

## Echoes of Absurdity: A Parallel Study Between the Protagonists in “*The Outsider*” and “*Bibar*”

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### ABSTRACT

Albert Camus’s “The Outsider” masterfully embodies absurdism, highlighting humanity’s futile search for meaning in a meaningless world. Unlike existentialism, absurdism rejects free will, urging individuals to confront life’s inherent absurdity. Meursault, the protagonist, is not just an outsider to society but also a man devoid of faith, whose moral development reflects his absurd predicament. Similarly, Samaresh Basu’s “Bibar” explores absurdity, despite differing cultural and philosophical contexts. Both novels examine existential meaninglessness and individual alienation, though shaped by their unique backgrounds. By going more deeply into the protagonists, philosophical foundations, cultural settings, and literary methods of these two novels, this article will elaborate on the idea of absurdity and how it appears in them. Moreover, it also delves into how their actions—or inactions—reflect a sense of alienation and detachment, challenging the traditional notions of morality and purpose which express the echo of absurdity.

## INTRODUCTION

Nobel Prize laureate, French-Algerian philosopher, author, and journalist Albert Camus (1913–1960) left behind works and ideas that have had a profound impact on readers and intellectuals worldwide. Camus was born in Mondovi, Algeria, which was then a French colony. His upbringing in humble circumstances influenced his views on social justice and human struggle. He rose to prominence in 20th-century philosophy and literature, particularly as a key proponent of existentialism, despite his own resistance to the term, preferring to focus on absurdism and the human condition. The central conflict in Camus's philosophy is the inevitable absurdity of life and humanity's quest for meaning in an apparently meaningless cosmos. In his foundational work "The Outsider", this theme is expressively expressed as well as he explores how people can remain strong, defy authority, and make moral decisions in the face of hardship and absurdity.

Actually, Camus's approach to the problem of absurdity encapsulates the essence of what we refer to when engaging with the philosophy of absurdism. Absurdity is not only about allowing life to be conducted as it pleases, but also about finding meaning in life even in the midst of many meaningless things. The root of this philosophy is the curiosity that meets people's need to know the reason as well as the way of their living in this universe. Basically, the emergence of absurdism is founded on the demands of the time and flourished after the World War II when the spiritual foundations of humanity were devastated. It was impossible for people to survive in such a bleak environment with the help of religious ideas. Moreover, in order to make individuals work for mechanized production, technical advancements started mechanizing people and reversing the relationship between humans and machines, depriving them of their unique identities and traits. People throughout that time experienced a level of loneliness, emptiness, and helplessness never before seen. To put it another way, dealing with such a ridiculous world, people progressively lost their sense of purpose in life and began to feel empty and hopeless every day. It is imperative that people adopt a new philosophy in place of religious beliefs in order to reconstruct their mental landscape and provide guidance for their daily lives. Absurdism emerged against this backdrop and in accordance with the demands of the times.

Albert Camus, often regarded as having laid the foundation for absurdism, once said that a sense of the absurd is produced by human attempts to impose rational order on an intrinsically irrational reality. This philosophy, seeks to address the issues of whether living a life devoid of hope is worthwhile and how we should insist on doing so. His theory can be broken down into two sections: the absurdity and how to react to it. These two ideas will be further discussed in relation to "The Outsider" and "Bibar" by Samaresh Basu in which Samaresh Basu portrays an anonymous character in "Bibar" who leads his life in a very indifferent way and finally tries to find a way to be free from all absurd thinking as well as relationships. "Bibar", published in 1965, is a significant work in Bengali literature, notable for its candid portrayal of urban

youth's existential dilemmas. The protagonist embodies the struggles of a generation caught between emerging liberal values and traditional societal norms. This article is going to discuss how Meursault from "The Outsider" and the anonymous hero from "Bibar" fight against absurdity in and how they get freedom through absurdity.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Albert Camus's "The Outsider" has been extensively analyzed for its existential themes and portrayal of the absurd. A vast range of Meursault's life's events are covered in the story, from his sexual relationship with Marie to his eventual murder conviction and guillotine. Critics have examined the protagonist, Meursault's detachment from societal norms and his confrontation with life's inherent meaninglessness. Dr. Navjot writes "Meursault's existential crisis, highlighting his disconnection from societal expectations and his struggle to find meaning in an incomprehensible world" (Kaur, Navjot). The philosophical theory of absurdity holds that human attempts to discover a logical explanation or purpose in the cosmos will always fail since, at least to humans, there is no such meaning. According to this, absurdity is the conviction that life is arbitrary and pointless and seeking meaning in life would be seen futile. It seems absurd to engage in activities just to fulfil a social obligation and it appears frequently as well as is a common theme in "The Outsider" as, a vast range of Meursault's life's events are covered in the story, from his sexual relationship with Marie to his eventual murder conviction and guillotine. The philosophy of absurdist examines the essence of the absurd and how people ought to react to it when they come upon it. The word absurd refers to the conflict between the human tendency to seek inherent value and meaning in life and the human inability to find any. In this context, absurd does not mean "logically impossible", but rather "humanly impossible" (Kierkegaard, 1991). Instead of adhering to the socially prescribed norm, absurdist insist on doing what comes naturally to them rather than what other people would expect of them. However, in contrast to other existentialist writers, Camus holds the relatively optimistic view that by realizing the folly of life and throughout his writings, he vehemently defends his central thesis, which holds that individuals ought to be happy living a pointless life. His concept of the "absurd" universe is predicated on a fear of living in an incomprehensible environment and the necessity of human reason. Actually, the challenges Meursault faces in "The Outsider" give rise to existential concepts of freedom, choice, obligation, and poor faith. These ideas demonstrate how Meursault's existence is crippled by inexplicable suffering and calamities. The everyday existence of an average individual is the subject of this novel which immerses readers in a world of isolation where they are unable to connect with their identities, relationships, culture, or place of employment. Patrick McCarthy claims that, "this feeling of absurdity arises out of the daily routine work" (Cherry, 2017). "The Outsider" is perhaps as Sartre puts it "constructed so as to furnish a concerted illustration of the theories expounded in The Myth of Sisyphus" (Sartre an Explication 8). Again it can be mentioned that, "The novel calls for contemplation, and appeal to its readers to take into consideration their own mortality and purpose of their lives. The existential

predicament of Meursault, the protagonist of Albert Camus' novel "The Outsider" which is unsympathetic and indifferent to the incidents of his own life and others around him is critically analyzed" (Sartre & Priest, 2002).

According to Camus, the struggle of man's inability to analyze and explain his existence in terms that are human was the source of the absurd and man faces a unique challenge in reality as a whole since his rationality is unable to refrain from exploring, searching, struggling, and critically examining life in general. So he said, "... that odd state of the soul in which the chain of daily gestures is broken, in which the heart vainly seeks the link that will connect it again, it is as it were, the first sign of absurdity" (Camus, 1955). Similarly, Samaresh Basu's novel "Bibar" is considered as a significant and controversial work in Bengali literature. The novel delves deeply into the complexities of urban life, moral dilemmas, and existential crises. The protagonist is a young man grappling with the alienation and ethical struggles of living in bustling Kolkata. This novel remains a landmark work that challenges societal norms and continues to resonate with readers. From the perspective of absurdity, Samaresh Basu's "Bibar" aligns with the philosophical underpinnings of absurdism, particularly in its exploration of existential struggles, alienation, and the search for meaning in a chaotic urban environment. The protagonist embodies the absurd individual who exists in a world that offers no clear answers to his moral and existential dilemmas. Writer Saroj Bhattacharya has said, "The protagonist of Samaresh Basu, who embodies the aimlessness spanning ages, is not silent. Standing at the foot of the stairs in his own home, he asks in his own style - 'Whose India is this?' He goes on to say that no one thinks about him because he, too, does not think about anyone. When he closes his eyes, he remembers only his office boss, the bartender, and the waiter. This terrifying emptiness is the true image of his inner being. Is it not the same for our lives as well" (Bandyopadhyay 552)?

Much like Albert Camus's concept of the absurd, "Bibar" portrays the protagonist's life as a series of conflicts between his internal desires and the societal expectations around him. The urban landscape of Kolkata acts as a metaphor for the chaotic and indifferent universe, mirroring Camus's philosophy in works like "The Outsider". The anonymous hero feels detached from the people and institutions around him, including his relationships and societal norms. His inability to conform to the expectations of a structured, "meaningful" life mirrors the absurdist condition where individuals struggle to find coherence in an incoherent world. His actions often defy conventional morality, leading readers to question the established notions of right and wrong. This moral ambiguity reflects the absurdist belief that meaning is subjective and that societal structures often fail to provide satisfying resolutions. The hero of this novel is alone and secluded as well as for enjoying freedom, he even murders his girlfriend. He is not only separated from his family but also detached from the society. Critic Partha Pratim Bhattacharya rightly says about the hero- "The novel begins with the turning point in the life of this isolated individual, when the young man comes out, tearing the web of

his family, environment, class values"(Bandyopadhyay 1997: 68).Unlike traditional narratives where characters overcome obstacles to achieve clarity or redemption, "*Bibar*" leaves its hero in a state of unresolved tension. This lack of resolution reflects the absurdist notion that life is a continuous confrontation with meaninglessness, and the only response is to live authentically despite it. Viewed through the lens of absurdity, "*Bibar*" is a profound exploration of human alienation and existential dilemmas within the chaotic urban experience. The protagonist's journey resonates with Camusian ideas, illustrating the tension between humanity's quest for meaning and the indifferent universe and it can be mentioned as "How intense hatred toward everything around can unknowingly entrap the hunter himself – *Bibar* is perhaps the complex narrative of that very entrapment. Within this complexity, one by one, dissolve the protagonist's extreme obsession, hatred, and detachment toward Nita, just as he harbors both detachment and intense hatred toward his job. This novel is about the rage of someone who, surrounded by various falsehoods, initially accepts them but gradually becomes unable to do so. Growing increasingly exhausted, it ultimately becomes a tale of a man's rejection".

## METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative methodology and only uses secondary material to examine the parallels between the protagonists of Samaresh Basu's "*Bibar*" and Albert Camus's "*The Outsider*." The study's main foundation is textual analysis, which incorporates ideas from academic publications, literary reviews, critical essays, and sourcebooks. By engaging with existing interpretations of absurdism and existentialism, the study explores how Meursault and the anonymous hero of "*Bibar*" embody the philosophy of the absurd in their respective socio-cultural contexts. Moreover, this article offers an intellectually stimulating comparative analysis of Camus's *The Outsider* and Samaresh Basu's *Bibar*, examined through the framework of absurdist philosophy. It commendably connects Western and South Asian literary traditions by analyzing the protagonists' experiences of existential crisis, alienation, and rebellion. The piece is generally well-organized and integrates pertinent philosophical, literary, and contextual perspectives. Its analytical depth and wide range of references enhance its scholarly significance. Although, it is solely based on secondary data, by synthesizing existing literature, this study constructs a coherent comparative perspective without incorporating empirical research or primary data collection. Through the use of this methodological framework, the study successfully reveals the absurdity that recurs in the lives of Meursault and the anonymous hero, providing a deeper comprehension of how existential philosophy appears in various literary traditions and how absurdity is embraced by both.

## DISCUSSION

The philosophy of absurdism originated from the understanding that humans are naturally driven to find meaning in a universe that is ultimately meaningless. This philosophy was developed by French philosopher Albert Camus in response to the absurd, as a diversion from existentialism and as a



counterweight to nihilism. The European existential movement gave rise to absurdism as a belief system when Albert Camus disapproved of several elements of the philosophical school of thought and published the "Myth of Sisyphus" in his manuscript. For the proponents of absurdity, it "... arises from the confrontation of human appeal with the irrational silence of the world" (Copleson; 2008). A distinguishing feature of absurdism from existentialism is its rejection of "free will." It requires us to acknowledge the ridiculousness of being human and deal with it accordingly. Absurdism is the belief that since there is no evidence of a higher power, people are illogical and cannot find an objective meaning in the cosmos. In Sartre's view, absurdity is a phenomenon and mental state and his absurdity lies in the contradiction of the real world itself, as he depicted in his book "Nausea". Nevertheless, Camus stated that absurdity is a connection and conflict between humans and the world. For him, absurdity neither exists in human nature nor in the world, rather it is created by the interaction between humans and the world. In comparison to these two perspectives, Camus's absurdity theory is more unified. It is only through man that the absurd originates, and it cannot exist apart from him; the world in itself is not absurd but simply irrational. However, one can say that, for Camus, the world and human life are absurd, or at least, they appear as absurd once their irrational and meaningless character is clearly perceived (Copleson; 2008).

According to Albert Camus's absurdist philosophy, since the human condition is so absurd, we should rebel against absurdity by giving up on trying to find purpose in life and instead concentrate just on having fun. The notion that people are compelled by their innate need to find purpose in a world that is ultimately meaningless gave rise to the absurdism theory. Camus says the origin of the absurd was from the conflict of man not being able to rationalize and explain his existence in human terms. He holds that reality as a whole poses its peculiar problem for man, whose rationality cannot help searching, looking, struggling, and critically looking at life in general. So he said, "That odd state of the soul in which the chain of daily gestures is broken, in which the heart vainly seeks the link that will connect it again, it is, as it were, the first sign of absurdity" (Camus;1955).

People tend to readily accept certain viewpoints, ideals, or laws—such as religious doctrines—and cling to them with great dedication, often granting them immense significance based on their personal needs. Absurdity, in this context, is not just a philosophical idea but also a psychological state—a complex blend of emotion, confusion, and disillusionment. When these deeply held beliefs are questioned, disproven, or rendered inadequate, the mental frameworks that support people's sense of meaning begin to collapse. In such moments, anxiety and despair take over, leaving individuals with the haunting realization that life—and the world itself—may be inherently meaningless or absurd.

This feeling stems from a fundamental conflict: the constant, intense struggle between human beings and an indifferent universe. Humans possess countless

desires and expectations; they long for meaning, order, and certainty. Rational beings strive to understand their lives through logic and purpose. However, the world does not operate according to human logic. It is unpredictable, chaotic, and frequently irrational. Because so many aspects of life lie beyond human control—and because individuals often fail to attain what they desire—this gap between expectation and reality gives rise to a deep sense of absurdity.

Albert Camus's concept of absurdity—the clash between the human desire for meaning and the silent, indifferent universe—lies at the heart of his masterpiece *The Outsider*. The novel eloquently illustrates this philosophy by depicting a world that is wholly absurd and a protagonist, Meursault, who is both shaped by and resistant to this absurdity. Meursault, an office clerk, lives a life devoid of ambition or deep emotional connection. One day, he receives news of his mother's death. He attends her funeral, but neither cries nor displays any sorrow. Afterward, he returns to his ordinary life, as if nothing had changed. Later, his friend Raymond invites him to the beach, where Meursault, under the blinding influence of the sun, ends up killing an Arab man—an act committed without clear motive or premeditation. During the lengthy trial that follows, Meursault is criticized more for his emotional coldness—especially his failure to mourn his mother—than for the killing itself. Ultimately, he is sentenced to death. Awaiting execution, Meursault finds peace in accepting the absurdity of life and refuses to turn to religion or seek redemption.

Camus uses Meursault's story to examine "the nakedness of man faced with the absurd." Every pivotal moment in Meursault's life—from the murder to the sentencing—is marked by irrationality and chance. His conviction is not based on logic or justice, but rather on society's need to reaffirm its moral and religious values. The court, the magistrates, and the priest all represent this collective desire to impose meaning, demanding signs of affection, such as tears at a funeral, as evidence of humanity. When individuals fail to conform, they are judged harshly. In this way, Camus critiques society's reliance on emotional norms as tools of judgment, highlighting how humans rarely escape the cycle of credulity and often use it to condemn others. Furthermore, he represents Meursault as an emotionless where he comes out as an outsider who is oblivious to the things that are happening in his life and has little to say about them. He usually answers with something like "it made no difference" or "none of it really mattered" when someone asks him what he thinks or when he has to make a choice. As he expresses at one point, "I said it didn't make any difference to me and that we could if she wanted to" (Camus 38). When his lover Marie asks him if he will marry her, he told her that it wasn't that important. Meursault's inner monologue is oddly serene in addition to being emotionless. His thoughts during his arrest are merely a reflection of what is going on around him, not those of a scared criminal caught in the act. His feelings are never extremely powerful, but that's not to imply he doesn't comprehend his predicament or feel anything about it. When he is able to enjoy the smells of summer, the part of town he loved, a certain evening sky, Marie's dresses, and the way she laughed, he is just slightly pleased. When he receives a death sentence, he experiences

some confusion and upset, but these emotions are never intense or passionate. He is condemned to his fate—the death penalty—because of his emotionless and dispassionate view of society and the outside world, which paints him as an outsider who either does not care about or does not comprehend social norms. *It can be said that “absurdity here refers to humanity’s futile attempt to impose meaning and rationality on a meaningless and irrational universe”.*

During the time Camus was writing, religious beliefs were growing increasingly fragile, particularly in the aftermath of the war, which left many people disillusioned. This collapse of traditional faith under the weight of absurdity is reflected in *The Outsider*. When Meursault is first urged by the investigating magistrate to confess and seek God’s forgiveness, he refuses. His declaration that he does not believe in God deeply unsettles the magistrate. For the magistrate, questioning the existence of God would mean undermining the very foundation of his worldview, rendering his own existence meaningless and absurd.

By the end of the novel, it becomes clear that the priest's insistence on Meursault's confession is driven less by concern for Meursault’s soul and more by the priest's own need for validation. The idea that someone could face death without turning to religion is a threat to the priest’s belief system. Thus, Camus reveals how religious conviction can sometimes serve as a psychological defense against the terrifying possibility of a meaningless universe. For Camus, “man’s salvation is not achievable in God; it must be achieved here on earth by man’s hand; thus the world for him is devoid of God; for God is dead, he is no longer in existence and can no longer guarantee our existence. Thus man in order to exist must decide to act” (Camus; 1942). However, Albert Camus' philosophy of absurdity explores the conflict between humans’ search for meaning and the indifferent universe that offers none. Central to this idea is the notion that life is inherently meaningless, yet we continuously strive to find purpose. He advocates for a rebellion against the absurd through the embrace of life’s experiences and the pursuit of personal authenticity. In this rebellion, one finds a kind of freedom, choosing to live fully despite the lack of ultimate significance. His ideas challenge people to confront the absurd and to live with passion and integrity, suggesting that the struggle itself can be a source of meaning. People can only truly be free when they stop expecting hope. To fight is to live to the best of one's abilities despite acknowledging the absurdity and having no hope at all. Moreover, the only practical solution for humans to live is to fight against absurdity. Meursault emerges himself by giving up hope and see the reality, living with passion by refusing suicide as well as living the moment fully. Actually, by refusing to play with the social norms, he reaches a place of existential freedom. His indifference is not just apathy but a conscious acceptance of the world’s indifference. He realizes that societal labels and norms do not define him and that his actions have meaning only to the extent that he attributes it to them. This freedom, while alienating, brings a sense of peace as he embraces the absurd truth of existence. In the same way the protagonist in “Bibar” also is represented as a character alienated from both the



society and the family as well as finds freedom from everything and finally he accepts everything around him.

In "*The Outsider*" by Albert Camus, the protagonist Meursault perceives reality through a lens that is radically stripped of illusions, emotions, or moral constructs—a perspective deeply shaped by Camus's existentialist and absurdist philosophy. Camus presents Meursault as the quintessential "absurd hero," who lives without the conventional comforts of hope, meaning, or purpose. For Meursault, life unfolds without any underlying purpose, and he approaches this with an almost extreme passivity, which is particularly evident in his reaction to events that would typically stir intense emotions in others. His acute awareness of reality accounts for his lack of concern for anything.

Only because of the lacking of hope to each other Meursault and his mother didn't believe in one another, they were able to increase their independence and options. Meursault avoided having to deal with significant maintenance costs, both in terms of money and time, which would have caused stress in his life, by relocating his mother to an assisted living facility. Instead of spending all day in a tiny dwelling without communication, his mother was able to meet more friends in the elderly people's home. She even obtained the most priceless gift—her devoted "fiancee." all the benefits of this decision since pessimism draws freedom. Unlike Meursault, the protagonist in "*Bibar*" is also detached from his family due to the lack of emotion and attachment to the family members.

Meursault's perception of the world is firmly based in his sensory experiences without imposing any emotional or moral significance on them. He frequently remarks on the heat of the sun, the hue of the sky, or the sound of the waves, but he refrains from giving these observations any metaphorical value. His world is immediate, tactile, and real as well as he comes out as chilly and uninterested as a result. At his mother's burial, for instance, he shows no emotion and merely expresses discomfort due to the heat; he is more impacted by the day's sensory suffering than by any sense of loss. Society, which views grief and grieving as signs of love or respect for the departed, is shocked by this seemingly heartless reaction. Again, in his relationship, Meursault adopts an equally detached perspective. For instance, he does not have the usual romantic zeal in his relationship with Marie. When Marie asks him if he loves her, he answers honestly and aloofly that he doesn't, but he would marry her if she so chooses him. He appears alien to others due to his lack of ambition and conventional emotional involvement, exposing the existentialist issue of alienation from society norms and values. In "*Bibar*", the hero also continues a non attached relationship with his girlfriend, as it is seen he goes through a mixed feeling whether he loves Nita or not. He wants to get her but after a while he creates a distance even thinks about murdering her. When he kills her he tries to recap all the incidents before this unexpected incident and here he expresses: "Obsession or detachment—I don't know. I intensely desire to have it, yet, in hatred and rage, I feel like destroying it" (Samaresh Basu 60).

Moreover, Meursault's refusal to hope or search for deeper meaning is central to his worldview and his understanding of reality. Hope, in Camus's philosophy, is seen as a comforting illusion, one that often distracts people from the present moment by focusing on a brighter or more purposeful future. By rejecting hope, Meursault aligns himself with the absurdist view that life has no inherent purpose, and he confronts the reality of his existence head-on. For him, life simply "is" – it's a succession of moments without any predetermined direction or ultimate significance. "So long as the mind keeps silent in the motionless world of its Hope, everything is reflected and arranged in the unity of nostalgia. But with its first move, the world cracks and tumbles, an infinite number of shimmering fragments is offered to the understanding. We must despair of ever reconstructing the familiar calm surface which would give us peace of heart" (Camus, 1955). This acceptance of absurdity becomes especially pronounced in the novel's climax, when Meursault faces his own death sentence. Meursault heroically faced the absurd reality without hope, fully accepting his demise before being executed. In the prison cell, as he contemplates the inevitability of death, he realizes that there is no sense in hoping for salvation, escape, or any intervention to change his fate. Instead of succumbing to despair, he achieves a sense of clarity and peace. He finds liberation in acknowledging that the world is indifferent to his fate, and this stark awareness allows him to embrace life as it is, rather than as he might wish it to be. "It was as if that great rush of anger had washed me clean, emptied me of hope, and, gazing up at the dark sky spangled with its signs and stars, for the first time, the first, I laid my heart open to the benign indifference of the universe" (Slochow, Harry).

The anonymous hero in "Bibar" embraces his life in the same way as well as he accepts the ultimate transcendence of societal judgment and confesses about Neeta's murder. He says, "Yes, I am the one who killed Nita because, what can I say, I just couldn't cope with her obsession and falsehood" (Ghosh 197-198). Actually, the protagonist was stuck in Neeta's love and addiction but he was depressed about it. As a result, finding no way to escape from this intricate situation he just kills her and confesses very easily. Additionally, there is no misunderstanding between the hero and his beloved Neeta as it is seen at the day of murdering she agrees for having dinner in a restaurant as per his request. Usually, Neeta comes back home at eleven pm and takes her dinner but on this day the hero comes with her and she offers her own dinner for him. Here the hero starts thinking Neeta loves him and they have a love affair and for this reason he can't tolerate her hypocrisy as she sometimes spend time with other persons after coming back home. As well as the hero longs for the freedom denying the happiness of subjugation which makes him murdering his beloved Neeta. A critic says, "The girl named Nita, whom he has killed – being with her was both a liberation from middle-class values and, at the same time, an admission of his own enslavement. 'Despite having complete freedom to stay away from Nita, I came running at her very call, which means that every drop of my blood is intoxicated by the liquor of subjugation.' This is the abyss (*Bibar*), the pit" (Bandyopadhyay 68).

Again, not only he acts for freedom from his girlfriend but also he denies the opportunity in his job, as, inspite of having a great chance of getting lots of money and success, he simply denies everything only for freedom just like he murders her for her hypocrisy. Neeta's sexuality keeps him in bondage, so he kills her to get rid of that bondage and he also disobeys his mother's instruction of accepting the file in his office. Although he knows that if he rejects the report he will be fired, yet he takes an independent decision. Because he knows people fear freedom. Critic Sumita Chakraborty rightly says about the independence of this anonymous hero- "The protagonist's sense of freedom has shaped him into a true human being. His inner conflict is with society. What appears to be betrayal of the nation is, in reality, the gradual establishment of a profound and benevolent faith. This seemingly paradoxical nature of language is what makes the novel *Bibar* possible" (Chakraborty, Chowdhury, Sengupta& Sarkar, 1994: 360).

Again, Meursault's "giving up hope" aligns with Camus's philosophy of accepting the absurdity of life without succumbing to despair. In doing so, he finds a form of freedom, realizing that without the illusions of hope, he can face life's realities honestly and accept its inherent randomness. Camus uses Meursault to illustrate that true freedom may come from releasing the desire for meaning or purpose and instead focusing on direct experience, without looking for comfort in abstract concepts like hope. In fact, Meursault effectively demonstrates that one can live beautifully in a world of absurdity by emulating his spirit of never running away, living in the present, and appreciating life. He battles against the world, accepted it, and then made peace with it. Unlike the hero, in "*Bibar*", also wants to be free from the hole of love, attachment and social judgment. As he has both addiction and indifference to Neeta additionally this indifference forces him to murder the lady. The indifference becomes more clear when his mother asks him to marry he visualizes Neeta as a bride but he only likes to pass time with her. In "*The Outsider*" we get Meursault to behave in the same pattern as when his girl friend asks to marry him he becomes confused. The both heroes from two novels cherish to be free from all belongings with the society and they love to be alienated from all those bondings. Moreover, the marriage system of the middle class society, reluctance of human relationships and the fight between the sense of freedom and subjugation as well as the existential anxiety haunt the anonymous hero of "*Bibar*". Critic Monivushan Bhattacharya rightly says, "Family, relatives, history, dreams, memories—none of these awaken any sense of responsibility within him. Everything is forsaken, abandoned. On one side stands the protagonist, and on the other, endless time" (Bandyopadhyay, 66).

Some people decide to end their life because they can't handle the absurdity and believe their lives are completely useless. In this situation, they give in to the ridiculousness, forget who they are, and take the simplest route to avoid absurdity forever. The absurd, as Camus explains, can push a person to existential crisis. Faced with the lack of meaning, one may feel despair and a natural response could be suicide—an act of rejecting life's absurdity by

choosing to exit it altogether. However, Camus adamantly opposes suicide as a solution, seeing it as an escape that refuses to confront the absurd. Instead, he argues that the best response is to live fully and passionately in the face of life's absurdity, without needing it to have meaning. This requires accepting that life has no ultimate purpose and that death is inevitable, yet still choosing to live and find joy or purpose in existence itself, moment by moment. For Camus, since everything, the world and life is absurd, facing it is like struggling against it. Having expressed man's fruitless endeavours in the world that is devoid of God and meaning, with no eternal truth or value, Camus raises a vital question whether the full awareness of this meaninglessness and absurdity inherent in life worth suicide. His solution to this is a constant revolution against the absurd instead of suicide which comes from the awareness of the absurd. For him, from the moment the absurd is recognized, it becomes a passion, the utmost harrowing of all (Camus, 1975). Actually, suicide has no true meaning for the absurdist since it does not eradicate the absurd. The absurd is not found in man or "the world," or "universe," rather in the particular combination of the two—man's search for meaning and the universal silence that follows. Suicide neither resolves nor removes the question of absurdism. Camus tries to convey that when someone commits suicide, the absurd won't be completely removed because there will still be other people with whom to combine the Absurd. For Camus, the "logical" choice in an absurd world is not to end one's life but to reject any illusions that mask reality and to live authentically within it. By embracing the absurd without resorting to despair or escape, Meursault affirms his freedom and embodies Camus's idea that true meaning is found not in grand purposes but in the simple act of living, even in the face of meaninglessness. This is the ultimate rebellion against the absurd—an affirmation of life on its own terms. Throughout the novel, Meursault faces a world that is indifferent to human existence. As well as his rejection of both religious solace and the temptation of suicide reflects his acceptance of life's absurdity. Moreover, Meursault's indifference to conventional morality—illustrated by his lack of guilt after killing a man—underscores his rejection of external values. His ultimate acceptance of life's meaninglessness is a quintessential absurdist stance.

According to Albert Camus, absurdity abounds in life and suicide is not always necessary to realize the absurdity and meaninglessness of existence. Even while a large portion of human life on Earth is based on the hope of tomorrow, that future only exists to push us closer to death, which is the ultimate adversary of life on Earth. According to Albert Camus, attempting suicide as a way to escape the absurdity of existence will undoubtedly indicate a complete failure on the side of the individual. Then, rather than giving life purpose, this will amount to giving in to absurdity. Therefore, even while there is no guarantee that we will ultimately prevail, he calls for a complete "revolt" against the ridiculous. For this reason, Camus rejected existentialist readings of his ideas. This could be because, in contrast to existentialists, Camus believed that there were instances in which life's events truly compelled us to act. His stance is undoubtedly quite



contentious, though. However, realizing that existence is pointless is already a step in the right direction. Man must firmly hold himself against it, separate from and revolt against it in its entirety since absurdity is meaningless. Because he is free to refuse to give in to the ridiculousness or pointlessness of existence, man is able to separate himself from the ridiculous. With that freedom, man ought to have some grace that will allow him to give his life some kind of purpose. Camus, through Meursault, suggests that life has no inherent meaning, but individuals can create their own values and live authentically despite this realization. By choosing to live fully in the face of death and absurdity, Meursault's refusal of suicide becomes a form of defiance against the absurd. He does not explicitly contemplate suicide, but his acceptance of the absurd resonates with Camus' existentialist views. Rather than succumb to despair or seek escape through death, this protagonist embraces life as it is, finding freedom in the realization that life is devoid of inherent meaning.

This mirrors the ideas Camus outlines in *"The Myth of Sisyphus"*, where embracing the struggle of life is portrayed as a courageous response to its inherent lack of meaning. Camus advocates the pointlessness of human labour in the Myth of Sisyphus, and Sisyphus, who was destined by the gods to the pointless task of rolling a boulder to the summit of a mountain, only for the rock to roll back to its base, was a fitting example of this. He keeps doing this with all of his strength and energy, but every time he manages to roll it up, the rock returns, and he must begin again endlessly. Because nothing has changed and the same thing happens every day, human labour is therefore a worthless and futile endeavour. Without a doubt, Sisyphus will never be able to push the stone to the top, and he will never have the opportunity to permanently defy the force. All he can do is keep doing his hard job day after day. But despite his extreme despair, Sisyphus never thought about physically or mentally killing himself to get away from his job. He accepted his work with zeal, fighting against nonsense with his brave and strong attitude. Accepting this ridiculous situation and fighting absurdity with a passion for life is also a form of confrontation if it is impossible to reverse the tragic fate that has been bestowed by power or the world. Camus said, "There is no more dreadful punishment than futile and hopeless labour" (Camus, 1955). So, all human endeavours for Camus, is but a futile task since at the end death will eventually strike.

Meursault's spirit is identical to Sisyphus's spirit. What lies beneath his supposedly aloof demeanour is his unmatched enthusiasm and love for life. His ultimate acceptance of his impending execution demonstrates his refusal to despair. He does not seek solace in religion or illusions of meaning but instead acknowledges the inevitability of death and the indifference of the universe. Again, throughout the novel, Meursault finds solace in the physical world – its sensations, like sunlight, the sea, or a simple cigarette. In his trial, punishment, and ultimate acceptance of death, Meursault's persona best exemplifies Camus' ideas. Meursault is severely criticized by society not because he killed someone but more because he does not share the typical feelings or viewpoints. His disregard for conventional standards disturbs society, and in the end, his



character and worldview are blamed more for his crime than for his actions. He has the chance to embrace the religious doctrine that the prison chaplain has provided him in order to cope with the fact that he will die. This would provide him with a sense of purpose or an eternity. However, he rejects any such delusions and won't lie to himself. Sometimes he wants to marry his girlfriend, sometimes he rejects. He claimed that he had no desire to marry his girlfriend, Mary, and that he didn't love her. However, after witnessing her converse with his friend's wife, he genuinely desired to marry her. He always admired her beauty in his heart when he saw her in court and in prison. By thinking back on the items in his room and memorizing every aspect of them, Meursault may get rid of his boredom and even feel joy. Admitting that he liked this place and experienced innumerable fulfilling moments in his life, he held onto every joyful memory. "I recognized, echoing in my tired brain, all the characteristic sounds of a town I'd loved, and of a certain hour of the day which I had always particularly enjoyed". "Yes, this was the evening hour when — how long ago it seemed! — I always felt so well content with life" (Han, Ruoqi). Even the sound of trams running, the yells of newspaper vendors, and the chirping of birds all provided him with constant satisfaction in this ridiculous world, allowing him to assert that, "To feel it (the world) so like myself, indeed, so brotherly, made me realize that I'd been happy and that I was happy still" (Han, Ruoqi).

Actually, Meursault has a metamorphosis in his cell that is consistent with Camus' philosophy of accepting life in all its absurdity. Meursault accepts his life as it is, refusing to turn to religion for comfort or to lament the pointlessness of his passing. He finds serenity in embracing the fleeting nature of life rather than in dreaming of a greater purpose. With the knowledge he has received about his place in the cosmos, this acceptance enables him to face death without regret or dread. Despite the world's disregard for his destiny, he learns to appreciate its beauty — the sounds, the feelings, the warmth of the sun. In this sense, Meursault's embrace of ridiculousness grants him a certain freedom. Giving up the urge for life to "make sense," he releases himself from social pressures and discovers certain happiness in the sheer act of existing, even if it is only for a short while. His refusal to commit suicide, acceptance of life without illusions, and readiness to meet death head-on all serve to exemplify Camus' concept of the "absurd hero". Such a hero endures life's challenges without requesting that it comply with his wishes, much like the legendary Sisyphus, who repeatedly rolls a boulder up a hill only to have it roll back down. Unlike, in "Bibar", the hero accepts the situation and thinks about the way of escaping from all hassles from others even he can never think himself dying like Neeta though he believes she could kill him in the same way he killed her. After this incident he feels peace rather than becoming sad and he plans to get rid of the jail if he is revealed anyway, he talks to himself, "As Neeta is already dead, and this will inevitably be seen as a murder, then surely I should escape from here" (Basu 61). According to Camus, one cannot escape the absurdity by holding onto unsupportable beliefs, metaphysical objects, or uncontrollable hopes, fancies, or illusions. Seizing what they can right now is what can truly help people fight against the ridiculousness. Because we live in a

ridiculous world, people frequently base their decisions on their wildest fantasies. But the irrational reality will never be able to fulfil their fantasies. Therefore, it is better to focus on the now rather than the past or the future, and to dedicate one to concrete rather than metaphysical things. Meursault doesn't grieve for his mother since he understands that it is over and that his grief will not bring about any difference. He is always in the here and now. He represents a person's seclusion from society. He stands out because he refuses to establish deep relationships with other people. He frequently acts in ways that are inconsistent with what other people anticipate of him. There is no reason for Meursault or the other mourners in the room to bid Meursault's mother farewell. "It was hard for me to believe the mourning truly existed," he says at one moment. It's hard for him to fit in because of his actions and inability to explain them. In his detention cell, he's forced to deal with new, unpleasant forms of isolation since he's been labelled an anti-Christ (Kim, 2021, p. 26).

In the closing pages of *The Outsider*, Meursault reflects on life and ultimately finds peace in its absurdity. He states that he is "happy" and ready to face his execution, having accepted the universe's indifference and recognizing that meaning must come from within, rather than being imposed by external structures or beliefs. In doing so, Meursault rejects societal constructs and moral systems that attempt to impose order or fabricate meaning where none inherently exists. His refusal to conform to social norms—such as expressing grief at his mother's funeral or embracing religious faith—renders him a target of society's judgment. His trial becomes less about the act of murder and more about his emotional detachment and nonconformity.

Meursault's acceptance of the absurd leads him to embrace life as it truly is: chaotic, unpredictable, and indifferent. This mirrors Camus's broader existential philosophy, which asserts that the lack of inherent meaning in life should not result in despair, but rather serve as a source of liberation. According to Camus, if life has no predetermined purpose, then individuals are free to live authentically and passionately, creating their own subjective sense of purpose and appreciating existence for its immediate experiences.

Camus's idea of "living without appeal"—accepting life without resorting to illusions or false hope—is embodied in Meursault's final transformation. In his last moments, Meursault finds serenity by immersing himself in physical sensations and memories: the warmth of the sun, the sound of the sea, and the pleasure of simple, tangible experiences. These sensory connections affirm his existence even as he faces its end. Rather than succumbing to hopelessness, Meursault experiences a liberating sense of freedom. In embracing the absurd, he discovers that life, even without meaning, is still worth living. He recognizes that death is inevitable and that worrying about it is futile. This realization allows him to stop resisting and instead embrace his fate with courage and serenity, as it is expressed by him, "I realized that I'd been happy, and that I was still happy" (Camus 107). This moment highlights a profound shift: Meursault no longer seeks meaning in life or fears death. In the novel's final

lines, Meursault envisions the crowd that will witness his execution. He welcomes their hatred and the absurd spectacle of his death. This demonstrates his full acceptance of life and death, as he imagines himself merging with the indifference of the cosmos. "For the final consummation 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" (Camus 107). From the moment man accepts that the world has no direction according to Nietzsche, he must give it one which will eventually lead to a superior type of humanity (Nietzsche, 2011).

Just like Meursault in *The Outsider*, the protagonist of *Bibar* also experiences a unique sense of peace following a violent act. After murdering Neeta, he reflects, "To be honest, I feel a strange sense of peace. What kind of peace it is, only the gods know, but still, certain tranquility seems to have enveloped me" (Basu 62). This moment suggests not a triumph or justification, but a complex emotional release—a detachment from moral expectations and societal norms. Much like Meursault, who attains serenity by accepting the absurdity of life and rejecting imposed meaning, the hero of *Bibar* seems to discover a paradoxical calm in the wake of an act that defies conventional morality. Both characters, in their final reflections, reject the frameworks of guilt and remorse that society demands. Instead, they find an unsettling peace in confronting the truth of their existence—one that is raw, irrational, and free from illusion. In this way, both Camus and Basu present protagonists who arrive at a form of existential clarity through transgression, positioning peace not as a moral reward, but as an outcome of confronting life without pretense.

## CONCLUSION

In recapitulating the main ideas it may be stated that, in both "*The Outsider*" by Albert Camus and "*Bibar*" by Samaresh Basu, the protagonists—Meursault and anonymous hero—exist as embodiments of absurdity, navigating worlds that neither conform to their sensibilities nor accept their defiance. Similar to the anonymous hero's defiance of social norms and the socio-political systems of his era, Meursault exhibits passive detachment and a refusal to pretend to feel the emotions that society expects him to. *Bibar's* hero confronts the absurd through his existential struggles against personal alienation and political persecution, whereas Meursault does it through his disregard for justice, love, and death. The echoes of absurdity in both characters reveal a shared resistance against societal norms, yet their paths diverge—Meursault embraces the absurd with an acceptance of life's inherent meaninglessness, whereas the anonymous hero's struggle remains one of continuous resistance and confrontation. Through this parallel study, it becomes evident that while absurdity isolates, it also liberates; both characters, in their own ways, transcend societal expectations, illustrating the profound existential dilemma that defines human existence. Ultimately, their journeys reinforce the notion that in a world devoid of inherent meaning, the only authentic response is to live with the courage of one's convictions, even in the face of absurdity.

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