ABSURDITY OF THE HUMAN CONDITION IN THE NOVELS BY ALBERT CAMUS AND SAMUEL BECKETT

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ABSTRACT

ABSURDITY OF THE HUMAN CONDITION IN THE NOVELS BY ALBERT CAMUS AND SAMUEL BECKETT

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This study carries out both a technical and a thematic analysis of the novels by Albert Camus, *L'Etranger*, *La Peste*, and *La Chute*, and Samuel Beckett, *Molloy*, *Malone Dies*, and *The Unnamable*. In the technical analysis of the novels, the study explores the differences in characterization and narrative technique. It argues that the differences in these two issues mainly emerge from the difference in the two authors' views of art. In the thematic analysis, on the other hand, the study focuses on the recurring themes in the two authors' novels. It argues that Camus and Beckett explore similar themes in their novels because both writers belong to the absurd tradition. In other words, although their notions of art are different, their views of the human condition are quite similar, which is reflected in the common themes they explore in their novels.

Keywords: The absurd, human condition, irrationality of the universe, Albert Camus, Samuel Beckett

ÖZ

ALBERT CAMUS VE SAMUEL BECKETT'İN ROMANLARINDA İNSANLIK DURUMUNUN ABSÜRDLÜĞÜ

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Bu çalışma Albert Camus'nün *L'Etranger*, *La Peste*, ve *La Chute* adlı romanlarının ve Samuel Beckett'in *Molloy*, *Malone Dies*, ve *The Unnamable* adlı romanlarının hem teknik hem de tematik bir analizini yapmaktadır. Romanların teknik analizinde çalışma, karakterlerin yaratılma yollarını ve anlatım tekniklerini inceler. Çalışma, iki yazarın romanları arasında bu iki açıdan görülen farklılıkların, iki yazarın sanata bakış açılarındaki farklılıktan kaynaklandığını iddia etmektedir. Tematik analizde ise çalışma, her iki yazarın da romanlarında görülen ortak temaları ele almaktadır. Bu tez, her iki yazarın ortak temalar kullanmasının nedenini, ikisinin de absürd geleneğe ait olmasına bağlar. Diğer bir deyişle, sanata bakış açıları farklı olmasına rağmen ortak temaların da ortaya çıkardığı gibi, insanlık durumuna bakış açıları oldukça benzerdir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Absürd, insanlık durumu, evrenin mantıksızlığı, Albert Camus, Samuel Beckett.

To My Mother

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Absurd as a Literary Movement

The Absurd has been one of the most pervasive movements in literature and in philosophy in the 20th century. Generally speaking, almost every movement in literature has emerged as a reaction to preceding literary movements or as a consequence of the radical changes in society or traumas that the world has gone through. The Absurd is not an exception since the two world wars, traumatic experiences for the whole world, played a tremendous role in the emergence of the Absurd as a school of thought in literature and in philosophy. As Esslin points out, "the decline of religious faith was masked until the end of the Second World War by the substitute religions of faith in progress, nationalism, and various totalitarian fallacies. All this was shattered by the war" (23), so

> the convention of the Absurd springs from a feeling of deep disillusionment, the draining away of the sense of meaning and purpose in life, which has been characteristic of countries like France and Britain in the years after the Second World War" (311).

Thus, the Second World War played a central role in the emergence of the Absurd by shattering all the established beliefs, ideals, and values of the pre-war Western world: "the certitudes and unshakable basic assumptions of former ages have been swept away, ... they have been tested and found wanting, ... [and] discredited as cheap and somewhat childish illusions" (Esslin 23). When everything that gave meaning and purpose to life and to existence turned out to be illusions, the old and familiar world became an alien one in which man felt lost and an "exile" in Camus's words:

> A world that can be explained by reasoning, however faulty, is a familiar world. But in a universe that is suddenly deprived of illusions and of light, man feels a stranger. His is an irremediable exile, because he is deprived of memories of a lost homeland as much as he lacks the hope of a promised land to come. The divorce between man and his life, the actor and his setting, truly constitutes the feeling of Absurdity (Camus, 1955: 5).

So, the world was no longer a unified whole, but "a disintegrating world that ...[had] lost its unifying principle, its meaning, its purpose - an absurd universe"(Esslin 301).

In such a world, it is quite natural for man to feel alienated since it is no longer possible for him to know "why it was created, what part man has been assigned in it, and what constitutes right actions and wrong actions" (Esslin 313). Thus, the universe for the absurdist writers and philosophers is irrational, defying logical explanation, and in such an irrational universe, man's existence becomes meaningless and purposeless. Since the universe is irrational and resists rational systematization, any attempt at systematization is futile and doomed to failure. Thus, as Camus states in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*, "the end of the mind is failure" (1955: 19) because man has the desire to make everything clear, but he cannot achieve this through his limited reason: "[the absurd] is born precisely at the very meeting point of that efficacious but limited reason with the ever resurgent irrational" (27), and it is impossible to bridge the gulf between "my appetite for the absolute and for unity and the impossibility of reducing this world to a rational and reasonable principle" (38). Thus, to Camus, "the absurd is essentially a divorce" between the mind and the world (23). Besides this, in a world "devoid of any guiding principles" (32), there are no absolutes, and values are relative, so absurdists are against absolutism, which requires a unifying principle in the universe. Therefore, quite naturally they rejected all "those philosophies that start from the idea that human thought can reduce the totality of the universe to a complete, unified, coherent system" (Esslin 313).

The Absurd is frequently regarded as a movement descended from Existentialism, a philosophical movement that influenced many diverse writers in the 19th and 20th centuries. The 19th-century Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard was the first to call himself an existentialist, but it was widely recognized as a philosophical movement through the work of Jean Paul Sartre after the Second World War. So, the reasons for its popularity are the same as those of the Absurd, that is, the bleak post-war atmosphere and the sense of deep disillusionment. As Bohlmann states, although the philosophers and writers who call themselves existentialist show significant variance in their views, they share a common ground firm enough to form a philosophical movement (xiv).

First of all, like absurdists, existentialists also believe that life has no inherent meaning or purpose, which makes it absurd. As Sartre states, "life has no meaning *a priori*. Before you come alive, life is nothing" (1957: 49). So, it is a philosophy based on human subjectivity since its center of interest is human existence. "By

existentialism we mean a doctrine which makes human life possible and, in addition, declares that every truth implies a human setting and human subjectivity" (10). Sartre also explains what "subjectivity" means according to existentialists: "Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself. Such is the first principle of existentialism. It is also what is called subjectivity" (15), which is a different way of saying "existence precedes essence" (13) on which such prominent names of Existentialism as Sartre, Heidegger, and Kierkegaard agree. As Bohlmann mentions, to Sartre, there are two forms of being:

> Being-in-itself ... and being-for-itself ... .Being-in-itself is the self-contained, non-conscious being of an entity, its material being ... .Being-for-itself ... is the mode of existence man achieves by separating himself from sheer being-in-itself through fashioning his desired self (2-3).

Heidegger names these states authentic and inauthentic being respectively: "authentic being [is] rooted in the explicit sense of my situation ... ; and inauthentic being, moving automatically in the established ruts and routes of the organized world" (qtd. inBlackham 92-93). And, like Sartre, Heidegger thinks that one can achieve authentic existence only by realizing one's possibilities and constituting one's own values and meaning in life. However, like being-for-itself, authentic existence is not easy to attain since it requires courage and strength necessary for rejecting society's morals and values. As Blackham points out, according to Heidegger, it is much easier to remain an inauthentic being since

> [t]his is the general alibi, the proof that all the time I was in respectable company, the flight from personal responsibility, the escape into anonymity. Always there is the prescription of what one should do in such a case, and the frown on what is not done. Assimilation to this established general form of human existence necessarily means the sacrifice of my own possibilities, the I remains buried in the one. But I gain the solidity and assurance of this massive existence, and reinforce it with my own acquiescence. To resist and break with this mode of existence in order to realize other possibilities would create a crisis in my personal life. There is in me the strongest tendency to avoid the issue, to take refuge from my original situation, the human plight, in the comfort and assurance of this anonymous and approved mode of existence (91).

Man, at the beginning, is a being-in-itself, or an inauthentic being, which leads to the idea of Nothing. Bohlmann argues that according to Sartre,

> the individual identity that man creates for himself - his being-for-itself - is constantly in a state of chance contingency with all that surrounds him, and both he and his circumambient world are wholly ungrounded, making for a condition of 'fundamental absurdity'" (14-15).

Man, in Sartre's word, is "superfluous" since he has appeared in the world by chance without any essence and without any purpose, so he is nothing at the beginning. Bohlman indicates that Heidegger also agrees with Sartre on man's nothingness before achieving authentic existence. According to him, "... we exist in a state of 'fallenness...' when we languish below the level of existence to which it is possible to rise" (52). Thus, as Blackham points out, Heidegger believes that man who achieves authentic existence "recognizes ... the nothing out of which he came and into which he goes" (103-104).

Existentialists also agree with absurdists on their view of language because both absurdists and existentialists regard language not as a means of communication but as an obstacle to it. To illustrate, Beckett is one of the absurdist writers preoccupied with the problem of communication between people. He refuses the adequacy of language as a tool for communication, saying "there is no communication because there are no tools for communication" (1931: 47). According to Beckett, "the attempt to communicate where no communication is possible is merely a simian vulgarity, or horribly comic, like the madness that holds a conversation with the furniture" (46). As Esslin indicates, for Beckett, as for many absurdist writers, "in a world that has lost its meaning, language also becomes a meaningless buzzing" (84). Language falls short in conveying man's thoughts and emotions because man lives "in a world subject to incessant change, [so] his use of language probes the limitations of language both as a means of communication and as a vehicle for the expression of valid statements, an instrument of thought" (Esslin 85). Like absurdist writers, Sartre also believes in the inadequacy of language as a tool for communication. According to him, language, far from expressing thoughts, "solidifies and kills our thoughts" (qtd. in Hincliffe 28). Besides this, words are never adequate to represent the things they refer to, for "language and the world are hopelessly divorced from one another" (Hincliffe 28). Likewise, as Blackham notes, according to Heidegger, although the function of language is ideally to communicate truth, everyday language does just the opposite:

> Language communicates truth, that is, uncovers and calls attention to what is there. But everyday language in constant use loses touch with the objects to which it ostensibly refers ... . Language then spreads untruth and establishes inauthentic existence. Instead of mediating my being-in-the-world by revealing intelligible objects of use and enjoyment, it obscures them by covering them with itself (93).

As stated earlier, both for absurdists and for existentialists, man inhabits a world in which nothing is certain or reliable, but for both there is one certainty awaiting man at the end of the road: death. Man is irrevocably condemned to death, which is "the cruel mathematics that commands our condition" as Camus says in L*e Mythe de Sisyphe* (1955: 12). Death is "the most obvious absurdity" for Camus (71) because man is sentenced to death for reasons unknown to him. Furthermore, it is "the most obvious absurdity" because it is in constant conflict with man's "craving for immortality", so the absurdity lies "in the anxiety created between my recognition of [the] inevitability of ... [death] and my innate sense of and craving for immortality" (Lazere 135), which gives the human condition its tragic sense. Moreover, since life ends in death, death makes all man's efforts senseless, and it "makes nonsense of any attempt to give 'meaning' to life" (Masters 16). However, this does not mean that man should give up life and sink to despair. On the contrary, for Camus the absurd man being aware of his mortality embraces life fully since he does not entertain such false hopes as the immortality of the soul. The absurd man knows that

> if we are to find happiness, which every man wants, then we must find it in this mortal life, and not look for it elsewhere, in which case we would be bound to be disappointed. In this way, we are being candid with ourselves, and loyal to our condition (Masters 17).

Thus, in Camus death is turned into a means of intensifying the passion for life, so the absurd man is determined to live his life as best as he can, and the only way of doing this is to live the present moment, knowing that life is short. To Camus, this is also how man should rebel against death, which dignifies him. As another absurdist writer, Beckett thinks that death is the tragic destiny of man, and that nothing can redeem it, so he reflects the anguish of mortality as a general state of humanity in his characters. On the other hand, although Beckett's characters seem to be pitiful characters in their ineffectuality and helplessness, they are dignified in their resolution to go on and to live. As Friedman points out, "beyond the tedium, the doubt, the painful sense of moribundity, there is that resolve (it dominates, as an 'affirmative note,' Beckett's stories and plays)" (53). Their determination to go on in spite of all their anguish and helplessness may be regarded as their rebellion against death, which Camus mentions in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*. So, as Szanto states, "no Beckett character allows his end to take him passively, and few in fact find their end

in death, as part of the plot lies in the need to continue, even after all has been said and lost" (90). However, it is difficult to say that Beckett, like Camus, regards death as a means of intensifying the joy of life, for his characters seem to treat life as a duty to be endured rather than enjoying it. Existentialists, like Sartre and Heidegger, have a similar attitude towards death. For both Sartre and Heidegger, death is the finality which transforms man into nothing; however, as Bohlmann indicates, for Heidegger this recognition helps one attain authentic existence since "acceptance of death makes possible a unity of existence, setting one free from the 'they', whose 'everyday falling evasion in the face of death is inauthentic Being-towards-death'" (Bohlmann 40). Therefore, instead of evading the idea of death, one should always keep one's mortality in mind:

> we should include ... [death] realistically among our life's projects and the way we evaluate them. We should embrace 'an impassioned freedom' towards death – a freedom which has been released from the illusions of the 'they'" (Bohlmann 39).

This provides the necessary freedom to choose one's own self and to form one's own values. So, like Camus, Heidegger has an affirmative attitude towards death. On the other hand, for Sartre death has no such positive role in establishing authentic existence, and he openly expresses his disagreement with Heidegger as seen in the following:

> We must conclude in opposition to Heidegger that death, far from being my peculiar possibility, is a contingent fact which, as such on principle escapes me and originally belongs to my facticity ... . Death is a pure fact as is birth; it comes to us from outside and it transforms us into the outside" (Sartre, 1956: 545).

Thus, it is just one of the absurdities in a world which has no absolute meaning: "It is absurd that we are born; it is absurd that we die" (547).

One of the major reasons contributing to the sense of absurdity is "the decline of religious belief [which] has deprived man of certainties ... [so] it is no longer possible to accept [a] complete closed system of values and revelations of divine purpose" (Esslin 401). The religious doctrines present a system of values and principles guiding man's way of life and conduct. In this generally accepted system of values, everything is clearly defined, and there is a strict line drawn between the right and the wrong, so man's duty is to adopt these values and strictly follow these teachings in order to get the promised reward at the end. However, a person for whom God is dead in Nietzsche's word is devoid of any such luxuries. He is all by

himself in a universe in which there is no God watching over him, punishing the evil and rewarding the good, hearing his prayer and alleviating his suffering, so his is a "painful independence" (Camus, 1955: 79). Thus, in the works of the writers of the Absurd tradition man alone in an indifferent and Godless universe is a recurrent theme. Atheistic existentialists like Sartre and Heidegger are also in agreement with absurdists about God and religion. That is why they believe that there is no absolute meaning in life and that man should create his own meaning and values. Since God does not exist, man is absolutely alone while assigning his own meaning to life and forming his values, which creates "forlornness" in Sartre's word: "When we speak of forlornness, a term Heidegger was fond of, we mean only that God does not exist and that we have to face all the consequences of this" (Sartre, 1957: 21). To Sartre, it is very distressing that God does not exist "because all possibility of finding values in a heaven of ideas disappears along with Him", so "man is forlorn because neither within him nor without does he find anything to cling to" (22). In Heidegger's words, man, in his state of "thrownness," has to bear the whole responsibility of his existence since he has no excuse in a Godless universe. Therefore, for existentialists, as for absurdists, "man ... is thrown into the universe and into desolate isolation" (Kern 169), so he is in exile.

Existentialists also stress the irrationality of the universe and the absurdity and ambiguity of the human condition in the universe. Like absurdists they react against philosophies which claim to work out a total rational understanding of man and the universe. As Bohlmann points out, according to existentialists, one can not "trust reason as a guide to an accurate apprehension of the world. Like the Romantics, existentialists decry reliance on narrow rationalism that employs abstraction"; therefore, "rather than being primary, abstract reasoning is to the existentialist simply something that the self may use as one of its tools in its attempts to achieve its possibilities" (21).

Despite all these common features between the Absurd and Existentialism, it would be wrong to claim that the Absurd is in complete agreement with Existentialism because they differ from each other even though both agree that life is meaningless and purposeless; in Existentialism it is up to man to give meaning and purpose to his life. As Bohlmann points out, for existentialists, "the world is utterly without absolute meaning, and man is left to invent his own personal meaning for his

existence" (14). As stated before, existentialists believe that there is "Nothingness" at the root of being:

> To speak of the 'essence' of a thing is to speak of it as necessarily being as it is, and behaving as it does behave. Conscious beings have no essences. Instead of an essential core they have nothing. Being-in-themselves have no possibilities; or rather, all their possibilities are realized at once at the moment of creation. From then on they behave as they were made to behave ... A conscious being, on the other hand, is aware of his own possibilities, of what he is not, or is not yet. So it comes about that he can pretend to be whatever he likes, and try to be whatever he likes (Warnock 62).

The recognition of nothingness is something liberating, according to existentialists, since man recognizes that he is free to choose what he will make of himself, for he has no ready-made essence. In other words, "this freedom, which brings anguish, springs from our recognition of Nothingness" (Hincliffe 25), and this brings anguish because of the great responsibility it entails. As Bohlmann states,

> Sartre sees the origin of anguish in the feeling of a being which is not responsible for its origin or the origin of the world, but which, because of its dreadful freedom to choose one form of action over another, is responsible for what it makes of its existence"(35).

Moreover, in Existentialism, man is responsible not only for himself but also for others, which adds to the anguish man feels when he makes decisions and puts them into action through which he realizes himself. In Sartre's words, "man being condemned to be free carries the weight of the world on his shoulders; he is responsible for the world and for himself as a way of being" (1957: 52). Besides this, man's radical freedom brings out anguish since he has to make his choices in "an indifferent world which chance has thrown him [into] without any absolute guide to right conduct" (Bohlmann xii). In other words, since there are no objective standards of right and wrong in the irrational and uncertain universe, man must create his own values and make his own moral choices. Therefore, "in the bright realm of values, we have no excuse behind us, nor justification before us. We are alone with no excuses" (Sartre, 1957: 23).

In contrast to existentialists, absurdists believe that the attempt to attach meaning to life is futile, and it is merely an illusion that man should avoid. For example, according to Camus, who always distanced himself from Existentialism, such an attempt is a make-believe, giving the illusion that man is free to mould his life as he likes, but this makes him not free but "the slave of his liberty":

> To the extent to which ... [man] imagined a purpose to his life, he adapted himself to the demands of a purpose to be achieved and became the slave of his liberty. Thus I could not act otherwise than as the father (or the engineer or the leader of a nation, or the office sub-clerk) that I am preparing to be. I think I can choose to be that rather than something else ... . Thus the absurd man realizes that he was never free. To speak clearly, to the extent to which I hope, to which I worry about a truth that might be individual to me, about a way of being or creating, to the extent to which I arrange my life and prove thereby that I accept its having a meaning, I create for myself barriers between which I confine my life (1955: 43).

Thus, for Camus meaning is an illusion that restricts man and prevents him from living life to the full. Unlike an existentialist, the absurd man does not need to look for meaning and significance in life because he knows that this is where the real freedom lies. Then, it can be said that freedom signifies different meanings for existentialists and absurdists. Whereas it is the only way to shape oneself and one's life and to choose one's personal meaning for existentialists, it means liberation from the illusion that one can assign meaning to one's life for absurdists. As Camus says, "Not to believe in the profound meaning of things belongs to the absurd man" (Camus, 1955: 44). This is the way to reach the real freedom because his freedom from illusion commits man passionately to the life in the present, and he embraces life instead of looking for meaning in life. As Camus states, "it was previously a question of finding out whether or not life had to have a meaning to be lived. It now becomes clear, on the contrary, that it will be lived all the better if it has no meaning" (1955: 40). Thus, while freedom of choice is one of the basic tenets of Existentialism, it is a make-believe that should be avoided in the Absurd, for it prevents man from facing his true condition. As seen, while Existentialism also acknowledges the absurdity of the human condition, it differs from the Absurd in its attitude towards and response to this absurdity.

Such writers and dramatists considered to belong to the absurd tradition as Camus, Beckett, Ionesco, Adamov attempt to portray "... [the] sense of the metaphysical anguish at the absurdity of the human condition" (Esslin 24) in their works. Their chief concern is to depict the absurdity of the human condition and man lost and trying to find his way desperately in a world devoid of meaning, sense, and purpose. But what is the aim of these writers and playwrights in displaying the absurdity of the human condition? Why are they so determined to make man face his condition truly? According to the absurd writers and playwrights, man who is ignorant of his true condition is the one who is deprived of human dignity since

"dignity ... comes of awareness" (Esslin 291). For them, modern society is mostly composed of such individuals who lead a mechanical existence by means of illusions and habit, so they lack the sensitivity and lucidity essential for recognizing the absurdity:

> At certain moments of lucidity, the mechanical aspect of their gestures, their meaningless pantomime makes silly everything that surrounds them. A man is talking on the telephone behind a glass partition; you cannot hear him, but you see his incomprehensible dumb show; you wonder why he is alive. This discomfort in the face of one's own inhumanity, this incalculable tumble before the image of what we are, this 'nausea,' as a writer of today calls it, is also the absurd (Camus, 1955: 11).

As Esslin points out, "this is the feeling of the deadness and mechanical senselessness of half-unconscious lives" (291). As a writer who belongs to the absurd tradition, Beckett agrees with Camus in that many people are ignorant of their true condition or evade it through their life composed of a series of habits which gives the illusion of meaning and purpose in life:

> Habit is a compromise effected between the individual and his environment, or between the individual and his own organic eccentricities, the guarantee of a dull inviolability, the lightning-conductor of his existence. Habit is the ballast that chains the dog to his vomit. Breathing is a habit. Life is a habit (1931: 7-8).

As Esslin indicates, Beckett "felt that habit and routine was the cancer of time" (33) since it made people more dead than alive. Thus, habit provides the necessary illusion to go on living without opening one's eyes to the reality. Therefore, in their works absurdist writers and playwrights both satirize people who are habit-bound and attempt to break their illusions, and shock them out of their mechanical existence by making them face their true condition, which is essential for regaining human dignity. Man should go on living not through a series of habits and illusions but in spite of his recognition of the absurdity of his condition.

1.2 Methodology and Limitations

The aim of this study is to analyse the differences between the characterization and the narrative technique as well as the similarities between the themes in the novels by Albert Camus and Samuel Beckett. Albert Camus and Samuel Beckett are undoubtedly among the greatest names of the Absurd literature who played a great role in the recognition of the Absurd as a literary movement. Like

other absurdist writers, their chief concern is to depict the absurdity and ambiguity of the human condition and the irrationality of the universe in their works. However, Camus and Beckett reflect their attitudes and responses to this situation differently because Camus portrays this absurdity and irrationality through a traditional and rationalistic structure whereas in Beckett the form and the content comply with his sense of the irrationality of the human condition, which stems from the difference in their view of literature.

This major difference between the two novelists undoubtedly gives rise to differences in the narrative structure of their novels and in their portrayal of characters although there are significant similarities between the themes recurring in their works. Thus, this thesis will examine the differences in characterization and narrative technique as well as the similarities between the themes in *L'Etranger*, *La Peste*, and *La Chute* by Albert Camus, and the trilogy by Samuel Beckett.

In Chapter 2, before dealing with the differences in characterization and narrative technique, Camus's and Beckett's views of art are discussed in detail. It is essential to clarify the difference between the two authors' views of art because it is the basis of the differences in their characterization and in the narrative technique they employ. After that, the same chapter examines how their views of art characterize their characterization, and discusses the differences in these two issues resulting from this basic distinction.

Chapter 3, on the other hand, dwells on the similarities between the themes of the two authors' novels because both authors belong to the absurd tradition.The common themes in the two writers' novels that Chapter 3 analyzes are the themes of alienation, isolation, and loneliness, the themes of irrationality, God, and death, and lastly the theme of time.

Chapter 4 concludes this study. It first gives a brief summary of the arguments made in the previous chapters. It also mentions the conclusions that are possible to reach in the light of this study.

CHAPTER 2

CAMUS'S AND BECKETT'S VIEWS OF ART

2.1 Camus's View of Art

Camus regards literature as a means of rebelling against life's disunity and formlessness, and the artist as the rebel who rejects this disunity and formlessness through his work. As he states in *The Rebel*,

> Man has an idea of a better world than this. But better does not mean different, it means unified. This passion which lifts the mind above the commonplaces of a dispersed world, from which it nevertheless cannot free itself, is the passion for unity. It does not result in mediocre efforts to escape, however, but in the most obstinate demands. Religion or crime, every human endeavor in fact, finally obeys this unreasonable desire and claims to give life a form it does not have. The same impulse, which can lead to the adoration of the heavens or the destruction of man, also leads to creative literature, which derives its serious content from this source (1956: 262).

Hence Camus's "concise and clear" prose and "tightly [and] symmetrically structured form" (Lazere 21). As Esslin points out, Camus expresses "the new content in the old convention" (xix) since he considers literature a source of unity. In one of his essays titled as "Create Dangerously," Camus expresses his ideas concerning his view of art and the ideal artist quite clearly. In his essay, Camus mentions two different models of writing, both of which he is critical about:

> If [...] [art] adopts itself to what the majority of our society wants, art will be a meaningless recreation. If it blindly rejects that society, if the artist makes up his mind to take refuge in his dream, art will express nothing but a negation. In this way we shall have the production of entertainers or of formal grammarians, and in both cases this leads to an art cut off from living reality (1969: 253).

According to Camus, art should neither "flee reality" as that of artists who adopt the theory of art for art's sake nor "defer to it" like that of 19th century naturalists, "but rather a precise dose of reality the work must take on as ballast to keep from dragging along the ground with weighted boots" (265). Camus also criticises those artists who regard the aim of art as negating everything: "this negation, maintained

so long that it is now rigid, has become artificial too and leads to another sort of sterility". He is against the

> belief that an artist could assert himself only by being against everything in general. But as a result of rejecting everything, even the tradition of his art, the contemporary artist gets the illusion that he is creating his own rule and eventually takes himself for God. At the same time he thinks he can create his reality himself. But, cut off from society, he will create nothing but formal or abstract works. Thrilling experiences but devoid of the fecundity we associate with true art, which is called upon to unite (256-257).

Camus criticises these three groups of artists for the same reason: all are cut off from society, and therefore from reality. To Camus, the artist should always take his source from the reality of society and translate it into a universal language so that it will be accessible to all men in the world eventually. The artist

> has only to translate the sufferings and happiness of all into the language of all and he will be universally understood. As a reward of being absolutely faithful to reality, he will achieve complete communication among men. This ideal of universal communication is indeed ideal of any great artist (257).

Then, if the artist wants his/her work to achieve universal communication, s/he should deal with the reality common to all men:

> The sea, rains, necessity, desire, the struggle against death – these are the things that unite us all. We resemble one another in what we see together, in what we suffer together. Dreams change from individual to individual, but the reality of the world is common to us all. Striving towards realism is therefore legitimate, for it is basically related to artistic adventure (258).

Camus views art as "a revolt against everything fleeting and unfinished in the world" (264). Therefore, to Camus, while art takes its source from this world, it reshapes the reality: "[The artist's] only aim is to give another form to reality that it is nevertheless forced to preserve as the source of its emotion. In this regard, we are all realistic and no one is" (264). In this sense, art both accepts and rejects reality, as "it is simultaneously rejection and acceptance … . The artist constantly lives in such a state of ambiguity, incapable of negating the real and yet eternally bound to question it in its eternally unfinished aspects" (264). Since art is a revolt against the world's disorder, chaos, and irrationality, the artist should give his work a form that will provide the fictional world with the order and reason that the real world lacks. "Then every once in a while, a new world appears, different from the everyday world and yet the same, particular but universal" (265). Thus, to Camus, the most suitable form is the "classical" form, for it is the most disciplined one:

> The more undisciplined what … [the artist] must put in order, the stricter will be his rule. … Art lives only on the constraints it imposes on itself; it dies of all others. Conversely, if it does not constrain itself, it indulges in ravings and becomes a slave to mere shadows. The freest art and the most rebellious will be therefore the most classical. … So long as a society and its artists do not accept this long and free effort, so long as they relax in the comfort of amusements or the comfort of conformism, in the games of art for art's sake or the preachings of realistic art, its artists are lost in nihilism and sterility (268).

2.2 Beckett's View of Art

Unlike Camus, Beckett does not have such a concern as compensating for the disunity of the world through literature. The main difference of Beckett`s view of art from that of Camus is that Beckett strongly defends that form and content cannot be separated from each other. As Rabinovitz argues, "a conviction that a literary style must reflect the essence of its subject is at the core of much of Beckett's writing"(4). In his work on Proust, where he states his ideas on such concepts as time, habit, memory and on art, Beckett expresses his agreement with Proust in that form and content are inseparable from each other:

> Proust does not share the superstition that form is nothing and content everything, nor that the ideal masterpiece could only be communicated in a series of absolute and monosyllabic propositions ... . Indeed he makes no attempt to dissociate form from content. The one is a concretion of the other" (1931: 67).

Thus, according to Beckett, there should exist "an integration between the subject matter and the form in which it is expressed" (Esslin xx). As a result, unlike in Camus's work, not only the content but also the form portrays the absurdity and ambiguity of the human condition. As Brienza observes, "instead of looking through the style to a story, as we do for many narratives and most nonfiction, we must stare at the style itself"(5) in Beckett's work. In his study on Joyce's *Work in Progress* Beckett criticises this tendency to regard form as a means through which content is presented:

> Here is the direct expression – pages and pages of it. And if you don't understand it, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is because you are too decadent to receive it. You are not satisfied until form is so strictly divorced from content that you can comprehend the one without bothering to read the other. This rapid skimming and absorption of the scant cream of sense is made possible by what I may call a continuous process of intellectual saliva (1983: 26).

Beckett also states that it is necessary for the artist to use new forms that cooperates with content to depict the chaos:

> What I am saying does not mean that there will henceforth be no form in art. It only means that there will be new form, and that this form will be of such a type that it admits the chaos and does not try to say that the chaos is really something else. … To find a form that accommodates the mess, that is the task of the artist now (1961: 23).

In other words, to Beckett, the function of art is not to explain but to portray the chaos: "the notion of art seeking as its end not order or clarity but a depiction of the chaos is a theme that will … be central to Beckett's works" (Ben-Zvi 29).This also explains why Beckett is critical about the realist tradition. According to Beckett, the representation of the world as a unified whole in which there is meaning and order is deception: "[Beckett] believes that the world that the naturalists mirror in their works – the world we know through perception- is a simplification of what the world is really like"(Ben-Zvi 14). Beckett asserts that it is impossible for man to comprehend the world in its totality due to the limitations of human perception. The artist should attempt to reflect this impossibility, not to ignore or cover it by creating an ordered and rational world. As Ben-Zvi indicates, "Beckett admires and is championing work that does not provide answers or explanations, but rather underlines the impossibility of doing so"(30). A work that does not underline this impossibility is a realist work, and this is what gives rise to his theory of "art of failure". According to Beckett,

> the world we know through perception is merely a simplification of the infinitely complex world of undifferentiated sense-data. Moreover, it is subjective simplification, since … [it] compromises not only our five senses, but the whole range of our emotions, which invariably colour perception" (Acheson 97).

Since man's perception is "a subjective simplification," "whatever … [the artist] does express will necessarily be inadequate as a comment on the world's infinite complexity" (Acheson 97). Consequently, Beckett believes that the artist is doomed to failure because as a human being he does not possess "the powers to control and understand reality" (Ben-Zvi 2). Only "an infinitely complex work" would reflect the world's infinite complexity, but "an infinitely complex work could only be written by an author possessed of absolute omniscience and omnipotence" (Acheson 6). In an interview in 1956, Beckett compares himself with Joyce, whom he admires a lot, and the difference between Joyce and him also underlines his view of art and the artist:

> Joyce was a superb manipulator of material – perhaps the greatest. He was making words do the absolute maximum work. There isn't a syllable that's superfluous. The kind of work I do is one in which I'm not the master of any material. He is tending towards omniscience and omnipotence as an artist. I'm working with impotence' ignorance. I don't think impotence has been exploited in the past … I think nowadays, who pays the slightest attention to his experience finds in it the experience of a non-knower, non-can-er … . The type of artist –the Apollonian- is absolutely foreign to me (1956: 3).

So Beckett explicitly announces that he is an artist who "make[s] 'impotence and ignorance' the material of his art" (Acheson 6). The artist is fated to failure because "there is nothing to express, nothing with which to express, nothing from which to express, no power to express, no desire to express, together with the obligation to express" (1965: 32). Then, what the artist should express through his art is his recognition of the impossibility to express as well as his obligation to express due to his responsibility as an artist.

Beckett's view of art also characterizes his work. As seen in his comparison of Joyce with himself, he distances himself from the Apollonian type of artist, who works "with restraint, measure, … lucidity [and] … perfection … . The Apollonian artist can do and know because he is concerned with the completed, the spatial, the physical, the individual" (Dearlove 6). The opposite of the Apollonian artist is the Dionysian, who "is less interested in the creation of final artifacts than in the celebration of the ongoing, the temporal, [and] the immaterial" (Dearlove 6). So, Beckett's dissociation "from Apollonian omniscience and omnipotence implies a concomitant dissociation from completed, knowable, and absolute relations in favor of fluid, unknowable, and uncertain ones" (Dearlove 6).

2.3 Characterization in Camus's Novels

Camus's view of art is reflected in his way of constructing his characters, for he presents them as particular individuals, by providing them with names and surnames, and with families, friends, an occupation, and an authentic social world that they interact with. Thus, he reflects the absurdity of existence in the lives of particular individuals. In other words, he portrays the absurdity in the relationship between the individual and the world because according to him,

> this world is not reasonable, that is all that can be said. But what is absurd is the confrontation of this irrational and the wild longing for clarity whose call echoes in

> the human heart. The absurd depends as much on man as the world. … Absurdity … determines my relationship with life" (1955: 6).

To Camus, "the absurd is essentially a divorce" (23) between man and the world, and that is why he depicts his character in their relationship with life.

Since the aim in realist tradition is to represent life as it is, one of the most important features of realist characterization is to depict characters as particular individuals. As Watt indicates, the realist novel is

> distinguished from other genres and previous forms of fiction by the amount of attention it habitually accords both to the individualization of its characters and to the detailed presentation of their environment (219).

Watt argues that in realistic character-portrayal, "realistic particularity" is greatly important as it makes characters "completely individualized entities" (219). The author portrays his characters as autonomous wholes who can be easily distinguished from others by their physical and psychological characteristics.

Rimmon-Kenan argues that character is "a construct within the abstracted story" which "can be described in terms of a network of character-traits" (59), and one can arrive at the construct "by assembling various character-indicators [the means of characterization] distributed along the text continuum and ... inferring the traits from them." There are various character-indicators that serve to particularize the character by "add[ing] background and solidity, in a sense familiarity to the reader's memory" (Myers 95), and Watt adds that naming is one of the most significant parts of the individualization of the character because it gives the character a social identity: "Proper names have exactly the same function in social life: they are the verbal expressions of the particular identity of each individual person" (219). As Watt observes, "the names should not be "historical names or type names" as "in previous forms of literature" (219). On the contrary, the name of the character should place him/her in "the context of a contemporary life" (220). Camus meets this criterion of realistic character-portrayal because Meursault in *L'Etranger*, Dr. Rieux in *La Peste*, and John-Baptist Clamence in *La Chute* are neither historical nor type names, but the names that give the character a social identity and place them in the contemporary life. Undoubtedly, naming is not adequate on its own to make the character a recognizable individual. "Objective detailing of the character's appearence and actions" (Myers 95), "character's speech" (Rimmon-Kenan 63), and

"objective detailing of the character's environment" (Myers 95) are other important character-indicators used in the process of the particularization of the character in the realist tradition. Through those character-indicators, the character is provided with a particular physical appearence, certain personality traits, an authentic social world, and "a past and future beyond what is specified in the text" (Rimmon-Kenan 32). In the following part, the major characters in Camus's three novels will be examined according to these three means of characterization, frequently used in realistic characterization.

2.3.1 Objective detailing of the character's appearance and actions

First of all, there is no information about the physical appearence of the major characters of the three novels, but there is a great deal of information about their actions, from which one can infer their personal qualities.

Meursault's personal qualities that are considered weird, and that have caused his downfall are demonstrated by his ignorance of the social roles he is expected to play. First, Meursault is presented as a son whose mother has just died, but as stated previously, he fails to perform the necessary rituals, which will be used against him by the prosecutor to expose his "monstrous" nature. The huge gap between how Meursault behaves and what society expects is, thus, hinted at from the very beginning. Meursault is not an ordinary lover either as understood from his attitude towards love. The only kind of love he knows is physical, so he is attracted to Mary and wants her when she smiles a certain way, but when Mary asks him if he loves her, he says he does not. Meursault does not fit into the portrait of a young man who is expected to be eager for success and career. Far from being eager, he even refuses to be transferred to the office in Paris, which would be considered a very big opportunity by most people. As his boss observes, he is a talented young man, and has a potential for success, but he lacks the necessary ambition for this, which is very unusual in a competitive society. Lastly, Meursault is also an extraordinary defendant, for he reveals no sign of regret, does nothing to defend himself, and refuses to tell lies to save himself. Thus, the fact that Meursault is a misfit who needs to be discarded by the society is displayed by his failure to act in accordance with the norms of the society.

In *L'Etranger*, Camus's aim seems to portray the conflict between the absurd man and the society, whereas in *La Peste*, Camus attempts to voice his belief in the solidarity of men against the absurd. Therefore, he depicts a philanthropic character who tries to promote solidarity among men against an epidemic symbolizing the absurdity of the human condition. Dr. Rieux's philanthropic personality is revealed by the great effort he shows during the epidemic to help and alleviate people's pain and suffering. He cannot bear to see people suffering, and he is ready to sacrifice anything he has to help them. Unlike Meursault, who thinks that everybody will die one day, and that it is pointless to postpone it, Dr. Rieux believes that one must do anything to prolong one's own and others' lives because it is the only way to rebel against man's mortality, which renders the human condition irrational. On the other hand, he does not consider himself a saint-like person or a hero, as he thinks that it is man's duty to help others. For example, when Rambert implicitly accuses him of "playing the hero" (150), he replies, "there is no question of heroism in all this. It's a matter of common decency. That's an idea which may make some people smile, but the only means of fighting a plague is common decency" (151).

Similar to Meursault, Dr. Rieux does not believe in a transcendental order either because of his awareness of the absurd. In other words, when he states that they should face the existence of the plague squarely and struggle against it together without expecting any help from a divine power, he speaks for Camus's "total rejection of all the abstractions [such as religion or ideology] that man has been asked to serve in the attempt to escape the ultimate absurdity of man in his world" (1).

As Lazere points out, *La Chute* is Camus's least conventional novel in form (46), but still Clamence appears to be a recognizable character with features that add solidity and particularity such as an authentic name, an occupation, a certain style of speech, and he is placed in a recognizable setting. As argued previously, Clamence's self-discovery is initiated by his failure to save a girl from drowning, which is the turning-point of his life because it has cast doubt on all his past actions, and initiated his fall from self-esteem and superiority. His narration of his previous actions sheds light on the gradual process of his self-discovery and how he has arrived at his present profession.

The motive behind his present action of telling strangers his life story is his attempt to impose on his listeners the same self-doubt and sense of guilt so that he will be the judge and "regain ... the summit from which he once dominated, and again feel ... his God-like nature, through his ability to enslave others through their feelings of guilt" (Vines 5). However, he is doomed to repeating his action to keep his position at the summit, which makes his victory short-lived.

2.3.2 Character's speech

As Rimmon-Kenan points out, "a character's speech, whether in conversation or as a silent activity of the mind, can be indicative of a trait or traits through its content and through its form" (63). A character's speech can reveal "the social aspect of a character" such as his/her "origin, dwelling place, social class or profession," or it can suggest his/her "relatively stable or abiding personal qualit[ies]" (Rimmon-Kenan 64-65). Moreover, Walder argues that "constructing ... individual styles of speech for [characters]" is one of the main means of "articulat[ing] social attitudes, views of the world and themselves"(41).

Through both its form and its content, Meursault's speech is, first of all, indicative of his reserved personality. For instance, he usually keeps silent and talks when people direct him questions. Furthermore, he always uses short sentences and rarely asks questions, which cuts the dialogue quite short. Therefore, people describe him as "taciturn and withdrawn"(66). This reveals a significant aspect of his personality: he has the naive honesty of a child, which can be observed in his refusal to tell lies. To illustrate, when his lawyer asks him "if [he] could say that [he]'d controlled [his] natural feelings" in his mother's funeral, he says, "no because it's not true"(65). So, he is ignorant of the fact that he needs to be a hypocrite and tell lies when society's arbitrary rules and rituals require this, which will cause his death in the end. Even in critical moments in the court, such as when the judge asks him if he has something to say after the declaration of his death sentence, he does not attempt to defend himself in the way the society expects him to do.

Meursault's speech also reveals his sensual nature. It is striking that whereas one is in the dark as to his emotions and feelings, one learns quite a lot about his sensory experience. His speech is loaded with images and sensations, which bears

witness to the pervasiveness of the present" (Sprintzen 25). For example, one does not know what effect his mother's death has on him. Instead, Meursault reports that he very much liked the white coffee offered to him, that he appreciated the mild sun and the warm country weather in the morning, and that the dazzling sun in the afternoon blinded his senses. As Sprintzen observes, "they are the spontaneous responses to sensuous qualities and reflect little if any conceptual interpretation or social propriety" (24). The reader does not get access to his feelings and emotions because Meursault himself is unable to "interpret his experience or give it a significance beyond what is immediately present to the senses. ... [He] resides in ... [the] present rich with sensations" (Sprintzen 24). Lazere argues that Meursault has a "purely sensory consciousness," and "it is a strain for Meursault's purely sensory consciousness, absorbed in the distinct sensations of the moment, to abstract sense impressions into words and syntactical order" (59), which might be another reason for his failure to conform to social conventions. Social conventions involve abstract concepts such as respect, gratitude, love, loyalty, commitment that are completely beyond Meursault's comprehension, for they have no physical reality. Hence, "no hierarchies of value is recognized." (Sprintzen 26). As Sprintzen observes, "events happen and [Meursault] responds" (25) without interpreting or attributing significance to them.

In *La Peste,* because Rieux is both the narrator and the main character of the novel, he is given two different voices. As the narrator, Rieux announces his intention to be "a historian" and write a chronicle of the events, which requires a highly objective discourse, as he himself states at the beginning:

> Naturally, a historian, even an amateur, always has data, personal or at second hand to guide him. The present narrator has three kinds of data: first, what he saw himself; secondly, the accounts of other eyewitnesses … ; and, lastly, documents that subsequently came into his hands. He proposes to draw on these rapports whenever this seems desirable, and to employ them as he thinks best. (6).

Therefore, his language is straightforward and plain, complying with Camus' conviction that art should be accessible to all men. Besides, as Shyrock points out, "Rieux tries to avoid… [a discourse] filled with the pathetic, the spectacular and the heroic" (2), for he attempts to report the events with the same objectivity as that of a historian just like in chronicles. The reason behind his attempt to avoid such a discourse may be that he does not want their struggle to seem heroic, because it has

nothing to do with heroism, but with man's duty. When Rieux's speech as a character is examined, one finds the same effort to be as straightforward as possible and to avoid "abstractions" in his language, which he defines as "a divorce from reality" (81). Using the language of abstraction means "comprimis[ing] with the truth" (11). Rieux speaks for Camus because, as Lazere points out, Camus "In *The Myth* [regards] language… [as] a means of rebellion against total meaninglessness" (68). Camus is against those who use language to manipulate, oppress or judge others. Man should use language to achieve communication with his fellow men since it is essential to attain solidarity: "Yes, what it is necessary to combat today is fear and silence, and with them the separation of minds and souls that they entail. What it is necessary to defend is the dialogue and universal communication between men. Servitude, injustice, falsehood are the scourges that shatter communication and forbid the dialogue" (1965: 18). Tarrou also voices the same idea in *La Peste*: " 'I'd come to realize that all our troubles spring from our failure to use plain, clean-cut language" (230).

In contrast to Meursault, who uses "language as a simple means of direct and honest communication," and Dr. Rieux, who believes in "the necessity of facing the facts by means of language which is clear, truthful and unequivocal" (Masters 126), Clamence uses a refined and elegant language as he admits: "Ah, I see you smile at that use of the subjunctive. I confess my weakness for that mood and for fine speech in general" (5). In *La Chute* Camus makes Clamence use quite a different language from his previous characters because "*The Fall* is also a protest against the misuse of language" (Masters 126). Lazere argues that according to Camus,

> The man who feels obliged to justify his motivations must explain, interpret and evaluate his actions. And his need to justify himself is inextricably connected with the need to condemn those whose actions contradict his own values, to attribute evil motivations to them. It follows naturally that Camus should… identify verbosity with those who have an obsession to justify and judge… and taciturnity with those like Meursault who are indifferent to judgments of innocence and guilt (60).

And, Camus's own words support Lazere's argument since he says: "the innocent is the person who explains nothing" (1963: 71).

Clamence uses language to entrap his listener by making him recognize himself in the mirror Clamence holds. As Lazere observes, "an unremitting battery of words is the first weapon he uses to cow his victim. He is fluent, never at a loss for words" (119) as a lawyer, but while previously he used "his mastery of language for

the salvation of others," he now uses it "for their destruction" (Lazere 118). Clamence's language also reveals a very important thing about him. Lazere states that, to Camus, "if absurdist despair neither ends in suicide nor is surpassed it runs the danger of turning into a pleasure-giving pose in which 'the absurd, which claims to express man in his solitude really makes him live in front of a mirror'" (141). Camus calls a person living in front of a mirror "the dandyish rebel," "who can only be sure of his existence by finding it in the expression of other's faces. Other people are his mirror" (1956: 51). Clamence, being a "dandyish rebel," also has to see himself in others by inflecting on them the same sense of guilt as he feels, and thus seeing the image of his own self-justification and he achieves this through his mastery of language.

Moreover, Clamence's language reveals him to be an educated and intellectual man, which also serves a certain purpose. According to Lazere, it contributes to Camus's criticism of Western civilization because "in the unsavory character of Clamence, who represents the humanistically educated, cultivated European, he is calling into the question the whole cultural tradition of western civilization. Like *Heart of Darkness*, it expresses the bestiality underneath Europe's veneer of refinement" (186), by revealing the duplicity of man's basic nature.

2.3.3 Objective Detailing of the Character's Environment

Placing the character in a recognizable and contemporary setting is quite significant, for it adds to the credibility and the particularity of the character. The setting of *L'Etranger* is realistic because when Meursault describes his environment he gives many details, which make it possible for the reader to visualize it as observed in his description of his flat:

> After lunch I was a bit bored and I wandered around the flat. It was just right when mother was here. But now it is too big for me and I had to move the dining room table into my bedroom. I live in just this one room now, with some rather saggy cane chairs, a wardrobe with a mirror that's gone yellow, a dressing table and a brass bed. The rest is in a mess. (25)

Also, he describes one of the typical Sundays in minute detail, which reinforces the reality effect by its specificity. To illustrate, in his description, the inhabitants of his neighborhood seem quite familiar and life-like to one:

> My room looks out onto the main street of the suburb. It was a beautiful afternoon. Yet the pavements were grimy, and the few people that were about were all in a hurry. First of all it was families out for a walk, two little boys in sailor suits with the trousers below their knees looking a bit cramped in their stiff clothes, and a little girl with a big pink ball and black patent leather shoes. Behind them the mother, an enormous woman with a brown silk dress, and the father, a small, rather frail man whom I know by sight. He was wearing a straw hat and a bowtie and carrying a walking stick. Seeing him with his wife, I understood why local people said he was distinguished. A bit later the local lads went by, hair greased back, red ties, tight fitting jackets with embroidered handkerchiefs in their top pockets and square-toed shoes. I though they must be heading for the cinemas in the town center. That was why they were leaving so early and hurrying to catch a tram, laughing noisily as they went (25-26).

All these details about Meursault's environment convey the sense of monotony and man's inclination to build up habits. The routine into which man imprisons himself to screen away from the sense of absurdity that Camus expresses in L*e Mythe* is depicted quite graphically in Meursault's description.

Dr. Rieux is also placed in an authentic social environment because the city where he lives is portrayed as a typical bourgeois city in which people's "chief interest is in commerce and their chief aim in life is, as they call it, 'doing business'" (4). In such a society, it is quite natural for people to be individualist and hold their comfort and interest above anything else. It is a city where "social unrest is quite unknown among us," (5) because the Oran people are highly complacent middle class people living in "treeless, glamourless, soulless… Oran [that] ends by seeming restful and, after a while, you go complacently to sleep there" (5). Thus, as Krapp indicates, "even before the outbreak of the epidemic, Oran is a city of the dead." (4). By placing Rieux in a capitalist society, Camus sharply emphasizes Rieux's difference from the majority of this society. Rieux, although his "financial security as a prominent physician would ostensibly qualify him as a bourgeois," (Krapp 5), has a critical attitude towards bourgeoisie. For instance, when Rambert asks him about the sanitary conditions of the Arab population, Rieux asks him if Rambert would be allowed to write a report without distorting the truth. Rambert says no. Rieux replies, "I've no use for statements in which something is kept back … . That's why I shall not furnish information in support of yours" (11). Besides, he charges no fee for the treatment of Joseph Grand, who has "suffered for a long time from a constriction of the aorta… as he [is] poor" (17). Moreover, Dr Rieux, as a humanist, is the first person to take action unlike his colleagues who do not want to acknowledge the

existence of the plague. Thus, Dr Rieux's belief in communal rebellion against all sorts of evil is underlined in his effort to struggle against the plague in a highly individualist society.

There is no doubt that the society has to undergo a process of transformation. At first they do not want to recognize the epidemic, and they try to conduct business as usual. As Krapp states, "they are neither accustomed to nor enamored of anything that disturbs their economic routine. Even public safety is motivated by the preservation of the status quo" (6). But, once the epidemic starts to kill many people, they begin to recognize the necessity of fighting against the plague all together. So "Rieux … successfully promotes solidarity through an experience of shared material conditions" (Krapp 7). Even Rambert, for whom personal happiness is the most important thing in life, is converted into the fight against the plague. Nevertheless, the solidarity attained during the epidemic does not last long. In his 1941-1952 Notebooks, Camus states that the plague "was of no use to anything or anyone. Only those who were touched by death directly or in their families learned something. But the truth they have arrived at concerns only themselves. It has no future" (50). Just after the epidemic dies out, they forget about the plague and the epic of solidarity as the narrator observes:

> Calmly they denied, in the teeth of the evidence, that we had ever known a crazy world in which men were killed off like flies, or that precise savagery, that calculated frenzy of the plague, which instilled an odious freedom as to all that was not the here and now… . In short, they denied that we had ever been that hag-ridden populace a part of which was daily fed into a furnace and went up in oily fumes while the rest in shackled impotence waited their turn (297-98).

In short, they are impatient to return to the "routine whereby they might increase their wealth and comfort" (Krapp 10).

The geographical setting of *La Chute* plays an integral part in the novel because it establishes an atmosphere of entrapment "through the bleak, fog-bound world of Amsterdam" with its "sunless and unsmiling flatland … [and] through the gray labyrinth of its waters" (Blanchot 142), reflecting Clamence's own entrapment, for he is trapped by his obsession with a sense of guilt and judgment. Furthermore, the atmosphere reflects his trapping and preying on his victim by means of his confession. The concentric canals of Amsterdam also enhance the sense of entrapment, as they "resemble the circles of hell" (13). The bar called Mexico City, where the narrative begins, also seems important. It is a sailor's bar and a place

where Clamence most probably feels at ease with himself since nobody is in a position to judge him.

2.4 Beckett's Characterization

Beckett's dissociation from the Apollonian artist and his subsequent identification with the Dioynosian artist is reflected in his characterization because his characters, unlike those of Camus, are incomplete and fluid. In contrast to Camus, he does not portray his characters as particular individuals whose specific character traits are revealed through certain character-indicators. On the contrary, he deconstructs the character-indicators used in realist characterization. Consequently, Beckett's characters are mostly tramps who have no families, friends, occupations, or at times they do not have even a name; in short, they have nothing to enable one to extract them from the text and to discuss them as specıfic individuals. As Rabinovitz argues, "if conventional characterization requires that characters be easily differentiated, Beckett is clearly moving in another direction" (196). In this sense, Beckett's characterization seems to be explained by "the 'purist' argument [which] points out that characters do not exist at all except, insofar as they are a part of the images and events that bear and move them" (Rimmon-Kenan 31). Therefore, it is impossible "to extract them from their context and to discuss them as if they are real human beings" (Rimmon-Kenan 31). This seems exactly to describe the trilogy characters, who embody "the Beckettian Ur-character, a shadow man, presented without physical description or background, placed in an unclear situation, suffering from an ill-defined problem" (Ben-Zvi 35).

Beckett draws his characters in their outlines because he aims to portray "the human condition at its most naked through lives that are stripped to the barest minimum" (Pultar 153). With the reduction of the characters to their essentials, they become transparent in their "anonymity" in Pultar's term. What remains is their consciousness, and this consciousness is not a specific one, but a general one representing man's mind. Hence, Beckett's characters are "degraded and mutated into a consciousness representing the human condition" (Pultar 129).

Then how is characterization in Beckett's trilogy different from characterization in Camus's three novels? Since Beckett frequently deconstructs the

realistic modes of characterization, it seems valid to examine his characterization on the basis of the same four character-indicators in order to display how Beckett deviates from them.

First of all, Beckett's naming his characters is directly related to his view of identity as something fluid and perpetually changing through time, so "in many works Beckett tries to erode the sense of a fixed identity that accompanies the naming of characters" (Rabinovitz 201). Beckett uses certain techniques to deconstruct the realistic naming such as giving his characters unrealistic names or changing their names in the course of the narrative, as observed in *Trilogy*. To illustrate, in *Molloy*, Sophie, the widow looking after Molloy for some time without his consent, is renamed Lousse. In *Malone Dies*, Malone names the main character of his first story Sapo, who is renamed Macmann in his second story. Also, the Unnamable changes his character's name three times. He first names his character Basil, who is renamed Mahood and Worm in his second and third stories respectively. In realist characterization, a name stands for a fixed identity, so by changing the characters' names, Beckett exposes the realistic fallacy of fixed identity. Rabinovitz also mentions another technique that Beckett uses in the *Trilogy*: "In some instances, Beckett uses the alliteration in a series of names – Molloy, Moran, Malone, Macmann – to undercut the sense of their realism" (Rabinovitz 201). Besides, the letter *M* is also suggestive, for it recalls the word "man," which may imply that these characters are prototypes representing the human condition.

2.4.1 **Objective Detailing of the Character's Appearance and Actions**

In realist characterization a detailed description of the characters' physical appearence plays a very significant role in specifying them as particular individuals. This is one of the conventions of realist characterization subverted by Beckett in his trilogy since Beckett deliberately reveals very little about the physical appearence of his characters. For instance, Molloy is an old man who is partly paralyzed and confined to bed. In his retrospective tale, one is told that he was a tramp with crutches, for he was lame in one leg. One also learns that he smelt very bad and wore rags. One witnesses his gradual physical disintegration and how he has arrived at his present condition. The information about his appearance is just enough to have a

very general picture of Molloy. When one tries to visualize him, one can only imagine an old and decreipt man in rags. Moran's physical features are not described in detail either. However, one knows that he is a typical middle-class man paying attention to propriety. But, due to his physical decomposition, accompanying his psychological transformation, he becomes unrecognizable to the extent that neither his sex nor his age is clear. Towards the end of his journey, when he looks at his image in the water, what he sees is the image of a stranger: "little by little, a face with holes for the eyes and mouth and other wounds, and nothing to show if it was a man's face or a woman's face, a young face or an old face"(149). From a middle-class man, Moran turns into "a shadow man."

Like his predecessors, Malone is not depicted as a recognizable character. He is a very old man probably in his eighties, and he is bedridden. His physical conditions are much worse than that of Molloy and Moran because he is completely paralyzed, and he feels that he is very close to death. The reader also learns that he has no tooth, but has a lot of hair and a thick beard. However, he is not as unrecognizable as the Unnamable, who is extremely deformed and dehumanized as observed in his description of himself:

> I am truly bathed in tears. They gather in my beard … - no, no beard, no hair either, it is a great smooth ball I carry on my shoulders, featureless, but for the eyes of which only the sockets remain. And were it not for the distant testimony of my palms, my soles … I would gladly give myself the shape, if not consistency, of an egg, with two holes no matter where to prevent it from bursting … . In the matter of clothes then I can think of nothing for the moment but possibly puttees, with perhaps a few rags clinging to me here and there. No more obscenities either. Why should I have sex, who have no longer a nose? All those things have fallen, all the things that stick out, with my eyes, my hair, without leaving a trace (307).

Thus, beginning with Moran, the characters are more and more generalized because the narrative in the trilogy gradually moves form "description of events in the outer world to mental events, a transition that narrows down the range of what the hero can experience. As their ability to participate actively in the physical world declines, Beckett's narrators focus more and more on inner activities" (Rabinovitz 79), and finally the Unnamable is presented as a being "personifying a mere consciousness" (Pultar 132).

When the actions of the trilogy characters are examined, it is seen that they are similar in nature since they are all involved in a quest, which ends in failure, symbolizing the futility of action. Besides, all the three characters feel an inner

obligation to go on with what they are doing although they are aware of their inevitable failure. Moreover, the source of this obligation is anonymous even to themselves. For instance, Molloy feels obliged to search for his mother, but he does not know why he feels so, and Moran does not know why he feels an obligation to look for Molloy: "for what I was doing I was doing neither for Molloy, who mattered nothing to me, nor for myself, of whom I despaired, but on behalf of a cause which, while having need of us to be accomplished, was in its essence anonymous" (115). The Unnamable is in a similar situation as he admits:

> What I say, what I shall say, if I can, relates to the place where I am, to me who am there, in spite of my inability to think of these, or to speak of them, because of the compulsion I am under to speak of them (303-04).

The motives behind their quests are unknown even to themselves because as Rabinovitz puts forward,

> Beckett seldom has much to tell about his characters' motives. Such omissions are based on his idea that we can never identify, except in superficial ways, the underlying elements of our own volitional processes. If we were truthful about how little we knew about even our simplest choices, we would be forced to admit that discussions of motivation are mainly based on conjecture. Hence, Beckett often introduces mysterious voices when he describes motivation and either satirizes omniscient narrators or avoids using them entirely (203).

Thus, the realist view of man as a rational being and his actions as motivated and explicable through cause and effect relationship is refuted by the trilogy characters.

2.4.2 Character's Speech

Since Beckett's characters are deliberately drawn as generalized characters, their speeches have the function of not individualizing but generalizing them by means of recurring words and phrases in their speeches. One feels as if it were the same voice speaking in all the three volumes since their speeches portray the same puzzled, frustrated but determined men in search of comprehending the world and themselves through their narratives. For example, all the trilogy characters vacillate between hope and despair concerning the completion of their quests. Rabinovitz asserts that "these characters can be linked when they set out with the same naïve belief: that with a little more effort their quests will have ended" (76). All of them express their belief in progress and hope to move forward in their quests, just to

contradict themselves by sinking into despair, but they are not late to rekindle their hope afterwards. Molloy, for example, expresses his hope through these words: “this time, then once more I think, then perhaps a last time, then I think it will be over, with that world too” (8). However, feeling frustrated he says, “no, I can’t do it” (12). Moran also frequently expresses his hope to progress faster: “I shall go faster, all will go faster” (240), but he also frequently falls into despair about the completion of his narrative: “Stories, stories. I have not been able to tell them. I shall not be able to tell this one” (138). And, Malone continuously tells himself to “go on” in order to encourage himself, but he has the same trouble with his stories, for he frequently interrupts them and repeats such phrases as “no, that won’t do” (190) and “no, I can’t do it” (196). Like others, the Unnamable tries to keep his hope alive, and says, “that helps you forward, I believe in progress” (163), but he also feels “unable to go any further, in any case” (98).

The speeches of the trilogy characters also reflect their continuous struggle to comprehend the world, achieve a unified self, and their consciousness of their inevitable failure. In the trilogy, writing is presented as a tool for giving order to one’s world and thus achieving one’s authentic self. In this sense, the trilogy characters represent the Dionysian artist who does not have “the power to control and understand reality” and who works with “impotence” and ignorance” because of man’s limited perception as discussed in the previous chapter. However, their speeches also disclose another reason for their inevitable failure: the limitations of language. It is impossible for man to comprehend everything about the world, but it is against man’s nature to accept it and yield to the irrationality surrounding him. The self may be regarded as a microcosm of the irrational universe. It is not a coherent whole, but fluid, continuously changing through time and fragmented, but man’s search for unity is observed in his relationship with his own self because he continually tries to define himself and is in search of his essence. However, words are adequate neither for the comprehension of the world nor for the attainment of a unified self. So the characters’ awareness of the futility of their attempt at comprehension and a unified self through their narratives because of the limitations of language is reflected in their speech. For them, language becomes a “buzzing” sound, empty and meaningless. To illustrate, Molloy says,

> Even my sense of identity was wrapped in a namelessness often hard to penetrate … . And so on for all the other things which made merry with my senses. Yes even then, when already all was fading, waves and particles, there could be no things but nameless things, no names but thingless names. I say that now, but after all what do I know now about then, now when the icy words hail down upon me, the icy meanings, and the world dies too, foully named. All I know is what the words know, and the dead things, and that makes a handsome little sum, with a beginning, a middle and an end as in the well-built phrase and the long sonata of the dead (31-32).

Besides, when Moran mentions his effort to understand the language of his bees better, he admits that he does so "without having recourse to [his]" (176). For Malone man's language is as incomprehensible as other sounds in the world, so it is impossible to distinguish between them:

> But for a long time now I have been hearing things confusedly. There I go again. What I mean is possibly this, that the noises of the world, so various in themselves and which I used to be so clever at distinguishing from one another, had been dinning at me for so long, always the same old noises, as gradually have merged into a single noise, so that all I heard was one vast continuous buzzing. The volume of sound perceived remained no doubt the same, I had simply lost the faculty of decomposing it. The noises of nature, of mankind and even my own, were all jumbled together in one and the same unbridled gibberish (207).

The Unnamable expresses the same trouble with words which he calls "mean … and needless" (307). He agrees with Malone that he sees no difference between man's language and the sounds of the beasts: "the sounds of beasts, the sounds of men, sounds in the daytime and sounds at night, … all sounds, there is only one, continuous, day and night" (390).

The problem of the trilogy protagonists is their desire and even obsession to capture the reality beyond language. One can know as much as words reveal to one, so it is impossible to go beyond language. Words "can only express the parts of … [reality] that exists through language" (Culik 2), so it is not possible to capture all the reality through language either. Reality beyond language is, thus, always beyond man's reach. The trilogy characters are doomed to failure because they attempt at a domain that the words cannot represent. At this point, it seems necessary to mention Wittgenstein's view of language as it seems very much related to that of Beckett:

> Wittgenstein … marks out limits to language arguing for the existence of a domain about which we cannot speak. He discusses the question of that which we cannot speak. He discusses the question of that which we know when no one asks us about it, but no longer know when we are supposed to give an account of it. … Further, the experience of nothingness cannot be a matter of discursive knowledge or understanding but must be a state of existence. There is of course irony in the

> argument that nothingness or the sublime is signed as an experience outside of representation by the sign-systems of language (Barker 55).

Besides, as Barge argues, the trilogy author-narrators' attempts can be regarded as the desire to reach the "Logos," or the "Word," the source, the origin of everything through art. The realization of this aim would not only give order to their world but also enable them to achieve their authentic self:

> Such a Word could create, in the microcosmic confines of the mind, an imaginative facsimile of a macrocosmic world in which the quest on level one could be completed - a world in which human existential needs could be met and ultimate riddles of being solved. In such an imaginative world as this, the artist/self could fabricate a story of a macrocosmic quest and thus accomplish the completion of the microcosmic quest – the authentication of his own artistic selfhood by means of the creation of art (74).

Beckett's characters seem to aspire to Camus's view of the ideal artist who writes in order to achieve order and unity and thus rebel against the world's chaos, and their failure shows the disagreement between the two authors concerning their view of art.

2.4.3 Objective Detailing of the Character's Environment

The settings in *Trilogy* are also completely different from the recognizable and specific settings of Camus's three novels. The settings in *Trilogy* also inform the movement from the outside world to the consciousness of the character. As the character's descent to his consciousness increases, the settings gradually become unrecognizable. The setting early in the second part of *Molloy* is the most recognizable one specified through detailed description, so that one can visualize his bourgeois world. Beckett seems to conform to the realist tradition in terms of Moran's setting. However, Beckett portrays such a recognizable setting just to show how Moran's traditional world crumbles into pieces at the end of the narrative. In the first part of *Molloy*, Molloy's environment is less specified since he wanders around open areas the locations of which are not specified, but still some places such as Lousse's house or the police-station are recognizable. In *Malone Dies*, Malone has no contact with the outside world except what he sees through the windows. Moreover, in contrast to Molloy, who knows that he is in his mother's room in a hospital, Malone does not know where he is. Also, in the course of the novel the room begins to resemble a skull, which may be regarded as the symbol of his descent

into his consciousness. The setting of *The Unnamable* is the most unrecognizable one since neither space nor time has been specified, but from his descriptions one has the impression that he is within a head. The setting is entirely unrecognizable because unlike Malone, whose contact with the outside world has not been cut off completely, the Unnamable is completely withdrawn from the outside world and is confined to his consciousness.

The question of character development in Camus's and Beckett's novels is also important to consider because there is a remarkable difference between them in terms of character development, which can be related to their views of art. In realist characterization, the character may or may not develop in the course of the action as Rimmon-Kenan indicates: "Allegorical figures, caricatures, and types are not only simple but also static," (49) so they do not show any development. "At the opposite pole there are fully developed characters. … The development is sometimes fully traced in the text or implied by it"(41-42). Meursault in *L'Etranger*, Dr. Rieux in *La Peste*, and Clamence in *La Chute* belong to the second group because as in real life, their experiences influence them and change some aspects of their personality, which contributes a lot to their credibility and individualization. For example, Meursault is totally ignorant of society's judgment, for judgment is a concept beyond his comprehension. He regards all the ways of living as the same, for he is free from society's arbitrary rules and values. However, "after he shoots an Arab in a moment of sun-blinded confusion, … he learns the full extent of society's compulsion to judge" (Lazere 33). Besides this, in his reaction towards the priest, who insists on convincing him of turning to God before the execution, the change taking place in his attitudes becomes noticeable. This burst of anger is against not only the priest but also the society that condemns him, for he has not conformed to its rules and rituals. Before the murder, Meursault does not have a defiant attitude towards society; he is simply ignorant of its norms and values. However, as observed in his reaction, he is no longer ignorant of them. He refuses to play the game the rules of which he has now learned, and chooses death rather than conformity. At the end, "Meursault goes to the guillotine impassively, content that death will provide an escape from the spurious world of society's judgment" (Lazere 36). Nevertheless, this does not mean that Meursault's appreciation of life's value has come to an end. As Lazere argues, "Meursault's willingness to die … stems from his social revolt and thus does not

entail any metaphysical denial of life's value" (55). In *La Peste*, Dr. Rieux also recognizes some facts that he has not been aware of. Throughout the narrative, he struggles hard to promote solidarity among the Oran people, and he manages to make the higly self-centered Oranians aware of the fact that everybody is "in the same boat." Nevertheless, he recognizes he has been mistaken in his belief that the sense of solidarity will survive because after the epidemic dies out, he sees that nothing has really changed. The Oran people return to their old complacent lives. It is not valid to claim that Dr. Rieux's idealistic nature has changed as a result of his recognition, but one can argue that he has gained a much deeper view of man's nature because he has learned that man is inclined to deny the cruelty of the human condition and hide himself in his illusory world governed by habit. However, neither Meursault nor Dr. Rieux has changed as much as Clamence. As discussed earlier, as a result of his failure to save a drowning girl, the process of Clamence's development begins, and he ends as a bitter man full of sense of guilt and obsessed with judgment.

In contrast to Camus's characters, Beckett's characters, except Moran, remain the same, for Beckett's aim is not to create particular individuals but to depict generalized characters representing the human condition, and in this sense, his characters are prototypes. Only Moran can be regarded as an individualized character in his specificity but as shown previously, he has also turned into a prototype since his distinguishing features disappear in the course of the narrative. Then his development is a development towards anonymity. Except for Moran, none of the trilogy characters displays any development. They all begin their narratives with a vacillation between the determination to go on searching for clarity and unity and their consciousness of its futility. Throughout their narratives, their vacillation between hope and despair goes on, and the narratives end with the same unresolved conflict between their struggle for meaning and their sense of failure. Thus, they represent man's deep down awareness of the sense of absurdity and futility, but this does not stop man from looking for meaning and order in life, and this conflict between his desire for order and clarity and world's irrationality goes on until his death. However this ongoing conflict which makes man suffer is also what enables man to go on.

2.5 Narrative Technique

2.5.1 Narrative Technique in Camus's Novels

The narrator is one of the most essential devices of narrative composition since he "functions as the mediator between the author and the reader and between the story and the reader" (Stanzel 13). Therefore, a proper understanding of the narrator's relationship with characters and with the reader is crucial to the reader's understanding of the narrative. Stanzel mentions three narrative situations, "person," "perspective," and "mode," which determine these relationships and the reader's attitude towards the narrator and the narrative. "Person" explains the type of "the relations between the narrator and the fictional characters" (Stanzel 48). If the narrator "belongs totally to the fictional realm of the characters of the novel" (4), it is a "first-person narrative situation" (4). On the other hand, in the authorial or third-person narrative situation, the narrator "is outside the world of characters" (5). "Perspective" is related to point of view, that is, the standpoint from which an event is narrated:

> The manner of this perception depends especially on whether the point of view according to which the narration is oriented is located in the story, in the protagonist or in the center of action, in a narrator who does not belong to the world of the characters or who is merely a subordinate figure, perhaps a first-person narration in the role of observer or a contemporary of the hero. In this way an internal and external perspective can be differentiated" (49).

Lastly, Stanzel defines mode as "the sum of all possible variations of the narrative forms between the two poles, narrator and reflector" (48). Stanzel argues that a reflector, or a focalizer in Rimmon-Kenan's word, belongs to "the figural narrative situation" in which the narrator

> is replaced by a reflector: a character in the novel who thinks, feels and perceives but does not speak to the reader like a narrator. The reader looks at the other characters through the eyes of this reflector-character. Since nobody 'narrates' in this case, the presentation seems to be direct (5).

Stanzel also adds that a narrator "is always aware that he is narrating, while the reflector-characters are never aware that their experiences, perceptions and feelings are the subject of a process of communication" (147); therefore, it creates an illusion "that [the reader] is witnessing the action directly" (147). However, sometimes it is hard to decide "whether the process of transmission is determined by a teller-

character [the narrator] or a reflector-character" (Stanzel 148). One can observe such an ambiguity concerning the role of Meursallt in *L'Etranger*. Chaitin argues that "*L'Etranger* follows the journal (diary) format from start to finish" (133), and this is exactly what produces the ambiguity. The writer of a diary records his/her experiences, observations, and impressions as Meursault does in the novel, and s/he does not have the aim of communicating them to the reader. Consequently, as observed in the manner in which Meursault relates most of his experiences, the presentation seems to be direct. For example, the manner in which Meursault relates his mother's death evokes the sense that he is writing an entry in his diary. The sentences are quite short, and there are no subordinate or coordinate conjunctions since his aim is not to communicate these events to the reader. Besides, the time of narration confirms Chaitin's argument because Meursault recounts the events just after they have taken place. Chaitin disagrees with critics claiming that it is a retrospective narrative since they think that "the entire narrative is affected from the vantage point of Meursault's new understanding of his life" (129). For instance, the first sentence of the narrative shows that Meursault has recorded the death of his mother on the day he has received the telegram informing him of her death. In addition, such sentences as "today's a Saturday" (23) and "I worked hard at the office today" (29) tell the reader that Meursault is writing this entry in his diary on the day that these events have taken place, and proves that he has not written his narrative during his imprisonment. Then, one tends to think that since the narrative is in the diary format, Meursault must be classified as a reflector-character in accordance with Stanzel's theory. However, the ambiguity begins when he speaks in a manner as if he was giving information to the reader about some characters like a narrator. For example, in Part I Chapter III, he seems to be a narrator presenting the characters when he talks about Salamano and his dog:

> On my way upstairs...I bumped into old Salamano, my next-door neighbour. He had his dog with him. They have been together for eight years. The spaniel has got a skin disease range. I think…. After living for so long, the two of them alone together in one tiny room, Salamano has ended up by looking like the dog. He's got reddish scabs on his face and his hair is thin and yellow. And the dog has developed something of its master's walk, all hunched up with its neck stretched forward and its nose sticking out (30-31).

Moreover, he sometimes describes the setting and assumes the role of a narrator: "My room looks out onto the main street of the suburb" (25). Such sentences seem

out of place for a diary entry because there is no need to identify the characters or describe the setting in a diary. Then, it is ambiguous whether Meursault is a reflector-character or a narrator. However, it can also be argued that Meursault may have included such passages in his diary, thinking that it might be read by somebody in the future because even in the most private writings one has a potential reader in one's mind. That may be the reason for the ambiguity concerning the role of Meursault in the narrative. In this sense, Meursault can be considered both a reflector-character and a first-person narrator.

It is important to specify the time of the narrative correctly because its misunderstanding can change the whole meaning of the novel. As Chaiting points out, some critics regard *L'Etranger* as a trial novel because they consider it a retrospective narrative. In trial novels, there is the use of "retrospective narration in which the hero reviews, evaluates and interprets his past life from the new-found perspective attained through some radical change in circumstances" (127). But, as indicated, *L'Etranger* is not a retrospective narrative, so Meursault cannot have written his narrative in prison under the light of his new understanding. It is correct that Meursault has changed and arrived at a new understanding as discussed in Chapter II, but he reflects on the events just after they have occurred, so the reader witnesses his gradual change.

The time of narration is also important in terms of the defamiliarization effect that Camus attempts to achieve in *L'Etranger*. Defamiliarization is a term first used by the Russian formalist Schlovsky. Through defamiliarization, the author "renew[s] our perception of what lies around us" (Martin 47). As Stanzel puts forward, defamiliarization

> can be attained by concentrating on the point of view of characters from the fringes of society. The number of outsiders, of outcasts and déclassès who are entrusted with this function in the modern novel - … Meursault in Camus's *The Stranger* (*L'Etranger*) – is remarkably large. In all these cases it is precisely the complete shift of the point of view into an outsider which produces the estrangement by causing the reader to see a reality which is familiar to him with entirely 'other eyes' (Stanzel 10).

At this point, it seems necessary to mention the role of focalization in achieving the defamiliarization effect in *L'Etranger*. Focalization, in Rimmon-Kenan's words, is the "'prism', 'perspective', 'angle of vision'," through which the story is mediated to the reader (71), and it is "verbalized by the narrator though not necessarily his" (71).

As Rimmon-Kenan underlines, it is necessary to distinguish between "'who sees ...' ... [and] 'who speaks...'" (72) because "speaking" and "seeing" may or may not be attributed to "the same agent;" therefore, the distinction between "narration and focalization ... is a theoretical necessity" (72). Rimmon-Kenan also adds that "narratives ... are not only focalized by someone but also on someone or something. ... In other words, focalization has both a subject and an object. The subject ('the focalizer') is the agent whose perception orients the presentation, whereas the object ('the focalized') is what the focalizer perceives" (74). It is seen that both narration and focalization are attributed to Meursault, and this is exactly how defamiliarization is attained in *L'Etranger*. The reader is presented only what Meursault perceives as a focalizer, and does not know how the same person or event appears to the other characters. Since the reader is limited to Meursault's consciousness, s/he sees everything familiar to him/her "with entirely new eyes." The time of narration also plays a crucial role in achieving defamiliarization because the reader witnesses Meursault's immediate reactions to the events. If Meursault wrote his narrative after he attained a new awareness, the defamiliarization effect would be lost because Meursault would not have his child-like naivety and ignorance any more. However, by means of his immediate reactions, Meursault's naivety and child-like ignorance of social conventions and rules are revealed. From the very beginning, Meursault is presented as "a stranger to our normal feelings and expectations. …We sense a distance" (Sprintzen 23). As Sprintzen states, one feels "scandalized by… [one's] initial encounter with Patrice Meursault" (23). However, Meursault

> does not aim to scandalize or offend. Far from it. He is rather quite unassuming, almost shy. …Expressing an air of naiveté, he often experiences an undercurrent of uneasiness as to what is expected of him. Occasionally he is moved to apologize without quite knowing what he is guilty of (3).

Sprintzen also argues, "stringed of our normal 'conceptual lenses,' we see that world increasingly as arbitrary, capricious, pretentious, even hypocritical" (23-24). In other words, the reader begins to see all these conventions and rules that s/he has internalized with totally new eyes. In this way, Camus makes the reader reconsider these values and norms and exposes their arbitrariness and irrationality. As Sprintzen argues, "by the time of the trial we may even find ourselves tempted, if not actually inclined to side with Meursault against the prosecutor and jurists who inhabit the world that was ours at the beginning of the novel" (24). Besides, the reader

recognizes the unbridgeable gap between society's view of Meursault and his/her own view of Meursault. The reader also realizes how these arbitrary norms and values determine the way one sees others.

The question of the reliability of the narrator is also important for the reader's understanding of the narrative. Rimmon-Kenan describes a reliable and an unreliable narrator as such: "a reliable narrator is one whose rendering of the story and commentary on it the reader is supposed to take as an authoritative account of the fictional truth. An unreliable narrator, on the other hand, is one whose renderings of the story and/or commentary on it the reader has reasons to suspect" (100). According to Rimmon-Kenan, "the narrator's limited knowledge, his personal involvement, and his problematic value-scheme" are "the main sources of unreliability" (100). Meursault, as a narrator, seems to have all the criteria of unreliability. However, Meursault is out of the domain of reliability and unreliability because through the narrative he never judges anyone and "he simply refuses to add on to the phenomena any broad meanings not justified by the facts of his experience" (Chaitin 128). Besides, as Schofer indicates, Meursault is "capable of observing, understanding, and inferring causes" (140), and Schofer illustrates this point by Meursault's observations and commentaries about people and their activities on a Sunday afternoon: "Not only does [Meursault] demonstrate that he has an acute sense of the smallest details, but he also deduces what the people are doing, and where they are going" (140). But, as Schofer states, Meursault's conclusions and commentaries are based on facts: "Sometimes Meursault does put together cause and effect, but after the fact" (141). In order to evaluate a narrator as reliable or unreliable, there should be subjective statements made by the narrator, but Meursault makes no such statements. He does not attribute any meaning to something if it is not based on facts. That is why he is outside the domain of reliability or unreliability as a narrator.

In contrast to *L'Etranger*, *La Peste* is a retrospective narrative since the narrator, who is revealed as Dr. Rieux towards the end of the narrative, writes his journal after everything is over. So, his vantage point is different from that of Meursault, and there exists such a difference in order to provide the narrator with the necessary emotional detachment with which he narrates the events. Retrospective narration provides him with detachment because before he reports the events, he has

time to reflect on them and to look back to them from a distance. As he himself explains, "he expressly made a point of adopting the tone of an impartial observer" (271) because his aim is to portray the collective revolt of the Oran people against the injustice of their condition. Although Dr. Rieux is one of those who has the most direct contact with the plague, he avoids reflecting his emotional involvement because "in the community of anonymous misery, it would be unsuitable to invoke the intimacy of one's own recollections (141). His using third person point of view also serves the attempt to achieve emotional distance. Besides, he conceals his identity from the reader till the end to conjure up the sense of credibility in the mind of the reader. At the very beginning he introduces himself as a narrator whose narration is motivated by objectivity, and who is determined to tell the truth: "[A narrator's] business is only to say: 'This is what happened,' when he knows that it actually did happen, that it closely affected the life of a whole populace, and that there are thousands of eyewitnesses who can appraise in their hearts the truth of what he writes" (6). His aim is to write a "chronicle," so he must have the same impersonality as that of a historian, and must base his narration on data: "naturally, a historian even an amateur, always has data, personal or second hand, to guide him. The present narrator has three kinds of data: first what he saw himself; secondly the accounts of other eyewitnesses…; and lastly, documents that subsequently came into his hands. He proposes to draw on these records whenever this seems desirable and to employ them as he thinks best" (6). Rieux also represents Camus's view of the ideal artist owing to his attempt to avoid reflecting his personal and emotional involvement. As Lazere puts forward, Rieux's "anonymity and objective tone in his chronicle reflect the obligation of the writer to efface his individuality at least part of the time to act as spokesman for the community of muted victims" (174).

Rieux does not let the reader be emotionally involved in the narrative and identify with those suffering as Braun indicates: "Identification with characters is discouraged by the use of clinical or administrative style. It is … an effort to demystify, to deromanticise" (87). Consequently, "the horrifying details are related dispassionately for the most part, and the reader is encouraged to feel that the events described, through ultimate in the horror, are in a way quite ordinary" (Masters 63) as observed in Dr. Rieux's description of the extremely painful death of a rat:

> That evening, when Dr. Rieux was standing in the entrance, feeling for the latch-key in his pocket before starting up the stairs to his apartment he saw a big rat coming toward him from the dark end of the passage. It moved uncertainly and its fur was sopping wet. The animal stopped to be trying to get its balance, moved forward again toward the doctor, halted again, then spun round on itself with a little squeal and fell on its side. Its mouth was slightly open and blood was spurting from it. After gazing at it for a moment, the doctor went upstairs (7-8).

Dr. Rieux's account of the agonies of the patients loaded with medical details carries the same impersonal tone avoiding emotional involvement:

> That evening a neighbour of his old patient in the suburbs started vomiting, pressing his hand to his groin, and running a high fever accompanied by delirium. The ganglia were much bigger than M. Michel's. One of them was beginning to suppurate, and presently split open like an overripe fruit. On returning to his apartment, Rieux rang up the medical stores depot for the district. In his professional diary for the day the only entry way: 'Negative reply.' Already he was receiving calls for similar cases from various part of the town. Obviously the abscesses had to be lanced. Two crisscross strokes, and the ganglion disgorged a mixture of blood and pus. Their limbs stretched out as far as they could manage, the sick man went bleeding Dark patches appeared on their legs and stomachs; sometimes, then suddenly swelled again. Usually the sick man died, in a stretch of corruption" (32-33).

The impersonal style that Dr. Rieux adopts especially when he describes such horrifying scenes is also closely related to "the clear-sighted lucidity which Camus claims is necessary if one is to overcome the Absurd" (Masters 64). He describes such scenes as if they were ordinary in order to give the reader the message that it is simply the human predicament. The reader is supposed to have the same "clear-sighted lucidity" to recognize and face human predicament as squarely as Dr. Rieux does. Focalization also has a very significant role in putting an emotional distance between the reader and the narrative. As in *L'Etranger*, in *La Peste* "seeing" and "speaking" are carried out by the narrator, so the reader sees everything through Dr. Rieux's impersonal and objective perception. Since Dr. Rieux relates even the most tragic scenes in a detached manner, seeing everything through his eyes prevents the reader from identifying with the victims of the plague, which would be impossible to achieve if the focalizers in the passages quoted above were such emotionally involved characters as the relatives of the victims.

The impersonality of the narrator may also be related to the value of moderation inherent in Camus's conception of rebellion. As discussed previously, rebellion is the only proper response to the absurd. The rebel struggles for order

amidst chaos and untity at the very heart of the ephemeral" (1956: 10). Alienation and suffering born out of the absurd are common to all men, so men should rebel against the chaos and injustice collectively. They should be united in their struggle for order and for the elimination of suffering. Existence is valuable despite injustice and suffering, and men should do everything to protect the value of human existence. Besides, according to Camus, the rebel should be ready to take risk in his struggle. However, it does not mean that there are no boundaries to his actions. On the contrary, Camus is in favor of limits since absolute freedom contributes to the evil and injustice that the rebel fights against because it gives way to nihilism and to its claim that "everything is permitted" (57). Therefore, the rebel's actions should be guided by the ethics of moderation; in other words, his actions should never transgress the values he defends. The value of moderation is also reflected in the narrator's impersonal style characterized by moderation. It is seen that Rieux never wants his actions to be considered heroic, for heroism is a concept entailing extreme actions and contributing to the evil and injustice. Dr. Rieux's straight forward and plain narration aiming to achieve comprehensibility is also in accordance with his dislike for such abstract values leading to extreme actions. And, this also reflects Camus' distrust for rhetorical, spectacular, and heroic discourses used for the "obfuscation" (Masters 64), manipulation, and oppression of men. As Lazere argues, "by the time of *The Plague* Camus has become committed to a straight forward literature, having developed an antipathy toward the abuses of linguistic ambiguity" (176), so Rieux, as a narrator, represents Camus's view of the ideal artist whose duty is to avoid such discourses and to be as plain and comprehensible as possible.

The theme of collective revolt against the absurd is also reflected in the technique of Dr. Rieux's "collective narration" in Shyrock's words. Shyrock argues that "the collective action that helps overcome the plaque or reduce its effects is mirrored in the collective narration" (2). The narrator states at the beginning that he will include "the accounts of other eye witnesses … and … documents that subsequently came into his hands" (6) in his narration; and he reports the speeches of Cottard, Father Paneloux, Ramber and Tarrou, and Tarrou contributes to "the collective narration" through not only his speeches but also his journal that Dr. Rieux quotes. The collective narration in *La Peste* is achieved by means of the existence of different narrative levels. In a narrative, there may be "naratives [which] create a

stratification of levels whereby each inner narrative is subordinate to the narrative within which it is embedded" (Rimmon-Kenan 91). Rimmon-Kenan adds that "in this hierarhical structure, the highest level is the one immediately superior to the first narrative and concerned with its narration," namely, "the 'extradiegetic level'" (91). It is at this level that Dr. Rieux relates the events during the epidemic. The other narrative level, "immediately subordinate to the extradiegetic level is the diegetic level narrated by it, that is, the events themselves" (Rimmon-Kenan 91). Then, the events that take place during the epidemic belong to the diegetic level. As Rimmon-Kenan indicates, "the events may include speech-acts of narration – whether oral ... or written," and the narrative level which these "speech acts" belong to is called "the hypodiegetic level" (91). Hence, the narrative level of the speeches of these four characters as well as Cottard's diary quoted by Dr. Rieux is the hypodiegetic level, and this is the level in which "collective narration" is attained. The speeches of those four characters characterize their responses to the epidemic, and each of them embodies a different response to the absurd. For example, Cottard's speeches reveal him to be the antithesis of Camus's concept of the rebel, for he does not fight against the evil and injustice but contributes to them by taking side with the plague. The plague has improved his situation considerably because before the plague, he was extremely lonely and desperate to the extent that he attempted suicide, one of the ways of evading the absurd that Camus rejects in *Le Mythe*. However, the plague provides him with the human company that he was bereft of and also improves his material conditions as he delves into the black market and earns a lot of money. After the plague, he completely changes and becomes an amiable man who enjoys the company of others. He has no wish to leave the town because he has found the happiness and peace he has always longed for as he admits to Rambert: "I've been feeling much more at ease here since plague settled in" (129). Moreover, when Tarrou asks him why he does not join them in the struggle, with "an offended expression" on his face he replies: "It's not my job…what's more the plague suits me quite well and I see no reason why I should bother about trying to stop it" (145). Besides, he thinks that their attempts are in vain because they are doomed to failure: "it won't get you anywhere. The plague has the whip hand of you and there is nothing to be done about it" (144). Cottard is just the opposite of the rebel who never bows down to his fate and struggles against it although he knows he is doomed to

failure. Thus, he embodies the negative response to the absurd since he is resigned to his condition and takes side with the plague.

Father Paneloux embodies another negative response to the absurd; that is, evasion of the absurd through certain illusions such as religion that Camus rejects in *Le Mythe*. As his two sermons reveal, he regards the plague as God's punishment, so his response is characterized by quietism. However, in the course of the narrative especially after the death of a little child, he recognizes the value of struggling against the plague, as his words in his second sermon reveal: "each one of us must be the one who stays!" (185). He joins the sanitary squads that Tarrou organizes and participates actively in the struggle, which is a great change for him. Nevertheless, he dies most probably because he cannot bear to have doubts about divine justice.

Rambert is another character whose response has changed remarkably. As his speeches reveal, for him love is the most important value in life. However, after Tarrou tells him that Dr. Rieux's wife is in a senatorium outside the city, he realizes that for the doctor personal happiness is secondary to the collective happiness. He recognizes that one should take all the risks and should sacrifice his personal happiness when required. Consequently, as he explains to Dr. Rieux, he gives up the idea of escaping from the city and decides to join the sanitary squads: "now that I've seen what I've seen, I know that I belong here whether I want it or not. This business is everyone's business" (188). He realizes that "it may be shameful to be happy by oneself" (188).

Like Dr. Rieux, Tarrou is the embodiment of Camus's vision of the rebel, as his speeches and his entries in his journal indicate. He is the one who organizes the sanitary squads, and by doing so, he puts his own life into risk. He says to Dr. Rieux, "I've drawn up a plan for voluntary groups of helpers. Get me empowered to try out my plan, and then let's sidetrack officialdom" (114-155). When the doctor warns him about the risks of such an undertaking, he replies, "I have no idea what's awaiting me, or what will happen when all this ends. For the moment I know this; there are sick people and they need curing. Later on, perhaps, they'll think things over, and so shall I. But what's wanted now is to make them well. I defend them as best as I can, that's all" (115). As a rebel, he is aware that he should take all the risks to fight against the cruelty of human condition and to achieve justice and order.

The inclusion of different characters' accounts and Tarrou's journal in the narrative also "helps Rieux-narrator to produce the type of narrative discourse that he desires" because it "incorporat[es] an air of credibility to the doctor's account" (Shyrock 2), which is essential to achieve in a "chronicle." Therefore, Dr. Rieux's determination to tell the truth, his impersonal narration, and his report of different characters' accounts reinforce the illusion of reality and also make him a reliable narrator.

La Chute, like *La Peste*, is retrospective narrative, for Clamence, the narrator, is relating the past events of his life. However, different from the two previous novels, the narrateee, "the agent addressed by the narrator," (Rimmon-Kenan 104) plays an important role in the narrative. To Rimmon-Kenan, every text has a narrator and a narratee, and a narratee, like a narrator, is a "constitutive…factor…in narrative communication" (88). Rimmon-Kenan also classifies narratees as "covert" and "overt": "Like narrators , narratees can be either covert or overt. A covert narratee is no more than the silent addressee of the narrator, whereas an overt one can be made perceptible, through the narrator's inferences of his possible answers…, the narrateee's actual answers or comments…, or his actions" (104). In *La Chute*, Clamence is talking to another man whose voice is never heard, but the reader infers his comments from Clamence's own words, so the narratee in *La Chute* is an overt one. Although his voice is never heard, the narratee has an important function in the narrative because for Clamence it is essential to have a listener to make his confessions and to achieve his aim; that is, to restore his sense of superiority as discussed earlier. Also, the fact that the narratee is not particularized and is denied speech has an important aim. In his anonymity, the narratee becomes a transparent figure, so in the course of the narrative the reader feels as if Clamence was addressing to him/her and directs his questions to him/her. Like the narratee, the reader begins to recognize him/herself in the mirror that Clamence holds. Thus, the whole narrative is based on the strategies that the narrator uses in order to trap the narratee and thus the reader.

Suspense is one of the strategies that Clamence uses to ensnare the narratee/reader. As Lazere indicates, "the structure reflects Clamence's entrapment of his listener/reader. By juggling the sequence of the past events he is recounting and by dropping hints of what is to come, he builds up suspense throughout the first

half of the book for the successive, climactic revelations in the second half" (183). Throughout the narrative, he sows the seeds of curiosity in the narratee/reader which grows more and more as Clamence refuses to satisfy this curiosity. For example when he accompanies his listener on the way to his hotel, he does not cross the bridge and explains,

> I never cross a bridge at night. It's because of a vow. Suppose, after all, that someone should jump in the water. One of two things - either you follow suit to fish him out and in cold weather, that's taking a great risk! Or you forsake him there and to suppress a dive sometimes leaves one strangely aching (13).

So, he sows the first seeds of curiosity, and the chase begins. As the narratee inquires of Clamence about that particular night, Clamence deliberately delays disclosing his secret. Whenever the narratee attempts to bring Clamence back to point, he gives such replies as "What? What evening? I'll get to it, be patient with me" (25), or "What? I'm getting to it. Never fear; besides I have never left it" (28). However, he does not tell what happened that night until their fourth meeting. Moreover, he awakens the narratee's/reader's curiosity, through his interesting profession. At the beginning, he introduces himself as a judge-penitent. And the next day, when they meet at the bar again, the first question of the narratee is about Clamence's queer profession. Clamence replies,

> What is a judge-penitent? Ah, I intrigued you with that little matter. I meant no harm by it, believe me, and I can explain myself more clearly. In a matter of speaking it's really one of my official duties. But first I must set forth a certain number of facts that will help you to understand my story (15).

Nonetheless, he answers the question four days later, and in the meantime although the narratee keeps asking about Clamence's profession, Clamence goes on relating the past events that have led him to his present position. As he continuously delays the answers, he appears to the narratee/reader as an enigmatic man full of secrets. Blanchot argues, "Clamence is a man in flight, and attraction of the story, strong and without content as it is, lies in the very movement of flight" (141). The narratee's curiosity and attraction to Clamence's story can be observed in his increasing willingness to see Clamence, as inferred from Clamence's words: "I'll see you again tomorrow, probably. Tomorrow, yes, that's right (31). But, the narratee is so curious about the story that he asks Clamence if he cannot stay more, but Clamence replies, "No, no, I can't stay" (31), and leaves him at the peak of his eagerness to hear the

rest of the story. At their third meeting, Clamence's first words also reveal how much the narratee is interested in him: "I am indeed grateful to you, mon cher compatriot for your curiosity" (33). Furthermore, after the first meeting, it is always the narratee asking Clamence to meet again. The more elusive Clamence is, the more he is chased after: "Tomorrow yes, if you wish" (52).

The other strategy of Clamence is that he builds up intimacy with the narratee by using such intimate terms as "Monsier et cher compatriot" (13), "cher Monsieur" (22), "mon cher compatriot" (33), and "cher ami" (54). Clamence uses such intimate terms in order to make the narratee feel closer to him and to give him the sense that he is helping an extremely lonely man who needs somebody to understand him: "Drink up with me, I need your understanding" (24). Because of his past experiences, Clamence must know that hardly any man can remain insensitive to such a call for help because it gives him an opportunity to feel superior to the one in need of help. Besides, just like Clamence, it makes him feel that he is a virtuous man, which adds to his sense of superiority. Since the narratee thinks that he is helping a man filled with sense of guilt by listening to him; he does not recognize the subtle accusations and judgment behind Clamence's words. Since he does not suspect that Clamence is in fact accusing and judging him, he does not take his guard against his accusations. Clamence is aware that man becomes defensive and does everything possible to prove his innocence when he is accused or judged directly. But, if he thinks that the other one is accusing or judging himself, he does not need to take his guard against the other, so he, being defenseless, begins to adapt these accusations to himself and to see himself in the other person. Consequently, the narratee becomes a proper victim for Clamence, who devours him with great appetite.

Clamence's mastery of language is his most effective weapon to ensnare the narratee/reader. Lazere notes that as a narrator Clamence is very different from Meursault and Dr. Rieux in that "*The Stranger* and *The Plague* are both calculated to give at least an illusion of nonliterary style and viewpoint. … In contrast, … [Clamence's] language is studiously refined and elegant" (184). As a lawyer, he is a very good speaker who has the skill to manipulate his listener as he wishes through his speech. As he admits, he speaks as if he were pleading a case in the court: "But I am letting myself go! I am pleading a case! Forgive me" (12), and he excuses himself, saying, "Heavens., how easily one slips into a habit; I am on the point of

making a speech to the court" (84), but it is a conscious act aiming to attract the narratee. Just like moths attracted to light and destroyed by it, the narratee/reader is attracted to Clamence's story and drawn into Clamence's hell. Once the narratee/reader is there, he will not be able to get out as Clamence very well knows. "Now I shall wait for you to write to me or to come back. For you will come back, I am sure!" (103). His narrative is like a poison which runs through the victim's blood once it is injected. As Bishop argues, it is "a complete rhetoric that, like all rhetorics, is implicitly geared to other ends than truth alone" (148). His definition of his "shop sign" is also very telling: "a double face, a charming Janus, and above it the motto of the house: "'Don't rely on it.' On my cards: 'Jean Baptiste Clamence, play actor'" (36). Clamence is, then, an unreliable narrator as he suggests: "I adapt my words to my listener and lead him to go me one better" (102). Focalization also plays an essential part concerning Clamence's manipulation of the narratee/ reader. Because Clamence is both the narrator and the focalizer, the narratee/ reader sees only what Clamence wants to show. As a result, Clamence manipulates his narratee/ reader as he likes, for the narratee/ reader has to depend upon Clamence's focalization throughout the narrative.

Clamence also deliberately creates ambiguity by blurring the line between truth and fiction as his words reveal: "I know what you are thinking: it's very hard to disentangle the true from the false in what I'm saying. I admit you are right" (88). The narratee/reader does not know whether Clamence's stories are true or invented because "in the realm of mask, deception and seduction one can never be sure whether the pointing is straight, or, indeed, if it is directed to anything at all" (Bishop 148). This also adds to the sense of suspense because of the ambiguity it creates. But to Clamence, it does not matter at all whether his stories are true or invented: "And my stories, true or false, do they not all tend towards the same end, do they not have the same meaning? Well, then, what does it matter whether they're true or false, if, in both cases, they point to what I have been and what I am" (88). It does not matter at all because not the content but what his stories reveal is important, and they reveal the basic duplicity of man.

Lazere indicates that the identity of the narratee also creates a question mark in one's mind about the existence of the narratee:

> Camus's narrative design provides another dimension of literary ambiguity in the final identification of Clamence's 'client' as a fellow Parisian lawyer. Perhaps his visitor is a hallucination, and Clamence is talking to himself. Or perhaps Clamence is not really a lawyer but alters his whole story to match that of each different client he waylays, so that each of us readers too is being lured to confess our personal variant on 'what happened to you one night on the quays of the Seine and how you managed never to risk your life'" (183).

Clamence's words about authors of confessions also reinforce his unreliability as a narrator. He states that he reads nothing "but confessions, and authors of confession write especially to avoid confessing, to tell nothing of what they know. When they claim to get to the painful admissions, you have to watch out, for they are about to dress the corpse" (89). This is exactly what Clamence is doing. He claims that "for the status to stand bare the fine speeches must take flight" (52). Nonetheless, just like the authors of confessions he refers to, he always "dress[es] the corpse" through his digressions and elegant speech. One can infer from Clamence's ideas about people's obsession with judgment, guilt, and innocence that people confess because of their need for self-justification emerging from self-righteousness. As Clamence points out, it is extremely important for man to feel justified, and he does anything to elude judgment. That is also why Clamence makes confessions: to elude judgment through his attempt to make his listeners feel that the sense of guilt and duplicity are common features of all humanity.

2.5.2 Narrative Technique in Trilogy

The trilogy is one of Beckett's works which best illustrates his view of art and the artist. In the trilogy Beckett communicates his view of art and the artist through his narrators, who are all writers involved in the process of composing a narrative. In *Molloy*, there are two retrospective narratives in which both author-narrators seek to record the events that took place in their past journeys. In contrast to Molloy and Moran, "Malone writes in the present of fictional characters in a diary form" (Ben-Zvi 92). Similar to Malone, The Unnamable writes in the present and composes fictional tales. And, a very important point is common to all the trilogy novels: all the author-narrators are involved in the quest for writing which ends in failure.

Since the trilogy protagonists are all writers involved in the writing process, the reader witnesses the process of the composition of a narrative, the problems that the author-narrators come across in the writing process, and their comments on their narratives. Therefore, the trilogy novels are self-reflexive texts foregrounding their own fictionality and thus parodying certain conventional narrative techniques by exposing their artificiality and limitation. As Kennedy argues,

> such an approach dispenses with most of reassuring constants of the traditional novel: stable myth, character, setting, events and objects, together with an underlying belief that the fictional world 'corresponds' to the external world we know and that the causes and sequences of the plotted story 'follow'. Instead, a series of uncertainties are introduced into the narrative (119).

Consequently, the failure of the author narrators in achieving their aims at the end is inevitable, so "we are presented with the experience of reading novels that, in certain respects, appear to fail as novels" (Gibson 116). But, these failures are deliberate and they convey Beckett's rejection of an art that "pretends to be able" as Beckett himself stated in *Three Dialogues* (1965: 103). Besides, as Barge indicates, "these deficiencies are defined as failure only when placed against the commonly held assumptions of Western literary practice up to the twentieth century" (195). Then, through the "failures" of the author-narrators' narratives, Beckett "fracture[s] and dissolve[s] the uniformities, the homogeneities, of conventional narrative discourse-the consistencies that assure the coherence, the order, the sense and significance of the classic text" (Gibson 116). In this part, what elements of traditional narrative Beckett subverts in the trilogy as well as how and why he parodies these elements will be discussed.

Molloy consists of two retrospective narratives, and in each there is a writer who "must tell his tale as it took place at the time not as it would happen to him now" (Pultar 10). In other words, they must write the facts without any distortion which would turn their report into fiction. Then, there are two quests in each part of *Molloy*: Molloy's quest for his mother and Moran's quest for Molloy; and their quests for recording their past journeys truthfully. Nonetheless, just as they failed in their quests that they attempt to record, they also fail in recording them properly.

Molloy, the author-narrator of the first retrospective narrative, strives to recount what he experienced in his past journey. Nevertheless, he faces many difficulties in doing this. First of all, although his aim is to retell the past in a proper

order, his "ability to narrate is necessarily limited (in contrast to the omniscient narrator) by what he knows directly" (Kennedy 118). Molloy is, then, an unreliable narrator because of his partial knowledge of the past as he, at the very beginning, admits: "the truth is I don't know much" (7). Throughout the Molloy part, there is a consistent "uncertainty concerning time, place and identity" (Kennedy 123). For instance, Molloy is not sure whether or not he is "confusing several different occasions, and different times" (14). Because of his uncertainty about the past, he also frequently contradicts himself as observed in the following example: "with Lousse my health got no worse. … But I may very well be wrong. For of the disorders to come, as for example the loss of the toes of my left foot, no, I'm wrong, my right foot, who can say exactly when on my helpless clay the fatal seeds were sown" (52). Sometimes, he is not even sure about the existence of the things he describes: "it was a chainless bicycle, with a free-wheel, if such a bicycle exists" (16). Molloy is also ignorant of the identity of the people he came across during his journey: "I say charcoal-burner, but I really don't know" (83).

What is subverted by Beckett through Molloy's uncertainty and ignorance is "the conventional relationship between narrator and reader. …What is undercut is the dignity of the tone guaranteed by the similar conventions…and in particular the dignity of the speaker who continually talks down to his audience" (Gibson 121). In contrast to the omniscient narrator who is self-assured all the time concerning his knowledge of "time, place and identity," Molloy "manifests uncertainty and doubt of a kind that is comically inappropriate in a novel" (Gibson 127). Thus, what is mocked is "the solemnity we have come to expect of novels - a solemnity guaranteed by certain consistencies in the way information is relayed to the reader" (Gibson 130).

The uncertainties and Molloy's impartial knowledge of the past make it impossible for him to recapture the past. Since memory is defective, and time distorts the past, what one remembers is actually the fictionalized version of the past. Therefore, "any attempt to capture the past will become, of necessity a fiction" because of "the unverifiable nature of the past" (Ben-Zvi 90-91). Truthful narration is, then, just a dream as Molloy is very well aware: "And truly it little matters what I say, this or that or any other thing. Saying is inventing" (32). So, in his attempt to restore the past, Molloy "realizes…the inauthenticity of the writer to

recapture…past" (Kern 202). The fact that truthful narration is impossible troubles Molloy so greatly that he becomes unwilling to go on writing: "And as to saying what became of me, and where I went in the months and perhaps the year that followed, no. For I weary of these inventions and others beckon to me. But in order to blacken a few more pages may I say I spent some time at the seaside without incident" (168). He knows no matter how hard one attempts at truthful narration, "all representation is an arrangement" (Kose 176):

> When I say I said, etc., all I mean is that I knew confusedly things were so, without knowing exactly what it was all about. And every time I say, I said this, or I said that, or speak of a voice saying, far away inside me, Molloy, and then a fine phrase more or less clear and simple, or find myself compelled to attribute to others intelligible words, or hear my own voice uttering to others more or less articulate sounds, I am merely complying with the convention that demands you either lie or hold your peace. For what really happened was quite different (87-88).

Molloy is exactly the opposite of the 'I'-narrators of Camus, who restore the past in their retrospective narratives, and who admit no such doubts and uncertainties in their narratives. In contrast to Molloy, they never contradict themselves since they never lose control over their narratives. Thus, they belong to the traditional omniscience which Becket subverts in *Molloy*. It is also striking that since Molloy is uncertain about many points concerning the past, it is a relief for him to talk about the details of which he is certain, for it gives him the sense that he is able to accomplish something as a writer, no matter how trivial it seems. On the other hand, he is aware that this is a short-lived victory, for he will again fall into uncertainty and doubt, and will lose his control over his material again: "I recount these moments with a certain minuteness, it is a relief from what I feel coming" (38).

Molloy is not only an unreliable narrator but also a self-conscious one because of his reflections on his own writing as observed in the examples above. Pultar indicates that "conventional writers do make such remarks…in connection with the text of their manuscripts, but these are more often than not merely enunciated and not transcribed… Yet this writer…has no hesitation to do so" (6). Another striking example of Molloy's reflection on his text concerns the problem of the arrangement of events in writing: "if I failed to mention this detail in its proper place it is because you cannot mention everything in its proper place" (41). Furthermore, it is impossible to mention everything that took place in the past, so the

writer should select what is worth recording. But, the problem is that the choice is subjective, so one can never be sure of the validity of one's choice:

> Oh, I know, even when you mention only a few of the things there are, you do not get done either…But it's a change of muck. And if all muck is the same muck, to move from one heap to another a little further on… And if you are wrong, and you are wrong, I mean when you record circumstances better left unspoken, and leave unspoken others, …right but for no good reason, …it is often in good faith, excellent faith (41).

Such reflections "concerning the craft of writing itself" are numerous in Molloy's narrative, and through the reflections, "it becomes evident that the subject of the novel - as distinct from the subject of retrospective tale - is the process of writing" (Pultar 6) and its disintegration.

Molloy's difficulties in composing his narrative emerge from not only "the unverifiable nature of the past" but also the inefficiency of language in describing his past journey. As a writer, Molloy's only tool is language but he is aware of the inefficiency of words in expressing his thoughts or describing his past journey: "the icy words hail down upon me, the ivy meanings, and the world dies too, foully named. All I know is what the words know, and the dead things" (31). Since Molloy is greatly skeptical of language, he is frequently hesitant about what words to choose, and he is always in doubt concerning the correctness of the word he chooses: "And once again I am, I will not say alone, no, that's not like me, but, how shall I say, I don't know, restored to myself, no, I never left myself, free, yes, I don't know what that means, but it's the word I mean to use" (13). Thus, as Barge states, "the breakdown of the story, or of art, so apparent in the continuum of *Three Novels* rests on the more basic failure of language itself" (222).

In contrast to Molloy, Moran, at the beginning, seems to have complete control over his narrative like a conventional narrator. For instance, he gives the account of the day when he receives Youdi's orders for his search for Molloy in vivid detail. Thus, the narrative begins quite conventionally with a narrator who gives precise information about time, place, and characters in the narrative. However, as Moran gradually resembles Molloy during his quest for Molloy, he begins to lose his control over his material and becomes exactly as unreliable and self-conscious as Molloy as a narrator. In other words, the disintegration of the narrative parallels the disintegration of Moran, and reflects his transformation. Thus, just like Molloy's

narrative, Moran's narrative, which was supposed to be truthful, cannot escape from turning into fiction which bothers Moran a lot.

As Moran gradually turns into Molloy, he begins to experience problems very similar to those of Molloy. For example, he begins to forget words, or he cannot decide which words to use: "is it sorrow, is it trouble something, I forget the word" (108). Moreover, he gets more and more uncertain about the past events he is supposed to recount as they took place. Similar to Molloy, he becomes doubtful about time and place, whereas he was quite certain about them before: "I wonder if I was not confusing it with some other place" (135). Sometimes, he cannot be sure whether the things he remembers really exist or not. To illustrate, what if Molloy is just a product of his imagination?: "Perhaps I invented him" (112). Like Molloy, he loses track of past events, and experiences problems related to the sequences of events: "it would not surprise me if I deviated in the pages to follow, from the true and exact succession of events" (133). Just like Molloy's narrative, his narrative slips into fiction because of his defective memory and distortions of time: "But images of this kind the will cannot revive without doing them violence. Much of what they had it takes away, much they never had it foists upon them" (115). Like Molloy, Moran also becomes unwilling to go on, for he is aware of the fact that his attempt at truthful narration is futile: "I have no intention of relating the various adventures which befell us, before we came to the Molloy country. It would be tedious. But this is not what stops me. All is tedious in this relation that is forced upon me" (132). This is a task imposed on him by his boss, Youdi, so "this exasperation is [also] connected with the drafting of the report, which he cannot get away from, since the messenger Gaber is to come and get it" (Pultar 13). And, he makes it quite clear that it is not a pleasure for him to write the report, saying defiantly, "[Youdi]asked for a report, he'll get his report" (120). It is striking that he uses the possessive adjective "his" instead of "my" although he is the one writing the report. He writes the report according to Youdi's expectations, so it does not belong to him**.** Nevertheless, as Pultar points out, Moran's attitude towards the report begins to change with his hearing a voice inside him (14). After he hears the voice, he states that he "will conduct it in [his] own way" (132), and he does not care if it displeases Youdi: "And if it has not the good fortune to give satisfaction, to my employer, if there are passages that give offence to him and to his colleagues, then so much the worse for

us all, for them all" (132). Now, he yields to the voice's instructions while he is writing the report: "And the voice I listen to needs no Gaber to make it heard: For it is within me and exhorts me to continue to the end the faithful servant I have always been" (132). Pultar remarks that "writing this report is a 'penance' for Moran. It is a penance because, at one level, it is drudgery. … Yet it is also a penance as an ordeal which the voice subjects him to" (15). Moran feels that the voice he hears inside him is changing him. For example, he realizes that he has more imagination now than he had before: "I have not enough imagination to imagine it. And yet I have more than before" (132). Moreover, he admits that he is writing the report "with a firm hand weaving inexorably back and forth and devouring my page with the indifference of a shuttle" (133). One can argue that Youdi's expectations embody requirements of conventional writing that a writer is supposed to conform to. However, he becomes free from these requirements by means of the voice, which can be regarded as the symbol of imagination, and thus he gains an artistic independence. As Kern states, Moran "become[s] aware of the freedom of the writer to create his world, a world contrary to actuality. [He has been] freed from his past meticulousness and adherence to facts" (202). In other words, he has learned that "art…is ultimately inevitably synonymous with artifact and artifice" (Pultar 23). Hence, he ends his report by stating, "then I went back into the house and wrote, It's midnight. The rain is beating on the windows. It was not midnight. It was not raining" (176).

In the Moran part, Beckett also subverts a very important convention of plot; that is, "the convention of the enigma" (Gibson 125). An enigma is used in the plot in order to generate tension and suspense in the text, and the reader expects it to be resolved in the course of the narrative. However, in the novels of such writers as Beckett, "[enigmas] are often introduced only to be forgotten. They have ceased to be the driving force within the narrative and are sometimes reduced to the status of mere ornament (Gibson 124). This is exactly what happens in the Moran section, which begins like a detective story, and turns out to be a parody of "the convention of enigma." Moran introduces himself as an agent and a member of a vast organization of which he knows almost nothing. He has never seen any of his colleagues or his boss Youdi. He receives certain instructions through Gaber, the messenger, and he is ordered "to deal with the client in one way or another according to instructions" (137). Besides, Moran does not know what happens to the clients

once he finds and takes them to the appointed place. Thus, the organization which Moran is a member of appears to be highly mysterious. This timeu, Moran is ordered to set out for Molloy, but the mission itself is an enigma for Moran and thus for the reader because Moran is not told what to do with Molloy once he has found him. Moran sets out to find Molloy, and the reader expects Moran to find Molloy and to find out what he will do with Molloy. But, the narrative does not meet the reader's expectations because Moran's tale does not answer these questions. Instead, the reader is told about Moran's gradual psychological and physical disintegration, which makes him turn into Molloy, and the obstacles that weaken Moran's will to continue his quest for Molloy. As Hayman points out, "although every detail is noted in this narrative…we are struck by the fact that nothing much is happening" (140). Consequently during the narrative, Moran as well as the reader loses his interest in these enigmas, and his quest ends in failure. These enigmas are forgotten, and "nothing significant happens" (Hayman 140), in the narrative, for what is foregrounded is the failure itself, both the failure of Moran's quest for Molloy, and his failure in the quest of writing.

Like the previous volume of the trilogy, *Malone Dies* is also the story of a failed quest. The protagonist of *Malone Dies* is a writer like Molloy and Moran, but different from them "he is not a narrator-scribe writing about the exploits of a former self" (Pultar 33) but a writer who strives to compose fictional tales. As Barge indicates, he is "the first hero who overtly states his quest to be the composition of his [fictional] stories" because "no pre-Malone hero deliberately makes up and writes down a story or stories about someone other (ostensibly) than himself" (169) *Malone Dies* is also different from *Molloy* in that Malone writes in the present moment and composes his fictional stories before the eyes of the reader. In Abbot's words, *Malone Dies* is an "intercalated or nonretrospective narrative," in which "the time of its writing is contained by the time of the events recorded" (71). There are, then, two narrative levels in *Malone Dies*:

> On the one there is Malone dying and busying himself with his reminiscences, his stories, inventing, and writing. …On the other level are the stories into which Malone delves and which he tells in the past and in the third person. Only at the moment of death do the two levels fuse, past and present meet, and Malone dies simultaneously with his hero, Sapo-Macmann" (Kern 221).

Like Molloy and Moran, Malone is a self-conscious narrator as he reflects on his writing at the moment of their composition. However, in *Molloy*, the two narrators' problems emerge from the impossibility of truthful narration of the past. No matter how hard they attempt at truthful narration, what they produce becomes a fictionalized version of the past. On the other hand, Malone's reflections concern the problem of writing fiction because "in *Malone Dies* Beckett attempts to make the fictive process the central issue" (Ben-Zvi 90) The reader comes across comments which do not normally appear on the finished product: "I tried to reflect on the beginning of my story. There are things I do not understand. But nothing to signify I can go on" (190). Besides, he makes correction on his writing: "Sapo had no friends - no, that won't do: Sapo was on good terms with his little friends, though they did not exactly love him! (190). "Sapo loved nature, took an interest. This is awful. Sapo loved nature, took an interest in animals and plants and willingly raised his eyes to the sky, day and night" (191). Or sometimes the reader sees a writer lose his inspiration and unable to write even a word: "I am lost. Not a word" (265). Hence, the reader witnesses "the present act of composition, watching- as it were-over the shoulders of Malone as he seeks for the words that will allow him to continue his chronicle", "rather than the finished product, free of mistakes, an artifact produced in some fictive pasts," (Ben-Zvi 95) and this makes *Malone Dies* "a fiction about fiction" (Cohn 100).

Malone refers to story-telling as "a game" he has played and failed several times before, but he is determined to win the game this time. It is so much important for Malone to win the game of story-telling because "that will define the hero as artist, and thus bestow selfhood upon his nebulous being" (Barge 211). Hence begins Malone's artistic quest, doomed to failure, and through his failure Beckett subverts certain conventions of realist art. First of all, as in Molloy, the omniscient narrator of the realist fiction is parodied in *Malone Dies*. As Kern points out, in his narration Malone "appropriately assumes the role of the omniscient author and refers to … [his characters] in the third person" (213). Malone does not want even a little uncertainty, or "darkness" in his stories. His fictional world will be an ordered world without any instability or irrationality:

> For I want as little possible darkness in …[Sapo's] story. A little darkness in itself, at the time is nothing. You think no more about it and you go on. But I know what

> darkness is, it accumulates, thickens, then suddenly bursts and drowns everything (190).

Thus, the kind of stories he attempts to write are realistic stories, for as in the realist fiction he aims to create a fictional world in which everything is explained and rational. Nevertheless, he fails in his role as an omniscient narrator because unlike an omniscient narrator who has ultimate knowledge of his characters, Malone does not know everything. For instance, he calls his first character Sagoscat, but he does not know if it is a Christian name or not (187). Also, he is unable to explain "why Sapo was not expelled [from school] when he so richly deserved to be" (190). He is very much troubled by this "little cloud" (190) in the story, and he thinks he has to find out why Sapo was not expelled. But, he fails to find the answer and therefore has "to leave this question open" (190). Pultar argues,

> what Malone…points out here is…the futility, or impossibility of causality, a requisite of the conventional narration. He states obliquely that such novels cannot be written. He seems to say that omniscience is a deception or trickery, at best an artifice (42).

Beckett also parodies realist fiction through Malone's attempt to write "lifeless" stories, or stories "divorced from life" (Barge 190). Malone says, his stories "will not be the same kind of stories as hitherto… . They will be neither beautiful nor ugly, they will be calm, there will be no ugliness or beauty or fever in them any more, they will be almost lifeless" (180). Moreover, his characters will have no resemblance to him because "my concern is not with me, but with another" (195-196). To put it differently, Malone's, stories will have nothing of "the suffering and failure of the macrocosm" (Barge 190). In Barge's words, "he is going to make art into a game discarded from life" (Barge 190). Only in this way can he succeed in creating a fictional world in which everything is certain and ordered. So, Beckett attempts to show that the world realist art portrays is far from reflecting the real world. Realist art, claiming to represent the world as it is, is "content to transcribe the surface, the facade, behind which 'real' reality is 'imprisoned.' For Beckett realist art is 'a grotesque fallacy'" (Pultar 90).

Malone fails in his attempt to write lifeless stories because "he cannot insulate his art from life or from the macrocosmic self" (Barge 191). Beckett makes his protagonist fail in order to communicate his "aesthetic strategy which attempts to

admit chaos into art" (Estress 441-442) , and which "implies that no order in life (Beckett's 'mess') must logically result in no story in art" (Barge 199). As soon as the outside world intrudes the fictional world with all its chaos and uncertainty, Malone's stories become failures. The outside world intrudes into the fictional world through Malone's unconscious inclusion of his earlier life to his stories. There are lots of references to Malone's past life and to his own characteristics. To illustrate, after Malone states that Sapo has "eyes as pale and unwavering as a gull's" (192), he reflects, "I don't like those gull's eyes. They remind me of an old ship-wreck, I forgot which" (193). Malone does not like those "gull's eyes" because they are very much like his own eyes, so the "old ship-wreck" he wants to forget is Malone himself. Furthermore, Malone is in fact aware of Sapo's similarity to him, and that is why he feels the need to state their difference: "Nothing is less like me than this patient, reasonable child" (193). Moreover, Malone's own sense of failure and his life-long difficulty in comprehending the world enters the story through Sapo:

> Sapo's phlegm, his silent ways, were not of a nature to please. In the midst of tumult…he remained motionless in his place, often standing, and gazed straight before him. …People wondered what he could brood on thus, hour after hour. His father supposed him a prey to the first fluttering of sex. … But in the view of his teachers the signs were rather those of besottedness pure and simple (192).

Malone's sense of alienation that he has always had also pervades his stories because his characters are as alienated as him, as observed in his story about the Lamberts: "There they sat, the table between them in gloom, one speaking, the other listening, and far removed, the one from what he said, the other from what he heard, and far from each other" (213). As Barge argues,

> his own past experiences infiltrate the stories, and each major character he writes about becomes himself. He soon realizes fully the seriousness of his task, and the familiar darkness that has engulfed his life in the outer world (physical and emotional pain, and a lack of clarity as to what is going on) begins to ruin his stories also" (Barge 191).

As a result, the darkness drowns his stories as it has drowned his life.

Like Malone, the Unnamable writes in the present moment, but the two author-narrators are different from each other in that Malone's aim is to create characters totally different from himself, whereas the Unnamable "announces and insists that he alone is the subject of his story, that is not a story, and that he will renounce fictional devices" (Cohn 101). Malone hopes, "I will not say I no more"

(265), but what the Unnamable desires to do is just the opposite because he "will not rest until he can say 'I' in such a way that it convinces the self of its proper being beyond the fictional personae" (Kennedy 140). In other words, the Unnamable's quest is "to find the essence of the self" (Cohn 109), which he makes clear when he states in a determined tone, "my speech can only be of me and here, and that I am once more engaged in putting an end to both" (304). Previously, he has tried to define his authentic self through fiction. He has created "all these Murphys, Molloys and Malones" (30) hoping that he would achieve his authentic self through them. However, he now recognizes that he has only wasted his time: "They have made me waste my time, suffer for nothing, speak of them when, in order to stop speaking, I should have spoken of me and me alone" (305). Ben-Zvi argues that there are such references to previous characters in order "to point to the outline of a creator behind them all who has spun them in an attempt to spin himself" (83).

The Unnamable can also be regarded as a different phase of the trilogy protagonist, who has tried different ways in each volume to reach his innermost self, and who has failed each time: first, he has employed retrospective narrative to establish a meaningful connection between his past and present self, but what he produces becomes fiction. Secondly, he has decided to create an "other," and thus escape from his obsessive search for the self. But, he fails in his attempt since his fictions have turned into self-examination. In *The Unnamable* the protagonist decides to try another way: he will not talk about the past or create new characters, but talk about himself and the present moment.

The Unnamable starts his quest by trying to define himself through three basic questions: "Where now? Who now? When now? (293). Nevertheless, he can neither describe the place he is in and his present state nor identify the present moment. All these issues remain undefinable, and the Unnamable recognizes the futility of his attempt: "I shall not answer them any more, I shall not pretend any more to answer them" (309). It is impossible to talk about himself when he is unable to answer these three basic questions. On the other hand, he cannot stop speaking before he attains his authentic self and thus the silence he greatly desires. Therefore, he sees that he has no other alternative than composing stories once more: "I shall be obliged, in order not to peter out, to invent another fairy-tale, yet another, with hands, trunks, arms, legs and all that follows" (309). Thus, as Cohn indicates, "though the

Unnamable claims to be on guard against fiction, though he explicitly banishes Beckett's fictions as 'sufferers of my pains,' he too slips into fiction" (101). Through the Unnamable's unavoidable slip into fiction, Beckett points out that it is impossible to achieve an authentic self through speech or writing because Beckett does not believe that "a viable existence can be forged from words which can obviously never correspond exactly to a preexistent reality or inner essence" (Barge 205). Hence, sooner or later one's attempts at talking or writing about the self will slip into fiction, as it does in *The Unnamable*.

The first character that the Unnamable creates is Basil, whom he immediately renames as Mahood. The Unnamable fabricates Mahood "to create a person with a human nature (the essence of manhood). The Unnamable's purpose is to impart to himself 'a subjective substance' by fabricating a pseudo-self" (Barge 217). At first the Unnamable's voice can be easily distinguished from that of Mahood, for the Unnamable refers to him in the third person, and reminds the reader that it is "still Mahood speaking" (323). However, it becomes more and more difficult to distinguish between their voices because "the Unnamable soon shifts to the first person for his story…, gliding imperceptibly into his own obsessive search for the boundaries of his identity" (Cohn 104). The Unnamable shifts to the first person in Mahood's story because he attempts to speak through this "pseudo-self" and thus say 'I' through him. However, his voice merges with that of Mahood to such an extent that it overcomes the Unnamable's voice: "Here in my domain, what is Mahood doing in my domain, and how does he get there?" (317). The Unnamable decides to "scatter" Mahood since he has become one of the "miscreated puppets" (327), through whom the Unnamable fails to speak. The problem is that "Mahood usurps the Unnamable's voice [so] how can the Unnamable ever authentically utter 'I'…?" (Barge 217). Therefore, while he at first tries to define himself through Mahood, he now attempts to distinguish himself from him but "what if we were one and the same after all, as he affirms, and I deny?" (317). In order to get rid of Mahood, the Unnamable creates another character named Worm with the same hope of finding a name for himself "Worm … It will be my name too, when the time comes, when I needn't be called Mahood any more, if that happy time ever comes" (340). But, the Unnamable is aware that Worm may also fail to define the Unnamable: "Perhaps he too will weary, renounce the task of forming me and make way for another, having

laid the foundation" (340). Worm is very much different from Mahood; in fact, he is "the first of his kind" (340) because "he is an amorphous creature with almost nothing that would link him to what one traditionally conceives of as a subject; nothing save one lidless and endlessly tearing eye" (Gendron 55). At this point, it seems important to dwell on the consistent reduction of the Unnamable's characters. Mahood in the first story is a character with one leg, but he loses not only his other leg but also his arms and sight, and he is reduced to a trunk confined to a jar. Finally the Unnamable creates Worm not as "a character or person, but only [as] a voice – the most shorn-of-identity to be found in the trilogy" (Barge 218). Then, it is not implausible to argue that the reduction of the characters indicates the Unnamable's attempts to dig towards his innermost self, and the more he digs towards it, the more undefinable it becomes. Nevertheless, the Unnamable still seeks to define Worm and thus himself by providing him with human qualities though he knows that it is in vain:

> A face, how encouraging that would be, if it could be a face. A presence at last. … [He]'d be somehow suddenly among us, among the rendezvous, and people saying, look at old Worm, waiting for his sweetheart and the flowers, look at the flowers , you'd think he was asleep, you know old Worm, waiting for his love, and the daisies, look at the daisies you'd think he was dead. That would be worth seeing. …[But] it's all dream. For here there is no face, nor anything resembling one, nothing to reflect the joy of living and succedanea, nothing for it but to try something else (365-366).

Since Worm remains undefinable, he fails "to merge with the self the Unnamable is trying to capture" (Ben-Zvi 100). No matter how hard he tries to do so, he recognizes its ultimate impossibility: "I'm Worm, no, if I were Worm I wouldn't know it, I wouldn't say it, I wouldn't say anything, I'd be Worm" (350) Worm, then, represents "the core of the self" that cannot be represented through words. As soon as it is represented, it becomes a linguistic construction. Thus, the self beyond words is undefinable just like Worm. Esslin regards Worm as "that pure potentiality…man about to be born…that state of pure potentiality by which Sartre defines Being-for-itself" (1962: 142-143). Since Worm represents "the core of the self [that] is pure potentiality" (Esslin 143), the Unnamable will never achieve the silence he seeks for, and he is doomed to go on with his quest till his death.

CHAPTER 3

THEMES

3.1 Alienation, Isolation, and Loneliness

As indicated earlier, Camus's and Beckett's works display similarities in terms of their themes owing to the fact that both of them have written in the absurdist tradition. The first common theme observed in the works of these two authors is the theme of alienation, isolation, and loneliness.

As mentioned before, absurdism as a school of thought in philosophy and literature flourished after the Second World War, so the absurdist writers predominantly analysed the post-war man's condition in the bleak post-war atmosphere. According to the absurdists, man was doomed to alienation since the illusion that there existed common values or rights and wrongs forming a consensus in society was irreparably broken. Many people agreed with Nietzche that God was dead, which made them feel utterly alone as if in a desert, and each man had his own desert. Recognizing all of a sudden that God did not exist, and that one was ultimately alone in this indifferent Godless universe was traumatic for man.

Man was doomed to isolation in such a universe, for there was not a common and firm ground on which they stood together safely. This ground which had seemed firm and safe was broken into pieces, and one had to stand on his own ground, alienated from one's fellowmen. Hence, lack of communication, lack of sympathy and love, and man's sense of solitude are reflected in the works of absurdist writers like Camus and Beckett.

Meursault, the protagonist of *L'Etranger*, is a good example of those who go on with their lives in isolation from others. Meursault is not a man craving for human company and warmth. On the contrary, his alienation seems to be self-dictated since he tends to keep people at a distance from himself. For instance, whenever somebody, like the soldier on the bus, wants to start a conversation with him, he cuts the conversation as soon as possible: "when I woke up, I found myself cramped up

against a soldier who smiled at me and asked me if I'd come far. I said, 'Yes' so as not to have to talk anymore" (10). Thus, he is not a genial, talkative person who wants to make friends at every opportunity, but one "described … as being taciturn and withdrawn" by the people around him (66), for he willingly detaches himself from others. As Braun points out, "Meursault's detachment covers a variety of attitudes ranging from indifference to downright callousness ... [He is] an indifferent, shallow, and perfectly boorish young man" (59). To illustrate, when Raymond, his neighbour, tells him about his plan of revenge, Meursault unhesitatingly agrees to write a letter to Raymond's girlfriend in Raymond's name so as to bring the girl back to Raymond's rooms, where Raymond will "punish her" (34). Raymond's plan works, and Marie, Meursault's girlfriend, and Meursault hear the girl's shrieks, but Meursault stays perfectly calm and indifferent to the girl's cries, and does nothing to stop Raymond although he has a share in the girl's distress. Marie becomes so upset that she does not eat anything at lunch, whereas Meursault eats a lot. His indifference to the distress of Salamano, an old neighbour of his, also illustrates the extent of his detachment from and indifference to others. Salamano is a terribly lonely man living with his dog after his wife's death. One day the dog gets lost, and Salamano sinks into despair and deep sorrow. To share his pain, he goes to Meursault, but Meursault falls short in sympathizing with the old man's feelings. On the contrary, he says, "he was annoying me a bit, but I didn't have anything to do and I didn't feel sleepy" (47).

It is also observed that Meursault has no intimate relationship with anybody, including his mother, which is supposed to be one of the most intimate relationships. For example, he does not know much about his mother and her life in the home; he learns of his mother's engagement with Mr Perez in the funeral, which shows that he has not visited his mother even rarely. Besides, he does not know her age. When his boss asks how old his mother was, he says " 'About sixty,' so as not to get it wrong" (29) "because I didn't know exactly" (21).

Furthermore, the mother and the son do not seem to have a close relationship before he sends her to the home for old people, as his reason of sending her there reveals: " 'she'd run out of things to say to me a long time ago and she'd got bored of being alone" (48). He does not have an intimate relationship with Raymond either although the latter regards him as his "mate." But, Meursault's reaction is again one of indifference and detachment: "I didn't mind being his mate and he really seemed

keen on it" (36), but he is no one's mate. It is even unusual for Meursault to be called by his first name since he hardly ever lets others approach him that much: "I didn't notice at first, but [Raymond] was calling me by my first name" (36).

Thus, Meursault's indifference and detachment alienates him from people, but what is the reason lying behind his indifference and detachment? As the title suggests, Meursault is an outsider, an alien who does not belong to the society in which he lives because of "his freedom from society's arbitrary laws and self-righteousness" (Lazere 43), and what releases him from all these arbitrary laws and values is his sense of the absurd. Then, his alienation is directly related to his being an absurd hero, representing many aspects of the absurd man Camus mentions in *Le Mythe*.

The most important thing that makes Meursault an absurd hero is his premonition of death because as Lazere indicates,

> Camus and his protagonists consider society's rationalized standards of right and wrong and its power to enforce to be groundless. ... Death obliterates all of society's distinctions between innocence and guilt, and a premonition of his death exposes to a man the artificiality of society's rules, freeing him to rise above them and live any way he pleases (29-30).

Meursault never pronounces his premonition of death openly, but his attitude towards life and his way of living display it adequately. As an absurd man, Meursault has no such ambitions as career or wealth, and no illusions as self-importance, owing to his premonition of death. For example, when his boss asks him if he wants to work in the new office in Paris, which means a better position and so better life conditions, his reaction tells much:

> I said yes but really I didn't mind. He then asked me if I wasn't interested in changing my life. I replied that you could never change your life, that in any case one life was as good as another and that I wasn't at all dissatisfied with mine here. He looked upset and told me that ... I had no ambition, which was disastrous in the business world. ... I'd rather not have upset him, but I couldn't see any reason for changing my life (44).

To Meursault, "one life ... [is] as good as another" because his recognition of his mortality equalizes all ways of life. They are all the same to him because one way of life can never be more honourable than or superior to another. On the other hand, Meursault also acknowledges that he did not think that way when he was a student. At that time, he had plans and ambitions concerning the future: "When I was a student, I had plenty of that sort of ambition" (44); in other words, he was not an

outsider at that time. However, "when I had to give up my studies, I very soon realized that none of it really mattered" (44). Here, Meursault's ideas echo those of Camus that he expresses in *Le Mythe*:

> Before encountering the absurd, the everyday man lives with aims, a concern for the future or justification. ... He weighs his chances, he counts on 'someday,' his retirement or the labor of his sons. He still thinks that something in his life can be directed. In truth he acts as if he were free, even if all the facts make a point of contradicting that liberty. But after the absurd everything is upset. That idea that 'I am,' my way of acting as if everything has a meaning ... all that is given the lie in vertiginous fashion by the absurdity of a possible death. Thinking of the future, establishing aims for oneself, having preferences – all this presupposes a belief in freedom, even if one occasionally ascertains that one doesn't feel it. But at that moment I am well aware that that higher liberty, that freedom to be, which alone can serve as basis for a truth does not exist. Death is there as the only reality (1955: 42).

That is why all ways of life are the same to Meursault, and because of that reason society's laws or values have no validity for him, so he never makes any judgment concerning others' behaviour.

People hate Meursault, for he is different from them. Long before he kills the Arab, people have been judging him wrongly, of which he is totally ignorant. For example, when the old Salamano tells him that "local people thought badly of ... [him] for sending [his] mother to a home," he replies "that ... [he] hadn't realized before that people thought badly of ... [him] for doing that" (48). But, in the trial he realizes "how much all these people hated ... [him]," which hurts him so much that " for the first time in years I stupidly felt like crying" (87). As Masters indicates, "he is a 'stranger' among his fellows, with their pasts and futures, their regrets and their aspirations. Being so unlike them, ... he is exiled and alone" (23). Meursault does not act in accordance with society's expectations and rules since they have no validity for him. Therefore, he does not feel the necessity to display his sorrow outwardly as expected. Similarly, he does not think that smoking in the room where his mother's body lies is inappropriate. Moreover, the day after the funeral he goes swimming, meets Marie there, goes to the cinema and then to bed with her, all of which are used against him in his trial. So, Meursault fulfills none of the society's expectations from a dutiful son. However, as Master states, "society expects each member to share its myths, respect its idols, and treat its religion with suitable awe" (29), and those failing to observe these, like Meursault, are eliminated by society in one way or another. This is what the society in *L'Etranger* does to Meursault. Meursault is

executed because as Camus explains in the 1955 foreword, he fails to "play the game":

> I summarized *The Stranger* a long time ago, with a remark that I admit was highly paradoxical: 'In our society any man who does not weep at his mother's funeral runs the risk of being sentenced to death.' I only meant that the hero of my book is condemned because he does not play the game. In this respect, he is foreign to the society in which he lives (1968: 335-336).

It is seen that the evidence that the prosecutor brings against Meursault has nothing to do with the murder, for the judge and the prosecutor question people about the funeral day and the day after the funeral. For example, the judge questions the warden of the home about Meursault's attitude on the funeral day:

> To another question he replied that he'd been surprised by my calmness on the day of the funeral. He was asked what he meant by my calmness. The warden ... said that I hadn't wanted to see mother, I'd left straight after the funeral without paying my respects at her grave (86).

After that, the judge asks the caretaker a number of questions concerning the same issue, and the caretaker's answers once more point out Meursault's "extreme insensitivity." The caretaker "said that I hadn't wanted to see the mother; that I smoked, I'd slept and I'd had some white coffee" (87). And, after Marie's testimony, "people hardly listened to Masson who announced that I was an honest chap ... [and] to Salamano either when he recalled how I'd been kind to his dog" (91) because people have already reached a conclusion about Meursault like the prosecutor: "Gentlemen of the jury, on the day after the death of his mother, this man was swimming in the sea, entering into an irregular liaison and laughing at a Fernandel film. I have nothing more to say to you" (91). But, he has one more thing to say: he demands Meursault's execution on the basis of his behaviour in the funeral and on the day after the funeral, which, he thinks, indicates Meursault's despicable nature. He claims that Meursault "had no access to any humanity nor to any of the moral principles which protect the human heart" (98). He considers demanding capital punishment a "sacred duty" since Meursault is nothing but "a monster" (99). Thus, Meursault is executed, for he is the odd one out to be discarded.

In *Le Mythe* Camus presents alienation as a predicament of man aware of his condition because for man recognizing the absurd, "the universe [is] suddenly divested of illusions and lights, [so] man feels an alien, a stranger" (1955: 5). On the other hand, Camus brings a positive dimension to man's state of exile in *La Peste*

because through the portrayal of the common resistance of the Oran people against the plague, he implies that "although part of the absurd condition is man's solitude in the natural universe and in society, this very solitude can become a source of solidarity between men recognizing their common condition" (Lazere 68).

Camus treats the theme of alienation very differently in *La Peste*, for in *L'Etranger* he presents Meursault's alienation as an individual case, whereas in *La Peste* it is presented as man's predicament resulting from his recognition of his absurd condition in the universe. Besides this, in *L'Etranger* one observes the revolt of a solitary man against society's arbitrary rules and values, while in *La Peste* the recognition of their common condition gives rise to a collective struggle against their condition. In this context "the plague ... is a personification of the Absurd" (Masters 61), and the Oran people before the plague represent man before his recognition of the absurd, for they easily follow the "Rising, streetcar ..." sequence that Camus describes in *Le Mythe*:

> rising, streetcar, four hours in the office or the factory, meal, streetcar, four hours of the work, meal, sleep, and Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday according to the same rhythm – this path is easily followed most of the time (10).

The similarity between this pattern and the one that the narrator of *La Peste* describes is very striking:

> Perhaps the easiest way of making a town's acquaintance is to ascertain how the people in it work, how they love, and how they die. In our little town ... all three are done on much the same lines, with the same feverish yet casual air. The truth is that everyone is bored, and devotes himself to cultivating habits. Our citizens work hard, but solely with the object of getting rich. ... Naturally they don't eschew such simpler pleasures as love-making, sea-bathing, going to the pictures. But very sensibly, they reserve these pastimes for Saturday afternoons and employ the rest of the week in making money, as much as possible. In the evening, on leaving the office, they forgather, at an hour that never varies, in the cafés, stroll the same boulevard, or take the air on their balconies (4).

Besides, as the narrator points out, "these habits are not peculiar to our town; really all our contemporaries are much the same" (4). However, after the plague gives its first signs, this air of complacency begins to turn into that of uneasiness: "Hitherto people had merely grumbled at a stupid, rather obnoxious visitation; they now realized that this strange phenomenon, whose scope could not be measured and whose origins escaped detection, had something menacing about it" (15). And, as the plague becomes more threatening, "the perplexity of the early days gradually gave

place to panic" (21) because "the stage sets collapse" (1955: 10). In other words, once the habitual routine that has prevented them from recognizing their true condition and that has provided them with necessary illusions to go on with their lives complacently collapses, they experience the feeling of the absurd, because "the awareness of ... absurdity results from a breakdown in habitual routine and expectations" (Lazere 137).

Then, what do the Oran people do in the face of their recognition? As Camus states in *Le Mythe*, there are three possible responses to the absurd once it has been recognized: suicide, hope, and revolt. To Camus, suicide and hope amount to escaping the absurd, which Camus rejects fervently since the only way to overcome the absurd is revolt: "Is one going to die, escape by the leap, rebuild a mansion of ideas and forms to one's own scale? Is one, on the contrary, going to take up the heart-rendering and marvellous wager of the absurd?" (1955: 39). Like Camus, Dr. Rieux believes that they cannot overcome the epidemic by evading the problem. If they want to overcome it, they must lucidly recognize the problem, which is a symbolic expression of the position of revolt against the absurd: "Still, that could not stop, or be stopped. It was only a matter of lucidly recognizing what had to be recognized; of dispelling extraneous shadows and doing what needed to be done. Then the plague would come to an end. [...] If not, one would know it anyhow for what it was and what steps should be taken for coping with and finally overcoming it" (38). Thus, Camus refuses two of these responses since suicide involves resignation to the absurd, and hope flight from it, and he strongly believes that one must revolt against the absurd, meaning that one should

> live life to the full in spite of its being meaningless, all the time cherishing one's awareness that it is meaningless. ... It is a revolt doomed to failure, because it is a revolt against man's mortality, but it must be maintained in full consciousness of its inefficacy, precisely because it is the only attitude which does not deny, stifle or distort one's awareness. Revolt is the only honest response to life which faces the hard facts squarely and refuses all concealment (Masters 47).

As stated previously, what awaits man after the recognition of the absurd is a sense of exile because as Masters states, "with the moment of awareness comes a sense of exile, a feeling of being a 'stranger' in a world suddenly deprived of its familiar sense" (37). Similarly, when the epidemic begins spreading quickly, and many people start dying, the gates of the town are closed, and people are exiled in Oran: "the first thing that plague brought to our town was exile" (65). Moreover, it is "an

exile in one's own home" (67), which has stopped being familiar and making sense, so they experience "the feeling of exile – that sensation of a void within which never left us, that irrational longing to hark back to the past or else to speed up the march of time, and those keen shafts of memory that stung like fire" (65). Thus, the recognition of the absurd entails a sense of exile, which the inhabitants of Oran experience after the plague. By means of the plague, they have opened their eyes to reality, and the sense of exile has followed this awakening.

On the other hand, through the plague and the exile, they have realized something very important: "Once the town gates were shut, every one of us realized that all ... were ... in the same boat" (61). In other words, they recognize that they share the same destiny, that they are all victims of the same inhuman forces that may destroy them at any moment. Thus, the exile brings on solidarity among the inhabitants of Oran, who realize that they must struggle as one body against their common predicament.

Jean-Baptiste Clamence, the protagonist of *La Chute*, is also an outsider like Meursault, but he is different from Meursault in that Meursault is an outsider from the start, whereas Clamence becomes an outsider after quite a sociable and bright life. His exile results from his recognition of the absurd like Meursault and the Oran people, but Clamence's alienation is an individual case like that of Meursault, for no solidarity is born out of this solitude. On the other hand, different from both, Clamence's exile is a conscious choice because Clamence quits his career, his social environment, and everything he has in Paris, and moves to Amsterdam as a result of his recognition of the absurdity of his whole life. Then, it is necessary to divide Clamence's life into two as before and after his awareness of his condition.

Before his recognition, Clamence was a successful lawyer and a man eager to help people in need. For example, he defended widows and orphans without charging money, helped the blind across the street, and "enjoyed telling people the way in the street, giving a light, lending a hand with heavy barrows, pushing a stranded car, buying a paper from the Salvation Army girl or flowers from the old-woman pedlar" (17-18). Consequently, he had a good reputation in society, which provided him with "money, glory, and self-esteem" (Braun 209). He led a happy life, for he had a good career, a good reputation, and "satisfaction" from his good deeds: "But you can

already imagine my satisfaction. I enjoyed my own nature to the fullest and we all know that therein lies happiness" (17).

However, one day an event resulting in Clamence's lucidity takes place: he fails to save a drowning girl. That event becomes a turning point in his life because after that he is involved in a process of self-examination, which shatters his self-image, and reveals the truth about himself and his life. As Masters points out, "every item of his past life is reinterpreted in the light of this experience, and found to be hypocritical" (118). For instance, "he now realizes that his good deeds were always done before an audience, that they ceased whenever there was no one to applaud them" (Masters 118), and that is why he failed to save the drowning girl: there was nobody to admire his bravery and self-sacrificing nature, so he did not put his life in danger. In other words, he discovers that the Clamence who does not miss any opportunity to help people is a mask that he puts on "to feel above" (19). As he admits, "I realized … that modesty helped me to shine, humility to conquer, and virtue to oppress" (62-63). To put it differently, he realizes that all his good deeds aim to make him feel superior to others. He defends widows and orphans without charging money not because he is idealistic but because "it set … [him] above the judge whom … [he] judged in turn, above the defendant whom … [he] forced to gratitude" (21). Thus, he sees that beneath his noble actions lie his selfishness and vanity: "I have to admit it humbly, *mon cher compatriote*, I was always bursting with vanity. I, I, I is the refrain of my whole life and it could be heard in everything I said" (37).

However, it is not easy for Clamence to admit that his motives, which he believes to be noble, are indeed hypocritical, so "he tries to escape this awareness through a series of mental anaesthetics – wealth, ridicule, love, debauchery" (Lazere 46), and for a while he succeeds in escaping the "laughter" that he has heard since that day: "I lived in a sort of fog in which the laughter became so muffled that eventually I ceased to notice it" (78), but as he is aware, "it is but a long sleep" (78) that he has to wake up from, and he does so when he mistakes a piece of wood in the water for a drowning person:

> Then I realized, calmly, just as you resign yourself to an idea the truth of which you have long known, that that cry which had sounded over the Seine behind me years before had never ceased, carried by the river to the waters of the Channel, to travel throughout the world, across the limitless expanse of the Ocean, and that it had waited for me there until the day I encountered it (80).

Thus, he understands that his attempt to escape the truth is futile, and as he discovers "these facts little by little in the period following … [that] evening" (37), his life loses all its meaning because everything he has believed to be true about himself and his life turns out to be a lie. All he comes across after he becomes "lucid" gives him a sense of nothingness and meaninglessness: "I was tormented by the thought that I might not have time to accomplish my task. What task? I had no idea. Frankly, was what I was doing worth continuing?" (66). For him "nothing remained but to grow older" (79) since his life had no meaning any more. As a result, he leaves his past life behind, moves to Amsterdam, where he lives as a foreigner. In other words, he exiles himself after his recognition of the absurdity of his life.

As stated earlier, the nature of Clamence's alienation is quite different from that of Meursault and that of the Oran people due to the difference in their responses to the absurd because Meursault and the Oran people adopt the response that Camus advocates in *Le Mythe*; that is, revolt, whereas Clamence resigns to the absurd, for he falls into despair as a result of his awareness. However, to Camus, lucidity should not lead to despair. In *Le Mythe* he claims that life has no meaning, but this does not mean that life is not worth living. Besides, recognizing the absurd should not give rise to nihilism. To Camus, "it is possible to find the means to proceed beyond nihilism" (1955: V). As Lazere indicates, Camus believes that "the absence of metaphysical and epistemological meaning in life … [is not] equivalent to the absence of all value in life"; in contrast, "values [can] be found that make life worth living under the conditions of absurd meaninglessness" (53), and Camus names three values born out of the recognition of the absurd: "the values of revolt, freedom, and passion" (Lazere 134), which Clamence fails to adopt, for he goes to the opposite direction leading to nihilism, which results in his alienation.

The theme of alienation and isolation is a pervading one in Beckett's *Trilogy* as well. Both Camus and Beckett agree that alienation is a part of the absurdity since the individual is an exile in the universe, with which he cannot establish meaningful relationships. Beckett's characters are "isolated existents," each of whom is "immured in his own consciousness" (Kern 185). On the other hand, different from Camus, Beckett dwells on the limitation of consciousness, which makes the possibility of knowing others completely impossible. Since his characters "are unable

to know each other, except as possibilities" (Kern 186), fragmented and imperfect relationships emerge. Therefore, "the limitation of human consciousness" that Beckett portrays in *Trilogy* appears "as a factor separating [man] from the universe" (Szanto 9) and from one another. Hence "that irremediable solitude to which every human being is condemned" (Beckett 46).

Different from Camus, Beckett also deals with the problem of identity leading to a sense of alienation in *Trilogy*. In fact, Camus's and Beckett's concepts of the self are similar to each other because for both the self is elusive, so man is a stranger not only to others but also to himself. Camus mentions this problem in *Le Mythe*, saying:

> …if I try to define and summarize it, it is nothing but water slipping through my fingers. I can sketch one by one all the aspects it is able to assume, all those likewise that have been attributed to it, this upbringing, this origin, this ardour or these silences, this nobility or this vileness. But aspects cannot be added up. This very heart which is mine will forever remain indefinable to me. Between the certainty I have of my existence and the content I try to give to that assurance, the gap will never be filled. Forever I shall be a stranger to myself (1955: 14).

However, in Camus the elusiveness of the self does not seem to be probed into consistently, while in Beckett it is a theme consistently dealt with.

Man has always been in search of the answer to the question, "Who am I?" Nevertheless, as Beckett emphasizes in *Trilogy* man is fated to failure in his search for his self since self is not fixed but fluid and indefinable. As Esslin argues, in Beckett's work, the problem is one "of ever-changing identity of the self [through time] … [so] the self at one moment in time is confronted with its earlier incarnation only to find it utterly strange" (79). It is impossible to capture the self which is in a continuous "process of renovation and destruction that occurs with change in time" (Esslin 70), and only death can put an end to this otherwise never-ending process. Therefore, it is utterly impossible to know others, either who are in a continuous process of change.

The author-narrators of *Trilogy* are also alienated characters, confined in a room, which may be symbolic of their confinement in their consciousness. Moreover, their deteriorating health enhances their isolation. For example, Molloy, the protagonist of the first half of *Molloy*, is a "bitter, aged, passive invalid" (Pultar 2), staying in a room in an asylum, which he thinks is his mother's room. He has no contact with anybody, except with a man, most probably an editor, who visits him

once a week. The man gives him money and takes his writings with him. So, Molloy has only a business relationship with his sole visitor he refers to as "he", for he does not know even his name, which indicates the extent of his isolation: "When he comes for the fresh pages he brings back the previous week's. They are marked with signs I don't understand. Anyway I don't read them. When I've done nothing he gives me nothing, he scolds me" (7). He seems unwilling to write because all he wants is "to speak of the things that are left, say … [his] good-byes, finish dying" (7), but he has to go on writing, for "they don't want it" (7). He has no other alternative than writing the tale "they" ask him to, the tale of the events that took place before he found himself in his mother's room. Thus, "the tale he is commissioned to write is in reality a retrospection. The events narrated have all taken place in the past" (Pultar 10). Therefore, throughout the narrative he attempts to revise his past experiences and make sense of them, which he fails continuously since there are lots of questions unanswered in his mind. "For example my mother's death. Was she already dead when I came? Or did she only die later? … I don't know. Perhaps they haven't buried her yet" (7-8). Furthermore, he does not know how he came there: "I don't know how I got there. Perhaps in an ambulance, certainly a vehicle of some kind. I was helped. I'd never have got there alone" (7). Molloy is also unable to make sense of past events. For instance, he says that he was sitting on a slope and watching two men whose ways intersected just before he came to the decision to search for his mother, but he has no idea why he was there: "… what was I doing there, and why come? These are things that we shall try to discover" (14). Thus, both present and past events are hardly comprehensible to him due to "the limitation of human consciousness", which alienates man from the world and results in imperfect relationships.

In the retrospective tale that Molloy tells, one realizes that one of the major causes of Molloy's alienation is his lucidity. Molloy is a typical absurd hero, who is aware that the world is an irrational place, and therefore "there is a little of everything, apparently, in nature, and freaks are common" (14). He can be certain of nothing in this irrational world, even of the directions: "I confuse east and west, the poles too, I invert them readily" (20). His confusion of directions may also be symbolic of man's confusion in the face of the irrationality and his consequent sense of exile. Moreover, as an absurd hero he does not believe in the fixed criteria by

which one can judge something as right or wrong. For example, when he contemplates on propriety, he voices his doubt about the rules as follows : "On this subject I had only negative and empirical notions, which means that I was in the dark, most of the time, and all the more completely as a lifetime observation had left me doubting the possibility of systematic decorum, even within a limited area" (25). This is the predicament of the lucid man, which leads to his alienation from the world he has difficulty in comprehending.

Molloy is also bitterly aware that man is condemned to be alone, no matter how conflicting it is with his need for love, so "[you endure loneliness] until the day when, your endurance gone, in this world for you without arms, you catch up in yours the first mangy cur you meet, carry it the time needed for it to love you and you it, then throw it away" (12). Nevertheless, he sometimes feels a strong urge for human company, "craving for a fellow" (15). Therefore, as he watches the passer-by from the slope, he feels "the temptation to get up and follow him … so as to know him better, be … [himself] less lonely," but instead he "watch[es] him recede" (11). The extent of Molloy's alienation can also be observed in his reaction to being touched by the policeman: "He gave me a shove. I had been touched, oh not my skin, but none the less my skin felt it, it had felt a man's hard fist, through its coverings." The policeman does not touch him in a friendly manner at all, but it is a "golden moment" for Molloy, who feels "as if … [he] had been someone else" (21) because he feels the touch of another human being, reminding him that he exists.

When Molloy's relationships in the past are examined, it is observed that they are all imperfect relationships, none of which is based on love, affection, or understanding. For example, his relationship with his mother is limited to the "code" system he invented, for his mother is "as deaf as a post" (18). He attempts to communicate with his mother "by knocking on her skull. One knock meant yes, two no, three I don't know, four money, five goodbye" (18); however, even this is sometimes a failure since both of them confuse the numbers:

> I was hard put to ram this code into her ruined and frantic understanding, but I did it, in the end. That she should confuse yes, no, I don't know, goodbye, was all the same to me, I confused them myself (18).

For Molloy it is highly important that she learn the meaning of four knocks since this means money. Therefore, Molloy tries hard to teach her the meaning of four knocks,

but he fails. Finally, he finds a solution, which "consisted in replacing the four knocks of my index knuckle by one or more … thumps of the fist, on her skull. That she understood" (18). There is no place for emotional discourse in Molloy's code of communication with his mother, whom he calls "poor old uniparous whore" (19) because he considers her responsible for his present state. He regards her as the cause of his life-long suffering and alienation because she brought him into the world. There is only one reason why he does not "think too harshly of her" (19): she tried to end her pregnancy, and it was unfortunate of Molloy that she failed: "I don't think too harshly of her. I know she did all she could not to have me, except of course the one thing" (19). She did everything not to have Molloy, "except the one thing": she had sex with his father, and that is why Molloy sees her responsible for his condition. Nevertheless, she did not make the same mistake again at least, and Molloy gives "her credit for not having done it again, thanks to … [him], or for having stopped in time, when she did" (19). Thus, although he does not hate his mother, he does not have a loving relationship with her, either.

Although Molloy decides to go and see his mother, he has no specific reasons for that:

> I needed, before I could resolve to go and see that woman, reasons of an urgent nature, and with such reasons, since I did not know what to do, or where to go, it was child's play for me, the play of an only child, to fill my mind until it was rid of all other preoccupation and I seized with a trembling at the mere idea of being hindered from going there, I mean to my mother, there and then (16).

Also, as the time passes, he starts forgetting about the goal of his quest and his reasons which he never reveals, if there are any: "It came back to my mind, from nowhere … that I had set out to see my mother, at the beginning of this ending day. My reasons? I had forgotten them" (27). Then, one tends to think that the quest itself rather than the goal of the quest is significant, and that the quest must have a function because not the reasons of the quest but the quest itself is in the foreground. It is observed that in the course of the quest Molloy gets much more alienated than before, as he ends up a helpless invalid, utterly isolated from the world outside. Thus, one of the functions of the quest may be the depiction of the process of Molloy's alienation, and his alienation, according to Pultar, "makes him an illustrative character," for "he is a device used to portray the human condition" (21).

Molloy also mentions two women, with whom he gets into contact, but both relationships are very far away from being called healthy and normal. To illustrate, the relationship between Molloy and Lousse is a master-servant relationship, for Lousse wants Molloy to take the place of her dead dog and possess him as she possessed her dog: "I would as it were take the place of the dog I had killed, as it for her had taken the place of a child" (47). In a way, he would meet her need to love and to be loved as a pet does until it dies. His relationship with the old woman, who, he claims, makes him "acquainted with love" (56), but whose name he is not sure of, is greatly eccentric since everything about it goes against the conventional notion of love. For example, they meet "in a rubbish dump" (57), and the woman starts the relationship "when she laid her hand upon my fly. More precisely, I was bent double over a heap of muck … when she, undertaking me from behind, thrust her stick betweens my legs and began to titillate my privates" (57). Moreover, the woman pays Molloy "after each session" (57), which Molloy considers unnecessary because he "would have consented to know love, and probe it to the bottom, without charge" (57-58). Furthermore, love is reduced to a mechanical sexual relationship, devoid of affection and romance. This is the only kind of love that Molloy can experience in the Beckettian universe, and therefore he thinks it is love:

> She had a hole between her legs, oh not the bunghole I had always imagined, but a slit, and in this I put, or rather she put, my so-called virile member, not without difficulty, and I toiled and moiled until I discharged or gave up trying or was begged by her to stop. A mug's game in my opinion and tiring on top of that, in the long run. But I lent myself to it with a good enough grace, knowing it was love, for she had told me so (56-57).

In fact, Beckett seems to downgrade the relationship between them deliberately in order to mock the idealization of the concept of romantic, or true love. This is the only kind of love his characters are capable of experiencing.

In *Molloy*, Beckett also deals with the problem of the elusiveness of the self leading to self-alienation. For example, Molloy's self-alienation is observed in his failure to remember his name and surname in the police station, which is symbolic of his identity problem. Besides, he admits that he frequently forgets who he is and feels as if he were a stranger to himself:

> I had forgotten who I was (excusably) and spoken of myself as I would have of mother, if I had been compelled to speak of another. Yes it sometimes happens and will sometimes happen again that I forget who I am and strut before my eyes, like a stranger (42).

Beckett also seems to mock "the official patterns of self-identification, of naming and numbering" as Friedman argues (57) through Molloy's failure to remember his name and surname. Besides, the misunderstanding taking place between the policeman and Molloy when the policeman asks for Molloy's papers is also an example to the parody of such patterns. Molloy misunderstands the police because he "had no papers in the sense this word had a sense for … [the policeman]: "Your papers, he said, I knew it a moment later. Not at all, I said, not at all. Your papers! he cried. Ah my papers. Now the only papers I carry with me are bits of newspaper, to wipe myself, you understand, when I have a stool. … In a panic I took this paper from my pocket and thrust it under his nose" (21).

Different from Molloy, Moran, the author-narrator of the second half, is not an isolated character from the start, for he has quite a regular and conventional life. Unlike Molloy, he lives in his own house with his son and Martha, the maid, in a community, of which he is a member. As Pultar indicates, he is "a church going bourgeois able to afford domestic help, living in a community with neighbours, holding value judgments that favour decorum, exactitude, punctuality" (17). He is a man leading a complacent and conventional life, as observed in his description of one of his typical Sundays:

> The weather was fine. I watched absently the coming and going of my bees. I heard on the gravel the scampering steps of my son, caught up in I know not what fantasy of flight and pursuit. I called to him not to dirty himself. He did not answer.
> All was still. Not a breath. From my neighbours' chimneys the smoke rose straight and blue. None but tranquil sounds, the clicking of mallet and ball, a rake on pebbles, a distant lawn-mower, the bell of my beloved church. And birds of course, blackbird and thrush, their song sadly dying, vanquished by the heat, and leaving dawn's high boughs for the bushes' gloom. Contentedly I inhaled the scent of my lemon-verbena (93).

However, these are his "last moments of peace and happiness" (93) which will soon end with the arrival of Gaber, the messenger, delivering Moran's mission.

Moran is an "agent" and his new mission is to seek and find Molloy; therefore, the rest of the narrative is a retrospective tale, like that of Molloy, recounting his unsuccessful quest for Molloy. Moran says that he is writing a report that Youdi, one of his "employers," orders him to write about the events taking place during his failed quest. In the report Moran writes, one can view the great change in his character and his view of the world, which makes him as alienated as Molloy in

the end. Thus, like Clamence and the Oran people, Moran becomes an exile after his recognition of the absurd.

Moran shows the first signs of his change as soon as Gaber leaves. For example, when he misses mass, due to the unexpected arrival of Gaber, he feels terribly disturbed, and decides to ask Father Ambrose for a private communion. However, the communion does not have the expected effect on Moran, which surprises and disappoints him: "The host, it is only fair to say, was lying heavy on my stomach. And as I made my way home I felt like the one who, having swallowed a pain-killer, is at first astonished, then indignant, on obtaining no relief" (102). Besides, this great change he is going through is accompanied by self-alienation since he turns into a stranger to himself. He starts losing his self-control, so his "methodical mind" does not function as it used to. When he tries to plan the steps in the Molloy affair, he realizes that he is making plans out of their proper order, which terrifies him:

> I had a methodical mind and never set out on a mission without prolonged reflection as to the best way of setting out. It was the first problem to solve, at the outset of each enquiry, and I never moved until I had solved it to my satisfaction. …But if I was in the habit of first settling this delicate question of transport, it was never without having … at least taken into account the factors on which it depended. For how can you decide on the way of setting out if you do not first know where you are going, or at least with what purpose you are going there? But in the present case I was tackling the problem of transport with no other preparation than the languid cognizance I had taken of Gaber's report. … To try and solve the problem of transport under such conditions was madness. Yet that was what I was doing. I was losing my head already (98-99).

He is bewildered by the change coming over him, and for a man like Moran, "who prides himself on having abhorred vagueness …, on having a methodical mind" (Kern 196), it is terrible not to understand: "I could not understand what was happening to me. I found it painful at that period not to understand. I tried to pull myself together. In vain" (102-103). Thus, he starts losing his touch with his familiar self and with the world, which was once familiar to him, and this causes him to feel greatly anxious: "The colour and weight of the world were changing already, soon I would have to admit I was anxious" (97). He also feels confused, for irrationality approaches him and invades him everywhere, not only from the outside but also from within" (Kern 198). He feels "a great confusion coming over … [him]" (98), and "what it was all about … [he] had not the slightest idea" (114). Thus, "such is Moran, or such at any rate is Moran within an hour of having heard of Molloy" (Kenner 98).

He starts resembling Molloy more and more both physically and mentally, and this is just the opposite of the former Moran. He feels that he is "nothing but uproar, bulk, rage, suffocation, effort, unceasing, frenzied, and vain, just the opposite of … [himself]" (155).

Since Moran seems to know that the cause of all this painful change in him is "the Molloy affair," he avoids thinking about the affair seriously: "And I am all the more surprised as such light-mindedness was not like me. Or was it in order to win a few more moments of peace that I instinctively avoided giving my mind to it?" (97). He even considers giving up the case, but he cannot: "I had already accepted it, I had given my word. Too late" (106). It is indeed "too late" for Moran to return to his old mode of existence "governed by reason, discipline, and above all, habit" (Kern 196). Once he has accepted the Molloy affair, his world begins to crumble, and "it is as though preoccupation with Molloy has the power to make familiar liaisons with familiar reality dissolve" (Kenner 97).

What Beckett discusses in his work on Proust with regard to habit appears to be quite related to the nature of the experience that Moran goes through. Beckett says in *Proust*:

> the creation of the world did not take place once and for all time, but takes place everyday. Habit … is the generic term for the countless treaties concluded between countless subjects that constitute the individual and their countless correlative objects (1931: 8).

Beckett argues that the individual wraps himself in the comfort and security of habit which protects him from being exposed to the reality of his condition, and the cost is "the boredom of living," preferred to the suffering caused by facing the reality: "Such as it was, a minister of dullness, it was also an agent of security" (10). Nevertheless, when something unforeseen or unusual happens, habit "is incapable of dealing with" it (9) because "the old pact is out of date" (9). Therefore, "it must be continuously renewed" (8), and, according to Beckett, in the process of forming new habits according to new circumstances, the individual experiences "the suffering of being" (8): that is, "the free play of every faculty" (9). In this case, "habit may not be dead … but sleeping" (9), and Beckett calls such kind of experience "second and more fugitive experience" (9-10) in which lucidity comes to an end when "the pact" is renewed. He argues that "this second and more fugitive experience may or may not be exempt from pain. It does not inaugurate a period of transition" (9-10). On the

other hand, “the first and major mode is inseparable from suffering and anxiety – the suffering of the dying and the jealous anxiety of the ousted” (10). To Beckett, when habit stops doing its duty of securing man from recognising his condition, the result is “suffering and anxiety” as Moran experiences because “the old ego dies hard” (10). Moran’s murder of the man whom he meets in the forest, and who resembles him a lot may be symbolic of the death of Moran’s old ego: “I regret to say [the face] vaguely resembled my own, less the refinement of course, same little abortive moustache, same little ferrety eyes, same paraphimosis of the nose, and a thin red mouth that looked as if it was raw from trying to shit its tongue” (151). But, the man does not resemble Moran after he kills him: “he no longer resembled me” (152). So, with the death of his former self, Moran starts resembling Molloy much more, and similar to Molloy, he also experiences steady physical disintegration. Moreover, there seems to be a parallel between Moran’s awakening to the reality of his condition and his physical deterioration because as he changes spiritually, he also goes through a physical transformation. For example, at the beginning of the journey, when the change in him has just started, he suddenly has a sharp pain in his knee, and at the end of the journey, when he has opened his eyes fully to reality, he has to use crutches, since he is lame in one leg. One tends to consider the parallel between the two points symbolic of Moran’s gradual alienation as he awakens spiritually because as Pultar states, “his losing his physical strength brought along alienation” (21). Pultar also points out that “the chilling solitude, the state of the outcastness and the deeply entrenched, unassailable alienation is worsened, as his son, without whom the disabled Moran is unable to go anywhere, abandons him” (26). So, he is utterly alone “in this God-forsaken place” (150), lost and helpless. He searches his way through the forest the whole winter to return home upon Youdi’s order, and he reaches home in the end. However, as everything else in Moran’s world, it has also greatly changed for the worse. For instance, he finds his hens and bees dead, his house deserted and in darkness, which appears to be symbolic of the crumbling of his old complacent bourgeois self and life.

Malone, the protagonist of *Malone Dies*, is also an alienated character like Molloy and Moran. He is an old man, who is staying in a room in an obscure place for an unspecified period of time, and as the title suggests, he is waiting for his end to come. Like Molloy and Malone, he is confined in a room, but different from Molloy

and Malone, he is never seen in the outside world. The reader learns something about his past life only when he refers to some events in the past; for example, he was a wanderer without a home like Molloy since he says, "I have been walking except the first few months and since I have been here" (183). Unlike Moran, he has never lived in a social environment or become a member of such a group. He has been on his own most of the time, but now he is utterly isolated from the outside world, for he has no contact with it. Because he is an invalid, he continuously stays in bed, and tries to see the outside world from his bed: "My bed is by the window. I lie turned towards it most of the time. I see roofs and sky, a glimpse of street too, if I crane" (184). Besides, the old woman who brings Malone his soup stops doing so. Therefore, he sees nobody, except a hand delivering the soup.

Similar to that of Molloy, Malone's confinement in a room is also symbolic of his withdrawal to his consciousness, but this implication is more obvious here because from time to time Malone has the feeling that the room he stays in resembles a skull:

> It is never light in this place, never really light. The light is there, outside, the air sparkles, the granite wall across the way glitters with all its mica, the light is against my window, but it does not come through. So that here all bathes, I will not say in shadow, nor even in half-shadow, but in a kind of leaden light that makes no shadow, so that it is hard to say from what direction it comes, for it seems to come from all directions at once, and with equal force (221).

The colour of the room is also similar to that of a skull because it is a "kind of grey incandescence" (221). Therefore, "sometimes it seems to me I am in a head and that these eight, no six, these six planes that enclose me are of solid bone" (222). As Barge states, the reader witnesses "the gradual transformation of the room … to an area resembling the skeletal enclosure of the human brain" (169-170). The limitation of human consciousness resulting in alienation is emphasized in *Malone Dies*, too because like Molloy and Moran, Malone is unsure of many things about his present and past state. For instance, while describing his present state, there are a number of unclear points in his mind, concerning where he is staying and how he was brought there:

> Perhaps I came in for the room on the death of whoever was in it before me. I enquire no further in any case. It is not a room in a hospital, or in a madhouse, I can feel that. … And when I look out of the window it is clear to me from certain signs, that I am not in a house of rest in any sense of the word. … I do not remember how I got there. In an ambulance perhaps, a vehicle of some kind" (183).

He attempts to remember where he was and what he was doing just before he lost his consciousness, but they are all vague: "But perhaps I was stunned with a blow, on the head, in a forest perhaps, yes now that I speak of a forest I vaguely remember a forest" (184). Hence, as the word "perhaps" that Malone uses frequently like the other trilogy protagonists shows, everything is uncertain, which alienates him from the outside world because like Molloy and Moran, he fails to establish meaningful links between the world and himself.

Beckett's disbelief in the possibility of sincere and healthy relationships is observed in *Malone Dies*, too. Man is doomed to isolation, for he is incapable of comprehending the world and others. Hence man is fated to failure in his attempt to communicate and relate to others as Malone's failure in getting close to others in the past illustrates. For example, he had an affair with a man called Jackson for a while, which ended in failure like his other relationships:

> I could have put up with him as a friend, but unfortunately he found me disgusting, as did Johnson, Wilson, Nicholson, Watson, and all other Whoresons. I then tried, for a space, to lay hold of a kindred spirit among the inferior races, red yellow, chocolate, and so on. And if the plague-stricken had been less difficult of access I would have intruded on them too, ogling, sidling, leering, ineffing and conating, my heart palpitating. With the insane too I failed, by a hair's breadth (219).

When he was young, he was naïve enough to believe that he would find someone whom he would be close to, but years have taught him the opposite: "That must have been when I was still looking for someone to be faithful to me, and for me to be faithful to" (218).

Like the previous trilogy protagonists, Malone also experiences the problem of identity of the self and self-alienation. As stated before, the self is not fixed but elusive. It is in a continuous process of change, so as Malone says, "A man changes. As he gets on" (202). Therefore, it is impossible to capture the self, which will always be one step ahead of one. Malone is also aware that only death will put an end to his life-long search for the self, so he seems to welcome death: "the search for myself is ended. I am buried in the world, I knew I would find my place one day, the old world cloisters me, victorious. I am happy, I knew I would be happy one day" (199). When he imagines himself dead, he feels peaceful and happy because his consciousness will stop existing, and this life-long struggle will come to an end. Unless it ceases to exist, it will go on with its quest, which is always doomed to failure:

> It is there I die, unbeknown to my stupid flesh. That which is seen, that which cries and writhes, my witless remains. Somewhere in this turmoil thought struggles on, if too wide on the mark. It too seeks me, as it always has, where I am not to be found (187).

The impossibility of capturing the self gives rise to self-alienation in *Malone Dies*, as well, as Malone's alienation from his body implies. For instance, he feels as if his whole body dilated, and

> notably my feet, which even in the ordinary way are so much further from … me than all the rest, from my head I mean, for that is where I am fled, my feet are leagues away. … Strange, I don't feel my feet any more, my feet feel nothing any more, and a mercy it is. And yet I feel they are beyond the range of the most powerful telescope. ... And similarly for the rest (234-235).

As seen, he conceives himself as totally dismembered and has lost his touch with his whole body, which may be regarded as the extreme point of self-alienation.

Malone's sense of self-alienation becomes clear in the stories he is writing in order to pass the time while waiting for death. To illustrate, his first story is about a boy called Sapo, who has problems in comprehending himself like Malone because "he could make no meaning of the babel raging in his head, the doubts, desires, imaginings, and dreads" (193), so like his creator, he has no idea "what manner of being he was" (193), for he is a stranger to himself. Sapo also has problems in comprehending the world, but Malone makes his character equipped with the "courage and strength" necessary to resist living "vanquished, blindly, in a mad world, in the midst of strangers" (193). However, it is seen that it is all futile when Malone starts writing about Sapo's old age. After disappearing for so many years, Sapo, whom Malone now decides to call Macmann, meaning son of man, reappears as an old inmate just like his creator, and he stays in a room in an asylum. Thus, years have brought Macmann to the same point as Malone: man is doomed to living "vanquished, blindly, in a mad world, in the midst of strangers" (193). As Ben-Zvi points out, "the fictional world … [Malone] created in many ways resembles his own" (94).

The gradual alienation of the previous trilogy characters reaches its peak in *The Unnamable*, and the sense of increasing alienation as *Trilogy* progresses is reinforced by the "progressive reduction ... [in] places, people, events, things, and words themselves" (Cohn 113). As Cohn argues, there is a very systematic reduction in *Trilogy*, and the function of this reduction is to "probe with increasing intensity

into the nature of man" (79). In other words, the withdrawal of the character "within his problematic self" (Cohn 113) and his increasing alienation are symbolized by the gradual reduction. To illustrate this gradual reduction taking place as the trilogy progresses, Barge points to "the wandering journeys of Molloy and Moran … [becoming] the limited movements in bed of Malone, which, in turn become the fixed stasis of the Unnamable" (218). There is a severe reduction in setting since the "place changes from wild forests, curving roads, strange cities, and nostalgic gardens to a single bed in some unidentified dwelling to whatever microcosmic space the Unnamable inhabits" (Barge 218). Along with reduction, there is also a gradual increase in the uncertainty that the protagonists feel concerning the place, the nature of the events, and their identity, and this reduction resulting in uncertainty also reaches the maximum in *The Unnamable*, as the opening questions of the Unnamable display: "Where now? Who now? When now?" (293). Reduction gives way to uncertainty on the part of both the reader and the character, and in each volume, all these issues become much more vague and unrecognizable at last in *The Unnamable*. Lyons argues that "the absence of details that would place Beckett's tramps in a plausible or historically specific situation often causes ... [the reader] to perceive them as charged, symbolic figures, as twentieth-century everymen" (44). To put it differently, reduction leads to uncertainty, which gives way to generalization, and turns the protagonists to everymen representing the human condition.

The gradual reduction in *Trilogy* also gives the sense that the trilogy characters stand for different stages of the same person, and as *Trilogy* progresses, he is confined in his consciousness more and more. In other words, the reader comes across a much more alienated character than before in each following volume. Thus, as Cohn argues,

> from moving among people with name and function to meeting briefly with nameless figures, the protagonist withdraws within his problematic self. From volume to volume of the trilogy the protagonist-narrator concentrates more demandingly upon himself (113).

In each volume the protagonist is involved in a quest, the quest for the central self, but while in the first and second stages, he looks for the object of his quest in the outside world, in the third stage, he tries to find it through art, but in the final stage, when he fails in all his quests, he has nothing to do except completely withdraw

within his mind and look for his central self in his consciousness. Thus, there is simultaneously a movement towards the inward of the character and increasing reduction in each volume.

If these four protagonists are considered four different stages of the same person, Moran should stand for the first stage representing man's state before and after recognizing the absurd and his gradual and painful transformation once the illusion is broken. As mentioned before, Moran is a typical middle-class man who lives complacently in quite a traditional social setting at the beginning, and he is the only one who has both a name and a surname: Jacques Moran. However, as stated earlier, as a result of the transformation he undergoes, he turns into Molloy, who is regarded by many critics as the later version of Moran, and the sense of alienation and uncertainty grows as he becomes Molloy. Besides, the traditional setting of which he is a part also crumbles. Moran seems to have carried the seeds of his later version within himself, as his intuition telling him that he has always known Molloy implies. Secondly, Molloy's present setting is a room, which is supposed to be his mother's. At this stage, he is not only emotionally but also physically isolated from the outside world. Parallel to the growing alienation, his physical condition gets worse than that of Moran, for he becomes an invalid. Moreover, his life, before he is brought to this room, has also been quite an isolated one since all his life he has been a tramp, and has never been a part of a social setting, unlike Moran. Contrary to Moran, Molloy cannot be sure of his name when asked. He does not have even an identification card, the most simple document justifying his existence. With Malone, the uncertainty and isolation grow, for he is confined in a room in an obscure place, and the room gradually resembles a skull, symbolic of his withdrawal to his mind. As Barge argues, Malone's "physical withdrawal from the macrocosm foreshadows the final pattern of the Unnamable's desperate plunge into the core of consciousness" (218).

It is observed that the Unnamable is completely withdrawn within his mind, and therefore he has no contact with the outside world, which makes him the most alienated protagonist of the trilogy. The reader has information about neither his identity nor the space and time he lives in since unlike his predecessors he does not report anything about what he sees or experiences in the outside world. Furthermore, he starts his long speech by asking questions, and he does not know the answers to

these questions either. Thus, of all the trilogy characters he is the one who is most unsure about his state. Like the previous protagonists, he is involved in a quest; Molloy's quest for his mother, Moran's for Molloy, and Malone's for the completion of his stories, and all these quests have the same underlying goal: search for the self, which is doomed to failure. The Unnamable is involved in the same quest, but different from the others, he presents the goal of his quest very clearly: he will try to name that part of himself that has remained unnamable so far. For instance, he is determined "to speak of things of which [he] cannot speak" (294), and he is aware that what he intends to do is terribly challenging, so "the best would be not to begin. But I have to begin. That is to say I have to go on" (294). The Unnamable is involved in the same quest, but he is the only one who looks for the object of his quest in his consciousness. Therefore, as Barge states, the fictional space is the "narrow sphere of … [the Unnamable's] own self consciousness (218), and that is why he has no contact with the outside world. He is involved in a "journey inward toward what we may call the core of consciousness" (Barge 211). For example, he says, "sometimes I say to myself I am in a head" (353), and the place he inhabits also resembles a skull. It is a twilight place with "dim intermittent lights" (295), and he finds them quite strange:

> These lights, for instance, which I do not require to mean anything, what is there so strange about them, so wrong? Is it their irregularity, their instability, their shining one minute and weak the next, but never beyond the power of one or two candles? (296).

Besides, the grey pervading the place also reminds one of the interior of the skull: "Close to me it is grey, dimly transparent, and beyond that charmed circle deepens and spreads its impenetrable veils" (302). It is a timeless place like one's consciousness in which the past, the present, and the future merge into one another. The Unnamable points out, "there are no days here" (295). Since there is no time here, there is no change either, and therefore, "nothing has ever changed since I have been here" (295). Living in a timeless place where he is "incapable of measuring time" (301), he feels as if he were "situated in forever" (Barge 219). He says, "I have always been sitting here, at this selfsame spot" (293). The idea of being enclosed within his head also gives him the sense of safety, as if it were a shelter to him from the outside world: "And sometimes I say to myself I am in a head, its terror makes me say it, and the longing to be in safety surrounded on all sides by a massive bone"

(353). The outside world is threatening to him with its uncertainty and irrationality, which alienates him and makes him withdraw to his mind.

As stated before, the object of the Unnamable's quest is the same as that of the previous characters: the central self, and the tool he uses in searching for his self is neither external objects nor art. Since he is totally confined in his consciousness, all he has are words, so as Barge argues, "the Unnamable announces his purpose as simply being able to say 'I,' to speak about 'me,' and then to go silent" (214). He thinks that when he succeeds in speaking about himself, he will have reached his goal "of isolating and defining 'me, for the first time'" (Barge 215). However, his failure is inevitable because "the nature of the task defeats any possibility of its accomplishment" (Barge 215). To put it differently, the Unnamable has to use language to search for his self, but "neither self nor world … [is] knowable through words, and yet we have only words with which to know" (Cohn 102). Although his only tool is language, it "is precisely that which prevents and blocks access to authentic selfhood" (Wright 81). From the start, the Unnamable is also aware of the challenge he has to face, and he "foreshadows his failure in his opening paragraph" as Barge points out (215): "I seem to speak, it is not I, about me, it is not about me" (293). He also seems to recognize that language will fall short in making him achieve his goal because of its "[in]adequacy of specific representation" (Barge 222). According to him, "it's quite hopeless" (293) because this futile discourse ... is not credited to me and brings me not a syllable nearer silence" (309). Thus, it is a "strange task, which consists in speaking of oneself" (313) when language itself is an obstacle to it. He has to speak of himself in order to find his self and achieve "silence and peace" (313) with "words … [that] swarm and jostle like ants, hastily, indifferent, bringing nothing, taking nothing away, too light to leave a mark" (358), so he calls language "babble" (351). As Barge puts forward, "in no other fiction by Beckett is the relation (or non-relation) between language and the self is set forth more directly" (222). Language fails to represent the "I" and "me" because there is always something surpassing them due to the slippery nature of the self. Therefore, it is impossible to fix the self through language. That is why "to go on means going from here, means finding me, losing me, vanishing and beginning again" (304). As soon as he thinks that he has found his self, he loses it again, as it is in the perpetual process of becoming. It is a never-ending process, and he will never be able to

achieve the silence he desires very much as long as he is alive; only death is capable of fixing the self. The self "can never be fixed and defined without thereby [being] deprived of its freedom, that is, of life" (Kern 211). In this case, it seems very futile to use the first person pronouns, and the Unnamable recognizes the futility of his continued use of … [them]" (Barge 216). He thinks that it does not matter which pronoun he uses because they are not different from one another, and he decides not to use them anymore, for "it's too farcical" (359). Nevertheless, he cannot help using them, and calls them "cursed" (345) because he sees through their inability to represent his self, which results in self alienation as observed in his following words: "About myself I need know nothing. Here all is clear. No all is not clear" (296). Throughout the book, he tries to speak about himself, but the problem is that he does not know anything about himself: "I shall speak of me" (305), "I, of whom I know nothing" (306), "I. Who might that be?" (339). According to Kern, self-alienation is unavoidable because the self "becomes a stranger ..., an object as soon as it is seen by an intelligence which classifies and judges it" (207). In other words, as soon as the Unnamable utters "I," his own "I becomes a me, [and] it becomes ultimately as unattainable as any other human reality" (211), but the Unnamable has no other alternative than that. Therefore, throughout the book he "struggles with the formlessness of first-person pronouns, an inability to use 'I' or 'me' with any adequacy of specific representation" (Barge 222) although he knows that he is doomed to failure.

3.2 The Irrationality of the Universe, God, and Death

Along with the theme of alienation, the irrationality of the universe is also a recurrent theme in the works of Camus and Beckett. The novels of both writers portray the universe as an irrational place, devoid of any ultimate meaning or any unifying principle, unlike the rationalists who regard the universe as a perfect mechanism in which everything can be rationally explained. For example, in *Le Mythe* Camus argues that man lives in an irrational and chaotic universe though he longs for clarity and unity:

> I want everything to be explained to me or nothing. ... The mind aroused by this insistence seeks and finds nothing but contradictions and nonsense. What I fail to

> understand is nonsense. The world is peopled with such irrationals. The world itself, whose single meaning I do not understand, is but a vast irrational" (1955: 20).

According to Camus, man's passion for unity and clarity can never be satisfied, for he lives in an irrational universe, and this is the basic cause of "human drama":

> To understand is ... to unify. The mind's deepest desire, even in its most elaborate operations, parallels man's unconscious feeling in the face of his universe: it is an insistence upon familiarity, an appetite for clarity. ... That nostalgia for unity, that appetite for the absolute illustrates the essential impulse of the human drama" (1955: 13).

Out of this unbridgeable gap between the human passion for clarity and the irrationality of the universe arises the feeling of absurdity, as Camus explains in *Le Mythe*: "The absurd is born of this confrontation between the human need and the unreasonable silence of the world. The irrational, the human nostalgia, and the absurd that is born of their encounter" (21).

Beckett also has a similar view concerning the terms of the feeling of absurdity, for in his work "the self ... [and] the world ...have been in opposition" (Kern 102). In other words, Beckett agrees with Camus that man's desire for understanding everything and unifying what he knows into one meaningful whole is doomed to frustration. As Brée points out,

> describing, reasoning, discussing, examining – Beckett's characters never tired of those activities ... They share our 'deplorable mania' only 'when something happens wanting to know what' but furthermore for wanting ... to know why (74).

Nevertheless, man's "quest for total surety is doomed to fail" (Ben-Zvi 69) because although man strives to reach the fundamental truth, the unifying principle underlying the working of the universe, the absence of absolutes makes it impossible. Thus, as Ben-Zvi states, there is an emphasis on "the rejection of the possibility of absolutes" in Beckett's work (39).

Camus and Beckett also deal with the question of God, religion, and death in relation with the irrationality of the universe in their work. As stated in the introduction, the awareness of man that he lives in a universe where there are no certainties, principles or absolutes stems from the decline of religious belief, on which both Camus and Beckett elaborate in their work. As absurdists, they do not believe in the divine order governing the working of the universe. On the contrary, what governs the world are chance and coincidences, so man lives in a mad world

where nothing is improbable. Therefore, making plans or arrangements for the future is futile, since man cannot control most of the things in his life, which leads to a sense of anxiety and fear.

In Camus's *L'Etranger*, the irrationality is displayed in two seemingly different but parallel dimensions: the irrationality of the universe as the macrocosm and that of society as the microcosm. In the novel, the irrationality of society corresponds to that of the universe with its arbitrary laws, rules, and rituals; and Meursault represents the absurd man who is aware of the irrationality of both the universe and the society he lives in. Therefore, he believes neither in God nor does he see any sense in life nor the validity of society's laws and customs. He is one of Camus's typical heroes who does not "believe ... in God, an afterlife, or any rationale in the workings of the universe" (Lazere 29).

When one reads Meursault's story and the events leading to his murdering the Arab and consequently to his disaster, one feels as Meursault does while he is being taken from the court to his prison cell. As they pass through the familiar streets on a summer day, Meursault thinks of the days when he used to feel happy:

> Yes, this was the time when, long ago, I used to feel happy. What always awaited me then was a night of easy, dreamless sleep. And yet something had changed, for with the prospect of the coming day, it was to my cell that I returned. As if a familiar journey under a summer sky could as easily end in prison as in innocent sleep (93-94).

Therefore, one agrees with Meursault when he says, "you never know what might happen" (104), as what governs the universe is chance, so one can, at any minute, be exposed to "the capricious twists of fate" (Lazere 10), which *L'Etranger* dramatizes. For example, Meursault could never know that he would shoot an Arab on such a pleasant day, but fate was ready to play its trick on him.

Meursault's neighbour, Raymond, is in trouble with the relatives of his ex-girlfriend because of his treatment of her. Raymond invites Meursault and Marie, Meursault's girlfriend, to the house of one of his friends for lunch on Sunday, and when they are on the beach after lunch, they come across the Arabs, the relatives of the girl. They fight, Raymond is wounded, and is taken to the doctor. After he comes back, he is in a bad mood, and he insists on going for a walk on the beach again. Meursault follows him, and they run into the Arabs again. Nothing happens this time,

but Raymond hands Meursault his revolver, and they return. However, Meursault is unwilling to return to the house:

> I went as far as the chalet with him, but while he climbed the wooden steps, I stayed at the bottom, with my head ringing from the sun, unable to face the effort of climbing the wooden staircase and having to confront the women again (58).

He has two choices: climbing the stairs or taking a walk on the beach. He chooses the latter quite lightheartedly, without knowing that such a seemingly ordinary decision will lead to his destruction at the end. Meursault in his answer to the prosecutor's question, "why return precisely to that spot?" tells the truth: "I said it was by chance" (85). The physical conditions, as well as the coincidences, play a significant role in Meursault's tragedy, and according to Lazere, this is an example of the absurdity of fate because if the physical conditions had been different, Meursault most probably would not have pulled the trigger: "The sun is the source both of Meursault's greatest pleasures when it is comfortably warm, as in the swimming scenes, and of his downfall when it is too hot," (160). This time it becomes one of the causes of his tragedy because when he comes across the Arab on the beach, it is unbearably hot, and "reacting only to his sensations of the moment to the pain in his head caused by the overpowering sun, and the glint of steal which he dimly perceives in the Arab's hands, he shoots" (Masters 26), as observed in Meursault's description of the moment:

> All I could feel were the cymbals the sun clashing against my forehead and, indistinctly, the dazzling spear still leaping up off the knife in front of me. It was like a red-hot blade gnawing at my eyelashes and gouging out my stinging eyes. That was when everything shook... my whole being went tense and I tightened my grip on the sun. The trigger gave, I felt the underside of the polished butt and it was there, in that sharp but deafening noise that it all started. I shook off the sweat and the sun. I realized that I'd destroyed the balance of the day and the perfect silence of the beach where I'd been happy. And I fired four more times at a lifeless body and the bullets sank without leaving a mark. And it was like giving four sharp knocks at the door of unhappiness (60).

Meursault would not have shot the Arab if the sun had not been so hot. Therefore, when he says that "it was because of the sun" (99), he tells the truth no matter how ridiculous it sounds to the audience in the court. Thus, the murder is really "a mishap" as Celéste, Meursault's friend, says in the court when he is asked what he thinks of Meursault's crime: "I think it was a mishap. A mishap, everyone knows what that is. You can't guard against that. So there you are! I think it was a

mishap" (89). As Lazere indicates, "the killing, then, is just one of those things that happen in a fatal universe, the four additional shots, Meursault's fatalistic affirmation that he is prepared to accept the consequences of this stroke of bad luck" (157).

Camus presents fate as capricious, irrational, and beyond control in *L'Etranger*. For instance, the nurse Meursault sees at the home, knitting silently in her corner, resembles the fate figure knitting its web, and once it is determined, "there is no way out" (22) as the nurse tells Meursault. The "capricious twists of fate" are dramatized through not only Meursault's situation but also the story of the Czech, who is murdered by his mother and sister unwittingly. The man has been away from home for a long time, and returns as a rich man, but he does not reveal his identity to make a surprise; however, he is killed by them for his money. Meursault's reaction to the story when he reads it shows that he has learned much about the ways of fate: "on the one hand, it was improbable. On the other, it was quite natural" (78). One hears or witnesses such "improbable" events in one's daily life and is terrified, but one also knows that "it is quite natural" since such "improbable" events always occur in life. Meursault also thinks that the man "deserved it really and that you should never play around" (78). Lazere asserts that Meursault "has similarly tempted fate by getting involved needlessly with the gunplay on the beach and will also pay with his life" (161). Meursault has learned that one should not tempt fate, and should always be on one's guard against its tricks, but it is too late.

As Camus explains in *Le Mythe*, death is one of the basic causes that renders life irrational and absurd because it makes all human endeavour meaningless and equally insignificant. It makes everything meaningless because it invalidates everything and stands as the single truth and single certainty, so "no code of ethics and no effort are justifiable a priori in the face of the cruel mathematics that command our condition" (12). As mentioned previously, Meursault is also aware of this fact, and that is why he believes that "you could never change your life" (44) because it always ends in the same way. Due to the same reason, he knows that he has no right to judge anybody, for death equalizes all ways of living: "in any case one life was as good as another" (44). Moreover, according to Camus, death makes human condition not only absurd but also unjust because man is sentenced to death for an unknown crime:

> Camus describes natural death, the ultimate absurdity, in two metaphors: 'the absurd walls' of the prison of mortality, and the verdict of guilty and death sentence that nature inevitable pronounces an every man without any reason and without any possibility of grace through a Last Judgment (Lazere 29).

That is why Meursault says that "the little automatic woman was just as guilty as the Parisian woman Masson had married or as Marie who wanted me to marry her" (116). They are all guilty of something they do not know, but the sentence is always the same: death. Thus, as Meursault remembers the nurse's words in prison, "no, there was no way out" (79).

In his prison cell, while waiting for his execution, Meursault reflects on death, and his first reaction is one of great fear very naturally. For instance, when he imagines being a free man, a spectator watching an execution, his "heart would suddenly be poisoned by a great flood of joy" (106). But, he feels great terror when he thinks of his approaching execution: "I'd feel so dreadfully cold that it would make me curl up inside my blanket. My teeth would be chattering uncontrollably" (106). At first, he thinks whether there is a way to avoid his execution and to escape from prison: "What interests me at the moment is trying to escape from the mechanism, trying to find if there is any way out of the inevitable" (104). However, as the time passes, he realizes that he will die sooner or later, so what is the use of escaping from prison? He will have postponed his death for a period of time, but he will never be able to avoid "the inevitable". He thinks, "it doesn't matter very much whether you die at thirty or at seventy" (109) because "given that you've got to die, it obviously doesn't matter exactly how or when" (109). Therefore, as Lazere argues, "in spite of his awareness that the court's guilty verdict is absurdly arbitrary, he is eventually able to resign himself to it, because he recognizes that every death is an arbitrary guilty verdict" (162). With this recognition, his love of life reaches its peak because he is aware that he has a limited time, and that each second of it is very precious. So, "his impending death ... makes him passionately appreciate the life he must give up" (Lazere 35). For example, when the chaplain visits him, despite Meursault's refusal to see him, he tries to convince Meursault to believe in God, but for Meursault, it is just a waste of time, and his time is so limited that he does not want to waste even one second of it:

> every man that I've known in your position has turned towards Him! I remarked that it was up to them. It also proved that they could spare time. As for me, time was the very thing I didn't have for taking an interest in what didn't interest me (112).

He understands now why his mother got engaged to a man when she was so close to death. Her approaching death made her totally indifferent to society's judgment and arbitrary values, and all she wanted was to make the most of the time she had. Meursault feels just like his mother, and at this point his feelings are very similar to those of the condemned man described in *Le Mythe* because he has "the divine availability of the condemned man before whom the prison doors open in a certain early dawn, that unbelievable disinterestedness with regard to everything except for the pure flame of life" (1955: 44). Meursault achieves this state of mind with his full awareness of death. To Camus, this is the ideal state of mind, which all men should aspire to, and which can be achieved by a total consciousness of one's mortality.

As stated earlier, in *L'Etranger*, the irrationality of not only the universe but also the society is demonstrated through Meursault's crime and execution. Meursault's crime shows that not logic or reason but chance and coincidences govern the course of one's life, so one can be exposed to anything at any minute. Similarly, the society in *L'Etranger* is presented as one that is as irrational as the universe through its treatment of Meursault's case. It sends a man to death when he fails to conform to its laws and share its myths since he threatens the unity of society, which is, in fact, based on arbitrary rules and values. As Lazere points out, "the irony of society's judgment ... is that underneath the superficial rationality of its workings it is based on ridiculously arbitrary values" (162). However, society, as observed in *L'Etranger*, regards its own laws and rules as absolutely right, and any behavior that contradicts those laws and rules is judged wrong. When those laws and rules are examined, their arbitrariness becomes obvious. For example, in the novel, a son is expected to demonstrate his sorrow outwardly, and if he smokes or drinks coffee during this period of mourning, it shows that he is not upset enough to be a good son. Thus, if a person does not follow the fixed patterns of behavior determined by the society, he becomes an outsider whom the society should eliminate in one way or another, as one sees in Meursault's situation. But, in all these rules and laws, a very important part, the why part, is missing. To put it differently, the question why one should follow those fixed behavior patterns in order to be a "good" member of

society remains unanswered. Hence the irrationality of the society corresponding to that of the universe. However, there is a very important difference between the two, which Lazere indicates: "society as Camus portrays it is as duplicitous, and lethal as fate, with one vital difference: fate makes no claim to rationality, while society does make one" (161).

The trial gives the reader an opportunity to examine the society Meursault lives in very closely, and from the beginning to the end, its most basic characteristic seems to be its absolute reliance on rationality and on the existence of the divine order in the universe. The universe is regarded as a flawless mechanism by the society since God created it as a perfect one. So, rationality is the backbone of the system, and they believe that there is nothing that cannot be rationally explained. Owing to this fact, there are no such things as inexplicable situations or unmotivated behaviour; the lack of causal connections cannot even be imagined. However, Meursault's case points to just the opposite of everything they consider unquestionable. To illustrate, "Meursault shows that the immediate senses can dictate human behavior as much as logical decision [and] [t]his is a truth which society cannot afford to face. There must always be a reason, not simply an explanation, otherwise upon what logic is the social organism based?" (Masters 30). The examining magistrate, for instance, desperately tries to learn why Meursault fired four additional shots at the lifeless body, and he cannot bring himself to believe that Meursault himself does not know the reason:

> "Why did you pause between the first and the second shot?' he said. Once again I saw the red beach in front of me and felt the burning sun on my forehead. But this time I didn't answer. Throughout the silence which followed, the magistrate looked flustered. He sat down, ran his fingers through his hair, put his elbows on his desk and leaned slightly towards me with a strange expression on his face. 'Why, why did you fire at a dead body?' Once again I didn't know what to answer.
> The magistrate wiped his hands across his forehead and repeated his question in a slightly broken voice, 'Why? You must tell me. Why?' I still didn't say anything (67).

Like the examining magistrate, the judge cannot accept that there were no "clear-cut motivations" (Braun 62) for Meursault's crime, so when Meursault says that he had not intended to kill the Arab, the judge hopes to hear the reasons for the murder, but Meursault's answer is greatly disappointing, for he says "it was because of the sun" (99). Meursault's answer shows the unbridgeable gulf between Meursault and society because Meursault is an absurd man, who, unlike society, is aware of the fact that

"there need not be a reason for everything" (Masters 31); he is lucid about the absurdity of human condition. It is out of question for the court and the jury to recognize this absurdity because it would be the denial of everything they have believed to be true.

Meursault also threatens their belief system. Belief in God is the essential thing that gives purpose and meaning to their lives. Besides, they believe that there is a divine power that governs the universe, which means that everything has a reason. So it is the basis of the rationality they strictly adhere to. In fact, the society portrayed in *L'Etranger* is composed of individuals who choose to evade the absurd awakening, and delude themselves. According to Camus, "the typical act of eluding, the fatal evasion ... is hope. Hope of another life one must 'deserve' or trickery of those who live not for life itself but for some great idea that will transcend it, give it a meaning, and betray it" (1955: 7). Thus belief in God is a shield that protects man from the truth of his condition. Moreover, belief in God gives way to a belief in an after life which solves the problem of irrationality that man's mortality causes. Death is not the end of anything, and this life is just a preparation for another life, a better one. But, Masters points out, "sin, for Camus, would be to denigrate the life that we have and invent a better one, to refuse the present and hope for a future" (17). Nevertheless, everybody, except Meursault, commits this sin in *L'Etranger*. Only Meursault is aware that he has only this life, so every instant of it is too precious to waste, as observed in his talk with the chaplain:

> 'No, I can't believe you. You must surely at some time have wished for another life' I replied that naturally I had, but that it meant nothing more than wishing I was rich or could swim fast or had a better-shaped mouth. It was the same kind of thing. But he stopped me because he wanted to know how I imagined this other life. So I shouted at him, 'One which would remind me of this life' (114).

Here, Meursault represents the absurd man who is "devoid of hope [of another life] and conscious of being so" (1955: 24). Therefore, he "has ceased to belong to the future" (1955: 24). It is observed that both the chaplain and the examining magistrate make a lot of effort to persuade Meursault to believe in God, and they are terrified when they cannot achieve this because, as Lazere argues, "his denial of God before the examining magistrate questioning him about the murder, and later before the chaplain preceding his execution, threatens to undermine their lives" (153).

As a result, they decide to eliminate Meursault because he "threatens ... the very basis of their unity" (Masters 27) with "his character, his behaviour, and his crime, all [of which] emphasize the part of irrationality in the human condition" (Masters 30). Thus, Braun notes,

> the trial shows the absurd man as a victim of those who refuse, the absurdity of human condition. The court and jury refused to admit the possibility of an absurd crime, because it ruined their belief in rational ethics, self-control and eventually, the whole system of moral accountability (62).

In *La Peste*, the irrationality of the universe and of the human condition is presented through an epidemic, which "comes out of the blue" like "all disasters" (25) as the man whom Tarrou talks to states. The reason why Camus chooses a pestilence to present the irrationality is that it is something beyond man's control and comprehension. No one knows its origin and people can do very little to influence its course, so it is a "strange phenomenon whose scope could not be measured and whose origins escaped detection" (15). Thus, Camus displays the irrationality in its most extreme form through the plague. It comes out of an unknown origin all of a sudden, follows its own direction, crushes men, and stops inexplicably. Therefore, for Oran people "the confrontation with the plague is the confrontation with the incomprehensible" (Brée 16).

As stated earlier, before the plague enters their lives, the inhabitants of Oran lived quite complacently as typical mediocre middle-class people, but with the plague comes exile, suffering, and death to their lives. The situation of Oran people represents the human predicament since they represent all men, who are in exile in a universe which they cannot control or comprehend, so suffering accompanies their alienation, and death awaits them at the end of the road. All of a sudden, their lives are invaded by a force beyond their control and comprehension; therefore, they regard it as something impossible, for it is irrational. As Masters argues, "it is frequently referred to as an 'abstraction,' at which times it stands for all that passes the comprehension of men and threatens their happiness" (91). For example, on the one hand, they are terrified by the idea of the epidemic, and on the other, they cannot bring themselves to believe that such a thing is possible. Therefore, they are

> torn between conflicting fears and confidence that it is temporary. When a war breaks out, people say: 'It's too stupid; it can't last long.' But though a war may well be 'too stupid', that doesn't prevent its lasting. Stupidity has a knack of getting its way (34).

Before the plague, they believed that they had been living in a world in which everything was in their control, so they felt quite safe in their middle-class world. Thus, "they disbelieved in pestilences" (35) since it passes their understanding: "A pestilence isn't a thing made to man's measure; therefore we tell ourselves that pestilence is a mere bogy of the mind, a bad dream that will pass away" (35). Oran people "presupposed that pestilences were impossible" (35). In their world there can be nothing that they cannot control or understand. At this point, Camus seems to voice his ideas on the conflict between human desire to understand everything and the irrationality of the universe, and as he explains in *Le Mythe*, the absurd arises from their meeting point. Furthermore, man's tendency to label the things that passes his comprehension as impossible or "stupid" is also emphasized in *La Peste*, which again emerges from man's longing for absolute clarity. Man, most of the time, does not accept the fact that he lives in a universe that he can not understand, as observed in Oran people's reaction to the plague. However, the plague proves just the opposite: everything is not in their control, and at any minute they may be exposed to destruction like the mice in the streets. Thus, as the narrator, Dr. Rieux, states, people living in Oran are bewildered since they have come across irrationality for the first time: "you must picture the consternation of our little town. Hitherto so tranquil, and now, out of the blue, shaken to its core, like a quite healthy man who all of a sudden feels his temperature shoot up and the blood seething like wildfire in his reins" (15). To put it differently, by means of the plague, Oran people are forced to recognize the irrationality behind their seemingly safe and rational world. Thus, they are trapped in a situation that they have not chosen, and even the geographical location of the city is symbolic of their entrapment. It is "in the centre of a bare plateau, ringed with luminous hills and above a perfectly shaped bay" (5) and it is "shut off almost everywhere from the sea" (29). So, there is no way out, just as in *L'Etranger*.

As mentioned previously, what makes the human condition irrational is not only that man lives in a world beyond his control and understanding, but also that he is sentenced to death by nature, and according to Camus, "we're unjustly and inexplicably punished for no crime" (Braun 92). For Camus, death is the biggest evil since it is cruel and unjust, and he chooses an epidemic to display its cruelty and injustice in its most extreme form. Masters indicates that "on the metaphorical level,

the plague represents the face of death, in its extreme capricious and arbitrary form" (91), and in order to show its cruelty and injustice, the narrator describes the terrible agony of the victims in minute detail. For example, the unbearable suffering of the first victim just before his death is described so graphically that one feels terrified:

> Two hours later the doctor and Mme Michel were in the ambulance bending over the sick man. Rambling words were issuing from the gaping mouth, thickly coated now with sardes. He kept on repeating: "Them rats! Them damned rats!" His face had gone livid, a greyish green, his lips were bloodless; his breath came in sudden gasps. His limbs spread out by the ganglia, embedded in the berth as if he were trying to bury himself in it or a voice from the depths of the earth were summoning him below. The unhappy man seemed to be stifling under some unseen pressure (21).

However, this is just the beginning because the epidemic starts to spread out terribly fast, and people start dying one by one. An atmosphere of panic grows as the epidemic takes more lives, and after the seclusion period, panic gradually gives way to an air of frenzy. People helplessly try to escape from the town in order to survive, but they are prevented by the police: "Discontent was on the increase and, fearing worse to come, the local officials debated lengthily on the measures to be taken if the populace, goaded to frenzy by the epidemic, got completely out of hand" (103). They are just like prisoners condemned to death, with one important difference: they do not know what they are guilty of. It is also striking that no matter how significant man considers himself, the plague levels out all the differences and reduces everybody to the same level of insignificance:

> The plague was no respecter of persons and under its despotic rule everyone, from the warden down to the humblest delinquent, was under sentence and, perhaps for the first time, impartial justice reigned in the prison (153).

Besides, the number of people dying of the plague is so great that "the coffins … [become] scarcer; also there … [is] a shortage of winding–sheets, and of space in cemetery" (158). Consequently, the authorities are forced to find a solution to this very urgent problem, and they find one:

> In a patch of open ground dotted with lanctiscus trees at the far end of the cemetery, two big pits had been dug. One was reserved for the men, the other for the women. Thus, in this respect, the authorities still gave thought to propriety and it was only later that, by the force of things, this last remnant of decorum went by the board, and men and women were flung into the death-pit indiscriminately (159).

Thus, the plague robs men of their dignity and pride; they are thrown into the death-pits just like animals, and the only "distinction that can be made between men and, for example, dogs" is that "men's deaths are checked and entered up" (159).

In this irrational world, in which man is sentenced to death, human endeavour is also futile, and Dr. Rieux is the one who is completely aware of this fact because of his profession. Masters states that "[Dr. Rieux] has no illusions about the efficacy of his work. He knows that all the victims of the plague will die, in spite of his medicine. ... Like Sisyphus labouring with his rock up the self-perpetuating hill, Rieux, has the bitter knowledge that his task is doomed to failure" (69). As he himself admits, the plague means "a never ending defeat" (118) for him. His is the most futile attempt because it is a fight against death, so he "had nothing to look forward to but a long sequence of such scenes, renewed again and again" (105). Like Sisyphus, he never gives up struggling even though he knows that it is futile "because he is in rebellion against the injustice of the plague; to do otherwise would be to succumb to it. He represents the position of revolt which is lucid yet indomitable" (69). In other words, Rieux embodies the ideal state of man Camus describes in *Le Mythe*. According to Camus, one should always be lucid about one's predicament and should never delude oneself through metaphysical hope or commit suicide, for both are the expressions of escape from facing one's true condition. For Camus, lucidity should entail not resignation or escape but revolt against man's metaphysical condition; that is, against man's mortality, which is doomed to failure all the time. However, not the result but the process of the revolt is significant for Camus. To put it differently, the very fact that it is fated to failure makes man's revolt much more dignified and admirable, as observed in Sisyphus' condition: "Sisyphus, proletarian of the gods, powerless and rebellious, knows the whole extent of his wretched condition: it is what he thinks during his descent. The lucidity that was to constitute his torture at the same time crowns his victory" (1955: 90).

Just like Sisyphus, Dr. Rieux is also conscious of the futility of his attempt to rebel against death. However, "like Sisyphus, he will not give up simply because he knows he cannot succeed. Each victim is a new rock to be pushed to the summit" (Masters 69). When Tarrou tells him that his "victories will never be lasting" (118), his reply shows his complete lucidity: "Yes, I know that. But it's no reason for giving up the struggle" (118) because he hates the suffering and death that his fellows are

condemned to: “he had much liking for his fellow-men and had resolved, for his part, to have no track with injustice and compromises with the truth” (11-12). Therefore, although he has seen many people suffer and die, he has never got used to their suffering and death. On the contrary, it has increased his anger and his determination to revolt against their predicament:

> Do you know that there are some who refuse to die? Have you ever heard a woman scream ‘Never!’ with her last gasp: Well, I have. And then I saw that I could never get hardened to it. I was very young then, and I was outraged by the whole scheme of things. … I’ve never managed to get used to seeing people die (117).

Since Dr. Rieux is outraged by the death penalty that all men are sentenced to, he strongly believes that men should “struggle with all … [their] might against death” (118) even if their struggle does not change the result eventually because “when you see the misery it brings, you’d need to be a madman, or a coward, or stone blind, to give in tamely to the plague” (115). Therefore, he believes “himself to be on the right road – in fighting against creation as he found it” (116). Although his attempt is futile, his motive is noble, for it is “an attempt to forestall death and alleviate suffering” (Lambert 70). Dr. Rieux is not alone in his struggle against the plague because some townspeople also have the consciousness that they must struggle against their predicament with all their energy and devotion even if it means risking their lives in this predicament” (122). They all have the same

> certitude that a fight must be put up, in this way or that, and there must be no bowing down. The essential thing was to save the greatest possible number of persons from dying and being doomed to unending separation. And to do this there was only one resource: to fight the plague (122).

On the other hand, there are also those who adapted the attitude of resignation towards the plague, “[b]ut, naturally enough, this prudence, this habit of feinting with their predicament and refusing to put up a fight, was ill rewarded” (66). Since “they drifted through life rather than lived,” they were “the prey of aimless days and sterile memories” (66).

At this point, it is also important to point out the differences between Dr. Rieux and Meursault’s attitudes towards death because Meursault’s attitude is just the opposite of that of Dr. Rieux. As mentioned previously while Meursault is in prison awaiting his death, he gradually becomes resigned to it after he starts thinking that he will eventually die, so there is no point in postponing the inevitable. Similar

to Rieux, he knows that his attempt is futile, but unlike him, he does not feel rebellious against his predicament. Therefore, although Meursault embodies many characteristics of the absurd man described in *Le Mythe*, he lacks the rebellious attitude that Dr. Rieux displays, and for Camus resignation means siding with the cruelty and injustice of man's metaphysical condition, so as Lazere points out, "by failing to affirm any value in life that would make it worthwhile to continue living and … facing his own death impassively, he has acquiesced to the metaphysical judgment of natural death" (36).

As mentioned before, Camus is also against man's escaping from facing his true condition squarely through religion. Lambert argues that

> humankind is plagued by suffering and death inflicted by nature … [and] many adopt abstractions that help them avoid confrontation with the plague, a popular abstraction is the religious imputation of suffering to human guilt (70),

and Camus criticises this attitude very openly in *La Peste* through Father Paneloux and his sermons, and "[he] considered *La Peste* his most anti-Christian work" (Kashuba 50). In his first sermon, Father Paneloux openly declares that the plague is a warning from God to mend their ways and to believe in Him with full commitment. According to him, they have sinned, and the plague is a punishment for their sins: "Calamity has come on you, my brethren, and my brethren, you deserved it" (86-87). God has punished those who have sinned against Him throughout history, and now it is Oran people who have deserved punishment. And, he believes that they should "rejoice" because the plague is the way of God's showing His love and concern for them:

> I wish to lead you to the truth and teach you to rejoice, yes, rejoice – in spite of all that I have been telling you. For the time is past when a helping hand or mere words of good advice could set you on the right path. Today the truth is a command. … This same pestilence which is slaying you works for your good and points, your path (90).

Father Paneloux's sermon reflects the Christian point of view concerning sin and punishment, and Braun puts forward that his sermon "was suggested to Camus by actual sermons preached during great plagues of the past. It summarized, in Camus's eyes, Catholic beliefs concerning sin and the avenging God" (91).

As an absurd man rebelling against man's condition, Dr. Rieux represents the opposite attitude. He has no religious beliefs, as he admits when Tarrou asks him if

he believes in God (116). Besides this, nothing can justify human suffering and death, and that is what Christianity attempts to do. In Christianity, "suffering is beneficial in calling the sinner to repent" (Braun 91), but for a man who has devoted all his life to relieving human suffering, this is unacceptable. As a doctor, after witnessing the suffering of people so closely, he cannot accept that men can suffer for a good cause. Furthermore, when he and Tarrou reflect on Father Paneloux's sermon, he says that Father Paneloux would "not speak with such assurance of truth with a capital T" (116) if he had witnessed the suffering of men on their deathbeds, so he talks in abstract terms: "every country priest who visits his parishioners and has heard a man gasping for breath on his deathbed thinks as I do. He'd try to relieve human suffering before trying to point out His excellence" (116). And, Dr. Rieux turns out to be right in his claim because after Father Paneloux witnesses a little child's unbearable agony on his deathbed, he cannot talk any more with the same assurance as he did in his sermon. As he watches the helpless child, he no longer thinks that "the just man need have no fear, but the evildoer has good cause to tremble" (87) because this innocent child has done nothing to deserve such great agony and death at such an early age. At that moment, all he wants is to relieve the child's suffering, and he continually begs God to spare the child, but God does not answer his prayers, and the child dies in terrible agony. Thus, after watching "a child's agony minute, by minute" (192), Father Paneloux can no longer defend the plague and regard it as God's way of punishing the sinner or His way of showing His love and concern for them, and he admits to Dr. Rieux that "what we'd been seeing was as unbearable to me as it was to you" (196). In his dialogue with Dr. Rieux, it is obvious that he is not as assured as he used to be, and as the narrator reflects, "it was obvious, that he was deeply moved" (197). His hesitation is clear in the tone of his voice and in his words. He no longer excludes himself from the townspeople, speaks "in a low voice," and uses the word "perhaps":

> 'That sort of thing is revolting because it passes our human understanding. But perhaps we should love what we cannot understand.'
> ...
> 'No father. I've a very different idea of love. And until my dying day I shall refuse to love a scheme of things in which children are put to torture' (196-197).

The change in the Father's state of mind is also clear in his second sermon. As Braun indicates, "his second sermon was less assertive than the first. He didn't

say ‘you’ any longer, but ‘we’. We should accept the will of God, even uncomprehendingly” (91). However, his shattered belief cannot be restored, and consequently, “his faith shattered, Paneloux finally died of an illness that might have been the plague but need not have been. On his card they wrote ‘Dubious case’” (91). For a man who has devoted his life to God and has followed His teachings strictly all his life, it is too much to doubt His existence. All his life, he has believed that man has suffered for a good cause, and that suffering brings out redemption. However, after seeing a child’s suffering and death, he recognizes that guilty or innocent, adult or child, all men are punished for no crime at all. Thus, all he sees now is an irrational universe, indifferent to human suffering, so he recognizes the human predicament as it is, which kills him eventually.

Recognizing the irrationality of the universe, then, entails the absence of absolutes and of God, and when one accepts that there are no absolute values, the existing social and religious values become arbitrary. There is not a distinction between the right and the wrong, and even there is no right or wrong. Then nobody has the right to judge anybody and declare others guilty or innocent on the basis of those arbitrary rules and values. Hence, the recognition of the irrationality brings out freedom from the existing social and religious systems and values, which are considered arbitrary. But, is such freedom always desirable? *La Chute* examines this question through Clamence’s dialogue with an unidentified listener.

In *La Chute*, Clamence emphasizes that man always needs some kind of authority such as religion or the state to tell him what is right and what is wrong, and to guide him through simple and clear regulations and values. The only thing to do is to adopt them and to be a good believer or a good citizen: “The essential is that everything should be arbitrarily, hence obviously, pointed out” (99). Then, it is essential to have a master to whom they submit themselves:

> ‘Our Father who art provisionally here ... our guides, our delightfully severe masters, O cruel and beloved leaders...’ In short, you see, the essential is to cease being free and to obey, in repentance, a greater rogue than oneself (100).

The idea of the absence of an authority, be it divine or social, terrifies the ordinary man because in this case he would not know how to cope with life, which would seem chaotic and frightening, and how to find his way out of this chaos and ambiguity. The absolutes provided by the authorities satisfy man’s need to justify his

values and feel safe; he knows his place in the universe thanks to them. The absence of them, on the other hand, would be disastrous: “Ah, mon cher, for anyone who is alone, without God and without a master, the weight of days is dreadful. Hence one must choose a master” (98) to shield oneself from ambiguity and chaos. Moreover, without divine or social authority, man would be responsible for each of his actions, but being responsible for one’s actions when there are no guiding principles is greatly terrifying. However, when man obeys an authority, he never feels responsible for anything, which is a “grace” for man, as Clamence states: “but those rascals want grace, this is irresponsibility” (61). Most men willingly choose slavery when the other option is freedom: “since they don’t want freedom or its judgments, they ask to be rapped on the knuckles, they invent dreadful rules, they rush out to build piles of faggots to replace churches” (99).

Divine or social authority also helps one’s need to justify one’s values, so this is just the opposite of that of the absurd man who is “free from illusions of ... a God to justify one’s values, [and] ... freedom from society’s arbitrary laws and self-righteousness” (Lazere 43). To justify one’s values also requires one to judge others who do not adopt these values, and Camus always “attacked traditional standards of innocence and guilt as being an arbitrary means that the self-righteous use to justify themselves while condemning others” (46). In other words, justifying one’s values through religious or political means amounts to condemning others. Camus was always against judgment and self-righteousness because according to him, “man’s earthly salvation ... lies in enjoying and sustaining as long as possible a finite, sensual life free from the self-righteous compulsion to be judged innocent by God or by society, or to condemn others ... out of self-righteousness” (43). He believes that one must always be right and innocent; the opposite situation is unbearable to man, and he can do anything to avoid being declared wrong or guilty, so

> The question is how to elude judgment. I’m not saying to avoid punishment, for punishment without judgment is bearable. It has a name, besides, that guarantees our innocence: it is called misfortune. No, on the contrary, it is a matter of dodging judgment, of avoiding being for ever judged without ever having a sentence pronounced (57).

According to Clamence, in order to elude judgment, one should judge others and condemn them before they condemn one as wrong or guilty, so it is a kind of competition: “People hasten to judge in order not to be judged ... Each of us insists

on being innocent at all costs even if one has to accuse the whole human race and heaven itself" (60). Power also assures one's rightfulness and innocence since the inferior "has no right to answer back" (35), and therefore man needs someone inferior to him: "Every man needs slaves as he needs fresh air. Commanding is breathing [...] And even the most destitute manage to breathe. The lowest man in the social scale still has his wife or child. If he's unmarried, a dog" (35). As Clamence states, people need to create a space in which they are masters, and "the truth is that every intelligent man, as you know, dreams of being a gangster and of ruling over society by force alone" (42).

Clamence is not different from the rest because he has also been infected with the same disease as that of his contemporaries. Nevertheless, at the beginning he is not aware of it, and he "professes to a humanitarian ethic in his life as a lawyer in Paris" (Lazere 44). For instance, he is against judgment, and is always on the side of the one who is judged. Lazere points out that "in contrast to the prosecuting attorneys of Camus's previous novels, he is a defence attorney" (44). Furthermore, he dislikes judges and he feels "an instinctive scorn for judges in general. ... I could not understand ... how a man set himself up to perform such a surprising function" (15-16). However, as mentioned before, his failure in saving the drowning girl becomes a turning point in his life because after that event he gradually discovers his real motives and his real nature. Besides, the mysterious laughter he hears when he remembers this event also tells him that he is not as perfect as he thinks: "Along with a few other truths, I discovered these facts little by little in the period following the evening I told you about" (37). First of all, he discovers that he has used his profession as a means of avoiding judgment and of judging others without being judged in return: "I was truly above reproach in my professional life" (16-17) because "the judges punished and the defendants expiated, while I, free of any duty, shielded equally from judgment as from penalty, I freely held sway bathed in a light as of Eden" (22). By means of his profession, he lives in a state of grace, which most people desperately desire for. What other profession could shield him from judgment so effectively?: "I was concerned in no judgment; I was not on the floor of the courtroom but somewhere in the flies like those gods that are brought down by machinery to transfigure the action and give it its meaning" (21)

Consequently, he is both exempt from judgment and satisfies his need to feel superior, for he feels justified all the time: “My profession satisfied most happily that vocation for summits” (21). After that event, Clamence also recognizes that all his good deeds serve the same purpose: to elude judgment and to feel justified and superior. In other words, his image in society is highly important for him; he should be not only approved but also admired. To illustrate, he remembers that after he helps the blind cross the street, he touches his hat while it is impossible for the blind man to see this, so he wants his “good” nature to be recognized by everybody: “Whenever I left a blind man on the pavement to which I had convoyed him, I used to touch my hat to him. Obviously the hat-touching wasn’t intended for him since he couldn’t see it. To whom was it addressed? To the public” (36-37). He also remembers another event that enables him to discover a very important truth about himself. One day in the traffic he experienced a conflict with the driver of a motorcycle, and was insulted by him and another driver. Later on he got very angry with himself since he let them insult him and dreamt of taking his revenge. “But it was too late, and for several days I gnawed on a feeling of bitter resentment” (41). This event makes him realize that like others he also has a strong desire to dominate and even oppress others in order to shield himself from judgment: “When I was threatened, I became not only a judge in turn but even more: an irascible master who wanted, regardless of all laws, to strike down the offender and get him on his knees” (42).

Clamence also realizes that the reason why he shares the same mania to judge and to avoid judgment with his contemporaries is that he is afraid of freedom like them. Then, he is just the opposite of Meursault, who is totally indifferent to society’s arbitrary laws and its judgment, and who is therefore free in a real sense. As Lazere argues, “[Clamence] is afraid of the freedom he could gain by living a finite life ... without justification ... [and] afraid to ... deprive his ego of the gratification of judging others” (47). Before he knew that he was not indifferent to judgment, he was a passionate defender of freedom since he was not aware of the real meaning of freedom:

> Once upon a time, I was always talking of freedom. ... After all, I did on occasion make a more disinterested use of freedom and even ... defended it two or three times without of course going so far as to die for it, but nevertheless taking a few risks. I must be forgiven such rash acts. ... I didn’t know that freedom is not a reward or a decoration that is celebrated with champagne. Nor yet a gift, a box of dainties

> designed to make you lick your chops. Oh, no! It's a chore, on the contrary, and a long-distance race, quite solitary and very exhausting. ... Alone in a forbidding room, alone in the prisoner's box before the judges, and alone to decide in the face of oneself or in the face of others' judgment (97).

Therefore, just like others he needs some kind of master to escape from freedom, and since he does not believe in God, he needs a master to take His place: "So hurrah for the master, whoever he may be, to take the place of heaven's law" (100). Thus, while he was a passionate defender of freedom in the past, he is in favour of authority at present:

> Isn't it a good thing too to live like the rest of the world? Threat, dishonour, police are the sacraments of that resemblance. Scorned, hunted down, compelled, I can then show what I am worth, enjoy what I am, be natural at last. This is why trés cher, after having solemnly paid my respects to freedom, I decided privately that it had to be handed over without delay to anyone who comes along. And every time I can, ... I invite the good people to submit to authority and humbly to solicit the comforts of slavery (100).

However, Clamence's self-discoveries bring him not light but a sense of guilt because "innocence lies in rebellion against all forms of metaphysical and human judgment" (Lazere 46), but Clamence fails to rebel against judgment since he is too weak to face its consequences, so "Clamence's true guilt is his failure ... to be a sincere 'defence attorney' against the judgment of Church, State, judges, community" (Lazere 46).

Clamence knows that it is impossible to escape his sense of guilt, but he should alleviate this unbearable burden in some way, and he finds a way: he will alleviate his burden by passing on some of it to others. He will "find ... [a] means of extending judgment to everybody in order to make it weigh less heavily on ... [his] own shoulders" (100). To put it differently, he should "drag down everyone he meets to his own level of guilt. Furthermore, if he can convince other men that they too are guilty, he can momentarily regain his superiority by judging them once again" (Lazere 47). On the other hand, Clamence is also aware of the fact that "the judgment you are passing on others eventually snaps back in your face" (101). He must find another way to avoid it, and he comes up with a solution:

> Well, here's the stroke of genius. ... Inasmuch as one couldn't condemn others without immediately judging oneself, one had to overwhelm oneself to have the right to judge others. Inasmuch as every judge some day ends up as a penitent, one had to travel the road in the opposite direction and practice the profession of penitent to be able to end up as a judge (101).

Then, his confession functions as a mirror he holds up so that his listener will see himself in it: "the portrait I hold out to my contemporaries becomes a mirror" (102). He makes his listener gradually realize that

> he is describing not one man, but all men, and by implication his present victim, whose self-esteem he slowly breaks so that at the end of the day, the victim has seen himself in the mirror held up by Clamence, and assumes his burden of shame (Masters118).

Thus, he has found a means of gaining the superiority necessary to judge others and to silence the laughter he has been hearing since his failure to save the girl: "Once more I have found a height to which I am the only one to climb and from which I can judge everybody" (104). Nevertheless, his victory is not long-lasting, for "at long intervals, on a really beautiful night I occasionally hear a distant laugh and again I doubt" (104). Therefore, he has to find another victim: "I crush everything, people and things, under the weight of my infirmity and at once I perk up" (104), and there is no end to this. Then, it can be said that when Clamence describes Amsterdam's "concentric canals …[that] resemble the circles of hell" (13), he refers to his own hell of endless repetition.

Like Camus's novels, Beckett's *Trilogy* also depicts an irrational universe in which characters feel lost since they live in a state of uncertainty and ambiguity, which is one of the basic causes of their alienation as argued previously. Like all men, they have a longing for clarity and unity, and they attempt to achieve them by using their mental faculties; however, they are doomed to failure at every attempt, which is very frustrating for them. As Müller argues,

> the dominant theme in Beckett's plays, as in his novels, is the futility of humanity's search for meaning and significance and the tragic fact that humankind cannot in spite of this ultimately vain endeavour, renounce looking for sense (263),

and in all trilogy characters one can observe this futile attempt and their awareness of its futility. Then, it would not be implausible to say that Beckett agrees with Camus that there is a never-ending conflict between man's need and desire for unity and clarity and the corresponding irrationality of the universe; man goes on demanding, and the world remains silent in front of this demand. As Cerrato states, "as much as they spurn the great world, it invades them, and their desperation lies in the effort to comprehend it (28). No matter how hard Beckett's characters attempt to comprehend the world, they fail because

> if the world is unreadable and its sense unattainable, human effort to create it is doomed to failure. Most of Beckett's work deals with this impossibility, though it is nevertheless framed by a compulsion to say, and to look for meanings (Cerrato 27).

This never-ending conflict also makes the lucid man suffer, for he recognizes the futility, but his need for order and system does not let him give up the struggle. Thus, as Esslin points out, "conscious being inevitably entails suffering" (114), and in the *Trilogy*, Beckett draws his characters as both lucid and persistent, and thus suffering.

Molloy, the protagonist of the first half of *Molloy* is also conscious of the irrationality surrounding man, so he lives in a continuous state of doubt and ambiguity. He can never be sure of anything including the most basic facts such as his name or his mother's name. On the other hand, he is a human being, and he cannot help desiring certainty and clarity although he knows that it is impossible. To illustrate, Molloy longs for the existence of some principles his being aware that there are none because if there existed some principles, he would not feel so much in the "dark" and would have something to stand on with assurance:

> And if I speak of principles, when there are none, I can't help it, there must be some somewhere. And if always doing the same thing as it were is not the same as observing the same principle, I can't help it, either. And then how can you know whether you are observing it or not? And how can you want to know? No, all that is not worth while, not worth while you do not bother about, you let them be, for the same reason, or wisely, knowing that all these questions of worth and value have nothing to do with you, who don't know what you're doing, nor why, and must go on not knowing it, on pain of, I wonder what, yes, I wonder (46).

Hence the conflict between his "recognition of the absence of ... absolutes" (Ben-Zvi 26-27) and his human need for meaning and clarity. Therefore, the reader frequently sees Molloy speculate on several issues, but he can never reach clear conclusions. On the contrary, his speculations make him more uncertain than before, because in a universe in which there are no absolutes, there is no way to be sure of the truth, so "reason is forced to admit that any conclusion is perhaps true. ... Perhaps not" (Goldman 71). For example, at the very beginning, he reports a meeting of the two men he labels as A and C. The two men leave the town separately, but A turns back, and they meet on the road. Firstly, Molloy wonders if they are strangers or not because they exchange a few words before they leave, so there are two possibilities: either they know each other or they are strangers exchanging a few words when they meet "on a deserted road". But, this ambiguity seems to disturb *Molloy*; hence, he tries to understand if they are strangers or not:

> To say they knew each other, no, nothing warrants it. But perhaps at the sound of their steps, or warned by some obscure instinct, they raised their heads and observed each other, for a fifteen paces, before they stopped breast to breast. Yes, they did not pass each other by, but halted, face to face, as in the country, of an evening, on a deserted road, two wayfaring strangers will, without there being anything extraordinary about it. But they knew each other perhaps (9).

After that, he begins to speculate on them separately, but similarly he cannot be certain of anything about them. Each explanation is immediately followed by another, and it seems to Molloy as probable as the previous one, so the most frequent word he uses in his speculations is "perhaps." For instance, when he contemplates on the man, A or C, he is not sure, he makes predictions concerning the man and the little dog following him, and he realizes that there are several probable explanations. To illustrate, that the man comes "from afar" does not seem to him probable because the man wears "sand-shoes, [is] smoking cigars, [is] followed by a parreranian" (12): "Did he not seem rather to have issued from the ramparts, after a good dinner, to take his dog and himself for a walk, like so many citizens, dreaming and farting, when the weather is fine?" (12). However, he sees that there is one more explanation which is as probable as this one; perhaps the man comes "from afar," he is a tramp like Molloy, and the dog is not his:

> But was not perhaps in reality the cigar a cutty, and were not the sand-shoes boots, hobnailed, dust-whitened, and what prevented the dog from being one of these stray dogs that you pick up and take in your arms, from compassion or because you have long been straying with no other company than the endless roads, sands, shingle, bogs and heather, than this nature answerable to another court, than at long intervals the fellow-convict you long to stop, embrace, suck, suckle and whom you pass by, with hostile eyes, for fear of his familiarities? (12).

After a few more speculations about the man which also end in ambiguity, he concludes, "what rigmarole" (13). Finally, he announces that they have disappeared and that he has never seen them again, but he refutes himself immediately: "am I sure I never saw them again? And what do I mean by seeing and seeing again?" (15).

Man is also unwilling to recognize that the universe is not a unified whole because of his need of a system and order. Recognizing this fact means accepting the chaotic nature of the universe in which any system or order is impossible; therefore, man tends to formulate and create systems all the time. Molloy says, "I always had a mania for symmetry" (84), and here he represents all men. In *Molloy*, Beckett questions "the notion of totality, of system, even in science [and] shows the world as multiple, provisional, a leotary through Molloy's attempts at distributing his sucking

stones symmetrically," and behind it lies Beckett's adherence to the image of infinity, which refutes any possibility of system or order. This image appears

> as the circle that runs into itself and thus can have no end. This circular concept of infinity, emptied of the religious content we find in Dante and Vaughan, merges into Nietzsche's idea of the endless cycle of recurrence, based on the assumption that, if there is a finite amount of matter in the universe and infinite time, the same combinations and permutations of the same elements must endlessly recur. This becomes the permutation of a number of elements in all possible combinations, only to start again when all these have been exhausted (Esslin 114).

After Molloy leaves Lousse, he spends some time near the sea, and he collects sixteen stones to suck later on because this makes him forget about his hunger. All of a sudden, the thought of distributing the stones symmetrically occupies his mind. After that, he provides the reader with a six-page account of the possible permutations he uses in order to achieve this symmetrical distribution. As he admits, "deep down it was all the same to me whether I sucked a different stone each time or always the same stone, until the end of time. For all tasted exactly the same" (74). The symmetrical distribution of the stones will not bring him any benefit, but that is not the point. The point is that he needs to achieve a system. Therefore, when he fails in each permutation, he gets angry and perplexed; hence man's frustration with a chaotic universe: "[I] gazed at them in perplexity ... I gazed thus at my stones, revolving interminable martingales all equally defective" (71). At the end, he finds a solution: he throws all the stones at sea, except one: "the solution to which I rallied in the end was to throw all the stones but one, which I kept now in one pocket, now in another, and which of course I soon lost, or threw away, or swallowed" (74). It is impossible for Molloy to achieve the symmetrical distribution he intended as he unwillingly recognizes at the end because if Molloy's sixteen stones are considered to be the representatives of "the finite amount of matter in the universe", there will be an endless repetition of the possible permutations "not only within each cycle taken separately, but also for the sum of all cycles ... [since] they went on forever" (73). Thus, as Cohn indicates, in Molloy's symmetrical distribution of sucking stones lies doubt in the scientific method" (84), and Beckett uses such scenes to parody rationalism and mathematical methods of reasoning as Ben-Zvi indicates: "these endless attempts at explanation are ironic, a biting satire of the modern rationalist computing endlessly, endlessly, endlessly" (66), which leads nowhere. Beckett also seems to regard science as being unable to define human experience. To illustrate,

the scene in which Molloy uses his knowledge of mathematics to count his farts is highly ironical. Molloy finds that he farts "three hundred and fifteen farts in nineteen hours, or an average of over sixteen farts an hour ... Four farts every fifteen minutes" (30). And, he concludes, "extraordinary how mathematics help you to know yourself" (30). Consequently, Molloy learns how many times he farts in a certain period of time, an "essential" truth about himself, thanks to mathematics.

Different from Molloy, Moran, the protagonist of the second half of *Molloy*, has no such anxieties or frustration concerning ambiguity and irrationality at the beginning since he believes that the world is quite a rational place. Therefore, he does not experience the conflict that Molloy does at the beginning. He lives a typical middle-class life, as said before, and his religious belief also reinforces his view of the world as a unified whole since "the word 'religion' implies a system of thought and experience that acknowledges some reality beyond and above man's material and empirical existence" (Barge 20). Through religion, man finds answers to questions beyond his comprehension. It explains the things that man cannot, so thanks to religion, there is nothing inexplicable for man. Thus, as Kern argues, "the world that comes to light within the horizon of Moran's intelligence … [is] describable, respectable, comprehensible, and full of clichés" (96).

However, as stated before, with his quest for Molloy, Moran's shield of complacency starts breaking, and the irrationality starts leaking through his seemingly rational world, as a result of which he turns into Molloy, and enters the world of chaos and disorder, which is completely different from Moran's earlier ordered and rational world. Moreover, during his quest he meets two strangers, an old man with a club and a man who resembles himself, and he gives the former some bread , whereas he kills the latter. According to Kern, "Moran has faced two aspects of himself – irrational threat (the man with a club) and smug order (the man with a blue suit); he has nourished the one and slaughtered the other" (87). To put it differently, the old version of Moran, who believes in order and rationality, has died, and the new one is aware of the collapse of his seemingly rational world; he feels that he is in the process of "crumbling, a frenzied collapsing of all that had always protected … [him] from all that … [he] was always condemned to be " (149).

In *Malone Dies*, Beckett depicts the last attempts of Malone, an old man, who is "in the process of dying" (Ben-Zvi 91), to give some kind of order to his life,

which is restricted to a small room. As a Beckettian character, Malone is also lucid about the fact that life has neither order nor sense, for he regards life as "the long blind road" (182). Throughout his life, he has been aware of the fact that the attempt to provide order in one's life is futile, "for I have never seen any sign of any inside me or outside me. I have pinned my faith to appearances, believing them to be vain" (210). Besides, he has been unable to comprehend life or its meaning, if it has any: "I say life without knowing what it is. I tried to live without knowing I was trying" (195). Now, he has come to the end of his "life … [he] could never manage" (199), but similar to Molloy, he is still not resigned to his condition because he plans to achieve order and clarity before he dies. He thinks that if he achieves this, he will have taken his revenge for his life-long failure. He regards it as a kind of game; life is his rival, and this time he will win the game: "Now, it is a game, I am going to play. I never knew how to play, till now. I longed to, but I knew it was impossible. And yet I often tried" (180). However, this time "I know the game is won, I lost them all till now, but it's the last that counts" (210). So, he makes a plan consisting of three steps to achieve his aim. Before he dies, he will have completed three tasks: He will describe his "present state," tell "three stories," and take an "inventory" of his possessions" (182), and so "I…[will be] avenged" (184). It is very significant for Malone to make a plan and to believe that he will complete his tasks because it will make him feel that he has attained the control of his life eventually: "This time I know where I am going, it is no longer the ancient night, the recent night" (180). On the other hand, although he appears quite optimistic about the success of his plan, he indeed knows that he will fail: "A full programme. I shall not deviate from it any further than I must. So much for that. I feel I am making a great mistake. No matter" (183). Thus, like Molloy, Malone also experiences the same conflict between his lucidity and his longing for order and unity, representing man's predicament.

Firstly, as demonstrated earlier, similar to Molloy, Malone cannot be sure of anything concerning his present state, so he fails in describing his present state clearly. He is even more uncertain than Molloy, for he is unable to identify even the place he is staying in at the moment. Therefore, although he puts forward that "my desire is henceforward to be clear" (181), he is doomed to uncertainty.

Secondly, because Malone's struggle is against chaos and ambiguity, he does not want anything in his stories to remain in the dark. For example, while writing his

first story, which is about a boy he calls Sapo, he cannot explain something, which disturbs him a lot. Although Sapo offends the school master, he is not expelled from school, and Malone feels that he has to find a logical explanation for this: "I must try and discover, when I have time to think about it quietly, why Sapo was not expelled when he so richly deserved to be. For I want as little as possible of darkness in his story. A little darkness in itself, at the time is nothing. You think no more about it and you go on. But I know what darkness is, it accumulates, thickens, then suddenly bursts and drowns everything" (190). To put it differently, Malone attempts to create a comprehensible world in which everything is clear: this will be his way of defying life's chaos and uncertainty, and life's "half-truths" (182). Nevertheless, he fails to explain the reason for Sapo's non-expulsion, and it remains as an ambiguity in the story, which annoys Malone:

> I have not been able to find out why Sapo was not expelled. I shall have to leave this question open. I try not to be glad. I shall make haste to put a safe remove between him and this incomprehensible indulgence… We shall turn our backs on this little cloud, but we shall not let it out of sight. It will not cover the sky without our knowing, we shall not suddenly raise our eyes, far from help, far from shelter, to a sky as black as ink. That is what I have decided. I see no other solution. It is the best I can do (190).

But, as he progresses, "the darkness that controls Malone's life invades his stories as well" (Barge 73), which makes him frustrated: "What tedium. If I went on to the stone? No, it would be the something. The Lamberts, the Lamberts, does it matter about the Lamberts? No, not particularly, But while I am with them the other is lost. How are my plans getting on, my plans, I had plans not so long ago" (216).

Malone fails in his third objective, as well, that is, making an inventory of his possessions, about which he feels very enthusiastic, but why does Malone want to do such a thing so passionately? According to Barge, "the quest for unity…finds expression in Malone's obsession with his possessions in the room" (280). In other words, it represents man's desire to create his own order in a world devoid of order and unity. From the very beginning, Malone has high hopes for making an inventory of his possessions:

> For then I shall speak of the things that remain in my possession, that is the thing I have always wanted to do. It will be a kind of inventory. In any case that is a thing I must leave to the very last moment, so as to be sure of not having made a mistake. In my case that is a thing I shall certainly do, no matter what happens (181).

Nevertheless, he soon starts to face some difficulties. For example, "I see … I had attributed to myself certain objects no longer in my possession" as far as I can see" (196). On the other hand, he discovers some objects whose presence he has forgotten such as "the bowl of a pipe," "a little packet tied up in age-yellowed newspaper" (197). All these make him anxious because

> I want this matter to be free from all trace of approximativeness. I want, when the great day comes, to be in a position to enounce clearly, without addition or omission, all that its interminable prelude had brought me and left me in the way of chattels personal. I presume it is an obsession (196).

He attempts to overcome these difficulties by forming a definition, according to which he will make his inventory: "only those things that are mine the whereabouts of which I know well enough to be able to lay hold of them, if necessary, that is the definition I have adopted, to define my possessions. For otherwise there would be no end to it" (250). But, he feels that his solution will not work, and "in any case there will be no end to it" (250) because he can never be sure about what he has and does not have: "So that, strictly speaking, it is impossible to know…what is mine and what is not, according to my definition" (251). To illustrate, "the ports do not seem to be mine, I simply have the use of them. They answer to the definition of what is mine, but they are not mine. Perhaps it is the definition that is at fault" (253). He eventually fails in making an inventory of his belongings, so as Barge indicates, "whatever hopes for achieving unity and order he has entertained by planning to include "my inventory" are abandoned" (171).

The same desire for clarity and unity is also observed in the Unnamable's "quest for understanding" (Rabinovitz 24), but similar to his predecessors, he is aware of the futility of his attempt since he is lucid about the impossibility of arriving at a clear understanding of his situation as his words in the first paragraph reveal: "What am I to do what shall I do, what should I do, in my situation, how proceed? By aporia pure and simple? Or by affirmations and negations invalidated as uttered, or sooner or later?" (293). So, as Acheson points out,

> the hopelessness of the narrator's situation is evident when he mentions the prospect of proceeding by 'affirmations and negations invalidated as uttered, or sooner or later', and also in his use of the term 'aporia', for aporia is the scepticism that arises from awareness of opposed, irreconcilable views of a subject (133).

Then, right from the beginning the Unnamable knows that his quest is doomed to failure, and he gives a clue to the reader about what is awaiting him/her in the rest of

the novel: a fruitless struggle for affirmations resulting in negations and contradictions. Nevertheless, like the previous trilogy characters, "he is subject to an inner obligation to continue … the search in spite of its futility" (Acheson 133), and he does not know why he feels obliged to search for truth or knowledge, and when he speculates about the reason for this inner obligation, he wonders if he is "the prey of a genuine preoccupation, of a need to know" (297). Thus, he shares the same kind of obsession as that of the previous narrators: the obsession with clarity and unity.

Similar to previous protagonists, whenever the Unnamable makes a statement, he starts suspecting its validity and questioning it, which results in his frustration and puzzlement. For instance, he seems sure about the fact that "nothing has ever changed since I have been here" (196). However, he immediately thinks it does not guarantee that there will not be any change thereafter: "from the unexceptionable order which has prevailed here up to date may I infer that such will always be the case?" (296). And, he thinks he may which he immediately suspects: "I may of course. But the mere fact of asking myself such a question gives me to reflect" (196). Hence his attempt at clarification:

> If one day a change were to take place, resulting from a principle of disorder already present, or on its way, what then? That would seem to depend on the nature of the change. No, here all change would be fatal and land me back, there and then, in all the fun of the fair (297).

Thus, it is not certain for the Unnamable whether a change in the future is possible or not, but all of a sudden, a thought appears in his mind, which is even more disturbing for him: "Has nothing really changed since I have been here?" (297). He immediately tries to assure himself that it is not the case, but it is too late because he is now aware of such a possibility: "No, frankly, hand on heart, wait a second, no, nothing, to my knowledge. But, as I have said, the place may well be vast, as it may measure twelve foot in diameter" (297). So, he can affirm nothing because each of his speculations ends not in clarity but in contradiction and doubt. Still, he is disturbed by uncertainties, and as soon as he comes across one, he reasons and speculates on it, which is fated to end in contradiction and doubt. For example, when he investigates the origin of the cry that he hears from time to time, his speculation ends in ambiguity:

> What kind of creature uttered it and, if it is the same, still does, from time to time? Impossible to say. Not a human one in any case, there are no human creatures here,

> or if there are they have done with crying. … Is it not perhaps a simple fart, they can be rending? Deplorable mania, when something happens, to inquire what. If only I were not obliged to manifest (298).

However, he does not give up his search, and throughout the narrative, the Unnamable frequently repeats his determination to "go on":

> To go on, I still call that on, to go on and get on has been my only care, if not always in a straight line, at least in obedience to the figure assigned to me, there was never any room in my life for anything else (323).

The phrase "go on" repeated throughout the narrative shows his determination to search for the truth or knowledge about life, so as Rabinovits argues, "the phrase 'go on' figuratively represents … the idea of making intellectual progress" (24). Going on has been the aim of his life, but he has always been conscious of its inconsequentiality: "I have only to go on, as if there was something to be done, something begun, somewhere to go" (337-338), and the book ends with his simultaneous determination and awareness of its futility: "You must go on, that's all I know … you must go on, I can't go on, I'll go on" (417).

His search for silence is also symbolic of his "quest for understanding" because "it is a search for the moment when all will have been said" (Szanto 93). To put it differently, he wants to reach absolute knowledge by saying everything, but it is impossible since "there always remains another word, another clarification, another possibility" (Szanto 93), as he is also well aware: "you think you have succeeded, but you always overlook something, a little yes, a little no, enough to exterminate a regiment of dragoons" (305). Therefore, the task he assigns to himself is not different from the attempt to drink an ocean: "I have the ocean to drink" (316). Nevertheless, he will not quit his search for silence in spite of its impossibility:

> I speak, speak because I must, … I seek my lesson, my life I used to know and would not confess, hence possibly an occasional slight lack of limpidity. And perhaps now again I shall do no more than seek my lesson, to the self-accompaniment of a tongue that is not mine. But instead of saying what I should not have said, and what I shall say no more, if I can, and what I shall say perhaps, if I can, should I not rather say some other thing, even though it be not yet the right thing? I'll try, I'll try in another present, even though it be not yet mine, without pauses, without tears, without eyes, without reasons (308).

The circle figure used frequently in *The Unnamable* also symbolizes man's never-ending and futile attempt for clarity and unity. For instance, the Unnamable tries to figure out where he is, and wishes he were at the center: "I like to think I

occupy the centre, but nothing is less certain" (297). His wish for being at the center may symbolize man's need for clarity and order in a chaotic and incoherent world because the Unnamable would be at an equal distance from each point in the circle if he were at the center, so he would have a much clearer view of everything. Besides, the center is always the most stable place and safe from chaos since it is fixed. The circle figure also appears in the Unnamable's story about Mahood, the protagonist of the Unnamable's story: Mahood is a character who sits in a jar outside a chop-house and is looked after by the mistress of the chop-house. He is totally inactive: because "of the great traveller I had been, on my hands and knees in latter stages, then crawling on my belly or rolling on the ground, only the trunk remains …, surmounted by the head" (329). But, before he became an invalid, he spent his life by making irregular loops around the world:

> And my course is not helicoidally … but a succession of irregular loops, now sharp and short as in the waltz, now of a parabolic sweep that embraces entire baglands, now between the two somewhere or other, and invariably unpredictable in direction, that is to say determined by the panic of the moment (329).

The irregular loops may stand for the thoughts in the thinking mind without any beginning or any end, which corresponds to Beckett's concept of infinity mentioned in *Molloy*: "the circle that runs into itself and thus can have no end" (Esslin 114). As Hoffman indicates, "within this roly-poly there exists a mind which is similarly spheroidally preoccupied with the questions and negations that are the novel's substance" (56). Then, it is Beckett's interruption that ends the narrative, which otherwise will never end as long as the Unnamable exists, as Hoffman explains:

> The Unnamable's interior monologue may go on to infinity, for all we know. If it were to, we might describe this novel as a curve having one of its axes as an asymptote. In other words, as y (the length of the novel) approached infinity, x (the content of the novel) would approach nearer and nearer to zero. Content zero, length infinity – these are the mathematical limits of the novel (54).

The Unnamable's desire for precise knowledge is also hindered by his limited senses, and according to Barge, through the Unnamable's limited senses, Beckett parodies Descartes, for "Descartes' beginning stance is a scepticism that rejects as truth all evidence (such as tradition and sense experience) except that which issues from the thinking mind" (231). However, the Unnamable uses his senses in his quest, which is a "non Cartesian element" as Barge calls it: "A non-Cartesian element for Beckett's people is that they, unlike Descartes, accept empirical or sense evidence as

valid data. … Like Descartes, the Beckett hero cannot learn truth from empirical evidence" (232-233). To illustrate, the Unnamable tries to give a meaning to the wavering lights he sees from time to time. Their unpredictability disturbs him, and he wanders why they are so irregular. Hence his speculation on them:

> Is it their irregularity, their instability, their shining strong one minute and weak the next, but never beyond the power of one or more candles? … The play of the lights is truly unpredictable (296).

First, the Unnamable seems to trust his perception fully, but then he starts to suspect that the reason in the irregularity of the lights is his flawed perception. "It is only fair to say that to eyes less knowing than mine they would probably pass unseen. But even to mine do they not sometimes do so? They are perhaps unwavering and fixed and my fitful perceiving the cause of their inconstancy" (296). There is no way of being sure because what his eyes perceive are the only data he has, and they cannot provide him with "truth". Therefore, he has to accept the possibility that "disorder of the lights [is] perhaps an illusion" (297). Moreover, he cannot be sure about the reason for his inability to see clearly. He first says that he can see "as clearly as the visibility permits" (299), but then he dwells on the possibility that his poor eye sight is the cause of his limited perception:

> For the visibility, unless it be the state of my eyesight, only permits me to see what is close beside me. I may add that my seat would appear to be somewhat elevated, in relation to the surrounding ground, if ground is what it is. Perhaps it is water or some other liquid. With the result that, in order to obtain the optimum view of what takes place in front of me, I should have to lower my eyes a little. But I lower my eyes no more. In a word, I only see what appears immediately in front of me, I only see what appears beside me, what I best see I see ill" (299).

Besides, the Unnamable is not sure whether he is partly deaf or not, so he cannot be certain if he can hear all the noises around him: "If he made a noise, as he goes, I would hear him all the time, on my right hand, behind my back, on my left hand, before seeing him again. But he makes none, for I am not deaf, of that I am convinced, that is to say half-convinced" (297). Thus, it is impossible for him to learn the "truth" from the evidence that he obtains through his senses, but "unlike Descartes, his sense experience of these data is all the 'truth' he knows. In fact, that is precisely his problem" (Barge 233).

Then as in the previous volumes of *Trilogy*, Beckett parodies rationalism for its attempt to explain the universe as ordered and knowable. Rabinovitz argues that

Beckett's objection to "scientific methodology" essentially arises from the fact that it "introduces generalized abstractions that tend to overemphasize rational concepts … [and] imposes neatly delineated categories on an imperfectly understood world" (183). Rabinovitz adds,

> it is not so much that Beckett is hostile to science per se; as he once told me, he admired those scientists who can 'accept unanswerability' and who 'dare say I don't know.' What he objects to is an approach that uses generalizations to present the illusion of knowledge when there is none (183).

Although the Unnamable employs the methods of rationalistic thinking such as reasoning and speculation from time to time, he actually knows that they fall short in helping him achieve his quest: he says, "the thing to avoid, I don't know why, is the spirit of system" (294), so he echoes Beckett's idea that man should "avoid … generalizations and focus … on the immediate details of individual experiences," and should recognize "that at best we can achieve only partial understanding of isolated events" (Rabinovitz 183). Only that way can one be true to one's condition and break the illusion of rationality. However, because man tends to avoid facing up to the reality of his condition, all men, with varying degrees of difference, are addicted to system and order, like the trilogy protagonists, and the Unnamable is also aware of his own problem: "What prevents the miracle is the spirit of method to which I have perhaps been a little too addicted" (303). The irony is also quite obvious in the Unnamable's comment on the subjects that he has been taught: "they gave me courses on love, on intelligence, most precious, most precious. They also taught me to count and even to reason. Some of this rubbish has come handy on occasion, I don't deny it" (303). Like Molloy, who uses his knowledge of mathematics to count his farts, the Unnamable uses his knowledge of these subjects "to scratch … [his] arse with" (300).

Then, man can be certain about nothing except one thing: death, which is the only absolute that man has. Man is irrevocably condemned to death, and as Molloy states, "to decompose is to live" (25). In other words, as soon as one is born into the world, one starts dying, and there is no way to avoid it: "You must say goodbye, it would be madness not to say goodbye, when the time comes" (8). When Molloy's attitude towards death is examined, it is seen that he appears to have an ambivalent attitude because he seems both attracted by the idea of death and frightened with it. For example, Molloy admits that he has once attempted to commit suicide, and that

the idea of suicide attracts him from time to time, though not much: "the thought of suicide had little hold on me, I don't know why, I thought I did, but I see I don't. The idea of strangulation in particular, however tempting, I always overcome, after a short struggle" (78). Death sometimes appears attractive to Molloy because it signifies the end of all misery and suffering he is condemned to, and as he admits at the beginning of his narrative, he wants this misery to come to an end: "What I'd like now is to speak of the things that are left, say my good-byes, finish dying" (7). Thus, he seems to view death as a peaceful state, for it puts an end to his absurd existence. That is why he regards his life as being too long to bear. He says, "my life without end" (15) when he mentions it. Besides, the fact that the search for the self ends with death also makes it desirable. Before death, it is impossible for the self to achieve wholeness, but with death the self becomes eventually fixed, for there is no change after death: "there is no whole, before you're dead. An opiate for the life of the dead, that should be easy. What am I waiting for then, to exorcise mine? [...] How joyfully I would vanish there, sinking deeper and deeper under the rains" (27-28). On the other hand, he is afraid of death because it is completely unknown, and the unknown is always frightening for man. That is why most men are afraid of attempting to change their situation. Even if their present condition is miserable, it is secure because they are used to it. So, Molloy prefers life no matter how miserable his conditions are. What if death is a worse state even than being alive?:

> Yes, the confusion of my ideas on the subject of death was such that I sometimes wondered, believe me or not, if it wasn't a state of being even worse than life. So I found it natural not to rush into it and, when I forgot myself to the point of trying, to stop in time (68).

Hence, Molloy prefers even slavery to death:

> And I for my part have always preferred slavery to death. ... For death is a condition I have never been able to conceive to my satisfaction and which therefore cannot go down in the ledger of weal and woe (68).

Malone also has a conflicting attitude towards death similar to Molloy since he seems both to welcome death and to be frightened of it. At the beginning, he appears to be calm and even content that he will die soon, as his very first words reveal: "I shall soon be quite dead at last in spite of all" (179). Malone welcomes death because it will end his life-long suffering. Hence, he thinks, "beyond this tumult there is a great calm, and a great indifference, never really to be troubled by

anything again" (198). Besides, even though his life has been full of uncertainties, he has been sure of one thing: his mortality, so he has always known that there will be an end of his absurd life, which he refers to as "the long blind road": "I used not to know where I was going, but I knew I would arrive, I knew there would be an end to the long blind road" (182). Moreover, he imagines himself to be peaceful and calm as he goes to his death, and uses "sea imagery to describe what he believed would be the condition accompanying his death" (Ben-Zvi 95). He says, "I want to be there a little before the plunge, close for the last time the old hatch on top of me, say goodbye to the holds where I have lived" (193-194). However, as his end approaches, Malone's attitude starts changing because although at first he claims that he wishes to die, and seems calm about the fact that he has limited time, he begins to lose his calmness and tries to assure himself that he has a lot of time before him: "So quiet, quiet, I'll be still here at All Saints, in the middle of the chrysanthemums, no, this year I shall not hear them howling over their charnels" (234). And, as time passes, he even starts to panic and makes more effort to hide his fear of death from himself: "I have no time to pick my words, I am in a hurry to be done. And yet no, I am in no hurry" (207). Moreover, when he describes the dead rabbit in his story, he seems to reveal his fear of death that he attempts to suppress:

> It was dead already, it had ceased to be. There are rabbits that die before they are killed, from sheer fright. They have time to do so while being taken out of the hutch, often by the ears, and disposed in the most convenient position to receive the blow, whether on the back of the neck or on some other part. And often you strike a corpse, without knowing it. …This occurs most frequently at night, fright being greater in the night (215)

Also, now he is not as sure as he was if he really wants to die. Like Molloy, he considers committing suicide to end his misery: "If I had the use of my body I would throw it out of the window" (219). However, he immediately admits the possibility that he thinks so since he knows he is unable to do it: "But perhaps it is the knowledge of my impotence that emboldens me to that thought" (219).

It is also striking that Malone continuously delays making an inventory of his belongings because having something to do in the future gives him a cause to go on and makes him feel that he still has time: "All my life long I have put off this reckoning saying, Too soon, too soon. Well it is still too soon" (182). Furthermore, although he seems so ready for his death, the idea of "the immortality of the soul" (229) he voices also reveals his fear of death. So, like all men, he wants to believe in

the immortality of the soul, for he is afraid that death will be the end of his existence "unless it goes on beyond the grave" (237). As Ben-Zvi argues,

> while the 'rail' comes from the personal, Lemuel, [a character in one of Malone's stories,] it indicates the all-too-familiar tendency of human nature to hold tenaciously to consciousness. … Lemuel is the embodiment of the violence with which Malone struggles to maintain life (95).

Malone is afraid of death like all men because of its vagueness. Similar to Molloy, he admits that death is as vague as life itself: "It's vague, life and death" (227). Malone's whole life has been spent in misery and suffering, but he is still clinging to life in spite of all this misery and isolation. No mater how terribly he suffers, he cannot resign to the idea of his death. For none of the trilogy characters life is a place of joy and happiness. On the contrary, it is a place of suffering, a kind of "punishment for the crime of having been born" (Barge 186), as Macmann, the protagonist of Malone's second story, feels:

> The idea of punishment came to his mind, addicted it is true to that chimera and probably impressed by the posture of the body and the fingers clenched as though in torment. And without knowing exactly what his sin was he felt full well that living was not a sufficient atonement for it or that this atonement was in itself a sin, calling for more atonement, and so on, as if there could be anything but life, for the living (240).

Nevertheless, man, whatever his conditions are, prefers this punishment to the unknown. One knows what life is like, which gives one a sense of security, but does one know what death is like? What if it were worse than life? What if death means being "born again into an even worse place than before"? (227).

The Unnamable's attitude towards death is not different from that of his predecessors, for he is both attracted to and frightened with the idea of death, which can also be observed in his paradoxical attitude towards silence. From the very beginning, the Unnamable states his desire for achieving silence since he will have told everything and completed his quest for understanding. On the other hand, paradoxically he is also afraid of going silent. For instance, he openly states that he continues his speech for his "fear of silence" (308), and adds that he goes on speaking "in order not to peter out" (309), which reflects his fear of death. Silence in *The Unnamable* signifies death as well as achieving his quest because the Unnamable's quest is the one that will go on until his death. The Unnamable's "quest for understanding" includes self-knowledge; that is, to find out who he is; however,

as stated before, this search for the self will not end until he dies since the process of the self's perpetual becoming ends with death. Moreover, his desire for exhausting everything is something impossible, so it does not end before his death, either. That is why the Unnamable's attitude towards death is paradoxical; he wants to achieve silence, but he knows that achieving silence signifies the end of his existence. Consequently, death is both peaceful, for it will end all this struggle and painful since it will put an end to his existence: "painful moment, on the surface, then peace, underneath" (381). He thinks, "what a joy to know where one is, and where one will stay, without being there. Nothing to do but stretch out comfortably on the rack, in the blissful knowledge you are nobody for all eternity" (341). Nevertheless, he cannot hide his fear although he claims that he perceives death as a peaceful experience because like the previous characters, the following question haunts him: What if death is worse than life?: "Talking of speaking, what if I went silent? What would happen to me then? Worse than what is happening?" (309). For the Unnamable, as for other trilogy characters, life is not a place of happiness. On the contrary, like Malone he perceives life as a kind of punishment for being born: "I was given a pensum, at birth perhaps, as a punishment for having been perhaps" (312). Nevertheless, like the others he is still terrified of death even though it will release him from all this suffering and misery. What makes death so terrifying for him is the same thing: he knows what life is like, but death is a question mark about which one can know nothing, and this is one of the things that makes life bearable in spite of all its misery.

It is seen that Mahood, one of the characters in the Unnamable's stories, also has a paradoxical attitude towards death like his creator. Mahood regards life as a miserable state, where one terribly suffers, so he sometimes longs for death:

> The last step! I who could never manage the first. But perhaps they would consider themselves sufficiently rewarded if I simply waited for the wind to blow me over. That by all means, it's in my repertory. The trouble is there is no wind equal to it. The cliff would have to cave in under me. If only I were alive inside one might look forward to heart-failure, or to a nice little infarctus somewhere or other (336).

On the other hand, similar to the Unnamable, he thinks about the possibility that death may not be as peaceful as it seems to be: "It will perhaps be less restful than I appear to think, alone there at last, and never importuned" (337). Hence, he prefers

life to death since death is unknown to him, and so frightening, and "while there's life there's hope" (336).

As Moran gradually turns into Molloy, his view of God also begins to change because Moran, who has been a devoted believer before the quest, starts losing his devotion to and trust in God. He never stops believing in the existence of God, but the image of God in his mind changes as his old secure world crumbles into pieces. Thus, Moran is a typical Beckettian hero who "seems obsessed with the idea and need of God. At the same time, he is appalled by what seems to be evidences - cruelty, injustice, suffering, death – that God, as he is conceived by man (the hero), must be either malign, indifferent, dead, or nonexistent" (Ben-Zvi 24). Therefore, Moran's God is neither omnipotent nor just, but one who is either impotent or malicious as all this chaos and suffering indicate, and he reveals his anger and frustration with him: "as for God, he is beginning to disgust me" (106). Besides, he sounds quite ironical as he talks about the time when he "was part of that docile herd going yet again to thank God for his goodness and to implore his mercy and forgiveness, and then returning, their souls made easy, to other gratifications" (129). He is not in good terms with God at all, as his own version of quietist Pater also reveals: "Our Father who art no more in heaven than on earth or in hell, I neither want nor desire that thy name be hallowed, thou knowest best what suits thee. Etc. The middle and the end are very pretty" (168). Then, it can be said that Moran's problematic relationship with God represents man vacillating between "recognition and avoidance" (Ben-Zvi 2). On the one hand, he needs to believe in "a transcendent power outside himself as the potential source for the meeting of his metaphysical needs" (Barge 20); on the other, he recognizes the evidences for the absence of such a power. And Beckett examines this oscillation through Moran's problematic relationship with God.

Malone does not openly state whether he believes in God or not, but from his view of life and death and from his state of mind, one can infer his attitude towards God. It is seen that Malone frequently uses the word "God" and such clichés as "my God," (182), "God forbid," (235) "God knows," (209), so one tends to make a hasty conclusion that Malone believes in God since he frequently articulates His name when he is desperate, shocked, irritated or surprised. However, when Malone's attitude towards life and death is closely examined, one can see that even if Malone

believes in God, he does not regard Him as just and omnipotent like Moran. Even if God exits, He is useless because He just sits in his corner indifferently. If Malone regarded God as omnipotent and just, he would not feel lost in the world, whose meaning he does not know. On the contrary, he would know "what [he is] doing and why" (194). However, Malone neither believes in order and clarity nor meaning and purpose in life. Besides this, if he were a believer who has no doubts over the existence of God, he would not have doubts concerning after life, but Malone does have such doubts as mentioned before. In this respect, it would not be implausible to say that his religious beliefs are weaker than Moran's since Moran, even though he is angry with God, never has such doubts. On the other hand, although he is aware of the irrationality and meaninglessness of life, he cannot help thinking that there must be a transcendental order beyond this world. Thus, his attitude towards God is ambivalent, and Ben-Zvi's explanation concerning Beckett's portrayal of man's need to "shrink from" his condition may be illuminating for Malone's ambivalent attitude: "[Beckett] is fully aware of the human need to avoid such conclusions; the 'shrink from it' becomes a necessary requisite of self-preservation. It is precisely this terrain between recognition and avoidance that Beckett explores" (2).

The Unnamable's attitude towards God is similar to that of his predecessors. The Unnamable is the only trilogy character who openly declares that he does not believe in God: "Yes, God, fomenter of calm, I never believed, not a second" (307). However, he contradicts himself since he presents the reader with the God image in his mind although he claims he does not believe in God. Similar to previous trilogy characters, the Unnamable is angry with God, for he thinks that God is capricious and malevolent, so He takes pleasure in torturing His creatures: "the essential is to go an squirming forever at the end of the line, as long as there are waters and banks and ravening in heaven a sporting God to plague his creatures, per se his chosen shits" (341). On the other hand, he cannot help praying to God in times of despair and terror, which is again typical of all trilogy characters: "Please God nothing goes wrong" (355). So, it seems as if there were three different people with three different conceptions of God; the first does not believe in Him, whereas the second believes but does not trust Him, and lastly the third seems to both believe and trust Him. Thus, his relationship with God is also problematic since like other protagonists, he represents man's need to believe in a transcendental order.

3.3 Time

Time is another recurring theme in the works of Camus and Beckett, and being absurdists writers there is a striking similarity in their conception of time. First of all, both Camus and Beckett regard time as an enemy that ruins people and carries them to their ultimate end, that is, death. So, time and death are closely interrelated for both writers. For example, Camus explains in *Le Mythe*:

> … During every day of an unillustrious lifetime carries us. But a moment comes when we have to carry it. We live on the future: 'tomorrow,' 'later on'… . Yet a day comes when a man notices or says that he is thirty. Thus he asserts his youth. But simultaneously he situates himself in relation to time. He takes his place in it. He admits that he stands at a certain point on a curve that he acknowledges having to travel to its end. He belongs to time, and by the horror that seizes him, he recognizes his worst enemy. Tomorrow, he was longing for tomorrow, whereas everything in him ought to reject it (1955: 10-11).

Likewise, Beckett in his work on Proust calls time "the double-headed monster of damnation and salvation" (1931: 1), so time figures as a destructive power in his works, too, as suggested by the physical deterioration of his characters in time. In the works by both writers, time is also treated as a void which needs to be filled up in verbal or non-verbal ways. Time is an infinite emptiness that stretches without any beginning or end; therefore, characters cannot differentiate yesterday from today, and memory fails them since time is composed of days almost identical with each other. Beckett also elaborates on memory in relation to time while Camus does not deal with it in his novels. According to Beckett, memory is unreliable since it is impossible to remember past events as they happened. What one remembers is one's own version of the past. As Beckett explains, "there is no escape from yesterday because yesterday has … been deformed by us. The mood is of no importance. Deformation has taken place" (2). What one remembers is just distorted pictures of past events because "people deform the days by altering the pictures of past actions which reside in the memories stored in mind" (Ben-Zvi 24). Therefore, it is impossible to be sure about past events, which explains the uncertainty of Beckett's characters about past events when they attempt to reconstruct the past.

In *L'Etranger* Camus presents his view of time through Meursault's way of living and his days in prison. Meursault is a man who lives only in the present moment because of his premonition of death, and this is also closely related to

Camus' view of time as an "enemy"of man, for it carries man to death. While Camus views time as a destructive force, he does not mean that man is doomed to defeat in the face of time because he suggests that man avoid hope for the future, get rid of his belief in immortality, and live life to the full. This is how man should rebel against his predicament. Thus, through Meursault's way of living Camus presents the reader with man's rebellion against his condition. It is observed that Meursault's intuition of death and of the irrationality of everything leads him to "live only from minute to minute" (Lazere 58) since it liberates him from any illusions of the future and from conventional morality. In an irrational world, in which nothing is certain and anything can happen at any minute, it is equally irrational to entertain hopes for the future. So, as Camus explains in *Le Mythe*, "the absurd enlightens me on this point: there is no future. Henceforth this is the reason for any inner freedom" (1955: 43). According to Camus, the absurd man should be indifferent to the future and should have "a desire to use up everything that is given" (44). As Masters argues, "that death makes the concept of 'future' absurd, is all the more reason to embrace fully the present" (17). Therefore, the present and the succession of presents before a constantly conscious soul is the ideal of the absurd man" (1955: 47). This exactly describes Meursault, because for him the only reality is the present moment, beyond which there is nothing. According to Lazere, it also explains his inability to "sustain his emotions beyond the time when the objects that stimulated them is present; he was fond of his mother and of Marie, but once the one died and he is separated from the other, his fondness naturally wanes" (48). To illustrate, when he thinks of Marie, he realizes that she does not mean anything to her anymore:

> For the first time in ages I thought of Marie. She hadn't written to me for days on end. That evening I thought it over and I told myself that she'd probably got tired of being a condemned man's mistress. It also crossed my mind that she might have been ill or dead. It was in the natural order of things. And how would I have known, when, now that we were physically separated, there was nothing left to keep us together or to remind us of each other. Anyway, from that point on, Marie's memory would have meant nothing to me. I wasn't interested in her anymore as if she was dead (110).

As Masters points out,

> Meursault lives entirely for what he is feeling now; he does not remember what he felt yesterday, nor does he anticipate what he will feel tomorrow. His life is a succession of unrelated instants, valuable in themselves, but losing all value when they are over (23).

Such abstract notions and feelings as love do not signify anything for him because they require being carried beyond the present moment, and so they lose their meaning for Meursault. Thus, the only reality for Meursault, whose "purely sensory consciousness [is absorbed] in the distinct sensations of each separate moment" is "physical reality" (Lazere 59). In other words, "the more abstract a concept is, the further removed from physical reality it is, the more incomprehensible it is to Meursault" (Lazere 59). That is why Marie's question asking whether he loves her does not mean anything to him, so "I told her that it didn't mean anything but I didn't think so" (38). He loves the way she dresses or she smiles, the warmth of her skin or "the familiar little pout of her lower lips" (90), but he does not love her as she expects since "the abstraction 'love' signifies no physical reality" (Lazere 59).

Through Meursault's experience of time in prison Camus also presents time as a void that has no beginning or end. It is not until Meursault is imprisoned that he begins to view time that way. Meursault realizes this when he is isolated from the outside world and confined to a narrow space like Beckett's characters, so when in prison, time appears to him as an infinite emptiness that should be filled up in some ways. He is terribly bored since he has the whole twenty-four hours to spend, but there is nobody or nothing that can help him pass the time, so "the main problem…was killing time" (77), and he tries to find some methods to pass the time in his prison cell. One of the ways he invents to kill time is the memory game in which he tries to make a mental note of everything "he sees in his room" (77). Thus, he uses his memory as an effective tool to kill time as he admits: "I realized then that a man who'd only lived for a day could easily live for a hundred years in prison. He'd have enough memories not to get bored. In a way, that was a good thing" (77). Making an inventory of his possessions by memorizing every detail about them is another memory game he plays: "At the same time, I'd try not to lose track of my inventory, to enumerate everything. So that, by the end of a few weeks, I could spend hours doing nothing but listing the things in my room" (77). Sleeping is also quite an effective way of filling up time, for "I managed to sleep during the day. … In fact, during the last few months I was sleeping sixteen to eighteen hours a day" (77), so he has six hours left, and that is how he spends this period of time: "So that left me six hours to kill with my meal, my bodily functions, my memories and the story of the Czechoslovakian" (77).

When one is occupied with one's daily routine, one is ignorant of that face of time as an infinite void, but the moment one is devoid of one's daily routine and is isolated from the outside world like Meursault, one starts experiencing time that way, and when time turns into a void that should be filled up, it becomes a terrifying experience because man feels its infinity and feels lost within it; this is also how Meursault feels. Since all the days are identical in prison, he loses "track of time": "I'd read somewhere that you ended up losing track of time in prison … [The days are] so distended that they ended up flowing into one another. They lost their names. The words yesterday and tomorrow were the only ones that still meant something to me" (78). Therefore, when the warder tells him that he has been there for five months, he is greatly surprised because "for me it was for ever the same that I was spinning out in my cell and the same task that I was pursuing" (78). Meursault loses his notion of time in prison because no one day is different from another, so time becomes one long commodity for him.

In *La Peste* living in the present and living life to the full again appear as ways of revolting against time and death. Like most people, the inhabitants of Oran appreciate this fact in the time of a crisis since they become aware of the fragility of human life. As Rieux notes, "each of us had to be content to live only for the day, alone under the vast indifference of the sky" (57). Fear of death intensifies the life instinct within them, and they recognize that they should savour every second of life:

> once these people realized their instant peril, they gave their thoughts to pleasure. And all the hideous fears that stamp their faces in the daytime are transformed in the fiery, dusty nightfall into a sort of hectic exaltation, an unkempt freedom fevering their blood (110).

However Tarrou, who comes to Oran just before the plague breaks out, and Rieux's old asthma patient are different from others in that they had been conscious of this fact before the epidemic threatened their lives because they have always been conscious of their mortality. Tarrou witnessed the execution of a man that had frozen his blood and had made him determine to fight for human life, and the old asthma patient has been living on the brink of death due to his illness, so they know how precious every instant of life is. For instance, in his diary that Rieux shares with the reader, Tarrou wrote:

> Query: How contrive not to waste one's time?
> Answer: By being fully aware of it all the while.

> Ways in which this can be done: By spending one's days on an uneasy chair in a dentist's waiting-room; by remaining on one's balcony all a Sunday afternoon; by listening to lectures one doesn't know; by travelling by the long train routes, and of course standing all the way; by lining up at the box office of theatres and then not buying a seat; and so forth (25).

The ironical tone that Tarrou uses is obvious because he lists here the familiar ways in which people waste their time as if they would live forever. However, he knows that "one's got to squeeze all one can out of life" (137). Rieux's old asthma patient is also conscious of the destructive nature of time, and in order to be aware of every moment, he uses a very interesting way:

> He worked out the time … with his two saucepans, one of which was always full of peas when he woke in the morning. He filled the other, pea by pea, at a constant, carefully, regulated speed. Thus time for him was reckoned by these pans and he could take his bearings at any moment of the day. 'Every fifteen pans,' he said, 'it's feeding-time. What could be simpler? (108).

So, as Lazere points out,

> the old asthma victim has retired and spent the rest of his days merely being conscious of life every minute. He maintains this constant awareness by throwing away clocks and marking time by shifting peas, one by one, from one saucepan to another (39).

Lazere also adds that the old man's "mechanical multiplication of moments allies him to … Camus's quantitative ethic of the most life, rather than the best life in *the Myth*" (39). In *Le Mythe* Camus explains his "ethic of quantity" rather than "quality" saying, "what counts is not the best living but the most living" (1955: 45), and the old man's "desire to die at a very advanced age" (108) also proves his alliance to Camus's "ethic of quantity". Besides, because there are no absolute values, there is no such thing as the best living. As Masters argues, according to Camus,

> 'Quality' is suggested by abstract concepts which exist outside time. Now that all abstract concepts have been overthrown and the finite power of time recognized, quantity is more important, because one can no longer believe that any experience is qualitatively more profound than the other (51).

Therefore, rather than trying to find any meaning or significance in life, man should live with "an intense commitment to life as it is" (Masters 51).

In *La Peste* time is also presented as an infinite void which should be filled in some ways. Like Meursault, when Oran people are devoid of their daily occupations, time turns out to be a terrifying experience for them. For example, for Rambert, a journalist who is not an inhabitant of Oran, but who is trapped there because of the

seclusion period, days in Oran are unbearable since all days are identical and time passes terribly slowly; therefore, he tries to kill time during the day like Meursault in prison, and this is how he tries to pass the time everyday "till nightfall".

> In the mornings he would sit on the terrace of one of … [the cafés] and read a newspaper in the hope of finding some indication that the epidemic was on the wane. He would gaze at the faces of the passers-by, … and after reading for the nth time the shopsigns on the other side of the street … would rise and walk again at random in the yellow streets. Thus he killed time till nightfall, moving about the town and stopping now and then at a café or restaurant (100).

Rambert also kills time in the railway station every day by "studying the timetables, reading the prohibitions against spitting, and the passengers' regulations" (101). Thus, he is not different from Meursault in that he is also a prisoner exposed to the infinity of time although his space is much wider than that of Meursault.

In *Trilogy* Beckett presents his view of time as a destructive force through characters' physical and mental disintegration. In *Molloy*, Molloy is seen to use crutches because of his stiff leg at the beginning of his journey; however, in the course of his quest his other leg also becomes stiff, and he begins to crawl. Finally, he ends his journey at the bottom of a ditch, being unable to crawl any more. At present, he is an invalid confined to his bed. Thus, throughout the narrative the reader witnesses Molloy's gradual physical disintegration. Molloy feels the destructive effect of time not only physically, but also mentally, as he admits: "All grows dim. A little more and you will go blind. It's in the head. It doesn't work any more, it says I don't work any more. You go dumb as well and sounds fade" (8).

His mental deterioration also results in the unreliability of his memory, and at this point it is necessary to dwell on the unreliability of memory, since it is an issue that Beckett elaborates on in *Trilogy*. Federman notes, "Beckett's creatures have a prodigious talent for forgetting even their names" (105), as observed in Molloy's failure in remembering his name. Molloy can hardly talk about past events with certainty since his retrospection is always accompanied by scepticism. To illustrate, when he talks about a woman helping him at the seaside, he cannot be sure whether the events he is narrating occurred on that day or not: "yes it seems to me such an incident occurred about this time. But perhaps I am thinking of another stay, at an earlier time" (74-75). Moreover, he thinks that he may be mistaken not only about the time but also about the woman who helped him: "But perhaps I am merging two times in one, and two women, one coming towards me shyly, urged on by the cries

and laughter of her companions, and the other going away from me, unhesitatingly" (75). Similarly, after he narrates the events that took place in the police station, where he was taken for reasons unclear to him, he tries to fix the exact time of its occurrence, but he cannot be sure: "that then is how that second day began, unless it was the third, or the fourth" (29).

Molloy is supposed to write some kind of "autobiography" as Garland names it, but

> autobiography depends on recounting, on rendering an account, an account for oneself, and therefore on memory. This is what Beckett's characters lack: the ability to speak as if their memories belonged to them, and thus the ability to relate or reconstruct the sequence of events (32).

Therefore, although Molloy claims that he "quote[s] from memory" (71), his memories are "very likely to be invented rather than remembered" (105). Then, Molloy is in search of the impossible. He attempts to write his memories, but his narrative turns into "a blend of memory and fiction" (Acheson 99) because as Beckett states in *Proust*, it is impossible to reconstruct the past as it is. Time distorts one's memories, and whenever one tries to retrieve them, one partly fictionalizes one's past, so Molloy says, "Perhaps I'm inventing a little, perhaps embellishing" (9). Thus, the forgetfulness of the trilogy characters, which is at the extreme, serves "to highlight the ... irretrievability of the past" (Acheson 57).

The trilogy characters also tend to forget and confuse past events because they do not experience time as a linear progression. They are trapped in a circular pattern in which time turns into an infinite and immeasurable unit, so they have no notion of linear time. In such "a repetitive pattern in which temporality was held at bay" (Garland 18), they feel as if days were not different from each other, and so they can never be certain about how much time has elapsed. For instance, Molloy gets confused about how long it has been since he began his journey. From the position of the moon he estimates that it has been fourteen days since he set off, but it does not seem probable to him since he has not realized that it has been such a long time:

> Had there then elapsed, between that night on the mountain, that night when I saw A & C and then made up my mind to go and see my mother, and this other night, more time than I had thought, namely fourteen full days, or nearly? And, if so, what had happened to those fourteen days, or nearly and where had they flown? (41-42).

Like Meursault, he has lost track of time although he is not in prison because like Meursault, he is trapped in a cycle in which time seems to be frozen, and Molloy seems aware of the cyclical nature of his life because he says, "whatever I do, ... it will always be as it were the same thing" (61). Furthermore, after he rests in "a hole" for some time, he goes on with his journey, and the words he uses to describe his quest also display his awareness of his entrapment in a circular pattern: "Then I resumed my spirals" (68). Moreover, he also regards his life both "as something over ... [and] as of a joke which still goes on, and it is neither, for at the same time it is over and it goes on" (36). According to the calendar time, Molloy's life is still going on since he is still alive; on the other hand, he also feels as if his life were over because he feels outside temporality owing to the repetitive pattern of his life. Hence, Molloy's situation fits Rabinovitz's statement about Beckett's characters in general: "if their movements at times seem rectilinear, their routes are finally circuitous – the end of each cycle marks the beginning of a new one at a more advanced stage than the previous one, so these routes take on a helical form" (74). Therefore, when Molloy thinks that he has made some progression, he sees that he is mistaken: "however far I went, and in no matter what direction, it was always the same sky, always the same earth, precisely, day after day and night after night" (65).

In such a repetitive pattern, time turns into an infinite emptiness as in Camus's work, and characters feel an urge to fill it up in some ways. Molloy does not openly state that he feels such an urge, but his confinement and the activities he is involved in seem to imply it. For Beckett's characters, telling stories or talking about their memories are popular ways of passing the time, and this is also what Molloy does. He is totally isolated from the outside world, so telling a tale of past events is the only way to pass the time for a lonely old man confined to his bed until his death. Then, one of the reasons for his writing a tale of past events is to pass the time: "what I need now is stories" (13).

The idea of time as man's enemy also appears in the second part of *Molloy* because, as indicated earlier, like Molloy, Moran also undergoes a physical disintegration as he gradually turns into Molloy. Moran recognizes that his physical condition is rapidly deteoriating since he is getting old: "And I seemed to see myself ageing as swiftly as a day-fly" (149), and finally time changes him so much that he thinks he has become unrecognizable:

> Physically speaking it seemed to me I was now becoming rapidly unrecognisable. And when I passed my hands over my face, in a characteristic and now more than ever pardonable gesture, the face my hands felt was not my face any more, and the hands my face felt were my hands no longer (170).

Besides, in Moran's speculations about old age, Beckett's view of man as time's victim is obvious: "To be literally incapable of motion at last, that must be something! My mind swoons when I think of it. And mute into the bargain! And perhaps as deaf as a post! And who knows as blind as a bat! And as likely as not your memory a blank! And just enough brain intact to allow you to exult!" (141). It is striking that Moran, who is proud of having a methodical mind and a good memory, starts forgetting things after he starts resembling Molloy. He says that as a good detective, he is very conscientious about his work, and he pays attention to every small detail: "I was so scrupulous" (138); however, he now forgets the instructions he was given about "the Molloy affair":

> I gave fitful thought while basking in the balm of the warm summer days, to Gaber's instructions. I could not reconstruct them to my entire satisfaction. In the night, ... I devoted myself to this problem. The sounds my son made during his sleep hindered me considerably. Sometimes I went out of the shelter and walked up and down, in the dark. Or I sat down with my back against a trunk, drew my feet up under me, took my legs in my arms and rested my chin on my knee. Even in this posture I could throw no light on the matter. What was I looking for exactly? It is hard to say. I was looking for what was wanting to make Gaber's statement complete. I felt he must have told me what to do with Molloy once he was found (136-137).

He tries hard to remember the instructions because without them he is unable to know what he is going to do with Molloy when he finds him, but however hard he attempts to remember, it is in vain, so "I told myself I had better give it no more thought, that the first thing to do was to find Molloy, that then I would devise something" (138). Similar to Molloy, Moran cannot remember the past events either; therefore, he tries to reconstruct his past with an unreliable memory just like Molloy. For example, after he and his son have an argument, his son leaves him without food or money, but Moran fails to remember the reason for this argument although it must have left a mark on his mind, for it causes his son to leave him: "That night I had a violent scene with my son. I do not remember about what. Wait, it may be important. No, I don't know" (160). Then, similar to that of Molloy, Moran's narrative is also a mixture of memory and fiction as the word "story" he uses to describe his narrative implies: "Stories, stories. I have not been able to tell them. I shall not be able to tell

this one" (138). It is striking that Moran does not use the word "memories" because he is also conscious of the fact that the process of reconstruction of the past involves fictionalization; time distorts his memories.

Like Molloy, Moran also seems to lose track of time since his life is also composed of a circular pattern in which time turns into an infinite emptiness, which is symbolized by his circular quest, ending with his return to the point where he began his journey. For instance, he cannot be sure how much time has passed since his last confession: "How long had I gone now without confession or communion?" (169). For the former Moran it was impossible to ask such a question because while leading a conventional life, his life was governed strictly by the calendar time, and he was moving along with time, but as soon as "the Molloy affair begins, he enters a circular pattern and goes out of the calendar time. Time is no longer linear for Moran, it is a commodity that stretches without any beginning or any end, which makes him feel that "[you] ... see yourself doing the same thing endlessly over and over again" (134).

Beckett presents his view of time as an enemy of man in *Malone Dies* through Malone's physical condition, which is getting worse with his approaching death. At the beginning, he describes himself as an invalid, but he can write and use a stick which helps him to reach the things in the room:

> My body is what is called unadvisedly perhaps, impotent. There is virtually nothing it can do. Sometimes I miss not being able to crawl around any more. ... My arms, once they are in position, can exert a certain force. But I find it hard to guide them. Perhaps the red nucleus has faded. I tremble a little, but only a little. ... My sight and hearing are very bad, on the vast main no light but reflected gleams (186).

Besides, throughout the narrative, his physical condition gets worse. To illustrate, he begins to find it hard to go on thinking and writing, but he still has a little energy that enables him to struggle and to go on:

> In any case I think I'll stop. I was keeping the best for the end, but I don't feel very well, perhaps I'm going, that would surprise me. It's a passing weakness, everyone has experienced that. One weakens, then it passes, one's strength comes back and one resumes (253).

But, it does not pass; he gets much weaker, and recognizes in horror that "the bed has not stirred" (255) for a certain period of time. It is important for Malone because as he states at the beginning, "the groaning of the bedstead is part of my life, I would

not like it to decrease" (186) because if it decreases, it shows that he has weakened, and if it ceases, it means that he is either dead or unable to move any more. That is why he feels anxious when he has difficulty in moving: "Why this need of activity? I am growing nervous" (257), so he is aware that he is in the process of "decomposition," and he calls his physical deterioration "my decomposition" (255). Towards the end, he begins to suffer terribly since "the pain is almost unbearable, upon my soul it is" (275). And, at the end, his suffering reaches the peak, for he is living his last moments: "Try and think. I can't. Grandiose suffering. I am swelling. What if I should burst? The ceiling rises and falls, rises and falls, rhythmically, as when I was a foetus" (285). Thus, throughout the narrative, the reader witnesses Malone's physical "decomposition" which carries him to his death.

Like Molloy and Moran, Malone has a poor memory, for he remembers the past very little. For example, he does not remember what happened to him or how he was brought there:

> I don't remember how I got here. In an ambulance perhaps, a vehicle of some kind certainly. One day I found myself here, in the bed. Having probably lost consciousness somewhere, I benefit by a hiatus in my recollections, not to be resumed until I recovered my senses, in this bed. As to the events that led up to my fainting and to which I can hardly have been oblivious, at the time, they have left no discernible trace, on my mind (183).

Besides, like the previous narrators, he admits that when he tries to reconstruct the past, he partly fictionalizes it: "have often amused myself with trying to invent them, those same lost events" (183). Moreover, he is aware that "all that must be half imagination" (185). Furthermore, he states that he has "a short memory" (207) because similar to Molloy and Moran, he forgets what he said or thought a little while ago: "Already I forget what I have said. That is not how to play. Soon I shall not know where Sapo comes from, nor what he hopes" (189).

Malone's experience of time is also very similar to that of Molloy and Moran because he experiences time not as a linear continuum but as a repetitive pattern, which turns time into infinite emptiness. Malone, like Molloy, is confined into a room, and has almost no contact with the outside world, so as Szanto states, "each day differs very little from each preceding day and will differ almost not at all from the day to follow" (72), which results in his uncertainty about time. For example, he does not know which month it is now; he can only guess: "Then it will be the month of April or May. For the year is still young, a thousand little signs tell me so" (180).

Besides, he is uncertain about how much time has elapsed: “I don’t know how long I have been here, I must have said so. All I know is that I was very old already before I found myself here. ... But I think I have been here for some considerable time” (186). Hence, like Molloy he needs to fill up this infinite and terrifying emptiness through some activities, and at the beginning he makes a programme in which he lists the activities he will deal with, so one of the functions of these activities is to pass the time until his death. He will talk about his present state, tell three stories, and enumerate his belongings. Malone’s desire to pass the time seems conflicting with his fear of death because he knows that every lived moment brings him much nearer the end of the road, but his need to pass the time is at the same time very human because if he does not fill up the time with such activities, he will “watch ... [himself] die” (180), so he tries to occupy himself all the time “in order not to watch the progress” (Ben-Zvi 91). In other words, he hopes that these activities “will provide distraction and calm” (Ben-Zvi 91). Hence his “little pastimes” both help him pass the time and prevent him from thinking about his predicament.

Beckett follows the same pattern in *The Unnamable* when he examines the time concept. The Unnamable is the last protagonist of *Trilogy*, so as mentioned before, the physical disintegration has reached the peak, for “my body [is] incapable of the smallest movement” (303). Moreover, the protagonists of his stories are also old and in the process of disintegration. For example, Mahood, like Molloy, is using crutches, and he suffers terribly, and relieves his pain by means of painkillers. Besides, in the later stage Mahood is seen to be sitting without legs or arms in a jar, and he is dwindling continuously. Time’s distortion of memory also appears in *The Unnamable* since the unnamable is as forgetful as his predecessors: “My inability to absorb, my genius for forgetting, are more than they reckoned with” (327) says the Unnamable, and his memory is so poor that he forgets what he was saying: “What I was saying, just now, something important, it’s gone” (314). When he muses on certain points, he reminds himself to be “quick ... before [he] forget[s]” (314) what he was thinking about. The Unnamable also forgets the things about the characters he has created. To illustrate, he remembers Worm, but he does not remember the other details about him, whereas he remembers everything about Mahood except his name: “I remember Worm, that is to say I retained the name, and the other, what is his name, what was his name, in his jar, I can see him still ... I know how he lived”

(399). Then, he remembers the name, but this time he forgets other details: "now I remember ... I don't see him any more, Mahood, ... I don't know how he lived any more" (399). The Unnamable also speculates about time and how it distorts or erases one's memories. He thinks that time "piles up all about you, instant on instant, on all sides, deeper and deeper, thicker and thicker, ...with no memory of anything, ... no knowledge of anything, no history, no prospects" (393).

The Unnamable also goes through the same problem of passing the time like the earlier protagonists because of "an empty, 'immeasurable' stretch of time which insidiously suffocates him" (Brée 82). Therefore, he states that he is "incapable of measuring time" (301) because he has no notion of time. Hence he feels as if nothing had ever changed: "Nothing has ever changed since I have been here" (296). Thus, time units do not make sense to him: "There are no days here, but I use the expression" (295). He has no notion of duration, either since he is unaware of how much time has passed: "What matters how long? ... A short time, a long time, it's all the same" (311). So, he does not have the ability to distinguish an instant from a year: "I say an instant, perhaps it was years" (320). Therefore, he has to fill up this infinite emptiness in such ways as talking and telling stories, but nothing helps him because it is a never-ending continuum:

> no point in telling yourself stories, to pass the time, stories don't pass the time, nothing passes the time, that doesn't matter, that's how it is, you tell yourself stories, then any old thing saying, no more stories from this day forth, and the stories go on, it's stories still, or it was never stories, always any old thing, for as long as you can remember, no, longer than that, any old thing, the same old thing, to pass the time, then ... time didn't pass" (388 - 389).

Thus, although he does anything to pass the time, it does not pass because there will be new seconds that he should fill, so it is a futile attempt, and he is conscious of "the futility of my telling myself any old thing, to pass the time" (389).

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

This study attempted to explore the differences between the characterization and the narrative technique as well as the similarities between the themes in the novels by Albert Camus and Samuel Beckett. It was argued that the themes that Camus and Beckett explore are similar because both writers belong to the absurd tradition that flourished after the Second World War in the 20th century. Consequently, both authors portray man as an exile in an irrational universe, devoid of meaning and a transcendental order. On the other hand, there are considerable differences in the way Camus and Beckett draw their characters and in the narrative technique they employ in their novels due to the difference of the two authors' view of art and the artist.

In Chapter 2, the differences between the characterization and the narrative techniques in the two writers' novels are discussed. It is seen that the difference between the two authors' view of art and the artist gives rise to considerable differences in regard to these two issues. Firstly, Camus sees art as one of the ways of rebellion against the chaos and disorder of the outside world by providing order and clarity that the external world is devoid of. According to Camus, since reason is limited, it is unable to fulfill man's never-ending desire to know the whole. For Camus, this is the point where art enters the scene since he believes that the function of art is to fulfill the human desire for order and clarity. But, as Eubanks and Petrakis observe, "for Camus there are distinctions to be made within the artistic creation. Fictional creation is a 'greater intellectualization' than other forms of art" (7) because in fiction "the temptation to explain remains the greatest ... in which conclusion is almost inevitable" (1955: 99). Then, Camus regards fiction as the most convenient form to

> provide ... the illusion of rendering unity to the world; a sense of belonging and coherence is achieved in a novel. Fiction creates self-contained worlds because stories have a beginning, middle, and end. Characters, at least so far as the fictional work is concerned, come to a conclusion; and regardless of plot twists, there is unity to the story (Eubanks & Petrakis 7).

Camus also argues that a fictional work should take its material from the world; that is, it should not be cut off from reality. On the other hand, it should attempt not to reproduce reality as it is but to give it a new shape. In this respect, both a total acceptance and a total rejection of reality are flawed. An ideal work of art should involve both an acceptance and a rejection of the world; it is an acceptance in the sense that it takes its material from the world, and at the same time it is a rejection since the artist creates the illusion of order and unity that the world is devoid of by reshaping the reality. In order to achieve this illusion, a work of art should be restrained. Therefore, to Camus, the most suitable form is the classical form, for it provides organization and discipline by imposing on the work certain constraints. In this sense, Camus may be regarded to be close to the realist tradition because he uses the traditional novelistic devices in his novels, as observed in his characterization and the narrative technique he employs in his novels.

On the other hand, Beckett considers form and content inseparable from each other, so he argues that not only content but also form should depict the chaos of the world. Hence, the artist should employ new forms that accommodate the chaos, for the traditional forms fall short in its depiction. Therefore, unlike Camus, he completely rejects conventional novelistic devices, and he displays his rejection by exposing their artificiality and insufficiency through parody and subversion. Then, it does not seem implausible to argue that in his trilogy Beckett subverts and parodies most of the conventional novelistic devices that Camus uses in his characterization and narrative technique in his three novels.

Consequently, whereas Camus complies with conventions of realist art in characterization, Beckett not only deviates from them to a great extent but also subverts them. For instance, Camus conforms to the tradition of giving characters names that provide them with a social identity and place them in a contemporary social setting. Besides this, Camus's characters are individualized through certain characteristics peculiar to them. They are depicted as credible individuals acting in predictable ways in certain situations, so the reader can name at least a few qualities to describe them. For example, Meursault in *L'Etranger* is portrayed as an outsider disregarding social rules and conventions, and he acts accordingly. He does not feel the need to display his sorrow outwardly in his mother's funeral, or he does not hesitate to refuse his boss' offer to transfer him to Paris. Besides, when one is asked

what kind of a man Dr. Rieux is, one can name some of his characteristics easily: a philanthropic man who believes in solidarity, and who does everything he can in order to help others. Lastly, Clamence in *La Chute* is also an individual with a particular personality. He is depicted as a man obssessed with judgment and self-justification as both his past and present actions reveal. Then, it can be said that the actions of these characters suggest a sense of fixed identity since their actions are never inconsistent or contradictory.

Camus's characters are also individualized through their speeches, revealing their characteristics. To illustrate, Meursault's speech is indicative of his aloofness as his short sentences and his unwillingness to be involved in a dialogue suggest. His speech also reveals his sensual nature, for he frequently talks about his sensory experience whereas he remains silent about his emotions and feelings. His language also indicates his inability to make sense of abstract concepts since they have no physical reality, which explains his failure to comprehend and conform to social conventions involving such abstract concepts. Dr Rieux's language also reveals his personal qualities and thus individualizes him. For instance, his straightforward and plain language points out to his dislike of abstractions and his belief that one should use a plain language to achive communication with others, for this is how men attain solidarity. On the contrary, Clamence uses language not to achieve communication but to manipulate and ensnare others. Therefore, unlike Dr. Rieux, he uses a refined and sophisticated language, revealing his motives.

Camus also conforms to conventional characterization by placing his characters in a recognizable and contemporary setting. The setting of *L'Etranger* is made recognizable through vivid details, as observed in Meursault's description of his neighbourhood on a typical Sunday, or his description of his apartment. Similarly, Dr. Rieux is placed in a typical bourgeois city with all its monotony and banality. The narrator describes Oran in detail as a soulless city inhabited by mediocre people whose chief aim is to build up their wealth. Both settings convey the sense of monotony and man's inclination to build up habits in order to screen themselves away from the sense of absurdity. Thus, by placing both protagonists in such settings, their difference from the society they live in is strikingly underlined. Clamence is also placed in a specific setting. Amsterdam with its dullness and

concentric canals is symbolic of the hell of endless repetition that Clamence is confined to.

Beckett's characters seem to negate all the realistic conventions that Camus uses to draw his characters. In contrast to Camus's characters, they are drawn in their outlines, and reduced to their essentials, for their function is to represent everymen. Firstly, whereas Camus names his characters according to the rules of realist naming, Beckett uses certain techniques to subvert the realistic naming. Realistic naming suggests the existence of a fixed identity, and Beckett erodes the sense of a fixed identity by giving his characters unrealistic names or renaming them. Besides, the actions of the trilogy characters are not differentiating but recurring. To illustrate, all of them are involved in a failed quest which symbolizes the futility of any attempt at meaningful action. Moreover, they all feel an obligation to go on with their quests although they do not know why. Thus, their motives are unknown even to themselves in contrast to realistic characters whose actions are motivated and explicable all the time.

The speeches of the trilogy characters also subvert the conventional function of speech to individualize characters because unlike the language of Camus's characters, their language contributes to their anonymity because their speeches, like their actions, are similar to each other, giving the sense that the same puzzled and frustrated voice is speaking in all the three volumes. Moreover, the striking difference between the two authors' view of language comes to the surface at this point. To Camus, communication between men is attainable through a straightforward and plain language. This is exactly the opposite of Beckett's view of language because Beckett presents language as an inefficient tool to express one's thoughts, to comprehend the world, or to define one's self. At this point, Beckett agrees with Wittgenstein, who states that there is a domain which words fail to represent. Since man cannot know what words reveal to him, it is impossible to capture the reality beyond words. Hence, the efforts of the trilogy characters to comprehend the whole or to define the self are doomed to failure.

The settings in the trilogy are also strikingly different from those of Camus's three novels because they do not have the function of setting the characters in a recognizable and contemporary environment and thus contributing to their credibility. On the contrary, the settings are symbolic in the sense that they

symbolize the gradual withdrawal of the trilogy protagonist into his consciousness. Beginning with the Moran section in Molloy, there is a consistent reduction in the setting, informing the movement inwards. In each volume, the more the character descends into his consciousness, the more unrecognizable the setting becomes.

Lastly, the differences between the narrative techniques in the two authors's novels are examined. It is seen that in accordance with their different views of art, Camus employs techniques of conventional narrative, while Beckett uses many of the techniques that Camus employs to expose their artificiality and limitations. To illustrate, all of Camus's three novels are retrospective narratives with omniscient narrators. Traditional retrospective narratives require an omniscient narrator who has complete knowledge of the past. It is seen that Camus's narrators have all the qualities of an omniscient narrator of a traditional retrospective narrative because they have complete knowledge of the past, display no difficulty in remembering even the smallest details, and recount past events in their proper order. Whereas Camus fulfills all these requirements, Beckett parodies them in *Molloy* through his two unreliable and self-conscious narrators. Just like Camus's narrators, Molloy and Moran attempt to restore the past events in their narratives, but unlike them, these two narrators experience some problems concerning the writing process, and as self-conscious narrators, they often reflect on these problems. For instance, unlike Camus's narrators, they do not have complete knowledge of the past, so they frequently fall into uncertainty about the order of the events, and admit doubt about the truthfulness of their narratives. In contrast to Camus's omniscient narrators, they are doubtful about the truthfulness of the narration of the past due to their defective memory, that is, they know that their account of the past inevitably slips into fiction. In this sense, Molloy negates what Camus's narrators seem to have accomplished: the truthful retrospective narration. Besides, Molloy also parodies one of the conventions of plot that Camus uses in *La Chute*: "convention of enigma." As discussed, Clamence uses a number of strategies to create suspense in his story to ensnare the narratee/reader eventually. In the last section, in accordance with the convention, all the answers along with Clamence's motives for creating suspense are revealed, and the tension is resolved. However, in the Moran section of *Molloy*, although certain enigmas are introduced, they are never answered, contrary to the

reader's expectation. Both Moran and the reader are distracted from these questions by means of digressions and overwhelming details.

The narrators of *Malone Dies* and *The Unnamable* are as unreliable and self-conscious as Molloy and Moran. Although Moran tries to assume the role of an omniscient narrator, he fails in his attempt, for he is in the dark as to certain questions about his characters. Moreover, the emotional distance that Malone is unable to achieve between himself and his stories seems to be a parody of the impersonality and objectivity of Dr. Rieux in *La Peste*. Malone fails to efface his personality and thus confer upon himself the narratorial authority of an omniscient narrator. In contrast to Dr. Rieux, he is unable to achieve emotional detachment because the characters he creates greatly resemble him, so his narrative turns into self-examination despite his determination to avoid it. Thus, Beckett shows that the underlying desire in every narrative is to define one's self. As Harrington indicates,

> many of [Beckett's] texts show clearly that in spite of the knowledge or truth revealed by any narrative, we still cannot do without fabricating fiction. In this way, Beckett's work aims deep at the psychological root of narration. This need for narration is, for Beckett, the basis of our own entanglement with ourselves, and no narrative can fully release us from this desire (175).

That is exactly why Malone's stories turn into an unconscious attempt at self-exploration. The same desire is seen in The Unnamable. This time the narrator is determined not to fabricate any fictions in his search for his self, but his self-exploration slips into fiction. In this way, Beckett also shows the impossibility of talking about the self because every effort to talk about the self turns into fiction, so the core of the self is unnamable.

In Chapter 3, firstly the themes of alienation, isolation, and loneliness have been explored. It is seen that both writers depict man as alienated from both others and the irrational universe which they fail to comprehend. However, different from Camus, Beckett dwells on man's limited consciousness, which he regards as a factor enhancing man's alienation. In addition, Beckett handles the problem of self-alienation caused by the elusiveness of self, but in Camus's novels this problem is not probed into.

Secondly, the themes of irrationality, God, and death are common in the two authors' novels. However, the two authors differ in their exploration of the these themes. The characters of both authors inhabit a universe which is beyond man's

understanding and control. Camus and Beckett also agree that nothing is certain, stable or predictable because the universe has no transcendental order. But, different from Camus, Beckett also attempts to convey man's never-ending conflict between his recognition of the irrationality and his need for order and clarity. The efforts of the trilogy characters to achieve order and clarity prove to be futile; however, like all men, they cannot stop looking for meaning and order in spite of their recognition of its futility. In fact, Camus mentions this problem in *Le Mythe*, saying that the absurd is born out of the conflict between man's need for unity and clarity and the corresponding irrationality of the universe, but his protagonists do not suffer from such a conflict unlike the trilogy protagonists.

Camus and Beckett also handle the theme of God differently. In Camus's novels, none of the protagonists have any doubt about the inexistence of God. They all clearly express that they do not believe in God, and act accordingly. Thus, especially Meursault in *L'Etranger* and Dr. Rieux in *La Peste* embody Camus's absurd man in *Le Mythe* who does not evade the absurd through transcendental hopes; they face their condition squarely. Clamence in *La Chute* does not believe in God either, but he does not represent Camus's absurd man since he needs some kind of authority to tell him what is right and what is wrong, and thus to make him feel justified. Since he does not believe in God, he needs another master to replace Him. In the trilogy, on the other hand, Beckett's characters cannot bring themselves to renounce the idea of God completely. Although they seem not to believe in God, they cannot stop articulating His name especially in times of despair and frustration. However, they are not on good terms with God either because they all agree that even if God exists, He is either an impotent one, who is unable to help His creatures or a cruel one, who takes pleasure in watching them suffer. Thus, they embody especially the modern man's vacillation between his need for a transcendental order and his recognition that such an order does not exist.

Camus and Beckett also agree that man's mortality is one of the basic causes of the absurdity of human condition, for it makes all human endeavour meaningless and equally insignificant. Nevertheless, they draw different implications from man's mortality. To Camus, man should never ignore the fact that he is a mortal being, but this awareness should not lead to hope for another life or despair. On the contrary, this recognition should intensify his passion for life, and knowing that there is no

other life than the one he has, he should savour every minute of his life. For Camus, this is how man rebels against his mortality. Therefore, Meursault in *L'Etranger* and the Oran people in *La Peste* appreciate life much more after the catastrophy than they did before, recognizing that their time is limited. On the other hand, in his trilogy Beckett explores man's ambivalent attitude towards death, because the trilogy characters both regard death as an end to their miserable condition and are afraid of it because of their fear of the unknown. Besides, Beckett depicts the instinct of life as the biggest habit that man has, so no matter how much they suffer, they want to go on living a life of misery and futility.

The theme of time is handled quite similarly by Camus and Beckett because both writers consider time a destructive force carrying man to his death. Moreover, both agree that especially when man is drawn out of his daily routine, time turns into a void which needs to be filled in verbal and non-verbal ways. But still there are some differences. For example, Camus shows that since life is finite, man should live in the present moment without thinking about the future, for there is no future. Besides, different from Camus, Beckett elaborates on the problem of defective memory in relation to time. Consequently, the trilogy characters can never be certain of past events because of their defective memories.

In the light of this study, it can be argued that for Camus the communication of his philosophical ideas that he explores in his theoretical writings seems to be his main concern. As Camus points out in *Le Mythe*, fiction is the most effective means of exploring and communicating the philosophical views since they are put into practice through life-like situations. That may be another reason why his novels conform to the premises of the classical form, which makes him communicate his message in the most organized way and thus enables his novels to be accessible to as many people as possible. However, Beckett is mainly concerned with questions concerning art and creation rather than communicating philosophical ideas. Therefore, in his trilogy he handles such problems as limited consciousness resulting in limited perception, inefficiency of language to express man's thoughts and to achieve an authentic self, and limitations of conventional novelistic devices to depict the human predicament in an irrational and chaotic universe. In other words, art serves different aims for these two writers.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

TURKISH SUMMARY

Albert Camus ve Samuel Beckett'in Romanlarında İnsanlık Durumunun Saçmalığı

Giriş

Bu çalışma Albert Camus'nün *L'Etranger*, *La Peste* ve *La Chute* romanlarını ve Samuel Beckett'in *Molloy*, *Malone Dies* ve *The Unnamable* romanlarından oluşan üçlemesini hem teknik hem de tematik açıdan incelemektedir. Romanların teknik açıdan incelemesinde, iki yazarın karakterlerini yaratma yolları ve anlatım teknikleri ele alınmaktadır. Çalışma, iki yazarın romanlarının bu iki açıdan farklılıklarını sanata bakış açılarındaki farklılığa bağlamaktadır. Öte yandan çalışma, tematik incelemede her iki yazarın da absurd geleneğe ait oldukları için benzer temalar işlediklerini gösterir. Diğer bir deyişle bu tez, iki yazarın sanata bakış açıları farklı olmasına rağmen, insanlık durumuna bakış açılarının, ortak temaların da gösterdiği gibi, oldukça benzer olduğunu savunur.

Camus ve Beckett'in Sanata Bakış Açıları

Camus, sanatı dünyanın karmaşasına karşı bir başkaldırı olarak görür. Sanatçı, bu baş kaldırıyı dış dünyada varolmayan düzen ve netliği sanat eserinde yaratarak gerçekleştirir. Camus'ye gore, insan aklı sınırlı olduğu için insanın asla sona ermeyen herşeyi anlama ve bilme isteği asla tatmin edilemez. Öte yandan, insane bu arayışından doğası gereği vazgeçemez. Camus, sanatın işlevinin, insanın düzen ve netlik isteğini tatmin etmek olarak gördüğü için, sanatın bu noktada devreye

girdiğine inanır. Ama, Camus için her sanat dalı aynı derecede bu işlevi yerine getiremez. Ona gore, roman bunun için en uygun türdür çünkü romanda bir başlangıç, gelişme ve sonuç bölümü vardır. Bu, romanda yaratılan kurgusal dünyaya düzen ve bütünlük verir. Karakterler, en azından romanın dünyası içerisinde bir sonuca varırlar. Ayrıca, Camus'ye gore, roman malzemesini dünyadan almalıdır. Başka bir deyişle, gerçeklikten kopuk olmamalıdır. Öte yandan, geçekliğin birebir kopyası da olmamalıdır. Varolan gerçekliği kullanırken ona yeni bir şekil vermelidir. İdeal bir sanat eseri, gerçeklerden kopmayarak bir kabullenme gerçekleştirirken, gerçeklere yeniden şekil vererek varolan gerçekleri aynı zamanda reddeder. Başka bir deyişle, ideal bir sanat eseri, gerçek dünyayı hem kabul eder hem de reddeder. Camus'ye gore, arzulanan düzen ve netlik ilüzyonu yaratmanın yolu, sanat eserinin belli kurallara ve geleneklere uymasıyla gerçekleşir. Bu yüzden de roman için en uygun biçimin klasik biçim olduğunu savunur, çünkü bu en disiplinli ve kurallı biçimdir. Romanın bu ilüzyonu yaratabilmek için gerek duyduğu disiplini ve kuralları ona sunar. Bu bağlamda, Camus'nün gerçekçi geleneğe yakın olduğu kabul edilebilir çünkü romanlarında kullandığı karakterlerini yaratma tekniklerinde ve anlatım tekniğinde görüldüğü gibi, geleneksel roman tekniklerini kullanır.

Öte yandan Beckett, biçimin ve içeriğin birbirinden ayrılamayacağını savunur. Ona gore, dünyanın karmaşası sadece içerik yoluyla değil biçim yoluyla da yansıtılmalıdır. Bu yüzden, yazar bu karmaşayı yansıtabilecek yeni biçimler kullanmalıdır. Beckett'e gore, geleneksel roman teknikleri bunu yapabilmekten çok uzaktırlar. Bu yüzden Camus'nün tam aksine Beckett, geleneksel roman tekniklerini tam olarak reddeder ve onların yüzeyselliğini ve yetersizliğini parodi yoluyla gösterir. Öyleyse, iddia edilebilir ki Beckett, üçlemesinde Camus'nün romanlarında kullandığı bir çok geleneksel tekniğin parodisini yaparak onları eleştirir.

Camus ve Beckett'in Karakterlerini Yaratmada Kullandıkları Teknikler ve Anlatım Teknikleri

Sanata bakış açısının doğal bir sonucu olarak Camus, karakterlerini gerçekçi akımın geleneklerini kullanarak yaratır. Örneğin, karakterlerine, onlara sosyal bir kimlik kazandıran ve onları belirli bir sosyal çevreye ait kılan isimler vererek, gerçekçi isim verme geleneğine uyar. Bunun yanısıra, karakterlerini kendilerine has özellikleri olan

belirli bireyler olarak resmeder. Karakterler, tıpkı gerçek hayattaki insanlar gibi durum ve olaylara bu kişilik özelliklerine gore tepki verirler. Örneğin, Meursault sosyal kural ve normları önemsemeyen biri olarak okuyucunun karşısına çıkar ve tutum ve davranışları da bu özelliğiyle uyum içerisindedir. Bunun yanısıra, Dr. Rieux'un nasıl biri olduğu sorulduğunda, en azından bir kaç özelliği kolayca sıralanabilir. Dr. Rieux, humanizme ve insanların birliğine inanan, ve insanların acılarını hafifletmek ve onlara yardım etmek için elinden geleni yapan bir adamdır. Son olarak Clamence de belirli bir birey oalarak yaratılmıştır. Clamence, hem geçmişteki hem de şimdiki davranışlarının ortaya çıkardığı gibi suçluluk duygusu, yargılama ve kendini haklı çıkarma duygularını saplantı haline getirmiş bir adamdır. Bu duygularının ona verdiği acıları hafifletmek için de, hiç tanımadığı yabancılara hayat hikayesini anlatarak, aynı suçluluk duygusunu onların da hissetmesini sağlamaya çalışır. Böylece, yargılanan pozisyonundan yargılayan pozisyonuna geçer. Ama Clamence bunu sürekli yeni kurbanlar bularak tekrar etmek zorundadır, çünkü zaferleri oldukça kısa solukludur. Bu yüzden, sürekli aynı şeyi tekrar etmeye mahkumdur. O halde denilebilir ki, Camus'nün bu üç karakteri, gerçekçi karakterler olarak, tutarsız ve çelişkili olamayan tutum ve davranışlarının gösterdiği gibi sabit bir kimliğe sahiptirler.

Camus'nün karakterlerinin aynı zamanda, gerçek hayattaki gibi kişilik özelliklerini ele veren kendilerine özgü konuşma biçimleri vardır. Örneğin, Meursault'nun dili kullanış şekli onun insanlara olan duygusal mesafesini ortaya koyduğu gibi aynı zamanda duyusal özellikleri son derece hassas olan yapısını da ele verir. Aynı zamanda, dili kullanma şekli, fiziksel gerçekliği olmayan soyut kavramları anlamaktaki yerersizliğini de gösterir, ki bu onun toplumsal değer ve normları anlayamamasının önemli bir nedenidir. *La Peste* romanında ise, Dr. Rieux'un dili oldukça sade ve dolaysız kullanması, onun soyutlamalara olan karşı tavrını ortaya çıkarır. Dr. Rieux'un dili bu şekilde kullanmasının diğer bir nedeni de, insanlar arasındaki birliğin sağlıklı bir iletişimle sağlanabileceğine inanmasıdır. Bu yüzden de, dili iletişim için değil de iletişimi zorlaştıracak şekilde kullananları eleştirdiği görülür. Clamence ise tam aksine dili, insanları manipule etmek ve tuzağına düşürmek için kullanır. Bu yüzden, oldukça süslü ve karmaşık bir dil kullanır, ki bu da Camus'nün dili bu şekilde kullananlara getirdiği bir eleştiridir.

Camus'nün kullandığı mekanlar da gerçekçi akımın geleneklerine uygundur çünkü karakterlerini belirli bir sosyal ortama yerleştirerek onların daha da inandırıcı karakterler olmalarını sağlar. *L'Etranger* romanında kullanılan mekan, Meursault'nun mahallesindeki tipik bir Pazar gününü anlatmasında görüldüğü gibi, detaylı bir anlatımla gerçekçi bir hale getirilmiştir. Benzer bir şekilde, Dr. Rieux'un yaşadığı Oran şehri, bütün monotonluğu ve bayağılığıyla tipik bir burjuva şehri olarak tarif edilmektedir. Anlatıcı, Oran şehrini ruhu olmayan bir şehir, şehir sakinlerini de tek amaçları servetlerini arttırmak olan burjuvalar olarak betimler. Her iki mekan da, monotonluk duygusunu ve insanın absürdlük duygusundan kaçmak için nasıl alışkanlıklar geliştirdiklerini anlatmaktadır. Aynı zamanda, karakterleri böyle mekanlara yerleştirerek onların yaşadıkları toplumdan farklı olduklarını çarpıcı bir şekilde ortaya koyar. Clamence de diğer iki karakter gibi gerçekçi bir mekana yerleştirilmiştir. Bütün sıkıcılığı ve içiçe geçmiş dairesel kanallarıyla Amsterdam, Clamence'in tekrarlara mahkum olduğu ve içine hapsolduğu cehennemi sembolize eder.

Beckett'in karakterleri Camus'nün karakterlerini çizmek için kullandığı tüm gerçekçi akımları parody yoluyla yerle bir eder. Camus'nün karakterlerinin aksine, Beckett karakterlerini olabildiğince genel olarak çizmiştir, çünkü onların amacı genel insanlık durumunu resmetmektir. Öncelikle Beckett, gerçekçi isimler yerine sembolik ve gerçekçi olmayan isimler kulanır. Böylece, gerçekçi isimlerin verdiği sabit kimlik hissini yerle bir eder. Aynı zamanda, karakterlerin eylemleri onları ayırt edici özellikte değildir. Aksine, hepsi birbirine benzer eylemlerde bulunurlar. Örneğin, hepsi başarısızlıkla son bulan arayışlara çıkarlar. Böylece, absurd bir evrende eylemin anlamsızlığını vurgularlar. Ayrica, hepsi arayışlarının başarısızlıkla biteceğini bilmelerine rağmen, arayışlarına devam etmek için nedenini tanımlayamadıkları bir zorunluluk hissederler. Böylece, herzaman açıklanabilir davranışlarda bulunan gerçekçi karakterlerin aksine, hareketlerinin nedeni kendileri için bile bir bilinmezdir. Yani bu açıdan da Camus'nün karakterlerinden som derece farklıdırlar.

Üçlemenin karakterlerinin kullandıkları dil de onları ayırt etmez, aksine onları aynılaştırır. Eylemleri gibi, kullandıkları dil de birbirine çok benzemektedir. Böylece, okuyucu her üç romanda da aynı yolunu kaybetmiş ve kafası karışmış kişinin konuştuğu hissine kapılır. Karakterlerin içinde bulundukları mekan da gerçekçilikten

son derece uzaktır. Beckett, karakterlerin aşamalı olarak zihinlerine çekildiklerini gösteren sembolik mekanlar kullanır. Karakterlerin benlik arayışı, aşamalı olarak dış dünyadan kendi zihinlerine yönelir. *Molloy* romanının ikinci yarısındaki Moran karakteri ile başlayarak, mekanda karakterlerin zihinlerine çekilişlerini gösterecek şekilde bir indirgeme görülür.

Son olarak, iki yazarın romanlarındaki anlatım tekniklerindeki farklılıklar ele alınmıştır. Sanata bakış açılarındaki farklılığın sonucu olarak, Camus geleneksel anlatım tekniklerini kullanırken, Beckett bu tekniklerin yüzeyselliğini ve yapaylığını göstermek amacıyla onaların parodilerini yapar. Örneğin, Camus'nün üç romanında kullandığı geçmişe dönük anlatılar, herşeyi bilen anlatıcılar gerektirmektedir. Camus'nün anlatıcıları, herşeyi bilen anatıcının tüm geleneksel özelliklerine sahiptirler. Geçmişle ilgili en küçük ayrıntıları hatırlayarak, olayları belirli bir zaman dizimine gore anlatırlar. Beckett ise, Camus'nun romanlarında kullandığı geçmişe dönük anlatı biçimini, *Molloy* romanındaki güvenilmez anlatıcıları yoluyla parodisini yapar. Camus'nün anlatıcıları gibi, Molloy ve Moran geçmişte yaşadıkları olayları anlatmaya çalışırlar. Ama, onların tersine geçmiş olayları yazma sürecinde bir takım sorunlar yaşarlar. Örneğin, Camus'nun anlatıcılarının tersine, Molloy ve Moran, geçmişi olduğu gibi hatırlayamazlar ve olayların oluş sırasından emin değillerdir. Bu da onların amaçlarına ulaşmalarının önünde aşılamaz bir engel olarak kalır ve başarılarını imkansız kılar.

Malone Dies ve *The Unnamable* romanlarındaki anlatıcılar da Molloy ve Moran kadar güvenilmezlerdir. Örneğin, Malone, herşeyi bilen anlatıcı rolünü üstlenmeye çalışsa da bunda başarısızlığa uğrar çünkü yarattığı karakterlerine dair cevaplarını bilmediği sorular vardır. Aynı zamanda, kendi hakkında konuşmama kararlılığına rağmen, karakterlerinin kendisinden bir çok iz taşıdığı görülür. Tüm çabasına karşın, hikayeleri kendisini ve yaşamını sorgulama ve anlama çabasına dönüşür. Yani o da, Molloy ve Moran gibi başarısızlığa uğramıştır. Ayrıca Beckett, bu yolla her kurgusal anlatımın aslında insanın kendini anlama ve benliğini keşfetme çabası olduğunu vurgular. Aynı çaba, *The Unnamable* adlı romanda da görülmektedir. Ama bu kez anlatıcı, kurgu anlatılardan uzak durmaya ve sadece kendisi hakkında konuşmaya kararlıdır. Ama bir sure sonra, benliğini keşfetme amacı taşıyan anlatısı kurguya dönüşür. Bu yolla Beckett, benlik hakkında konuşmanın imkansızlığını gösterir. Bu

romanda görüldüğü gibi benlik hakkında konuşarak onu keşfetme çabası kurguya dönüşmeye mahkumdur çünkü benliğin özü asla adlandırılamaz.

Temalar

Camus ve Beckett'in romanlarındaki ilk tema, yabancılaşma, yalnızlık ve soyutlanma temalarıdır. Her iki yazarın romanlarında da karakterler anlayamadıkları karmaşık evrenden soyutlanmış ve yalnız hissederler. Ama, Camus'den farklı olarak Beckett, insanın soyutlanma duygusunun bir diğer nedenini insanın sınırlı bilinci olarak görür. Aynı zamanda Beckett'in karakterleri, sadece dış düyaya değil kendilerine de yabancı hissedeler çünkü benlik sürekli değişir ve ölüme kadar değişimini sürdürür. Bu yüzden, karakterlerin kendilerini anlama ve bütünleme çabaları boşunadır.

İkinci olarak, mantıksızlık, Tanrı ve ölüm temaları iki yazarın romanlarında ortaktır. Her iki yazarın karakterleri, insanın kavrama yeteneğinin ötesinde olan mantıksız bir evrende yaşarlar. Ama, Camus'den farklı olarak Beckett, insanın mantıksızlığın farkındalığı ile asla sona ermeyecek herşeyi anlama isteği arasındaki çatışmayı da ele alır. Üçleme karakterlerinin düzen ve netliğe ulaşma çabaları boşunadır. Ama bunu bildikleri halde yine de anlam arayışlarından vazgeçemezler.

Camus ve Beckett Tanrı temasını da farklı şekillerde ele alırlar. Camus'nün üç karakteri de Tanrı'ya inanmadıklarını açıkça ifade ederler ve bu konuda en ufak şüpheleri yoktur. Ama Beckett'in karakterleri, Tanrı'nın varlığını tamamen reddedemezler. Tanrı'ya inanmıyormuş gibi görünseler de, umutsuzluk, şaşkınlık ve kızgınlık durumlarında O'na seslenmekten kendilerini alamazlar. Ama Tanrı'yla ilişkileri iyi de değildir. Hepsi, eğer Tanrı varsa bile, O'nun ya yarattıklarına yardım etmekten aciz olduğunu, ya da yarattıklarının acı çekmesinde zevk aldığını düşünürler. Böylece, günümüz insanının, herşeyi anlamlı kılacak, yaşamına bir anlam kazandıracak ilahi bir düzenin varlığına inanma ihtiyacı ile, böyle bir düzenin olmadığının bilincinde olması arasında bocalamasını temsil ederler.

Camus ve Beckett, insanın tüm çabalarını anlamsız ve önemsiz kılan ölüm gerçeğini, insanlık durumunun absürdlüğünün temel nedenlerinden biri olarak Kabul ederler. Ancak, iki yazar bundan farklı sonuçlar çıkarırlar. Camus'ye gore, insan asla ölümlü olduğunu unutmamalıdır, ama bu bilinç onu umutsuzluğa ya da ölümden sonraki yaşam umuduna yol açmamalıdır. Tersine, bu farkındalık kişinin yaşam tutkusunu

arttırmalı ve yaşamın her anının değerini bilmesini sağlamalıdır. Camus'ye gore bu, insanın ölüme başkaldırma yoludur. Bu yüzden *L'Etranger* romanındaki Meursault ve *La Peste* romanındaki Oran şehri sakinleri, her an ölebileceklerinin farkında oldukları için, yaşamın değerini eskiye gore çok daha iyi bilirler. Öte yandan, Beckett üçlemesinde, insanın ölüme karşı çelişkili olan tutumunu yansıtır çünkü üçlemenin karakterleri ölümü hem sefil durumlarının sona ermesi olarak gördükleri için ölümü arzular gibi görünürler, hem de ölümden bir bilinmez olduğu için korkarlar. Aynı zamanda, Beckett yaşam içgüdüsünü insanın sahip olduğu en büyük alışkanlık olarak görür. Bu yüzden, insan ne kadar acı çekerse çeksin, yaşamaya devam eder. Üçlemenin karakterlerinin gösterdiği gibi, bilinmezlik korkusu ve yaşama alışkanlığı insanın devam etmesini sağlar.

Zaman teması da iki yazar tarafından farklı ele alınmıştır. Her iki yazar da, zaman kavramını insanı adım adım ölüme yaklaştıran, zarar verici bir güç olarak görür. Bunun yanısıra, her iki yazar da insanı meşgul eden günlük rutinin dışına çıkıldığında, zamanın bir şekilde doldurulması gereken sonsuz bir boşluğa dönüştüğünü düşünürler. Böyle durumlarda, zaman durağanlaşır ve başı ve sonu olmayan kocaman bir boşluğa dönüşür. Böyle durumlarda, karakterler sözlü ya da eylemleri yoluyla bu boşluğu doldurmaya çabalarlar, çünkü tersi, yani hiçbir şey yapmamak katlanılmazdır. Ama, iki yazarın zaman temasını ele alışlarında bir takım farklılıklar da vardır. Örneğin Camus, hayat sonlu olduğu için, insanın gelecek hakkında endişe duymadan sadece şimdiki anı yaşaması ve hakkını vermesi gerektiğini düşünür. Her an herşeyin olabileceği bir dünyada gelecek yoktur. O halde, gelecek için endişelenmek, ya da şimdiki anı gelecekteki belirsiz amaçlar için harcamak son derece anlamsızder. Beckett ise zamanla ilişkili olarak, zamanın hafıza üzerindeki olumsuz ve yıpratıcı etkilerine değinir. Donuç olarak, üçleme karakterleri bu sorundan dolayı geçmiş olayları asla olduğu gibi hatırlayamazlar. Geçmişi çarpıtarak ya da kısmi olarak hatırlarlar çünkü hafızaları, zamanın olumsuz etkilerinden paylarını almıştır.

Sonuç

Bu çalışmanın ışığında, Camus'nün amacının öncelikle kuramsal yazılarındaki düşüncelerini okuyucuya iletmek olduğu öne sürülebilir. Le Myth De Sisyphe adlı

kuramsal çalışmasında da işaret ettiği gibi Camus, kurgusal anlatıyı felsefi düşünceleri işlemenin en etkili yolu olarak görür, çünkü bu düşünceler, gerçek hayattaki durumlara benzeyen kurgulanmış durumlar yoluyla uygulamaya konulur. Bu, Camus'nün geleneksel biçimi benimsemesinin bir diğer nedeni olabilir çünkü bu biçim onun iletmek istediği düşüncelerini en düzenli ve anlaşılır şekilde sunmasını sağlar. Ama Beckett felsefi düşünceleri işlemek ve bunları okuyucuya iletmek derdinde değildir. Beckett romanlarında temel olarak sanat ve yaratma süreciyle ilgili sorunları ele alır. Bu yüzden, üçleme karakterleri, yazar-anlatıcılar olarak bu tür sorunlara değinirler. Örneğin, sınırlı algıya yol açan sınırlı insane zihni bu konuların arasındadır. Aynı zamanda, dilin insanın duygu ve düşüncelerini anlatmak ve özgün bir benlik oluşturmaktaki yetersizliği de işlenen konular arasındadır. Son olarak, karmaşık ve mantıksız bir evrendeki insanlık durumunun absürdlüğünü yansıtmakta yetersiz ve yüzeysel kalan geleneksel roman tekniklerini ele almaktadırlar. Diğer bir deyişle, sanat Albert Camus ve Samuel Beckett için farklı amaçlara hizmet etmektedir.