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Albert Camus

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Why do people still struggle to survive through their lives when everyone has to end up in fatality? What is the point of living then? Many people are afraid of dying without considering the true meaning of the real life. We merely need to admit that we couldn't change the repeated cycle. Some might feel impartial to death and eventually pull themselves away from the worldly desires. Albert Camus, a French-Algerian journalist and writer of philosophical essay, believes the sense of the theory of the absurd¹ which the absurd arises from the collision of our human desire of life and consciousness of death. Conforming to Camus's principle of the absurd², human life is rendered eventually insignificant by the fact of death and that the individual cannot make reasonable sense of his present.

Although he was raised and studied under difficult conditions, Albert Camus was still so insightful and successful through his life. Camus was so talented both in theaters, role plays, literature and philosophy which was his degree in the college. At the age of seventeen, he caught tuberculosis. Despite his illness he continued to lead an outdoor life. After enduring the hardships of his childhood and suffering the isolation resulted from his family, Camus began writing to take his mind off from the problems. The concepts of poverty, exertion, and true perception of his own life had such an obvious impact on many of his works. Furthermore, these could even be the

¹ Website contributors. "Theory of the absurd." Absurdtheorieslab. 15 Jan 2013. <<http://absurdtheorieslab.wordpress.com/category/absurd-theories/>>

² Wikipedia contributors. "Albert Camus:Idea on the absurd." Wikipedia, The free Encyclopedia. 19 Jan 2013. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert_Camus>

origin of his view about the absurd. Camus came to the conclusion that neither the hypothetical systems of the past nor any guarantee of the right of human values could provide and positive guidance for human life. He asks whether it makes any sense to go on living once the meaninglessness of human life is fully understood.

Camus referred to this meaninglessness as the “absurd” of life. The absurd isn’t about the mankind or cosmos. It’s altogether their coalition that generates the absurd. He believes that this absurd can be described as the lack of success in the world to fulfill the human demand. Such demand provides a foundation for human values, for our personal ideals and for our discretion of right and wrong.³ Hence life is meaningless once such goals are not achieved. He insists that there are particular human experiences that face with the absurd. There are three possible philosophical responses⁴ to this perplexity by Camus’s perspective which are physical suicide, a leap of faith, and recognition. If we think that to be alive with no purpose or meanings is not worth living anymore, killing ourselves seems to be the simplest choice for us to cope with. In his point of view, suicide is the only serious philosophical problem.⁵ On the other hand Camus considers the leap of faith as philosophical suicide. In order to take a leap of faith⁶, one must act with the goodness of the absurd, where a suspension of the moral may need to exist. Lastly as the choice of recognition, people need to accept absurd and continue living. Since the absurd is inevitable, the proper response to it is courageous acceptance. He concludes that recognition is the only defensible option.

³ Fried, Charles. Right and Wrong. 1978. p.167-169

⁴ Website contributors. “Three philosophical responses.” Camus-society. 15 Jan 2013.
< <http://www.camus-society.com/camus-thought.html>>

⁵ Gutenberg contributors. “Philosophical problem.” Gutenberg. 15 Jan 2013.
<<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/5827/5827-h/5827-h.htm>>

⁶ Sparknotes contributors. “The leap of Faith.” Sparknotes. 19 Jan 2013.
< <http://www.sparknotes.com/philosophy/feartrembling/terms.html>>

Camus's work that associated with his doctrine of absurd was eventually published during World War II.⁷ The early collections of his essays, such as *L'Envers et l'endroit* (The Two Sides Of The Coin) in 1937 and *Noces* (Nuptials) in 1938, were where Camus first expressed on the experience of the absurd. Later in 1942, the story of a man living an absurd life was published as *L'Étranger* (The Stranger) which also won the Nobel Prize in 1957. It was about Meursault, a main character of the story, who was shunned by the society due to the action response to the death of his mom. His traditional belief goes against the social tradition. Seeing from the opposite side, Camus presented as if all Meursault's actions were the only action that everybody always wanted to do but they couldn't due to the wrong of social civilization. *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* (The Myth of Sisyphus) was later released in the same year, a literary essay on the Absurd. Camus compares this myth to the state of human condition in which we search for meanings in a meaningless world. Although we continually search for some sense of purpose, our endeavor to discover any absolute definition is useless. He underlines that happiness is only temporary and our human condition is fatality. Then we must apperceive and learn to live in this absurd existence in which life as a whole is aimless and yet we contend daily in order to cherish our own small joys and happiness.

Analyzing from his work, through the features of Camus's, the absurd objected that the existence is futile when there is no physical pleasure due to the inescapable mortality. Camus is often called to be an existentialist⁸ but he never consented to the label. Even he visualizes many things the way an existentialist sees them. Although many contrast these thoughts and believe that Camus was anything but a thinker of this philosophy, Camus is one of the main authors that people turn to research and

⁷ Parker, Emmett. *Albert Camus: The Artist in the Arena*. 1965. p.1-9

⁸ Website contributors. "existentialist." Merriam-webster. 19 Jan 2013.
<<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/existentialist>>

read to understand the thinking of existentialism⁹. One of his most famous books, *The Plague*, illustrates the need for a human to become an individual and find true existence in society. He talks of humanity's aloneness in the universe and their complete freedom and responsibility for their own lives. To be able to make sense of his characters, one must understand Camus's philosophy of the world.

In conclusion, Camus was a highly creative and ambitious individual who created considerable and lasting contribution to his field. He progresses themes which became particularly his own image of loneliness, understanding of the true meaning of life, and realization of the fleetingness of the world. As all imaginative genius does, his art spoke to the world in an astute and avant-garde way causing the belief of absurd is being known. As stated in his theory of the absurd, people inhabit a world which neutral to our suffering and deaf to our complaint. We need to live our lives in our own and careful way to appreciate everyday moments and the merriness of life even one day the body will eventually ended up without soul.

⁹ Mural contributors. "existentialism." Mural. 19 Jan 2013.
<<http://mural.uv.es/yororo/camus.html>>