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***The Outsider's Response to Life and Death:  
Analysing Meursault's Behaviours and  
Attitudes in Camus's Novel***

***Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for a  
Master's Degree in Literature and Civilisation***

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## DEDICATIONS

I dedicate this work to my mother, who stood faithfully by my side through every moment of pain and illness. Her unwavering presence during my most difficult times, her encouragement, and her strength were the greatest support I could have ever hoped for. I am deeply grateful for her love and constant belief in me

I dedicate this work to my dear father who was there in through every moment of this journey I am always grateful to him and for his support.

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## ABSTRACT

*“The Outsider”* by Albert Camus has been studied from different perspectives. However, the majority have focused on the theories of existentialism and absurdism. This study examines how the protagonist Meursault of Albert Camus’ *The Outsider* responds to death and life through his behaviours and attitudes. Camus’ novel delves into existentialist and absurdist philosophy making it one of his most significant works. It presents a character that is complex, who challenges the traditional beliefs about life and death and the meaning of existence. The issue examined in this paper is Meursault’s indifference to life events, such as death which conflicts with societal expectations. The purpose of this research is to analyze how life and death affect Meursault’s behaviours and attitudes. Textual analysis was collected through a close reading of the novel focusing on significant passages to illustrate Meursault’s behaviours and attitudes. Using Reflexive Thematic Analysis by Braun & Clarke, themes were generated from the text without imposing external frameworks. This approach is beneficial because it highlights the researcher’s role in interpreting and constructing meaning from data. Some of the main findings are Meursault’s approach to life with indifference, viewing it as a series of sensory experiences rather than a search for meaning; his acceptance of death as an inevitable end that reinforces his detachment from life and calm demeanour; a psychoanalytical reading focused on the ego, superego, and death drive frames Meursault’s attitudes and behaviour as a case study in psychological analysis. His behaviour that aligns with the absurdist beliefs that means it must be constructed in a meaningless world. This study concludes that Meursault’s responses reflect Camus’ philosophical perspective that invites readers to rethink about purpose, emotions and existential freedom.

**Key words:** Outsider, Albert Camus, life, death, behaviour, attitudes

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# **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

Through the powerful and emotionless opening line “My mother died today. Or maybe yesterday, I don’t know”, the author Albert Camus introduces readers to “*The Outsider*”, a novel that is exceptional in its understanding of meaning and emotions. This simple line seemingly sets the tone of the novel focusing on existential themes that are reflected in the protagonist Meursault’s character from behaviour and attitudes. By using such a line, Camus lets the readers question the reality of the truth, life, death, and meaning.

Based on the translator’s note, numerous translations for the title of the book have been done such as “*The Outsider*”, “*The Stranger*” or “*The Foreigner*”. Where the origins of the book is ‘l’étranger’ since it was written by the French writer Albert Camus, where all these translations describe the protagonist Meursault. “in French ‘étranger’ can be translated to “Outsider”, “Stranger” or “Foreigner”. The protagonist is all three, and the concept of an outsider encapsulates all these possible meanings; Meursault is stranger to himself, an outsider to society and foreigner because he is French man in Algeria” (Smith V).

Albert Camus’s *The Outsider*, originally published in French in 1942, and remains one of the most influential works of the writer and also in literature. It is often recognized as a novel of existentialism and absurdism. It opens with one of the famous quote a single line that had many readers in Astonishment “Maman died today or maybe yesterday, I don’t know”. This book would introduce us to a character that defies traditional expectation of emotions, morality, and meaning. Camus used Meursault’s indifference not only as a personal trait but as means to critique a world that demands Consistency, moral clarity, Emotional synchronization in the face of the universe.

*The Outsider* is set in the mid-twentieth century, reacting to the philosophical and intellectual movement known as existentialism, which rose to popularity following World War II. With Meursault's rebellion against conventional norms and moral conventions it

represents a larger questioning of purpose in an apparently uncaring environment. Camus demonstrates how the colonial system considered the majority Arab people as unworthy because he does not name any of the Arab characters and was unconcerned about granting them justice. This historical part of the work receives less attention than the philosophical element which, granted, is Camus's primary concern.

The concepts of the book are the absurd and the confrontation of the individual's desires for meaning and the void. The core theme of the book is the search for meaning in a meaningless world. Other works were published in the same year as "*The Outsider*" that is his famous philosophical essay "*The Myth of Sisyphus*". Camus clearly expressed his philosophy that life is vacant of meaning and somehow human still and persist to search for any meaning, he disputed that this friction creates a state of the absurd. While most writers will try to solve such conflicts through faith or rebellion and also maybe suicide, our writer chose to deal with it in a smart and new path that is the acceptance which also is one of the most important points of the story.

While the myth of Sisyphus include the lack of essential purpose but still continues to live regardless of it, the outsider would be the opposite. The character does search for inaccurate comfort in neither society nor religion, his honesty and also detachment and the acceptance of death correspond him with the existential hero where Camus showcased that a condemned man not for what he does but he refuses to pretend to be someone he is not.

His final condemnation is not about the murder as it is for his lack of feeling and his inability to live up to societal norms. Throughout the trial, the focus is on moral character rather than legal responsibility and also his reaction to each event; the jury and prosecution seem more troubled by Meursault's actions at his mother's burial and his reaction to it than by

the crime he committed. This change is a reflection of Camus's criticism of a culture that values feeling and appearances over reality and personal freedom.

Since the book was written during the chaotic time of World War II and the German occupation of France, the intellectual life revolved on issues of justice, accountability, and resistance. *The Outsider* mentions more general ethical and political issues, even if it is mostly read through the perspective of existential philosophy. As an editor of the underground publication *Combat* and a member of the French Resistance, Camus was particularly concerned with maintaining moral clarity in a society where ideology sometimes excused violence which was noticed in the character behaviour. On the other hand, Camus's special way was to avoid any ideological debate in the book, instead presenting a protagonist who refuses to lie to anybody, including himself which always puts him in an awkward situation without realizing it. Meursault's honesty, ironically, is what results in his social and legal collapse. Camus therefore raises troubling issues about the cost of honesty in a world that values conformity, as well as the moral authority of communities that punish individuals for failing to fulfil advised role.

Although the novel largely ignores the political and racial tensions of the colonial context, its silence on these matters has sparked extensive debate among critics it's not much of the character racism or any sort of hatred but it was related to very ridiculous reason. The Arab man Meursault murders remains nameless and voiceless throughout the narrative as it was seen only from Meursault's perspective not knowing much about the victim, a fact that many postcolonial critics interpret as a reflection of the erasure of indigenous identity under colonial rule. Camus, a French-Algerian himself, he was criticized for his failure to address and confront the colonial injustice in his works, and *The Outsider* is no exception. But the story and the meaning about it was focusing on existential isolation and alienation implicitly

critiques the dehumanization intrinsic in colonial societies. Whether Camus intended such a critique remains subject to interpretation, but the ambiguity contributes to the novel's complexity and enduring relevance.

The Outsider's narrative is very simple to understand yet can also be confusing. Meursault is an office worker after he learned of his mother's passing, makes the trip to attend his mother's burial. Those around him such as friends and lover are shocked by his surprising lack of sadness, yet the next day he carries on with his life as usual. A few days later, he gets caught up in a beach fight and murders an Arab man for no apparent reason. The novel's second half describes his arrest, trial, and his experience with the lawyers, the judge, Chaplin.

When it comes to the narrative style, Camus employs a first-person voice that mirrors Meursault's emotional state and his inner thought. The writing is simple and only focuses on data, presenting events in a direct and neutral tone. This style of minimalist writing is an approach that has the effect of drawing attention to each word without any difficulties and just enjoying the meaning of the lines. Meursault does not dramatize his experiences which would force the reader into a position of judgment or discomfort. Camus's style thus becomes a rhetorical device, compelling readers to question their own expectations of narrative, empathy, and meaning-making. The emotional neutrality of the text aligns with the philosophical message: in a meaningless universe, emotional performances may be as artificial as moral systems.

This study is entitled "*The Outsider's* Response to Life and Death: Analysing Meursault's Behaviours and Attitudes in Camus's Novel." It analyses novel's protagonist towards social norms and human relations without forgetting his behaviour and attitudes towards multiple events in the story which makes him the key figure of Camus's existential philosophy. It demonstrates how Camus creates a sense of separation between the character

and the world he exists in, by using a simple narrative style to reflect Meursault's own emotional distance. This study also explores how existentialism and absurdism theories are showcased through the study's pages. By delving into these theories, the paper reveals how "*The Outsider*" challenges standard understandings of meaning and dealing with life's events.

This paper is presented in three chapters. The first chapter entitled "Literature Review and Theoretical Framework" will offer an 'orientation to previous research' about "*The Outsider*" and theoretical perspective on to the meaning of Life from a, 'philosophical perspective' including existentialism and absurdism, and religious perspective focusing on 'oneness with nature', in addition also this chapter examines the meaning of death with similar perspectives focusing mainly on existentialism and absurdism. The second, part of the chapter it explores the theoretical approach to the character analysis by exploring psychological theories adapting Sigmund Freud psychoanalysis theory and philosophical theory.

Chapter Two entitled "Background on 'The Outsider' by Albert Camus and Analytical Process" explores the content of the book *The Outsider*, starting by giving background introduction of the writer to provide the readers of this paper an idea to who is Albert Camus, followed by an 'overview of the book' which explain the story and its narrative, this chapter also focuses on introducing the protagonist, and provide an in-depth study of his character within the story narrative. The process of analysis is done by using Reflexive Thematic Analysis, extracting and formulating relatable themes supported by passages from the novel that present Meursault's attitudes and behaviours as portrayed in "*The Outsider*", in addition to exploring their meaning. And with that the chapter is a detailed character and novel analysis.

This thesis aims to explore the philosophical groundwork of “*The Outsider*” particularly in the relation to Camus’s theory of existentialism and Absurdism. The character’s indifference is also highlighted throughout the novel by focusing on his behaviours and attitudes, behaviour refers to someone’s actions in response to situations and it is an external expression of a person’s mental state and emotions. On the other hand attitudes are an internal matter where it is centred on opinions, acts and even beliefs.

This research paper will answer these two following research questions; each question is designated for the main themes in the book that are life and death.

**RQ 1** How does the death of Meursault's mother influence his perception of life and Death?

**Hypothesis 1:** His mother’s passing reinforces his pre-existing perception of the inherent meaningless of life making her passing an inevitable event.

**RQ 2** What is the effect of life and death on Meursault’s behaviours and attitudes?

**Hypothesis 2:** Meursault’s behaviours and attitudes, in response to death are seen as a significant absence of grief and acceptance, coming from his emotional detachment towards life and its experiences.

From my position as a researcher, I found the book particularly compelling because of the profound differences and similarities between me and the protagonist Concerning the differences I consider myself as someone who enjoys life at its fullest, with my loved ones I take joy in being around them I find their company very comforting and especially the warmth I get from them, my relation with my mother is one of the bonds that I would pour all my emotions and energy to be a better daughter.

Another difference, is that I am someone who openly expresses my emotions whether it’s sadness or happiness or even anger. However few similarities exist, it is not stated in the

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

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story if the character has siblings but seeing how he handled his mother funeral and being the only one who was there who attended her burial, which strongly suggest that he is an only child to his mother which makes this a common point between us. Another point of similarity we both enjoy the weather and the sky when it changes its colour throughout the day I strongly believe we find peace when it comes to enjoying the weather. I believe that Meursault is a confused yet an aware character that will intrigue readers to his complex character that explains why I am a fan of this book.

To finish, Albert Camus's "*The Outsider*" offers the reader a protagonist who is a complex character who lives with no illusion and full acceptance in a world that demands illusion. His indifference from societal norms, his emotional detachment, honesty and how he faces death serves not only as literary devices but as philosophical statements. By rejecting the expected roles of the believer the emotional and the in distress character reveals the absurdity of these roles and how a slight difference made him pay the ultimate price. Camus didn't offer a final answer but rather invited us to face the absurd with courage. It is this tension between society and self, illusion and truth, which makes "*The Outsider*" a lasting and provocative work of modern literature.

**CHAPTER ONE**

**LITERATURE REVIEW AND**

**THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

## 1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces key theoretical perspectives on the meaning of life and death which are major themes in the novel *“The Outsider”* by Albert Camus. It starts by including an orientation to previous research about *“The Outsider”*. It also examines the meaning of life from philosophical and religious standpoints. Starting with philosophical perspective, this chapter explores existentialism, where it focuses on individual’s freedom and the search for meaning in an indifferent world, and absurdism which emphasizes the struggle between human longing and the world’s indifference. Religious in ‘meaning of life’ is another perspective that includes the ideas of ‘oneness with nature’, where life is seen as a path towards higher understanding. Also the chapter deals with the ‘meaning of death’ explaining philosophical perspective same as existentialism where death gives life a meaning, and absurdism views death as an important proof that life is meaningless.

Finally, the chapter gives an overview on different interpretative theories, such as psychological theory using Freudian psychoanalysis, to understand the character’s motivations, behaviours and Attitudes, also including philosophical theory using existentialism to analyse the charter from an existential lens.

## 1.2 Orientation to Previous Research of *“The Outsider”*

This section introduces different studies that have been conducted on *“The Outsider”* by Albert Camus as main element of analysis, it introduce some of the approaches that were used in this paper.

One of the books that will make you question the meaning of life and death the sanity of the character the behaviour that was projected by the character and how the writer Albert Camus used his brilliant insight on philosophy and how he mastered to capture the themes of

existentialism and absurdity. While working on the book *“The Outsider”* I read more pieces from the same book as result of my journey and each one provided me with fresh insight and more profound viewpoints.

Authors’ Chouib Mohammed and Bentahar Soumia worked on the *“A Philosophical Interpretation of Albert Camus’s Postmodernist Literary Endeavours in The Stranger”*. This work was published on the 17<sup>th</sup> July 2023. They adopted a philosophical framework to understand the postmodernist literary endeavour of the French philosopher, Albert Camus in his acclaimed novel, *The Outsider*. It has several postmodern elements that demonstrate Camus's foresight as a writer at the dawn of a new literary age, even if his philosophy is usually situated inside modernism. However, by analyzing how Camus employs postmodern literary techniques in *The Stranger* to undermine meaning, question power structures, and conflate fiction and reality, this dissertation opts for an interdisciplinary approach that aims to comprehend the novel's postmodern dimension. Through a close reading of *The Stranger*, this dissertation has integrated these three postmodern philosophical streams, offering new insights into Camus as a postmodern thinker. By combining existential philosophy and with postmodern storytelling techniques, he subtly but profoundly transformed the narrative structure. Additionally, he cleared the way for the advent of the late 20th century's highly fragmented and self-referential fiction.

Another fascinating work that was done by Hayder M.Saadon and M.Ridha Al-Hasani titled *“Existentialism and Absurdity in Albert Camus's “The Outsider”, Psychological Study”*. This work was conducted in 2023. By examining the narrative structure, the opening lines, the role of pity, rage at Meursault's judges, and the connection between murder and innocence, this essay demonstrates Camus' intention to get the reader to consider their relationship with society. Meursault has realized that life is meaningless. To put it another

way, life is what you create of it while being conscious of two things: your mortality and the certainty that you will die. *The Outsider* gives the skill of arousing psychological depth a fresh perspective. Existentialist thinkers emphasize individual agency and personal accountability for one's choices, arguing that human existence is enigmatic due to the universe's unpredictable nature. This philosophical idea serves as the foundation for *The Stranger* and is maybe the main reason Albert Camus chose to write the book in the first person. By portraying a person who embodies the concept, Meursault, the novel's pitiful and uncaring protagonist, explains the notion of existentialism. Camus recognized in Meursault what he recognized in an individual born with existentialism's tenets.

Other work by Mahdi Iman where he focused on the, "*Emotional Detachment in Albert Camus' the Stranger: A Happy Man Drawn into Misery*" According to the essay, Meursault purposefully distances himself from people in order to be happy, but when he unknowingly becomes attracted to other people's emotions, this bliss quickly devolves into complete despair. Where he challenged by suggesting that there is a viable reading of *The Stranger* in which Camus encourages readers to reach a level of comprehension above Meursault's, from which his bigotry can be critically viewed, carefully considered, and vehemently rejected, rather than endorsing his racism, sexism, and colonialism. Therefore, proposing that there is a plausible interpretation of *The Outsider* in which Camus is exposing Meursault's preconceptions rather than confirming them. However he stated that he is not assuming that comprehending *The Outsider* requires comprehending Camus better than he did himself when suggesting that it is feasible to comprehend Meursault better than he does himself and others. Although acknowledging that 2 Sexism, Racism, and Colonialism in *L'Étranger/The Stranger*, this interpretation is an effort to comprehend Meursault in a different way than Camus did. By concentrating on the novel's essential key moments of comprehension and misinterpretation it confronts this challenge.

A Thesis Submitted by Basma Bishay to the Department of English and Comparative Literature in the American University in Cairo on May 2018 entitled “*Rebellion and the Absurd: Reading the Novels of Albert Camus*”. In line with Albert Camus's thoughts on the notion of the absurd, this thesis aims to offer a critical interpretation of his books “*The Stranger*” and “*The Plague*”. It was set out to examine Camus's protagonists in terms of their being-in-this-world, especially in light of the author's conception of rebellion, using this idea as the conceptual basis this work. The two books under consideration imply that a rebellious reaction to life's inherent absurdity is not only viable but also a legitimate response to the human predicament, despite Camus's theory of the ridiculous appearing to negate the significance and worth of individual work. It is one of the works that had the same ideas by applying the known themes that Albert Camus would use in his other famous writing inspiring others for research.

### **1.3 Meaning of Life**

Life's meaning has long been a mystery to humans. Life is known for its hardships and surprises that wear people down, but it's also exciting to go through and experience it on our own. The word life is particularly significant because life understanding is way beyond human's expectation yet it's a complicated matter for each individual and how to perceive it. This section will focus on the concept of life and how it is perceived through different lenses and scholars.

As Klinger captured that the meaningfulness of someone's life cannot be inferred just from knowing his or her objective or circumstances. The thing that is very interesting and somehow unique is meaningfulness. This concept is experienced through emotions as the lead. It is clear that when we ask about the meaningfulness of someone's life we are asking

about the qualities of his or her inner experience, each typical person, scientist, writers, or even religious people have their own perspective to what life exactly means (Klinger 10).

Writers look at life in a different manner than others, “No need to hurry. No need to sparkle. No need to be anybody but oneself” (Woolf 12). Woolf emphasizes on living life without rushing and absorbing life without caring much about life events, also embracing our true self without pressure, valuing inner peace first. According to Gibran, living is determined not so much by what life brings to us as by the attitude we bring to life. It means that our life choices are in our hands but the main idea is to control how we do respond to life’s unfolding events and also a hidden explanation that we cannot always control life because it’s full of surprises. Life isn’t counted by the minutes we breathed, but by the minutes we lived (Hemani). This aligns with the famous philosophers Albert Camus and Jean Paul Sartre existentialist perspective that life is not with an inherent purpose which is creating meaning.

Yet, it explains that instead of focusing on how life passes but how to embrace it by appreciating one’s surroundings and making use of interactions. Reading might provide people with the inner peace and outdoor activities can give us a moment of life this is simply a method of celebrating person’s existence, which we should all accept; it does not imply that they are not enjoying their life or that they are living it excessively. As it is the little things that matters enjoying the smallest moments of life can have a big impact on oneself.

According to Frankl, for each individual the meaning of life is different. For some, it may be found in relationships; work or a hobby, while others may find meaning in small, daily activities and interactions *A Reflection on the Meaning of Life*. Was the focus of Frankl, stated that life is never made unbearable by circumstances, but only by lack of meaning and purpose. Some people sink to despair when they lose everything that makes

life significant. A happy life requires freedom, love, connections, and family. He also noted that everything changes with a single adjustment in reality. Our future viewpoint on life is determined by how we continue to live after experiencing loss, grief, anguish, or unspeakable suffering.

“The unexamined life is not worth living” (Plato). This quote is from the Plato’s apology in Socrates’ defence in the course of his trial in Athens in 339 BCE defence. Two aspects are believed to lead to a meaningful life and seek for knowledge and to self reflect.

### **1.3.1 Philosophical Perspectives**

Another major concept, we will deal with novel through the concept of philosophy and existential lens exploring the existentialism perspective. That will help study Meursault existential state when being the true existential figure of the story through his behaviours and attitudes toward existence.

#### **1.3.1.1 Existentialism**

Existentialism is a family of philosophical views and inquiry that explore the human individual’s struggle to lead an authentic life despite the apparent absurdity or incomprehensibility of existence. In examining meaning, purpose, and value, existentialist thought often includes concepts such as existential crises, angst, courage, and freedom. Human freedom is the shared interest that binds existentialist philosophers together. Readers of existentialist philosophy are urged to feel and practice freedom rather than just think about what it is.

The new proposed idea of existentialism of the self, one in which we are constantly constructing or inventing who we are as our lives go, rather than viewing it as a material or object with a predetermined nature or “essence”. This means that we are brought into life and

we are tasked with constructing ourselves by our decisions and deeds; in other words, our nature is not predetermined. (Aho)

Though it is more of a reaction to traditional philosophies like positivism, empiricism, and rationalism that seek ultimate order and universal meaning in the structure of the seen world or in metaphysical principles, existentialism and nihilism share many traits. It asserts that people actually base their decisions on what matters to them rather than on logic. Those who deny the worth of any collection of concepts or systems are commonly described as shallow, academic, and disconnected from reality by the movement of existentialism. (The Basics of Philosophy)

“If you’ve ever pondered the meaning of existence or questioned your purpose in life, you’ve partaken in existentialist philosophy.” (The Ethics Centre) the core ideas of existential philosophy, emphasizes personal experience, independence, decisions, and the pursuit of meaning in an apparently meaningless or chaotic world.

Freedom is typically portrayed in a good light, it is a must to acknowledge that we are the only ones who can establish or fail to build our own unique purpose if our freedom was truly understood. “Man is condemned to be free; because once thrown into the world, he is responsible for everything he does” (Sartre). Sartre suggested that it might be “painful” to have excessively much freedom. Freedom is overpowering when there are no rules or regulations to guide you.

Existentialism can start from these bases and spread in a variety of opposing ways. It can thus take on a theistic form by insisting that’s being’s transcends existence and that this transcendence is the source or basis of existence. However, it is also possible that human life adopts the role of God by projecting itself with complete freedom and generating itself by

presenting it a problem. Existentialism thus poses as an extreme kind of atheism or it can emphasize on the limitations of human life, that is, the limitations of its projection and choice options where it positions itself as humanism (Abbagnano).

Jones College claims that the existentialist perspective demonstrates that people are conscious, thinking individuals with the capacity for independent existence. Our lives are what we make them. Every decision and action taken is entirely the responsibility of the individual, who is also free to select what they believe (Lendl, Sir, and Flores).

Thus, human beings, through their own consciousness, create their own values and determine a meaning to their life. As Sartre writes in his work "Existentialism is Humanism". Man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world and defines himself afterwards". Of course, the more positive, A person can choose to act in a different way, and to be a good person instead of a cruel person, it is also clear that ,humans can choose to be either cruel or good, they are, in fact, neither of these things essentially.

Kierkegaard's perspective is slightly different from the other scholars, concentrating mainly on religion where the function of prayer is not to influence God, but rather to change the nature of the one who prays (Kierkegaard).

### **1.3.1.2 Absurdism**

This section will define the concept of 'absurdism'. It will highlight some simple definitions of the word and then shed light on philosophical and religious views of 'absurdism'. 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 (Arinze and Onwuatuegwu).

In this context, absurd does not mean logically impossible, but rather humanly impossible (Kierkegaard). Absurdism, as a philosophy, examines the essential characteristics of the absurd and how individuals should react to it when faced with its absurdity. For Camus, humanity cannot find salvation through God; it must be sought and realized by humans themselves in this life. Consequently, he views the world as lacking a divine presence; God is deceased, no longer exists, and cannot ensure our continued existence. Thus man in order to exist must decide to act (Camus).

The underlying premise is that the universe only has meaning that we assign to it. The world's "unfairness" is also included in this meaninglessness. The idea that "bad things don't happen to good people" is in contrast to this. There is no such thing as a good or bad person in the world, metaphorically speaking; whatever happens, and it may happen to a "good" person just as much as to a "bad" one.

The feeling of the absurd can arise in many ways from the perception of the inhumanity and indifference of nature, from the realization of man's temporality or of death which reveals the uselessness of human life or from the shock occasioned by perceiving the ultimate pointlessness of daily life and its routine (Camus).

The Latin word "absurdus-a-um", which means, among other things, irrational, out of place, silly, ludicrous, and discordant, is where its roots lie. Therefore, anything that blatantly lacks common sense, reason, proportion, or conformity to conventional wisdom is considered absurd. It is useless since it stands for things that are nonsensical or logically conflicting in modern philosophy, religion, and the arts, the term "absurd" has taken on several interpretations that reflect the incapacity of values to satisfy human needs (Arinze and Onwuatiegwu).

Camus views absurdity as a confrontation, antagonism, struggle, or “divorce” between two values in his main book, the *Myth of Sisyphus*. Camus believes that recognition is the only reasonable choice after precisely defining the human predicament as ludicrous, which he defines as the conflict between man's need for importance, meaning, and clarity. (Camus)

Camus in 1955 used the tale of Sisyphus from Greek mythology to illustrate his point about the absurdity of existence. The narrative was essentially about Jupiter, the king of all gods, abducting a mortal woman named Aegina. Having learned of the kidnapping, Sisyphus volunteered to inform Aegina's father, Aesopus, about what transpired in return for granting his castle access to water. As a result, the gods punished him and sent him to the underworld to endure an unbreakable curse. There was a curse that caused a rock to roll up the mountain and then drop back down. This punishment was Sisyphus's eternal curse. (Lendl, Sir, and Flores)

### **1.3.2 Religious Perspective**

Meursault undergoes a minor form of spiritual growth not through religion but through existential awakening. Different to traditional journeys of spiritual development and growth, that search for comfort in religion. As someone who doesn't believe in god Meursault rejects all these deceptions where he found peace in the acceptance of the absurd life. While he didn't grow spiritually in a religious sense but he found his freedom and peace through accepting his faith and life's events.

#### **1.3.2.1 Oneness with Nature**

Moments of physical sensations such as feeling the warmth of the sun, watching the sky changes its colours, enjoying the sunset, and the sea, are what connect Meursault to nature,

where he found himself drawn to and it reveals his Oneness with Nature. By these sensations Meursault reached his inner peace and spiritual clarity.

We see ourselves as essential parts of the natural system rather than as distinct beings battling it. Every step we take is a dance with the soil beneath our feet, every breath we take is a communion with the trees, and every heartbeat is a rhythm in harmony with the tides of life all around us. We are nature, not just something found in it discovering happiness in the simplicity of a leaf's pattern, wisdom in a river's course and brotherhood with the local species (D'Souza). A new way of living that values balance, honours all life forms, and recognizes that one's health is reliant on the health of the whole may be built around this reconnection We begin to perceive the world in a different light as we accept our true selves.

The human body is composed of five elements, just as nature is. If any one of these elements is out of balance, it can cause chaos in the environment, and if any one of the five elements is out of balance, it can cause chaos or disease within us (The Harmony of Being). For example, when our water content decreases, we become dehydrated; the fire element converts food into energy for movement and other bodily functions; the earth element regulates the muscles, bones, and tissues; and the space in all organs and body parts allows blood or air to flow and exist. (Phull)

Da Vinci mentioned that Nature is the source of all true knowledge; this saying serves as a reminder that nature is too vast to understand, yet it has the intelligent systems that it is full of teachings simply waiting to be found rather than merely serving as a setting for human existence. Nature remains a significant source of inspiration and knowledge in all fields including philosophy, science and arts teaching. Another way to interpret the remark is as meditation on the more profound knowledge inherent in nature. It is seen by many faiths and ideologies as a teacher of balance harmony and interconnectivity.

Chinese Taoist philosophies are encapsulated in Lao Tzu's excerpt from the Tao Te Ching, it encourages us to empty our minds of all thoughts and to let our hearts be at peace. Watch the turmoil of beings, but contemplate their return. Each separate being in the universe returns to the common source. Returning to the source is serenity. If we don't realize the source, we'll stumble in confusion and sorrow. When we realize where we come from, we'll naturally become tolerant, disinterested, amused, and kind-hearted as a grandmother, dignified as a king. Immersed in the wonder of the Tao, we can deal with whatever life brings us, and when death comes, we are ready (Tzu).

Which emphasize inner peace, life's organic flow, and the necessity of going back to the source he advocate clearing the mind of ideas and achieving inner serenity, arguing that genuine knowledge comes from letting oneself be in balance with the Tao rather than from engaging in continual mental activity. A greater understanding that everything eventually returns to its source arises from witnessing the world's chaos without being caught up in it; this insight gives calm instead of anxiety.

This might be seen as a meditation on the fundamental oneness of existence by a philosopher especially one who was influenced by stoicism, Taoism, or even romanticism. The most basic forms of nature such as common dawn the changing, the changing of the seasons or the care of the soil serve as reminder that regardless of our cultural social or religious differences we are all a part of the same organic whole according to (Aurelius).

Shakespeare explains that one touch of nature makes the whole world kin it means that we encounter transcendental moment when we interact with nature, which eliminates the sense of separateness and unveils a more profound communal life. The straightforward, uniting presence of natural has the capacity to remind us of our shared humanity and beginnings in a world that is frequently split by manmade barriers.

Mahatma Gandhi's statement To forget how to dig the earth and to tend the soil is to forget ourselves emphasizes the close relationship between nature and human identity from a philosophical standpoint this concept has its roots in existentialism Environmental philosophy and Gandhian self-reliance, contends that our connection to the land is essential to who we are and goes beyond simple utility .working with the land according to philosophers like Martin Heidegger, is a real way of life that grounds us in a direct contact with existence rather than distancing us via consumerism and industrialization .

#### **1.4 Meaning of Death**

Death is a major concept in the novel "The Outsider" it start with Meursault's mother's death and then his own death, death through Meursault attitude is illustrated as a natural event of life he accept death and embrace it because he found peace while doing so. He believes that death is bound to happen in our lives. And we should just accept it because for each beginning there is an end.

The philosopher Heidegger acknowledges death as an inevitable part of life if we take death into our life, acknowledge it, and face it squarely, it will free us from the anxiety of death and the pettiness of life and only then will be free to become ourselves, allows us to live more authentically. By facing death, we free ourselves from the anxiety that comes with it and from the distractions of superficial concerns. Another life mystery is death. As much as it takes for the human to understand it, it will always seem a big question. Death is the end of the journey of each human being, it ends because that's the cycle of life; death can be tragic for some and peaceful for others.

Camus also included his thoughts and ideologies about suicide with regards to the absurdist view. Life has no meaning; he then seeks to determine if life really is worth living.

Camus first explained the concept of suicide (Camus 1), as an act committed by people who see life as not worth living. The world, being filled with difficulties and hardships, constantly wears down man. Camus stated that “life is never easy.” (Flores)

The American philosopher Thomas Nagel believes that, experiencing things has inherent benefits that surpass any drawbacks. Thus, a person’s welfare level is positive whenever she is experiencing things, and if someone continues to experience things, it is generally beneficial for them to live longer, regardless of the amount of pain that the continuing life will bring. For an existentialist, becoming is accepting the beauty of life via ongoing development and transformation.

Being, as defined by is “as far as we know, the human being is unfinished, always responsive to its world, and repeatedly carrying himself forward freshly, until death” (Heidegger 65). Whenever death comes, it would have been good to live longer, so it is bad for us that we will not “if there is no limit to the amount of life that it would be good to have, and then it may be that a bad end is in store for us all” (Nagel 80).

The concept of death was explored by many philosophers as it is not just an end but it delved into the true meaning of death and life, as they are the core of our existence in this vast world, death is referred as “mysterious.” In this sense, death would be mysterious, but no more than any other idea that defies analysis, if we are unable to come up with an acceptable explanation for it. And the fact that we cannot predict what death will be like is what makes it so enigmatic and terrifying. Generally speaking, death is seen as a terrible thing, particularly if it occurs too quickly (Feldman).

Death and the idea of it are completely meaningless. I can’t think of an image. Death itself has no purpose, but the idea of death serves a purpose for the living. Regarding death,

we can only state that it is either real or not. Death is a straightforward ending if it is real. The end of one's embodied existence is a doorway to another life rather than actual death if it is not genuine.

Without any substance, we are forced to use metaphors when discussing death. Death is a blank canvas for people who believe in death. Death is a gateway to another life for those who deny its existence. We are unable to avoid employing one metaphor or another, regardless of whether we consider death to be a wall or a gateway. The phrase "a person who dies is relieved of suffering" is frequently used. Even the claim that the deceased do not suffer is symbolic if death is genuine, as if there is still a part of them that is immune to suffering. Since there are already a lot of theories regarding a "next life" I will concentrate on the idea that death is real and signifies the end of a person's existence (Mason).

"Death may be the greatest of all human blessings." (Plato 63) Socrates' perspective on death, which differs from the more common fear of it, is summed up in this quotation. Socrates believes that death might be liberation for the soul, allowing it to depart from the physical body and reach a realm of higher knowledge and awareness. For Socrates, death is not something to be afraid of, but rather a natural part of life, and perhaps even a step toward something higher.

Yalom noted that individuals desire to accomplish something with their life when they are facing death. But finding the meaning of death may be accomplished with the help of an everlasting universe and faith in the creator.

#### **1.4.1 Philosophical Perspectives**

Another major concept, we will deal with novel through the concept of philosophy and existential lens exploring the existentialism perspective. That will help study Meursault

existential state when being the true existential figure of the story through his behaviours and attitudes toward existence.

#### **1.4.1.1 Existentialism**

Existentialism is a philosophical view that explores the nature of existence and the human conflicts to live an authentic and life despite of the absurdity of life and its circumstances. That also examine purpose and meaning in existence. Many philosophers have different view on death and existentialism that might link death and existence. Focusing of the individuals life experience, dealing with the concept of death is related to the existentialism, making death not only an event of life but it's all about the humans experiences towards and during the life time.

Camus, associated existentialism with what he termed "Philosophical Suicide" in the first series of the absurd, and with a diminishing of human existence to its historical context in the later series of revolt. In both instances, existentialism was viewed as contrary to life, and, for that reason, was fundamentally opposed to Camus's own perspective that affirms life. "There is but one truly serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide" (Camus 3). Judging whether life is or is not worth living amounts to answering the fundamental question of philosophy all other questions is secondary.

Other philosophers have different views about death and existentialism. One of them is Heidegger who said that "Understanding the phenomenon of death involves grasping the Being of Dasein as a whole. If Dasein is understood existentially as a possibility, then it becomes clear that Dasein's authentic being in its totality is "Being towards death" (Heidegger 258). Dasein is explained as being-toward-death, according to Heidegger in "Being and Time", and how it perceives the world via its existence is essential to

comprehending human life. This idea questions conventional metaphysics and aims to comprehend how people live really by facing their own mortality and existence.

A key component of Heidegger's existential philosophy is his concept of Being-towards-death, which emphasizes that death, is an essential component of human existence and Self-awareness than an external or biological occurrence. Heidegger states in *Being and Time* that death is an essential component of Dasein's interaction with the outside world. According to Heidegger, death is the peak of potential; it is the one event that indicates the boundaries of life and cannot be avoided or surpassed. Death is not a distant or abstract idea; rather, it has an unbreakable connection to how individuals live and see their environment. Heidegger discovers death's weakness and its most genuine possibilities for existence confronting it.

The words "Angst" or "Dread" were employed by Kierkegaard in 1844 in his work "the concept of anxiety" to describe what we call "Death Anxiety" or what social psychologists call "Existential Terror" (Becker). Angst is frequently understood to mean only dread or worry. It is interesting to note that the word "angst" is derived from the German root "angust", which is also the word for fury. This suggests that the combination of death-related emotions is made up of both anger and anxiety. Ernest Becker postulated that people develop "culture" humanly constructed views of reality to lessen their fear of dying. All "Cultures" describe the universe's beginnings, indicate literal or symbolic routes to immortality, and prescribe proper conduct, morals, and virtues. Therefore, people cope with existential fear by finding purpose in life and gaining self-esteem via fulfilling or surpassing cultural norms. In order to reduce "Death Anxiety" Becker and psychologists like Sheldon Solomon, who research "Terror Management" (Maxfield), emphasize the significance of maintaining and

strengthening a sense of meaning and purpose in one's own life as well as possibly in the wider world.

Karl Jaspers does not force an ontological framework on people, in contrast to Heidegger. His departure from the conventional perspective on death is not that drastic. Existence has the chance to unite with Transcendence, the ultimate reality; according to Jaspers this does not always mean complete annihilation or personal immortality. Even though Jaspers' ideas on death are not regarded as religious, existential ideas like transcendence, being, and existence are similar to religious ideas but use different language (Filiz).

The concept and meaning of death are essential in this paper because it is one of the prominent concepts of Albert Camus' novel, since death was mentioned at the beginning of the novel as a tragic interpretation to accepting it and embracing it.

#### **1.4.1.2 Absurdism**

Camus contends that choosing to live and keep interacting with mankind, even in tiny, seemingly unimportant moments, takes more bravery than succumbing to the impulse to die in order to escape the absurdity of existence. "But sometimes it takes more courage to live than to shoot yourself." (Camus 25), this quote relates to the existential view that genuine strength is defined by the decision to persevere and find significance in the ordinary, despite life's basic absurdity and death's inevitable ending. Which explains the absurdity in Meursault's behaviours and attitudes, Camus uses the same absurdity about death in "The Outsider" which confused the readers. "Living is keeping the absurd alive. Keeping it alive is above all contemplating it" (Camus 18). Although most individuals occasionally consider dying, they do so in a hazy, distant manner and they do not accept it as a necessary

component of their life; therefore this is not a typical thing to do. They ignore the ridiculous without making their lives any less ridiculous since they live as death does not exist. However, don't assume that accepting the ridiculous is just a passive, resigned attitude. Instead, it is an active affirmative act, or what the philosopher refers to as “revolt”.

Your comments imply surrender to life when you remark that you no longer find any purpose to exist. That resignation, however, is essentially closing your eyes to this “meaninglessness”, since I am aware that you are rejecting the absurdity of life rather than existence itself. According to Camus, this is the antithesis of revolt and a type of suicide that might be either psychological or physical (Jairo, and Oval).

“Death does not matter,” an absurdist might remark. Actually, nothing matters at all. We're all going to die eventually. Whether you pass away in 30 years or tomorrow are irrelevant. This mindset is seen in Camus's novel “The Outsider” , where the main character, Meursault, chose to respond to “The Gentle Indifference of The World” with the same lack of concern the night before he was to be executed (Livneh). “In the end, each life is no more than the sum of contingent facts, a chronicle of chance intersections, of flukes, of random events that divulge nothing but their own lack of purpose”( Auster).

This approach is consistent with existentialist’s theory, which holds that meaning must be produced by the person rather than provided. In the myth of Sisyphus, Camus highlights that the absurd comes from peoples’ need for order and significance in an unknown universe that provides none. Any significance we apply to life, if it is really a series of coincidences, is a subjective attempt to give chaos shape. It also implies that existence is just a series of chances, events and random occurrences that neither disclose nor hide greater purpose rather than being directed by any innate meaning or destiny.

The link between the absurd and suicide are, namely the extent to which suicide is a response to the absurd. It is a well-established notion that a guy who does not cheat must operate according to his beliefs. Then his behaviour must be dictated by his belief in the absurdity of life. It is reasonable to question, plainly and without pretence, if a conclusion of this magnitude necessitates giving up a hard to understand circumstance as quickly as possible. Naturally, referring about males who are predisposed to be in peace with them (O'Brien).

Camus believed that even that question was meaningless as we could never find a solution to the issue of why we are here since the world had no essential value. Whatever we accomplish, it will all come to an end and we will die. Life is more meaningful than death. According to Camus, we ought to embrace the insanity of our existence and make the most of it in all its insanity. We must avoid despair and sorrow.

While optimism seeks to resist the absurdity of existence by anticipating a potential religious afterlife, where we find purpose in death or after death, despair ultimately manifests itself in suicide. “The struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man’s heart, we must imagine Sisyphus happy” (Camus 123). Writes Camus, instead of abandoning his pointless work or attempting to offer it some false value, he simply lives every instant of it to the highest potential. And the appearance that promises oblivion and the complete impossibility of any more experiences, death is the definitive horror.

### **1.5 Character Analysis**

In this section the focus will be on analyzing Meursault character and his attitudes and behaviours by giving and overview on different perspective through theories focusing on psychological theory using the Freudian psychoanalysis.

### 1.5.1 Overview of Different Perspectives

Albert Camus is the author of the book *The Outsider*. It centres on the lives of Meursault, a French Algerian who receives a Telegram notification of his mother's passing. Camus refers to this contradiction between man and the outside world as the “absurd,” and the Meursault narrative is an illustration of it. As Meursault navigates life, the narrative is recounted from his first person point of view. Meursault is a completely distinct person. Given his lack of empathy, one would assume that he suffers from some form of anti-social personality disorder based on his behaviour. This characteristics view is reflected in several different places throughout the narrative. Meursault was interpreted as the absurd hero in some research that was conducted yet it's not entirely true this main idea was also for the hero in the *Sisyphus* essay by Albert Camus.

Meursault's greatest shortcoming is not his immorality but rather his amorality. He is somewhat aware of the law, but he either ignores or lacks the ability to distinguish between right and wrong. He defends his violent domestic abuser neighbour to the police because he didn't have any reason not to, which is a serious character trait. Meursault says, “It was because of the sun” in response to a question concerning why he killed the Arab on the beach. Naturally, this explanation is illogical and might be interpreted as a link between Meursault's logic and the absurdist theory of an illogical cosmos.

Meursault muses about the guillotine in *The Outsider's* last chapter. He believes that the death by guillotine compels the condemned into “moral collaboration” with his executioners since the prisoner remains hopeful that that it succeeds the first time. Because it gives the prisoner hope that he won't die, he believes that a poison that only works nine times out of ten would be a far better punishment. The chaplain pays him a visit, which makes him snap his demeanour. His thoughts about his imminent decay shift as he relaxes.

Neither morality nor immorality characterizes Meursault. Instead, he is amoral he just doesn't distinguish between right and wrong in his own thinking. Meursault acquiesces apathetically when Raymond requests that he compose a letter that will enable Raymond to torture his mistress, stating that he “didn't have any reason not to”. He writes the letter primarily because he has the time and skill to do so, and he does not assign any value to his deed.

Now that he has finally realized the cosmos is pointless, Meursault finds solace and relief in it. The Outsider was released in Nazi-occupied France so the chronological period must also be taken into account when reviewing from a philosophical perspective.

### **1.5.1.1 Psychological Theory**

This section introduce the Freudian psychoanalysis it explains how certain motives and conflicts influence the attitudes and behaviour and with that by interpreting Meursault the protagonist in the novel “*The Outsider*” attitudes and behaviours.

#### **1.5.1.1.1 Freudian Psychoanalysis**

The father of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud was a prominent early 20<sup>th</sup> century psychologist in psychology, physiology and medicine fields. He presented the innovative idea that the function of the human mind dynamic energy system is framed by unconscious forces, working with Joseph Breuer; Sigmund laid a new theoretical and therapeutic groundwork to comprehend psychological advancements and mental disorders. The focus of his theory is the concepts of the unconscious, infantile sexuality and defence mechanisms (Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis), which debated the traditional beliefs about intellect and human behaviour, defence mechanisms are unconscious psychological methods used to prevent a person from worry caused by unwanted ideas or sensations. According to Freudian theory, defence mechanisms entail a distortion of reality in order to better cope with a circumstance.

Patients frequently invent unconscious techniques to reduce internal conflict, in particular between the superego and the id.

Clinicians utilize psychodynamic therapy to assist patients better understand their own unconscious processes. Patients' self-awareness and comprehension of their own actions increase when they recognize and identify these processes. One of his most influential contributions is the structural model of the psyche in psychoanalytic theory, constructing the mind to the ID, the ego and the superego where the ID signify the unconscious urges and desires, aggressive and sexual instinct (*The Ego and the Id*), the Ego connect between the ID and reality while mostly operating on the reality principle while the Superego represent rooted societal norms and moral values. These structures connect dynamically, creating inner conflicts that displays by behaviour, dreams, and symptoms. As the time passed theorist such as Anna Freud, Melanie Klein, and Jacques Lacan redeveloped these structures.

Psychoanalytic theory has deeply inspired w wide range of fields beyond the medical psychology that includes literature, philosophy, cultural studies. For instance in literature this theory have been used to analyze characters behaviours and motivations and helped with narrative structures and hidden psychological themes where in philosophy many thinkers adapted this theory to explore subjectivity, language, and identity. On the other hand psychoanalysis has helped human to developed understanding about their inner lives where offering therapeutic methods to deal with anxiety trauma and emotional struggles, till this day psychoanalysis is still helping humans by offering therapy and even study some cases of mental and emotional issues.

Psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic are related yet they are different in function and meaning. Psychoanalytic is a term used to explain anything related to psychoanalysis such as theories, approaches, and interpretations. By implying this term practitioners and scholars pin point the ideas and tools that appeared from the psychoanalytic traditions which explore the

unconscious, human behaviour, the psyche dynamics. While psychoanalysis refers to the theoretical system and clinical method its aim is exploring the unconscious mind, internal conflicts and the origins of the psychological suffering. It covers both the therapeutic practices and the body of awareness that has progressed from Freud's foundational work.

Despite the multiple new modern forms that the psychoanalysis it took it all traces back to the founder Sigmund Freud's work, its legacy lies not only in contribution to therapeutic methods but also in its amazing impact on how it explain identity, and the human complexities and experiences.

Albert Camus's "*The Outsider*" has been always seen from an absurdist and existentialist lens, yet applying Sigmund Freud psychoanalysis theories will uncover a must needed analysis through the novel layers of unconscious motivation, internal conflict and psychological defence mechanisms that are related to Meursault's detached character. With Freud's frameworks including the id, ego, superego, repression, and the death drive, where it turns Meursault behaviour a case of a psychological study more than a philosophical statements.

While reading the novel and understanding Freud's theory its somehow make sense that Meursault would use a defence mechanisms because of how his character was developed during the events yet a contradiction occurred while also reading that it might be that Meursault is misunderstood in the society, other than that he seems to operate through his ID and ego with repressed superego ,this is seen in his desire for physical gratification where he prioritizing simple pleasures and living in the moment over the moral and emotional considerations while showing no guilt as a focused matter. His emotional detachment and his mother's death this might be the clearest portrayer of the absence of the superego as it is

excepted to grief especially in a traditional society where the character is numb to the new and to grief emotions and not even scared of a such big matter such as death itself, it also shows how unbothered he was asking to have a smoke and even worrying about the road distance.

Another events that was shown the absence of the superego or as in the correct term the suppressed or underdeveloped superego was Meursault's trial where his lack of emotion and even committing a crime as murder where ending someone's life in a blink of an eye just because he was bothered about how hot it was that day also showing no regret about the act that was committed.

For Freud or in Freudian term the superego represent the internalized rules of culture and society and Meursault's indifference towards the rules project the subconscious rejection of it. To Freud repression is one of the defence mechanism individual use it mostly to protect themselves from inner conflict or anxiety, since he rarely expresses his feelings after his mother's death while he focus on the weather more than the funeral and his grief which is

Described as a repression of grief he is doing so unconsciously by protecting himself from the unwanted emotional pain by directing his focus on sensory details. Without that forgetting the murder of the Arab it wasn't described that the motivation of his act was based on emotions but rather it was physical discomfort which is absurd but from Freud's perspective he would argued that it might have happened because of bottled aggression that was suppressed by Meursault which include that even if Meursault's calm surface may have a toll on him which also hide a psyche that is deep in conflict and that the calm surface is just a mask to hide his frustration or even his emotions .

Death drive According to Freudian thought, Eros stands for the life drive and Thanatos for the death drive. Eros supports social collaboration, reproduction, and survival whereas

Thanatos encourages people to act aggressively, take risks, and relive previous traumas. Human behaviour is influenced by the intricate relationship between the two. Learn more about Freud's theories and the reasons why Thanatos and Eros are still a topic of discussion by reading on.

Meursault is emotionally cut off from the outside world. He doesn't care about things that most people would find highly important, like a parent passing away or a marriage proposal, at least not emotionally. He just doesn't care that Marie loves him or that his mother is no longer with him.

### **1.5.1.2 Philosophical Theory**

This theory provides a framework that explores existential thoughts that were articulated by different philosophers. This section helps to uncover how Meursault embodies a philosophical attitude.

#### **1.5.1.2.2 Existentialism**

Existentialism is a philosophical theory that highlights individual's freedom, choice, and responsibility in a meaningless or indifferent universe. It evolved through thinkers like Søren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, Simone de Beauvoir and Martin Heidegger. Existentialism advocates that existence anticipates important meaning that humans did not born with a planned purposes but must work and create their own meaning with actions and decisions this theory highlights themes such as freedom, anxiety, authenticity, detachment with confronting the absurd and nothingness. In existentialist concept, individuals equally free but also totally responsible for the consequences of their actions and choices, a position that often leads to existential anxiety and dread. Regardless of discouraging outlook, it still offers a deeply humanistic perspective encouraging people to live genuinely and confidently in the face of uncertainty.

The Second World War, the Nazi death camps and the atomic bombs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki all contributed to what has been referred to as “the existentialist moment” (Baert), which occurred in France in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This is why “existentialism” as an intellectual movement is frequently seen as a historically situated event where an entire generation was forced to confront the human condition and the anxiety provoking death, freedom, and meaninglessness destruction and chaos. This movement even found expression overseas in the work of the “lost generation” of American writers like F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway, mid-century “beat” authors like Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsburg, and William S. Burroughs, and the self-proclaimed “American existentialist,” Norman Mailer (Cotkin 185). Its involvement with the relation between freedom and faith and the confusion about god formed theological dispute through Karl Barth writings and lectures. Later when man makes meaning for his existence, then he shapes his inner core. Sartre debate that human’s importance cannot lead to his existence because there is no god with this theory of his would represent atheistic existentialism.

This theory, rooted in existentialism, holds the search for meaning is carried out within the very act of existing. The existential writers try to detect meaning through the experience of absurdity, they proposed that the ontological capacity that complies social and human establishments is missing the sense of consciousness due to overrating reasoning, possessiveness and productivity. That promotes the feeling of division, disconnection of time and language in human’s beings. Existentialists respect a common assumption that illustrates their method of interpretation. This assumption points to the unplanned relation between the crises of existence. “What is existence?” each human might ask this question but it cannot be solved unless it start from their own self.

Existentialism encourages us to embrace our freedom and to confront our limitations, it insists to engage with life in a way that is mindful and carefully and authentically even if we might face circumstances that are beyond our control and we are not responsible to how we respond act and even create meaning within them. It also explain that living authentically does not occur in isolation since we live in a society the way we choose to live will impact others around us and also in recognizing our own freedom and also to recognize others freedom this is ethical duty as Simon de Beauvoir argued, that our freedom is interdependent authentic existence requires a world in which can pursue their own meaning and liberation.

This visual, representation of existentialism is what makes “The Outsider” special. It depicts a character that embodies the ideology and demonstrates how he would interact with others, rather than attempting to theoretically explain the idea. Making the existentialism school a troublesome school and approach in the narratives style if one looked more closely, the universe would appear to have no purpose. We are more prone to think that the universe has a purpose because we all have an innate need, or rather, drive, to understand what is happening around us.

## **1.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has explored the theoretical framework to analyse “*The Outsider*”, focusing on philosophical, religious and psychological perspective related to life and death. These perspectives will guide the interpretation of the protagonist Meursault in the following chapters.

**CHAPTER TWO**  
**BACKGROUND ON “*THE OUTSIDER*”**  
**BY ALBERT CAMUS AND**  
**ANALYTICAL PROCESS**

## 2.1 Introduction

Chapter two entitled, 'Background on The Outsider by Albert Camus and Analytical Process'. It introduces the writer of the novel "*The Outsider*" also known as "*L'Étranger*" by Albert Camus. Camus is a French Algerian, writer and philosopher known for his innovative writings, such as "*The Outsider*" and his development of the existential philosophy and the idea of 'life has no essential meaning but human will still search for it'. This chapter also gives an overview on the novel, which follows the main character of the story named Meursault, a man, who is the definition of the human complex behaviour that is also detached from life and society. Analysing the character behaviour and attitudes during the development of the novel is based on a qualitative method of analysis, which is Reflexive Thematic Analysis. The process of analysis will be detailed in the following sections.

## 2.2 Background on "*The Outsider*" By Albert Camus

This section, will give a full background on the novel' writer Albert Camus and the book "*The Outsider*" and additionally the protagonist Meursault will be presented to the reader of this paper. By including an analysis process with its steps, relating it with a personal analysis.

### 2.2.1 Biography of Albert Camus

Albert Camus was born on the 7<sup>th</sup> of November, 1913, in Mondovi, colonial Algeria now Dréan Algeria. Although Camus thought his father was Alsatian and a first-generation immigrant, biographer Herbert Lottman's, research shows that the Camus family, was originally from Bordeaux, and that the author's great-grandfather was the first Camus to leave France for Algeria. He was a member of the first wave of European colonial settlers in the new melting pot of North Africa in the early 19th century. He grew up in poverty; he was raised by his mother after his father's death. He died in World War I. Despite financial hardship he excelled in school and later studied philosophy at the University of Algiers.

Camus became a journalist and began writing plays and essays that reflected his interest in human rights and political justice during World War II. He joined the French resistance and was editors of the underground newspaper "Combat" in 1941. He got famous internationally with his 1942 novel "*The Outsider*" (*L'étranger*), that introduced the concept of the absurd and the conflict between human's desire, to find meaning in life, in the quite indifferent world (existentialism). This theme was extended in his well known essay "*The Myth of Sisyphus*".

Camus strongly rejected nihilism instead he advocated for freedom and human dignity. His later works includes, "*The Plague; la Pest*"; "*The Fall; la chute*" and essays such as "*The Rebel; L'homme Révolté*" and "*The Myth of Sisyphus; Le mythe de Sisyphe*". Camus expanded on his philosophical and moral matters. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature at the age of 44 in 195, one of the youngest awardees ever. His award recognized his profound impact on literature and his exploration of existential and moral issues.

Sartre's insightful analysis suggests that Camus was more of a writer of philosophical parables and stories in the vein of Voltaire than a novelist. This evaluation supports Camus's own conclusion that his fictional works were contes "tales" and recits "narratives" that combined philosophical and psychological insights rather than true novels. "Fr. Romans", a genre he identified with the highly detailed and densely populated social survey of authors like Balzac, Tolstoy, and Proust.

Contrasting Camus with other writers, who have earned the title in order to determine precisely why and in what unique way he can be referred to as a philosophical writer. We may immediately rule out any resemblance to the endeavours of Dante and Lucretius, who set out to reveal complete intellectual systems and cosmologies in epic poem. Clearly, Camus made no attempt of that kind. However, there is at least some parallel between Camus and authors such as Pascal, Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche who are, authors who were initially philosophers,

or religious writers. But whose literary flair and stylistic accomplishments also earned them a special place in the canon of world literature.

We may observe here that Camus himself was acutely aware of his homage to Nietzsche and Kierkegaard particularly in the structure and style of *The Rebel* and *The Myth of Sisyphus* and that, had his tuberculosis not diverted him from his academic career and led him into fiction and journalism, he very well might have followed in their literary-philosophical footsteps.

On January 4<sup>th</sup>, 1960, Camus died tragically in a car accident at the age of 46 he died young a manuscript of unfinished autobiography novel "The First Man" was found in his briefcase and published after his death.

### **2.2.2 Overview of the Novel "The Outsider"**

*The Outsider* originally titled "*L'Étranger*" in French written by the French-Algerian philosopher and author Albert Camus. It was published in 1942 regarded as one of the important works of the 20<sup>th</sup> century literature. It was translated into over 60 languages most known translation are Arabic, English and German, that helped the novel reach international audiences influencing reader and thinkers. The original title can be translated to "*The Stranger*" or "*The Outsider*" based on the interpretation. Choosing "*The Outsider*" as an English title reflects the protagonist emotional and social detachment. The novel is split into two parts each part represented a different narrative and story developing, introducing different characters.

Existentialism is the central philosophical concept of the French author Albert Camus's novel *The Outsider*. The oversimplified definition of existentialism is that the universe is full of meaninglessness, but it would be ridiculous to try to describe it in a single line. Our lives have no inherent meaning or regulations, and we are all headed toward the same destination

death. According to existentialism, we must make our own decisions, take responsibility for them, and look within ourselves for meaning and purpose in a meaningless world.

Existentialism is personified by Meursault, the protagonist of *The Outsider*. Since it is often assumed that one should respond to a parent's death with sadness, Meursault's opening statement makes it abundantly evident that he does not live up to social norms and that he is sceptical about them. Meursault is a social outcast and an odd. The day following his mother's burial, he sleeps with a lady and does not shed a tear. In addition, he shoots an Arabian guy in a courtroom because the sunshine was too intense. Is he a psychopath? I believed so, but after reading the book, my opinion of Meursault significantly changed.

Meursault is a character that would enjoy the weather in each situation he was in, he would always points out how the sky colour was or how the stars would shine and importantly he talks about the sun. He seems so indifferent but when it comes to weather he becomes someone else someone who is normal with peace in heart and mind. He is someone that would look totally normal from the outside but once he says anything it would be something that is shocking with that would make the individual question his sanity but even if he so no one has pointed out that to him and how ridiculous he sounds especially Marie knowing from the book that they were somehow close to each other yet she never said anything even when he said some harsh words to her concerning love and marriage. When Meursault returns to Algiers the day following the burial, he runs across Marie, a former secretary for his company. After re-establishing contact, the two go swimming together, see a comedy movie that night, and start dating.

The protagonist getting involved with Raymond was somehow a turning point in the novel his involvement caused him a Hefty of problems, while reading the book it will either make you stunned with how he would react to each word was said by his so called friend “ so

I left her, but first, I hit her “ (Camus 28) also continuing by telling him the plan he wants to do while using harsh words like “ spit on her” (Camus 29) , in this passage some reader would see how unbothered he was even if it meant that someone would get hurt .

There was a reader review that was describing how exactly I felt when I read the book even when I read it ten times I would have the thought. “When I finished the book, I realized that I’ve been just trying to imitate other people’s lifestyles and trying to meet the expectations of others. I was merely walking on the pathways that were given because I was afraid to be considered a stranger. I learned that I am responsible to make decisions based on my own beliefs and values. This book inspired me to become less bound by societal expectations and to start inquiring about what kind of person I truly am”. ( Inhyuk )

### **2.2.3 Overview of the Protagonist Meursault**

The novel centres on Meursault, the protagonist of the novel a detached and indifferent character whose reaction to his mother’s death and his unexplained actions lead to his end. This becomes evident from the notorious opening lines of the book. As the novel develops, Camus gives us a deep dive into Meursault’s mind, eventually it is determined that he is a stranger in his society. He disagree with societal norms by not shedding tears at his mother’s funeral, his actions and the thoughts behind them are disturbing and unreasonable as a key figure in absurdism, Albert Camus has been impactful in educating people about its fundamental principles. Camus was an important figure in the development of absurdism and worked as an advocate for the theory. He explored absurdity in his works like *The Outsider* where he examines absurdism and how it might be presented to everyday human familiarity.

Through Meursault, Camus proves some of the radical philosophies of absurdism. Meursault is a self-described “absurdist” prioritizes his own interests, after the death of his mother, this philosophy emerges. Just before she was going to be buried, the funeral director

asks him, "Would you want to see your mother one more time?" Meursault's response to this is a simple "No" After the burial ceremony, Meursault recounts his return ride home as "I was filled with ecstasy when the bus reached the nest of lights that was Algiers, and I knew I would be returning to bed to sleep for twelve hours." This demeanour by Meursault is not uncommon. Even though these passages convey that Meursault is unfazed about his mother's death, this is not the case. A more reasonable approach would be to accept that Meursault's mother's death has no significance and to move on. Meursault mourns his mother's death, but he doesn't feel compelled to do so. Through the character journey Camus challenges traditional notions of morality societal expectations and the human search for meaning.

### **2.3 Process of Analysis**

This analysis, involves a close examination of Meursault's action, attitudes, and behaviours and his relationships, to understand his character towards life and death and how it shapes it. Using reflexive thematic analysis, to focus on different key moments in the novel and exploring different themes.

#### **2.3.1 Reflexive Thematic Analysis**

Reflexive thematic analysis is a qualitative method developed by Braun and Clarke; it highlights the researcher's roles in interpreting and constructing meaning from data. By dealing thoroughly with the text considering Meursault behaviour and attitudes, key themes are extracted revealing, how the novel presented acceptance, indifference, physical freedom and numbness. The analysis is based on my close reading to the novel highlighting significant passages analyzing their significance to construct and revise meaningful themes.

Reflexive thematic analysis, despite its widespread usage, there is a lack of understanding about the definition and methodology of thematic analysis for other instances;

(Stirling, Boyatzis; Tuckett). Since it doesn't seem to exist as a “named” analysis like other approaches such narrative analysis and grounded theory do, it may be considered a very badly “branded” approach. Accordingly, it is frequently not stated clearly as the method of analysis, even though it contends that much analysis is fundamentally thematic. Instead, it is either identified as a different method (Meehan, Vermeer, & Windsor,) or not at all (Braun & Wilkinson 30). It is challenging to assess research, compare or synthesize it with other studies on the subject, and it can hinder future researchers working on related projects if we do not know how people went about analyzing their data or what assumptions guided their analysis (Attride-Stirling). For these reasons alone, clarity around process and practice of method is vital. We hope that this paper will lead to more clarity around thematic analysis

In light of qualitative research, it is critical that we now recognize our own theoretical stances and values. We do not hold to a naïve realist perspective on qualitative research in which the researcher may only “give voice” to their participants. Even a “giving voice” strategy “involves carving out unacknowledged pieces of narrative evidence that we select, edit, and deploy to border our arguments,” according to Fine (218). However, it is not believed that there is a single best approach or theoretical framework for carrying out qualitative research. What matters is that the researcher's goals are aligned with a theoretical framework and methodologies, and that these choices be acknowledged as such.

Thematic analysis is distinct from other analytical techniques including “thematic” discourse analysis, thematic decomposition analysis, interpretative phenomenological analysis, and grounded theory that aim to characterize patterns in qualitative data. Though theoretically limited, both grounded theory and interpretive phenomenological analysis look for patterns in the data. Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis is associated with a phenomenological epistemology (Smith & Osborn), which prioritizes experience (Holloway

& Todres). Its goal is to comprehend the phenomenon in question by delving deeply into people's daily experiences of reality (McLeod). The idea that "anything goes" is one of the ways that people outside the profession criticize qualitative research. The opening phrase of (Laubschagne's) abstract, for example, echoes this sentiment: "For many scientists used to doing quantitative studies the whole concept of qualitative research is unclear, almost foreign, or airy fairy not real research."

Even, if qualitative research cannot be held to the same standards as quantitative approaches, it does offer analytical techniques that ought to be properly applied to the data. Additionally, there are standards for carrying out quality qualitative research, including both data collecting and analysis the question of "criteria" for evaluating qualitative research is not without controversy; some argue that strict criteria restrict flexibility and impede methodological advancement. Reicher expands on the criticism by posing the question of whether the vastly varied variety of qualitative techniques can and ought to be evaluated using the same standards. (Elliott et.al)

Since thematic analysis is a flexible approach, it is a must also to be precise and clear about the goals, and real actions must align. Therefore, it is necessary to apply the theory and technique rigorously. According to Reicher and Taylor "rigour lies in dividing a systematic method whose assumptions are congruent with the way one conceptualises the subject matter". (Reicher and Taylor 549)

Reflexive analysis stages are not necessarily exclusive to theme analysis, as several of them have similarities with other qualitative research processes. The process begins when the analyst starts to identify and search for meaningful patterns and potentially interesting issues in the data, which might happen during data gathering ( Braun and Clarke,).

Thematic analysis has several advantages that helped the researcher to achieve the main objective of this study. The most important ones are introduced in the following table by Clarke, Burns, and Burgoyne:

Flexibility.
A Relatively easy and quick method to learn, and apply .
Accessible to researchers with little or no experience of qualitative research.
Results are generally accessible to the educated general public.
Useful method for working within participatory research paradigm, with participants as collaborators.
Can usefully summarise key features of a large body of data, and/or offer a „thick description“ of the data set.
Can highlight similarities and differences across the data set.
Can generate unanticipated insights.
Allows for social as well as psychological interpretations of data.
Can be useful for producing qualitative analysis suited to informing policy development.

**Table 2.1 Advantages of Thematic Analysis (From Clarke, Burns, and Burgoyne 37)**

Finally, even this thematic analysis did not have particular achievement as an analytic method yet it is used often and it does seem easy to use, it is mainly focus on the research and the research questions.

### 2.3.2 Steps of Reflexive Thematic Analysis

These stages are not necessarily exclusive to theme analysis, as several of them have similarities with other qualitative research processes. The process begins when the analyst notices and searches for meaningful patterns and potentially interesting issues in the data, which might happen during data gathering. The following table presents the main steps of thematic analysis:

Phase	Description of the process
<b>1. Familiarising yourself with your data</b>	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and rereading the data, noting down initial ideas.
<b>2. Generating initial codes</b>	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
<b>3. Searching for themes</b>	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
<b>4. Reviewing themes</b>	Checking in the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic „map“ of the analysis.
<b>5. Defining and naming themes</b>	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells; generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
<b>6. Producing the report</b>	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

**Table 2.2 Phases of Thematic Analysis (from Clarke, Burns, & Burgoyne 35)**

In the following section, the researcher will explain how the method of data analysis, Reflexive Thematic Analysis, has been used to collect the necessary data to answer the research questions. It is necessary to highlight that the steps of thematic analysis, as introduced by Braun and Clarke, have been followed to explain their use in this research.

**FAMILIARIZATION WITH THE DATA:** this step involves a deep engagement with the novel. I read *The Outsider* at least fifteen times underlining key themes and taking

notes on Meursault thoughts, actions and his emotional responses to each event throughout the novel. With this step it helped to track patterns and also fully engaged with the narrative.

**GENERATING INITIAL CODES:** Specific passages from the novel were carefully highlighted and coded that illustrate Meursault's existential view, his emotional detachment and his relation to death and life. Also passages include his reaction to his mother's passing his refusal to lie in court and his acceptance to his execution, each code captures Meursault's behaviours and attitudes of his own beliefs.

**SEARCHING FOR THEMES:** related codes were collected the process in order to create an interpretive title. For example, codes that are related to Meursault enjoyment of weather and his connection to nature were brought together under one theme "sensory pleasure", also codes that highlight his indifference to death under the theme of "expected death".

**REVIEWING THEMES:** at this step, it is crucial to revise the novel to ensure that each theme accurately represented the codes that they are connected by asking question do theses extracted themes are related the novel and the passages that were highlighted?

**DEFINING AND NAMING THEMES:** in this step, it is necessary to finalize the themes names and writing a brief definition such as "acceptance" and "expected death" were defined based on Meursault's calmness and his indifference to death and believing that death is something bound to happened. Also "honesty" it defines Meursault his honest when facing death.

**PRODUCING THE REPORT:** as the last step is relating the themes to quotes from the novel backing up each theme that was extracted and defined. Connecting it mainly to

Camus' existential and absurdist philosophy and as a researcher that how my interpretation shaped this thematic analysis.

Reflexive thematic analysis allowed me to engage with the novel, *The Outsider*, in a deeper interpretive exploration. It helped me construct that not only reflected Meursault character but it also revealed a broader existential question that was included in the novel. With Braun and Clarke guidance, it was easier to co-create meaning through a reflective reading process.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

In this chapter, an overview about the book has been introduced. It has also provided an overview about the writer of the book and the protagonist of the novel and this study. This chapter has also included a detailed explanation of the method of analysis which is reflexive thematic analysis and the steps that have been followed to analyze the novel.

**CHAPTER THREE**  
**MEURSAULT'S BEHAVIOURS**  
**AND ATTITUDES**

### 3.1 Introduction

This Chapter examines how life and death are essential to Meursault's behaviours and attitudes, and how the philosophy of absurdism and existentialism applies to his character in "*The Outsider*". It starts with explaining how life is presented in the story as a random and meaningless concept that also focuses on physical experiences rather than emotional or moral values, where the protagonist sees no deeper meaning and purpose in life. The effect of life on Meursault includes emotional detachment and passive attitude while the effect of death helps him embrace absurdism and finding freedom in accepting life as it is. This chapter uses Reflexive Thematic Analysis, identifying key themes about life and death based on passages from the novel "*The Outsider*". Each theme will be supported by selected quotes presenting how Meursault's view evolves throughout the story. In conclusion, the chapter reveals that death and life are essential to understanding the protagonist Meursault and Camus' philosophy of accepting the absurd with honesty.

### 3.2 Character Analysis of Meursault

A person's behaviour is influenced by his or her ego, which is the part of a person's mind that acts in accordance with society's expectations. The ego is a raw material that has not undergone any purification process, and it can be compared to a raw material that has not gone through any purification process. Every normal human strives to achieve the superego, which is the ideal phase. In some ways, Meursault is a victim of societal moral policing. Meursault was sentenced to death simply because he did not do what society required him to do when a person is charged for murder, the motive and events surrounding the crime are typically examined in court. However, the prosecution for Meursault focuses on his personal

life rather than the crime he committed. It is clear that his disrespect to societal standards, rather than the act he committed, destroyed his life in jail.

Meursault's handling his mother's death also highlights, his acceptance of everything such as life and death, it's a factor that existentialists seem to share if someone dies, it must be accepted and move on. Meursault demonstrates this same attitude while being locked up, explaining that he is able to adapt to prison life without too many issues. He claims that he can quickly get used to the change, including the fact that he is not allowed smoking, and that he does the same when living in a cell with little to do.

Meursault does not lie, he does not lie to others he always answers honestly even if it is hurtful and importantly he does not lie to himself he already admitted to his lover that he does not love her "that didn't mean anything, but said I was pretty sure I didn't love her" (Camus 38) even if he was willing to marry her. He is someone who does not believe in god even if it might save his life. These moments show his honesty not only this but his rejection to traditional human values such as love and religion.

The crime that Meursault committed was not because of grudge or that he was angry with the victim, he was mainly annoyed that the sun was extremely hot that it made him feel agitated, and because of a drip of sweat got on top of his eyelashes he decides to shoot, but he was convicted not for the first shot but for the four other shots that he took at the dead body and for his lack of remorse. But the only real and absurd excuse is that, the sun was too hot that it blinded him. This was not an excuse this is what he really felt, just because he got annoyed it has nothing to do with violence it's all about his mental state at that moment.

Throughout the novel Meursault character development does not end in a moral transformation but in an existential awakening when he faced death he embraced the absurd

he basically embraced the idea that life has no deeper meaning and that death is the final step, a step that can never change.

### **3.3 Overview of the Concept of Life in “*The Outsider*”**

Life was portrayed by Albert Camus, as essentially meaningless and indifferent in his book *The Outsider*. Through the character it is explored that the idea of life is only sequence of unpredictable occurrences empty of any underlying meaning and importance. The character of Meursault is more likely to observe than engage, and once he engages it becomes chaotic with many emotionless twists he clearly lives life as it unfolds, caring less about it or even being part of it in a whole. He is a kind of person, who does not live in the moment, nor he plans ahead; he is different and a lot of people around him have noticed it because of his detachment and how he is reacting to life's events. It is known that his behaviour is not human like, but it totally can be since it is the human's nature to be complex towards life events. It can be concluded that Meursault might have been fed up with life or he didn't even try to contribute to life nor appreciate it.

Meursault does not seek ambition, love, or social acceptance in life, he is someone who is portrayed to be stranger to life and as someone who lives in the present dealing with what he can see or hear or feel stuck in a routine. His detachment underscores the absurdist's idea that life lacks an important value and that Meursault accepts it rather than resisting this meaninglessness, where he finds peace in the absence of illusion. Camus uses this portrayal to critique the human tendency to search for purpose in a universe that offers none reinforcing existential concept, that individuals must create meaning or just accept its absence in this indifferent world.

It can be clear that he is human with complex nature, as he is numb to life and how life can be a big part of our existence because our life is full with events that are important to

witness and be there for it, like birth, death and sickness, as it is a major part of our surrounding to us.

### 3.3.1 Meaning and Effect of Life on Meursault's Behaviours and Attitudes

This section, explores the meaning of life on Meursault's behaviour and attitudes. Meursault is driven by physical experiences rather than looking for purpose and He have a deeper acceptance of life's indifference. Using reflexive thematic analysis, to examine how Meursault's acceptance of life is shaped by his own death revealing themes that relate to this section.

**EMOTIONAL DETACHMENT AND HONESTY:** Through Meursault's perspective, life is portrayed as a boring and indifferent experience stripped of traditional emotional depth or ambition. One key moment, Meursault casually states "I realized I was getting married" (Camus 45); "Marie came to see me and asked me if I wanted to marry her. I said that it was all the same to me and that we could get married if she wanted to" (Camus 38); "Then she wanted to know if I loved her. I replied as I had once before that that didn't mean anything, but said I was pretty sure I didn't love her" (Camus 38).

This has not only showcased his emotional detachment but also his indifference to an important events, that ordinary people would feel when talked about love and marriage a sacred bond between two, where it is associated with personal growth, commitment and social identity holds no deeper meaning. For Meursault instead it becomes just another event in the passive stream of his existence this kind of attitude reflect the theme of emotional detachment suggesting that he operate on physical and immediate responses rather than emotional or psychological investment. Therefore, abstract concepts like connection, love, sympathy, and compassion have no place in his existence

**EXISTENTIAL INDIFFERENCE:** A related line “I could see no reason to change my life” (Camus 38) further emphasizes his indifferent acceptance of the present as he somehow enjoys his present and how his life was unfolding where he sees no need to disturb his life balance because he does not believe in any great cause. His indifferent reaction towards both circumstances and the idea of change resonate with the rejection of social norms. While society values progress, ambition, and self improvement, still Meursault remains detached viewing those aspirations as irrelevant constructs. This quote emphasizes the theme of existential indifference “I opened myself for the first time to the tender indifference of the world” (Camus 111). Meursault welcomes the indifference of the world and he seems calm about it which reflect an existential view that he believes life has no important meaning.

“You can never change your life and that in any case every life was more or less the same, and that my life here wasn’t bad at all” (Camus 38). Meursault reveals his acceptance of existence and his lack of ambition. This line encapsulates the theme of endless repetition and indifference. Representing a core belief of absurdism that life lacks meaning and that human efforts to construct meaning are often in denial. By recognizing the similarity of all lives and choosing to remain pleased with the situation where Meursault accepts existence without any self deception of transformation or growth. He doesn't pay attention to the social norms and regulations, his emotional neutrality toward existence reinforces Camus’ broader existential and absurdist themes, and highlights Meursault’s indifference from societal expectations.

**SENSORY CONFLICTS ABOUT NATURE:** This might raise a question for the readers of this paper what the sun has to do with meaning of life. Meursault experiences life through sensory perception instead of emotions, spirituality or morality. The sun was a factor to show life and that life exists since its part of our existence, Meursault is an admirer of the

weather. His moods relate to the weather whenever he feels anything or talk about something. He would describe it in a way that would make the reader question his liking.

He surely hates the sun when he said these quotes, “The sun, the smell of leather and dung clinging on to the wheels of the hearse, the smell of polish and incense, the exhaustion From not having slept all night all these things stung my eyes and blurred my thought” (Camus 15). Meursault likes everything that has to do with the sense which makes him an existential hero to the core, he views the universe based on his five senses.

While marching his mother’s funeral, he kept focusing on the heat of the sun instead of focusing on his grief which would tell us his attitude towards such a major event. The theme that can be extracted from this quote is ignorance due to the sun. He ignored what was really happening around him, as if he was out of the space or he didn’t belong there. Another passage that shows that Meursault focuses on the sun is “But today the sun blazing down upon the shimmering landscape made it inhuman and depressing” (Camus 14), again shifting his focus and ignoring the big event that is happening around him.

“My mind was a blank because all that sun on my bare head was making me feel drowsy” (Camus 48) this quote shows how the sun makes him dizzy which is very different to what he said in the previous quote, here the sun is seen from Meursault’s in a negative side and he shows his dislike. “The sun was beating down on the sand and its brilliance reflecting off the sea was almost unbearable” (Camus 48) and how the sun to him is unbearable he shows a pure dislike of the sun.

Here, he shows his liking to the sun and other nature elements “About Marie, he remarked: ‘She’s terrific, and what’s more, charming. Then I stopped paying attention to this little mannerism because I was thinking about how wonderful it was to be out in the sun and

how good it felt.” (Camus 46) through this quote it is clear how he ignored the person that was talking and shifted his focus to the sun and showcasing his enjoyment and stating how wonderful it was. “When I woke up, the stars were shining on my face. The sounds of the countryside drifted towards me. The scent of the night, the earth and the salt air cooled my temples. The wonderful peacefulness of this sleepy summer flowed through me in great waves”. (Camus 110) he enjoys the moments of peace only when it comes to the weather he feels one with nature since we are part of nature and that how we exist. “I breathed in the scent of the cool earth and didn’t feel sleepy anymore.”(Camus 11) his moods changes once he feels connected to nature this is what it is meant by oneness with nature.

**FREEDOM VS CONFINEMENT:** Meursault is someone who likes to swim and that’s one thing he said when he was told “I am sure you have sometimes wished for another life” (Camus 108), he replied “that of course I had, but I might just as well have wished to be rich, or to swim very fast or to have a more beautifully shaped mouth” (Camus 108) this passage translate many ideas first that he wish to swim faster this is an activity that is enjoyable while living it’s an activity that will shape our existence and creating an memory with it. These two passages collectively reveal that Meursault sees life as static, repetitive, and devoid of deeper value or purpose. “While I was shaving, I wondered what I should do and I decided to go swimming” (Camus 17)

“When I imagined the sound of those first little waves beneath my feet, the sensation of water flowing over my body and the feeling of freedom this brought me, it struck me how much the walls of my prison had closed in on me” (Camus 69). Water is a symbol of liberation and escape, while prison represents control and entrapment. The contrast between imagining the feeling of water and physical reality of the closed cell reinforces dominant tension between inner freedom and confinement.

**WEAK SUPEREGO:** “I don’t believe it had even occurred to me at first that all these people were eager to get a look at me” (Camus 75). His lack of awareness suggests that he have no interest what is going around him he does not project his superego in any situations which indicate a weak superego. Meursault’s ego is underdeveloped due to his carelessness about how people perceive him he rather ignores them once for all, as much as people noticed his indifference he does not care about their opinion. “What interests me is you”, “I didn’t really know what he meant by that and I didn’t reply”. (Camus 60)

In conclusion, by highlighting these themes, it gives a full understanding of how Meursault perceives life.

### **3.4 Overview of the concept of Death in “*The Outsider*”**

The concept of death to Meursault is a matter of peace to him he believed that death is something natural to happened in the human lives , it is just different for him because he is someone who would accept death with open arms it’s natural to be afraid of such thing at the end “Death” is something scary something that is beyond this world just the thought of leaving your beloved ones and also what comes after death which is the judgment day but it might be his reaction to death is such because he said he doesn’t believe in god when he was questioned by the judge as someone who doesn’t that means he is indifferent to the fear of death.

#### **3.4.1 Meaning and Effect of Death on Meursault’s Behaviours and Attitudes**

This section examines the meaning and effects of death on Meursault’s behaviour and attitudes in *The Outsider*. Though a reflexive thematic analysis, where it explores how Meursault reacts to death and how he reflect his existential understanding of life’s absurdity.

**UNINTEREST:** “My mother died today. Or maybe yesterday, I don’t know” (Camus 03), the narrative's first few sentences serve as an overview and introductory to the novel. It introduces the reader to existentialism in its most basic form. In terms of life, Meursault is utterly indifferent and didn't even care when his mother died. The most distressing part of the entire experience is that he had to go to the funeral in its entirety. When he finally shows up for the funeral, he is completely absorbed by the intense heat of the day and shows little interest in his mother.

Since the telegram said that the funeral will be held the next day, Meursault is preoccupied with the exact date of his mother's passing rather than what is most important. “The old people’s home is in Marengo, eighty kilometres from Algiers. I'll get the bus at two o'clock and arrive in the afternoon, that way I can be at the wake and come home tomorrow night” (Camus 03).

It is said that some people rather focus their attention on other things so that they don’t deal with their emotional issues as if protecting themselves from the harm of the strong emotions. The character throughout the book will give you some insight on his emotional state, “I was overwhelmed by memories of a life that I could no longer claim as mine, a life which had offered me the most subtle but most persistent of joys: the scent of summer, the neighbourhood that I loved, a certain type of sky at night, Marie’s laughter and her dresses. The sense that my presence was completely pointless here made me feel as if I were suffocating, and all I wanted was for it all to be over quickly so that I could go back to my cell and sleep.” (Camus 95)

**UNUSUAL ACCEPTANCE:** “I could only hope there would be many, many spectators on the day of my execution and that they would greet me with cries of hatred”

(Camus 111) here Meursault accepts death with open arms and wishing that the day of his execution will be full of spectators this also showcases his absurdist state as if he point to death as something absurd. Meursault's approach to his mother's passing also highlights his acceptance of everything and viewpoint, which existentialists appear to hold. It's necessary to accept death and move on. When incarcerated, Meursault follows suit, explaining that he has little trouble adjusting to prison life "To tell the truth, I wasn't really in prison" (Camus 65) He claims that despite certain conflicts, such as not being allowed to smoke, he quickly adjusted to the shift and did the same for living in a cell with little to do. "I felt as if I had been waiting all this time for this very moment and this early dawn when I would be vindicated." (Camus 109) the way he accepted his vindication shows how he is indifference to such big events emotions such fear would usually creeps on in such moment but he seems to be immune to such emotions and that what Camus tried to deliver to the reader a character through an existential lens.

**NUMBNESS:** Meursault's reality, whether it is the actual world or the world of his thoughts and feelings, lacks any logical structure. There is no justification for Meursault's actions, such as killing the Arab and his ignorance to others feelings. The narrative is narrated by him and is simply a quick first person account of his life. Instead of discussing his feelings about people, places, and events, he talks about the weather, the food he ate, and the activities he did. He seems to avoid dealing with his emotions such as grief and rather think about unnecessary stuff such as looking for the black suit with the stripes and how he needed to tell his boss thinking how upset he can be.

As someone like Meursault he is just obsessed with the idea of numbness because it advantages him apparently , killing an Arab for no apparent reason lead him to his execution in the process making the judges of his trial confused to his indifference. When Meursault and

Marie start dating, it means nothing to him. Meursault assures her that he would marry her if she demands it, but he is unable to love her since love is too nebulous feeling. He has a similarly absurd connection with Raymond. Despite being aware that his neighbour is a dangerous pimp, he lets himself become entangled in his troubles since he believes it doesn't matter. He seems to avoid dealing with his emotions such as grief and rather think about unnecessary stuff such as looking for the black suit with the stripes and how he needed to tell his boss thinking how upset he can be.

**EXPECTED DEATH:** Camus established Meursault emotional detachment from death this indifference reflects a larger existential theme that death is a natural part of life not something that should be overly reacting to it and accepting it .Meursault does neither cry nor grief and show no desire to deal with his mother death with any meaning. “Mama had died but it was something that was bound to happen one day.”(Camus 30) he also said that “All those others, they too would one day be condemned to death. He as well, he too would be” (Camus 109)

Meursault also said “it wasn't my fault” (Camus 19) in the events of his mother's death and also the events that follows this moment reveals that death is something that he has no control of it. He somehow justifies the event as matter of nature and not morality, which explains that he does not feel or express guilt or sadness which is part of the absurdity. “I may look as if I had nothing but I was sure of myself, sure of everything, sure of my life, sure of my impending death” (Camus 109).

Only when Meursault faces his own execution that he begins to reflect deeply about life and death he was condemned to die realizing that because life has no meaning the only way to live authentically is to accept its absurdity when he accepts death in his final moment this

becomes an existential liberation. Death can be a mirror to society the way society reacts to Meursault's behaviour around death is very different, he is not judge only for his crime but for not mourning his mother, which got him many reactions from the staff of the elderly house and in court which makes Meursault seems inhuman. Based on the story and Meursault character death is not an end to be feared but where the absurdity becomes clear. Meursault journey is from indifference to acceptance that can one live honestly and freely.

**PREDICTION:** Marie commented on Meursault appearance as she said "I looked like death" (Camus 43) it explains that death can invades life slowly and not in a physical state but as a symbol of emotional exhaustion and also it can serves a theme of prediction of his eventual mortality at the end. as readers this kind of interoperation can creep us out but that's the opposite to Meursault death is not something tragic nor its scary it is simply the end of a chapter since everything in this life has an ending whether we like it or not weather it comes early or late in life.

Meursault's approach to his mother's passing also highlights his acceptance of everything and viewpoint, which existentialists appear to hold. It's necessary to accept death and move on. When incarcerated, Meursault follows suit, explaining that he has little trouble adjusting to prison life "To tell the truth, I wasn't really in prison" (Camus 65) He claims that despite certain conflicts, such as not being allowed to smoke, he quickly adjusted to the shift and did the same for living in a cell with little to do.

**HONESTY:** I said: "No, because it isn't true" (Camus 59), when his lawyer asked him if he could say that he had kept his emotions under control that day. Truth is something that Meursault is passionate about. "Marie came to see me and asked me if I wanted to marry her. I said that it was all the same to me and that we could get married if she wanted to"; "Then

she wanted to know if I loved her. I replied as I had once before that that didn't mean anything, but said I was pretty sure I didn't love her" (Camus 38). He is an outsider, and is distant from people since they are unable to accept reality as he sees it. He probably doesn't worry as much about whether life has purpose because of his apathy. It was strange that Meursault became so consumed or perhaps captivated by his own demise. He at least considers it, demonstrating his renewed concern for his own life. He could use it as a means of atonement. His comprehension of life's purpose makes him an existentialist hero. "Demanded I tell him one last time if I believed in God. I said no", "you do believe, don't you, and you will put your trust in Him?" Obviously, I said no again. He slumped back into his chair."(Camus 62) when he was asked by the judge he showed that he does not try to lie even though he was trying to get away from this question by agreeing but once he was asked again he decides to stick to his first answer, Meursault does not try to find comfort in faith he rather face whatever comes his way. "Yes, that was all I had. But at least I had a hold on that truth as much as it had a hold on me."(Camus 109) Meursault finds something to hold on to which is the truth; he knew the only truth that mattered to him is his death.

**DEFLECTION:** "Felt the same dazzling explosion of blazing sun"; "The sun and the dizzying fire it unleashed upon me."(Camus 52) this quote was said leading up to his crimes he the sun is a factor that lead to Meursault committing the crime, because of the sun "That it was because of the sun."(Camus 93) he clearly stated that because of it he killed the Arab he also said that "The sun and the five shots I'd fired."(Camus 60) .Meursault's body was overwhelmed by the heat the scorching sun which leads to the death drive (thanatos) it's a psychological force that pushes individual to destruction and aggression. His crime wasn't driven by hatred or personal business but rather by irrational bodily discomfort and also sensory triggers.

To conclude this section, it is important to understand that Meursault's confrontation with death acts as a key moment that has reshaped his view of life. It freed him and got him to embrace death as part of existence.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

This chapter examined Meursault's attitudes and behaviours, through selected key passages from the novel "*The Outsider*" highlighting his perception of life and death and how it shaped him through the time of his existence. By using the reflexive thematic analysis, relatable themes were generated.

# **GENERAL CONCLUSION**

To conclude this work entitled “*The Outsider’s* Response to Life and Death: Analysing Meursault’s Behaviours and Attitudes in Camus’s Novel”, Albert Camus’s “*The Outsider*” introduces a powerful exploration of existentialism mainly on the protagonist, Meursault who is a man that is indifferent to life’s events and life in general and also death with this it reveals a profound view into the human life through an in-depth analysis of the chapters we have dealt with. How is Meursault’s behaviours and attitudes towards life and death shaped by Camus’ philosophy of the absurd focusing on the detachment between individuals and society and the meaningless of existence.

This paper has provided a theoretical framework to understand “*The Outsider*” through different lenses including orientations to previous research of “*The Outsider*” surrounding the novel’s central themes such as existentialism and absurdism, by viewing the meaning of life from a philosophical lens using existentialism and absurdism perspectives. In addition to viewing it from a religious perspective that includes the concept of ‘Oneness with Nature’ where it suggests a different path of meaning through connection with nature. Including the meaning of death and examining it through similar philosophical perspectives enhances the understanding of the novel. This section also introduces key theoretical frameworks for further analysis, specifically Freudian psychoanalysis and existentialist philosophy, which will serve as the primary analytical tools.

The background of the novel is explored through a biographical overview of Albert Camus, focusing on the key events and influences in his life that shaped his philosophical outlook and literary work. An overview on “*The Outsider*” offering an insight on the novel’s narrative structure and a summary of the story developing mentioning how the protagonist is explored and highlighting the complexity of his character and how he embodies the novel’s philosophical view. His indifference in a world that is ruled by social convention positions him

as an outsider someone who refuses to obey conventional beliefs and whose lack of deceptions makes him a stranger to others. It also delves in the process of the analysis by employing in this study a reflexive thematic analysis, mentioning the steps of the analysis process and emphasizing that this process is suitable for this thesis giving an easy path for a successful analysis.

Exploring the relation between life and death, and the complex psychological and philosophical framework of the protagonist Meursault's reaction to his mother's death and his final confrontation with his own death in the novel's last pages demonstrate his existential awakening. While individual tries to put meaning on life and death Meursault persisted uninterested in searching the meaning of life and judgment of others. His journey toward accepting the absurdity of life ends in his realization that death is as certain as life itself. And through his acceptance he finds a sense of freedom. Trough character analysis, he is revealed to be the perfect interpretation of Camus' existential philosophy. Examining the relationship with concept of life and death, their meaning, and their affect it has on the protagonist by using a reflexive thematic analysis.

This research answers the following research questions how does the death of Meursault's mother influence his perception of life and death? The researcher used Reflexive thematic analysis after doing a deep reading of the book .The findings revealed that the main attitudes and behaviour of Meursault towards life are:

- Existential Indifference
- Sensory Conflicts with Nature
- Freedom vs Confinement

Answering this research question what is the effect of life and death on Meursault's behaviours and attitudes? By including findings through the conducted analysis reveals the behaviour and attitudes of Meursault toward death such as:

- Unusual Acceptance
- Expected Death
- Deflection

Each finding is explained and supported with the passages from the novel, in the last chapter of this research.

For future research, many studies can be conducted on Meursault and the postcolonial setting researchers, may investigate if Meursault is influenced by the Arab character, and try to find a lead to this theory. Also they might try to analyse the novel with different analysis methods and even approach this novel with different perspectives, adding to the religious perspective diving in more details and even extracting a new view. Researchers might also study Meursault's case while he was in trial by asking how the lawyer, the judge and witnesses handled Meursault's case.

Ultimately, Camus's clever use of Meursault's character to challenge us readers to question the meaning they put to their own lives through Meursault rejection of societal norms and his honesty in confronting the certainty of death the outsider offers a deep commentary on the absurdity of existence. Meursault's response to life and death is not one of despair but of drastic acceptance of the world as it is unpredictable indifferent and void of meaning. This acceptance ultimately allows Meursault to achieve form of freedom that comes from embracing the absurd rather than seeking false comfort in religion morality or social expectations.

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