

Self-Centered Approach from an Existential perspective

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Abstract

This paper deals with existentialism and how existentialism works in self centered Approach. This writing starts with the topic of existentialism and a brief analysis of how existentialism works in human nature with the reference of two texts and person. After the Second World War people did not believe in existence because in this war 12 million people were died and 20 million people were badly injured. They told that if God exists in the world, those people never died. Waiting for Godot is the example. Someone is against the social customs and never abides by the rules of the society. There are some customs in the society which must be followed but someone remains in his central decision. The person holding these characteristics works whatever he wants weather it will be right or wrong. There is a vast difference between the self-centered person and the common man of the society and also between his tradition and classical tradition. Finally I concludes with a discussion of the concept of mine and other writers.

Key words: Existentialism, Self-centered Approach.

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Introduction:

Existentialism: Existentialism is the movement in the nineteenth and twentieth century philosophy that addresses crucial issues of human being. Kierkegaard and Nietzsche are considered the father of existentialism. According to me, there are three major tendencies of self-centered person which are:

- Searching for the meaning of human life.
- Centralizing of human decision.
- influencing the whole society with an individual's action.

The main principles are basically:

- A person is defined only he/she acts.
- He/she is solely responsible for his/her actions.

The Stanford Encyclopedia of philosophy considers Sartre to be the father of existentialism and his essay *Being and Nothingness* as well as the lecture "Existentialism is a human" to be leading documents in setting and defining the philosophy.

Self centered Approach: With existentialism in mind I will now begin discussing the work of Albert Camus and Samuel Beckett focusing on *The stranger* and *Waiting for Godot* and the myth of Sisyphus.

In *The stranger* Camus tells the story of a man and his name is Meursault who does not cry at his mother's funeral and kills a man for seemingly no reason and never protest his trial. He is subjected to death. Camus started writing it two years before world war II: Therefore it predates the popularity of existentialism. In fact Camus did not believe in the like of existentialism entirely; in an introduction to a collection of his work. Camus wrote "Sartre is an existentialist and the only book of ideas I have published. Camus very clearly says that he is not an existentialist. Camus never disagrees with the analysis of the human condition of the existentialists: however he does not agree with the conclusions as to how people should react to the realization of their condition. According to Showalter, "existentialists such as Pascal, Kierkegaard and Dostoyevsky for example analyze the human condition and find such misery that philosophical choices led to intolerable despair on Christian terms. Existentialists wrote that one could not live in the knowledge of the condition comfortably. The only options were complex misery or taking comfort in the things. Camus rejects this idea and he wanted to find a way to live in the absurd comfortably. However as Showalter said that artist's intention is not really a matter. The meaning of the works come from the work itself. Thus the work of Camus has been adopted by existentialists, namely Sartre. Throughout "The

stranger” Meursault is completely passive and detached from the society and towards everything which happens to him. In the funeral procession Meursault comments multiple times on how hot it is and also comments that “But today with Landscape shimmer with heat, it was inhuman and oppressive”. Meursault’s desires are similar to the purely tactile understanding Camus and discusses in the myth of Sisyphus. Meursault’s embrace of the present and acceptance has execution and also relates to Sartre’s idea of existential despair. The idea of despair is that one must accept the thing over which he or she has no control power. As an absurd man, Meursault does not gaze the relationship between his actions and their consequences and he does not grasp that his coldness regarding the murder of the Arab has any bearing on the guilty verdict. Therefore he believes that he has no bearing on whether he will be executed or not. Then in the spirit of existential despair Meursault does not worry about his execution or try to find a way out of it. He thinks that he has no control over his mind so he accepts it as his fortune. Therefore Camus argues that although death is not to be run and it is something that should be accepted as inevitable. Suicide is not to the answer to an absurd life.

The murder leads to the trial which is a major turning point in the novel as well as an important moment for Meursault. On the day of the murder Meursault spends the time at the beach with Marie, Raymond and an older couple. After two encounters with a group of Arabs, Meursault finds himself alone with one of the Arabs and with a gun in his pocket, eventually. And then Meursault shoots the Arab, killing him in the first shot and then shooting him four more times. Nowhere in the book Meursault does ever nationalize the murder. The only explanation is that it is hot and he has a headache and he wants to sit by the spring in the oasis. Meursault follows the path of least resistance in this case that path results in the death of the Arab. Here Meursault influences the whole society with an individual’s action and many critics try to impose a reason on to the murder whether it be political or psychological or they try to create some symbolism out of the murder.

The stranger has a perfect existential elements. Even Camus claims that he was never an existentialist. it is easy to see how existential thinkers like Sartre adopted him as their own.

Both Albert Camus in “The stranger” and Samuel Beckett in “Waiting for Godot” have the absolute randomness of life and its lack of concern to humankind. In “the stranger” Meursault accepts a just about stoic being, remaining not interested in life’s trials and tribulation.

In waiting for Godot Vladimir and Estragon try to stay distracted while waiting for a man named Godot who will probably never come. Despite the fact that both authors bear a grim view of human being and the characters are recovered by their own particular feeling of validness and responsibility. Vladimir represents the part of humanity who believes in religion and spiritual beliefs to guide them and that Estragon represents the more ideal existents part of humanity who chooses to stop waiting and construct the meaning of life based on experience in the tangible physical example of dialogue which supports this concept:

Vladimir : Let’s wait and see what he says.

Estragon : Who ?

Vladimir : Godot.

Estragon : Good idea.

Vladimir : Let’s wait till we know exactly how we stand.

Estragon : On the other hand it might be better to strike the iron before it freezes. (Samuel Buckett,14)

Here we see that Vladimir depends on Godot to tell him what he needs to know regarding his experience while Estragon states that they do not have the time to wait that they should take action on own before it is too late. The metaphor of the cooling iron suggests that humanity does not have enough time to wait for their spiritual ponderings to offer them enlightenment that the chance will pass and their efforts will not take effect once it does.

Therefore it can be concluded from this that Estragon's suggestion is that he and Vladimir made their own now before it is too late and is the more ideal course of action advocated by the play. This is Estrogen who follows the nation of no longer waiting on religion for answers and going to the philosophy of existentialism.

Estragon : charming spot. (He turns advances to front halts, facing auditorium)
Inspiring prospects. (He turns to Vladimir). Let's go.

Vladimir : We can't

Estragon : Why not ?

Vladimir : We are waiting for Godot.

Estragon : (despairingly) Ah ! (Samuel Buckett,35)

Here Vladimir and Estragon remains in their central decision and they believe that they are waiting for nothing. And also they are searching for the meaning of life. Once again the existential philosophy of human experience in the physical world is what Estragon seeks in his desire to leave for inspiring prospects and the common human tendency to wait on religion to offer and answer is inherent in Vladimir's suggestion that they should stay and wait so that they can be enlightened by Godot.

Vladimir : Do you want me to go away ?(pause.) Gogo!

Estragon : Don't touch me! Don't question me !Don't speak to me! Stay with me!

Vladimir : Did I ever leave you ?

Estragon : You let me go.

Vladimir : Look at me. Will you look at me ?

Estragon : What a day ! (Samuel Buckett ,42)

Albert Camus an existentialist writer believed that "Boredom or waiting" which is essentially the breakdown of routine or habit caused people to think seriously about their identify as Estragon and Vladimir do in the "Waiting for Godot". In "The plague" Camus suggests that boredom or inactivity cause the individual to think different. This is also similar to the idea of meditation, an almost motionless activity allowing the individual to think with clarity. The German existentialist philosopher Martin Heidegger expressed clarity that human beings can never hope to understand why they are in the world. I think that human being does not know why they come in the world.

Estragon : In my opinion we were here.

Vladimir : (look around) You recognize the palace ?

Estragon : I didn't say that.

Vladimir : well ?

Estragon : That mashes no difference.

similar in act two in the same circumstances they doubt about the place they were the day before:

Estragon : And here where we are now ?

Vladimir : Where else do you think ? Do you
not recognize the place ?

Estragon : (suddenly furious). Recognize what is there to recognize ?

Vladimir does not answer Estragon's question. These questions seem to bring pain or anxiety to Estragon. Buckett conveys a universal message pondering the impossible questions that arise from waiting cause pain anxiety. Both Vladimir and Estragon ponder sude by haring them-selves from the tree but are unable to act through to anxiety as Estragon states.

``Don't let's do anything. It's safer.

Estragon : Well, shall we go ?

Vladimir : Yes, Let's go.

They do not move. (Samuel Buckett,40)

Sartre explains that "abandonment" as: "It is we ourselves who decide we are to be"(Sartre,2007:34). As for despair Sartre argues that despair means: we must limit ourselves to reckoning only with those things that depend on our will or on the set of probabilities that enable action (Sartre,2007:35). By abandonment existentialists mean to say that God does not exist and that it is necessary to draw the consequences of his absence right to the end. The existentialists strongly opposed to a certain type of secular moralism which seeks to suppress God at the least possible expense. For existentialism everything is indeed permitted if God does not exists and man is in consequences forlorn (Priest,2001:32)

Conclusion

From above discussion I can say that "God is dead" and this is the human decision. For this reason someone always works against the society and someone does fun with God. A person falls in danger because of his action and he is responsible for his action. According to Deranty, most of the existentialists followed Nietzsche in the convection that art's power of revelation is to a large extent devoted to expressing the absurdity of the human condition (Deranty,2009).

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