

Absurdism in Communication Based on Albert Camus

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Preprint

Abstract

Albert Camus, one of the pioneers of existentialism and absurdism, identified the search for meaning in a meaningless universe as "absurd" by defining the limits of absurdism in his work *The Myth of Sisyphus*. According to him, a person knows that he will die while trying to add value to his life. This contradiction brings out the "absurd". Because death is a tragic end for Man.

Another absurd work of Albert Camus, *The Stranger* is dominated by an incongruous sensibility. This novel of Camus, who argues that the world is absurd and meaningless, is considered one of the most important works of philosophy of the 20th century. The meaninglessness of life, alienation from the environment and oneself, and indifference are at the forefront in the novel.

Albert Camus, who has very influential works all over the world, knew today's people very well and expressed the problems of alienation and lack of communication in societies in a foresight way in 1942. In *The Stranger*, studies on absurd philosophy were carried out at the level of master's degree and doctorate, by considering other works of Camus. Some of these studies have dealt with Camus' philosophy of "absurd" by comparing existentialism, while others have touched on the concept of absurd in the context of the works. In my thesis titled "Absurdism in Communication Based on Albert Camus", I focused on the alienation caused by absurdism by taking Albert Camus's novel *The Stranger*, which tells the story of absurdism, and examined the absurd communication and alienation of today's people by using In-depth Interview method, based on reasons such as socioeconomic, cultural and digitalization.

Keywords

Absurd;albert camus; digitalization;the stranger

INTRODUCTION

Absurdism, which is related to existentialism but differs from existentialism at certain points; draws attention to the fact that the universe is devoid of meaning and to the human in the absurd cycle. In this study, it is discussed how the repetitive behaviors, absurd thinking style and "incompatible" elements in bilateral relations of Meursault, the main character in Albert Camus's acclaimed novel *The Stranger*, are integrated into our lives, especially with the acceleration of digitalization. In addition, empathy, which is the main subject of Bauman's sociology, was especially emphasized, and the emotions and actions of people in their daily lives such as fear, anxiety, and unresponsiveness were examined from an absurd point of view.

In the first part of the study, existentialism as a philosophical school, the points where existential philosophy intersects and diverges with absurdism, was studied from the perspective of the existential philosophers of the period; J.P. Sartre, Kierkegaard, Heidegger and the advocate of absurdism, Albert Camus.

In the second part, Camus' philosophy was tried to be explained by supporting it with absurdism, his cult work *The Myth of Sisyphus* and the *Stranger* novel, and the incompatible character of the novel, Meursault's cycle and relations were discussed by making references to the work.

In the third part of the study, the absurdism in communication is emphasized, the alienation and lack of empathy caused by digitalization, which has gained momentum in recent times, has been explained and the "feeling of absurdity" that has emerged in today's world has been tried to be explained.

In the fourth chapter, the reflections of the absurd communication that we all face but most of us do not realize in our daily lives, especially in our school, work and private lives, are explained, and the concept of social alienation is supported by the analyzes of Lefé Breand Eric Fromm.

In the last part of the study, "In-depth Interview Method" was used as a research method, and Camus's novel *The Stranger* was read to four people, two women and two men, from

different professions and age groups. The findings and conclusion section were prepared by interviewing the people who participated in the interview on the meaning of the main character of the novel, Meursault, and on the absurd examples they encountered in their daily lives.

In my thesis on “Absurdism in Communication Through Albert Camus”, I will deal with the absurd communication, which is perhaps the problem of outrage, which many of us are not aware of or because we normalize it, within the framework of Albert Camus' *The Stranger* and *The Myth of Sisyphus*. Starting from Camus, I will explain the absurd communication created by digitalization in the context of interpersonal relations in daily life.

While I was preparing this study, I did not come across that “Absurd Communication in the Digital World” was considered as a concept in the literature reviews I made, and I think that I will contribute to the literature by conceptualizing it. I will try to define the concept of Absurd Communication in the Digital World within the framework of the *Stranger* and the *Myth of Sisyphus*, through the Alienation explained by Camus differently from Marx, the absurd philosophy rooted in Søren Kierkegaard, and the daily life theory of Agnes Heller and Goffmann.

In my study, in which I used the in-depth interview method as a method, one-to-one interviews were conducted with 4 people, 2 women and 2 men, who read Albert Camus' novel *The Stranger*, in order to understand people's perspectives on absurd communication, and the findings were analyzed and the result was tried to be reached.

RESULTS

The purpose of this study is that I wanted to try to explain the absurd concept of communication that most of us are not aware of, that we are used to, normalized, but that we establish/have to establish with each other in some way every day, through the main character Meursault in Albert Camus' *The Stranger*. The digitalized world, our digitalized identity has disrupted our bilateral relations, even though we do not accept it. Now, the

state of “being in touch” has become purely for individual purposes, far from empathy and curiosity. The meaning of the question “How are you?” was made meaningless. Especially in our business and education life, we start our target-oriented communication with the question “how are you” in order not to be accepted as a rude or contradictory person, but we do not wonder how the other party actually is.

Is there any human communication left in this dialogue that we all see and establish over and over everyday? Curiosity or empathy?

The only thing that is real in the dialogue that starts with “how are you” is that the person asking the question “how are you” has an exposure and will ask something. Since this is now the problem of the period, I wanted to work on this absurd communication that is established consciously or unconsciously. Since I did not come across that “Absurd Communication in the Digital World” was considered as a concept in the literature reviews I made while preparing the study, I tried to contribute to the literature through the lack of communication, which is now the problem of our age, by conceptualizing it. By examining the concept of Absurd Communication in the Digital World within the framework of the Stranger and the Myth of Sisyphus, I tried to shed light on the communication of today's people by defining it through Alienation, which Camus explained differently from Marx, the absurd philosophy whose roots are based on Søren Kierkegaard, and the daily life theory of Agnes Heller and Goffman.

“Today my mother died. Maybe yesterday, I don't know. I got a telegram from the nursing home: Your mother is dead. Her funeral will be held tomorrow. Not much is understood from this. Maybe she died yesterday.”

Camus' *The Stranger* begins with the lines above. On the first page of the book, the reader marvels at the reaction of the main character, Meursault, to the event. The two-line sentence gives us an idea of Meursault and shows us the absurd. The work, which consists of two parts, begins with death and ends with death. At this point, it is realized that living knowing that one will die creates an absurdity.

At certain stages of his life, a person asks himself the reason for his existence and cannot find an answer. Because the existence of man on earth is a set of contradictions. A person is conscious of the cycle of life and lives knowing that he will die. Our rational

expectations in life do not exist and will not exist in this world. This gives rise to the absurd.

Man is a conscious being, so here there is conscious nest here is man, and in the world where there is man, there is the absurd, in other words, the concept of "absurd". It is not possible to talk about a world in which there is no human and, accordingly, consciousness. Over coming the absurd is possible only by transcending consciousness, which shows us the fact that man must perish.

When a person begins to question his existence, he finds himself in an incompatible cycle. Everyday is the same as the previous day, he has to work to live, he has to communicate to be accepted, he has to live within the framework of the rules determined by the society, according to the morality determined by the society. There is a gap between what has to be done and what is wanted to be done, and this gap creates alienation. Alienation takes place towards the society by breaking away from society, limiting bilateral relations, and avoiding communication. Then, the process of listening, understanding and talking to oneself decreases and alienation is completed within the individual.

DISCUSSION

In this study, the "In-depth Interview Method", which is used to address the opinions, feelings and solution suggestions of the participants on the subject, was applied.

A total of four people, two women and two men, from different professions and age groups, who read Albert Camus's novel *The Stranger*, were interviewed by asking the following questions. With this method, the meaning of absurdism for the participants, the behavior of the main characters Meursault and Meursault's behaviour, the absurd examples in their daily lives and the concept of alienation were analyzed with the questions asked and the responses given were tried to be measured.

CONCLUSION

The individual, whose daily life somehow continues, but turns into an object that has lost its effectiveness, finds himself in a state of perpetual unhappiness and despair. People's personal and social behaviors, social interactions and movements are surrounded by daily life. However, one's self and social self must be in harmony. Otherwise, it is accepted as “foreign, other” by society.

When we look at today's society, alienation is clearly seen. While a human is a creature that needs to communicate, our state of being in communication now is completely obligatory. We do not react to many things happening around us, we do not feel sorry for people's pain. When we interact through digital applications and come face to face most of the time, we lose our words. In today's society, Man has now turned into a creature that is alien to the society, and this will lead to individual alienation in the coming period, leading to a complete isolation of the person.

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