chapter offers an organized groundwork for the comprehension of the different levels of social rejection as a lead to Meursault's absurdity.

4.2 Meursault's Defiance of Social Norms and Conformity

In *The Outsider*, Meursault's nonconformity to the society prescribes came along with the existential thoughts which greatly influenced Camus's work. His actions went against all expectations of feelings and morals not through his planning but by living in an honest, present, and physical way. He was living an individual life when he refused to show feelings or engage in the society-approved acting and this individual life at the same time made freedom of the individual and society's need of coherence, meaning, and performance very evident.

His total apathy to his mother's death and funeral is the first and clearest case of the conflict of the two opposing living ways. His simple but very powerful statement "I realised that I'd get through another Sunday, that mother was buried, that I was going to go back to work and that, after all, nothing has changed" (Camus, 2019). This is just a reminder of his mother. He implicitly claims what later on Camus terms the absurd condition, that is, life has no such a thing as inherent meaning (Camus, 1955). His reaction is an outright confrontation with society's mourning customs and rituals, hence he is immediately drawn into the net of distrust by the community. According to Islam (2019), society sees his frankness as a sign of immorality.

Seen from an existential point of view, Meursault is not living in Sartre's "bad faith" but instead is standing out because he refuses to be phony and by being very real he is expressing the most genuine self. This genuineness is accessible to his interpersonal associations. He is physically in

the relationship with Marie but he does not emotionally and socially express it through making declarations of love which are expected. When he says "I probably didn't love her" he is actually illustrating Sartre's (1946) argument that people have to be truthful and not conform to the pre-arranged emotions.

Meursault's moral neutrality then further distances him from the society that is very much depending on shared stories in creating order. His turning down of these stories becomes crucial in the course of the trial where the judiciary interprets his truthfulness as monstrosity.

4.3 Emotional Indifference and Social Judgement

One of the most prominent features of Meursault's character in *The Outsider* is his emotional indifference. Meursault's low, key emotional display is not by any means a lack of feeling but rather a radical existential philosophy that denies any meanings given by society. Still, society sees this indifference as a kind of moral failure, thus a rift deepens between Meursault and the expectations laid upon him. While talking about jury of his trial, he says that "it wasn't peculiarities they are looking for here, but criminality. There is not much difference though" (Camus, 2019), which implies that even the very differences of individuals can be illegal and society can consider them as a kind of crime.

The funeral is that first moment when the tension between the two sides becomes apparent. Meursault is not the one to normally show grief for his mother. Instead, he is more absorbed in his physical experiences like the "bright red glare" and the heat rather than the emotional sorrow (Camus, 2019). Islam (2019) interprets this action as a signal of the division between Meursault and society since mourning is culturally considered a moral obligation. Hence, his refusal to act out the grief is later interpreted as an inhumanity.

From an existential standpoint, Meursault is not guilty of what Sartre (1946) refers to as "bad faith, " i.e. the act of faking those feelings which society demands. Honesty in Meursault's case not only becomes his "ideal" but also "his very being" as he lives his life according to his own rules, without lying, deceiving or giving false hopes even during his last hours. Moreover, his honesty quite corresponds to Camus's (1955) conception of the absurd man, who rejects the illusion of comfort and only utters what is truest to experience. However, such authenticity is still an impossible thing in a society that is based on emotional conformity.

At the time of trial, Meursault's indifference is deliberately exploited. The prosecutor contends that a man who does not cry over his mother must be devoid of a moral conscience. He claims that Meursault is "a man with such an empty heart that this emptiness turns into a chasm and threatens to swallow society thus creating a gap between the social world and himself" (Camus, 1942) and by doing this he diverts the attention from the actual shooting to the one here. It

confirms Foucault's (1977) idea that, as per the depiction of institutions, these establishments which are in the service of enforcing norms call for the punishment of those emotionally deviant people.

In the end, Meursault's emotional truth turns out to be his social crime. By not conforming to expected feelings, he reveals that the social rituals are fragile. And society excommunicates him in order to keep them safe.

4.4 Language and Miscommunication in the Social Sphere

Language is not just a way of communication of *the Outsider* but is rather a tool by which Meursault's outsider status is established and maintained. He is very short, literal, and emotionally neutral in his way of speaking, which disagrees with a society's demand for expressive and symbolic language. Although social exchanges are based on feeling, moral framing, and shared codes of meaning, Meursault interacts only on the level of the concrete, and is even clear, logical, and factual without the slightest trace of fear. This disparity results in repeated miscommunication and thereby underlines the division between his absurd honesty and society's need for moral interpretation.

Meursault's simple language mirrors his existential view of life. Camus (1955) says that the absurd man does not veil reality with emotional or metaphysical language. Meursault is such a man when he talks about things straightly, for instance, when describing Marie's marriage proposal, he says, "It didn't mean anything" (Camus, 2019), and regarding the murder he says, "rather than regret, I felt kind of annoyed." It looks like Meursault is very clear about what he wants or does not want, why he is doing for what cause and he is not afraid to take it all.

This language barrier escalates in the environment of institutions. Meursault's answers to the magistrate's questions are truthful but lack feeling, and hence the magistrate interprets them as defiance and says that "I have never seen a soul as hardened as yours" (Camus, 2019). Foucault's (1977) theory of disciplinary discourse can explain the reaction that the institution expects the person under the power to perform the acts of linguistic remorse, confession, narrative coherence which are essential for the institution to keep its authority over the individual. Failure of Meursault to adopt such language makes him, in the eyes of society, a threat.

In the court, the advocate uses the lack of Meursault's words and his short comments to bring a moral indictment against him. Meursault says that "He announced that I had no place in a society whose most fundamental rules I ignored, nor could I make an appeal to the heart when I knew nothing about the most basic human reaction" (Camus, 2019). Islam (2019) writes that the court not only judges his speech but also his failure to speak in manners acceptable to society, which means that so much is left unsaid but much more is implied.

At the end of the day, Meursault's language is the main conflict in the book that is revealed by his core: his understanding becomes confusion for society, and his honesty becomes the reason for his condemnation. In this way, the statement that Meursault is the most misunderstood character in the novel is mostly due to his language, his way of speaking, and, of course, society's misjudgement of his character is quite accurate.

4.5 The Trial Scene: A Stage for Social Rejection

The trial in *The Outsider* is the social rejection of Meursault that has reached its peak, and the legal process is changed to a public performance of moral judgment. The court that should be examining the facts of the shooting, instead concentrates on Meursault's character, his emotional behaviour, and alleged lack of humanity. It demonstrates how the shift from one to another reveals that institutions are not only functioning to judge the crime but also they function to protect social norms by recognizing and punishing those who resist the philosophies it represents.

According to Camus (1955), legal systems are there to structure a world that is essentially irrational. The court in Meursault's situation fabricates a moral narrative which depicts his detachment of emotions as proof of his crime. Islam (2019) comments that the prosecution cannot stop itself from pointing to Meursault's conduct at his mother's funeral, as if it was the most significant part of the whole incident they are talking about. This suggests that Meursault was penalized for emotional nonconformity rather than for the violent act.

The trial also embodies Foucault's (1977) thought when The courtroom becomes a place where identity is examined and controlled. Since Meursault declines to show remorse or to fake the expected emotions, the very thing he called honesty is now seen as moral corruption. His plain, unemotional words are far from the prosecutor's loud, exaggerated and emotional speech. Besides, it pushes him further away from the social border.

It is a process that takes an enormous amount of energy from him and he becomes emotionally strained, as he recalled, "for the first time in years, I stupidly felt like crying because I could tell how much all these people hated me"(Camus, 2019). Finally, Meursault is not the one who is found guilty of killing the man, but of not being able to fulfill society's emotional requirements, thus achieving his complete metamorphosis into an outsider.

4.6 Exclusion of the Absurd: Establishing Social "Justice"

Meursault's alienation in the community in "The Outsider" is a prominent indication that society sees "justice" through its own lens in order to keep peace. Although the court sees the execution as a lawful act and hence decides to uphold it, Camus substantially suggests that fear and emotion lie at the heart of this kind of justice that is preserved by the court. He questions the very basis of society that is grounded on the idea that life has one single meaning and the moral

structure has a fixed position to cede. At the same time, the modern world, by keeping him out of its orbit, temporarily satisfies its thirst for stability.

According to Islam (2019), through a detailed study of the text, the actual "crime" of Meursault is the absence of social mourning, repentance, or love conforming to the social rites. His conduct at the funeral is the foremost proof of his culpability. Besides, the community finds his mere presence unsettling because by revealing the naked truths of society, which are the very things that make it human, he faces the community while it is trying to deceive itself with the guise of civilization, as he says, "there's a time or another when even the very best of the normal people will have wished to see their loved ones dead" (Camus, 2019). Foucault's (1977) idea of disciplinary authority is instrumental in getting to the bottom of the reasons why the Meursault cannot be tolerated by institutions. He turns down the offer of confession, penitence, and narrative justification and thus, the power of the times that the authority wants to use to morally classify him is denied the required language. Finally, since he is not able to fit into the standard patterns of guilt and redemption, he becomes an exception, a 'tainted' social being, "an immoral monster" (Camus, 2019), that the law has to get rid of.

Eventually, the person who said the truth straight out was not eliminated because of his violent act but because he was truthful. He is the one who refuses to live in the fictional society that the community has constructed, and by doing this, not only does he reveal, but he also undermines, the very basis of the community's values, thus at the same time introducing the absurdity of the core social justice and society's response is to get rid of the threat, his last act, therefore, stands for...

4.7 Social Ostracism: A Journey Toward the Absurd and Existential Freedom

One of the major streams of existential thought is represented in Meursault's changes in the course of the novel: from his generally indifferent detachment to downright social exclusion. His experience illustrates the way in which rejection by society becomes the road through which he comes to a more explicit recognition of absurd. Social ostracism, rather than being only exemplary punishment, becomes the social instrument for bringing Meursault from his unawareness to his even more conscious level as he points out that "Nothing, nothing mattered and I knew very well why... and I went down to the world's benign indifference for the first time" (Camus, 2019).

Social exclusion accompanies him from the funeral of his mother until his trial and punishment. In every case, it is obvious that Meursault's failure to show the emotion expected of him is the factor that differentiates him. Williams (2007) explains that ostracism is a psychological phenomenon that occurs when a person violates socially shared expectations. The refusal of Meursault to present the signs of grief or remorse leads the neighbours, coworkers, and officials to consider him as someone who is not to be trusted. His actions reveal a perspective that does

not depend on social significance or emotional display which is something that the community finds terrifying.

During the trial, ostracism is taken to the next level. The court depicts Meursault as a summation of all the things the society stands against, emotional emptiness, atheism, and indifference to moral judgment. However, the absurdity of the situation is that he is the one who, when accepting his guilt, becomes the most "normal" one in his cell finding felicity even in his social rejection which should be, ironically, the source of his punishment.

It is, in fact, the denunciation which brings Meursault to existential lucidity. As he is stripped of social roles, he is left with no choice but to face life without any deception. Baumeister (1991) maintains that when the conventional moorings of meaning are taken away, people have to turn to themselves for creating new meanings. For Meursault, it is a matter of absurd consciousness, the recognition of the fact that the cosmos is neutral and that meaning can only come from one's own awareness (Camus, 1955).

His encounter with the priest is the final stage of this metamorphosis he states "But I, myself, I was the clearest, headed one, I was the one who understood most, I was the one who knew more than him, I was the one who held my life and the impending death in my hands" (Camus, 2019). By not availing himself of religious consolation, Meursault affirms his total existential freedom. Shobeiri (2018) considers this point as his sharpest insight of the absurd. In this way, social ostracism serves as the turning point in Meursault's emancipation.

He is alienated by society for the sake of their own preservation of illusion, nevertheless, this very alienation allows him to confront the world as it is when his last words are "I realized that I had been happy and that I was still happy" (Camus, 2019).

Chapter 5

5.1 Introduction

Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*, is a work that through Gregor Samsa's sudden transformation into an insect exposes social rejection and shows how societal recognition is dependent on one fulfilling the role that is assigned to them. This chapter Kafka presents absurdity as something that is opaque and unexplainable, and not as a philosophical absurdity as in the case of Camus. Gregor's metamorphosis is something that happens very abruptly and without any detailed explanation and thus, it separates him from the human community. On an existential level, his former identity which was dominated by the fact that he worked and was obedient, is the one that breaks down and thus it makes him feel lost in his new life instead of getting more insight.

As it intensifies his alienation, it tells the way his family turning from being dependent on him to hostile shows the fickle character of human relationships, which is the reason why his plight becomes worse. Also, the modernist devices such as fragmented perspective, disrupted communication, and interior consciousness mirror the selfhood and meaning crisis of the early twentieth, century, finally, this

chapter analyses the point at which absurdity, existential loss, alienation, and modernist fragmentation come together to portray Gregor's rejection not only as a personal tragedy but also a societal, economic, and psychological forces critique.

5.2 An Absurd Transformation: From a Social Product to a Unique Being

Gregor Samsa's transformation in *The Metamorphosis* is a typical example of Kafkaesque absurdity that distances the world and reality. The beginning is very much abrupt and absurd as "waking up from a dream he finds himself into some kind of monstrous insect"(Kafka, 2014). Prior to his transformation, Gregor is mainly a social product: his personality is made up of work, obedience, and the duties of the family. However, the change disrupts the ground of this exposing which shows the unprovoked nature of the social expectations." Existentialism adds to this interpretation by focusing on Gregor's identity crisis. This is a feature of Kafkaesque absurdity that the universe is run by irrational forces that are beyond human understanding. Unlike Camus's Mersault, he is not able to see clearly and rather disintegrates. Besides, alienation worsens the depression. Deligöz (2019) comments that the change of Gregor after all his transformation is the very thing that reveals the alienation he was always with. Before he become insect he was already alienated from his wants, autonomy and health of his body. Gregor

says, "If I were not for my parents, I would have quit a long time ago, I assure you"(Kafka, 2014).

Öztürk and Çipe (2020) pinpoint that Gregor's transformation leads to the revelation of the reality of his prior state: he was already being utilized as a mere tool in the capacity of his power. Once his body is no longer able to be the instrument of its function, the value in society instantaneously disintegrates. In fact, it was Gregor's transformation that ironically made him more "himself." After he was released from the pressures of his job, he had moments of curiosity, desire, and contemplation, parts of himself that were previously repressed by the obligation. However, society is just not capable of accepting this individuality. He has to be excluded because of his absurd transformation which exposes his identity rather than being a function. His transformed state symbolizes not only the beginning of complete social rejection but also a forced liberation from an imposed identity.

Therefore, Gregor's metamorphosis illustrates the violent conflict between a person's identity and what society expects of them when they are deprived of their social roles. It signifies the start of his transformation from a mindless societal product into a singular individual and a socially marginalized being.

5.3 Conditional Value: Social Judgement Through Utility

Gregor Samsa's value in *The Metamorphosis* is rooted almost entirely in his economic usefulness, making him a clear reflection of Marxist alienation and the existential collapse that follows when labour becomes the sole basis of identity. Before the transformation, Gregor is already estranged from his work, his family, and his own desires. Marx (1977) argues that when labour is commodified, the worker becomes an object within the economic system. Gregor becomes the best example as he works solely to pay his parents' debts, living with no autonomy or fulfillment.

Deligöz (2019) notes that Gregor's life is "mechanical" long before he turns into an insect; he is valued for what he provides, not for who he is. His transformation only makes this dehumanization visible. Once he can no longer work, his social status collapses immediately. Öztürk and Çipe (2020) show that Gregor's worth within the family was always conditional. The moment he loses his earning power, he shifts from essential provider to burdensome presence. His father's hostility and Grete's gradual withdrawal even his mother's fearfulness of his transformation reveal a painful logic: without productivity, Gregor no longer has a place in the home. Thus "the others swallow down the digest he aroused in them and show him tolerance, only tolerance"(Kafka, 2014).

Such a loss of function leads to an overwhelming existential crisis. Sartre (1946) claims that meaning has to be created freely, however, Gregor has not been given the opportunity to make a real choice. His toil provided him with a skewed sense of purpose but now he confronts a

vacuum inside him without it. The emotional coldness of his family intensifies his hollowness, showing how the capitalist way of thinking destroys loving relationships (Deligöz, 2019). Gregor's passing, though it might be considered as a release, reveals a reality in which man is subordinated to his use (Öztürk & Çipe, 2020).

5.4 The Treatment of the Family: A Microcosm of Social Rejection

The Samsa family is the primary emblem of social rejection, but only on a small scale. It demonstrates how familial relationships, which are the closest ties, get broken under the influence of the economic crisis and the lack of proper communication. Gregor's change reveals the issues that the family has been hiding all along: hierarchy, dependence, and suppressed resentment.

Before his alteration, he acts as the family's economic pillar "they gratefully accepted the money and he was happy to provide"(Kafka, 2014) . When he is no longer allowed to provide, this conditional acceptance breaks down as his sister says they "must get rid of it"(Kafka, 2014) showing that his worth was based on utility, not on love.

The family's responses move from fear and discomfort to rejection. His father through aggression, seizes control, while his mother is a bundle of anxiety and helplessness (Kafka, 2014). Grete, at first, is full of compassion and is very helpful, eventually, though, she becomes a person who supports his removal, therefore representing the business, like approach as dominant one in the intrusion of familial relationships (Öztürk & Çipe, 2020, p. 32). Communication breaks down since Gregor changes in a way that makes him less understandable and losing his human voice, thus they treat him as an unwanted object within the house. His being left out points to the problems tackled by modernism: to be accepted is dependent on something, human worth is linked to function, even the most sacred familial bonds will be broken if economic stability is threatened. In the end, the Samsa family is a reflection of the mechanisms that are responsible for the marginalization and social exclusion of people in society on a large scale and it becomes a microcosm of social rejection.

5.5 Misunderstood and Unheard: Language as a Social Barrier

In *The Metamorphosis*, language serves as one of the major ways through which Gregor Samsa is cut off from society after the change that takes place in him. The family could not understand what he was trying to say because his voice (which used to be very articulate) was now only a kind of unintelligible squeaks; hence, they could not reach his thoughts and intentions. So, his connection with the human community was broken (Kafka, 1915/2008, p. 12). This fall of language is a representation of the communication crisis of the modernist era, when the meaning of things is not stable and understanding between people disintegrates. Gregor's cognitive awareness is still very much human, however, since language failed which is the socially

recognizable way of communication, his existence became that of a non-being, thus, social inclusion is shown to be dependent on language (Deligöz, 2019, p. 47).

His communication failure makes the situation of Gregor's lonely being more dire. Theoretically from an existentialist point of view, self-affirmation requires recognition from others, and yet, Gregor's expressions of love or self-explanations only result in getting fright and withdrawal of the family (Sartre, 1946). To his family, it is the noises that he makes which are menacing and strange and thus, they frighten him resulting in his further isolation from them (Öztürk & Çipe, 2020, p. 33). Hence, language is the instrument that controls one's access to a social group: if the means of expression are nonexistent or defective, then the social identity is in danger of disintegration. Kafka depicts the linguistic disappearance of Gregor to argue that the issue of modern alienation is those that consist in human relations and also existential ones only to say that he ended up as a voice unheard, an eye unseeing, and socially invisible, embodied in a consciousness which could no longer establish contact with the world (Kafka, 1915/2008, p. 18).

5.6 Gregor's Bedroom: A Symbol of Social Isolation

In *The Metamorphosis*, Gregor Samsa's room is more than just a place where he lives; it represents his isolation from the social world. At the beginning, it is a space that is only for him and hence, it reflects his life of estrangement, showing an existence that is somewhat lifeless and routine, the latter being a result of the fact that his life was mainly shaped by his work and not by his own personality (Deligöz, 2019, p. 45). After he was turned into an insect, the room became something that kept him away from his family and society, a place that signaled his separation from the outer world (Kafka, 2014). His attempts to escape from the room always ended in situations where he would feel so terrified, disgusted, or angry that the room became a prison in both a literal and a psychological sense. The family's contradictory behavior, they at times making room for him, while at other times stacking up the things he didn't want, reflects the absurd and unpredictable nature of the situation that regulates Gregor's imprisonment (p. 18).

The room also mirrors the disintegration of Gregor's personality, which was the main focus of the modernist theory. As his communication with people outside the room becomes less and less, he loses his grip on time, perception, and emotion, and this causes him to become more and more alienated and confused. Giving minimal attention to the presence of Gregor and then finally ignoring him completely, the family is the main source of social acceptance being a privilege that is highly conditional (Öztürk & Çipe, 2020, p. 33). In going deeper and deeper into the room, Gregor becomes one with his invisibility which is the reason for his quiet and unrecognized death. Therefore, the bedroom stands for the path of social rejection that leads to confinement, then invisibility, and finally to existential erasure thus, it points to the fact that society pushes to the margins those who are incapable of fulfilling the normal expectations.

5.7 An Absurd End: Social Acceptance Through Gregor's Death

Gregor Samsa's demise in *The Metamorphosis* symbolizes the last step of both social and existential obliteration. He dies silently, without anyone noticing or helping him, thereby showing the indifference of the outer world and the final abandonment by his family. The fact that he cannot communicate or demand his rights as a human being highlights existential erasure: his own selfhood fades as other people do not recognize him anymore (Sartre, 1946). There is also a clear indication of Marxist alienation; after Gregor loses his economic value, he is first changed from being a giver into a burden, and then he embraces this idea so deeply that he disappears in himself (Deligöz, 2019, p. 48; Öztürk & Çipe, 2020, p. 34).

The family reaction thus brings out Kafka's indictment of the society which accepts people on condition only. Grete's saying that they can now "be rid of him" is pointing to how death is the means through which the household regains its stability and social order (Kafka, 2014). Not mourning and immediately going back to everyday life show the notion of those who are discarded because they do not conform. From an absurdist viewpoint, the fact that Gregor dies quietly is an illustration of a world without moral or rational logic; it is unrecognized and without reason, thereby contrasting with Camus's absurd hero who attains insight through being aware.

On an existential level, it is the annihilation of identity that comes from the collapse of the relational and personal spheres. Therefore, Gregor's death is a revelation of Kafka's pessimistic view: social acceptance in a conditional, utilitarian world is not the result of being included but rather that of being erased.

Chapter 6

6.1 Comparative Analysis

Social rejection is the theme most closely associated with both Albert Camus's *The Outsider* and Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*. They revolve around the idea of isolation, difference, and existential crisis of the human being. However, the singularity of their characters, in one case, Meursault, and in the other, Gregor Samsa, and their worlds aside, the paths of the protagonists show the same outcome: communities, because they do it systematically, are the main agents that oust from the center the people who, by breaking the given moral, economic, emotional, or power structures, surprise and disturb them. The chapter deals with a comparison between the presence of social rejection in both works on the level of narrative, psychology, and philosophy, drawing insights from absurdism, existentialism, Marxist alienation, modernist fragmentation, Foucauldian discipline, and contemporary psychological theories of ostracism.

Meursault's distancing highlights to the aspect of his being emotionally and philosophically nonconformist and indifferent respectively. Within the scope of Camus's absurdist philosophy, Meursault denies accepting the reassuring and peaceful illusions of meaning, morality, and transcendence. He is radically indifferent to social rituals, especially the abnegation of grief at his mother's funeral, which makes him an agent of moral deviancy in the eyes of society. As for Gregor, he can be said to be part of Kafka's nihilistic absurdity and modernist collapse. His removal is not due to gaining philosophical clarity but rather a bizarre transformation that makes him economically useless. In the same way as Meursault gains existential lucidity, Gregor loses his existential identity: one is chosen detachment and the other is defeated by it.

Although the power structures that are in charge of their rejection are not the same, they share a disciplinary core. On the one hand, Camus uses the court to visually represent the power of the institutions exerting control over the individual with the prosecutorial discourse that makes Meursault be seen as a criminal of emotion rather than action. On the other hand, through the family, the basic unit of society, economic dependence is turned into a source of surveillance and domination as shown in the power Kafka depicts the mother exerts over the son in the home. Foucault's discipline theory includes these instances: the individuals described are in the spotlights, judged, brought to the norm, and finally removed when their personal traits clash with the prevailing societal themes.

In terms of psychology, the characters dealt with the same consequences of ostracism that scholars such as Baumeister (1991) and Williams (2007) describe: losing the feeling of belonging, of control, of being seen, and leading a meaningful life. Meursault chooses the path of acceptance and revolt; Gregor opts for withdrawal, and ultimately death.

The comparative study through these similarities and differences suggests the respective absurdities of being either lucid or irrational; the rejection being either a public or a private matter; social systems purge themselves of those who are noncompliant or unable to conform.

6.2 Social Alienation: Voluntary vs Imposed

Social alienation influences the existential journeys of Meursault and Gregor Samsa, but the reasons and consequences of their isolation are very different. Meursault's detachment is kind of a last, ditch effort of his own, stemming from his denial of the emotional and moral shows that society puts on. On the other hand, Gregor's is forced upon him due to an absurd change and the socio, economic structures that demean him to mere labour value. By themselves, the two characters show how the contemporary societies react to the nonconformists by throwing them out and making them invisible.

Meursault is not the one who becomes an outcast due to the authenticity of his circumstance. His unemotional reaction at his mother's funeral, his disbelief in religion, and his dismissing comforting stories are the main traits of the absurdist individual according to Camus, who sees the world as it is without illusions. This voluntary attitude disrupts social order. Power relations in society as described by Foucault are at play here in the court's function of turning Meursault from a man who killed "by chance" into a moral threat; it is the institution that creates deviance as a reason for his exclusion.

On the other hand, Gregor's seclusion works behind a different mechanism. His metamorphosis is his severance from the human world, which in turn makes his Marxist alienation even more apparent, the one he had been suffering from for a long time. Gregor is almost completely defined by work, so after he turns unproductive, he loses all social value (Öztürk & Çipe, 2020). The quick reaction of his family to stop the support shows that the structural forces, economic dependency, obligation, and the irrationality of Kafka's world, are responsible for the withdrawal rather than a philosophical choice.

His disintegration gets further deepened by modernist fragmentation: he has no way of communication, his identity is falling apart, and eventually, he disappears as people reject him. Baumeister (1991) and Williams (2007) who studies ostracism, argue that exclusion in their case demolishes the main source of the agent's power and control over them, in other words, meaning, and as the journey of Gregor into existential erasure, they trace.

Meursault finds freedom in accepting the absurdity of life; Gregor experiences death. However, society's reactions to both are almost the same: they are isolated for being the ones who destabilize the normative order, regardless if it is through chosen authenticity or imposed difference.

6.3 Narrative Voice, Language, and Social Perception

Narrative voice and language influence the reader's perception of Meursault and Gregor Samsa, respectively, showing the alienation that is caused by communication, or its failure. While Camus's first, person narration provides Meursault with the authority to tell his story, Kafka's third, person limited perspective depicts Gregor as a character who is so lost that he doesn't understand the language and hence, his isolation is intensified.

Meursault's voice is characterized by clarity, restraint, and emotional neutrality. Thus, rejecting any symbolic or sentimental interpretation. The society, however, understands this truth as a lie and the prosecutor accuses his impassive demeanor as a proof of a "cold heart" (Camus, 2019, p. 89). An analysis based on the ideas of Foucault reveals the ways through which institutional power changes his identity, thus, substituting personal truth with a meaning that is approved by the society.

Gregor's case is a complete contrast. Even though he thinks in human language, he can only produce "a series of squeaks" (Kafka, 2014). His family interprets these noises as the sounds of a devil, thus, the banishment is intensified. As Williams (2007) argues, communication failure leads to less recognition and belonging.

Meursault is excluded because he speaks too plainly, while Gregor is because he is unintelligible. In both cases, narrative voice determines how others perceive them and thus, they are directly involved in the characters' social isolation and existential disappearance.

6.4 Societies Are the Same: Divergent Yet Cruel

Though *The Outsider* and *The Metamorphosis* come from different cultural and philosophical contexts, both show societies that eliminate those who fail to meet norms. Camus depicts cruelty through public institutions, while Kafka shows it in intimate, domestic settings. In both cases, difference is seen as a threat, and outsiders are removed.

In *The Outsider*, Meursault becomes intolerable not for the murder he commits but for failing to display grief or religious feeling: he "felt nothing but a little annoyed" at his mother's funeral (Camus, 2019). The court recasts him as a moral deviant, with the prosecutor claiming he has a "heart devoid of human feeling" (p. 89). Foucauldian analysis shows how institutional discourse enforces social norms and legitimizes punishment.

In *The Metamorphosis*, Gregor loses his value once he can "no longer work" (Kafka, 1915/2009, p. 29). His family progressively withdraws, treating him as a burden until Grete declares, "it has to go" (p. 52). Here, cruelty is private and practical, tied to economic and domestic expectations.

In both texts, social exclusion restores order: Meursault threatens moral stability, Gregor economic and familial balance. Despite different forms, the societies share a fundamental cruelty—eliminating those who disrupt collective norms.

6.5 Conscious Absurdity vs. Tragic Absurdity

Absurdity is the main driver of the plots of both *The Outsider* and *The Metamorphosis*, and it has different effects on the characters of Meursault and Gregor. Camus depicts absurdity that is embraced by the individual: a person sees that life has no meaning but still acts in a consciousness of this and revolt. Kafka shows tragic absurdity: the person has no understanding, insight, or control and thus suffers more.

Meursault is an example of a conscious absurdity as he actively denies the rituals which are of no real significance. In the face of the society's expectations, he states that "I felt that I had been happy, and that I was happy again" (Camus, 1942/1982, p. 116). His estrangement turns into existential empowerment and thus the recognition of life's indifference becomes a new type of liberation.

Gregor is the one who suffers from imposed absurdity. The author portrays his change in a quite random way: "He was lying on his armor, like back, and if he lifted his head a little he could see his brown belly" (Kafka, 1915/2009, p. 3). As the story progresses, the reader witnesses how Gregor's suffering is deeply rooted in the three structures of family, society, and economy, and he has no means of escape. His identity diminishes to the point of disappearing altogether.

The ways people respond to these characters also highlight the contrasts. Meursault endangers the moral order and as a result gets publicly judged whereas Gregor, causing domestic and economic disorder, incurs the wrath of those closest to him. Psychological studies suggest that Meursault preserves his inner sense of purpose (Baumeister, 1991; Williams, 2007), however, Gregor takes in the blow of the social exclusion which eventually makes him negate himself.

Absurdity that is consciously accepted leads to freedom; one that is tragically caught unawares results in pain. It is awareness that largely determines the experience of social rejection in these two works.

6.6 The Role of Death: An Inevitable Social Redemption

Death is used in both *The Outsider* and *The Metamorphosis* as a means for the society to regain control over the situation. In the case of Meursault and Gregor, death is not just the termination of life, it is the final stage of a social process that gets rid of those who disturb the moral,

emotional, or economic aspects of society.

The absurd and existentialist elements are the reasons for the execution of Meursault. One of the main reasons for his condemnation is not the murder, but the fact that he refuses to follow the societal emotional scripts. In the same vein, he brings death to the world when he says: “I opened myself to the gentle indifference of the world” (Camus, 1942/1982, p. 123), thus, his death is also a kind of existential freedom. Foucault’s ideas serve the purpose to demonstrate that institutions are those who set the standards of normality and unnormality and punish the latter in order to keep the society under control.

The death of Gregor is heartbreaking. Devoid of any economic value and emotionally making the situation difficult, he is gone without a word, thus, the family’s stability is restored: “The family felt a certain relief at his disappearance” (Kafka, 1915/2009, p. 72). Marxist and psychological theories throw light on his disappearance as the outcome of exploitation that is deeply rooted in the system and the effect of long, term ostracism (Baumeister, 1991; Williams, 2007). The two deaths, though different in terms of the background, both uncover the way by which society saves itself by getting rid of those who endanger its equilibrium.

6.7 The Bliss of Absurdity: A Gift of Liberation

Absurdity plays a central role in both *The Outsider* and *The Metamorphosis*, but it affects Meursault and Gregor very differently. For Meursault, absurdity becomes a path to freedom—he gains clarity and is released from societal expectations. For Gregor, it brings only confusion, suffering, and loss of self. Camus presents absurdity as a source of insight and empowerment, while Kafka shows it as a destructive, incomprehensible force.

In the end, Meursault finds an absurd kind of happiness just before he dies in the novel. Without the priest's religious help, he understands that the universe does not care at all: “I opened myself to the gentle indifference of the world” (Camus, 1942/1982, p. 123). When he embraces the lack of meaning, he attains a kind of emotional freedom, independence, and existential authenticity.

On the other hand, Gregor is unable to grasp or resist his condition. His transformation takes away his productivity, power, and the recognition of society. As a result of being confined by the expectations of his family and the oppressive system, he becomes so deeply rejected that he finally chooses death (Kafka, 1915/2009, p. 72).

From a psychological point of view, Meursault keeps his freedom and sense of purpose, while Gregor loses both. So, absurdity is a source of freedom in the works of Camus, but it is a source of utter destruction in the works of Kafka, which is indicative of its dual character in literature.

6.8 Conclusion: The Social Outcasts

Meursault and Gregor Samsa rank among the most memorable and distinctive social outcasts in literature. Their stories demonstrate the ways in which societies punish and erase those who choose not to conform, or are incapable of doing so. Although the world of Camus is governed by rational absurdism and that of Kafka by modernist fragmentation, both, in fact, disclose the human price of divergence. Through the use of absurdism, Marxist concepts, Foucauldian power, and psychology, the novels reveal that the outsider's plight is of a structural nature: societies organize themselves in such a way that they rid themselves of those who disrupt the order in order to maintain it.

Meursault alienates himself from society through emotional performance, religion, and moral norms rejection. His honesty makes society crumble around him: "I opened myself to the gentle indifference of the world" (Camus, 1942/1982, p. 123). The court changes his offense into a menace of morality, however, by embracing the absurdity of life, he attains existential freedom.

Gregor's estrangement is a result of external forces. His change cuts off connection, impairs communication, and removes his economic and social value. The family's joy at his death (Kafka, 1915/2009, p. 72) serves as proof of his total isolation. Both instances point to societies regaining equilibrium through the rejection of those who endanger moral, social, or economic expectations, thus, sacrificing individuals.

Chapter 7

7.1 Summary of Key Findings

This study has investigated how Albert Camus's *The Outsider* (2019) and Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* (2014) depict social rejection. Despite of their differences both Meursault and Gregor Samsa share the same fate. Both of them are thrown out of their respective social communities because their way of life, their very existence in this world, disrupts the moral, emotional, or economic norms. It is a confirmation that rejection is a structural response rather than just a personal one.

One big discovery is that the kind of alienation that each of the novels has is different. Meursault's alienation is a voluntary one and it comes from a conscious absurdism. His emotional detachment and his refusal to conform show his defiance of social expectations. On the other hand, Gregor's alienation is an enforced one and it comes from the structural forces. After his metamorphosis, he becomes a socially isolated and economically useless figure.

There are also major findings regarding the influence of communication and language which eventually lead to these results. Meursault's emotionally detached conversation creates small miscommunication that leads to a great misunderstanding, causing his life. Similarly, Gregor's losing his human voice and inability to speak or communicate properly with his family leads to his damnation.

Finally, the comparative analysis showed that both protagonists meet the same tragic end, death as a form of social cleansing. Meursault's execution restores moral order and Gregor's death restores domestic order. Their ostracism confirms society's need to eliminate those who becomes a threat to its stability.

7.2 The Interplay of Society, Freedom, and Absurdity

The relationship between society, freedom, and absurdity is the major theme that changes the protagonists In *The Outsider* and *The Metamorphosis* the dynamic of their alienation. Meursault makes a step to an existential freedom when he realizes the absurdity of life, and does not hesitate to refuse social rituals of grief, religion, or moral justification: "I probably loved Maman, but that didn't mean anything" (Camus, 1942/1988, p. 65). The court accuses this refusal of being a threat to the moral order, thus it disciplines him to maintain social coherence. Absurdity is thus the reason for autonomy, which allows Meursault to make a positive affirmation of his authentic existence while society is intolerant to him.

Gregor Samsa, on the other hand, sees absurdity forced upon him and that he cannot escape it. His transformation takes away his power, voice, and social value: "He was lying on his armor, like back" (Kafka, 1915/2009, p. 3). Bound by the demands of family and the economic

situation, he is left with no choice but to accept the treatment, and thus he loses the ability to make meaning of his life.

The two works reveal that society limits the individual's freedom in order to be able to keep stability.

In the works of Camus and Kafka, the protagonists are subjected to different forms of control; Camus presents the institutional power, while Kafka shows the domestic one. The absurd situation in each case reveals the conflict between the individual's true self and the society's imposition of norms, and the outsider is always pushed to the margin.

7.3 Theoretical and Philosophical Implications

The research demonstrates that *The Outsider* and *The Metamorphosis* not only emphasize the concepts of absurdity, alienation, freedom, and social power but also help in the development of these ideas. Both books question the fixed views of identity and reveal the instability of social legitimacy, thus proving that the literary depiction of an outsider is telling of the larger realms of existence, society, and mind.

In Camus' view, the absurdity taken up by man is also the one that can be liberating. The character of Meursault, for instance, sees life as meaningless and thus discards any moral and religious codes for his own and gains existential freedom: "I probably loved Maman, but that didn't mean anything" (Camus, 1942/1988, p. 65). On the other hand, Kafka shows absurdity as a factor imposed on man that ruins him. The protagonist Gregor's change into an insect or monster completely takes over his will and identity: "He was lying on his armor-like back" (Kafka, 1915/2009, p. 3). In this way, the author indicates that a person can be completely erased by the systems around him/her being so opaque. It is through contrasting the results of absurdity that it is shown as either empowerment or annihilation, according to the individual's capacity for awareness and revolt.

Thus, alienation comes out differently. The value of Gregor is seen only through his productivity which is a reflection of the Marxist critiques of capitalist society where one loses oneself through labor, while at the same time Meursault's exclusion is the result of refusing to conform, this, in turn, throws light on the multi-layered nature of alienation. The issue of power again plays a role in the way people get rejected: the court is the authority that disciplines Meursault through its control and at the same time the Gregor's family is the one that keeps him conforming in the domestic sphere, this is very much in line with Foucault's idea that power creates and punishes deviance as well.

Psychological theories of ostracism (Baumeister, 1991; Williams, 2007), finally, point out that the loss of belonging, identity, and agency has taken place in both instances. Together, the novels reveal how existential, structural, and social forces intersect to determine the fate of the

outsider, emphasizing the precarious balance between individuality and societal expectation.

7.4 Contribution to Literary Studies

This research considerably expands the scope of the novels by projecting a multidimensional view around their common theme of alienation and the social exclusion of the individuals. Such an approach would integrate absurdism, existentialism, Marxist alienation, modernist aesthetics, Foucauldian power, and even psychological theories of ostracism to each of the two novels which would then consequently identify the intertwining elements of identity, conformity, and social mechanisms that create and punish deviance.

One of the major contributions lies in the ability to differentiate between two categories of absurdity. The first type, the absurdity of Camus, is the one that allows the protagonist, Meursault, to face the void with clarity: “I probably loved Maman, but that didn’t mean anything” (Camus, 1942/1988, p. 65). On the other hand, Kafka's hero, Gregor, is in the tragic-style-absurdity where he is tortured by a transformation that he doesn't understand and cannot even rebel against: “He was lying on his armor-like back” (Kafka, 1915/2009, p. 3). This specific difference sharpens the comprehension of absurdity in literature and at the same time shows how narrative viewpoint and philosophical motive influence the interpretation of the outsider.

The work likewise places Gregor's estrangement in a Marxist context, accentuating economic reliance and productivity as the major factors of dehumanization, while the position of Meursault as a nonconformist would be the result of an existentially authentic life and moral deviance. Moreover, the very application of Foucault's theory of power shows how the society controls individuals both overtly and secretly, e.g., in Camus's case through the court and for Kafka through the family, controlling and eventually banishing the unfit. Lastly, by considering psychological explanations of ostracism (Baumeister, 1991; Williams, 2007), the thesis links literary analysis to social psychology, showing how exclusion undermines identity, agency, and meaning. Overall, this research enriches the academic conversation by demonstrating how Camus and Kafka illuminate the consequences of societal nonconformity across distinct philosophical and literary contexts.

7.5 Limitations of the Study

The present study comprises a very thorough and detailed comparative analysis of the two novels, *The Outsider* and *The Metamorphosis*, but at the same time, there are several restrictions that one should consider. The first point is that the researcher has limited his selection of different theoretical perspectives, which are absurdism, existentialism, Marxist alienation,

modernism, Foucauldian power, and psychological theories of ostracism. Although the lenses selected for the research definitely provide depth of understanding, they also rule out other perspectives like feminist, post-colonial, psychoanalytic, and trauma-focused approaches, which might bring to light the social rejection and identity formation dynamics in the novels to be discussed in a more elaborate way.

Secondly, analysis considers only two main characters only. Meursault and Gregor are indeed good examples of major alienation but their stories cannot cover all the literary representations of the marginality. To include other works by Camus or Kafka—or by authors like Sartre, Beckett, or Dostoevsky—could definitely enlarge the understanding of the theme of outsider-hood in different philosophical and historical contexts.

Thirdly, the work is mainly reliant on textual analysis and not on empirical or interdisciplinary evidence. Textual analysis without supporting historical, biographical, or sociocultural materials can hardly give strong contextual grounding.

Lastly, translation and narrative style pose some intrinsic difficulties. The differences that exist between original texts and the English translations made use of (Camus, 1942/1988; Kafka, 1915/2009) may influence the understanding of alienation, its nuances, and even the interpretation of its tone.

Despite these constraints, the study establishes a coherent framework for analyzing social rejection in modernist and absurdist literature, offering a foundation for future research.

7.6 Scope for Future Research

This research illuminates various pathways for future investigations to broaden the comprehension of social rejection, absurdity, and identity in contemporary literature.

One way is to enlarge the comparative framework to cover other existentialist, absurdist, or modernist authors such as Jean, Paul Sartre, Samuel Beckett, or Fyodor Dostoevsky. Looking at outsider characters in different literary and historical contexts might show the development of alienation and societal marginality changes over time.

Besides that, interdisciplinary perspectives have a lot of potentials to unfold the issue. The inclusion of sociological theories of deviance, psychological studies on ostracism and belonging, and philosophical analyses of agency could provide profound insight into the ways that literature reflects and critiques the exclusion mechanisms. Such methods would uncover the economic, emotional, and cognitive aspects of social rejection beyond the narrative representation.

Moreover, scholars may delve into how the translation, adaptation, and cross, cultural reception

could influence the interpretation of *The Outsider* and *The Metamorphosis*. Different cultural settings' comparative studies might reveal the fresh ideas about power, conformity, and existential struggle. Investigation of the impact of gender, class, and race on the experiences of the outsider would also deepen the analysis.

Lastly, by analyzing alienation in the digital age and technological modernity, the researchers could find the continuities or differences with the portrayals of the early twentieth century, thus, showing the timelessness of Camus and Kafka in shedding light on human identity and social marginality today.

7.7 Concluding Remarks

This research has analyzed the outsider aspects of both *The Outsider* and *The Metamorphosis* using the different but related concepts of absurdity, alienation, and social rejection as the basis for comparison. The author's absurd embrace is in stark contrast with the enforced isolation of the character Gregor Samsa, yet both stories still point out the vulnerability of human identity in rigid social structures. It was found that the nonconformists are disciplined, displaced, and ultimately eliminated by society, which reacts to their presence in such ways.

On the one hand, Meursault is the epitome of existential authenticity as he turns down the emotional and religious customs and thus shakes the moral foundation of the community; "I opened myself to the gentle indifference of the world" (Camus, 1942/1982, p. 123). His death sentence is a metaphor for cleansing the society of the nonconformists and ensuring the unity of beliefs. On the other hand, Gregor's change, though, discloses the value's dependency on the family and money. His inability to work and communicate makes him a non-person: "The family felt a certain relief at his disappearance" (Kafka, 1915/2009, p. 72), and this remark shows the inhumanity which is inherent in the modern society with its utilitarian ways.

A comparative approach shows that in all cases, voluntary or forced alienation, society applies the same treatment and considers the deviation as a noise that needs to be either corrected or eliminated. The two stories tell the same about the outsider, namely, he or she is the one who points at the uncomfortable truths regarding conformity, identity, and the extent of human empathy. The death of the outsiders strengthens the prevailing social order but at the same time uncovers its inner reliance on exclusion which is already very deep.

In the end, Meursault and Gregor serve as reflections of the modern world with all its inconsistencies. Their stories put the readers to the test in terms of morality, belonging, and meaning, which are already very difficult to define in a world that usually favors the status quo at the expense of the individual. Through their stories, Camus and Kafka illuminate the enduring human struggle to find authenticity within systems that resist it.

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