

THE OBJECTIVE CRITICAL STUDY OF THE UBIQUITOUS ABSURDITY AND EXISTENTIALISM PREDICAMENTS IN LITERARY MASTERPIECES

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Abstract

The very human existence is likely to suffer from the existential problems and the umpteen reasons like identity crisis, loss of faith, distrust within the incompatible relationships etc made it more bizarre and lead the entire mankind to the perversion. As a matter of fact, the contemporary trends to explore the knowledge are likely to be accepted but its counter effects are always unnoticed which pave the way to make a perverted genius.

The term existentialism should not be interpreted in a didactic manner but fundamental facts and observations are needed for critical consideration. From the very birth even an infant suffers from the very existentialism problems till his/her death. This paper is an attempt to scrutinize the discomfited yet far and wide vices in form of absurdity.

The predecessors of existentialism ideology and prevalent absurd tendencies were justified by the Greek and Latin philosophers in their vivid themes of revenge, lust, lack of intimacy in informal relationship. Even the sanguinary drama of University Wits i.e. Thomas Kyd and Christopher Marlowe sowed made the fundamental change in the mindset of human being and the very component of absurdity stated elevating in human psychology. This particular concept got consolidated especially during the mid 17th century when Jean Paul Satre and Albert Camu had unveiled and sensitively acknowledged the existential realities which were so repulsive yet plausibly applicable to mankind. The vices which were so inherent as the basic human instincts or rather the race of human being got corrupted by such unworthy, nasty, vicious and malignant notions substantially abolished the sheer love for life and gradually a modern man suffers from the existentialism crisis. Further, the literary observations shows especially of a German Philosopher, Fredrick Nietzsche,

“God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. How shall we comfort ourselves the murderers of all murderers? What was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives: who will wipe this blood of us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed to great for us? Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it?” (1)

Nietzsche’s works express a fear that the decline of religion, the rise of **atheism**, and the absence a higher moral authority would plunge the world into **chaos** and **anarchy**. Due to the same tendencies the modern world has lead itself to **nihilism**. Nietzsche’s statement prompted several replies from his more religious opponent, and from later existentialist, Albert Camus, for example, considered the human need for higher order **absurd**. Absurdity is the notion of contrast between two things. As Camus explains it in The Myth of Sisyphus that **the absurd is born out of this confrontation between human need and the unreasonable silence of the world**.

The Existentialism is not a definitive claim about the world or the people in it. It is marked; instead, by a set of themes about the human conditions and the struggles and freedoms that human must endure, or perhaps embrace. The individual is free as Satre says, “radically free”. The individual can shape its own life which has unfettered views and opinions and defy its so-called nature. The individual makes decisions and bears the responsibility for its actions alone. Existentialism is a philosophy of the individual and its struggle through life- a focus on the subjective life that we all actually live, rather than a search for objective truths external to us. The sheer constructive proneness of literary writers with their innumerable endeavors to sustain faith in God and compatibility within the humans truly saved the entire mankind which was about to move towards nihilism. As the world is having ample perpetually tormented human brains believing in the perception of nothingness, aimlessness and ennui that eradicated the good angles from their soul and drag them to the world of psychological annulled perversion which has a direct relevance with contemporary absurd predicaments.

Actually it is a vicious and filthy rebel of particular bad angels which leads the modern people to the murky globe, where everyone believes in enjoying the perversion with the so called great understanding, superficial interpretation and malicious wisdom. The widespread universal fact that we have to acknowledge has very well explained the philosophy in his ‘Myth of Sisyphus’ when he justifies the valiancy of the central character Sisyphus.

Knowledge is awful in this accidental universe. We begin our journey to Death the moment we born or even conceived because of the built in biological factor of decay. Your birth is accidental and your death is inevitable. Your body clock contains the information about the length of your sentence in this Prison house of Life. Further, Albert Camu believed that the story of Sisyphus had another symbolic message as many of life’s specific tasks certainly feel futile; however, what is more discouraging is that the sum total of a person’s outcome of life may seem pointless by keeping the acuteness prevalent in modern life. Human life, he argued, cannot be neatly dissected and misunderstood by human reason in the same way that scientists might successfully analyze and understood chemical reactions. We strive to be happy, but instead are trapped in a futility of life’s predicaments. As much as we try to make sense of it and solve the problem, we can’t, the sober reality of things simply does not live up to our optimistic expectations.

Another ideology of skepticism was undoubtedly observed by the constellation of eminent critics when they pondered over the issue. The problem of absurd impact is so widespread that it is almost each and every human being who is not ready to believe about the

things, ideology or God that does not exist but the height of the belief is that they are even not ready to believe whatever exists. The concept is not all about darkness, negativity or any disappointment because they all are different temporary phases of life which are liable to be transformed respectively into knowledge (Light), Positivity (Hope) and Happiness (Inherent satisfaction and Optimism). Whereas, absurdity is a niche where there is no wish, no hope or nothing to be resolved.

The psychological and literary analysis has definitely explored the reasons, realities and outcome of these peculiar nuances and as it deals with the greater philosophy, we need to first focus on how the very idea of absurdity emerged with its responsible reasons. Martin Esslin, for the very first time introduced the word ‘The Theatre of Absurd’ in 1960. Along with him Ionesco, Genet, Adamov and Samuel Beckett with his “Waiting for Godot” made this concept more elaborate and extensive for the mediocre people. Even though this conceptualization was acknowledged by the modern writers but to know its etymological reasons we need to delve the vivacious and distinguished illustrations from the classics as well.

The indirect undertones in various themes are indirectly conversed especially by Anglo-Saxon and Pre-Shakespearian writers who initiated the concept but with little literary acknowledgement and attention. The master craftsman of literature, William Shakespeare has unmitigated stated in one of his most celebrated dramas, **Macbeth**,

“Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow
Creeps in this petty pace, from day to day
To the last syllable of recording time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools,
The way to the Dusty Death. Out, out, brief candle,
Life is but a walking shadow, a poor player,
That struts and frets its hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more. It is a tale,
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.” (2)

The ephemeral human existence with its nothingness is equally emphasized and explained by giving the logical, etymological and plausible reasons by showing the basic detestable human instincts as one of the reasons of absurdity by Jonathan Swift,

“I cannot but conclude the bulk of your natives to be the most pernicious race of little odious vermin that nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth.” (3)

The ingredients became gradually preponderant and inexorable with its restrained notions that scientific amendments, logical resolutions or any materialistic comforts fail to interpret or provide any elucidation. The similar connotation has been well said by T S Eliot,

“We are the hollow men
We are the stuffed men
Leaning together
Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!
Our dried voice, when
We whisper together
Are **quite and meaningless**
As wind in dry glass
Or rat’s feet over broken glass

In our dry cellar

**Shape without form, shade without colour,
Paralyzed force, gesture without motion.” (4)**

With the hopelessness of life he himself describes the consequences and how it is going to be summed up. In the following lines his sheer undertone is about how the historical and glorious facts are ended. It always ends in sorrows and agonies.

“This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
Not with a bang but a whimper.” (5)

Eliot also expressed the pessimistic views of modern culture and the future. His main focus is his opinion of contemporary society, which he believes is decaying. His ultimate wasteland is the modern city and its post-war appearance, dry, barren and static. He emphasized the thought that there is no hope remaining.

“He who was living is now dead. We who were living are now dying.” (6)

Further, the literal term has been blended artistically with the ideology of making sordidness more conceded to the people even at the ‘Grihasthashram’ which is to be considered as the fruitful time-span of everybody’s life. Expressing his innermost ennui, estrangement within the relationship John Osborne substantially put forwards his ideas,

“Nobody thinks, nobody cares, no beliefs, no conviction, no enthusiasm.” (7)

We don’t have even the space to think about the optimistic visualization of life as the inertia and void become the prime concerns in the nutshell of modern life. Further Samuel Beckett in his “Waiting for Godot” expressed the same torpor where the characters aim at achieving nothingness. The two tramps, Vladimir and Estragon, have nothing significant to do with their lives other than waiting for the inscrutable Godot, or any significant place to be other than by the side of a road in the middle of nowhere.

““Let’s go.”—“We can’t.”—“Why not?”—“We’re waiting for Godot.” (8)

Vladimir and Estragon conclude from the fact of their existence that there must be something for which they are waiting; they are champions of the doctrine that life must have meaning even in a manifestly meaningless situation... What Beckett presents is not nihilism, but the inability of man to be a nihilist even in a situation of utter hopelessness.

“There is nothing to express, nothing with which to express, nothing from which to express, no power to express, no desire to express, together with the obligation to express.” (9)

Even being a keen observer of social milieu, a sensible human being would have a sense of pity for the modern generation who actually suffer from this ambiguous, obfuscate and grubby creed prevalent in their mindset. The estrangement among the relationship paves the way to make this ill notion more ineffable and inscrutable. This motif is not only well illustrated by the writers but the same sensibility has been exceptionally expressed and castigated by intellectuals and did their best endeavours to find the possible solutions. As the word solution has been referred here just to find another creative diversity which consoles our conscience but utterly fails to eradicate this sense of apathy and nothingness. The only way left for us is to accept, manipulate or just to get endless and perpetual suffering out of it. It is absolutely a riddle and a challenge to make this world free from this sense of nothingness as we do not want to confer something to the next generation which has been consisted of ‘Nothing’. This is the very ideology where the plausibility of human being thoroughly paralyzed and seems helpless in the realm of ABSURDITY. As said by Arthur Schopenhauer,

“We can regard our life as a uselessly disturbing episode in the blissful repose of nothingness.” (10)

Eventually, we need to acknowledge the predicaments and resolutions are not supposed to be found out but are evidently put forward for considerations and observations.

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