

ABSURDITY IN ENGLISH NOVEL

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FOREWORD

This study is the edited book version of my Master of Arts dissertation, entitled “From *Ulysses* to *Catch-22*: A Study on Absurdity in English Novel,” supervised by Assistant Professor Dr Mustafa CANLI and submitted to the Institute of Graduate Studies at Karabük University, Türkiye, in 2023. The title sheds light on the existence of absurdism school in the novel, focusing on two novels, namely *Ulysses* and *Catch-22*. Many studies have concentrated on the absurdity of the theatre, while the current study focuses on absurdism as a school and its manifestation in the novel. This study aims to examine the existence of absurdity in characters’ lives and how it affects their lives and suggest suitable solutions to eliminate their absurd and chaotic lives. This study will show how absurdism exists in these two different novels, where *Ulysses* belongs to the modernist period and, on the other hand, *Catch-22* belongs to the postmodern period as it contains elements that can be traced to the modernist period. However, the matter is absurdism’s existence, effectiveness, and transition from one period to another.

Various readers may generate diverse correct interpretations for absurdism situations due to the text’s capacity to provide a wide variety of appropriate meanings, which includes a range of meanings that can be supported by textual evidence. However, due to the actual text used in this approach, individuals must rely on it to confirm or adjust their responses. Consequently, not all interpretations are considered acceptable; some hold more accuracy than others. Authors’ expressed intentions and the subsequent meanings they provide are only additional text interpretations. Like all others, these interpretations must be evaluated about the text itself, which serves as the framework.

Yasir Ahmed HUSSEIN
Baghdad, 2024

INTRODUCTION

Absurdism has been acknowledged as a subject of academic study within the field of literature, as it allows for multiple valid readings of absurd events. This is due to the text's ability to offer a broad range of suitable meanings. Absurdism in literature is a literary genre that utilizes tactics like irregular narrative structure, surrealism, and humor to explore philosophical themes such as existentialism and the nature of humanity. Absurdism gained recognition as a topic of scholarly investigation as a literary trend following World War II, specifically due to the release of Albert Camus' renowned essay, *The Myth of Sisyphus*. Absurdism is a philosophical movement that emerged either due to existentialism or diverged from it. Absurdist novels and dramas delve into existentialist and nihilistic perspectives through their portrayal of characters and storylines; in addition, absurdity arises when individuals become aware of a fundamental absence of meaning in life and feel obligated to live within it. Wars have resulted in a loss of religious and spiritual beliefs, destroying people's aspirations for a meaningful and respectful life; the postwar period created existential issues such as alienation, distrust, despair, and loneliness. The world's meaninglessness makes man separate from his environment and himself, and writers have used this separation from a world that does not make sense to portray a horrible picture of the 20th century. Concerning this, modernist and postmodernist literary works emphasize existential issues to describe the world's absurdism and people's suffering. Therefore, this study focuses on absurdist school in fiction. As the title of the book referred, this study will shed light on the absurdism circumstances in James Joyce's *Ulysses* and Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* by using this concept, where this theory can provide an examination of the interaction between the text and the reader to obtain the complete meaning of these works. In *Ulysses*, Joyce depicts different absurd situations. The story is set in one night in Dublin. Joyce's work delves into the complexities of human thinking while encouraging a deeper understanding and acceptance of Dublin society's diverse perspectives and experiences. It is often noted that the work may appear boring at first glance, but it encompasses the entirety of human existence within its literary contents. On the other hand, Heller's work *Catch-22* portrays a diverse array of characters, each exhibiting their individuality, imperfections, and challenges in response to the absurd nature of war. The novel *Catch-22* embodies a perspective on the universe that aligns closely with the philosophical viewpoints of Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus. The world lacks meaning, as it simply exists without an identifiable reason. On the other hand, human beings strive to define the meaning of their lives.

Absurdism in fiction can be described as a literary genre that employs techniques such as irregular narrative structure, surrealism, and humor to delve into philosophical concepts such as existentialism and the nature of humanity. In literary works, the concept of absurdity frequently manifests through protagonists who experience a sense of aimlessness or are disillusioned with their existence, religious beliefs, or societal norms. The genre of absurdist literature encompasses various forms of artistic expression, such as short stories, novels, movies, and dramatic works. The dramatist Martin Esslin coined the term “Theatre of the Absurd”, which European playwrights used to describe their absurd and innovative plays throughout the 1950s. Several essays have been written about the absurdism movement, such as *Existentialism Is a Humanism* by Jean-Paul Sartre and *The Myth of Sisyphus* by Albert Camus. In these works, the authors explain their philosophical perspectives on existentialism, the concept of God, and the significance of human existence.

The literary genre of absurdism emerged during the mid-twentieth century, specifically in the 1950s and 1960s, with its initial prevalence in France and Germany. Absurdist fiction was initiated due to disappointment after the Second World War. It emerged as a response to the rise of Romanticism in Paris during the 1830s, the decline of religious conventions in Germany, and the cultural and philosophical revolt inspired by the works of Søren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche (Wegener, 1967). Absurdist fiction typically involves several recurring elements, such as dark humor, satire, paradox, the humiliation of rationality, and philosophical debates surrounding the concept of nothingness (Cornwell, 2006). In the framework of a play, absurdist fiction is referred to as absurdist theatre. The two forms are distinguished in that they emphasize the characters’ experiences, which center around the idea that life is paradoxical, incomprehensible, and meaningless (Esslin, 2001). The distinctive element of absurdist fiction includes portraying characters who engage in senseless acts within pointless events as they struggle to discover an inherent purpose in existence.

Absurdism is a philosophical movement that grew out of existentialism or went in a different direction from it. Existentialism is a philosophy centered around human life’s pointlessness and the stress and anxiety that come with questioning the presence of a reason for existence. The representation of characters and plots in absurdist novels and theatre explores existentialist and faithless viewpoints. Prominent writers of the absurdist literary movement were Franz Kafka, Albert Camus, Eugène Ionesco, and Samuel Beckett (Cornwell, 2006). Many previous studies focused on the use of absurdity in the theatre. In

comparison, the current study focuses on absurdism in fiction, where the works of absurdism in fiction have a satirical or illogical style. Absurdist humor is characterized as a comedic style dependent on non-sequential events, gaps of cause and effect, and unforeseeable juxtapositions (Reinsch et al., 2017). Nonetheless, the defining characteristic of this literary category is not humor or irrationality but rather the examination of human conduct in situations that seem aimless and hold philosophical absurdity. Absurdist fiction refrains from causing assessments of characters or their behavior, instead putting this responsibility on readers. In addition, the lesson or moral of the narrative is rarely stated directly, and the fundamental themes and character awareness, if they exist at all, tend to be vague in how they are expressed.

In contrast to different types of fiction, absurdist literary works do not require adherence to a conventional structure for the plot, which typically involves a sequence of events such as rising action, climax, and falling action. The traditional components of fiction, including plot, character portrayal, and progression, frequently appear absent. According to certain scholars, this work of fiction involves a departure from a standard or tradition (Harper, 2002). Another example involves doubts about the reliability of human rationality, which serves as the source for understanding nature's principles. The absurdity in fiction also does not try to argue against the known because it is firmly individualist and predominantly looks at how a person feels about his existence (Reinsch et al., 2017). This study aims to analyze and show the existence of absurdism in two novels, *Ulysses* and *Catch-22*. The first chapter will focus on absurdity in general and discuss the concept of absurdity and its rise, further exploring the relationship between it and other literary movements. Then, it is important to mention the major figures contributing to exploring and coining absurdism. The second chapter will focus on James Joyce's *Ulysses*. One can acquire the ability to identify the circumstances in which absurdity arises. This chapter will also explore the impact of absurdity on the main characters in Joyce's work. Through studying Joyce's literary work, readers can strive to realize absurdity's intricate and multifaceted nature and its deep influence on shaping one's perspective and perception of life. Chapter Three of the book will focus on the novel *Catch-22*, where the first lines of this chapter will demonstrate the relationship between these two selected novels, and it will move to explain what is meant by *Catch-22* and a brief biography and writing style of Joseph Heller. After showing these outlines, the chapter will show how the characters face the absurdity and the situation they have experienced, how they will act, behave, and choose their way to escape from the absurdity, and how freedom is essential for a human.

The current study will discuss and analyze absurdity in fiction using absurdism elements and examine how it affects human life and how the characters will behave during the absurd conditions they will experience. Absurdist believe the human state is fundamentally absurd due to the continuous pursuit of meaning, which proves futile as no rational meaning can be found. When individuals become fully aware of the absurdity of life or have a sudden realization of it, they are faced with three options: committing suicide, taking a leap of faith, or rebellion. These options will be depicted and explored during the novels. The term absurd represents the contradiction between the innate human inclination to search for meaning and value in existence and the human capability to discover it. The word absurd refers to the sense of hopelessness that arises while attempting to find meaning in a senseless world lacking divine purpose. Absurdism emerges from the conflict between individual yearning for purpose, meaning, and tranquility and the rejection of these necessities by the uncaring world.

The current study sheds light on the absurd situation in two iconic English novels. In *Ulysses*, this study will examine different situations through the minds of two men, Stephen Dedalus and Leopold Bloom. The journey of *Ulysses* is confined to a single day. Concerning that day, the current study will illustrate different situations. Furthermore, in this novel, the utilization of science serves as a means of comprehending the physical world. In contrast, myth serves as a conceptual framework for the protagonist, Bloom, to examine and understand his life from a spiritual perspective. Joyce's interpretation of the world in the Ithaca episode is illustrated through a sequence of inquiries and answers that resemble the approach used for scientific inquiry. Nevertheless, the character conducting this inquiry pushes it to absurdity, employing both the technical language and the epistemic doubtfulness associated with individuals involved in science. Heller's novel *Catch-22* exceeds the war novel category by depicting the absurdity of war and, to a broader extent, of life itself. *Catch-22* challenges traditional norms through its unconventional writing style, characterized by repetitive language, intricate chronological structure, and circular design. In the novel, the quest for meaning in an uncontrollable world has driven individuals to establish order to enhance their existence. However, it appears that whatever he attempted to establish to have a purposeful existence ultimately turns into absurd situations. The argument of this study is to shed light on the different circumstances of the existence of absurdism in novels after both world wars and how it continues to be present in literary works and life in different periods. On the other hand, the

study will show how characters will behave to escape from the absurd life that they have experienced.

Many of the previous studies focused on the use of absurdity in theater. In comparison, the current study focuses on absurdism in novels, where the works of absurdism in fiction have a satirical or illogical style. However, the primary feature of this literary genre is not humor or irrationality but rather the exploration of human behavior in situations that appear meaningless and contain philosophical absurdity. However, this study specifically focuses on analyzing absurdity in fiction using absurdism theory, which allows for examining the interaction between the characters' lives and the absurd conditions that they will experience.

CHAPTER 1:

Absurdity, Major Figures, and Other Literary Movements

The absurd could be briefly described as the lack of correlation between people and their environment. Therefore, the modern person's endeavor to discover meaning in life and establish an awareness of self was unsuccessful. Attaining this state of self-awareness is unattainable due to the inherent absurdity of life. Sartre posits that the concept of the absurd refers to the connection between humanity and the external environment (Sartre, 2007). Sartre argues that the absurd concept cannot be attributed only to man or the universe. Instead, because being in the world defines existence, it arises from the discordant connection between both. Considering that a person is undoubtedly part of the universe and experiences the same repetitive day, this concept becomes impossible to separate from a person. Persons are more likely to experience the concept of the absurd instead of comprehending it due to the mysterious nature of the universe. Chui provides a concise summary of Camus' concept of the absurd:

For Camus, an absurd existence is marked by a series of habits—rising in the morning, going to work, coming home, eating, sleeping—which ultimately end in death. Life is meaningless, and the absurdity of life lies in man's intrinsic desire to continue living tomorrow even though tomorrow is another day closer to death. Camus describes this feeling of absurd existence (Chui, 2013, p. 5).

This is the fundamental idea on which the absurd is based. Thus, it represents the entire state of human existence within the world. Moreover, people must provide justifications or answers for a specific matter, as they cannot determine it directly. They depict their present situation as devoid of optimism or desire for the future. In the absence of meaning, purpose is absent and, consequently, a loss of future. When people do not comprehend it, they wait for their end, which is represented by death. Death's inevitability makes the universe nothing more than a tool for time's passage. Similarly, the French dramatist Eugène Ionesco presents a definition of the concept of the absurd: "absurd is that which is devoid of purpose... Cut off from his religious, metaphysical, and transcendental roots, man is lost; all his actions become senseless, absurd, useless" (quoted from Esslin, 2001, p. 23). The absurd concept relates to the existential condition people experienced in the post-war period, characterized by a sense of meaninglessness and purposelessness in their lives, resulting in their disconnection from the world.

Camus draws a connection between the existential state experienced by an absurd man and the well-known king from Greek mythology, Sisyphus. In this story, Sisyphus is obligated to repeatedly push a boulder upward on a descending

hill, only to have it roll back down, resulting in an eternal cycle without ever reaching the top of the peak. This pointless attempt served as a metaphor for the meaninglessness and absurdity of existence. Engaging in daily routines might lead people to endless repetition without achieving a result. Nevertheless, to deal with the absurd, humans must acknowledge this endeavor is pointless and fully accept it. In *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Camus asserts that it is important to “imagine Sisyphus happy” (Camus, 1975, p. 111). If people envision Sisyphus as happy, they must acknowledge the meaninglessness and absurdity of the world and embrace existence. That is the only method that helps to avoid succumbing to despair, anxiety, and hopelessness. Albert Camus argues that despite the absurdity of the universe and the individual’s sense of abandonment and hesitancy, they must rebel and persevere. This is one method to deal with life’s irrationality and establish meaning despite its absurd nature. Bennett illustrates Camus’ belief that individuals may have happier lives despite the absence of meaning in the universe. According to Camus, this is the sole means of rebelling against the absurdity of existence (Bennett, 2015). Individuals must be aware of the absence of meaning in life. Ultimately, individuals must rebel against the absence of purpose and establish a sense of meaning, regardless of how absurd the effort seems. The sensation of absurdity arises when individuals comprehend that their lives are devoid of meaning, that life is peculiar, and that there is no sense of coherence between people and the world. Each behavior that the people perform seems odd because it never gets to a clear point that proves anything at all.

Likewise, Camus argues that the complexity and unfamiliarity of the universe create absurdism (Camus, 1979). The irrational nature of the universe restricts individuals inside it, preventing them from achieving self-realization. This is the point where the absurdity becomes evident. What is illogical or unreasonable causes people to be hesitant to take action. In *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Camus clarifies the concept of the absurd:

Man stands face to face with the irrational. He feels within him his · longing for happiness and for reason. The absurd is born of this confrontation between the human need and the unreasonable silence of the world. This must not be forgotten. This must be clung to because the whole consequence of a life can depend on it (Camus, 1979, p. 31).

Subsequently, absurdism arises whenever humans become conscious of a fundamental absence of meaning in life and feel obligated to exist within it. The entire universe remains silent, offering no comfort to the sad individual. Nevertheless, the absurd does not signify the ultimate end or result. Instead, it symbolizes the starting point. The absurd is simply an irrational view of life as a

whole. Foley highlights in his work on *Albert Camus: From the Absurd to Revolt*: Based on Camus, the concept of absurdity is primarily a statement about humans understanding the universe and, more specifically, their ability to comprehend it (Foley, 2014). By this logic, it can be concluded that this problem is not complete nonsense but rather the disagreement resulting from missing knowledge. The possibility of considering something absurd depends on an individual's subjective emotional perspective towards that particular object. It is absurd for there to be a lack of agreement between the object and the person.

In conclusion, neither the universe nor the individual is absurd. The absurdity lies in individuals' insistence on comprehending the universe, yet their inability to successfully do so indicates a lack of adaptability and comprehension. The absurd refers to the sense of disagreement experienced by individuals when they realize that life lacks meaning while simultaneously believing that there must be meaning. People experience a desire to provide meaning to life. The ultimate realization is acknowledging the universe's absurdism, which requires understanding its nature rather than its meaning. Another observation Albert Camus clarifies in *The Myth of Sisyphus* is that the absurd limits individuals' freedom. Individuals are not freed; they are bound (Foley, 2014). It is important to note that Kierkegaard previously described anxiety as the dizzy of liberation. Camus acknowledges that the absence of God allows for the possibility of everything being acceptable, although this does not mean that individuals possess absolute freedom. This statement highlights the paradox between liberty and the world, as described by Kierkegaard and Sartre. While individuals can do everything, the world's absurdity limits their ability to exercise it.

Hence, optimism becomes unnecessary in a universe that cannot ensure a better result. Camus claims, "This absurd, godless world is, then, peopled with men who think clearly and have ceased to hope" (Camus, 1979, p. 85). One assumes that individuals stop hoping due to their lack of freedom. Under those circumstances, the pursuit of self-realization becomes meaningless, making it useless, contradictory, and consequently unattainable. The absurdity of the universe makes all potential options for individual satisfaction nonexistent or meaningless. Furthermore, in response to the sensation of the absurd, Albert Camus also presents suicide as a possible means of escape. Subsequently, suicide is considered a significant concept within the context of absurdist plays. In *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Camus claims that people can arrive at multiple findings after acknowledging that life is void of meaning (Camus, 1979). As previously said, individuals have two options for finding their way to recovery: accepting the absurdity of life and continuing or choosing to end their own lives by committing

suicide. Simply, there are two ways in which individuals can engage in suicide: philosophical suicide or physical suicide. Philosophical suicide, as proposed by Kierkegaard, anticipates an unlimited and meaningful universe given by God as a response to the absence of purpose or meaning in the universe. In the work mentioned above, Camus adds an observation:

To say that that climate is deadly scarcely amounts to playing on words. Living under that stifling sky forces one to get away or to stay. The important thing is to find out how people get away in the first case and why people stay in the second case. This is how I define the problem of suicide and the possible interest in the conclusions of existential philosophy (Camus, 1979, p. 32).

Philosophical suicide is employed as a method for reducing the tension caused by the absurdity of life. Physical suicide, conversely, is rejecting the idea of a purposeful and improved existence given by a god. Individuals in this realm can either trust the existence beyond death or face the absurdity and endeavor to make sense of their lives. Moreover, Avi Sagi clarifies in his work *Albert Camus and the Philosophy of the Absurd* (2002) that Camus shows that choosing to remain alive is a manifestation of rebellion, whereas suicide is a manifestation of defeat. Suicide gives a resolution to the dilemma of absurdism; however, it represents a rejection of living. The solution presents a decision between the meaningless nature of living or suicide, which leads to death. Absurdism refers to being simultaneously conscious and rejecting the concept of death (Sagi, 2002). Therefore, it may be inferred that Albert Camus is against the act of physical suicide as it would completely negate the purpose of existence, making it meaningless. Moreover, deciding on physical suicide may include the deliberate termination of one's own life, which does not provide meaning for existing and, therefore, presents a paradox. Instead, one should strive to rebel against the trauma that impacts existence and attain a heightened level of self-consciousness.

The events of World War I, extending from 1914 to 1918 and World War II from 1939 to 1945, are widely regarded as significant incidents in history, politics, economics, and society during the twentieth century (Gavins, 2013). The world's destiny was changing in an unmanageable and irreversible manner. The loss of numerous lives during the two world wars resulted in profound disillusionment among people of all ages, as their fundamental beliefs were shattered. In 1939, the outbreak of World War II occurred amidst the repercussions of World War I, during which individuals had already been suffering from the first war. The global community had already experienced significant devastation and upheaval, resulting in the loss of 37 million civilian and military individuals. When individuals cannot attribute significance to their

existence, their convictions regarding values begin to be replaced by feelings of uncertainty and anxiety (Gavins, 2013).

Following the aforementioned, absurdism emerged as a subject of academic study and a literary movement in the aftermath of World War II, particularly in light of the publication of Albert Camus's well-known work, *The Myth of Sisyphus* (Abdulrahman, 2018, p. 7). The literary movement of Absurdism is not directly associated with the Greeks. However, Bennett argues that certain features of Absurdism can be traced back to the plays produced by certain ancient Greek dramatists. According to Bennett, it is possible to identify points of literary influence that contributed to the expression of Absurdism in the twentieth century (Bennett, 2015). An example of the utilization of Absurdism in comedic works can be observed in the works of Aristophanes (444 BC–385 BC). That has been elucidated by Kott's analysis of the concept of absurdity in both modern and ancient theatrical works:

In the entire history of drama there are only two works in which the hero cannot leave his plays and must remain motionless from the beginning to the end of the play. The first is Prometheus Bound. In the second, Beckett's Happy Days, the heroine Winnie is buried up to her waist in a mound of earth; later she sinks to her neck... Winnie goes on laughing. She laughs like Camus' Sisyphus when the rock at the top of the mountain slips from his hands and falls into the abyss. Winnie in Beckett's Happy Days is happy to the very end (Kott, 1971, p. 80)

For a deeper knowledge of the beginnings of absurdism, it is necessary to present a historical overview of the genre of tragicomedy. The literary work *Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett is regarded as one of history's most well-known tragedies. Tragicomedy is a genre of literature that combines tragic and comedic elements. The term's origin can be traced back to the play *Amphitryon* by the Roman playwright Plautus. In the play's opening scene, Plautus describes it as a tragicomedy. According to Bennett, it is highly probable that Aristotle, when he wrote some works, referred to a similar phenomenon that he described when he expounded on Greek tragedies with two endings (Bennett, 2015).

Several literary and philosophical movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries impacted the development of absurdism. The origins of the concept mentioned above can be traced back to existentialism, as it is believed to have emerged from the literary works of the Danish existentialist writer Søren Kierkegaard. A strong correlation exists between Nihilism and the previously mentioned movements, as they exhibit numerous shared characteristics. The movements of Dadaism and Surrealism significantly influenced the development of Absurdism. Eugène Ionesco asserts that surrealism and Dadaism significantly

impacted his and Samuel Beckett's literary productions. So, he believes that surrealism and Dadaism have played a crucial role in shaping his writing style, as these movements have prepared the path for creative expression for him and other writers (Bennett, 2015).

The origin of the existential anguish suffered by Absurdist philosophers can be traced back to the prevailing spiritual malaise that characterized the Euro-American environment during the time they lived. In the 1940s, individuals in Western society understood that their civilization was not progressing but regressing towards savagery, destruction, and a lack of ability to draw lessons from past events. The individual experienced a sense of despair and hopelessness towards their existence (Abdulrahman, 2018, pp. 7-8). Despite experiencing multiple wars, the people did not acquire the expertise to prevent the occurrence of World War I or utilize prudence in averting World War II. The economic recessions that the individual could not avert further destroyed their self-confidence and exacerbated their living conditions. People's self-confidence erosion led to a profound spiritual crisis marked by feelings of pessimism and desperation. This prevailing sentiment served as the impetus for the emergence of the absurd literary movement. The rise of absurdism as a literary and philosophical school of thought was primarily influenced by significant events such as the two world wars, the financial crisis, and worldwide traumatic events (Abdulrahman, 2018, pp. 7-9). According to Esslin, the decrease in religious trust was concealed until the ending of World War II by the adoption of substitute religions such as belief in advancement, national identity, and different totalitarian ideologies (Esslin, 2001, p. 23), which means the war profoundly impacted people and their beliefs. The Absurd concept gained widespread recognition in literature after the publication of Albert Camus' *The Myth of Sisyphus*. As previously noted, the concept of absurdism has a long history, and Camus was not the first author to address this topic. For instance, Søren Kierkegaard explored its concepts many years prior to Camus. The following authors are considered part of the absurdism movement: Samuel Beckett, Eugene Ionesco, Joseph Heller, and Harold Pinter. However, Camus is widely regarded as the initial advocate of absurdism.

The concept of absurdity is an important topic in various philosophical and artistic movements, frequently employed to challenge traditional ideas regarding morality, reality, and meaning. Existentialism suggests that absurdity serves as a reflection of the inherent contradictions and irrationality that are characteristic of human existence. Conversely, Nihilism asserts that absurdity symbolizes life's ultimate lack of meaning. Through the movements of Dadaism and Surrealism,

the use of absurdity serves to investigate the rules and standards of society within the realms of literature and artistic expression. The subsequent lines will clarify these movements comprehensively to improve the understanding of each one (Abdulrahman, 208, pp. 9-14).

Existentialism is a school of philosophy that centers around the existential nature of human life and can be characterized as a combination of values and ideas. This school of philosophy asserts that individuals develop their feelings about meaning in life, emphasizing inner characteristics of human nature and the individual. Existentialism recognizes that human behavior is influenced by various complex factors, such as a human's mind, feelings, emotions, morality, and soul, rather than being driven by logical decisions (Boakye, 2012). Acknowledging that this viewpoint does not reject the value of rationale and logic in human life is crucial. This school of philosophy asserts that humanity is characterized by an overwhelming sense of fear and sadness, lacking any aim or meaning. Hence, the essence of human existence lies in the simple effort of enduring until individuals determine their future. This plan embodies a method for reaching respect for humanity.

This philosophical concept emerged during the 19th century through the literary contributions of the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard. Despite the absence of obvious reference to the concept in his literary works, he is widely regarded as the founder of this field of philosophical thought. Kierkegaard clarifies in his writings that people can overcome their problems and difficulties and achieve liberation and inner tranquility through believing in God. For a considerable period, many Christian intellectuals held this notion (Abdulrahman, 2018, p. 13). Kierkegaard is considered the foremost figure in Christian Existentialism and has been associated with establishing the philosophical framework of Existentialism. Fyodor Dostoyevsky, the Russian author, is widely regarded as a prominent figure of the movement mentioned above. Dostoyevsky's opinions portray a perspective where human nature is characterized by its arbitrary behavior and tendency towards self-destruction (Kaufmann, 1966). The philosophical principles were further developed during the early 1900s through the literary contributions of Franz Kafka, who wrote in the German language. Kafka's literary works include protagonists who are socially isolated and face difficult, dangerous bureaucratic systems. The primary themes influencing his writing are fear, culpability, and worry. After those authors, Martin Heidegger, a German philosopher, and Karl Jaspers, a psychiatrist and philosopher, contributed to the field. The above notion significantly impacted many European philosophers, including Berdyaev and M. Fondame, whose literary contributions

are atheistic existentialism. The writings of the well-known philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre were largely responsible for the intellectual movement's rise to popularity and its zenith in the middle of the 20th century in Europe (Abdulrahman, 2018, pp. 12-15).

It is necessary to recognize that Existentialism and Atheism are not similar concepts. As a clarification, it should be noted that not all individuals who contribute to existentialist philosophy identify as atheists. For instance, there are monotheistic existentialists such as Kierkegaard. Existentialism can, therefore, be divided into two distinct movements: atheistic existentialists and monotheistic existentialists; the latter is also referred to as Christian existentialists. Atheistic Existentialism differs from the philosophical contributions of Kierkegaard and has been created differently within the context of Atheistic viewpoints. Jean-Paul Sartre is widely regarded as the foremost advocate of Atheistic Existentialism. According to Sartre, the principle of existence comes before essence as the most significant of philosophy, which directly opposes Plato and Aristotle's perspective on the concept of essence. According to the viewpoints of two prominent ancient Greek philosophers, it is posited that all things possess an inherent essence, including human beings. Furthermore, they assert that this essence is present within individuals before birth. This notion can be interpreted as the belief that one must remain cohere to their essence to achieve good behavior as a human being (Marino, 2004). Moreover, they believed that individuals had been created to embody a specific essence, the ultimate source of meaning for individuals. The perspective known as essentialism remained popular as a worldview until the end of the 1800s when Friedrich Nietzsche dismissed the notion that people must be saturated with any essence or meaning.

Sartre claims that an individual is a rational creature with consciousness and the capacity for independent decision-making. Humans enter the world and develop their essence through consciousness, free will, and conduct. Free will is essential to human nature, as individuals can decide for themselves and behave appropriately. Freedom is essential to the human experience, as humans are naturally endowed with an innate sensation of liberty upon birth. Sartre believed humans have free will and are responsible for their choices and behavior. As a result, the individual should exercise care while making decisions and selecting solutions. When a person takes responsibility for their fate, they also take on the burden of determining the fate of all humanity. This can lead to feelings of frustration because of that burden.

To improve understanding of absurdism, it is crucial to distinguish it from existentialism (Boakye, 2012). The proximity of these two schools may

occasionally result in difficulty recognizing their differences. The emergence of absurdism is commonly considered to have its roots in existentialism, with numerous scholars regarding it as an integral element of existentialist philosophy. Both entities deviated from the emotional distress and chaos experienced by humans. Atheistic Existentialists suggest the absence of inherent meaning. In contrast, Monotheistic Existentialists acknowledge the absence of inherent meaning until a person understands God, thereby necessitating an act of belief to discover inherent meaning. On the other hand, absurdists argue that the world has no sense or purpose and reject the notion of inherent meaning.

In contrast, certain supporters of absurdism do not completely reject inherent meaning; rather, they assert that life could possess meaning that remains unknowable or undiscoverable. The consensus among them is that the inherent meaning, assuming it exists, is beyond human understanding, rendering it elusive to absurdists. Existentialism and absurdity are different in terms of their specific activities. The first type is interested in discovering meaning, whereas the latter arises when a person endeavors to find purpose and meaning throughout the universe. Existentialism aims to facilitate the development of an individual's interpretation of meaning. For those who identify as Monotheistic Existentialists, also called Christian Existentialists, the meaning should be shown by a higher power, namely God. In the context of the absurd, constructing meaning begins with people realizing their absurd circumstances. That includes an acceptance of the inherent absurdity of life as an essential requirement for survival. Moreover, embracing the absurd concept enables individuals to construct their sense of purpose and face the inherent challenges of existence (Boakye, 2012).

Nihilism is a philosophical concept that characterizes all values as devoid of worth. It is commonly linked to a tendency of severe gloom and a radical skepticism not beholden to any loyalty. As per the perspective of nihilistic philosophy, life is devoid of any inherent meaning. According to nihilistic philosophy, all values lack a fundamental basis, and any form of knowledge or communication is unreachable. Existential nihilism is frequently linked with a profound sense of negativity and an extremist form of doubt that rejects the value of being. Some critics like Pratt states, "A real nihilist would have no convictions, exhibit no loyalty, and have nothing to achieve other than, conceivably, a desire to devastate" (quoted from Thielicke, 1969, p. 36).

The philosophical concept of nihilism is commonly attributed to the famous German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. In his work *Will to Power*, he proposes that the absence of a real-world implies that any idea or concept believed to be true is fundamentally wrong. According to his perspective, the universe lacks any

related purpose, sequence, or structure and depends on the personal interpretations and constructions people establish. The novel *Fathers and Sons* by Ivan Turgenev, a Russian novelist, discusses the concept of nihilism. The novel's publication contributed significantly to the dissemination of the term. Turgenev employs one of the principal characters to clarify the meaning of nihilism when he is queried about the features of a nihilist person. Turgenev answered, "A nihilist a man who does not bow down before any authority, who does not take any principle on faith, whatever reverence that principle may be enshrined in" (quoted in Gillespie, 1996, p. 139).

The purpose of nihilism could be explained through the distinction of four distinct types of nihilism; each shows a common feature of negation and rejection of meaning. The initial standpoint is epistemological nihilism, associated with extreme skepticism and negates the prospect of knowledge and truth (Crosby, 1988). Another type of nihilism is Political nihilism, which advocates destroying all current societal, political, and religious systems as a necessary step toward possible progress. The third viewpoint, moral or ethical nihilism, rejects the notion of having ideal ethical or moral standards. In this situation, there is no obvious difference between good and evil, and ethics are influenced by society and emotional constraints. Existential nihilism is the final and more relevant to absurdity, which describes human existence as having no fundamental value or importance. However, absurdism asserts that life has no meaning, whereas this truth does not always provide an object meaning (Crosby, 1988). According to both nihilism and absurdism, life is viewed as meaningless. Nonetheless, concerning the concept of absurdity, understanding the meaning of existence lies within the responsibility of the human being and their relationship with society in general. For example, people can find satisfaction and meaning in life, although the universe has no meaning. Conversely, adherents of Nihilism sustain that searching for meaning is useless and oppose the idea that a sense of meaning can lead to happiness, so both perspectives reject this idea (Rosen, 2000).

Dadaism represented a European vanguard artistic and literary movement that flourished through World War I in the first decades of the twentieth century (Abdulrahman, 2018, pp. 30-31). The movement's emergence in Zürich can be attributed to the migration of numerous thinkers, artists, and authors from France and Germany to Switzerland due to its neutral status during the war. These individuals had a powerful aversion towards prevalent ideologies such as materialism, rationalism, and nationalism, which they believed had played a significant role in the futile war. As a means of expressing their contraposition, they turned to the artistic environment. The authors declared that if the present

condition of life and community habits stay on the same current path, they will isolate themselves; they referred to themselves as non-artists and chose to produce non-art as they considered the belief that art and all phenomena in existence had lost their significance (Abrams, 2012).

Following 1920, this movement was disseminated to New York and Paris. The purported artwork created by non-artists exhibited complicated profanities and distinctive comedic elements. Since Dadaism's main norm was to break all other norms, it was more accurately described as a dissenting movement than a specific artistic movement. One defining feature of the movement was its tendency to provoke offense instead of eliciting admiration. Additionally, it exhibited corrosive, aggressive, and provocative characteristics. Furthermore, this movement utilized tangible materials such as magazines, advertisements, and discarded objects to convey a sense of actuality. Regarding the relationship of this movement to absurdity, this movement has significantly impacted the emergence and development of absurdism. Dadaism and absurdism are two distinct artistic and literary movements; the first emerged after the First World War, and the second appeared after the Second World War when humans were experiencing hopelessness and despair. Both movements believed life lacked meaning and expressed these opinions explicitly through satire and humor.

Surrealism emerged as a cultural and intellectual movement in art and literature, established by the prominent French critic and poet Andre Breton after 1924, following the end of Dadaism. Guillaume Apollinaire, a French playwright, utilized the term in 1917 to refer to his theatrical work *The Beasts of Tiresias* (Abdulrahman, 2018, pp. 19-21). The abovementioned movement can be considered a derivative of the pre-existing art movement called Dada, which occurred during World War I. Political factors highly influenced the Dadaists, as they were frustrated with the extensive devastation and loss of human lives that resulted from the war. They condemn different aspects of society, including culture, rationality, technological advancements, and even artistic expression. The belief that placing trust in humanity's capacity to enhance itself through artistic and cultural means, particularly following the unparalleled devastation of the war, is a gullible and unreal notion.

Consequently, the Dadaists produced artistic creations that utilized elements of accident, coincidence, and any other factors that emphasized the irrationality associated with human nature. The Surrealist concept is derived from Dada, but it gives Dada's pessimistic message a more optimistic one. The intention is to unveil a modern world that exceeds the ordinary experiences of everyday existence. A nihilistic kind of rebellion characterizes the movement of Dada

toward different features of Western culture (Tarantino, 2009). However, Surrealism transcends this nihilism and moves beyond it, as Dada's nihilistic tendencies can lead to self-destructive behavior. Like the Dada movement, artistic expression responds to the devastation caused by the rationalistic principles that have historically guided European political and cultural life, where this devastation reached its zenith during the frightful events of World War I. The Surrealist movement is known for its tendency to challenge cultural norms and values considered sacred. They generate a great environment that blends the cognitive impressions of the subconscious with the objective facts of the exterior world. According to Andre Breton's definition, Surrealism "is a method of fully merging the conscious and unconscious fields of experience, leading to a complete combining of the world of dreams and imagination with the rational world of everyday reality, thereby creating an absolute reality of surrealism" (Benjamin et al., 1996, p. 218).

The works of Sigmund Freud, the Austrian pioneer of psychoanalysis, have significantly impacted the Surrealist movement. They exhibit a heightened receptivity towards the differentiation between the ego and the ID. According to Freud's theory, individuals suppress authentic desires in their unconscious mental portion, which is considered the basis for the Surrealists' debate that revolves around the notion of the subconscious, representing the most elevated level of actuality. They endeavor to reproduce the way it works dramatically. A common characteristic of their plays is incorporating a dream-like realm, where perceptible occurrences merge with fantastical elements. So, surrealists created innovative forms of art and new techniques to access the unconscious.

The Surrealist movement is regarded as one of Europe's most impactful art movements during the mid-decades of the twentieth century. The Surrealist movement endeavors to create an art form devoid of any concerns related to aesthetics or morality. Frequently, authors utilize supernatural themes, fantasies, illusions, and subconscious imagery in their literary works. The authors frequently employ a literary technique wherein they juxtapose commonplace items in unconventional or irrational manners, thereby emphasizing the insubstantiality of traditional world perceptions. The Surrealists aim to emancipate the imagination from the constraints of rationalism by engaging in a writing practice where they freely express any words that arise in their conscious minds, which they consider sacrosanct. Despite the start of the collapse of Surrealism, it became an unorganized movement. Still, its principles and ideologies remain alive through different artistic and intellectual movements, such as absurdism in post-World War II. In summary, Surrealism is distinguished

from absurdism by its emphasis on the distortion of the real world. It also seeks to discover an unconventional way of changing reality that differs from what is commonly perceived; in contrast, absurdism is characterized by accepting reality as it exists without a desire to change or manipulate it.

The identification of particular individuals who have contributed to the creation of the concept of absurdity is a challenging endeavor. Nonetheless, there exist many notable individuals whose thoughts and writings played a crucial role in exploring and publishing the notion of absurdity. The following individuals are noteworthy to mention and write about them briefly. Albert Camus is well-known as an author, French Algerian, novelist, journalist, and playwright. He is primarily recognized for his literary pieces demonstrating absurd elements. The Nobel Prize for Literature was conferred upon him in 1957. Camus was raised in a family with a low socioeconomic status in Mondovi, Algeria, in November 1913. Camus' father passed away during World War I at the hands of German forces, only a few months following Camus' birth. Although Camus' mother suffered from partial deafness, she was obligated to seek employment in the family homes of others, where she provided childcare services. Camus was raised in a humble and cramped house amid challenging circumstances. The tough childhood he experienced has had a significant impact on his literary works. Camus often employs his own life experiences and childhood as a basis for depicting his characters in different literary works. Masters asserts that his characters embody his identity and perspectives (Masters, 1974). The central idea that dominates many of his literary pieces is his refusal to acquiesce to the inequity and pointlessness of the world. The literary works produced by Camus are characterized by absurdity. He separated himself from the group of existentialist writers and refused to be identified as a philosopher.

At seventeen, Camus manifested his initial indications of tuberculosis, as stated by (Lottman, 1997). Before that period in his lifetime, he showed a passionate interest in football; however, following that moment, his existence "in the sense he knew it seemed to come to an end when it should just be beginning" (Lottman, 1997, p. 45). Camus acquired a practical understanding of the idea that would later characterize his work; nevertheless, he had not yet started writing about absurdity. Camus felt obligated to encounter the concept of absurdity directly due to the unanticipated disruption caused by tuberculosis. Numerous circumstances in life are mysterious, and sometimes, the ultimate significance of these situations is still concealed from human perception.

During the initial phase of his career, Camus was primarily preoccupied with the concept of absurdity, a term he derived from his expertise. He later extended

his understanding of this concept through academic endeavors and drew inspiration from various intellectuals, including Fyodor Dostoevsky and St. Augustine. During the period extending from 1918 to 1923, Camus received his primary education. After finishing this stage of his studies, he engaged in many different occupations, including marketing and distributing vehicle repair components (Cruickshank, 1978). During his studies, Camus had concurrently established himself as an important figure in the realm of theater due to his aptitude and passion for the art. In 1936, he concluded his formal education, which involved an extensive study of the philosophical rules of Plotinus and how they correlated with those of St. Augustine. Despite Camus' lack of adherence to the Christian religion, he maintained a compassionate attitude towards Christian principles throughout his lifetime.

In 1940, Camus traveled to France, where he obtained employment as a journalist at *Paris-Soir*. That occurred shortly before the German attack in northeast France, which marked the start of Camus's contribution to the French Resistance movement during the initial phases of World War II. Following the German occupancy of Paris, Camus chose to stay in the French capital. In 1943, he encountered Jean-Paul Sartre, who significantly impacted his life. After that, in 1941, Camus wrote *The Stranger*, which is considered his most well-known piece of writing. Subsequently, he expressed condemnation of Communism, which resulted in a split between him and Sartre (Aronson et al., 2005). Camus did not attain broad popularity outside of Algeria until his work, *The Stranger*, was published in 1942. The novel centers around a protagonist who experiences a sense of separation from his social surroundings. Throughout that year, he released his most notable literary work, *The Myth of Sisyphus*. The work describes the truthfulness of the condition of humanity and the problematic situation of committing suicide, resulting in its notable success. In Camus's literary work, he explicates the concept of life's meaninglessness, claiming that a crucial clash exists between humanity's general expectations of life, namely, logic, meaning, and manner, as well as the reality of disorder that is faced (Lottman, 1997). After that publication, Camus released another literary work titled *The Plague*. In addition, it is noteworthy that *The Rebel*, a prominent philosophical publication, was authored by Camus and released in 1951. The literary work comprises a series of written works investigating the moral principles surrounding acts of rebellion and governmental aggression. Camus authored several plays, including *The State of Siege*, *The Misunderstanding*, and numerous other literary works. In 1960, a vehicle collision caused Camus's death in Paris, where he was forty-six.

According to Harris (1971), Martin Esslin has observed that Camus employs a distinct approach to convey the concept of the Absurd, which differs from the techniques utilized by Ionesco and Beckett. Specifically, Camus shows absurdity through an obvious and rationally built logic. Sartre provides commentary on Camus' literary style, noting that he employs a simple style to effectively convey the concept of the Absurd. This style does not emphasize one element over another. Hinchliffe concurs with Sartre's perspective on this matter. He additionally emphasizes that Meursault's character in *The Stranger* utilizes first-person narrative speaking, contrary to nineteenth-century authors' conventional employment of such a narrative technique (Hinchliffe, 1972). Typically, novels tend to be subjective. However, Meursault's utilization of a first-person perspective results in a narrative characterized by objectivity and a lack of extensive emotional detail.

Camus employs a literary technique described as a fake third-person narration. He aims to convey the novel objectively by utilizing a third-person narrator. This approach gives the novel a form of narration similar to journalism rather than a conventional humanistic one. The literary work *The Plague* employs third-person narration throughout the novel, except for the final chapter, wherein the actual narrator appears as the central character. Nonetheless, the third-person narrator cannot be considered a fully omniscient narrator, as evidenced by the narration of specific incidents in the novel, thereby enhancing the objectivity of the novel. In his writing, Camus employs a narrative technique to expand the depiction of occurrences beyond the scope of narrator Rieux's consideration, thereby introducing readers to the actual narration in the concluding sections of the work. This literary technique also serves to present diverse viewpoints within the novel.

Furthermore, Camus' literary aptitude originated from his intended focus on numerous important issues. He also demonstrated a heightened concern for the connection between art, history, and social circumstances. Additionally, he considered the correlation between art and other events that could indicate new changes that may occur in society. According to Harris' consideration, for that reason, Camus, during his time, provided insight into the most important political problems and philosophical, also religious beliefs (Harris, 1971). Camus portrays his characters as distinct people, providing them with complete names, familial ties, community connections, and jobs. Readers can envision a tangible reality through this approach while engaging with the characters. He illustrates the concept of absurdity in both people's personal lives and their interactions with the external environment. Moreover, Camus' literary work does not provide details regarding the characters' physical characteristics. Instead, he employs a

technique of portraying the characters' personalities through their behavior, which allows the reader to conclude their distinctive characteristics (Masters, 1974).

Consequently, Camus's depiction of certain people reflects the existential absurdity of human existence. He depicts the absurdity in the connection between a person and the surrounding environment. One prominent feature of his writing was his tendency to consider multiple options and pathways. He suggests that writers must provide potential solutions and suggestions and propose multiple answers for readers to select from. This approach enables readers to make rational choices based on their options. For that reason, Camus avoids imposing his personal opinions and ideas onto his audience. Camus endeavors to find an equilibrium between his thinking and behavioral responses, thereby exhibiting carefulness in his everyday decision-making (Curzon-Hobson, 2013). He consistently maintained a rational and positive attitude toward societal matters concerning all individuals. He held an opinion opposing traditional religious beliefs, yet at the same time, maintained a disposition of willingness and doubt towards all matters, consistently engaging in dialogue. He employs paradoxical language by utilizing absurd and adventure expressions to explain human beings' unavoidable conditions. Camus was not present in his writings but appeared in some form in many literary works. His work *The Stranger* portrays several resemblances between the character of Meursault and Camus' personal life. Both of them have French-Algerian origins. In the story, Meursault resides in Belcourt, which coincides with the region where Camus and his mother resided in 1914. The novel refers to apparent locations, such as the jail in the higher areas of the urban area, the small backyard next to the courthouse, and the shoreline where Meursault committed a murderous act (France, 2014, p. 42).

To fully comprehend absurdity, one must glance at Martin Esslin and the theater of the absurd. Martin Julius Esslin's life began in Budapest, and he received his education in Austria. He was known as a dramatist, critic, academic scholar, and theater professor. He gained recognition for introducing the term "theater of the absurd" in his 1961 publication, *The Theatre of the Absurd*. This work has been regarded as the most impactful and important theatrical language of the 1960s. In his publication, *Theatre of the Absurd*, he provided a definition of that term. According to him, the theatre of the absurd aims to convey the absurdity of human circumstances and the boundaries of rationality by rejecting reasoning and discursive thinking (Esslin, 2001). Martin Esslin describes the technique of absurd drama as a way for playwrights to critique the crumbling society by presenting audiences with a greatly exaggerated and distorted portrayal

of a world in a state of madness. According to Esslin, the absurd theater is classified as a comedy, even if it deals with serious, hostile, and resentful issues. This is because the characters' goals are sometimes incomprehensible, and their actions are frequently vague and mysterious, which makes it challenging for the audience to relate to them.

The absurd theater surpasses the classifications of tragedy and comedy by mixing laughter and terror. In addition, Esslin indicates, the absurd traditions not only work on a community scale, mocking society's brutal follies but also stand up to a deeper level of absurdity, the absurdity of the human situation itself, in a world where the loss of convictions in religion has stripped humanity of certitudes. When one can no longer embrace simple and comprehensive belief systems and divine objectives, he must confront life's extremely harsh truth (Esslin, 2001).

The Danish thinker, theologian, and author Søren Kierkegaard is regarded as one of the most essential individuals in existentialism and has significantly contributed to the comprehension of absurdism. Kierkegaard, who was born in Copenhagen in 1813, lived through a period of significant social and intellectual transformation. He had witnessed the emergence of modernism and the attendant difficulties that conventional religious beliefs faced. His literary works investigated the details of the condition of humanity, religious beliefs, and the quest for meaning, frequently utilizing a profoundly distinctive and reflective methodology. Kierkegaard's philosophical stance was distinguished by his refusal of methodical and theoretical philosophical structures, which he contended were insufficient in addressing the experiential realities of people (Hannay, 2003). He concentrated on the subjective and personal aspects of existence and centered his work on people's endeavors to deal with life's essential conflicts and contradictions. His insistence on realizing the importance of subjectivity is fundamental to comprehending the relationship with absurdism.

Even though Kierkegaard produced some literary writing before Camus, he established the framework for absurdism by examining similar subjects such as existential suffering, desperation, and the quest for reality. Kierkegaard's philosophical framework concerning absurdism depends on the central concept of the absurdity of existence. He stated that people end up in a state of conflict between the restricted and the endless, the temporary and the everlasting. Such stress leads to worry and hopelessness among individuals who struggle with the inability to resolve their restricted existence with the endless potential and principles they aim for. Kierkegaard suggested that the anxiety could be solved by seeking faith.

Additionally, Kierkegaard's investigation into the subjective essence of reality and people's connection with the divine entity enhances the comprehension of absurdism. He asserted that subjectivity is truth, emphasizing the significance of individual experiences and interpretations of those experiences in the quest for meaning. Kierkegaard maintained that those objective and general facts were inadequate to resolve the intricacy of the human condition and that every person must be involved in an individual and subjective connection with reality and God. In addition, Kierkegaard's literary works addressed issues like the absurdity of societal norms, the challenges faced by individuals in the community, and the conflict between emotions and logic (Hannay & Marino, 1998). The literary pieces authored by him are *Fear and Trembling*, *The Sickness unto Death*, and *Either/Or*. His works seek the intricacies of human life and inquire about established beliefs regarding ethical principles, religious concepts, and the quest for happiness. In overview, Kierkegaard contributed significantly to absurdism by examining the subjective aspect of life and the individual's effort to create meaning in an intrinsically absurd universe. Kierkegaard's emphasis on the significance of individual expertise, subjective reality, and faith issues served as a precursor for subsequent philosophers, such as Albert Camus, to further explore the absurd state of human existence. The literary pieces produced by Kierkegaard continue to promote and stimulate thinking, providing rooted perceptions of the intricacies and conflicts of human life.

One of the most influential people in the history of the theatre of the absurd is the Romanian-French writer Eugène Ionesco. Eugène Ionesco, born on November 26, 1909, in Slatina, Romania, gained recognition for his innovative literary writings that refused traditional dramatic structures and investigated the meaningless lives of human beings. The influence of his contribution to absurdism on 20th-century theatre was noteworthy. Ionesco identified with a profound sense of displacement during his early years and embarked on a quest for self-discovery. He was raised in an environment where multiple languages were spoken and exhibited a strong inclination towards philosophical and literary works from an early stage of his life. He studied French literature at the University of Bucharest. During that time, he was introduced to the literary works of existentialist thinkers such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus. These philosophical concepts and those philosophers would later significantly impact his intellectual contributions.

Ionesco shifted to France, intending to pursue advanced studies in French literature at the University of Paris. Nonetheless, due to the start of World War II, he could not fulfil the requirements for his academic degree (Gaensbauer, 1996).

The chaos of the war eventually affected him. The previous experiences had a profound impact on his perspective of the world and played a role in shaping his doubts regarding the logic and meaning of human existence. In 1950, Ionesco introduced his theatrical work, *The Bald Soprano*. This play was displayed for the first time in Paris, where it was considered an absurdist masterwork of art. It constitutes a satirical inquiry into the collapse of human relationships and the meaninglessness of societal norms (Gaensbauer, 1996). The theatrical production portrays a seemingly typical exchange among individuals who encounter difficulties expressing their points of view, ultimately leading to meaningless conversations.

The impact of Eugène Ionesco on absurdity and the absurd theatre was noteworthy. He used innovative language and theatrical techniques to create his plays (Lamont, 1973). He utilized literary devices such as wordplay and repetition to portray characters ensnared in monotonous and purposeless behavior patterns. Ionesco's literary productions were intended to emphasize the irrationality of human conduct. He observed individuals' inclination to adhere to established societal standards as a potential risk to independence and liberty. Ionesco was trying to encourage his readers to debate and contemplate the essence of their being. Through his understanding of irrationality and nonsensicality, he revealed the weakness of individuals' rationality and the innate absurdity of the human experience (Lamont, 1973).

Samuel Beckett, an Irish dramatist, novelist, and poet, was one of the most significant individuals in literature. He was born in Dublin, Ireland, on April 13, 1906; he is also well-known for his notable impact on the absurd theatre. The literary contributions of Beckett were significant in turning modern theatre and significantly influencing the norms of literature. Absurdist dramas frequently demonstrate recurring and typical conversations, irrational circumstances, and individuals struggling with hopelessness, isolation, and the uselessness of human beings. This artistic movement is exemplified with distinguished accuracy in the literary works of Samuel Beckett (Ackerley & Gontarski, 2004). Beckett's widely recognized theatrical work, *Waiting for Godot*, is regarded as a masterwork of absurdity. Individuals in the play interact in dialogues that appear to lack direction, address a range of illogical occurrences, and grapple with a quest for purpose in their lives. It portrays the existential concept of human beings waiting and the intrinsic ambiguity and absence of meaning in life. Another significant play by Beckett is *Endgame*. The drama is set in a strange environment and examines the themes of interdependence, power relations, and the inescapability of mortality. Individuals are depicted as engaged in monotonous and repetitive

routines, leading to entrapment and an atmosphere of desperation and sadness. The use of simple stage circumstances, fragmented conversation, and dark humor by Beckett in *Endgame* highlights the irrationality of the human condition and the recurring patterns of life.

Beckett's literary style is marked as a simplified and straightforward approach. Frequently, he used a strict and precise vocabulary, simplifying conversations to their fundamental components. Beckett's stylistic approach focused on representing the void and disenchantment characterizing the human condition. Apart from his theatrical works, Beckett also authored poetry, novels, and short stories, most of which displayed his unique themes of absurdity. Samuel Beckett's contributions to the literary movement of absurdity were attributed to his ability to display human existence's essence. That is achieved by deliberately removing traditional narrative structures, which reveal life's fundamental absurdity. His literary and theatrical productions rejected established conventions, prompting spectators and readers to interact with fundamental existential inquiries and concerns intrinsic to the human experience (Ackerley & Gontarski, 2004). Beckett's literary works have continued to attract and influence modern readers and authors due to his distinctive writing approach and thematic analysis. The impact of his work transcends the literary field. It has made a lasting impression on the cultural environment, rendering him a prominent figure in literature and the founder of the absurdity movement.

Sartre is known as a novelist, playwright, critic, and philosopher. He is a philosopher who has made his name known to the people as a thinker who thinks and discusses the problems of his age, reveals his philosophical situation in political events, and values freedom above all else. Sartre is an existentialist in his approach to the issues he deals with and the problems of his age. In a more specific classification, he is considered among the atheist existential philosophers because he does not believe in the existence of God. Jean-Paul Sartre's philosophical works have made noteworthy contributions to absurdity. Despite his primary association with existentialism, Sartre's philosophical inquiry into existential issues frequently crossed with the notion of the absurd. The philosophical concepts of Sartre's existentialism and his involvement with absurdity are inseparable as he explores the complexities of human life, the nature of liberty, and the essential absence of meaning in the world. Sartre's comprehension of absurdity is evident in his philosophical discourse, *Being and Nothingness*. Sartre engages with the concept of existence and the consequent feeling of absurdity, which emerges when individuals endeavor to discover meaning and guidance in an environment that lacks meaning. Sartre believes that

the human longing for meaning conflicts with the essential senselessness of existence, resulting in dissatisfaction and tenseness (Sartre & Barnes, 2002).

Sartre's significant impact on the philosophy of absurdity relates to his notion of bad faith. According to Sartre, people frequently choose self-deception to avoid the inherent absurdity of their existence. Individuals assume specific roles, comply with societal norms, and adopt false convictions to avoid the fundamental absence of meaning. In a condition of bad faith, people reject their liberty and responsibility, seeking comfort in illusions and preconceived notions of self. Sartre emphasizes that negating liberty increases the absurdity in people's lives (Leak, 2006). Sartre investigates the concept of liberty when confronted with the irrationality of existence. He argues that although the concept of existence may not inherently have meaning, people can establish their values and figure out their existence's meaning. This liberty, as conceived by Sartre, is both emancipating and wearisome. The concept of liberation allows individuals to break free from prearranged notions and meanings; however, it also imposes the responsibility of decision-making and self-development upon them.

As a philosopher, Sartre also expressed the same problems in the worlds he fictionalized through his literary works. His relationship with philosophy is actually due to man and his problems. For this reason, while expressing his philosophy, he also benefited from literary works that directly reflect human life. Sartre states, "Philosophy is not about dwelling on general and objective objects. However, philosophy is to deal with the man within the framework of his spiritual and life situation and problems, and to evaluate him with his attitude towards world events" (Titus et al, 1986, p. 387).

Considering Sartre's philosophical-literary writing style, one can see that Dostoevsky significantly influenced him. Dostoevsky did not create his novels only with literary patterns but synthesized his thoughts based on significant philosophical problems such as humans and the meaning of human life. In this respect, it is possible to see the traces of Dostoevsky, especially in Sartre's novel *Nausea*. In addition, the disgusting, constricting, and nauseating moods both authors use while describing places and people's encounters with the world leave a deep impression on the reader. Dostoevsky became one of Sartre's sources, not only in his writing style but also in the subjects he dealt with. Many critics have shown him as the father of existentialism in handling humans with all their individuality and loneliness. In the words of Camus, no one has been as successful as Dostoevsky in giving such close and compelling effects to the absurd world (Titus et al., 1986). The essential starting points of Sartre's philosophy would be through the changes that will occur in people's lives, the search for meaning, and

the feeble belief in God. In Dostoevsky's words, moral values and social rules will give way to behaviors guided by personal responsibility if everything is possible without God. This is the basis of Sartre's reflections on freedom and responsibility.

Although existentialism is the main subject of concentration for Sartre, existentialist philosophy is profoundly linked with his investigation of absurdism. It is essential to observe that Sartre's contributions to absurdity must not be viewed as an extensive or complete investigation of the philosophy (Baert, 2015). Sartre's comprehension of absurdity is interpreted within the framework of existentialism, and his literary works predominantly center on existential themes. Nevertheless, his observations regarding the absurdity of reality and corresponding human reactions persist as noteworthy and impact philosophical debates in modern society.

CHAPTER 2:

Absurdity and Absurd Plot Structure in James Joyce's *Ulysses*

The exploration of absurdity in literature has captivated readers and scholars throughout history. The examination of literature offers a distinctive perspective for comprehending the intricacies of human experience while also challenging conventional notions of rationality, meaning, and purpose in life. This chapter examines absurdity, charting its evolution from James Joyce's masterpiece, *Ulysses*, to Joseph Heller's famous literary work, *Catch-22*. Both literary works demonstrate a profound exploration of the notion of absurdity. However, this analysis will first focus on *Ulysses* and his investigation of absurdity.

The novel *Ulysses*, initially published in 1922, is a prominent instance of modern literature. Joyce's notable literary masterpiece depicts the sequential occurrences in characters' lives over only one day in Dublin, deftly linking a multifaceted web of thoughts, beliefs, and interactions that exceed traditional narrative standards. Through a complicated structure of narrative, absurdity emerges as a prominent part, prompting a reevaluation of the reader's preexisting ideas and encouraging a deeper examination of the human experience. Joyce employs a range of literary approaches to depict life's absurdity effectively. Robert Newman claims that "*Ulysses*-one that attracted much of the initial attention to the text. I refer to Joyce's use of the interior monologue and stream-of-consciousness techniques" (Newman & Thornton, 1987, p. 22); the utilization of the stream-of-consciousness narration approach serves as an illustrative to the brilliant instance of modern writing, which later mirrors the messy and fragmented features of human perception, showing a disorganized sequence of events and inner thoughts that align with the absurd nature of life. Through this creative technique, Joyce skillfully portrays the existential ambiguities, internal struggles, and paradoxes intricately woven into the lives of his characters, highlighting the absurdity present in their several situations. Moreover, *Ulysses* serves as an example of absurdity by subverting standard notions related to meaning. Joyce adeptly manipulates linguistic elements, employing strategies such as "wordplay, puns, and neologisms to emphasize language's ambiguity and arbitrary nature" (Curnutt, 2000, p. 39). In this literary approach, Joyce presents inquiries regarding the dependability of meaning and creates an obstacle for the reader in exploring a world where language is often lacking in capturing the intricate aspects of human life.

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the novel's events and characters through the lens of absurdity. Through this perspective, one can learn to recognize the conditions under which absurdity emerges. This chapter will also discuss the

influence of absurdity on Joyce's protagonists. By reading Joyce's literary works, one can strive toward understanding the complicated and numerous facets of absurdity and the profound impact that absurdity has on forming a perspective and comprehending life. Although *Catch-22* and its analysis of absurdity are important, we will focus on *Ulysses* to give a more insightful exploration of this fascinating issue. Joyce's masterwork will serve as a lens through which we hope to highlight the absurdity of the human condition and the significant role of literature in this theme.

Joyce received his education at Belvedere College and Trinity College, Dublin, where he specialized in law. James Joyce, a renowned literary figure of the early 20th century, started the publication of his literary works in 1903 and then passed away on January 13, 1941. Joyce's literary works were significantly influenced by his individual experiences, with a particular emphasis on his experiences during World War I and the Easter Rising of 1916 (Joyce & Ellman, 2003). The literary work *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Ulysses* are widely recognized as two of his most prominent novels. These works have received praise due to their unique writing style and complicated thematic exploration. These novels are considered significant and influential works in English literature in the 20th century. The quest for individual identity, the significance of human existence, and the search for the meaning of life are prominent themes throughout Joyce's writings. Joyce's characters usually embark on a journey of self-discovery, a central theme in his novels. Additionally, he employed the literary technique of stream of consciousness in his writing. Joyce uses this literary technique to allow readers to immerse themselves in the story, enabling them to experience the events as if they were participants (Joyce et al, 2004). When readers are introduced to a character within a story, they establish an emotional link with the character, thereby feeling their emotions and thoughts. Joyce identified himself as a writer with no interest in the publication or financial gain from his literary endeavors. In contrast, he intended to produce artistic works and tell a story that would profoundly impact individuals and change their lives.

Joyce's life was full of instability, which is one of the factors that contributed to his artistic impulse toward change; in fact, the unpredictable nature of Joyce's life was one of the most consistent aspects of his biography. In the year 1888, Joyce, at the young age of six, experienced a significant change as he moved from his familial residence in Dublin to start studying at Clongowes Wood College, which is located in County Kildare, also known as a Jesuit boarding school which it held a distinguished reputation. Despite being the youngest student in the educational institution, he gained recognition for his academic achievements and

established friendly relations with other students. However, within three years, Joyce's enrollment at Clongowes ended due to his father's job loss, which made him unable to pay the tuition fees. Throughout the subsequent eleven-year period, Joyce's early years were characterized by persistent instability, as his family went through nine relocations, caused mainly by eviction or the need to evade creditors. During the period of domestic instability, the adolescent Joyce commenced drafting a series of brief sketches that he titled *Epiphanies*. These sketches transformed ordinary moments into literary expressions, where Joyce saw meaning in ordinary occurrences, "believed that it was for the man of letters to record these epiphanies with extreme care, seeing that they are the most delicate and evanescent moments" (Punzo et al., 2009, p. 111). Joyce's career would be characterized by his inclination to write about ordinary individuals and unremarkable occurrences.

After a short period in Paris, Joyce comes back to Dublin to attend the funeral of his mother. He subsequently spent a year moving from one field to another between studying medicine, law, and literature. He engaged in teaching, sometimes living at his house and sometimes with friends, and finally shared a room with Oliver St. John Gogarty in the Martello Tower in Sandycove. Following a disagreement with Gogarty in September 1904, Joyce moved out of the tower during the nighttime hours and then embarked on a journey to the Continent, departing from Dublin in the shortest possible time. At this moment, his banishment from Ireland would be permanent as he traveled with Nora Barnacle, with whom he would share the remaining days of his life. While going through Europe, the couple got two babies. They relocated from Pula to Trieste, then to Rome, back to Trieste, then to Zurich, and finally to Paris.

During the initial years of Joyce's absence from Dublin, he authored a collection of short stories known as *Dubliners*, thereby developing his inclination towards portraying ordinary individuals and their difficult circumstances. In a similar way to the *Epiphanies*, Joyce's narratives aimed to accurately portray reality, including its harmful aspects and more acceptable elements. His constant commitment to portraying reality accurately posed challenges regarding publishing his writings during a time characterized by Victorian values and strict laws on censorship. During a particular dispute concerning *Dubliners*, a publisher expressed disapproval towards Joyce's utilization of the term (bloody) alongside other perceived indecent aspects. However, Joyce maintained an unwavering stance, asserting that he could not change his choices of words. According to Ellman, Joyce's literary works were intended to serve as a meticulously crafted mirror, displaying the real world faithfully (Joyce & Ellman, 2003), illustrating

that if the mirror's reflection is repulsive, holding the mirror responsible for that is inappropriate.

Joyce's next significant literary work was *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, a quasi-autobiographical novel published in 1916. This narrative chronicles the life of Stephen Dedalus, which extends from his early years to his growth into young adulthood. In this novel, Joyce traces the development of Stephen's consciousness from the simple ideas of a young child to the advanced intellect, where Stephen's thoughts start as simple as those of a toddler and progress to more complex as he ages, where his works need widely read, as one will meet in the initial part of *Ulysses*. To depict the development of Stephen's ideas (Joyce et al, 2004), Joyce employed a literary technique known as free indirect discourse. This technique enables the narrator to convey a character's thoughts and emotions while adhering to the conventional use of the third-person past tense instead of the first-person present tense usually employed in inner monologue. Joyce is going to continue using this technique in *Ulysses*. At the end of *A Portrait*, Stephen's Luciferian refusal of religion, society, and family ties drives him to embrace a life of liberty, artistic creativity, and self-imposed isolation. With its sensibilities and innovations, Joyce's *A Portrait* established him as a prominent figure within the modernist literary movement by 1920. Subsequently, Joyce relocated to Paris and became part of a community of writers that included Ernest Hemingway, Robert McAlmon, and F. Scott Fitzgerald.

In Paris, Joyce developed a particular friendship bond with Sylvia Beach, the American proprietor of Shakespeare and Company Bookstore. Despite the strict restrictions on censorship common in the English-speaking world, *Ulysses* faced significant challenges in finding a publisher. However, Sylvia Beach appeared as a savior for the novel, stepping in to rescue it. Furthermore, she provided Joyce with unrestricted freedom to make revisions, allowing him to compose over thirty percent of *Ulysses* during the stage of the publishing procedure. While combining and organizing interdependent elements throughout the novel, Joyce displaced paragraphs and pages of text on the printing plates. Despite paying significant expenses, Sylvia remained constant in her dedication to giving Joyce the freedom to shape *Ulysses* according to his artistic vision. One should express gratitude to Sylvia Beach and James Joyce for granting the world the gift of this masterpiece.

The plot of *Ulysses* is enhanced by the style in which Joyce presents the story. By employing a blend of inventive narrative techniques, the work effectively establishes a developed relationship between the readers and the inner thoughts of Stephen and Mr. Bloom as they navigate their daily lives. This connection develops with their reactions to various individuals and locations, recollections

of pleasant and distressing memories, and thoughts of their worries regarding the unknown directions they will encounter in the ambiguous future. One of these techniques, inner monologue, directly presents the characters' thoughts in the first person. The narrative includes fragments of internal thoughts in a seamless way, which is exemplified by the moment when Mr. Bloom departs from the house for the first time: "On the doorstep, he felt in his hip pocket for the latchkey. Not there. In the trousers I left off. Must get it. Potato I have. Creaky wardrobe. No use disturbing her" (Joyce, 1922, p. 55). In this quotation, the narrator initially adopts a third-person perspective to depict Mr. Bloom's search for his key. However, a subsequent shift occurs when the text changes into an inner monologue; then, Bloom becomes aware that his key is situated within a different pair of pants. The frequent and abrupt transitions between narrative and inner monologue may require some focus from readers, particularly due to Joyce's use of dashes instead of conventional quotation marks to signify dialogue. However, one can become used to this artistic choice and understand its rhythmic structure with practice. The absence of mediation in reaching the characters' inner monologue creates a heightened sense of the relationship between the reader and the characters, forcing the reader's ability to make inferences as they navigate the character's mental jumps. Another aspect of Joyce's writing style that helps readers become more attached to the characters is how the narrator uses the language, which is most characteristic of the protagonist, who is the story's focal point. Stephen Dedalus is a character known for having characteristics such as being erudite and a lyrical person, where the narrator assumes these features take on a central role in episodes. Subsequently, as the narrative switches its attention onto Mr. Bloom, the narrator adeptly depicts his peculiar, bodily, and curious traits by meticulously portraying sensory details and adopting a humorous tone. This narrative technique, known as borrowing a character's idiom, successfully conveys Mr. Bloom's distinctive traits.

The mixture of techniques that Joyce referred to as "the initial style" (Latham, 2014, p. 62) of *Ulysses* confirms that the reader experiences the plot in the characters' own words. This contributes to a sense of closeness that professionally connects readers to the protagonists, Stephen, and Mr. Bloom. This initial approach dominates the novel's first six episodes; however, as the work progresses, the reader's proximity to the minds of the two characters progressively increases and then decreases in an inverted ABC-CBA sequence. The lines that follow may serve as an illustration of this sequence. In the first triad that introduces Stephen, the Telemachus episode (A) employs modest utilization of inner monologue, choosing instead to emphasize narration to convey the

situation gradually between Stephen and his housemates. The significance of the reader's access to Stephen's thoughts becomes obvious in the Nestor episode (B) when he teaches his class and then encounters the headmaster. This access reaches its climax in the unbroken inner monologue of Stephen as he walks alone down the shore in the Proteus episode (C). In an inverse echo of the preceding episodes, the character of Mr. Bloom is initially introduced in Calypso (C) as he engages in his morning routine, primarily occupied by his thoughts. However, the reader's insight into his inner monologue diminishes to some extent as he carries out errands in Lotus-Eaters (B) and further declines in the sixth episode, Hades (A), as the narrator takes precedence in portraying the social interactions of Mr. Bloom attending a funeral alongside other Dubliners who exhibit varying levels of ignorance towards him. By completing these two initial triads, readers will deeply understand Stephen, Mr. Bloom, and their belonging to Dublin communities.

Just as readers get used to the novel's initial style, Joyce begins to mess with them. In the novel's seventh episode, Aeolus, the story is interrupted by a series of headlines from the newspaper that disrupt the structure of the writing inside the page. The previously mentioned oddity signifies the appearance of "the arranger" (Lawrence, 2014, p. 64), a different personality in the novel. This person differs from the narrator and immensely enjoys interrupting and embellishing the text. In the context of *Ulysses*, it can be argued that Mr. Bloom assumes the role of the Father, while Stephen represents the Son. Consequently, the arranger can be interpreted as embodying the Holy Ghost, forming a complete Trinity inside the novel's narrative structure. The term arranger can be traced back to the expression "retrospective arrangement" (Lawrence, 2014, p. 66), which is mentioned seven times throughout *Ulysses*. This recurring phrase offers insight into one of the fundamental approaches employed in the novel. One can only completely comprehend the development of *Ulysses*' style and the interwoven arrangement of its details after rereading it and looking back on it retrospectively.

As the initial narrative style retreats, the arranger progressively exercises greater authority over the latter parts of *Ulysses*, engaging in playfully manipulating and contributing to the text. The reader can observe the arranger's disturbing ingenuity in the novel's most inventive characteristics, such as the panoramic impact of the Wandering Rocks episode, the melodic prose of Sirens, the parodies found in Oxen of the Sun, and the catechism presented in Ithaca. The arranger's multiple challenges to novelistic rules could represent literary modernism's breakaway from conventional standards and its motivation to innovate and create something new. Although there is some disagreement among scholars on the concept of the arranger, many believe it to be a valuable concept

for clarifying the daring stylistic flourishes that combine to differentiate the novel. However, Joyce also assists readers in their understanding as each subsequent style in the work is constructed on previously revealed techniques. Thus, *Ulysses* depends on readers' mental abilities to exercise memory and adapt to the novel's changeable events.

James Joyce's *Ulysses* is widely regarded as a significant masterpiece of literature, exemplifying the required strength of the human spirit in the face of life's challenges. This literary work delves into the intricacies of human thinking while encouraging a deeper understanding and acceptance of the diverse perspectives and experiences within society. It is often noted that the work may appear boring at first glance, but it encompasses the entirety of human existence within its literary contents. In terms of plot, the novel tells the story of one day, June 16, 1904, in a small European city Dublin, Ireland, mainly through the minds of two men: 22-year-old Stephen Dedalus and 38-year-old Leopold Bloom.

Stephen has breakfast with his housemates, teaches a class, goes for a walk, engages in a talk about Shakespeare with other intellectuals, gets drunk, goes to a brothel, and is then knocked out in the street by a British soldier because Ireland was under the dominion of the English at that time. Stephen is deeply affected by the recent passing of his mother. This circumstance weighs heavily on him due to his deliberate avoidance of attending prayer due to his rejection of religious beliefs. Mr. Bloom starts his day by preparing breakfast for himself and his spouse, Molly. He engages in various activities within the city, including completing tasks such as attending a funeral, conducting job responsibilities as an advertising agent, having lunch, writing letters, engaging in a verbal dispute with an Irish person at a public place, watching a display of fireworks on the shoreline during the sunset, visiting a hospital specializing in childbirth where a friend is experiencing a challenging labor, encountering Stephen, and making the decision to give care and guide the drunk young man. In the afternoon, Bloom's wife engages in a physical relationship with another person. Furthermore, Bloom knows about this matter.

The plot of *Ulysses* contains many correspondences and allusions to *The Odyssey*. Joyce employed titles derived from *The Odyssey* for the episodes of his work, while the narrative of *Ulysses* roughly conforms to the storyline of Homer's epic. Stephen could be likened to Telemachus, a son searching for an appropriate father, while Mr. Bloom can be compared to Odysseus, a paternal character longing to come home and reunite with his son. In contrast to *The Odyssey*, which extends over a decade, the peregrinations of *Ulysses* are confined to a single day. Furthermore, Joyce frequently uses satire regarding these correspondences. For

instance, when Penelope is known for her constancy in rejecting her suitors, while Molly Bloom is unfaithful to Mr. Bloom; she engages in an extramarital relationship with another man during the afternoon.

In James Joyce's novel *Ulysses*, Stephen Dedalus is a character that plays a significant role. The absurdity of Stephen's name can be understood through various aspects, including historical, literary, and symbolic elements. An historical perspective can be recognized through Joyce's choice of the name Stephen Dedalus for his protagonist, which is rooted in historical references. According to Greek mythology, Daedalus was a highly proficient craftsman and architect who constructed the Labyrinth for King Minos of Crete. This connection helps to establish a comparison with Stephen as a creative individual who, during the novel, is attempting to navigate his own intricate mental and emotional labyrinth. Furthermore, Joyce derives inspiration from his personal experiences when giving names to his characters. Stephen Dedalus is the central character in James Joyce's semi-autobiographical literary work, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. By incorporating this character in *Ulysses*, Joyce establishes a sense of coherence and references his artistic development and journey.

When employing literary allusions, Joyce heavily utilizes Homer's epic poem *The Odyssey* as a structural and thematic framework for his novel *Ulysses* when using literary allusions. In the epic work *The Odyssey*, the protagonist Odysseus, alternatively referred to as *Ulysses*, conducts a protracted and challenging journey to return to his homeland (Lawrence, 1981). In the same way, the protagonist Stephen Dedalus in Joyce's work embarks upon a symbolic journey through the streets of Dublin. The essence of absurdity can be observed in the portrayal of Stephen Dedalus as the modern embodiment of *Ulysses*, a seemingly ordinary individual navigating through the routine and frequently banal aspects of life in Dublin. Joyce draws attention to the absurdity of the human condition by comparing the heroic deeds of a Homeric hero with the everyday challenges Stephen faces.

The name Stephen Dedalus holds symbolic significance within the novel when analyzed through the lens of symbolism. The surname Dedalus conveys transcending conventional boundaries and limitations through flight or soaring. The mentioned symbolism is aligned with Stephen's aspiration for intellectual and artistic transcendence. Nevertheless, the absurdity emerges due to the contrast between Stephen's ambitions and the reality of his circumstances. Stephen frequently experiences a sense of restriction within the limits of Irish society, burdened by the expectations and limitations placed upon him. This is evident, for instance, when Mulligan mocks Stephen's name: "The mockery of

it!...Your absurd name, an ancient Greek!” (Joyce, 1922, p. 4). Through a study of the significance and historical context of Stephen’s name, readers can gain a deeper comprehension of one of the main ideas in *Ulysses*, including the personal implications for Stephen himself. The given name, Stephen, is due to its somewhat standard nature, emphasizing the contrast between his ordinary name and his extraordinary desires. As mentioned above, the juxtaposition highlights the inherent absurdity of seeking perfection within limitations imposed by social norms. By juxtaposing the grandeur of mythological and literary figures with the everyday struggles of an ordinary man, Joyce highlights the absurdity inherent in the human condition and the pursuit of personal and artistic fulfillment.

In the ninth episode of *Ulysses* titled, *Scylla and Charybdis*, according to Stephen Dedalus, the artist constructs and deconstructs the images, where the author internalizes and isolates himself from the image as a quest to achieve perfection in his work. Stephen describes the process of creativity and life’s misery as isolating the human being, which is similar to the situation faced by Sisyphus, who must continue to struggle with a heavy rock eternally. Stephen Dedalus, the protagonist, introduces his Shakespearean theory, positing that the origin of Shakespeare’s literary works can be attributed to his suffering, particularly the pain caused by his wife Anne Hathaway’s betrayal. Stephen describes the work’s overall tone as gloomy, where Hamlet’s conduct fails to create a positive and meaningful environment (Pelaschiar, 2015). On the contrary, he depicts the world as nonsensical. Stephen depicts Hamlet as an absurdist philosopher who comprehends the pessimistic nature of existence rather than being regarded as a moral protagonist who conforms to the common principles of his time. Hence, examining the theory illustrates how Joyce’s specific interpretation of Shakespeare’s literary works is essential to comprehending the importance of *Ulysses* and its ironic nature.

In *Ulysses*, Shakespeare is an important literary figure who must be understood to comprehend Stephen’s narration fully. In the ninth episode, *Scylla and Charybdis*, the character Stephen starts an argument on the works of the English poet, focusing mainly on Hamlet. Stephen’s analysis adopts a historical-biographical approach to interpreting the writings of the English poet. The discourse holds great importance due to its presence during the Irish Renaissance period, establishing a distinct framework for reevaluating historical principles concerning modern issues. Stephen’s theory argues that Shakespeare’s literary works originate from profound personal suffering resulting from the loss of his son Hamnet and the infidelity of his spouse, Anne Hathaway. The understanding and appreciation of this theory could only be completely understood and

appreciated when considering the overall meaning of the novel, where Shakespeare's life and writings are interpreted as an absurd work of literature, according to Camus' concept of absurdity.

In brief, Stephen's Shakespearean theory is presented in the following way: Shakespeare was significantly hurt by the infidelity that his wife committed with his younger brother Richard in his hometown of Stratford when Shakespeare was working at the Globe Theatre in London. Stephen points out that Shakespeare's plays include specific arbitrary references that relate to the adulterous behavior of Anne Hathaway and the infidelity committed by his brother. Shakespeare employs Richard's name twice in his plays, specifically Richard II and Richard III, to depict two figures with negative characteristics. The first Richard is portrayed as a trivial and ignorant figure similar to the renowned Don Juan inside his court. Conversely, the second Richard is depicted as a ruthless murderer (Shakespeare, 2009), responsible for the deaths of his brother's sons and his elder brother, Clarence. The character of Richard III is portrayed as crude and savage, which can be seen as a progression of the immature Richard II, who ultimately seizes his brother's house.

A further important element of the theory is Stephen's claim that Hamlet represents Hamnet, who is Shakespeare's deceased son. Furthermore, Hamlet's murdered father symbolizes Shakespeare's own experiences of betrayal and neglect. Whereas Hamlet's mother, Gertrude, represents Shakespeare's infidelity wife. Stephen used a hypothetical approach to highlight the intricacy of the issue when presenting this autobiographical examination. Russell, in his role as one of the attendees, expresses to Stephen that biographical critique is "Interesting only to the parish clerk. I mean, we have the plays. I mean when we read the poetry of King Lear, what is it to us how the poet lived?" (Joyce, 1922, p. 181). Russell believes in a Platonic perspective regarding artwork, believing that it manifests the immaterial world and pure ideas. He claims that artwork aims "to reveal to us ideas, formless spiritual essences" (Joyce, 1922, p. 177), exceeding the physical realm and its hideousness. Consequently, Russell views Stephen's debate as an endeavor to reduce the raised spirit and moral value in Shakespeare's works, arbitrarily reducing them to a vulgar state to incite a ferocious discussion. Russell's debate has no value because the library conversation is like a Socratic speech, where Stephen intentionally seeks to generate doubts in his adversaries over their convictions by using deliberate references to Catholic and Irish scholars, thereby gaining a competitive advantage to win the debate (Wood, 1999).

To better comprehend the contextual implications of Stephen's debate in the novel, it is important to examine the portrayal of Bloom as a mocked Jew and marginalized individual within Dublin society, as well as Bloom can be considered as an ignored figure in the city like the Dubliners Mrs. Sinico and Gretta. Joyce primarily connects Bloom with Stephen's theory by emphasizing on father's situation: Bloom's child, Rudy, experienced a very short life of just eleven days following his birth, a circumstance resembling the death of Shakespeare's son, who also passed away when he was 11 years old. The only significant bond that Bloom maintains with his unfaithful spouse, Molly, is established within sorrowful remembrances of their passed-away child. Bloom, experiencing a sense of alienation in both the earthly and heavenly worlds, sees himself as a foreigner in Dublin, characterized by his feelings of powerlessness as a husband and a wicked man. Consequently, the only space Bloom can seek comfort and truth is within the memories of his dead child.

Bloom's entire existence is characterized by suffering, leading to his mockery by others who see him as having a cruel, vicious, and superficial style of living. In this instance, Joyce once again portrays the deserted human environment in which individuals who have suffered deterioration are considered responsible for their circumstances rather than attributing blame to other people. This is similar to the death of Mrs. Sinico in *Dubliners*, wherein the local newspaper explicitly stated that "No small blame attached to anyone." (Joyce et al., 2004, p. 323). The suffering of being neglected, expelled, and eliminated from historical and communal remembrance is the defining characteristic of the lives of the marginalized individuals in Joyce's work. Nevertheless, only by experiencing pain can Joyce's protagonists see the similarity between themselves and the ghost of Hamlet's dead father, whose losing, as Stephen asserts, "is his gain" (Joyce, 1922, p. 189). If "loss is gain" (Joyce, 1922, p. 189), Stephen believes that Hamlet's suffering originates from discovering his uncle's offense and when the ghost encourages him to get vengeance. The prince is faced with choosing the most morally acceptable behavior, considering the choice between following a personal vendetta and adhering to the ideals of ethics. Shakespeare becomes the father of humanity by transforming his losses into gains when he observes general human suffering exceeding his own.

In Hamlet's situation, there is no god he can pray to or ask for assistance. A similar observation could be reached concerning the distressing life of Leopold Bloom. In the same way, Shakespeare, "one who has faded into impalpability through death, through absence" (Joyce, 1922, p. 180), refused to allow himself to fall. Joyce's portrayal of absurdity in his work highlights the inability of the

characters to alter their fate or find a solution due to their doubt about their existence. Similarly, Camus generally analyzes and rejects religious notions of salvation and life after death. In the same manner, Stephen's rejection of following the path of religion indicates his critical attitude toward the problem of faith. Nevertheless, his faith is not in God or life after death but in art, which he sees as a flexible means to investigate the nature of meaning. Similarly, as demonstrated by Stephen, Shakespeare's viewpoint on the significance of life is only linked to ethical and artistic principles.

Concerning death, Prince Hamlet employs the metaphorical representation of death as an unknown world, like an undiscovered land that a traveler may encounter, but he would never come back to life. From this perspective, the prince demonstrates a nonchalant attitude towards death, indicating that it is possible his prolonged contemplation on this matter has desensitized him to the idea of death. This profound sense of fear confuses the will, thus reducing and destroying one's desire to end his own life. This statement, however, can be interpreted as a double-entendre related to the playwright's name. When examining this sentence, it might be seen as Shakespeare acknowledging that the questions raised by Hamlet are reflective of his questions, consequently indicating that he, like the prince, suffers similar pain. Camus stated that the inquiry of the reason one would stay alive is "one truly serious philosophical problem" (Camus, 1979, p. 11). He additionally said that "judging whether life is or is not worth living amounts to answering the fundamental question of philosophy" (Camus, 1979, p. 11); therefore, Hamlet's discussion of suicide is a great example of the idea of existence and Camus's absurdist philosophy.

Through the lens of *Ulysses*, Stephen's theory could be interpreted as a symbolic representation of the theme of the pain of search. Dedalus's journey toward his metaphorical paternal way signifies a departure from the tranquil shores of safety, as he willingly puts himself into uncertainty about his life. Conversely, Leopold Bloom is the opposite of his symbolic child. He wants to get to the end of his quest quickly to enjoy the pleasures: loveless intimacy with Molly, meaningless goals, and the localities of Dublin. Stephen's cognitive predicament is characterized by a conflict between his intellectual tendency and his challenge to embrace his symbolic father's attitude. However, he feels unable to separate himself from him as a son. His journey initiates and concludes with an awareness of the enduring ambiguity around the existential meaning of life. Similar to the details of Shakespeare's life, the library scene in *Ulysses* is characterized by irony and absurdity. In examining Joyce's work, Derrida asserts that laughter is a reliable element of this scene. No perspective is more

dependable than the sarcastic interpretation of idealism. One could conclude that Sisyphus and Shakespeare can laugh at their destinies, which makes them human. According to Camus, the true meaning of life lies in its sincerity since he says, "Basically, at the very bottom of life, which seduces us all, there is only absurdity and more absurdity.... And maybe that's what gives us our joy for living because the only thing that can defeat absurdity is lucidity" (Todd, 1997, p. 76).

The episode titled *Circe* is set in Nighttown, a part of the novel that can be characterized as absurd. Nighttown is recognized for its chaos and overstated theatricality, and the *Circe* episode is a great illustration of its absurdity. The episode's setting is within a brothel, which is characterized as having an unconventional and unusual ambiance. The characters engage in relationships within an atmosphere that deviates from conventional societal norms, resulting in strange and unexpected events. In the episode's progress, there is a notable blurring of the borders of reality, accompanied by surreal shifts experienced by the protagonists. Consequently, the distinction between dreams and reality becomes indiscernible, thus emphasizing the absurdity of the occurrences. The episode incorporates fantastical and hallucinatory elements, making distinguishing between reality and illusion difficult, where events unfold seemingly chaotically and disorderly, empty of apparent causal relationships. These aspects collectively produce a feeling of absurdity and confusion for both the characters and the readers engaging with it.

Joyce effectively portrays and creates the *Circe* setting in a remarkable style. Stephen and his companion, Lynch, arrive at Nighttown. Shortly after that, Bloom enters, lured by Zoe, into a bordello, where he sees Stephen and Lynch amongst a group of prostitutes. In the bordello, a limited number of minor occurrences are stimulants for forming imaginative scenarios involving the characters Stephen and, more notably, Bloom. The scene is structured by this alternating interplay of reality and fantasy, where fantasy usually arises from the depiction of reality. Bloom's imaginative thoughts dominate the story's flow most significantly, while Stephen's imaginative thoughts increase alongside his inebriation. The visit to the bordello ended with Stephen breaking the chandelier. Bloom recovers some of Stephen's money and leaves the bordello with him. After a dispute with two British soldiers in the street, Stephen is knocked out by one of them. Bloom asks for the help of Corny Kelleher, a mortician, to protect Stephen from law authorities. In the episode's conclusion, Bloom stares at a picture of Stephen and observes a picture of his late son, Rudy. The Nighttown episode is absurd because of the character's behavior and interactions with events, the show's deformation of place and time, the type of words used, and the non-logical shifts between

scenes. Events are shown with diminished clarity through a circular design, a preferred format within the framework of the one-act drama scene of the absurd (Bloom & Hobby, 2010), where this circular design does not provide a rational explanation or conclusion. In most cases, the circumstance remains unchanged; nothing shifts and nothing is resolved because there is no answer to man's challenges in this despairing world, which shows that existence is a meaningless cycle that repeats itself.

Additional aspects of circularity concentrate around two English soldiers and their position near the red-light zone. These individuals only make appearances at the episode's starting and ending points. At the start and end of the story, Stephen uses repeated symbolic gesticulation; initially, he ruins a streetlight using his cane, and subsequently, he employs the same cane to crash the chandelier of the bordello. The most significant is the notable technical resemblance between the Bloom-Stephen pair and the relationships found in absurdist issues. At the start of the episode, Stephen and Bloom make their entrances into Nighttown individually. However, as the episode progresses, Bloom assumes a protective attitude toward Stephen, who becomes unconscious. Despite their physical closeness, they remain separate individuals in terms of behavior. During Joyce's exploration of circularity, his initial notes suggest an intentional use of irrationality in his technique. These notes reference elements such as "Circe, the brothel, midnight, dreams, whore, and hallucination." (Grose, 1975, p. 113). At the beginning of the writing, Joyce regarded Circe as a "whirligig movement" (Ellmann, 1966, p. 151). The whirligigs developed by Joyce show a tendency to indicate directions indirectly. Despite the existence of critical debates on the general course of *Ulysses*, it is widely acknowledged that the Circe episode effectively portrays the anxieties and challenges that Bloom and Stephen face.

Stephen's encounters with death are very gloomy. He refers to his bordello dancing as the dancing of death, which causes him to faint, so "Stephen's mother, emaciated, rises stark through the floor in leper grey with a wreath of faded blossoms and a torn bridal veil, her face worn and noseless, green with grave mold" (Joyce, 1922, p. 539). During the most terrifying scene in Circe, Stephen's mother advises him to confess his sins and return to his religion. In rejection of his mother, Stephen conducts the expulsion of her ghostly existence by forcefully shattering a chandelier using a cane as he rapidly departs from the bordello. Upon exiting, Stephen, in an inebriated state, disputes with English soldiers. At the same time, he sees a situation where the hangman publicly declares the cost of execution to punish some people, precisely ten shillings. This occurrence recalled an earlier encounter at a bordello when mistresses demanded the same amount of

ten shillings. In the realm of Nighttown, the concepts of sex and death are perceived as having equal value, resulting in an absurd environment. However, the abovementioned values regarding sex, death, or night are not considered definitive. Despite their hallucinating encounters with death, Bloom and Stephen depart Nighttown alive. Consequently, the dense tapestry of absurdity results in a positive ending since these sequences allude to the fact that the characters must embrace the absurdity and disorder of life to remain alive.

It is noteworthy to observe that the episode of Circe is presented in the form of a play script, incorporating stage directions. That may lead to a question: What was the reason behind Joyce's decision to include a play within his novel? This question has been a subject of discussion for numerous critics. It is widely acknowledged that Joyce was deeply connected with the theater and had a lifelong admiration for Ibsen's dramatic works. Nevertheless, his play, *Exiles*, was written in a style similar to Ibsen's and is commonly perceived as disappointing. Swinson asserts that Joyce's interest in Ibsen mainly stemmed from the thematic content and conceptual ideas explored in Ibsen's works rather than from the technical elements of realistic drama. Joyce found these technical components uninteresting and hard to understand (Swinson, 1969), where the similarity between *Exiles* and Joyce's Circe episode is limited. The only similarity lies in adopting a traditional dramatic script design, where dialogue is denoted by the capitalization of each speaker's name, and directions for the stage are given in italics within parentheses. The similarities end there, as Circe differs dramatically as a play in a different style. Joyce's tendency for individual experiments in his artistic endeavors made him incompatible with any artistic movements, such as surrealism, Dada, or expressionism, despite some characteristics similar to those movements in his work. Martin Esslin regarded the Nighttown episode in *Ulysses* as a significant early illustration of the Theatre of the Absurd, with particular emphasis on the Nighttown episode (Eugene, 1970). By that point in time, the achievements of Beckett and Ionesco had created an environment where Joyce's scenes could be presented. These scenes not only foresee the emergence of the "Theatre of the Absurd" but also exceed it in terms of its daring vision and innovative creativity.

James Joyce used modern science and a wide range of cultural myths in his masterpiece of modernist literature, *Ulysses*. This turned a single day in the life of his main character, Leopold Bloom, into an epistemic quest to find a way to create more meaning for his life and existence. The climax of this intellectual pursuit can be seen in the penultimate episode titled Ithaca, in which Joyce intends to serve as a mathematical catechist. In this episode, he used technical

discourse and epistemic skepticism of scientific inquiry. The question-and-answer series in Ithaca explores the material aspects of reality as scientific principles specify, delving into investigating the absurd as a parody of the rational method employed in scientific texts. The text in Ithaca shows a transition from a scientific writing style to a mythic one, wherein a demonstrative and poetic one supports the meticulous and technical approach. To do that, Ithaca effectively clarifies the functions of science and myth within Bloom's epistemological pursuit: science, on the one hand, facilitates the comprehension of actuality about life, while myth, on the other hand, acts as a conceptual instrument through which Bloom could explore his personal experiences as influenced by his spiritual beliefs. To enhance the value of his life, Bloom must employ mythology, which serves as a manifestation of spirituality, to direct his conduct, thus shedding light on his ethical sense and his position within contemporary society.

Suppose the novel is viewed as an epistemic quest. This indicates that Leopold Bloom, the main character, draws inspiration from his longing for knowledge and to discover his place in the world. In this case, the narrative climaxes in the Ithaca episode and presents a comprehensive interpretation of the world (Thiher, 2005). Interpreting the world in Ithaca is illustrated through a sequence of inquiries and answers that resemble the approach used for scientific inquiry. Nevertheless, the character conducting this inquiry pushes it to absurdity, employing both the technical language and the epistemic doubtfulness associated with individuals involved in science. Through Ithaca's parody of science's descriptive method of reality, Ithaca suggests that Bloom is compelled to seek mythological knowledge to fulfill his epistemological pursuit. *Ulysses* portrays Bloom's endeavor to achieve a personally meaningful life. At the same time, Ithaca posits that the solution to this conflict resides in Bloom's spiritual inclination, as expressed through myth, instead of his material inclination, as science suggests.

To comprehensively understand Ithaca, it is necessary to analyze the text deeply, examining its contents and techniques to explain its different aims. The chapter's structure, mode, and language will ultimately merge into cohesive elements as created by Joyce, indicating a parody of the scientific investigative approach. Oddly, several of the initial readers of *Ulysses* could not recognize the satirical tones present in the text, thereby leading to their lack of appreciation for the episode Ithaca. After the novel's publication in 1922 and the initial few decades after, the challenges posed by the episode were so notable that it elicited widespread criticism. One of many critics, such as McGlazer, described Joyce's scientific and objective writing style as appalling. In his analysis of *Ulysses*, American literary critic McGlazer categorized Ithaca alongside Oxen of the Sun

and Eumaeus episodes as parts of the novel that he considered to be “dead weight” (McGlazer, 2020, p. 107). McGlazer asserted that these three episodes were artistically indefensible. According to the analysis of Harry Levin, a modernist scholar, the discourse in Ithaca was described as “unrelievedly painful and banal” (McGlazer, 2020, p. 108). In addition, Madtes, Joyce’s famous biographer, referred to the episode as “painfully rational” (Madtes, 1983, p. 65). However, the initial animosity decreased over time, and those who opposed the episode’s views became fewer, particularly writers of literary criticism. According to Madtes, during the mid-1970s, certain critics asserted that Ithaca could be the novel’s most distinct episode. Joyce chose the episode Ithaca as his preferred part of *Ulysses* (1983).

The plot in Ithaca can be summed up to its most essential incidents, characterized as very simple. It starts with the depiction of Stephen and Bloom moving towards Eccles Street at approximately 2 o’clock in the early hours of June 17th. They start a discourse regarding their agreements and disparities on various issues, later finishing with their arrival at Bloom’s home. Due to the unintended forgetting of his key, Bloom enters the house by smashing a window to let Stephen enter. After this, he prepares a hot drink for himself and Stephen. While enjoying their hot drink, they converse about various subjects, including the linguistic parallels between the Irish and Hebrew languages. Subsequently, they turn to singing some songs. Then, Bloom tells Stephen that he knows a place at 7 Eccles St. and asks him to stay there. Stephen refuses, and after that, he prepares to leave. They get out together, direct their focus toward the sky to see stars, engage in urination close to each other, and then shake hands. After Stephen’s departure, Bloom goes to his bedroom, accidentally hitting the furniture that Molly had rearranged earlier in the day, resulting in a slight head injury. Bloom lights a scented candle and sits close to his bed after that, thinking of his retirement decision and preparing a spending plan covering the day’s costs. He remembers the passing of his father before coming back to bed. He quickly converses with Molly; after that, he immediately sleeps.

The seeming ease of these situations raises the question, how could such everyday occurrences have resulted in such a challenging text? Richard Madtes states, “As in so much of Joyce, the difficulty lies less in what is said and more in how it is said. It is the technique, not content, that causes the most problems” (Madtes, 1983, p. 66). As Abbott commented, “The narrative language of Ithaca, which means the way the tale is conveyed, may be challenging, but the occurrence or sequence of events is not” (Abbott, 2020, p. 15). Ithaca is structured as a sequence of many questions and answers, observing and narrating the various

behaviors, decisions, and feelings expressed by Bloom and Stephen. Many scholars' analysis of *Ithaca* has primarily centered around its form, influenced mainly by a letter written by Joyce to his friend Frank Budgen. In this correspondence, Joyce characterizes *Ithaca* as a literary work that adopts the structure of a mathematical catechism, wherein various events are systematically deconstructed into their corresponding cosmic, physical, and psychological equivalents (Ellmann et al., 1967).

Following Bloom and Stephen's arrival at 7 Eccles Street, Bloom attempts to turn on the faucet to get water to prepare a hot drink. Subsequently, the speaker inquires, "Has the water begun to flow?" The response spans more than half a page:

Yes. From Roundwood reservoir in county Wicklow of a cubic capacity of 2400 million gallons, percolating through a subterranean aqueduct of filter mains of single and double pipeage constructed at an initial plant cost of £5 per linear yard by way of the Dargle, Rathdown, Glen of the Downs and Callowhill to the 26-acre reservoir at Stillorgan, a distance of 22 statute miles, and thence, through a system of relieving tanks, by a gradient of 250 feet to the city boundary at Eustace bridge, upper Leeson street... The South Dublin Guardians, notwithstanding their ration of 15 gallons per day per pauper supplied through a 6-inch meter, had been convicted of wastage of 20,000 gallons per night (Joyce, 1922, p. 624).

In the novel, the answer to the inquiry continues for a long time, filling most of the subsequent pages. Each of the responses provided references to different units of water measurement, such as gallons, pipeage, and tank capacity, and the first answer specifies these quantities and where they are located. The second answer exemplifies the qualities it mentions (equality, constancy, and depth). Each phrase in this quotation is filled with information, which the author or speaker presents in a flood of words and ideas that exceed the limits of a traditional sentence. Using this lengthy discourse, Joyce catalogs the physical properties of water and the world of *Ithaca* more broadly, where even little acts became subject to comprehensive study and analysis. Naturally, many texts categorized as (naturalist) do not provide the same level of explanation and measurement. According to Madtes, *Ithaca's* description could be considered an insufferably absurd form of naturalism. Furthermore, Madtes thinks that the answers presented by Joyce in this context are wholly truthful and nothing but truth. It is essential to highlight that the structure of Bloom's responses could be considered untraditional and lacking rational justification to create a feeling of absurdity and challenge readers' expectations (Madtes, 1983).

The narrative voice lacks self-awareness and is present only in the Ithaca episode. In addition, the speaker has a notable ability to easily enter the thoughts of both Bloom and Stephen, appearing to have the ability to navigate between the minds of characters, as well as “to pilfer through their pasts and look into their futures” (Budgen, 1973, p. 246). However, the powers mentioned above do not align with a wholly omniscient or limited narrator’s abilities. The restricted omniscience of the narrator makes changes, as indicated by the text, without stating the role or limitations of the speaker, which may have been purposeful despite Joyce’s unconventional use of scientific wording, exaggerated naturalism, and artistic detachment in his narrative, and even though the resulting impact of reducing the reading process, which Madtes defined as “constipation caused in the flow of the narrative” (Madtes, 1983, p. 70), the most prominent aspect of Ithaca is the question-and-answer style. As described by Madtes, this style is known as the argumentative style or the questioning approach.

Ithaca is regarded as a highly improbable investigation since it offers precise absurd questions regarding both characters and natural occurrences. Joyce desired his writing to simulate or provoke his readers and reveal the motivation for the episode’s technique: to parody its subject, specifically scientific discourse. Budgen affirms this viewpoint in his analysis, adding that the entirety of the episode’s textual content contributes to creating a parody (Budgen, 1973). The examination of the parody of scientific language requires careful analysis. However, it is important to acknowledge that Joyce’s purpose to employ parody also gives the scientific text an ironic sense. Ultimately, the pursuit of science attempts to comprehend the world using rational methods, turning this endeavor into an absurd one that subverts the fundamental principles of science upside down. According to Thiher, *Ulysses* again forces readers to examine modernity via the lens of myth, specifically the initial myth of the pursuit of knowledge and the desire to return to its origins (Thiher, 2006).

The parody of scientific inquiry in Ithaca drives its topic to an absurd extent, thus indicating the reasonable limits within which science works. In this regard, the episode also displays a shift from physical power to spiritual power, suggesting a way through which Bloom’s intellectual pursuit can progress. After all, engaging with the episode’s technique is essential to analyze its implications effectively. Joyce utilized a (mathematical catechism) as a comedic device, which, ironically, elicited not the expected laughter but rather a significant amount of consternation from his peers, which can be seen as an intelligent and ironic joke. The lack of comprehension regarding writing style can hide the primary purpose of the parody (Copland & Turner, 1969). However, one must

keep focused on analyzing this approach. According to Fleishman, the second-longest part of *Ulysses* can only be regarded as a remarkable display of artistic skill if it provides insights into the character and psychological experiences of Bloom and Stephen and their surrounding environment. By employing a stylized approach in this work, Joyce effectively parodies the conventions of scientific writing, thus enhancing the subtext of the chapter. This is achieved by incorporating several themes, which scholars have accurately examined in the field of literature.

According to Sultan, the novel *Ulysses* demonstrates how an individual can effectively separate himself from his senses. In this context, the novel removes any indications of a human mind engaging in interpretation (Sultan, 1987). Therefore, the stylistic representation of scientific writing in *Ulysses* offers a limited portrayal of the complex human experience that has happened. The section caused laughter from readers due to the contradiction of responding to an inquiry regarding the flow of water with an extensive description of the complete water distribution system. However, by employing this approach, Joyce asserts that he was interested in the control of space and time and the function of speech in readers' comprehension of the world.

The function of language is essential for the reader to comprehend the world in Ithaca, a fundamental matter concerning scientific discourse parodied throughout the episode. Despite the excessive use of scientific language in the episode, the inquiries and answers mainly serve human purposes rather than scientific ones. The function of the water tap, which works in a way understandable to Bloom, signifies proficiency in that aspect of life (p. 203). The episode satirizes the approach of scientific logic instead of its goals. The events of Ithaca show that depending entirely on scientific methods of inquiry cannot result in a comprehensive understanding of human existence. Joyce utilizes the manipulation of language by employing science as the ultimate good to highlight the absurdity of modern humans (Sultan, 1987). According to Budgen, the novel suggests that while considering the relationship between literature and science, readers should not have to depend on a specific research approach and should not underestimate the value of other forms of research. Hence, using parody in science makes its contents ironic (Budgen, 1973). This irony highlights Bloom's pursuit of knowledge, which must diverge from the tangible influence of science. This divergence is necessary due to the limitations of what the field of science can reveal concerning the nature of humanity and its environment.

After talking about science, the speech will shift to myth, where T.S. Eliot discusses Joyce's incorporation of myth into his novel, characterizing it as a

modern occurrence. Eliot suggests that rather than depending on traditional storytelling techniques, Joyce employs what he called the (mythical approach). In the other part of Ithaca, Joyce employs the mythical narration form with greater emphasis to demonstrate a gradual decline in Bloom's materialistic inclination by replacing scientific discourse with mythological aspects. According to Fleishman, the episode experiences a shift in atmosphere from a scientific one to a mythic style during the most significant tension in the episode, when Stephen leaves Bloom. This shift can be seen as a departure from the concept of total nothingness in life (Fleishman, 1967). Although Bloom is inclined toward knowledge, his profound concern lies in myth. Following Stephen's departure from 7 Eccles St., Bloom's thoughts stroll around what Fleishman calls a pre-scientific world, which can be understood as the mythical world. The significance of this change becomes evident in Bloom's exploration of the decline of his Jewish religion (Shea, 2012). Bloom experienced a turn to the Catholic religion upon his marriage to Molly, yet his memory of Catholicism appears to be challenging throughout the narrative of *Ulysses*.

Furthermore, he frequently contemplates Jewish norms and traditions. This loss of religion exemplifies Bloom's quest for a meaningful life, causing him to give up Judaism and embrace Catholicism. However, his endeavors to discover his purpose remain unfulfilled. This may highlight the absurdity of Bloom's thoughts and his sense of puzzlement. Therefore, Bloom's shift towards myth in the latter part of Ithaca symbolizes a broader shift in his intellectual pursuit to discover a sense of belonging to a community or house. Ithaca parodies science to the point that the hero of *Ulysses* must turn away from science and back to myth because, through science, he could not find a way to salvation and protect his life from a sense of absurdity, as well as he did not feel his existence through science, so he desired to be like a myth to get rid of the absurdity of his life.

However, Bloom's pursuit of a house complicates the text, leading readers to ask about the type of house Bloom seeks. While Odysseus, whose pursuit in *The Odyssey* encompasses an obvious goal and meaning, which is to come back to Ithaca, expel his spouse's suitors, and reestablish himself as king, Bloom in the novel has no apparent goals, instead, Joyce fills the episode with Bloom's ideas and emotions as well as hides narration comments or explanation. Joyce's intention was not to establish a direct resemblance between *Ulysses* and Homer's epic but instead employed myth to give a cognitive framework to modern life within the novel (Shea, 2012). This literary connection leads readers to contemplate Bloom's life, focusing on the thoughts and behaviors of mythological figures. According to Thiher, "In *Ulysses*, Homer's narrative is transformed into an existential myth

that includes absurd situations in which characters behave” (Thiher, 2005, p. 176). The current situation appears to hover at the edge of absurdity, constructing a complicated web of details that exceeds the limits of understanding and leads one to think about the fundamental rationale behind such a complex manifestation. The interpretation of the epistemic quest as an existential or absurd myth provides insight into the function of myth in *Ithaca*. It serves as a conceptual instrument that allows Bloom, and consequently, the readers, to explore his life and define his spiritual aspirations. The narrator in *Ithaca* gives a concise overview of Bloom’s ethical principles, expressing his aspiration to solve societal issues caused by injustice, greed, and world hostility. However, several impediments stand in the way of his belief that people’s lives are endlessly perfectible:

The universal standards imposed by natural rather than human law, represented in the pains of birth and death, remain unavoidable aspects of the human experience. Certain extremely painful illnesses and their subsequent operations, innate madness, congenital criminal behavior, and the inevitable incidents at sea, in coal mines, and factories. Devastating epidemics that kill out whole communities and ruin the meaning of life for humans. The reality of vital expansion, accompanied by the contractions of metamorphosis from birth to death, is evidenced by earthquakes whose epicenters are in highly populated locations (Joyce, 1922, p. 690).

These impediments represent fundamental difficulties in the lives of humans: isolation, maturing, illness, dying, chaos, and daily routine. These difficulties can result in an absurd life since the recurrence of these difficulties can result in the loss of meaning in life. Accordingly, Bloom believes that human existence is inherently characterized by significant suffering. Consequently, Camus states, “The way to live in an absurd world is to make a choice. Your own choice. Everything around us is a decision and one step, a necessary experience; it should not become a dead end.” (Camus, 1979, p. 93). As a result, philosophers of existence brought attention to the ancient Greek concept that life is not about one’s destination, as it focuses on life’s experience, including its problems, obstacles, and how not to be affected by these hardships.

Latham’s perspective on *Ulysses* is a story about characters struggling to find meaning in their lives. Latham viewed that Joyce considers Dublin as a desolate and barren city (Latham, 2014) characterized by individuals who conform to social norms rather than following their innate desires. This depiction reflects a central theme in *Ulysses*, which explores the fundamental absurdity and loneliness of the human condition. In addition, Latham demonstrates that myth

plays a significant role in *Ulysses* by making deliberate and explicit apparent allusions to the hero's journey in the world or referring to the hero's mythological name and behavior. Therefore, *Ulysses* posits that Bloom can find meaning in his life and comprehend his existence through spiritual motivation. The utilization of myth enables him to explore the city he lives in and understand the life of the modern world.

Bloom embodies each individual of his time; he follows a monotonous routine that eventually leads him to have an absurd feel. Additionally, he suffers from emotional detachment from his wife; he fantasizes about possessing material things and personal achievements and seeks ways to achieve meaning in his life. In this novel, the utilization of science serves as a means of comprehending the physical world. In contrast, myth serves as a conceptual framework for the protagonist, Bloom, to examine and understand his life from a spiritual perspective. Bloom could give his life a more significant meaning by learning from the mythology of other cultures, namely their legendary journeys and heroic figures, and adopting the spiritual guidance inherent in those stories. Even though mythical counseling can be seen as superficial and simple, the practice allows Bloom to contemplate the feelings he lacks in his world in general. Despite Bloom's inability to gain a meaningful life, he desires to strive towards such a life, enabling him to change his circumstances and get closer to the mythical notion of an ideal life.

CHAPTER 3:

War, Nihilism, and the Absurd in Joseph Heller's *Catch-22*

Before delving into *Catch-22* and its incidents, mentioning the connection or relationship between *Ulysses* and *Catch-22* is noteworthy as absurdity is rooted in human life from the period of *Ulysses* until *Catch-22*. *Ulysses* and *Catch-22* differ in their examination of absurdity; despite originating from distinct times and places and belonging to diverse genres and styles, certain thematic and stylistic resemblances exist between these works. During a discourse on literary genres, *Ulysses* adheres to the narrative framework of Homer's *Odyssey*, whereas *Catch-22* is classified as a work of satire and black comedy, which serves as a critique of the irrationality and authoritarian rule associated with war and its absurdity. To start, we will highlight the most prominent aspect, which is the intricacy of the narration. The two works are renowned for their intricate narration frameworks. *Ulysses* is renowned for its utilization of the stream-of-consciousness approach (Latham, 2014), which allows readers to intimately perceive the beliefs and emotions of each individual in a deeply personal way. Similarly, *Catch-22* utilizes a narrative that is not linear structure, characterized by the frequent shifting among incidents and viewpoints. This technique may occasionally cause disorientation, mirroring combat's disordered and absurd essence (Pinsker, 2009). However, it is undeniable that the utilization of irony and satire in each work holds great importance in criticizing social conventions, systems, and human conduct. *Ulysses* employs satire to critique different facets of the Irish community, beliefs, and political thought, whereas *Catch-22* serves as a humorous examination of the bureaucracy, absurdity, and insane behavior inherent in war.

The two novels have a wide range of complex and sophisticated characters therefore it is important to understand their complexities. *Ulysses* thoroughly analyzes the complex psychological aspects of characters such as Bloom and Stephen. Similarly, *Catch-22* portrays a diverse array of characters, each exhibiting their individuality, imperfections, and challenges in response to the absurd nature of war. The language used to convey the characters strengthens their distinctiveness by adding a further dimension. Joyce and Heller utilized pioneering and innovative structural methods in their literary compositions. The unique writing style and linguistic strategies employed by Joyce in *Ulysses*, together with his integration of many genres and techniques, recall similarities to Heller's unique structure of narrative and utilization of irony, word manipulation, and black comedy in *Catch-22*. Briefly, while both of these works have distinct characteristics, they both tend to explore and expand the limits of literary

structure and themes. They delve into profound philosophical issues and employ inventive methods to examine the reader's understanding of the real world, society, and life.

The novel *Catch-22*, published in 1961, received many reviews, displaying significant differences in critical reaction. The responses varied from positive praise to disdainful rejection. In the opinion of Nelson Algren, *Catch-22* is not only the most remarkable American novel originating from World War II, but it also represents the most outstanding American novel to have emerged from any country in recent years. Several critics describe the novel as possessing substantial depth and artistic merit, presenting profound thought and exquisite prose (Algren, 1961).

Catch-22 exceeds its limits of being merely an antiwar novel. Heller's portrayal of the distressing absurdity experienced in military service during World War II can be understood, as evidenced by the recurring allusions throughout the novel to its broader consequences, as a mere depiction of the absurd condition of humanity. The novel *Catch-22* embodies a perspective on the universe that aligns closely with the philosophical viewpoints of Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus. The world lacks meaning, as it simply exists without an identifiable reason. On the other hand, human beings strive to define the meaning of their lives. The relationship between a human being and his universe is absurd. Human endeavors lack intrinsic worth and are eventually meaningless. Furthermore, human beings do not possess any inherent characteristics. Reason and language, the means humans employ to reveal the meaning of their existence and express their understanding of the world, are rendered ineffectual. When a man becomes aware of these truths regarding his place in the world, he undergoes a sensation of the absurd and meaningless, which Sartre calls *Nausea*. However, many contemporary literary works are essentially absurd or existentialist. The remarkable aspect of *Catch-22* is that Heller's utilization of experimental techniques is closely associated with existential and absurd incidents and ideas. These techniques serve as an endeavor to effectively dramatize his perspective on the human condition instead of only identifying it.

Heller's ability to portray the human situation dramatically distinguishes his work from merely descriptive philosophy. *Catch-22* exceeds the war novel category by depicting the absurdity of war and, to a broader extent, of life itself. *Catch-22* challenges traditional norms through its unconventional writing style, characterized by repetitive language, intricate chronological structure, and circular design. Many allusions are made to pivotal incidents, including the death of Snowden until Heller provides the reader with a complete story. This circular

design does not provide a rational explanation or conclusion. In most cases, the circumstances remain unchanged; nothing shifts, and nothing is resolved because there is no answer to man's challenges in this despairing world, which shows that existence is a meaningless cycle that repeats itself (Davis, 1978). Using these techniques and the structure led me to relate *Ulysses* with *Catch-22*, where Joyce used these techniques and Heller did the same, although there are several years between these two literary works; in addition, Joyce's work belongs to the modern period while Heller's work belongs to the postmodernism period, but what is fundamental is the absurdity of this life as it faces the modern human being, so what is important is to highlight this absurd life and find a way to escape from this absurdity, which will be illustrated in this chapter through the character of Orr. Heller's writings are saturated with the acerbic irony of human life. The comedic elements present on the first page shift into a state of horror and fear by the final chapter. According to Heller, his work represents Camus's large stone carried up a hill and Beckett's unknown Godot. *Catch-22* subverts readers' conventional expectation that a novel should adhere to a chronological narrative structure and that its conflicts should finally be overcome. Heller skillfully manipulates form, playing with chronology and time, and strongly challenges conventional norms, aligning with the prevailing intellectual trends of his time.

It is essential to mention that *Catch-22* belongs to the postmodern period. However, it can be considered an extension of the modernist period, where Heller deliberately adopts some of the characteristics of the earlier period. Heller resorted to using the concept of absurdity to portray misery, difficulties, and the struggle to find meaning in their lives and the right path to get rid of death or fears that he and other people experienced during the Second World War. During the period of modernism, humans experienced a sense of loss and uncertainty and were worried as a result of witnessing a financial crisis and world wars. Consequently, they abandoned their old values and lost faith in the political system and its authorities. Amidst significant change and chaos, Americans also expressed their disapproval of the notion that American systems and politicians became entirely trustworthy, dependable, and untainted by corruption and immorality.

The widespread pursuit of individuals in the 1950s due to their views caused several Americans to reevaluate their confidence in government and politicians. In particular, the Great Depression of 1929 resulted in individuals losing their wealth. People began increasingly questioning why politicians, although responsible for the country's destabilizing issues, were still retaining their positions in the state system. As the number of inquiries continued to rise, the

people of the United States started to inquire about the absurdities surrounding them at the time. The significant desire of those citizens and their counterparts in other European nations for an ideal world liberated from war, dishonesty, and insincerity, which were believed to be outcomes of modernist thoughts, thus motivated and encouraged the intellectuals and artists of the time to partially reject the modernist perspective and instead seek a more ethical life that prioritizes the person over the government. Therefore, the notion of postmodernism arose.

Despite arguments and debates around the meanings of modernism and postmodernism, Mary Klages provides a simple explanation of the worldviews associated with these concepts. She claims, “Modernity is fundamentally about order: about rationality and rationalization, creating order out of chaos” (Klages, 2017, p. 157). Regarding postmodernism, it does not condemn the concept of fragmentation or chaos but instead embraces it. Also, she asserts that postmodern ideas aim to dismantle established systems of authority and control. Due to people’s lack of faith in power, they strive to establish a more equitable system where sources of authority cannot manipulate people’s lives (Klages, 2017). The novel *Catch-22* is a distinctive satire that critiques postmodern American society, conveying messages of contradictory rebellion that are particular to the period in which it was released. The work employs satire to thoroughly critique WWII’s societal and political problems and their effects, absurdly presenting them. These themes primarily include the individual’s rage with authoritative and inhuman bureaucracies and the widespread antiwar sentiments that controlled postmodern America.

Gaining a concise comprehension of Heller’s biography could illustrate the purpose driving the writing of *Catch-22* and the cause of its creation. The story accurately portrays specific experiences witnessed by the author during his participation in World War II. However, in some instances, these occurrences are exaggerated to communicate life’s challenges effectively to the readers. When raised in the challenging neighborhood of Coney Island in New York, Heller stated, “I cannot imagine a better place for a child to grow up in” (Seed, 1989, p. 8). His father’s career was driving a delivery vehicle. Nevertheless, when Heller reached the age of five, he suffered the loss of his father. This event had a profoundly distressing impact on him, fundamentally changing his vision of life. Consequently, it greatly influenced his early writings, as he acknowledges, “I didn’t realize then how traumatized I was” (Seed, 1989, p. 7).

The inspiration for his composition of the antiwar and anti-military novels came from his involvement in World War II. Fortunately, there were few fights to

engage in as the conflict approached its end. Upon expressing his desire to serve in the troops, he was informed that his life probability would not exceed three days; because he was overwhelmed by the fear of death, he decided to serve in the 488th Squadron of the 340th Bombardment Group, located in Corsica, from May 1944 to mid-1945. Heller completed sixty combat missions as a bombardier, resulting in him being awarded the Air Medal and a promotion to lieutenant. Heller's military events are mirrored and overstated ironically in the novel. During the last months of the war, a significant portion of his service included engaging in baseball or basketball games with other pilots. Nevertheless, there was one instance where Heller did not have an easy time in Corsica. During his thirty-seventh mission, while hovering over Avignon, one of his squad members had a severe injury, causing him to consider the possibility of death once more. As Pinsker claims, in the novel, Heller repeatedly brings up the ghost of death and refers to Snowden's slow death in Yossarian's hands (Pinsker, 2009).

Like other authors who traveled to Europe and returned with narratives and sources of inspiration, Heller incorporated various influences in the novel. One can discover many postmodern techniques within the novel, mainly derived from French and German philosophers and authors. Simmons observes that several were looking for guidance from Europe, particularly France, where they encountered the existentialist works of Camus and Sartre and the Theatre of the Absurd (Simmons, 2014). A decade after it was first released in 1961, *Catch-22* exceeded its status as mere war fiction and instead provided a vivid portrayal of the absurdity and irrationality of human life. *Catch-22* was subsequently included in the dictionary due to its widespread usage in everyday speech. Additionally, upon reaching ten million sales on its twenty-fifth anniversary, it was officially defined as a legal, regulatory, or practical paradox that traps individuals within its provisions, regardless of their actions. The initial occurrence of the term *Catch-22* in the novel happens when Yossarian implores Doc Daneeka, a doctor inside the squadron and a comrade of Yossarian, to exempt him from duty, then Yossarian inquires regarding the health of his colleague, Orr:

Yossarian looked at him soberly and tried another approach. "Is Orr crazy?"

"He sure is," Doc Daneeka said.

"Can you ground him?"

"I sure can. But first he has to ask me to. That's part of the rule."

"Then why doesn't he ask you to?"

"Because he's crazy," Doc Daneeka said. "He has to be crazy to keep flying combat missions after all the close calls he's had. Sure, I can ground Orr. But first he has to ask me to."

“That’s all he has to do to be grounded?”

“That’s all. Let him ask me.”

“And then you can ground him?” Yossarian asked.

“No. Then I can’t ground him.”

“You mean there’s a catch?”

“Sure there’s a catch,” Doc Daneeka replied. “*Catch-22*. Anyone who wants to get out of combat duty isn’t really crazy.” (Heller, 1993, pp. 40-41).

The phrase’s source and concept, which Joseph Heller coined, remain unknown. The paradoxical condition is very perplexing; one might contemplate the potential use of this narrative in real-world military and ordinary life to clarify the absurd and puzzling nature of life, where certainty remains elusive.

The novel stands out due to Heller’s distinctive writing style, which incorporates absurdity, paradox, and humor. He regularly employs creative tools such as catchphrases, slogans, connections to incidents, and significant scenes. Heller repeatedly refers to these incidents to highlight the paradoxical character of Yossarian’s condition. The continuous repetition of his inability to be freed is a notable feature. So, “And what happens to the men after Dr. Stubbs does ground them?” (Heller, 1993, p. 166). Doc Daneeka responded mockingly, “They go right back on combat status” (p. 166). With each subsequent repetition, one gains a more profound understanding of the issue—its origin, repercussions, timing, etc. These recurring incidents act as reference points to assist readers in getting their orientation in a narrative frequently characterized by its extreme absurdity, circularity, and challenging narrative structure. These recurring incidents, integral to Heller’s narrative technique, also serve as reference points for readers throughout the novel. Heller’s utilization of allusive points enables him to expand the depth of his novel and concentrate on the development of characters. Examining each character from Yossarian’s viewpoint allows for observing Heller’s impact on the development of all individuals in the novel. This progress is eclipsed by Heller’s central theme, the certainty of death.

The novel’s title, *Catch 22*, developed into an expression that symbolizes a predicament or challenging situation that lacks any possible solution or escape. Heller reinforces the phrase by using repetition, establishing it as a symbol of Yossarian’s continuous inability to resolve his dilemma. Yossarian’s primary objective, which is to survive or make every effort to do so, is fundamentally rooted in his conviction, and then he thinks he will inevitably face failure. Therefore, the profound exhaustion caused by Heller’s purposeless universe weighs heavily on his characters, destroying their willpower and ultimately forcing them to face their mortality, the sole inevitability allowed by such a life.

According to David, Heller consistently refuses to accept or admit death (David, 1994). The ends of Heller's literary works strongly emphasize the certainty of death, which is portrayed as an adversary that must be confronted while being invincible. According to David, Heller's choice of themes has changed in each work. However, the novelist continually tackles the individual's effort to find meaning in a life that is gradually progressing toward the certainty of death. If considered in general, Heller's books contain a fifty-year endeavor to express a path or a method for individuals to live a meaningful and real life in a world of the absurd. To establish a convincing argument for his viewpoint, Heller presents many facts that reveal the deception of commonly accepted notions about the world. This pushes the reader to confront the concept of the absurd while the author's characters come to uncover the nature of human life (David, 1994). Heller's novels methodically explore the fundamental relativity of commonly accepted institutions such as the army, the American Dream, Western beliefs, Western thought, and historical facts to show the hidden truth underlying human suffering: the endless desire for power, status, and financial gain. Readers who engage in Heller's novels eventually begin to realize the illusion of human life and, like the protagonists, must figure out how to react to the irrational universe. Heller explores different ways that humans may choose to live when faced with the absurdity of the human situation, using Yossarian's behavior and speech as a means of examination. Yossarian, the central character in Heller's work, adopts an approach that closely aligns with the philosophies of Sartre and Camus.

In the novel, Yossarian expresses his rebellion against the concept of the absurd by behaving like the acts adopted by Camus's absurd man during an act of revolt. Instead of succumbing to the tempting attraction of joining the political class, Yossarian actively participates in a continuous battle against the oppressive facts imposed by the authorities and the army. Yossarian's persistent refusal and mindful discontent with the cruelty of self-interested authorities symbolize the genuine way of life that Camus advocates as highly honorable and fulfilling for the absurd human. Yossarian's rebellion is characterized by a complete lack of hope for the return of belief that would give meaning to his life. This rebellion also involves constant rejection and a conscious disappointment, which Camus views as essential aspects of the absurd revolt. Sense of being outraged and scared due to his inescapable situation, he experiences intense anxiety when confronted with the absurd, which highlights the importance of recognizing, accepting, and, lastly, rebelling against the nature of being human.

Heller's writings consistently explore the theme of absurdity, investigating modern individuals' existential difficulties from various aspects. This highlights

the widespread nature of the absurd and stands for embracing the actual manner of life promoted by Camus in his work, *The Myth of Sisyphus*. In the preface to *The Theater of the Absurd*, Martin Esslin highlights that when people first encounter the absurd, they often experience a “sense that the certitudes and unshakable basic assumptions of former ages have been swept away, that they have been tested and found wanting, that they have been discredited as cheap and somewhat childish illusions” (Esslin, 2001, p. 32). Joseph Heller employs *Catch-22* to challenge and dismantle the fundamental assumptions and principles that control human existence, intending to prepare his readers to contemplate the choices available to individuals living in an absurd world. In a concise sentence, Joseph Heller’s meticulous narrator establishes the work’s overall tone. Through the miserable humor and unexpected pessimism of Heller’s main character, the narrator exposes the deceptive reality of authority. By exposing the deceptive visions and ideas that may have led the reader to believe in their reliability unquestionably, the narrator enables the reader to see “Just one thing: that denseness and that strangeness of the world are the absurd” (Camus, 1979, p. 20).

An analysis of specific mythological patterns in *Catch-22* can facilitate comprehension of the predicament in the novel, for instance, replacing Yossarian for Sisyphus in Camus’ work *The Myth of Sisyphus*. In Greek mythology, Sisyphus is subjected to punishment for committing several sins. The first thing Sisyphus did was reveal secret details regarding Aegina’s kidnapping to individuals whom he should not know. Furthermore, based on Homer’s account, Sisyphus has restrained death with a chain. Finally, following Sisyphus’ death and his prolonged stay in the underworld, Pluto gives Sisyphus the power to return to life to reprimand his wife. Sisyphus is seduced by the attraction of the water, sun, and sea. He declines to go back to the underground world. Upon learning about Sisyphus’ abandonment, Mercury sets out to bring him back. As retribution, Sisyphus is compelled to thrust a massive stone to the top of an enormous mound. Once Sisyphus approaches that point, the heavy stone descends the hill again and returns to its first starting position. The endless and useless task will continue indefinitely. Sisyphus is compelled to exert effort to push the heavy stone upwards eternally, only to see its eventual return downward (Camus, 1979).

In the novel, Yossarian encounters a similar irrational and absurd circumstance. Yossarian and his crew are based on the island of Pianosa, located on the coast of Italy. Their duty during World War II was to perform bombing missions. On each occasion, when Yossarian approaches the number of flights needed to finish his duties, Colonel Cathcart increases the number of requests. Hence, Yossarian appears cornered, compelled by the Colonel to continue

bombing flights over opponent areas endlessly or till the end of the war. Colonel Cathcart utilizes a regulation known as *Catch-22* to maintain this absurd state of events: "There was only one catch and that was *Catch-22*, which specified that a concern for one's own safety in the face of dangers that were real and immediate was the process of a rational mind" (Heller, 1993, p. 41). Hence, if a fighter requests to be excluded from participating in a mission, it is evident that he is not mentally insane since he is aware of its possible dangers. Insane fighters can be restrained; they need to make a request. Nevertheless, they stop making inquiries due to their mental instability and lack of awareness of the risks associated with every task. This example is widely regarded as the most significant and commonly referenced, as it inspired Heller to title his novel.

What would be the answer if one inquired about the extent to which Yossarian resembles Sisyphus? The explanation is a partial no because Sisyphus accepts his absurd situation, while Yossarian actively seeks an escape from this situation. Nevertheless, they both live in absurd situations. Sisyphus is condemned to the eternal duty of pushing an immense stone uphill, only to witness it descend back down. Yossarian is required to complete many missions, many of which expose him to direct danger. Yossarian's destiny is at risk of death during any of his tasks. At the novel's beginning, Yossarian is seen pretending to be ill in a hospital, gloomily removing all the descriptive words from the letters of soldiers and signing instead of the censorship using the name of Washington Irving; as a variation, he writes it in a reversed manner. Although he appears mentally unstable in this situation, this insanity occurs in a distinct person when compared to the actions of the individuals surrounding him. His friend, Clevinger, shows an understanding that Yossarian is mentally unstable and admits this fact to him, where Yossarian answers:

"They're trying to kill me," Yossarian told him calmly.

"No one's trying to kill you," Clevinger cried.

"Then why are they shooting at me?" Yossarian asked.

"They're shooting at everyone," Clevinger answered. "They're trying to kill everyone" (Heller, 1993, p. 13).

Under such circumstances, reviewing conventionally accepted beliefs becomes an essential topic with possibly life-threatening implications. Yossarian, above all, may be satisfied to be a nameless person of everybody, doomed to die or not, as chance wills. Furthermore, Yossarian is prepared to be a victim and deal with any ordinary calamity except those that result from other circumstances or irrational commands of authority.

Confronted with the dangers threatening his survival, Yossarian has one main rule: to preserve his life. To achieve this goal, he pretends to be ill at a hospital, deliberately wrecks his aircraft, contaminates the squadron's meals with soap, changes a battle map, and even briefly engages in thoughts of killing his commander. In brief, he exemplifies the type of character called antihero that would have been designated for him. Many individuals who deserve this title can be described as nonheroes—powerless, ineffective individuals possessing limited abilities and little more than tormented awareness. On the other hand, Yossarian displays an intense and confrontational attitude toward heroism, which directly challenges the world's claimed principles and goals.

The novel exposes the evident and rational thinking of the young and ordinary characters, unaware of the danger they face and the profound sense of absurdity surrounding them. In this case, Heller alludes to ordinary people unaware of the dangers surrounding them. In the novel, the concept of the absurd is essential for its thematic aspects and technique. Camus provides a partial description of the absurd that applies to a specific aspect of the novel's theme. He describes it as the uncomfortable feeling that one feels when confronted with the inhumane nature of humanity, the overwhelming awareness of the reality of one's existence, and the profound disgust that a contemporary writer refers to as feeling uneasy. This description aligns with the concept of the absurd. (Camus, 1979).

To get a complete comprehension of the absurdity in the novel, one needs to have a glance at the theater of the absurd and its relation to the novel. *Catch-22* presents similarities with absurd theatre in terms of both issue and structure. The novel's connection to the technique of absurd drama is evident in Martin Esslin's explanation, where he explains that "The means by which the dramatists of the Absurd express their critique – largely instinctive and unintended – of our disintegrating society are based on suddenly confronting their audiences with a grotesquely heightened and distorted picture of a world that has gone mad" (Esslin, 2001, p. 410). Esslin argues that absurd theater is considered comedy theater, despite its serious, aggressive, and resentful topics, because the characters' intentions are often incomprehensible, and their behaviors are frequently unclear and enigmatic, making it difficult for the audience to connect with them. The absurd theater surpasses the classifications of tragedy and comedy by mixing laughter and terror. In addition, it is noteworthy to shed light on this mixture of laughter and fear because it is also considered a recurring theme in *Catch-22*, leading to its categorization not just as absurd literature but also as a part of the genre known as black humor in contemporary fiction. As Esslin points out, the absurd traditions not only work on a community scale, mocking society's

brutal follies, but also stand up to a deeper level of absurdity, the absurdity of the human situation itself, in a world where the loss of convictions in religion has stripped humanity of certitudes. When one can no longer embrace simple and comprehensive belief systems and divine objectives, he must confront life's extremely harsh truth (Esslin, 2001).

Yossarian has already confronted the harsh truth of his close death and the being of nothingness. However, at this moment, the reader is just conscious of the result and nothing else—a pilot on the verge of losing his sanity due to the fear of death. The occurrence that conveyed to him a sense of near death is the demise of Snowden, a gunner aboard Yossarian's aircraft. During most of the trip back, Yossarian made an effort to provide care to the gunner who was close to death. However, he discovered that the injury he was healing was not the injury that would cause the gunner's death. The gunner's deadly wound, which was death itself, could not be treated with first aid. The idea of death occurs more than one time during the novel, with each occurrence bearing a different interpretation but finally remaining constant. In this situation, Yossarian not only resides on the verge of nothingness like the others but also lives in continual awareness of it. This nothingness grew eloquent for Yossarian, as described by Camus in his work *The Myth of Sisyphus*:

“In certain situations, replying ‘nothing’ when asked what one is thinking about may be pretence in a man. Those who are loved are well aware of this. But if that reply is sincere, if it symbolizes that odd state of soul in which the void becomes eloquent, in which the chain of daily gestures is broken, in which the heart vainly seeks the link that will connect it again, then it is as it were the first sign of absurdity” (Camus, 1979, p. 19).

The absurd may appear unavoidable, characterized by a sense of hideousness in circumstances, irrationality, and insufficient survival options. Overall, it evokes a feeling of combined horror and unreality. In simple terms, these are all the required components for the literature of the absurd. The seemingly organized structure of reality is ripped away in absurd writing to show the chaos and irrationality behind it. The paradox is fundamental to the style of absurd literature. The idea of conventional reason is demonstrated as irrational since it assumes the existence as an organized and logical universe. Conventional sanity may be viewed as a form of madness. If sanity can be defined as the capacity to accept and understand reality, then it is illogical to behave as though the universe is logical and consistent. Remaining loyal to conventional establishments might betray one's values, as these establishments may threaten the individuals they claim to assist.

In the environment of *Catch-22*, the emptiness is not just an ongoing appearance but also creates an opportunity to enter the lives of soldiers who are treated as unknown and dispensable components in a war machinery that prioritizes the desires of specific individuals like Colonel Cathcart and General Peckem, to the extent that the actual goal of triumphing the war becomes almost secondary. Men are systematically eliminated in the novel, which is accurately described as chillingly appropriate. Dunbar, Clevinger, and Major Major all showed up to either die or vanish. The notions of being alive or dying, existence or nonexistence, are devoid of reason and subject to random choice (Loughridge, 1970). In facing absurdity and the harshness of the leadership of the squadron, the significant thing for the leaders is to be proud in front of the higher authority; on the other hand, they neglect their airmen and do not care for their lives, like what happened with the new Lieutenant Mudd. He was assigned to Yossarian's camp; afterward, he met his death before starting his tasks. However, his existence is still recognized in administrative documents to avoid any lapses in bookkeeping.

Subsequently, Doc Daneeka is officially declared dead while he consumes the remaining time in a state of hopelessness, attempting to prove the reality of his existence. The novel portrays the institution's faceless obscurity using the career of a small individual who first supports the system and considers the war a blessing event. However, he spends the remainder of his time attempting to gain recognition from the individuals who remain part of the system's structure. He ultimately misses his final connection to a world where he can survive once his wife changes her place without leaving any contact information, following the receipt of a generic letter of sympathy: "Dear Mrs., Mr., Miss, or Mr. and Mrs.: Words cannot express the deep personal grief I experienced when your husband, son, father or brother was killed, wounded or reported missing in action" (Heller, 1993, p. 270). The maximum uncaring and cruelty is embodied in the image of the soldier in white. He was entirely made of bandages, plaster, and a temperature gauge. The temperature gauge served as a decorative element, placed carefully in the empty cavity of the gauze covering his mouth, which was checked in the morning and night by two nurses, Cramer and Duckett. This routine continued until the end of the day. One day, Nurse Cramer, upon reading the temperature gauge, realized that the soldier had passed away. This scenario exemplifies how the military regards persons as exchangeable things.

The other patients express their displeasure towards the soldier in white, feeling that his existence is disturbing and disliking him for reminding them of a painful reality. He serves as both a reminder of the inevitability of death and a

continual reminder of each individual's position inside the system. The nurses possess two pots, one for administering fluids directly to the soldier and another for collecting the liquid. Upon completion of the procedure, the two pots are inverted. When Yossarian saw this procedure, he asked, "Why can't they hook the two jars up to each other and eliminate the middleman?... What the hell do they need him for?" (Heller, 1993, p. 162). At this moment, Dunbar becomes overwhelmed as the soldier in white reappears, causing him to lose control and go into a state of fury and madness. After many days of the demise of the Soldier in white, a new soldier with a similar appearance appeared as his replacement. It is widely believed that this new Soldier is the same individual. Consequently, Dunbar becomes overwhelmed and loses control when the Soldier in white reappears. Dunbar exclaimed severely, his voice resounding loudly over the noisy clamor, "It's the same one!" (Heller, 1993, p. 352). Subsequently, Yossarian walked towards the Soldier's bed, following Dunbar. Undoubtedly, it was the identical person. Despite the Soldier losing length and gaining weight, Yossarian immediately recognized him through his two fixed arms and two rigid, large, ineffective legs raised almost vertically in the air by tightly stretched ropes and heavy weights hanging from pulleys above him. Additionally, Yossarian identified him by the old black opening in the gauze covering his mouth. Consequently, perhaps due to Dunbar's understanding of a hidden aspect of the system or because he was considered challenging, he promptly disappeared. This occurrence is characterized by the novel's blend of humor and horror.

This is the essence of the *Catch-22* environment. By emphasizing the serious nature behind the humor, the novel's humor could be overlooked. Nevertheless, no one is willing to refute the presence of that humor because it sometimes has an exceptionally high standard. The primary risk lies in succumbing to the temptation of quickly disregarding the novel because it is a mixture of comical and absurd episodes authored by a writer who cannot sustain the comedic elements. The comedic is a crucial component in the novel because it is filled with numerous pieces of absurd writing. However, similar to absurd literature, it is intertwined with a combination of the frequently absurd and the perpetually desperate. The large amount of the novel's structure is characterized by its episodic nature, with a sequence of events that follow one another, occasionally disrupting each other, resembling a mixture series of short plays. These consecutive scenes may be connected because they occur sometimes within the scope of the protagonist, John Yossarian. Over time, though, they gradually expose a similar encompassing atmosphere of dread, worry, absurdity, and the existential suffering that Sartre refers to as the feeling of nausea towards

existence, all inside a setting similar to a refuge for the mentally ill who have committed crimes. As the presence of this environment becomes increasingly evident, the path of the novel's progress gets more distinct. The seemingly unrelated episodes in the novel have a significant impact on the intellectual development of the protagonist.

Yossarian becomes utterly conscious of himself by recognizing the danger he faces. This newfound awareness drives him to strive to separate himself from the situations around him to ensure his survival. The instant he started trying to separate himself when he experienced Snowden's demise. His initial response was to reject wearing his uniform, which represents his participation in a system that poses a danger to his life. The subsequent reaction is to take refuge in the hospital. From his point of view, demise is also present in hospitals, but at least some individuals could be asked for assistance, not due to their empathy, but because it is their duty within the system. Furthermore, dying in hospitals is clean (Way, 1968). Yossarian's high levels of self-awareness can be considered a threat to those who wholeheartedly follow the system, resulting in their disdain and terror of him. The perfect fighter is no longer a heroic figure like those of ancient times but rather a person who lacks awareness and, therefore, is regarded as not a complete human. This can be represented in Havermeyer's character, where Colonel Cathcart described him as "He's the best damned bombardier we've got" (Heller, 1993, p. 25). Throughout the novel, he shows a complete absence of consciousness of the imminent danger of death, only becoming conscious of it before the novel's end. Many casualties of the system are not just unawares, but the system also appears to be controlled by individuals who primarily behave with soldiers as objects used to achieve a win under the system's rules.

Aarfy is a character who is excessively loyal to commands. He represents a mischievous state, enjoys entering the cockpit of the aircraft, and playfully poking Yossarian while he furiously guides the pilot to avoid anti-aircraft fire. Yossarian yelled and burst into tears. He started hitting forceful punches at Aarfy's chest, using both fists to the maximum of his ability. Beating Aarfy seemed similar to thrusting his fists into a flaccid piece of blown rubber; simultaneously, there was a complete absence of resistance or any reaction. Yossarian was astonished by his overwhelming feeling of blissful satisfaction. Aarfy had an unsettling and terrible presence, resembling a character from a nightmare. He seemed invincible and impossible to avoid, causing Yossarian to fear him and unable to disentangle him. For one of these reasons, he is ready to provide false attestation opposing Yossarian when Colonel Cathcart requests that. Essentially, he not only shares Cathcart's devotion to achieving victory, but his

level of commitment becomes so absolute that it renders him devoid of human qualities (Pinsker, 2009). Yossarian's attempt to separate himself from his surroundings to ensure his survival largely shapes the overall structure of *Catch-22*. This leads him to an insight, whether persuasive or not, indicating that his detachment carries a broader significance. By separating himself from the systems that pose a threat of being victimized, he achieves complete moral involvement with others. By becoming Nately's object of prostitution, he confesses his sin—as Camus contends that everyone must; and rejects Korn and Cathcart's assured but unethical means of survival in favor of a more dangerous but ethically justifiable existence by his standards. As the old man states, he selects to exist on his legs rather than die or endure submissively.

The unexpected leaps in time and events were not weaknesses of the novel; instead, they were essential to its technique. These instances cannot be classified as true memories, as they neither belong to a character's personal recollection nor are they usually linked to the event they disrupt. One purpose of these sudden shifts in time, similar to Heller's utilization of paradox, is to remove the characters from the conventional, time-bound framework of the novel. Events do not mainly happen by cause-and-effect or chronological relations, but they occur at one time. That is not regarded as escaping time in the narrative; on the contrary, it has shifted to being more personal and meaning more significant. Due to the proximity of the characters in the novel to their dying, time is rapidly passing for them. The concept of time is intricately connected to the idea of a regulated and organized eternal time. Yossarian, on the other hand, does not believe in the existence of God or an afterlife. He views life as a finite period that ends with his demise, and he feels that each thing in the world is working against him, making his life even shorter.

Heller presents Orr to readers for the first time as Yossarian's colleague who performs various practical tasks. They inhabit the most opulent camp in the unit. After each of Yossarian's hospitalizations or breaks in Rome, he was astonished to find that "Orr had installed in his absence - running water, wood-burning fireplace, cement floor" (Heller, 1993, p.13). Literature critics have rarely delved into the life of Orr. Although the realm of *Catch-22* is full of absurdities, Orr is described as "who was a grinning pygmy with pilot's wings and thick, wavy brown hair parted in the middle" (Heller, 1993, p. 14), who stands out as the first person who managed to escape and gain victory against it. Viewing Orr as a prominent character will allow readers to perceive him as a symbol of victory. The subsequent paragraphs will shed light on two pivotal incidents concerning Orr, the latter being his chaotic meeting with a whore and the initial involving his

ingenious run away to Sweden. At first look, they might appear traditional, much like other absurd incidents in the novel. However, their foresight becomes apparent when they reappear in the last parts of the novel, which brings about a moment of sudden realization. Considering Heller's meticulous preparation for *Catch-22*, it is essential to acknowledge Orr's character's significance in the work's final chapters (Potts, 1989). Despite our previous belief that Orr died upon his crashing into the sea, it has come to light that Heller was concealing him for the last act.

The primary focus of critical analysis has been on the significance of Orr's survival for Chaplain Tappman, Yossarian, and Danby; however, the reader may miss or observe the importance of Orr and his conduct. Tappman considers this escape from death a miraculous event and declares his return to faith in God. Yossarian's belief in the capacity of humans and optimism come back when he realizes that Orr had carefully planned this trip towards freedom and peace. Orr turns the provided rules into a game. He boldly defies and mocks the Absurd, like he was carefully preparing his escape prior to the commencement of the novel. "Now, with the news of Orr's intricately thought-out desertion, Orr becomes holy fool, a hero for those—like Yossarian and Danby and Chaplain Tappman—vying with an oppressive alliance of forces beyond their control" (Potts, 1989, pp. 109-110). Orr's act of taking a bold move without determining what will occur serves as the driving force for his mates to take the same action. Orr's deed of rebellion, directed towards the structure of government, the military, and all that Colonel Cathcart and his subordinates represent, greatly motivates Yossarian to leap into action. "Let the bastards thrive, for all I care, since I can't do a thing to stop them but embarrass them by running away. I've got responsibilities of my own now, ... I've got to get to Sweden" (Heller, 1993, p.436). Orr refrained from revealing any information to Yossarian due to Orr's continuously filling his mouth with chestnuts; yet, Orr demonstrated to Yossarian the potential results that may be achieved if one has the bravery to take action. Orr's escape serves as Yossarian's unspoken invitation and motivation, where a concealed reality is visible only to those who remain sufficiently aware. Tappman thinks that if Orr managed to paddle to Sweden, indeed, there would be an ability to overcome Colonels Cathcart and Korn if there is real persistence. In the novel's closing pages, Danby provides Yossarian with a small amount of money to help him escape to Sweden. At the same time, Tappman decides to confront the group of colonels and commanders who mistreat him.

Orr embodied a warrior specifically designed to confront and overcome the absurd. Above all, he comprehends the pointless nature of battling against the

absurd universe in which he exists; the one solution is just to flee. Dunbar endeavors to combat the absurdity by altering time, and then he subsequently vanishes from existence following a psychological collapse during his stay in the hospital. In addition, the character of the Old man who possesses and resides in the brothel in Rome endeavors to defy the absurdity of the war; nevertheless, he meets his demise through an attack on his whorehouse. None of them were aware of the impossible nature of their duties and couldn't remain in the universe of *Catch-22*. According to Davis, he explains that one's capacity to control debate does not reduce susceptibility to the dilemma of *Catch-22* situations and death. Similar to Orr and Yossarian, there is just a solution represented by escaping (Davis, 1978). All remaining characters escape due to either dread or necessity. In certain instances, like the example of Doc Dankeena, men are compelled to leave due to the *Catch-22* systemic issues and the absurdity of war. Only Orr and then Yossarian understand that they have no other option but to escape and reject the current circumstances, the community, and the conditions (Davis, 1978). Regardless of Heller's intentions, it is perfectly appropriate for Orr to be an aviator because his trip to escape necessitates an expert mechanical trip, irrespective of its symbolic or philosophical meanings.

Orr evades the risks caused by Yossarian's revolt and the uselessness of Tappman's debates with Colonel Cathcart. Orr embodies the characteristics of intellect and resilience that enable humans to endure and survive even under the most oppressive and exploitative circumstances. In the narrative's chaotic environment, Orr silently develops the abilities that may secure his survival. He independently learns the abilities of fishing, liferaft paddling, and navigation utilizing just stars, a compass, and a map to travel to Sweden. However, as a pilot, Orr cannot be considered perfect because his record is highly dreadful, with eighteen crashes posing a significant risk to his life and crew. Yossarian believes that since their existences have already been at risk, it is notable that nobody among Orr's teammates suffered any injuries during his accidents. Consequently, these training flights are essentially less dangerous than actual combat, a truth Yossarian fails to acknowledge until the novel's last part. Sergeant Knight provides Yossarian with an in-depth description of Orr's preparation following an earlier emergency landing in the ocean. Then he grabs a package of chocolate and shares it with the men aboard the boat. Subsequently, he gets pieces of bouillon and mugs for making soup. Orr obtains tea and prepares a cup for each individual to drink. Orr creates a handmade fishing rod by utilizing a line for fishing and dry food. Before approaching the novel's end, Yossarian realizes that he needs to flee. Yossarian orders Danby about fetching him "apples, and chestnuts" (Heller, 1993,

p. 433). This request symbolizes the lesson that Orr attempted to convey to Yossarian throughout his stories since it is already not too late for Yossarian to understand and act upon this message.

Orr's name conveys a sense of distinctiveness, implying that he is the exemption, the individual who perceives and acts in a manner that differs from others. He represents an intermediate position. Orr challenges the reasoning behind using the pronouns presented in the novel, characterized by using the pronoun (we) as significant individuals; that was the thinking Colonel Cathcart and his colleagues adopted in the system, while the soldiers are considered others. Orr's name is similar to his metaphorical parallel, Or, which does not adhere to reasoning. Orr challenges his unique and odd nature through his crazy behavior. Orr's uniqueness remains intact during *Catch-22*, even though he is not of significant importance to others. Orr's principal means of fleeing is the oar, which he would utilize to navigate his boat to Sweden; it serves as a punning to his name. Examining Orr's confrontation concerning the prostitute serves as an excellent entry point to gain a deeper understanding of Orr's absurd reasoning. In a house of prostitution, Nately's prostitute's younger sister was aggressively hitting Orr on his head using her heel. A group of people assembled to observe the source of the chaos and were positioned at the entrance of each of the several rooms:

The girl shrieked and Orr giggled. Each time she landed with the heel of her shoe, Orr giggled louder, infuriating her ... She shrieked and Orr giggled right up to the time she shrieked and knocked him cold with a good solid crack on the temple that made him stop giggling and sent him off to the hospital in a stretcher with a hole in his head that wasn't very deep and a very mild concussion that kept him out of combat only twelve days. (Heller, 1993, p. 21)

The situation mentioned above perplexes Yossarian consistently throughout the novel. Yossarian often demands clarification from Orr. Orr does not depend on spoken communication; he shows laughter or fills his mouth with crab apples. This represents the continual conversation that Heller and others of his time sought to shift from modernism to post-modernism. Nevertheless, Orr continually fails to express his thoughts and instead responds with laughter or diverts the topic by redirecting inquiries toward Yossarian. In this situation, Orr does not provide any justification for the prostitute's action of striking him using her shoe. Language fails to convey the situation properly concerning this futile endeavor to overcome the absurd. Orr gave money to the prostitute to strike him in a meaningless way (Loughridge, 1970). No one of the individuals who witnessed the chaos, including the whorehouse owner, the old woman who caretakers of the

prostitutes, and the soldiers who existed throughout the incident, was able to explain what occurred about the hitting issue. Orr maintains this confidential information until Yossarian comprehends the connections in the final scenes of the narrative. At this point, Yossarian can comprehend the message that Orr is attempting to convey. Yossarian gets the reason behind the girl striking Orr on his head by using her heel. Orr paid her for the service. However, she did not strike him sufficiently, prompting him to take the boat towards Sweden (Heller, 1993). In his endeavor to win against absurdity, Orr had to pay a prostitute to hurt him forcefully on his head using a shoe, causing him to lose consciousness and fall. If he had possessed a more powerful prostitute, he could have avoided the need to create his last plans and his ultimate victory.

This scene makes one recall the scene of the brothel in *Ulysses*, where both scenes are set in the same place. In *Ulysses*, Stephen is dancing in the prostitute's house, where he calls his dance the dancing of death, which causes him to faint. Stephen's presence in the brothel house serves as a means to detach himself from his miserable and absurd life. In *Catch-22*, Orr uses a different way to escape from absurdity; instead of dancing, he pays money to the prostitute to hit him forcefully, but he cannot escape because he faints like Stephen. Then he realizes he needs a more helpful plan to flee. Many soldiers possess a clear understanding of the existence of countries that are neutral in the ongoing battle. "Sergeant Knight knew all about Majorca, and so did Orr, because Yossarian had told them often of such sanctuaries as Spain, Switzerland, and Sweden where American fliers could be interned for the duration of the war under conditions of utmost ease and luxury merely by flying there" (Heller, 1993, p. 298). Numerous characters in the novel contemplate the thought of seeking refuge in a neutral area. Nevertheless, it is just Orr who makes a decision based on such an irrational desire, and similar to Heller, Orr meticulously strategizes well ahead of time. Yossarian describes Orr as possessing full awareness and understanding of his actions at every stage of the process; he even rehearsed experiencing abandonment from crashing aircraft. He practiced for it on each flight he flew. Orr's flee was highly hazardous, exceeding the capabilities of anybody to repeat it.

Orr engages in the hazardous act of intentionally crashing an airplane into the sea. Before his escape endeavor, Orr successfully landed his broken aircraft in the water, displaying such exceptional proficiency that none of the six crew members sustained any injuries. Sergeant Knight, a member of the crew, describes Orr's behavior during the boarding of the rescue rafts: Orr repeatedly struck his hands against his legs, resembling someone experiencing tremors, while uttering the

phrase “All right now, all right,” and giggling like a crazy little freak ... It was like watching some kind of a moron” (Heller, 1993, p. 297). As his name suggests, Orr gets a small blue oar and starts paddling a lifeboat raft with it. Upon completing this task, Orr returns to his tent and meets Yossarian. Yossarian pointed out that Orr had fallen on nearly all his eighteen flights and said, “You’re either ditching or crashlanding every time you go up” (Heller, 1993, p. 301). At this point, Orr provides his most significant hint on how to escape. Orr immediately requests Yossarian to commence flying beside him on duty. Yossarian, being rational, cannot understand why any fighter willingly chooses to fly with an inexperienced pilot who repeatedly succumbs to being shot down or cancels duties. Yossarian, in reality, feels sympathy for Orr. He senses that Orr requires protection in the harsh universe where they exist. Heller presents Yossarian’s internal thoughts during his last encounter with Orr through a soliloquy, that appears in retrospect as entirely unjustified and highly harsh to Orr: “Orr was so small and ugly. Who would protect him if he lived? Who would protect a warm-hearted, simple-minded... They would take his money, screw his wife and show no kindness to his children” (Heller, 1993, p. 302).

Orr, who is repairing the tube for the heater in the camp, inquires once more if Yossarian is interested in accompanying him on his flight. Yossarian, frustrated by Orr’s continuous tinkering and repetitive execution of useless duties, disregards him as merely another dying individual. However, Orr distinguishes himself from the rest of the soldiers in the 256th squadron. Orr possesses such a distinct personality that it is impossible to envision somebody slightly similar to him. Does Heller imply that although victory upon the absurd is achievable in literature, it is unattainable in reality? Actually, Orr may be described as a caricature of an individual, lacking the qualities of a commendable soldier. However, he departs and utters the following words to Yossarian: “Yes, sir - if you had any brains, you know what you’d do?... tell them you want to fly all your missions with me” (Heller, 1993, p. 305). Yossarian attentively leaned in and focused on Orr’s enigmatic facial features, which displayed a complex mix of thoughts and feelings while contemplating the significance of these words.

Orr’s ultimate victory against the novel’s absurd elements is a monumental accomplishment of unwavering determination. While the majority of characters endured the restrictions imposed on a soldier’s life, Orr defied tradition by completely disregarding the established rules by rewriting rules. Potts argues that in order to overcome the profound sense of despair experienced by Yossarian and his mate survivors, it requires a paradoxical combination of intellectual irrationality, heroic cowardliness, and bravery of foolishness (Potts, 1989). Orr

reinstates Yossarian's belief, motivating him to execute a daring action and attempt to escape to Sweden. Undoubtedly, that will be dangerous, but Yossarian confronts exactly similar dangers. There is a risk of arrest and death if he flees to Sweden, as well as if he remains on the field of battle. From Yossarian's viewpoint, the final results are unimportant because what matters is to keep trying. The choices that Yossarian must make between—the continuing battle in Italy or his idealized paradise in Sweden, where this does not represent the final goal. Yossarian, influenced by Orr, holds the ability to exercise his own volition and select not to engage in combat with the intention of striking an essential blow represented in escaping; on the other hand, he engages in combat solely for the purpose of engaging in combat to avoid revealing his plan. The selection is made for the sake of choosing itself (Pinsker, 2009). Yossarian's freedom of choice is limited only by his regard for living, both his life and others, and his desire to escape the illogical and destructive world determined by *Catch-22*. While Yossarian views Snowden's entrails as coming out of his body over the ground, Yossarian comprehends that the absence of free will reduces humanity to a state of nothingness or as putrefying trash. The optimism that Orr gives to Yossarian and Tappman in the last pages of the novel will not provide them with a benefit in the struggle versus absurdity in their war over worldly chaos. This will alone provide them with the opportunity to take revenge. Tappman's belief in God is restored, while Yossarian's belief in humanity is also restored. The act of Orr's victory served as the burst of faith and hope that powers the conclusion of *Catch-22*.

Liberty is an additional significant element in *Catch-22*. Yossarian's desire for complete liberty often paradoxically results in him becoming enslaved to that exact liberty; as Daniel accurately described, one day, an individual is going to grow elderly, he is going to have obtained his little practices, and he would be forced to obey his liberation as a slave to it (Daniel, 2013). The presence of characters who do not value freedom, such as Dunbar, could be considered contradictory for Yossarian. Dunbar abandoned all aspects that distinguish him from others, whereas Yossarian appears insane compared to him due to his abandonment of liberty. One might perceive this as a form of liberation, a type of freedom that prevents one from futilely pursuing the unachievable, thereby maintaining one's sanity and resilience. Yossarian, however, desires complete liberty. After Nurse Duckett informs him that his leg, as everything else, is the property of the government due to their investment in him, Yossarian responds, "It certainly is not your leg!" (Heller, 1993, p. 281). The nurse replied sharply, "That leg belongs to the U. S. government. It is no different than a gear or a

bedpan. The Army has invested a lot of money to make you an airplane pilot, and you've no right to disobey the doctor's orders" (Heller, 1993, p. 281). Yossarian strongly rejects it, asserting, "It's my self" (p. 281). Heller is not condemning war itself but instead criticizes the absurd and purposeless behaviors arising from military and authority. Concerning one more character, McWatt, Heller points out in *Catch-22* that McWatt had been the most mentally unstable soldier, as he remained wholly rational and unaffected by the war. During a conversation with Yossarian concerning combat and mortality, McWatt expresses his belief that he lacks the intellectual capacity to fully comprehend these matters, stating, "I guess I just don't have brains enough" (Heller, 1993, p. 322), then he giggled with a sense of shyness.

Yossarian is driven to madness by another limitation on his liberty, namely the continuous increase in the total number of flights imposed by Colonel Cathcart to complete the task and return home. Yossarian's madness directly impacts the other crew members, particularly those who have already completed all required flights and are now compelled to fly ten more (Loughridge, 1970). The colonel seeks to increase flight missions to attract attention from the commanders and obtain a promotion. On the other hand, Yossarian engages in the peculiar behavior of walking in without clothing, and he also increases his time spent in the hospital, consistently expressing concern about the condition of his liver. Several individuals look up to Yossarian as an example of inspiration, as the recognizable phrase that Heller wrote: "Insanity is contagious" (Heller, 1993, p. 10). The soldiers admired Yossarian for his courageousness in confronting the system. Heller asserts that the decline in morale was directly attributable to Yossarian. The government was in danger; he was risking his long-established privileges of liberty and independence by boldly exercising these. Yossarian has the unique ability to see beyond the perspective of blind nationalism and nationalistic discourse. "Am I supposed to get shot off just because the colonel wants to be a general?" (Heller, 1993, p. 117). Yossarian's sanity is compromised by his deep dread of mortality and losing his liberty.

Overall, it may be concluded that several absurd circumstances arise from the bureaucratic systems that humans have created to take control. The human quest for meaning in an uncontrollable world has driven individuals to establish order to enhance their existence. However, it appears that whatever he attempted to establish to have a purposeful existence ultimately turns into absurd situations. People are compelled to adopt a meaningless and absurdist viewpoint as a result of being subjected to the irrational and insoluble paradoxes of the government's decision organizations or bureaucracy. People respond in various ways when

faced with the absurdities of the systems they have created to establish structure and meaning (Harris, 1971). Many of them, like Sisyphus, accept their situations while knowing how absurd they are. Others, however, take significant shifts to escape the absurdity and meaninglessness of their situation, and they find new purpose in the short time they have left. Yossarian is a person who confronts immense, absurd, and meaningless corruption within the government. He explores every conceivable path to escape the restrictions imposed by the *Catch-22* rule, which benefits only its creators and provides no purpose for anybody else. Yossarian identifies three corrupt organizations that cause the squadron members to embrace various existentialist and absurd perspectives. The organizations in question encompass the military bureaucracy, the bureaucratic structure within enterprises, and the political organizations equipped with the power to select individuals for higher positions. Confronted by such establishments' absurdities, several individuals obey, like Sisyphus, while others are pushed into a state of nothingness.

When confronted with the immensity of the absurd finding, each person must choose to rebel against the callous and harsh universe or come back into an unreal acceptance of the cruelly arbitrary circumstances of human misery. Realizing the inherent meaninglessness of existence, the reader is outraged that the pain he or she is experiencing is the product of the selfish behaviors of others (Seed, 1989). By allowing the audience to create links between past times and the community they live in, the narrator allows readers to recognize that numerous assumptions regarding the ordered nature of the universe are merely suitable covers for the self-serving motives of those in positions of authority. Heller incites the reader's rage by exposing the overwhelming spread of avarice and apathy in the universe after having previously prompted them to contemplate the frightening absurdity intrinsic to the human situation.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this book suggest that *Ulysses* and *Catch-22* depict characters who experience existential pain and confront the absurdity of the universe. Both novels contain similarities regarding the depiction of the protagonists' misery and hopelessness in life as a whole and in their portrayal of humans who lived during the post-war period. Each character endeavors to deal with the absurdity of the universe. The novels exhibit variations in the protagonists' strategies for dealing with challenges. While specific individuals may completely embrace life as it is and agree with it, the central characters tend to be more oriented toward investigating and confronting it. *Ulysses* exemplifies absurdity by challenging conventional ideas about meaning. Joyce skillfully controls linguistic components, utilizing techniques such as wordplay, puns, and neologisms to highlight language's ambiguity and arbitrary characteristics. In this literary technique, Joyce raises questions about the reliability of meaning and challenges the reader to navigate a world where language frequently fails to convey the various aspects of human existence.

The plot of *Ulysses* is enriched by the style in which Joyce tells the story. Through the use of creative storytelling tactics, the work successfully develops a deep connection between the readers and the inner thoughts of Stephen and Mr. Bloom as they continue their everyday routines. This connection is formed by their responses to different individuals and places, recollections of both positive and negative memories, and contemplation of their concerns about the ambiguous ways they will face in the future. Through a study of the significance and historical context of Stephen's name, readers can gain a deeper comprehension of one of the main ideas in *Ulysses*, including the personal implications for Stephen himself. The name Stephen is due to its somewhat standard nature, emphasizing the contrast between his ordinary name and his extraordinary desires. On the other hand, Bloom embodies each individual of his time; he follows a monotonous routine that eventually leads him to have an absurd feel. Additionally, he suffers from emotional detachment from his wife; he fantasizes about possessing material things and personal achievements and seeks ways to achieve meaning in his life.

Catch-22 is not just the most remarkable American novel to come out of World War II, but it also stands as the most exceptional American novel to have been published in recent years. Many critics appreciate the novel for its substantial depth and artistic value since it offers significant ideas with expertly constructed language. *Catch-22* transcends its boundaries as a mere antiwar novel. Heller's description of the absurdity encountered in military service during World War II

can be interpreted, as evidenced by numerous allusions throughout the novel to its wider implications, as a simple portrayal of the absurd state of humanity. The novel *Catch-22* is a unique form of satire that critically analyzes postmodern American society. The work utilizes satire to critically examine World War II's sociological and political issues and their consequences, portraying them exaggeratedly and absurdly. The main themes revolve around the individual's frustration with the authoritarian and inhuman bureaucracy, as well as the widespread antiwar feelings that dominated postmodern America.

In *Catch-22* Heller utilizes a narrative that is not linear structure, characterized by the frequent shifting among incidents and viewpoints. This technique may occasionally cause disorientation, effectively mirroring combat's disordered and absurd essence. However, it is undeniable that the utilization of irony and satire in each work holds great importance in criticizing social conventions, systems, and human conduct. In *Ulysses*, Joyce employs satire to critique different facets of the Irish community, beliefs, and political thought, whereas *Catch-22* serves as a humorous examination of the bureaucracy, absurdity, and insane behavior inherent in war. In *Catch-22*, Heller presents Orr's character as embodying a warrior specifically designed to confront and overcome the absurd. Above all, he comprehends the pointless nature of battling against the absurd universe in which he exists; the one solution is just to flee. Orr's ultimate victory against the novel's absurd elements is a monumental accomplishment of unwavering determination. While the majority of characters endured the restrictions imposed on a soldier's life, Orr defied tradition by completely disregarding the established rules. Overall, it is noteworthy to show concise comparative findings for both novels. In *Ulysses*, Joyce depicts different absurd situations and delves into the intricacies of human thinking, while Heller's *Catch-22* portrays a diverse array of characters, each exhibiting their individuality, imperfections, and challenges in response to the absurd nature of war.

Through the study of *Ulysses*, readers can strive to realize the intricate and multifaceted nature of absurdity, as well as its deep influence on shaping one's perspective and perception of life. On the other hand, *Catch-22* shows how the characters face the absurdity and the situation they have experienced, how they will act, behave, and choose their way to escape from the absurdity and how freedom is essential for a human. Absurdity is rooted in human life from the period of *Ulysses* until *Catch-22*. *Ulysses* and *Catch-22* differ in their examination of absurdity; despite originating from distinct times and places and belonging to diverse genres and styles, certain thematic and stylistic resemblances exist between these works. *Ulysses* adheres to the narrative

framework of Homer's *Odyssey* in addition to the narrative techniques that Joyce used to highlight the absurdity in the modern period, which was characterized by challenging traditional values, beliefs, absurd existence, and questioning the meaning and purpose of human life. *Catch-22* is classified as a work of satire, which serves as a critique of the irrationality and authoritarian rule associated with war and its absurdity, alongside the techniques used by Heller to show the features of the absurdity in postmodernism, represented in the idea of life, which always doesn't make a sense and irrational existence, and the conditions of life are not changed and repeat itself as happened with Yossarian.

Concerning the findings that related to characters in *Ulysses*, Bloom embodies each individual of his time; he follows a monotonous routine that eventually leads him to have an absurd feeling. Additionally, he suffers from emotional detachment from his wife; he fantasizes about possessing material things and personal achievements and seeks ways to achieve meaning in his life. There is no obvious way that he could find meaning through it or escape from the absurdity he faces. Bloom could give his life a more significant meaning by learning from the mythology of other cultures, namely their legendary journeys and heroic figures, and adopting the spiritual guidance inherent in those stories. This practice allows Bloom to contemplate the feelings he lacks in his world. Despite Bloom's inability to gain a meaningful life, he desires to strive towards such a life, enabling him to change his circumstances and get closer to the mythical notion of an ideal life. Another significant character represented by Stephen. He engaged in fantastical and hallucinatory thoughts as a way to detach himself from the harsh reality of life and to enable him to find a purpose in his life.

On the other hand, the characters in *Catch-22* faced absurdity in the squadron, and some of them accepted and embraced it, like Aarfy, who was excessively loyal to commands. While other characters rebel against the absurdity, like Orr, who had carefully planned this trip toward freedom and peace. Orr turns the provided rules into a game. He boldly defies and mocks the Absurd, like he was carefully preparing his escape prior to the commencement of the novel. Orr's act of taking a bold move without determining what will occur serves as the driving force for his mates to take the same action. Orr's deed of rebellion, directed towards the structure of government, the military, and all that Colonel Cathcart and his subordinates represent, greatly motivates Yossarian to leap into action. Overall, it may be concluded that many of these characters, like Sisyphus, accept their situations while knowing how absurd they are. Others, however, take significant shifts to escape the absurdity and meaninglessness of their situation, and they find new purpose in the short time they have left.

People respond in various ways when faced with the absurdities of the systems they have created to establish structure and meaning. Many of them, like Sisyphus, accept their situations while knowing how absurd they are. Others, however, take significant shifts to escape the absurdity and meaninglessness of their situation, and they find new purpose in the short time they have left. Like Yossarian's character, who is a person who confronts immense, absurd, and meaningless corruption within the government. He explores every conceivable path to escape the restrictions imposed by the *Catch-22* rule, which benefits only its creators and provides no purpose for anybody else.

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