



A Comparative Study of Absurdity and Alienation in Albert Camus's *The Outsider* and Jibanananda Das's "One Day Eight Years Ago"

Submitted by

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Certificate of Accomplishment

This is to certify that Bishnupodo Das Kakon, holding student ID number: 193-10-490 of the Department of English, has accomplished this thesis paper sincerely and successfully as part of his academic course ENG 431- Project Paper with Internship with special focus on academic thesis under my supervision during Spring 2023. As much as I can assure, this is an authentic work. He has completed this paper with consultations from various sources, which he has gladly cited in his works. I cannot thank him enough for this amazing work of him which contributes to Comparative Literature. I absolutely admire the fact that he is the only student to have completed such an academic thesis from his batch. I really enjoyed to work with him. I wish him all the well wishes for the upcoming years of his life and believe that he will reach to the pinnacle of success.



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Declaration

I, Bishnupodo Das Kakon, hereby declare that I have read and accept all of the project paper submission rules for the English Department at Daffodil International University. My thesis titled "A Comparative Study of Absurdity and Alienation in Albert Camus's *The Outsider* and Jibanananda Das's "One Day Eight Years Ago"" is my rational contribution to the field of Comparative Literature. During the completion of this study. I consulted with essential and pertinent sources and these sources are cited in the work correctly. As part of the requirements for my Bachelor of Arts (Honors) in English, I completed this project during the spring 2023 semester under the guidance of Fatema Begum Laboni, Assistant Professor, Department of English. This paper or any part of it has yet not been submitted anywhere else for degree, scholarship or publication of any kind. I take all the responsibilities for this work.

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Dedication

I dedicate this research to my incredible father and mother, Suvash Chandra Das and Chaina Rani Das who supported me in every sphere of my life. I also dedicate this paper to my little sister, Srabony Rani Das who was always there for me no matter how tough the world turned for me.

Abstract

This paper explores the themes of absurdity and alienation in Albert Camus's novel, *The Outsider* and Jibanananda Das's poem "One Day Eight Years Ago" through the lenses of Comparative Literature and Textual Analysis. Both the protagonists of the novel and the poem encompass absurd and alienated elements which are manifested through their activities and behaviors. Additionally, this thesis uses a comparative examination of *The Outsider* and "One Day Eight Years Ago" as two different literary genres of two different cultures to draw a comparison between absurdity and alienation used by them. This endeavor also highlights the relative difference between Albert Camus's and Jibanananda Das's use of absurdity and alienation in their respective writings.

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Chapter One

Introduction

The social and academic importance of comparative literature lies respectively in its cross-cultural orientation connecting literature from diverse regions, languages and genres as well as in intersecting literature with other subjects like history, philosophy, political science or even natural sciences. Through the lens of Comparative literature one can realize just how much can be learned by looking over the horizon of one's own culture. In this paper I decided to work on the absurdity and alienation in two texts in order to point out how modern people are alienating themselves from everything by incorporating and exhibiting absurdist elements consciously or subconsciously in their everyday lives. The texts selected are Albert Camus's novel, *The Outsider* and Jibanananda Das's poem, "One Day Eight Years Ago". Although much have been written on these two literary texts from an existentialist point of view, still I believe that this paper has successfully disclosed many dilemmas of absurdity and alienation embedded in the two texts and unraveled the mystery of underlying connection between these two modern themes of literature.

Keywords: *The Outsider*, One Day Eight Years Ago, absurdity, alienation, comparative analysis

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¹ The English translation of the poem "At Bosor Ager Ekdin" by Faizul Latif Chowdhury, released on January 1 st ,2009 is "One Day Eight Years Ago". Joseph Laredo's *The Outsider* published by Everyman's Library 1998 is the English translated version of the novel *The Outsider*.

1.1 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The methodology adopted for this paper is comparative literature which is a wide medium used to analyze any two texts, but it is limited by the fact that it is solely a singular medium. The framework of this study is limited to analyzing and comparing the use of absurdity and alienation in the primary texts used in this research but ignores the entirety of authors who focus on existential themes in their work. Furthermore, there are three major conceptual theories being examined in this research in terms of analyzing the works of Jibanananda and Camus in “One Day Eight Years Ago” and *The Outsider*. The first concept is existentialism, which has been very slightly defined in the ‘Basic characteristics of absurdity and alienation’ introduction of this paper. The second and third concepts are absurdity and alienation. Absurdity is an existential theme that usually utilizes elements that are bizarre or do not make any sense. It is often utilized to examine important questions related to life and nature of reality. Alienation, on the other hand, is a tool utilized by an author in order to display the detachment of an individual from a group of people or society in general. It is utilized to showcase the loneliness of existence in a seemingly social world, and it is a concept that has become increasingly relevant in the modern world. A more detailed analysis of these concepts will be addressed in subsequent chapters of this research.

1.2 Objectives and Significance of the Study

This paper will investigate the following research questions

1. What is absurdity and how it has been utilized by Albert Camus and Jibanananda Das respectively in *The Outsider* and “One Day Eight Years Ago”.
2. What is alienation and how the theme of alienation is manifested by Jibanananda and Camus?

3. What are the major differences in the manner in which Albert Camus and Jibanananda Das have utilized absurdity and alienation in their work?

Furthermore, the objective of this study is to determine the role of existential elements such as absurdity and alienation in the works of Albert Camus and Jibanananda Das. The two writers belong from two different cultures and have their own preferred style of writing literature, but they often turn to existential elements such as absurdity and alienation in order to highlight their major themes. The two writers rely on these elements in unique ways, and the manner in which these elements are executed in their work is highly distinct as well. The following paper will conduct a comparative study on the literature created by Albert Camus and Jibanananda Das. In order to determine the role of these elements in their works, the comparative analysis will be utilized to highlight specific sections from both texts and conduct a cross-analysis in order to determine the precise role of absurdity and alienation in the works of the two great writers. Jibanananda Das and Albert Camus are perhaps two of the most influential writers of the last century and certainly two of the most important writers in the area of existentialism.

Many researchers have identified modern elements in both the poem and the novel but none has done comparative study of absurdity and alienation between a text of Bengali culture and a text of Western culture. This paper will shed light on the sufferings of modern entities for internalizing modern problematic characteristics like absurdity and alienation.

1.3 Overview

Absurdity examines the quality or state of being ridiculous or unreasonable. In literature, it refers to the question of meaning and life, writers often use absurd themes or characters to explore the fact that whether meaning exists at all. On the other hand, alienation is a familiar modern theme in literature defined as an emotional isolation or detachment from others. This paper has illustrated how modern people are alienating themselves because of being absurdist through the lens of Comparative Literature with the help of two texts, *The Outsider* and “One Day Eight Years Ago” respectively penned by Jibanananda Das and Albert Camus.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

In this chapter, the prior studies that are connected to the current topic are reviewed. The chapter covers an overview of existentialism, absurdism and identifies the researchers who have enriched modernism. The novel, *The Outsider* and the poem "One Day Eight Years Ago" are related to some studies on existentialism, absurdity and alienation which are discussed in more detail.

Many researchers have focused on Existentialism. By comparing the novella *The Outsider* to Samuel Beckett's play *Waiting for Godot*, Irfan Ullah and Liaqat Iqbal (2016) investigated the idea of absurdity in literature. This essay explores the absurdity that looked to be life without a purpose or goal, chaos in life, love for death, and emotionally and spiritually sterile persons. Although existentialism had many diverse meanings, its main emphasis was on the person and his relationship to God, as well as the purpose of human existence. It claims that there is no purpose to life and that man's existence is marked by unease, unrest, awkwardness, apprehensions, concerns, and terror.

Additionally, Manab Jyoti Bora's (2020) investigation into the novel *The Outsider's* existentialism. The investigation found evidence of existentialism in the main character Meursault. In this study, the social commentary on a variety of social situations—including marriage, time, and society—was examined. The different phases of Meursault's life "demonstrate the meaninglessness of life." Meursault does not search for a deeper meaning; he accepts life or death. Finally, Meursault contemplates his genuine life and recognizes the importance of life (Bora, 2020).

A well-known proponent of existentialist theory is Albert Camus. Many scholars used his ideas to include existentialist into their study. According to Albert Camus, "Whatever we may do, excess will always have its place in the heart of man, in the area where isolation is discovered. We all have internal exiles, sins, and destruction. But instead of releasing them onto the world, our aim is to combat them both within and without." (Camus, 1992).

The poem "One Day Eight Years Ago," by Md Shamim Mondol, Mohammad Afzal Hossain Khan, and Md Muniruzzaman (2022), provides insight into the idea of isolation. In order to make the poem an attempt at autobiographical investigation, Jibanananda Das used reportage to portray a contemporary guy and reveal his characteristics. By incorporating a reporter's voice and merging his personality with the protagonist's, the poet tells the tale in a different way.

The protagonist of the poem "One Day Eight Years Ago" commits suicide, and Manas Ray (2015) explores the salient causes of this conduct. One of his best-known poems is the subject of the paper's analysis. In the poem, two narrative threads coexist: the protagonist commits suicide for no apparent reason; and the ceaseless brutality of nature as a way of life.

Chapter Three

Methodology

To conduct a significant research, a researcher must first follow specific methodologies and techniques. Additionally, the methodologies used to perform the research are discussed in this section. Both primary and Secondary Sources will be used in the discussion. I have found the literary methodology of Comparative Analysis and Textual Analysis to be more relevant in meeting the goals of the study of two distinct topics *The Outsider* and "One Day Eight Years Ago", also I have used in depth analysis of both the poem and the novel alongside doing rigorous intertextual analysis.

3.1 The Framework of the Study

The method used in this research, which is known as a comparative approach to literature, is one of the most popular qualitative methodologies for examining works of literature by two different writers. It gives the researcher the advantage of carefully evaluating the literary styles used and immediately contrasting the themes and styles selected by the artists.

Researchers regularly apply comparative literature as a method to better comprehend the variations in the literary motifs and styles used by two authors in various genres of literature.

Comparative literature is described below by Bijay Kumar Das (January 1, 2000), "Comparing two pieces of literature is the simplest definition of comparative literature. The parallels,

differences, and similarities between two pieces of literature are examined in comparative literature. The usage of folktales and myths in two or more separate literary works is further studied, along with their styles, conventions, and topics.” (1)

Textual analysis is a broad term for various research methods used to describe, interpret and understand texts. All kinds of information can be gleaned from a text – from its literal meaning to the subtext, symbolism, assumptions, and values it reveals. (Jack Caulfield, 2019)

The Outsider by Albert Camus and “One Day Eight Years Ago” by Jibanananda Das are the two works of literature from which absurdity and alienation will be examined in this article by utilizing the comparative literature and textual analysis method.

Chapter Four

General Discussion

4.1 Absurdity and Alienation's Core Characteristics

Absurdity

There are several meanings for absurdity in literature, but generally speaking, it refers to a breakdown in comprehension and a lack of meaningful understanding, which stresses a lack of meaning. According to Eugene Ionesco, absurdity simply refers to the state of being "devoid of purpose, cut from all religious, metaphysical, and transcendental roots, Man is lost." He clarifies further that "all of Man's actions become absurd, senseless, and useless" (4).

Albert Camus offers the following definition that is both more expressive and useful:

Any universe that can be understood by reasoning, no matter how flawed, is a familiar one. However, man feels foreign in a universe that has been suddenly stripped of illusions and brightness. He is an unrecoverable exile because he lacks both the prospect of a future promised country and the memories of a past home (24). This separation of man from his existence, the performer from his environment, is what genuinely creates the absurdity feeling (18).

Alienation

Alienation is the feeling that you have no connection with the people around you or that you are not part of a group. A person feels alienated when he or she is cutoff from something he or she should be part of. Alienation is one of the strong hazards of living in the modern society. As people live in smaller families and bigger cities, they experience a sense of loneliness and isolation that is unique to them. Alienation is a socio-psychological condition which denotes a state of

'estrangement' of individuals from themselves or from others, or from a specific situation or process. There are also many more ways to understand it. Darankolaee and Hojjat claim

The alienated person is, in this sense, removed off from other people; pushed to its logical conclusion, this psychological disconnection displays as neurosis. According to critical social theory, alienation also refers to the fragmentation of one's identity through employment, which is another way of saying that the person is cut off from themselves (202).

The Marxist theory of alienation promotes a materialist theory of self-development and maintains that the alienation in the social and economic spheres can only be addressed if changes are made to the material transformation of the current capitalist order. Thus, the idea of alienation has many acceptable representations and has been interpreted in a wide variety of ways in literature as well. There are several writers who have been linked to the theme of alienation in literature.

4.2 Summery of *The Outsider*

French novel *The Stranger* or *The Outsider* penned by Albert Camus was translated into English in the year 1942. In this book, he has depicted a self-narrated story of the main character Meursault, a person detached from the rest of the world, whose mind is full of absurdism and employed numerous topics. Camus has illustrated the conflicts which Meursault confronts while living in a world that urges him to explore the purpose of human life. The meaninglessness of life in Meursault is one of the major themes. The notion that life has no redeeming value or goal is a key part of Camus's absurdist worldview. According to Camus, the only thing that is definite in life is death, and since everyone will die at some point, all lives are equally pointless. Throughout the course of the book, Meursault gradually comes to this conclusion, but it is not until his

confrontation with the chaplain in the final chapter that he truly understands it. Meursault understands that much like how he is uninterested in much of the universe. Meursault understands that the universe is equally indifferent to him as he is to most of it. Meursault has been born, will die, and will no longer be of any significance.

4.2.1 Summary of One Day Eight Years Ago

The poem "One Day Eight Years Ago" by Jibanananda Das (1899–1954), which is regarded as a classic of contemporary Bengali literature, is about both mass murder and individual suicide. It is the tenth(10th) poem from Jibanananda's Mahaprithibi which was published in the year 1944. The poem depicts the story of a person who had everything in life, but still for a weird feeling chose to hang himself and now is lying in a morgue. The poem is portrayed as reportage, a term used by Joseph North in 1935 and he terms reportage as 'three-dimensional reporting' and adds, "The writer not only condenses reality, he helps the reader feel the fact" (2020, p. 121). An accident was heard to have taken place, and the poem is a report on that whole incident along with detailed reflection on the situations, locations and attempt at excavating the probable reasons behind it as well as coming to a decisive conclusion about life protagonist's apparent suicide is contrasted in the poem with the unrelenting brutality and killings that define the natural world. The poet tells us a story of a man who killed himself hanging from a tree with ropes eight years ago and the story is presented in flashback. When the story starts, the unnamed man was heard to have taken to the morgue where he is perhaps sleeping deeply on the dissection table and it would never be disturbed as he would never wake up. The poet then tells us of the man's temporal and spatial locations at the time of his suicide. It was moonlit night in the sweet month of Falgun, a month of the spring season. That time he had his wife lying beside him. The season, time and moonlight and the wife

beside him clearly have erotic overtones. Still he felt a strong urge to go out and hang himself emphasizing a sense of alienation the dimensions of which Seeman (1989) explores as powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, social isolation, cultural estrangement, and self-estrangement (p.60). The poem is one of the most talked-about in the Bengali literary canon and has received a lot of critical attention over the years. Jibanananda's poetry is infused with death on a regular basis, and his language reflects this.

Chapter Five

Analysis

5.1 Absurdity in *The Outsider*

Absurdity is one of the main themes of the novel *The Outsider*. The main protagonist having a mind full of absurdity, Meursault is a person who is spiritually cut off from the rest of the world. Absurdist is the first trait that Meursault possesses. The term "the absurd" or "absurdist" refers to a contradiction between the desire for purpose and intrinsic worth in life and absurdist thought. In a meaningless, chaotic, or irrational universe, it alludes to how impossible it is for humans to find any. (M Adam Abdullah, Suryo Tri Saksono, 2021). In *The Outsider's* opening chapter, the trait of bizarre mentality is portrayed by Meursault. During his mother's funeral ignoring the death issue he was thinking about how he could have enjoyed a lovely day,

“It was going to be a beautiful day. It was a long time since I'd been out in the country and I knew how much I'd have enjoyed going for a walk if it hadn't been for mother.”

(*The Outsider*, 11)

Meursault then saw his mother's passing as inevitable because death may happen to anyone. As a result, Meursault experienced the normal grief as a child. Even Meursault transgressed by smoking, for example, which was prohibited when there was a death according to religious principles. Such behavior is shameful and does not represent melancholy.

Meursault's feeling of emptiness haunted him throughout the text. He could not draw a charted life. The feeling of nothingness constantly drove him from the beginning of the text until the end. Even when he was with his girlfriend he was unable to feel fulfillment.

“I felt completely empty and I had a bit of headache. My cigarette tasted bitter. Marie made fun of me because she said I had ‘a face like funeral.’” (*The Outsider*, 43)

The incident of killing an Arab without any apparent logic and constant firing at a lifeless body clearly portray Meursault’s repression in life which eventually led to outburst. Meursault was a man of his own world who always kept himself away from any kind of dispute and violence, suddenly killed a man without any particular reason.

“The trigger gave, I felt the underside of the polished butt and it was there, in that sharp but deafening noise, that it all started. I shook of the sweat and the sun. I realized that I’d destroyed the balance of the day and the perfect silence for this beach where I’d been happy. And I fired four more times at a lifeless body and the bullets sank in without leaving a mark. And it was like giving four sharp knocks at the door of unhappiness.” (*The Outsider*, 54)

Absurdities go even further, claiming that liberation in death. Meursault saw liberation in his receiving the death penalty. It is preferable for someone to die on execution row as opposed to committing suicide. This and Meursault’s perception of a meaningless life intersect. The main route to extreme liberation is death. Humans consider their limitations at this point. Humans go through a stage where they contemplate on their yearning for immortality. Meursault went through this prior to his execution. When Meursault received the declaration of capital punishment, his last wish makes it clear that he did not crave for any kind of love throughout his entire life like other common people of the society,

“And finding it so much like myself, in fact so fraternal, I realized that I’d been happy, and that I was still happy. For the final consumption and for me to feel less lonely, my last wish was that there should be a crowd of spectators at my execution and that they should greet me with cries of hatred.” (*The Outsider*, 107)

5.1.1 Alienation in *The Outsider*

Albert Camus has constructed the concept of alienation in the novel, *The Outsider* through the protagonist, Meursault's experience as an entity who does not manifest conventional societal characteristics and therefore he is alienated and rejected. The name of the novel, *The Outsider* itself hints about the theme of isolation as outsider means someone who is detached from everyone. Alienation is seen in Meursault's life in *The Outsider* Novel. The theme of alienation can be seen in two forms in the novel which are 'self-alienation' and 'social-isolation'. (M Adam Abdullah, Suryo Tri Saksono, 2021).

(1) Self-Alienation

Camus has reflected on the issue of the essence of existence in his book, *The Outsider*. For Meursault, life is merely a sequence of obligations that must be fulfilled. This is a perspective of the absurdity figure. True death is life. Meursault kept himself alienated from everything without any apparent reason. He struggled to connect with others intellectually. Meursault lead a routine and mechanical personal existence. After the death of mother a person would react in a bizarre manner but Meursault was emotionally so much indifferent that even before attending the funeral of his mother he was planning to return at his workplace.

“I'll catch the two o'clock bus and get there in the afternoon. Then I can keep the vigil and I'll come back tomorrow night. I asked my boss for two days off and he couldn't refuse under the circumstances.” (*The Outsider*, 3)

His feelings were not completely affected by his mother's passing. While he was attending his mother's funeral he was so normal that he was drinking coffee and smoking cigarettes without showing any kind of emotional attachment towards his mother.

“I’m very fond of white coffee, so I accepted and he came back a few minutes later with a tray. I drank, I then wanted a cigarette. But I hesitated because I didn’t know if I could smoke in front of mother. I thought it over, it really didn’t matter. I offered the caretaker a cigarette and we smoked.” (*The Outsider*, 8)

Meursault not only portrayed emotional indifference during his mother's funeral but also after the end of the funeral he continuously displayed lack of emotion about his mother’s demise. Just after returning from the funeral of his mother, the next day he went to enjoy movie with his girlfriend Marie Cardona and there he engaged himself in extracting sexual pleasure.

“The film was really funny in parts but otherwise really pretty stupid. She had her leg against mine, and I was fondling her breasts. Towards the end of the show I kissed her, but badly. Afterwards she came back to my place.” (*The Outsider*, 18)

Meursault displayed lack of emotion, aspiration and wants throughout his job life and personal life. When his boss offered him promotion in Paris, he declined immediately. Meursault kept himself in a shell always by keeping himself alienated wishfully.

(B) Social alienation

Meursault has a very morally upright social life. Traditionalist religious views are upheld by his civilization. It has to do with life's strong ideals, conventions, and ethics. In this life society, a person's actions and conduct are related to the manner in which the accepted values, standards, and ethics have been developed and are governed. (M Adam Abdullah, Suryo Tri Saksono, 2021).

Meursault has engaged in behavior that is at odds with the standards or principles that society as a whole has adopted. Normally when someone dies the people of Meursault’s society lament and

manifest heavy emotion whereas Meursault at his mother's demise completely showed opposite reaction and even refused to show his mother's face.

“At that point the caretaker came in behind me. He must have been running. He shuttered a bit. ‘We covered her up. But I was to unscrew the coffin to let you see her.’ He was just going up to the coffin when I stopped him. He said, ‘Don't you want to?’ I answered, ‘No.’”
(*The Outsider*, 6)

The way he treated others was yet another immodesty that gave him a foreign appearance. His only friends from his living area were Salamano and Raymond Sintes whom other people of the society ignored. Meursault failed to draw any particular reason why the other people from his society did not like Salamano and Raymond and this aspect of Meursault is one of the things that makes him feel more alienated. One of Meursault's absurdist expressions of his civilization is selfishness. It refers to the idea of alienation put forth by Sartre in 1963, who stated that "each expression of the estranged state contradicts man's essential being, his potency for goodness." It follows from his egoism that Meursault is bound by self-alienation. Meursault was powerless over his inner self. His social alienation will be brought on by the estrangement. Meursault had the best of intentions when he decided not to meddle in other people's affairs, but he was ultimately ensnared by his own ego. (M Adam Abdullah, Suryo Tri Saksono, 2021)

5.2 Absurdity in “One Day Eight Years Ago”

Jibanananda Das has presented the protagonist of “One Day Eight Years Ago” as an absolute absurdist. The protagonist had all the things a successful person can desire while living but still for a peculiar feeling, an unknown ambivalence, chose to embrace death. This line from the very first stanza of the poem, “he was longing for death” (Translated by Faizul Latif Chowdhury) makes it clear that the protagonist was craving for death. Generally, a person who does not find any meaning behind living longs for death and this protagonist’s desire for death clearly indicates absurd mentality of him. At the beginning and toward the end of the poem, the poet clearly states that the protagonist had a satisfying matrimonial and prosperous material life. In the first stanza the poet describes,

“His wife lay beside—the child therewith;
hope and love abundant” (Translated by Faizul Latif Chowdhury)

A resembling idea is reflected in the second last stanza, where the poet demonstrates,

“Listen
yet, tale of this dead; —
Was not refused by the girl of love,
Didn’t miss any joy of conjugal life,
the bride went ahead of time
and let him know
honey and the honey of reflection;
His life ne’er shivered in demeaning hunger
or painful cold;” (Translated by Faizul Latif Chowdhury)

From these lines we clearly get the idea that this person owned riches and even was blessed with “a life of ease”. He had wonderful wife, loveable child, successful career but these mundane pleasures were insufficient for him. Something troubled his soul which he failed to perceive and this troubled feeling forced him to commit suicide.

The poem, "One Day Eight Years Ago" echoes absurdity through the protagonist's action of suicide. The protagonist clearly failed to give meaning his life. Neither he was rejected by any girl nor he was unhappy in his marital life. Moreover, he was blessed with a child and successful career. But still he committed suicide and now lying in the morgue. Despite having a pleasant conjugal life, he decided to leave the world. Some strange feelings constantly haunted him and this strange feeling can be depicted as the meaninglessness of life. He was enshrouded with an absurd feeling and this absurdity forced him to embrace death over living.

5.2.1 Alienation in "One Day Eight Years Ago"

The protagonist of the poem was burdened by his alienation. Jibanananda Das has manifested the protagonist as an embodiment of absurdity and loneliness. Alongside being an absurdist, he also found himself lonely despite having family and others. He did not have a single person in his life to whom he could express his inner psyche and internal peculiar feeling. (Manas Ray,2015)

In the poem, the disturbed feeling which instigated the protagonist to commit self-murder was conveyed to him by "a silence like the neck of a camel."

Sumita Chakravarty's interpretation says that this surrealistic imagery suggests the feeling of loneliness that a desert evokes. The silent sense of solitude glided to the protagonist the way a camel would quietly stretch its long neck into the tent of Bedouins. The loneliness appeared as strange and harrowing to the protagonist because he had a wife and a child. There is no reason for him to feel isolated while they lay right beside but still he felt lonely. His loneliness struck him so hard that he believed if he kills himself, he,

"Will not face anymore the stress

The heavy burden -

The deep unceasing pain of consciousness." (Translated by Faizul Latif Chowdhury)

Furthermore, we can experience the protagonist's life fluctuated with tiredness and solitude from the stanza given below,

“Know—I know
woman’s heart—love—offspring—home—not all
there is to things;
Wealth, achievement, affluence apart
there is some other baffling surprise
that whirls in our veins;
It tires and tires,
and tires us out;
but there is no tiring
in the post mortem cell
and so,
there he rests, in the post mortem cell
flat on the dissection table.” (Translated by Faizul Latif Chowdhury)

He had all the mundane achievements alongside familial satisfaction. Despite having all the worldly pleasures, he led a tiring life while he was alive and now he is having a peaceful sleep in the morgue. During his lifetime he had everything but “some other baffling surprise” made his life tiresome and this “baffling surprise” can be interpreted as nothingness of life and loneliness.

Jibanananda Das has injected the theme of alienation in the poem, “One Day Eight Years Ago” by portraying the protagonist's alienated life where he had family members and others but still a notion of loneliness was felt by him constantly. He could not escape from the internal loneliness while he was alive and that is the reason he chose to commit suicide. He felt detached from everything. He had a lovely wife, a child but still could not make a connection with them. He had a successful career but there he failed to make connections with others too and finally he embraced death in order to make himself free from invisible loneliness which always kept haunting him throughout his life.

5.3 A Comparative Overview of Absurdity and Alienation in *The Outsider* and “One Day Eight Years Ago”

Both Jibanananda Das and Albert Camus have injected absurdist elements in “One Day Eight Years Ago” and *The Outsider* respectively through the portrayals of their protagonists who discovered their lives meaningless without specific goal and purpose. Both Meursault and the protagonist from *The Outsider* and “One Day Eight Years Ago” failed to create meaning in their lives. Both of them were emotional and spiritual barren characters in terms of living their lives in every aspect.

Jibanananda Das has portrayed absurdity as one of the key themes in his poem, “One Day Eight Years Ago” by manifesting the suicidal incident of the protagonist who failed to find any meaning while living despite having a happy conjugal and materialistic life. Similarly, Albert Camus has displayed absurdity through Meursault's eagerness of accepting death. Both the protagonists showed love for death.

The protagonist from “One Day Eight Years Ago” felt hopeless despite having everything whereas Meursault felt hopeless despite having no aspiration. Both the characters showed no hunger for greater success. In spite of having a successful materialistic life the protagonist of the poem decided to suicide. Similarly, due to the lack of aspiration Meursault negated to receive promotion and go to Paris.

Both of them were extremely unhappy with the functioning of the world and could not feel connected with the surroundings. They found social norms and rituals as arbitrary that is why they did not hold back from embracing death. In one hand the protagonist of “One Day Eight Years

Ago” moved towards self-destruction without any apparent cause. On the other hand, Meursault killed an Arab without any apparent reason and faced capital-punishment later on.

Alongside absurdity, alienation is another major theme constructed successfully in “One Day Eight Years Ago” and *The Outsider* by the authors through the alienated protagonists. Both the protagonist of “One Day Eight Years Ago” and *The Outsider* are spirituality detached from the rest of the world. Meursault failed to feel the heart connection both with his mother and lover Marie Cardona. Meursault was apathetic on his mother's demise as well as his interactions with Marie every time. Similarly, the protagonist of “One Day Eight Years Ago” had his wife and child still he felt he is alone. The Protagonist of “One Day Eight Years Ago” and Meursault kept themselves self-alienated as they found the world around them arbitrary and hostile. Not only both the characters were self-alienated but also, they were socially alienated. There was no mentioning of friends of the protagonist from “One Day Eight Years Ago”. Similarly, Meursault did not have such friends with whom he shared a very deep understanding and emotional attachment. The world around them functioned normally for everyone but both of them felt disconnected and felt separated. They found it very hard to go with the flow of the everyday life and decided to make themselves isolated. Both of them rejected their loved ones and society. They made themselves separated both consciously and subconsciously. One salient factor to be noticed is the difference of accepting the meaninglessness of life by Meursault and The Protagonist of “One Day Eight Years Ago”. Despite knowing that life is meaningless Meursault never thought about committing suicide, he embraced the futility of life. On the contrary, the protagonist from “One Day Eight Years Ago” could not accept this absurd sense of meaninglessness and decided to commit suicide.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

In conclusion, this thesis paper has excavated absurdity and alienation themes in *The Outsider* and “One Day Eight Years Ago” through the portrayals of the protagonists of the both texts who embody absurd and alienated characteristics. There are plenty of commonalities in the way Camus and Jibanananda has utilized the tools of alienation and absurdity in their literary works, *The Outsider* and “One Day Eight Years Ago” respectively. The one major similarity between the two writers is that they waste very little time in establishing an absurd situation for their audience, and we see the setup of the plot being established almost immediately in the opening portions of the text.

This paper will surely be a benchmark for comparative study between two texts belonging from totally two different cultures and for pointing out the modern elements of literature meticulously through the lenses of absurdity, alienation and comparative literature.

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