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Kamel Daoud's *the Meursault's investigation: a Postcolonial Counterargument to Camus' Classic the Stranger*

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Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that this submission is my work and that, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution.

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Dedication

To my family,

To Ouarda, Nawel, Ines, Chaimaa, and Mohamed,

To my cherished friends,

To the BLEU team,

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Abstract

This work investigates two novels: Camus' *The Stranger* and Daoud's *The Meursault Investigation*. Camus' *Meursault* is seen as a stranger to society. Camus' novel focuses largely on the concept of absurdity, the lack of meaning or purpose is very common in the twentieth century literature. While Daoud's novel, *The Meursault Investigation*, is a kind of meditation on Arab identity and the disastrous effects of colonialism in Algeria. Moreover, it is a great work of literature in its own right. It is a reduplicated story of the unnamed arab who was killed by Camus' protagonist. That being said, camus' position in Algeria along with its novel is discussed through Daoud's novel and statements to determine the latter's exact genre. More precisely, Daoud sought to treat the issue of the human condition outside the context of religion and revenge which are shadowed by Nihilism and absurdity. Besides, both novels are submerged in the absurd which serves as an adequate tool for this kind of analysis and research. To sum up, *The Meursault Investigation* is a rework of *The Stranger* from the point of view of the murdered's brother, Harun.

Key words: *The Stranger, The Meursault Investigation, Absurdity, Nature, Society, Arab.*

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General Introduction

Albert Camus and Kamel Daoud are two writers who debuted as journalists passionate by Literature. The first writer, who is well known in the literary field, is French born Algerian who dedicated his fictional works into investigating the meaning of life and the absurdity of humans in general. Besides, he had lived in French Algeria at a time when Algerians wanted independence. Such fact often highlighted his position in the midst of that conflict. While, the second one is an Algerian writer influenced by Camus' writings and often sought to offer tribute to his favourite readings despite the time gap between them. In fact, he attempted a fictional conversation with Camus' character in *The Stranger* through his novel, *The Meursault Investigation*. In that respect, he was the center of attention back home for taking on both a controversial topic and person.

In fact, Camus addressed in *The Stranger* the issue of absurdity and randomness that govern a human life. Throughout his book, the protagonist is faced with awkward situations that will later determine his stand within society. More precisely, the fact that he did not lament his mother made him more attention worthy than killing a nameless Arab with cold blood. Seventy years later, Daoud shifted that attention on the murdered Arab and granted him a name, Musa. Besides, *The Meursault Investigation* is a retelling of the 1942 event from an Arab and Algerian perspective. The Arab's brother, Harun was lingering on the absurd trial of Meursault and its outcome and sought to understand what really happened to Musa. This dissertation will discuss Kamel Daoud's motives behind naming the Arab while uncovering the details and major aspect that led Meursault to kill him and marginalize him.

The present work seeks to answer the following questions:

- Was Meursault's act of murder a manifesto of identity problem and power?
- Was Harun a revengeful character?
- How was kamel Daoud's novel regarded?

The research opposes the hypotheses that claim that Meursault's murder was due to the unbalanced scale of power prior independence nor the fact that Daoud's novel deals with postcolonialism and revenge.

The study of The Meursault Investigation from a none postcolonial point of view will reintroduce Albert Camus' legacy back to Algeria in terms of incorporating his works into the Algerian educational system. Besides, it shows to what extent a human's mind can be creative through the use of literature that enables the conduct of purely philosophical exchanges and questionings. It will also grant future students the ability to meditate on pieces of literature as being a form of art and mastermind.

To conduct such investigation, the colonization of Algeria by France will be reviewed in this part since the murder happened during that time. Indeed, The French principles were successfully built up in Algeria from 1830 up till its freedom in 1962. It was described by brutality and shared incomprehension between the rulers and the dominated. That being the case, Algeria was a station for a huge number of European settlers known as colons and, later, as *pieds-noirs*. In any case, the indigenous Muslim populace represented a larger part of the region's population since its commencement. Linking it to the novels, Meursault was one of the *pieds noirs*. Such fact, made the whole murder and trial seem like a political issue where a colonizer is free to act according to the scale of power. In that regard, an Arab life does not matter. Not only did the Algerian/ French conflict drive Camus' novel from absurdity but it also made a lot of speculations on Daoud's novel. The present work attempts to establish whether Daoud's intentions were political in regard of writing a counter argument of Camus' classic *The stranger*.

The Myth of Sisyphus is Camus' best illustration of absurdity in which he characterized it as the worthlessness of a quest for importance in an unlimited universe, without God, or significance. For more clarification, he suggested that it emerges from a clash between a human being's thirst for order and significance, and the world's indifference and unwillingness in providing it. While Kamel Daoud treated the absurd along with the human condition that sets a person's actions, arguing that practicing and accepting the absurd are two different things. Besides, Nihilism was also tackled in both novels and is considered as being either the trigger or fruit of the absurd. The following

paper will trace these two notions and examine to which extent they can consume a character and affect its doings.

It is important to mention that while conducting such research, there had been some limitations that included; first, shortages in the access of literature since a lot of websites are not free. Second, the present topic is originally French which means most of the collected data were translated and it is commonly known that valuable information get lost in that process. Third, the lack of prior research studies related to the topic. Finally, constraints of time and space while considering the pandemic of Corona virus that limited students to work remotely from their supervisors.

This research concerning these controversial writers was divided into three chapters. Each chapter is a key element in attempting to understand Camus and Daoud who come from different backgrounds, in addition to their novels, *The stranger* that paved the way for another philosophical novel *The Meursault Investigation*. In chapter one, an overview on the writers' biography is displayed as a road map to their motives and sources for their literary creations. In chapter two, the characters of Meursault and Harun are explored along with their relationship with the other characters in the novel as an attempt to dig deep into their persona and figure out the reasons that led to some of their doings, questions, and perspectives. The third chapter is concerned with notions of the Absurd and Nihilism that were found in both novels. This will serve as a magnifier to the core of the plots. The last part of this chapter deals with Daoud's statements about his novel and Camus as a philosophical writer that will set the ground rules for the research question.

1.1. Introduction

The first chapter will reveal information on two writers who had never met, yet their works collided. In fact, the names Camus and Daoud echo the sound of being different in terms of epochs, origins, and ideologies. While taking into account; Albert Camus was a French writer who lived in Algeria while Kamel Daoud is an Algerian writer who lives in Algeria. However, the biographer and historian Robert Zaretsky hopes to place them in the same situation arguing that the equals between the two men are unusual: like Camus, Daoud started as a columnist and editorialist whose articles are persistently, even foolishly disparaging of his nation's political and strict specialists. Like Camus, Daoud's style, while sharp and grim, additionally detonates in eruptions of incredible lyricism (Tomaino). Like Camus, Daoud is a local Algerian who is an outcast both at home and abroad. Indeed, this chapter focuses on investigating and understanding Camus and Daoud as writers and analysing their doctrines. Also, it aims at unraveling the conditions that governed their choices and lives.

1.2. Albert Camus the Rebellious

Albert Camus (7th of November, 1913), a French man, well known for writing novels, essays, and plays; was considered to be the voice of his generation. Owing to his deep interest in the serenity found in a human being while facing issues of existence, value, and meaning of life. In other words, the philosophical dilemmas that leads to the absurdity of life. Such aspects attracted a lot of people to devour his books that resulted in him being awarded with the Literature Nobel Prize in his 40's. In fact, he attempted at writing literature at a young age armed with a Spanish maternal legacy of having pride and dignity in poverty. While his father, a French man, who was killed back in World War I, leaving Camus a one year old baby. This being said, he was living a limited life

with his brother, grandmother, a disabled uncle, and mother. His mother worked as a maid to support her family in a poor neighbourhood in Algiers, French Algeria back then, where he was born and raised (Cruickshank). His family members were the subject of his early essays. Despite his poverty, he felt that he was rich thanks to the equable climate, in his words: “I was born poor and without religion, under a happy sky, feeling harmony, not hostility, in nature. I began not by feeling torn, but in plenitude.” (Sack)

As for his Academic achievements, he mostly relied on a scholarship, considering his poor financial status. That Scholarship was the fruit of his teacher’s support and acknowledgement of his abilities, Mr Louis Germain. In fact, Camus himself wrote a letter to that same teacher after he had won the Nobel Prize of Literature in 1957, saying: “When I heard the news, my first thought, after my mother, was of you, without you, without the affectionate hand you extended to the small poor child that I was, without your teaching and example, none of all this would have happened.” (Berube, and Kushigian) Besides, he was enrolled at the University of Algiers where he studied philosophy and was deeply invested in the quest of finding and understanding the importance, significance, and sense of life. At the same time, he was also invested in sports and academical activities that involved establishing a theatre as well as directing and acting plays. Nonetheless, he was inflicted by Tuberculosis that pushed him away from any physical activities additionally to teaching posts that made him transition from one job to another, till he landed on journalism, *L’envers et l’endroit* (1937; the Wrong and the Right Side) and *Noces* (1938; Festivities). Then his literary fire sparked with essays and books that dealt with the meaning and meaningless of life (Camus’ Biography). Particularly, his perception of the importance of life, while stating that “the literal meaning” of life is relative to each person’s reason that drives him away from suicide (King). He also spoke about happiness and how it is redundant to seek it while

making illusion to “the meaning of life” that prevents people from truly living their lives (Guaderrama). More precisely, his first novel, *The Stranger*, revolves around the hollows that surround a man’s existence at some point of his life, the question of his purpose on earth. It is characterized by a man named Meursault who is unfamiliar with feelings and emotions that a normal human being would experience. He shoots an Arab after a fight that did not concern him; from there the trials begin where he is sentenced to death and fails to comprehend the reason behind it. Besides, his honesty and straightforwardness made him feel stranger to society norms and people, that precise honesty revoked his innocence in a meaningless way, thus, the absurdity of life that was portrayed in the dull style of the novel.

The World War II (1939-1945) made Camus flee France and go back to Algeria in 1941 where he finished writing “*Le Mythe de Sisyphe*” (*The Myth of Sisyphus*). The writer kept digging up his main theme about the meaningless of life in his books and some plays. The latter was considered as Camus’ finest. Later on, he tried to tackle that same principle theme by exploring the positivity that sparks from “Man”, in contrast to *L’Étranger* (*The Stranger*) where he focused on the negative sides of a man. Indeed, honesty and absurdity are still present with the appearance of Revolt. They were explored in *La peste* (*The plague*) and *l’Homme révolté* (*The Rebel*). Such interest surfaced from his political involvement in the Communist party. In fact, he advocated for the plan of a man not being indulged in the foolishness of the world, whereas, ensuring that Revolt is not being mistaken for Revolution. Considering the fact that, he perceives it as a meaner replacement of the actual injustice (Simpson). While, he called for Revolt that he perceives as a discrete disagreement upheld by the ethics of liberality and self discipline. According to him, if the world imposes on us restrictions, one ought

to break from those barriers by making “your very existence is an act of rebellion.”
(French)

Most importantly, Camus believed that the aim and purpose do not determine nor account for the methods used. With such belief, he was clearly dismissing the Marxist doctrine that a world revolution is bound to happen because of “history” and that any measures taken will be accounted for: “for Marx Nature is to be subjugated in order to obey history, for Nietzsche nature is to be obeyed in order to subjugate history” Camus found refuge in his compositions and used it as a method for communicating and conveying his political perspectives that is why he abstained from subscribing to any single political convention.

Simultaneously, be that as it may, Camus consistently composed with reservation and judgment, cautioning his kindred columnists not to surge in their celebration by permitting a decrease in the nature of their composition. Without a doubt, in his *Study of the New Press*, Camus requires "a press that is clear and virile and written in an average style" while berating the papers that "trespassed by sloth" in their detailing during obstruction timeframe. He underlines the thought of duty in news casting when he composes:

Now that we have won the means to express ourselves, our responsibility to ourselves and to the country is paramount. It is essential that we recognize this...the task for each of us is to think carefully about what he wants to say and gradually to shape the spirit of his paper; it is to write carefully without ever losing sight of the urgent need to restore to the country its authoritative voice. If we see to it that that voice remains one of vigour rather than hatred, of proud objectivity and not rhetoric, of humanity rather than mediocrity, then much will be saved from ruin, and we will not have forfeited our right to the nation's esteem (Camus at combat 24), (qtd in Simpson).

After that, his literary career had sparked internationally and esteemed writers began commenting on his works and philosophy. As indicated by Sartre's discerning evaluation, Camus was less an author and increasingly an essayist of philosophical stories and anecdotes in the custom of Voltaire. This evaluation agrees with Camus' own judgment that his anecdotal works were false books, a structure he connected with the thickly populated and luxuriously point by point social scenes of essayists like Balzac, Tolstoy, and Proust, but instead contes ("stories") and recits ("accounts") consolidating philosophical and mental bits of knowledge. Hereof, is likewise significant that at no time in his profession did Camus ever portray himself as a profound scholar or make a case for the title of rationalist. Rather, he about consistently alluded to himself basically, yet gladly, as un écrivain, an essayist. He was rather, according to Sartre, a kind of universally handy pundit and present day philosopher: a debunker of legends, a pundit of extortion and superstition, a foe of dread, a voice of reason and empathy, and a candid protector of opportunity. (qtd in Simpson) In other words, Camus was a figure particularly in the Enlightenment convention of Voltaire and Diderot. Hence, in evaluating Camus' profession and work, it might be best, basically to take him at his own assertion and describe him above all else as an author, thoughtfully appending the appellation "philosophical" for more keen precision and definition (Simpson).

More precisely, Camus himself best characterized his own specific status as a philosophical essayist when he composed in *The Myth of Sisyphus*, with writers like Melville, Stendhal, Dostoyevsky, and Kafka particularly as a primary concern, Camus stated: "The great novelists are philosophical novelists" (qtd in Simpson) that is, scholars who shun precise clarification and make their talk utilizing "images instead of

arguments. To re-stress, Camus viewed himself as most importantly an essayist, “More a writer than a philosopher.” And at different occasions in his profession he likewise acknowledged the names writer, humanist, and even moralist. In any case, he clearly never felt open to distinguish himself as a thinker. A term he appears to have related with thorough scholarly preparing, efficient reasoning, sensible consistency, and an intelligible, painstakingly characterized teaching or collection of thoughts. It is just to call attention to that he was not an orderly, or even an eminently taught scholar and that, in contrast to Heidegger and Sartre; for instance, he indicated next to no enthusiasm for power and metaphysics, which is by all accounts one reason he reliably denied that he was an existentialist. So, he was very little given to theoretical way of thinking or any sort of dynamic conjecturing. His idea is rather almost constantly identified with recent developments (e.g., the Spanish War, revolt in Algeria) and is reliably grounded in sensible good and political reality (Simpson).

On the lights of what had been said, he was submersed, raised, and taught as a Catholic and constantly aware towards the Church. Yet, Camus appeared to have no interest in the heavenly. Indeed, even as an adolescent, he was all the more a sun-admirer and nature sweetheart than a kid, outstanding for his devotion or strict confidence. Then again, there is no denying that Christian writing and reasoning filled in as a significant impact on his initial idea and scholarly advancement. As a youthful secondary school understudy, Camus contemplated the Bible, read and relished the Spanish spiritualists St. Theresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross, and was acquainted with the idea of St. Augustine. The latter would later fill in as the subject of his baccalaureate paper and become as a kindred North African essayist and a semi existentialist. Besides, in school Camus consumed Kierkegaard, who, after Augustine, was most likely the single most noteworthy Christian impact on his idea. He

additionally contemplated Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, without a doubt the two journalists who did the most to set him on his own way of rebellious negativity and agnosticism. Other eminent impacts incorporate not just the significant present day logicians from the scholastic educational program, from Descartes and Spinoza to Bergson, yet in addition, and similarly as critically, philosophical journalists like Stendhal, Melville, Dostoyevsky, and Kafka (Simpson).

Toward the evening on January 4, 1960, French thinker Albert Camus, creator of *The Stranger* (1942) and *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942), was riding in the front seat of a Facel Vega driven by Michel Gallimard. The two men were coming back to Paris in the wake of spending the special seasons in Provence, France. In the unassuming community of Villeblevin, a little more than 105 km, outside Paris, Gallimard lost control of the vehicle. As police later noted, Gallimard had not been speeding, the street was straight, and the asphalt was not frosty or even wet. The Facel Vega in any case veered into a tree, in a flash executing Camus and gravely injuring Gallimard. The vehicle was pulverized.

Camus had not initially proposed to come back to Paris in that Facel Vega. Obviously, Gallimard had persuaded Camus to ride with his family; the arrival half of a train ticket was found in Camus' pocket. Additionally in the vehicle were 144 pages of written by hand, the original copy, the initial segment of a proposed epic personal novel dependent on the essayist's adolescence in the Algerian frontier. The forty six years old essayist had anticipated that it would be his best work. The composition was later altered and distributed in 1995 by Camus' girl Catherine as: "*The First Man*" (Bracken).

1.3. Introducing Kamel Daoud

The 50 years old Algerian writer and journalist, Kamel Daoud was the first born of his family out of six in Mostaganem where he was raised. His family was purely Algerian, meaning; they spoke Arabic and were Muslims. This being said, he found himself taking up the newly Islamic occurrences in his teen years. However, he was disappointed by what the zeal of religion had to offer and quickly rejected that emerging movement. Such religious dogmatism had a strong effect on his life considering the fact that he got a divorce from his wife in 2008 after she had set off towards spirituality and had been progressively religious (Serafin). Later on, He pursued French studies, mainly literarily at the University of Oran. Such engagement enabled him to tackle journalism as a profession and a path paver for a career as a writer. In his mid twenties, he landed on a journalism job with *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, a francophone newspaper where he expressed his political thoughts on his first column named *Raina Raikoum* "Our Opinion, your opinion". Later on, he scaled up into being the Editor in chief for eight years. Besides, his ambitions roamed around different media, online newspapers *Algérie – focus*, and a newspaper that deals with African countries' related issues *Slate Afrique*. In his thirties, He distributed his editorial, trailed by the novellas "The Fable of the Dwarf" and "Pharaoh". In 2008 he discharged "The Preface of the Negro", an assortment of short stories that was republished in 2011 as *Le Minotaure 504* (Serafin).

As for his publications, In 2013 Daoud distributed his presentation novel, *Meursault, contre-enquête, The Meursault Investigation* which was imagined as an anecdotal "counter investigation" or a retelling of Albert Camus' "The Stranger". Described by the envisioned sibling of the anonymous "Middle Easterner" foolishly killed by the segregated and impartial Meursault, Daoud's epic shows a double representation of the human condition as conceived by Camus and was pictured again by Daoud. Notwithstanding the Prix Goncourt du Premier Roman, the work likewise

got the Prix François Mauriac and the Prix des Cinq Continents for Francophone composing in 2014. Nonetheless, the novel was not without contention. Insulted by the storyteller's eager censure of religion in his book, Islamists voiced shock, condemned the work as sacrilege, and requested revenge. In 2014 a fatwa, or strict declaration, was given by an extreme Salafist imam in Algeria who considered Daoud a "renegade" and an "adversary" of Islam (Serafin). Some of his quotes in his book, *The Meursault Investigation*, were judged as offensive to the Islamic religion: "As far as I'm concerned, religion is public transportation I never use. This God — I like traveling in direction, on foot if necessary, but I don't want to take an organized trip." (Daoud 112)

For more clarification, in his attempt in treating the human condition while exempting religion and having to unravel the situation of the Algerian society post independence, the writer had to use a strong language to convey the message.

I know this from the hollow sound that persists after the men's prayer, and from their faces pressed against the window of supplication. And from their coloring, the complexion of people who respond to fear of the absurd with zeal. As for me, I don't like anything that rises to heaven, I only like things affected by gravity. I'll go so far as to say I abhor religions. All of them! Because they falsify the weight of the world. Sometimes I feel like busting through the wall that separates me from my neighbour, grabbing him by the throat, and yelling at him to quit reciting his snivelling prayers, accept the world, open his eyes to his own strength, his own dignity, and stop running after a father who has absconded to heaven and is never coming back. Have a look at that group passing by, over there. Notice the little girl with the veil on her head, even though she's not old enough to know what a body is, or what desire is. What can you do with such people? Eh? (Daoud 118)

However, the mentioned above quotes were the motives behind Abdelfattah Hamadache Zeraoui's Fatwa, a religious decree that demanded a death penalty for

Daoud with the argument that he scrutinized the Qur'an just as the consecrated Islam:" he injured the Muslims in their respect and lauded the West and the Zionists. He assaulted the Arabic language. We appeal to the Algerian system to sentence him to death freely, on account of his hostility against God, his Prophet, his book, Muslims and their nations." (qtd in Hofmann). Accordingly, the Algerian legal executive conveyed its judgment on March 8, 2016 after Kamel Daoud had grumbled in the Algerian courts over these open demise dangers by the imam. The latter was condemned to a half year in jail, a quarter of a year fine and what might be compared to 450 Euros fine. Nonetheless, this sentence was dissolved in June 2016 by the Oran Court of Appeal for "regional ineptitude" (Hofmann).

In April 2015, a portion from *Meursault, contre-enquête* was highlighted in the *New Yorker* magazine. The November 20, 2015, issue of *the New York Times* included a commentary conclusion piece by Daoud titled "*Saudi Arabia, an ISIS That Has Made It*" in both English, deciphered by John Cullen, and French. The February 14, 2016, issue of the *New York Times* highlighted a controversial second opinion piece by Daoud, "*The Sexual Misery of the Arab World*" in English, interpreted by John Cullen, French, and Arabic. In 2018, his *Le Quotidien d'Oran* articles (2010-2016) were converted into English. Kamel Daoud's journalistic writings often tackled the criticism of Algeria's leader, Abdelaziz Bouteflika who was part of a regime usually called "le pouvoir" in the Algerian streets. Daoud praised the March shows that were held against the president and his government in 2019 as an Algerian renaissance. In a segment for *Le Point*, he differentiated the dynamism of the dissidents with the sclerosis of the system, in writing that appeared to draw motivation from the music and vibes of the protesters

On the one hand, the immobile body of Bouteflika, the incarnation of a generation that refuses to die and will not accept a transition, a handing-down of power; on the other hand, the body of

the demonstrator, exuberant, laughing, singing, feminine, masculine. This was the first thought that struck me that day, marching with hundreds of thousands of others from Oran: the return of the body.” (qtd in Creswell)

He was welcome to the celebration to peruse his book *The Meursault Investigation*, yet an ongoing auto crash has left him unfit to travel, which is the reason he did the discussion by means of video from his home in Oran, Algeria. “Women's freedom is my freedom,” said Kamel Daoud ,and commendation roared at the Lit.Cologne, Germany's most significant writing celebration, even before he could complete his sentence. In spite of the fact that his voice was marginally contorted through the Skype call, his message was loud and clear: You can qualify a nation's wellbeing by its relationship with ladies, he announced. In that respect, Daoud also expressed his opinions about Refugees while stating:"The average refugee may take a long time to understand the relationship to women that's fundamental to Occidental modernity." (Hofmann). Having figured out how to spare his life by surrendering his home, an exile won't surrender his way of life so delicately, he composed. Group nature or the smallest passionate impediment may horrendously present to everything back simultaneously, he included. His opinion piece didn't go unnoticed. It was distributed in various nations, remembering for German in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. It was unequivocally condemned: scholastics blamed Daoud for additional spreading the disdain that previously existed in Europe against exiles from Muslim nations. However in that equivalent piece, Daoud started by calling attention to that Cologne is "a place of fantasies", alluding not exclusively to the sexual dreams of the aggressors, yet in addition to the brisk understandings of far-right radicals, who have dreaded a brute intrusion in their cultivated world for a long time, he composed. He also mentioned that terrorism is a worldwide dilemma and that it is not appropriated to any specific religion

since there is a complex relationship between the fanatics and women who represent life itself, and because they aren't fond of life, "they hate women" (Hofmann). All things considered, the writer has chosen to quit composing in papers and to focus on his books. Basically, He figured out how to battle against Islamists, yet he needed to begin managing left-wing erudite people in France and Europe, who blamed him for being Islam phobic after his content on Cologne. His tale *The Meursault Investigation*, started debate when it was distributed in France in 2014. That earned him to be one of the most regarded intellectuals in the Arab world in a short period of time. Considering the fact that he was an Algerian writer who had taken the initiative to revisit *The Stranger* and give a personality to the anonymous Arab who gets shot on the sea shore by Camus' existential character Meursault, who claims he did it for no genuine explanation, however "on account of the sun." (Hofmann).

1.4. Conclusion

To sum up, Albert Camus was keen on investigating all what can be debateable and philosophical, especially, the meaning and meaningless of life. However, because of tuberculosis, he had drifted away from those investigations under an academic scope and sought their discussion in literature through journalism. That shift made him into an author who is energetic in his conviction that life should be lived distinctively and rebelliously. As for Kamel Daoud, he was fond of literature and his journalistic career served him as ledge into becoming a writer. Such admiration for literature made him leap into voicing the dead in his first novel, *The Meursault Investigation* that was an intimidating retelling of Camus' classic, *The Stranger*. According to their histories, both writers share much for all intents and purpose. They lashed at religion but it was too restricted for them to target since unethical human acts, human nature, and the world's

absurdity and foolishness were their main focus. Thus, they wanted to echo their words and ethics and position them into the real world.

Both writers sought to voice their thoughts through literature, especially in *The Stranger* that deals with the absurdity of life and *The Meursault Investigation* that treats the human condition outside the context of religion. The second chapter will explore the character of the two protagonists and highlight their relationship with other characters.

2.1. Introduction

Meursault and Harun are two different protagonists found in two different books in different epochs; yet belonging to the same story, the story of a murder. In the first novel *The Stranger*, talks about Meursault who is an indifferent man facing existential issues and dwelling in the world of the absurd which isolated him from society to the point that he killed a man and failed to acknowledge him nor bestow him a name other than “The Arab” . This being the case, the absurdity of his murder astonished the prosecutors to a point that the victim was neglected in the case and they condemned him for the simple reason that he unsuccessfully showed emotions at his mother’s burial. While in the second novel *Meursault’s investigation*, deals with the dead Arab who is given a name, Musa, and his brother, Harun, who is an angry and lost character since he did not get a chance to live his childhood due to the loss of the family provider, nor his teenage years because of his mother’s fixation for revenge, and nor his adult life as he felt as a stranger to his society. Besides, he was mostly frustrated owing to injustice that followed both his dead brother’s murder and the murder he later on commits. The following content will investigate both novels in terms of the relationships that connected the protagonists, Meursault and Harun, with their surrounding, as well as the details that shaped their personality and actions.

2.2 Reading *The Stranger*

Meursault is mentally disconnected from the standard natural environment, to an extent that the matters that would be very important for most people, for example, a death of a parent or a marriage proposal don’t seem to interest him, at least not on a sentimental level. He is neutral when it comes to his mother’s passing or if his girlfriend

loves him or not. In other words, Meursault is a merciless, irreverent character who is simply there, basically living. He is inflicted with a shortage of feelings and is kind of the encapsulation of what affectability isn't. He could be seen as if he is isolated from society norms. Essentially, one ought to recall that Meursault is a man who won't lie about himself, a man who is unable to recognize the mechanisms that govern his society towards fulfilment and happiness. He won't anticipate an eternal life, he won't use religion as a vehicle to abstain from confronting the way that he should bite the dust, and he will not cover his quiet acknowledgment of his mom's death. He challenges all appointed authorities, aside from himself: he won't play the dishonest contrite for his investigative specialists and investigators. In showing his lack of concern, Meursault certainly challenges society's acknowledged good norms, which direct that one ought to lament over death. Since he doesn't lament, society considers him to be a pariah, a risk, even a beast. At his preliminary, the way that he had no response to his mom's perish harms his notoriety undeniably more than his taking of someone else's life. Meursault is neither good nor shameless. Or maybe, he is irreverent; he essentially doesn't make the differentiation between what is right and wrong. When Raymond requests that he composes a letter that will help Raymond torment his special lady, Meursault impassively concurs on the grounds that he "didn't have any explanation not to." He doesn't put any esteem judgment on his demonstration, and composes the letter chiefly in light of the fact that he has the opportunity and the capacity to do as such. At the novel's beginning, Meursault's lack of concern appears to apply exclusively to his comprehension of himself. Beside his secularism, Meursault makes barely any suppositions about the idea of his general surroundings. Be that as it may, his suspecting starts to expand once he is condemned to death. After his experience with the clergyman, Meursault presumes that the universe is, similar to him, absolutely not

interested in human life. He concludes that individuals' lives have no valid significance, and that their activities, their comings and goings, have no impact on the world. This acknowledgment is the zenith of the considerable number of occasions of the novel. When Meursault acknowledges "the delicate aloofness of the world," he discovers harmony with himself and with the general public around him, and his advancement as a character is finished (Ross). Electronic

Going back to the first part of the novel, it gives a glimpse to the nature of the relationship between Meursault and his mother. It appears to be distant and cold due to the fact that he did not know: when his mother died exactly, her age, her friends, nor has he tried to visit her. As this information is displayed in front of the reader, one can only deduce that Meursault is strange and extremely odd for behaving carelessly with his mother. However, the writer hinted otherwise through some details: "Mother died today. Or maybe yesterday; I can't be sure." (The stranger 7) The word mother itself mirrors Meursault's affection towards his mother and his attachment to her since only a child would address his mother with "Maman" the exact word in the French version which translates for "Mom". Another point would be the fact that he had to place her in a nursing home because of financial issues rather than relationship ones. This being the case, Meursault loves his mother like any human being but has a different and strange way of expressing it. Besides, it could be said that he just blocked his emotions in order to protect himself since nothing really changed with the death of his mother who didn't live with him; he got used to her absence and did not deny it.

For the first time in a long time I thought about mother. I felt as if I understood why at the end of her life she had taken a 'fiancé,' why she had played at beginning again. Even there, in that home where lives were fading out, evening was a kind of wistful respite. So close to death,

Maman must have felt free then and ready to live it all again. Nobody, nobody had the right to cry over her. And I felt ready to live it all again too. (*The Stranger* 192)

Throughout the novel, it is noticeable that the protagonist kept his mother alive in his head. Perhaps he had forgotten about her the next day she died, but she remained an important figure in his life till his very last moments. Meursault relates to his mom and accepts that she shared a lot of his perspectives about existence, including affection for nature and the ability to get acclimated with essentially any circumstance or event. Generally significant, Meursault concludes that, around an amazing finish, his mom more likely than not grasped an unimportant universe and lived for the occasion, similarly as he does: “Maman used to say that you can always find something to be happy about. In my prison, when the sky turned red and a new day slipped into my cell, I found out that she was right.”(177)

As for the second female relationship, Marie Cardona, who happened to be a previous associate of his, with whom he get sexually involved the day after his mom's burial. She is the type who is satisfied with life and isn't demanding anything but a suitable husband and a life in Paris. Unlike Meursault who is only interested in a physical relationship, she is quite romantic and constantly digs up for a sentimental relationship with him. At first, when she knew that he had been flirting with her after he had just buried his mother, she is perplexed on her judgement of the man in front of her but then she follows up the stream into his bed. His oddity appeals to her and is satisfied with the occasional sex and the outings. At the same time, Meursault does not feel the need to connect with her emotionally and likes her physically since he cannot find reasons to prevent him. In fact, all of his descriptions of her are about her looks and physical touches: “Marie came over as we'd planned. I wanted her so bad when I saw

her in that pretty red-and-white striped dress and leather sandals. You could make out the shape of her firm breasts, and her tan made her face look like a flower.” (57) In another scene, Marie had asked him to wed her and he agreed since he couldn’t find a reason not to, and then she asked him whether he adored her, on which he responded negatively saying that marriage was not a “serious thing”. With trademark passionate lack of interest and separation, Meursault responds to Marie's inquiry with ruthless genuineness. Nonetheless, his genuineness double-crosses his numbness of the scope of human feeling, and maybe significantly more than that, his basic sexual enthusiasm for Marie. After Meursault's capture and detainment, the simple lady blurs from the story and soon enough vanishes from his musings, as his hard, dull, and fierce contemplative requests become the dominant focal point.

Another odd relationship that Meursault made was with Raymond Sintes, the pimp who was the complete opposite of him. The latter was also attracted by Meursault’s indifference towards life and mistook his amorality for the likeliness of his immorality and sought for a friendship with him. Meursault’s acceptance of this relationship was the beginning of his downfall considering the fact that it was Raymond who had an issue with the Arab and handed him the gun that served as a murder weapon. Besides, Raymond is somebody who obtrusively manhandles ladies and accepts that it is a proper method to regard them. While Meursault witnesses such misbehaviours and does not treat his ladies the same, he does not seem to mind nor have pity for Raymond’s mistress. Consequently, one can only think of Meursault as being a man with no empathy: “He wanted to write her a letter, “a real stinker, that’ll get her on the raw,” and at the same time make her repent for what she had done. Then, when she came back, he would go to bed with her and, just when she was “properly primed up,” he’d spit in her

face and throw her out of the room.” (54) Despite the fact that Raymond shared with him his malice plan for his mistress, he agrees to write the words that would lure her into the trap. Eventually, when Raymond’s plan succeed then he beats up his mistress in front of Meursault and Marie who urged him to go and seek for a policeman, yet he rejects for absolutely childish reasons that will eventually amuse the readers into welcoming the emotional incongruity in Meursault's explanation that he does not care for cops, as he will before long be compelled to manage cops as well as jail and the legitimate framework because of his own fierce demonstrations.

The protagonist is well known to be deeply interested in nature. In the first chapter, he considers the sun as a source of relaxation and describes how it made him at ease ,and water being a source of pleasure that allows him to swim with Marie. However, nature becomes an alarm for unpleasantness and misfortune, whenever he talks about the sun and heat, something evil happens as if he is directed and compelled by the drought and uneasiness of the two O’clock heat. More precisely, All through the book Meursault's activities were constrained by the sun, which continued pushing him to do inappropriate things that would get him in a difficult situation. The sun had control over him. Then again, when the sun was down, he was himself and settled on his own choices: “The sun glinted off Raymond’s gun as he handed it to me,” (93) the metaphor used in this quote served an epiphany to the reader of how the sun attracted him towards shooting as a shiny object attracts to be picked up. Besides, the sun assumes responsibility for Meursault's activities, forcing him to do what it needs him to do. The sun tears through the sky and consumes Meursault with all the constrain making him fire the firearm when he did not intend to. At the point when the sun is not there,

Meursault settles on his own choice. Meursault subliminally follows up on the sun when compelled to do as such:

The presiding judge cleared his throat and in a very low voice asked me if I had anything to add. I stood up, and since I did wish to speak, I said, almost at random, in fact, that I never intended to kill the Arab...Fumbling a little with my words and realizing how ridiculous I sounded, I blurted out that it was because of the sun. People laughed. (162)

Meursault admits that he is not the one doing an inappropriate thing; he is being constrained by the sun to do it. He has no control of what he does when the sun is near. The sun is compelling him, which implies Meursault's activities are done subliminally. The portrayal of the sun portends that something terrible is going to occur or has occurred (Singh).

Meursault is a man who just talks reality, despite the fact that he was in court being condemned to death; everything he did was expressing the heartbreaking truth about all the episodes that had happened. He was not condemned to death due to the homicide; he was condemned just due to what his identity was and his perspectives that were judged as odd. All the questions that were addressed to him by the lawyers targeted his life before the crime and were irrelevant to it, especially on the account of his stand concerning his mother's death. Such a fact can relate the character to Jesus who was also crucified for his identity rather than his doings. In addition, Meursault is someone who has no control over his actions and seemingly does the wrong thing intuitively with no intention in that regard. Sadly, this trait does not match with his honesty that led him to his downfall (Singh). The protagonist is represented as a character that follows a pattern, the pattern of strangeness that is distinct to the other characters and the readers. That

bizarreness is displayed through his behaviours that are eccentric to a human with attitudes and feelings that are in the scope of social norms.

Going back to his mother's funeral, his lack of grief is a strike of juxtaposition, a mixture between normality in not feeling the need to initiate a made up grief and strange when he does not voice nor act his sadness. The latter was differently expressed, more precisely, in a peculiar way that were judged by the readers as being a form of detachment that included: Acting all blunt in the funeral, abstaining from looking at his mother's dead and cold body, rejoicing in a sweet breeze instead of mourning, swimming with a girl the next day, watching a movie with her, and enjoying her company at night in his bed. In the light of the generic mindset imposed by the society for the need of wearing masks, Meursault rebels and is labelled as an outcast, and a stranger rather than A human being not compelled by the atrocity of social orders. In fact, the writer depicts the protagonist's lifestyle as being different, especially his Sundays which are usually the most anticipated days to go out into the world, yet Meursault prefers to sit back in his room and make the world his personal TV. Camus explains:

For me Meursault is not a piece of human wreckage, but a man who is poor, naked, and in love with the sun which leaves no shadows. Far from lacking in all feelings, he is inspired by a passion which is profound yet unspoken, the passion for the absolute and for the truth. It is still a negative truth, that of being alive and experiencing life, but without it no conquest of oneself or of the world will ever be possible. Meursault was conscious of the nature and value of the attitude he represented (Panomareff 119).

All of the choices that Meursault made post his mother's funeral resulted in the coincidental killing of the Arab, from being acquainted with Raymond and accepting his dinner invite for the mere reason that he will be spared from cooking, the fact that he wrote the letter that served as a trap for Raymond's girlfriend because he wanted to satisfy him for no reason, to going to the beach and shooting the Arab. Later on he was taken to court and condemned, but even that very same condemnation was odd since he was not sentenced for his act of murder, but for his inability to grieve at his mother's funeral. More importantly, most of the questions addressed to him were about his mother and not the Arab. His answers were strange: "I undoubtedly loved Mama but that didn't mean anything. Every normal person sometimes wishes the people they loved would die." (102) that being said, the magistrate turned bitter towards his answers and his acts during the burial that portrayed him as a convict who must be taken to the gallows. Camus stated:

A long time ago, I summed up *The Outsider* in a sentence which I realise is extremely paradoxical. In our society, any man who doesn't cry at his mother's funeral is liable to be condemned to death. I simply meant that the hero of the book is condemned because he doesn't play the game. He refuses to lie. Lying is not only saying what isn't true. It is also, in fact especially, saying more than is true and, in the case of the human heart, saying more than one feels. We all do it, every day, to make life simpler. But Meursault, contrary to appearances, doesn't want to make life simpler. He says what he is, he refuses to hide his feelings and society immediately feels threatened. For example, he is asked to say that he regrets his crime, in time honoured fashion. He replies that he feels more annoyance about it than true regret. And it is this nuance that condemns him (qtd in Carroll 27).

It clearly shows that there is no clarification for the homicide and that any endeavour to discover a clarification is as existentially foolish as any endeavour to clarify the significance and motivation behind presence itself. It is as foolish as society's endeavours to force regular norms on any free soul.

2.3. Reading *Meursault's Investigation*

“It’s the story of a crime but the Arab isn’t even killed in it - Well, he is killed, but barely, delicately, with the fingertips, as it were. He’s the second most important character in the book, but he has no name, no face, no words. Does that make any sense to you, educated man that you are?” (Daoud 92) After reading *The stranger*, one cannot help himself but to try and understand Meursault’s character and his act of murder while completely neglecting the presence of the murdered, the nameless Arab. However, after reading *The Meursault's Investigation*, you come to be acquainted with the victim and learn that he has a name, Musa, and a spokesman, Harun, his brother who will be retelling the story from a different perspective, an Arab perspective. The story begins with an inverse to the original book: “Mama’s still alive today.” (10) That sentence evokes a sense of indifference which was the best description that governed the relationship between Harun and his mother. In fact, she was a typical underprivileged Algerian woman who had to work as a housekeeper to provide for herself and her remaining son after Musa’s death and her husband’s abandonment that made her suffer from an unrecoverable severe depression (Lalami).

Consequently, my mother imposed on me a strict duty of reincarnation. For instance, as soon as I grew a little, she made me wear my dead brother’s clothes, even though they were still too big for me [...] I was forbidden to wander away from her, to walk by myself, to sleep in unknown places, and, while we were still in Algiers, to venture anywhere near the beach. (73)

Therefore, she developed a strong urge for revenge and an unconscious resentment for Harun, considering the fact that he was alive and Musa was not, and also for not being able to vindicate his brother's passing since he was only a child. Especially since the French authorities failed to give her: justice, Musa's body for an Islamic burial, nor recognize him as a human with a name and a family. That longing continues to consume her while decaying the mother-son relationship. Later on, the adult Harun starts resenting her for pushing him into killing a French man, Joseph, who sought refuge in their garden during the independence of Algeria. That act of murder made her at ease with herself, attain closure, and mellow with Harun: "“Everything was written!” Mama blurted out, and I was surprised by the involuntary aptness of her words.”(199) On the other hand, Harun profoundly disliked his mom for his impulsive adolescence and he accused her for his powerlessness to shape stable associations with others. Simultaneously, he can never force himself to abandon her totally, and keeps on visiting her (Connelly).

That being the case, Harun finds himself isolated from his society and craves to make connections with people or at least for someone to hear about the story that changed his life, the story of his brother's murder that was committed by a French settler, Meursault, whom he despises for not only killing his brother but for depriving Musa from a name and more precisely, for acting all egotistic about his death and turning it into an existential issue in his book that was introduced to him by a teacher named Meriem who symbolizes true love that is worth to be experienced despite its failure. Harun expressed: “ Well, the original guy was such a good storyteller, he managed to make people forget his crime, whereas the other one was a poor illiterate God created apparently for the sole purpose of taking a bullet and returning to dust – an

anonymous person who didn't even have the time to be given a name." (10) For more clarification, Harun relentlessly investigated his brother's murder through Meursault's book, *The Stranger*, and kept trying to follow Musa's tracks word after a word and to dig up answers behind the periphery of "The Arab": "At one and the same time, I felt insulted and revealed to myself. I spent the whole night reading that book. My heart was pounding, I was about to suffocate, it was like reading a book written by God himself. A veritable shock, that's what it was. Everything was there except the essential thing: Musa's name." (202) Thus, his efforts made him angrier than before because the author completely dismissed the existence of Musa and denied him a name. Besides, the thing that frustrated him even more was learning that he resembles the character of his brother's murderer and that he is actually fascinated by him. In other words, as a part of his character, Harun is strikingly like Meursault: "I was looking for traces of my brother in the book, and what I found there instead was my own reflection, I discovered I was practically the murderer's double." (204) and what can be more devastating than mirroring the person whom he thinks about as his foe: the two men stay confined from the occasions happening around them that resulted in them being objects of doubt or aversion (Connelly).

In addition, Harun was considered as a stranger by society for declining to join the army forces in the Algerian liberation. In particular, after he had killed a French settler, Joseph, as a kind of retribution for his brother's death; the Algerian authorities do not seem to mind the act of killing the Frenchman rather than being killed outside the setting of the war and they expressed their frustration towards Harun when they found out that he did not participate in the Algerian cause: "He started stammering, declaring that killing and making war were not the same thing, that we weren't murderers but

liberators, that nobody had given me orders to kill that Frenchman, and that I should have done it before.” (174) That being said, Harun was not punished for killing a Frenchman, just like French authorities did not condemn Meursault for killing an Algerian man. They both evaded the sanctions. However, Harun could not live at ease nor move past the homicide and considered his evasion of punishment as absurd and preposterous and felt that he should have been sentenced: “They were going to set me free without explanation, whereas I wanted to be sentenced. I wanted to be relieved of the heavy shadow that was turning my life into darkness.” (177)

2.4. Conclusion

On the light of what had been mentioned in the previous paragraphs and upon reading the two novels, one can only conclude that apart from Meursault being an indifferent paradoxical character by nature who is not aware of his entourage nor differentiate right from wrong, with no religious faith, and does not seem to fit in a society governed by social norms; he still feels love and should not be seen as apathetic for failing to shed tears in his mother’s funeral. However, it does not exempt his absurdity as a character nor neglect his disregard for human life as part of his existential ideas that showcased the meaningless of life and existence. In other words, he is a mysterious man rebelling against societal patterns through his lack of interest in the face of love and death. On the other hand, Harun is considered to be a reflection of his nemesis, an unstable character that is filled with grudge towards: Meursault for taking the life of his brother, his mother for pressing him to commit a crime, and his brother for dying and leaving him to pick up the pieces. Besides, he is also grappling the absurdity of life yet, unlike Meursault that state of bitterness towards life accumulated in his character after some unpleasant happenings that governed his life, from the death of his

brother to living in a religiously-hypocrite dogmatic society. Furthermore, it is essential to mention that in both novels the character of the Arab, Musa, is dismissed for Meursault neglected his presence as a defence mechanism against being consciously tormented while Harun knew little about him since he was only a child when he died. In other words, Meursault succeeded to blur his victim's existence in his book and Harun's life: "Musa, Musa, Musa ... I like to repeat that name from time to time so it doesn't disappear." (30)

The following chapter will provide an insightful analysis of both novels through the use of absurdity and nihilism as a research tool in the process of answering the research questions. Besides, it will highlight Daoud's aspirations for his novel while tackling the issue of Camus as a writer in the Algerian society.

3.1. Introduction

The last chapter is a ticket to the essence of the two novels, more precisely, Daoud's book. In the first part, notions of the absurd and nihilism are tackled in order to get a glimpse on the truth behind Meursault's murder and Harun's desperate attempt to be heard. In other words, the absurdity of life denounces religion as a purposeful element in an individual's life that pushes him into the preposterous thinking that nothing has a value and no efforts should be displayed. Camus stressed on the fact that the universe itself is emotionless and not interested in the journey of finding meaning and any foolish attempts to seek importance in science, philosophy, or religion will fall flat. This being the case, it is normal for the absurd dweller to show nihilistic traits. While in the second part, Kamel Daoud's interview about his book will be discussed in terms of his ideologies and thoughts that motivated him in taking on Camus' Classic. And what could be a better analysis of the book than its writer himself.

3.2. Notions of the Absurd and Nihilism in Both Novels

Camus is deservedly increasingly popular for his books, where a significant number of his philosophical thoughts are turned out in a more inconspicuous and more captivating way than in his articles. He composed *The Stranger* around a similar time as *The Myth of Sisyphus*, and the two books from various perspectives equal each other. *The Myth of Sisyphus* can be examined as an endeavour to explain and to make explicit the perspective communicated in *The Stranger* (Leeves). For a better understanding of the mentioned characters and their actions, both novels are to be analysed through an Absurd and Nihilist perspectives. According to Merriam Webster dictionary, Absurdity is all that is irrational, illogical, meaningless, and bizarre while Nihilism is a perspective

that conventional qualities and convictions are unwarranted and that presence is silly and futile. As a start, Nihilists accept that life is totally good for nothing, yet absurdists accept that despite the fact that life is inane; an individual will go through his whole time on earth looking for significance. That was illustrated in Camus' novel that paved the way for an existential struggle where nihilism and absurdity raised a sense of amorality in the main character. From Meursault's point of view the world is unimportant and he is sceptic in regard of human life since he believes that there is no point in behaving in a moral way. Consequently, rather than scanning for importance, Meursault lives isolated from the individuals around him and could not care less about his life, family, or companions. Such aspects were demonstrated in his superficial relationships and the killing of the Arab. As he believes that life is good for nothing and all exertion put into it would be squandered and he extracts no purpose in his life or the lives of others. He lives genuinely disconnected from the world through the madness of sincerity. While his behaviour during the homicide and the prosecution reveals his amoral side that comes from the absence of significant worth that he puts on his own life and by result, the lives of people around him. By way of example, the novel depicted the Arab's murder as accidental and unplanned, it would be normal for an individual to be consciously tormented for his unintended actions. Nonetheless, it was not the case for Meursault who is not vexed as he does not recognize ethical manners from unethical ones, demonstrating that he does not hold fast to moral principles. His irreverence comes from his scepticism and nihilism, since profound good quality is irrelevant when life is totally pointless. More precisely, at the point when confronted with his own condemnation, he revealed to himself that since his plea was denied his life was numbered, yet he observed, that it will only be sooner than the rest of the world, then he comforted himself with the idea that life does not merit the credit bestowed on it. He continues on arguing

that it has little effect whether one bites the dust at thirty years old or more since other men will keep living. "this business of dying" will eventually be the outcome of every soul. (Camus 178) consequently, His conviction that life is useless permits him to carry on improperly and to acknowledge his passing without feeling any regret by strongly suggesting that the universe is as careless as him to human life. Accordingly, Camus' character delivers a statement while facing the stars in that jail cell claiming that he had been washed off his blurring fury and freed from any kind expectation by exposing himself to the delicate lack of concern of the world and that he felt truly in high spirits over it .(192) Put in another way, Liberated from aspiration, Meursault perceives himself in a universe without significance and without belief while acknowledging his ludicrous situation and can't stop himself but feel ecstatic about it.

Throughout the novel, the characters try to put some senses into Meursault by frequently encouraging him to grasp religion and spot his confidence in a perfect world past this one. Meursault, however, is resolutely nonbeliever, and demands that he embraces just this life and the physical experiences while challenging the social build of religion even before his own passing, declining to drain any last minutes on God. Considering the fact that religion is regarded from a psychological perspective as being developed by man trying to make significance to a silly presence. Regardless of whether your religion is the right one, many put stock in a specific God, and that by one way or another makes life significant. For instance on the off chance that you carry out beneficial things, implore, atone your wrongdoings, and accept, at that point you will go to paradise and have a subsequent life. Anything to cause demise to appear to be less alarming and realizing that it's truly not the end, urges you to depend on a religion. At

the end of the day, acknowledgment of religion, or the chance of an eternity, implies that man successfully gets away from death.

That absence of purpose in life made the protagonist unable to create human bonds. His evaluation that Marie's inquiry, whether he loved her or not, had no importance shows how he is poorly equipped for having typical human feelings. Besides, he is supposedly a viewer rather than the doer, this sprung from his description of himself as not having the will to act and that all of his doings are due to some unfortunate series of events. Not long before the homicide, he considers the subjective idea of his decisions. The scene places him in a spotlight like a climactic defining moment in a play. Regardless of whether he acts or does not act has no effect, since life has no basic reason. This rehashed thought arrives at a crescendo as the warmth builds, the blinding light causes a cerebral pain, and his physical uneasiness persuades his critical choice to come back to the sea shore. More importantly, he uses an unconscious protection pattern that enables him to feel contented with the situation he is in through the rejection and dismissal of an individual's most valued assets that compromise life, love, death, and freedom: "As for the rest of the time, I managed quite well, really. I've often thought that had I been compelled to live in the trunk of a dead tree, with nothing to do but gaze up at the patch of sky just overhead, I'd have got used to it by degrees." (120) He reflects upon his position as a detainee and proclaims that he can be accustomed to anything if it is repetitious, he further continues on explaining his meaningless perception of life as a pirate sailing along the width of the sea with no treasure sought. He grapples with his detainment by lessening the noteworthiness of the opportunity he has lost, freedom. Meursault clearly envisions being encased in the storage compartment of a dead tree open to the sky. The picture brings out a man segregated from the world's touch, content

with just a little light. Differently put, he is exhibiting the exaggeration of absurdity that governs his course. Undoubtedly, his time in prison made him surface his deepest thoughts with no external factors to distract him and how his notion of time changed. He arrives at new decisions about his developing idea of time. Time moves in augmentations of days, not hours, for him currently, bringing out the possibility of the sun's section from sunrise to obscurity. Here, Meursault expresses the absurdist idea that time has no significance aside from as a human build. Another aspect of his character would be the nihilist part that rejects religion under the illusion that life is purposeless. Going back to the court scene when the judge, agitated and undermined by Meursault's open rejection of God, he urges him to think about the outcomes for holding such an assumption. The question that the judge addressed to Meursault on whether he would purposefully deny his life of importance was the judge's last attempt to trigger his compassion. In addition to the fact that Meursault disappoints him by proving no compassion, he also argues that thinking that life has importance does not necessarily mean that it is meaningful. That conversation with the officer communicates a focal topic in the novel that life has just the sense that individuals attribute to it. As the trial moves up and he is sure that he will be condemned for his actions, he attains a kind of self awareness. He verbalizes what he once just faintly detected, that life holds no importance. He sensationalizes this view into an image of the world going on without him, and he reassures himself that each individual faces a similar destiny, a grave.

On the whole, one can deduce that Meursault's act of killing and dismissal of the Arab was a mere detail for him which just led him sooner to the inevitable. Going back to the scene where the Arab was shot by Meursault, it is explicit that he cared less for the perish of the human being in front of him and more about the tranquillity and harmony

of that particular day. The interruption of the quiet sea shore setting by the weapon, reports echoes of doom and the fact that he recalled the exact number of additional shots on the victim's body after he represented no risk, confirms the good for nothing murder.

Despite the fact that the killer lacked any direct, explicit, implicit, nor any kind of motive for killing the Arab, his brother Harun who is the protagonist of the counter book, seemed to disagree on such philosophical association and expressed a strong urge for needing to make importance with respect to his sibling's life, Musa: "I needed Musa to have had an excuse and a reason" (Daoud 41). As a child, he dismissed the silliness behind his brother's death and expressed an obligation in granting him a story. That shifts the story in Harun's utility of mockery and a deriding tone to depict the portrayals of the killer's mental states as depicted in *The Stranger* as a way to ridicule his character and belittle his philosophical dilemma (Boothe). When he learned that his brother's crime was in fact with no passion, motive, nor a meaning; he started to look for answers in the murderer's book, yet he failed and resorted into making the whole book absurd and meaningless which was its writer's aim. That paradox frustrated him: "what in fact was never anything other than a banal score-settling that got out of hand was elevated to a philosophical crime." (38) And what antagonized him even more was the fact that his whole life and the events that circled him were trivial if his brother's death was regarded as futile: "I had the feeling I was pressing my face against the window of a big room where a party was going on that neither my mother nor I had been invited to. Everything happened without us. There's not a trace of our loss or of what became of us afterward." (109)

Unlike Meursault who was convinced by the senseless life that he was undergoing and tried his best to cover his murder under the umbrella of the universe's indifference

to human life; Harun's sense of emptiness flowered after it had been irrigated by the French man's blood while pointing out that After he had killed a man, he lost a thin line in his life that cannot be restored and started submitting murder to the people he did not appreciate, in his head. (148) that killing made him not cherish life anymore. (149)

Harun frequently censures religion, which makes him an outcast in his moderate Muslim people group. His conviction and nihilism sprung from an increasingly idealistic conviction that religion keeps individuals from grasping their own lives and being really free. Besides, he has no enthusiasm for attempting to find realities known to man that are proposed by sorted out religions. He sometimes engages in taking on an existentialist point of view as an attempt to make a sort of religion that is common humanism and implies to what it may look like as having a humanist good code: "What would I do if I had an appointment with God and on the way I met a man who needed help fixing his car? I don't know." (119) the protagonist is openly direct in his nihilistic perspectives by detaching himself from Islam and Muslims; he even refers to the Koran as "their book" (120) and its content as "redundancies, repetitions, lamentations, threats, and daydreams." (120) He perceives Religion as a stumbling block in the quest of the heavenly instead of being its mirror. Furthermore, he recalls an Imam who had incited him to "at least pray like the others," (218) in an attempt to bring him back to the rest of them so that he would not be seen as an outcast. On that light, it reveals and stresses the degree to which denial of Islam has prompted his singular life, maybe as much as the horrendous conditions of his childhood or the homicide he carries out so as to retaliate for Musa's demise. Flash back to Meursault's remark that religion is worth "close to one hair on a lady's head" (Camus 188) is generic and somber, belittling the congregation without offering anything to reinstate its centrality in human culture.

Harun changes this remark by talking about “the lady I adored.” (Daoud 219) Instead of recovering religion with scepticism, he is contrasting it with the most important experience of his life, his affection for Meriem. Despite the fact that Harun is an amazingly sceptical character with a dismal biography, toward the denouement of the novel he draws firmly on this one positive experience to discover confidence in the excellence and estimation of life. Subsequently, He separated himself immovably from Meursault who remains emotionless towards his own life until the snapshot of his passing. Regardless of Meursault's lack of concern and Harun's outrage and hatred, Harun's incredulity of religion joins him to Meursault, reminding the peruser that their two stories are inseparably connected. Simultaneously, Harun is on a very basic level increasingly idealistic creative mind of a human culture without religion is maybe his most important takeoff from Meursault's perspective. Religion hence enlightens the similitude and contrasts between these two focal characters:

Do you find my story suitable? It's all I can offer you. It's my word. I'm Musa's brother or nobody's. Just a compulsive liar you met with so you could fill up your notebooks ... It's your choice, my friend. It's like the biography of God. Ha, ha! No one has ever met him, not even Musa, and no one knows if his story is true or not. The Arab's the Arab, God's God. No name, no initials. Blue overalls and blue sky. Two unknown persons on an endless beach. Which is truer? An intimate question. It's up to you to decide. El-Merssoul! Ha, ha.(Murdoch)

3.3. DAOUD's Statements

The previous chapters served as an acquaintance tool for two novels that are contradictory in terms of ethnicity: the first novel is written by a pied-noirs, French settlers in Algeria, about a French man killing an Arab out of boredom and his death is completely dismissed under the capacity that human life does not matter. While the

second novel, a counterargument to the original book, written by an Algerian about the Arab's younger brother who ends up murdering a man who happened to be French as an act of retaliation after the country's independence.

Following these circumstances, the word post colonialism emerges to a reader's mind. In fact, traces of it are to be found all over, starting from the killer's neglect of his victim and putting no effort in naming him and referring to him simply as "The Arab" to His condemnation that had nothing to do with the Arab's ill fortune since he had no voice nor was his life and family taken into consideration since his body was never delivered for a proper burial, as if Arab lives do not matter. Then again, Harun gave his brother a voice, a name, and a story:

Just think, we're talking about one of the most-read books in the world. My brother might have been famous if your author had merely deigned to give him a name. H'med or Kaddour or Hammou, just a name, damn it! . . . But no, he didn't name him, because if he had, my brother would have caused the murderer a problem with his conscience: You can't easily kill a man when he has a given name. (90)

According to Gwen Dawson, The brightness of Daoud's work lies in the fact that a lot of his lectors will perceive these holes in the original story, they will be rereading it from a different perspective. Since the entirety of their attention and hers included was on Meursault's inspirations in shooting "the Arab" and his subsequent battle to characterize an amazing significance despite being an important character or element in Meursault's acclaimed philosophizing. Then she raised blameful questions on why no one ever thought about the dead Arab or his family (Three Percent Editors). Daoud also mentioned this fact in his interview with The New York times, he says. "Like everyone else, I read the story of the murder and I didn't even think about the murdered Arab. I

ignored him. [Camus' protagonist] Meursault's genius is to make you forget the crime. Even if you were a victim of it!" (Hong). Besides, she emphasized on the fact that the two novels should go hand in hand while stating that *The Meursault Investigation* is awkwardly interesting in the most ideal manner. It has the right to be perused and concentrated close by its exemplary partner. Indeed, even with just a passing commonality with Camus' *The Stranger*, Daoud's epic is a compensating perused. *The Meursault Investigation's* splendor, notwithstanding, turns out to be most clear when perused directly in the wake of perusing (or rehashing) Camus' work of art. It is then that its mind boggling communications with the classic are best valued (Three Percent Editors).

Dr. Ron Srigley argues that Kamel Daoud's new book, *The Meursault Investigation*, had parted from the superficial world that we live in, and took us back to a world in which Camus and Meursault's inquiries are the genuine motors of the human dramatization. He also mentioned that it allowed the writer to handle the subject of Camus' imperialism in the form of a dialogue with the writer that is concerned with the supernatural and ethics, considering the fact that the setting of the book was during the post liberation of Algeria. This dialogue was conducted through Harun who claims that the killer, Meursault, not Camus, composed *The Stranger* as a firsthand record of those occasions. Without a doubt, Harun expels Camus from the matter. Dr. Ron Srigley claims that such expulsion is in fact a literary retribution where Camus is erased from history like Arabs were in his novel. In addition, he expressed his admiration of Daoud's efficiency and capability in addressing such issues through an ongoing meeting in The New York Times where he hinted to the fact that for Camus the topic of God or the sacrosanct is focal. Stigley believes that religion is also an essential matter for

Daoud, yet not from a fanatical perspective and that the holy is a method of asserting the world while permitting our moral sensibilities and our need to oppose it to thrive without surrendering to agnosticism. In his article, he tackles a lot of aspects found in both books, from the second novel being a tribute, postcolonial argument, harun's imagination, to a warning from the circle of violence. More precisely, Meursault described Musa's death as: "four short raps on the door of unhappiness," Harun labelled Joseph's death as: "like two sharp raps on the door of deliverance." Such representations offer the novel a scrutinising sense of the provincial system.

However, during the meeting with New York Times, Daoud focused on the strict rationale of *The Fall*, being, as he focused on, the fundamental wellspring of his motivation for *The Meursault Investigation*, stating that what he has composed is anything but a political one and that it had been considered as a postcolonial novel, yet it was not the case (Kałuża).

In his discussion with Carlin Romano in 2015 where he was invited to speak about his debut novel, *The Meursault Investigation*, a lot of interesting aspects about his novel and Camus were analyzed. In the beginning of the sit down, he was asked about how Algerians perceive his book and Camus as a writer: "The situation of Camus is very complex in Algeria; he is both a person and a character. Officially, he exists neither in school books nor in its official history. The reproach that was made against him was that he did not take up arms during the war." Then he continued talking about Camus' response to the daunting question he received from an Algerian about the attacks that had occurred in Algiers at that time: "Between justice and my Mother, I choose my Mother." That answer rose controversy among the Algerian Nationalists. Thus, Daoud carries on: "People thought that I wrote a story of vengeance, which was not the case."

It was due to the colonial issue between Algeria and France that people insisted on the fact that the novel is a sort of a postcolonial repayment. Especially, after the subjective interpretation of Camus' choice: his mother over justice, France over justice. That issue kept standing to a point that Daoud thought to himself: "An Algerian who writes in French about Camus, Hello problems." But to his surprise, the situation was different and people regarded it as a literary creativity apart from a message from a decolonised or an article on post imperialism. He also emphasized on the fact that he merely wrote a based story about the positive and negative aspects that revolves around humans from their birth to their death and that those traits about human condition were questioned in the original story. Then he added that his novel caught the attention of a third party, the religious fundamentalists: "If the essential story reproaches Meursault for killing an Arab, the Islamists reproach Camus for killing God!" This exchange with the writer himself enables the readers to admire both the book and Daoud who proved to be competently arrayed for an eloquent literary dialogue with Camus through his novel. He also spoke about literature in terms of its splendour in being much more than morality and immorality and the fact that it possesses the ability to make the readers sympathize with a murderer and even perceives him as a fool. And what's more interesting is Carlin Romano's question that invoked Camus' blindness to the Arab, Daoud responded:

Each kind of writing is a denial to the other... like the human flesh that reveals and hides at the same time... Camus's style served as a screen to the novel...in my opinion a good novelist is the one who makes you forget about the language and reaches a balance where the style is no longer perceptible because it is perfect ... if the Arab mastered this language and be able to respond, would he have been killed ?

The writer admits the imperialism of language and suggests that it is both an open and a closed door to the world, a barrier and a bridge between the one and the other.

In another interview with ROBERT ZARETSKY who asked him about his motives in taking up the Arab's story, he responded: "Because I'm Algerian and *The Stranger's* story bears on my own. Because I am a Francophone writer and Camus is a master of the French language. Because I am confronted by an absurd world that kills in the name of the sun or Allah, and because I like to appropriate the great novels, rewrite, and make them mine. With the anonymous Arab [the one who Meursault murders], I saw a breach in this classic of 20th century literature, one that I took on as a literary, historical, and philosophical challenge." Then he refers to the standing conflict between Algeria and France and highlights the fact that he has written his book to portray "human history whose pretext is the pain of Algeria's colonization" rather than "question of rewriting the history of our shared pasts" his host was curious about the dead Arab and dived in the subject of "naming and identity", where Daoud reacted by saying that the westerners had a fun game of naming "Africa and Asia's mountains and insects," while completely dismissing their inhabitants which is why, By asserting your own name, you are additionally making a case of your humankind and in this manner the privilege to equity.

Daoud himself excluded the possibility of perceiving his novel as postcolonial and he emphasized on the fact that he considers himself as an enthusiast for Albert Camus' works and literature in general which made him imagine Harun's tale with no postcolonial motives or that of vengeance while claiming that his book was inevitably going to be written either by him or someone else. Daoud recovered that

killed Arab, eradicating the secrecy of *The Stranger* with his presentation novel *The Meursault Investigation*. Through his character Harun, he managed to voice the Arab and restore his name, family, garment, shoes, companions, cigarettes, peculiarities, and traits (Hong).

3.4. Conclusion

As a final point, Meursault had to come to an assertion that the fact of embracing the meaningless of life by rejecting any possible human created purpose, one will reach true happiness. Such assertion blurred his sense of guilt and confirmed the absurdity of his murder. However, that same conviction stimulated Harun's desperate need for a purpose in the event of Musa's death. In that respect, it made him replace religion by evoking the state of human condition while arguing that one should not rely on God to be morally conscious: "I'd needn't neither judge not God not the charade of a trial. Only myself."(144) In other words, Harun did not hate his nemesis for being a colonist with power over Arabs but for dismissing a human life, Musa, and denying him an identity. Besides, Kamel Daoud also stressed on that fact and on being fascinated by the tool of Literature that enabled him to conduct a philosophical exchange with Camus rather than making allusions to his country's colonial past.

General Conclusion

This humble work aims at identifying the reasons behind the creation of *The Meursault Investigation* and since its setting was at a postcolonial time and space, it attempts to establish its essential inspiration and determine its nature as a piece of literature. Also, it tackles the absurd which is believed to be either the engine or the residue of Nihilism. Such contributions were made through an analysis of both writers along with their fictional characters. Besides, Kamel Daoud's statements were taken into account in order to highlight Camus' position in Algeria as a writer and to mirror Daoud's intentions via his work.

One can only conclude that in Camus' novel, there had been a philosophical dilemma that tackled and questioned the meaning behind existence itself. Besides, the writer is most famous for his engagement with the absurd, especially, nature as the main focus for his literary and philosophical works. For Camus, the fact of trying to bestow meaning to existence leads to disappointment. This was portrayed in Meursault's moral indifference and his rejoice in embracing the absurd. It was also embraced by the readers who were shocked at the beginning of the novel by the first line, yet completely neutral when a human life was taken away. It was due to their absorption of the absurd. Thus, the fact of not showing emotion as society expects or killing a human without a motive were the protagonist's philosophical experiences that confirmed his convictions about the absurdity of existence and the world being indifferent to it. In other words, he surrendered to the universe's indifference by not investing efforts in creating meaningful relationships, depriving his victim a name, and rejecting religion that attempts to provide a meaning to life.

On the other hand, Daoud's novel revealed Meursault's blind spot through the eyes of Harun, the victim's brother. First, he made him exist via a name, Musa. Then, he gradually built up his character from Harun's memory of him and tried to grant his death a meaning. Yet, it led him to a complete disappointment, especially, after he had read *The Stranger* which he frequently quoted, shadowed, and scorned. Basically, it was a love-hate relationship that he developed with Meursault/ Camus' book. Such frustration from life and its absurdity that was developed in Harun's character, sprung mostly after

he had killed a Frenchman, Joseph. The murderer felt that he had lost his humanity and the right to live and dwelt in the absurd by rejecting the man created meanings and the religion that corrupted humans even more. In overall, Kamel Daoud filled in the neglected piece in Camus' puzzle and wanted to discuss the human condition outside the context of religion and the false meanings through Harun. To emphasize even more, Daoud managed to make the readers reread *The stranger* from *The Meursault Investigation's* perspective and vice versa. Such literary accomplishment was done through a philosophical discussion of the human condition while exempting the postcolonial dilemma.

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