



RESEARCH PAPER

Metaphysics of Epistemological Structures of Societal Exclusion: A Foucauldian Analysis of Camus' *The Stranger* and *Caligula*

Imran Aslam^{1*} Syeda Hajra Batool² Imrana Zulfiqar³

1. Lecturer, Department of English, University of Gujrat, Punjab, Pakistan
2. Lecturer, Govt. English, Associate College for Women, Bajrah Garhi Sialkot, Punjab, Pakistan
3. Lecturer, Department of English, Superior Group of Colleges Gujranwala, Punjab, Pakistan

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PAPER INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: October 13, 2021	The paper studies the affinities between Foucault's <i>others</i> and Camus' absurd heroes i.e. Meursault and Caligula. The paper traces, through a thorough analysis of Camus' <i>The Stranger</i> and <i>Caligula</i> , the development of Meursault and Caligula from being members of society to their downfall as outcasts. Society is threatened by individuals who deviate from social norms and follow their own subjective passions. Such individuals, since they defy the episteme of society, must be contained and made an example of so that other members of society do not follow suit. The discourses, produced by the dominant episteme of the time, create zones of exclusion where, madmen, criminals, lepers and idlers are kept. The process of ostracism entails a series of events starting from, formation of objects, authorities of delimitation, grids of specification and the zones of exclusions. The paper discusses in detail the processes responsible for the exclusion of Camus' absurd heroes from the social sphere. The paper concludes that Foucauldian Renaissance like situation still persists in modern day societies where different episteme and discourses create zones of social exclusion. The connection between Renaissance, Foucault's and Camus' and the present day society, be it eastern or western, is implied in the paper.
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*Corresponding Author expandable@gmail. com	

Introduction

Aristotle (1981, p.59) who solved Zeno's puzzling paradoxes, himself left a paradoxical dictum which, since its inception, has shaped almost all our social discourse. That man is a political (social) animal, a deceptively simple truth, has so seeped into our "common-sense assumptions" that it has become an ideology (Fairclough, 2013, p.2). Society, following its own better judgement, ignores the 'animal' and nourishes the social side of man. Man being a social creature is a given and this taken for granted truth is undisputed. Whenever the animal begins to lurk around the corner, the tamed wolves in sheep's clothing are threatened. Those who,

after Aristotle's wise pronouncement, partake of society, maroon their animalistic impulses, forego their freedom and wear the communal mask so efficiently that the mere sight of another animal, who reminds them of their own truth, sends their world into chaos where civilisation itself is endangered. Such animals must be either tamed or incarcerated for society to keep functioning.

Foucault, the French sophist, calls them *others*. They are the outcasts of society who, because they are different, pose a challenge to the discourse of the society. Every society is driven by a particular discourse which dominates other discourses. Society outcasts the *others* because of their non-conformism to the prevalent discourse. The exclusion from societal sphere, too, is advanced as one of those 'common-sense assumptions' that it acquires the status of a sacred ritual. The branding of others and the consequent exclusion from society is the handiwork of a whole network of systems driven by epistemological structures embedded in societal psyche. In order to understand the systems of exclusion, it is important to understand "unconscious operation of historically specific epistemological structures which, by imposing its design onto discourses of particular era, shape the experiences of people" (Garland, 2014, p.370). In Foucauldian perspective these epistemological structures are known as episteme. For him, "episteme may be suspected of being something like a world-view, a slice of history common to all branches of knowledge, which imposes on each one the same norms and postulates, a general stage of reason, a certain structure of thought that the men of a particular period cannot escape - a great body of legislation written once and for all by some anonymous hand" (Foucault, 1972, p.191). To put it Biblically, episteme is a worldly version of Ten Commandments in one. They are the codes upon which any society is built. Violation of any code is a violation of all the others. You either follow ten or none. The whole of society follows the blue print of tower of Babylon whose tiers are built upon multiple sets of codes and ideas collectively known as episteme. The challenge to the foundation (episteme), from where the tower (society) draws its power, is an act threatening to bring the whole tower down. The collapse must be avoided. The enemy of the tower must be punished.

Going by the analogy, episteme forks into discourses which further bifurcate like a rhizome. All the rhizomes are connected, they multiply and generate new discourses. This complex functioning of episteme in fabricating social network develops the dialogical relationship of knowledge and power. Foucault describes the relation of power and knowledge as: "There is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations" (1995, p.27). The legitimate forms of knowledge, existence of which is dependent on the episteme embedded within a culture, pick up the social stamp of approval or disapproval and outline the patterns of normality and abnormality. These power structures are present everywhere in society as Foucault remarks, the judges of normality are present everywhere. We live in the society of priests, doctors, magistrates etc. and "it

is on them that the universal reign of the normative is based" (1995, p.304).

These judges of normality become *Authorities of Delimitations* that have the power to delimit and therefore settle the differential attitudes of objects. Examples of such authorities are medicine (which, on the basis of body of knowledge it incorporates, gives the status of object of exclusion to every distinct behaviour including madness, homosexuality, criminality) civil law or penal law (which exclude objects by branding them as being irresponsible and a threat to society), religion (which can charge individual's action as immoral, unethical or demonic) and judiciary (which has the authority to decide the state of individual's actions and also his penalty). The judges, since they are the arbiter of the 'normal and rational', create *zones of exclusions* to keep the irrational and abnormal at bay from the tower. Foucault's archaeological survey of Western history foregrounds diseased, beggars, vagabonds, madmen, criminals, unemployed, homosexuals and debauched as the *other* who pose a threat to the social fabric. They are *different* so they must be zoned out.

Foucault eyes the *Others* as creative individuals who have the courage to surpass the circle drawn to curb man's creative ability. Supporting his idea of warranting the expansion of human thoughts in a bondage free environment, he remarks: "But couldn't everyone's life become a work of art? Why should the lamp or the house be an art object but not our life" (1997, p.26). Deleuze and Guattari (2013) in *A Thousand Plateaus*, champion the schizophrenic as a creative individual whose split consciousness must be released instead of being dammed up by restrictive bondages such as psychoanalysis. Foucault urges us to "...understand that with our desires, through our desires, go new forms of relationships, new forms of love, new forms of creation" (Foucault, 1997, p.163).

The system, in order to exclude such *different* (Derridean pun intended) individuals, first and foremost must turn them into *objects*. Every discourse establishes registers of normalized and differential behaviour, on the basis of which some objects are identified, named, analysed and categorized. The *Planes of emergence* are created where individual differences, which achieve the status of unacceptability by rational and normative codes of society, are developed. These surfaces of emergence may involve 'the family, the immediate social group, the work place, the religious community, sexuality, art', which incorporate normalized patterns of behaviour and a threshold beyond which lie the zones of exclusion.

The system of *formation of objects* further includes the analysis of forms of specification by which abnormal behaviour such as madness, unacceptable sexual orientation or other planes of distinct behaviour are further categorized. These *Grids of specification* are dependent on different discourses. For instance in nineteenth century psychopathology was the dominant discourse of the time. According to it, all objects belonging to the category of delinquency were categorized on the basis of

heredity, criminal impulses, aggressiveness in behaviour, perversion etc.

For Foucault, within a particular discourse, the objects like homosexuals, madmen, criminals are not just located side by side rather they are under a complex set of relations. "These relations are established between institutions, economic and social processes, behavioural patterns, systems of norms, types of classification, modes of characterization" (1972, p.45). So, within the discourses, objects are not defined by their nature, but by the external relations they form with other objects.

The wandering mind of a madman makes him dissent certain obligations which are enforced through ritualistic discourses. This experience of being released from a kind of psychological cage becomes a threat for the working of those restrictive patterns that fabricate the social design. For madmen of every era were devised methods of exclusion in accordance with its epistemological structures. The subjective passions and desires of these marginalized non-conformists *seemed* a threat. The madman became a "...motif of a soul as a skiff, abandoned on the infinite sea of desires, in the sterile field of cares and ignorance, among mirages of knowledge" (2001, p.10). The liberating experience of madman made him a dreadful image throughout centuries. "Madness was one of those unities in which laws were compromised, perverted, distorted; thereby manifesting such unity as evident and established, but also as fragile and already doomed to destruction" (p.84). The madman was deemed an anti-Christ, a *demon* who might make men lose faith in God and all his attachment to his home" (p.10). Moreover, Renaissance age perceived madman as a possessor of "iridescent bubble of knowledge-an absurd but infinitely precious lantern" (p.19). But the knowledge possessed by the madman was a forbidden one. So the madman became "one of the preferred figures in countless Temptations" (p.17). The possession of such forbidden knowledge was once again threat for the entire humanity which was suffering already due to Original Sin.

The madman became a reminder of an existential crisis and people were at once terrified of the nothingness of their existence, of meaninglessness of their lives because the order, the meaning which people gave to their lives was disavowed by the madman. In short, society pushed aside madness in order to sustain meaning to avoid chaos.

The increasing number of *Lepers* and *beggars*, disturbing public order by begging alms, were excluded from societal network in the classical period as Foucault writes, "Lord Mayor complains of this vermin that troops about the city, disturbing public order, assaulting carriages, demanding alms with loud cries at the doors of churches and private houses" (p.46-47). The zoned out *Leper* served as a reminder of divine wrath.

Idlers were specified by the authorities of delimitation after the Thirty Years' War, therefore, to root out idle behaviour, a particular civil law was established in

accordance with the moral codes, according to which "the sin of idleness [was] the supreme pride of man once he ha[d] fallen, the absurd pride of poverty" (p.52). All unreasonable people, who ignored their ethical responsibility by not utilizing their energies for well-being of society, including madmen, beggars, vagabonds, sickly, poor and unemployed became outcasts as Foucault remarks "This community acquired an ethical power of segregation which permitted it to eject, as into another world, all forms of social uselessness" (p.54). *Homosexuality*, unproductive or sterile in nature, was condemned as it, "carried the taint of abnormality; if it insisted on making itself too visible, it would be designated accordingly and would have to pay the penalty" (1978, p.3-4). In short, the touchstone of exclusion of specific people in classical age was their social uselessness.

Throughout Western history the allegedly irrational and indifferent behaviour of *others* was deemed animalistic. "It is animality that reveals the dark rage, the sterile madness that lie inside men's hearts"(2001, p.18). For him, "Animality, in fact, protected the lunatic from whatever might be fragile, precarious, or sickly in man" (p.69). The classical period feared such behaviour of delinquents and madmen because it exhibited "how close to animality their fall [had brought] them" (p.77).

The retro-prospective work of Foucault brilliantly sketches the working of social forces which establish the hegemonic social setup that settles *a* worldview as *the* cultural norm and the *only* valid ideology. In order to strengthen the hold of that setup, zones of exclusion are introduced that consume every object which tries to liberate itself from the social constructs. The process of social exclusion is dependent directly on the discourses which design the discursive practices and therefore construct the objects of exclusion. Throughout his works, Foucault has tried to highlight the fact that the dominant thinking patterns within a society, considered natural by the members of that society, are actually imposed by the power-relations. In the light of those thinking patterns, subjects are given identities, and along with the identities, come the responsibilities of conduct.

Foucault's iconoclasm finds its literary counterpart in Camus' lyrical philosophy expressed in his works of Absurd cycle i.e. *The Stranger* and *Caligula*. The protagonists of both works become the Foucauldian *others* when people brand them as madmen, demons and antichrists. *The Stranger* and *Caligula*, though written almost seventy-five years ago, are still relevant today because of their presentation of universal human problem of individual freedom vs restrictive social norms. It comes as no surprise to realise that authorities of delimitations and the zones of exclusion have not changed over the decades because the fundamental social episteme remains the same irrespective of topography. Under the head discussion of the efficient working of social machinery in restricting individual freedom and maintaining social stability by establishing rules and wiping out rebels, the present study, after developing similarities between the absurd heroes of Camus and Foucault's creative individuals, offers an interpretation of the necessity of the execution of Camus'

absurd characters. In order to explicate the social exclusion and consequent tragedy of the absurd heroes, it is important to shed light on the sensibility which awakens them to the immuring quality of rationality only to turn them against those rational principles.

Camus defines the absurd as a 'divorce' between man and his life – the life he wants to live and the life he is living (Camus, 1955, p.11). The realisation of the absurd awakens all the marooned voices inside man's soul and he can no longer tolerate the scheme of things as it is. The rise of the feelings of emptiness inside the hearts of the absurd heroes i.e., Meursault and Caligula, engulfs social harmony and therefore, the authorities decide to make a clean sweep of the revolting subjects off the face of the society.

To be more precise, absurdity lies in the confrontation of the irrational world and the reason demanding man. The 'unreasonable silence' (p.28), of the universe at man's suffering gives birth to a void in the soul, which previously, stuffed with certain illusions including the presence of the ultimate authority and the idea of an after-life, shielded him from absurdity. Camus remarks "It is in the soul that the source of conversion is found. The soul is desire for God and a longing for a lost homeland" (qtd in Eubanks & Patrakis, 1999, p.294). With the awakening of lucid reasoning, man begins to question those illusions and hopes whose logic he does not understand because these things are outside the perimeter of human comprehension. The confrontation with the absurd awakens the consciousness of man which knocks down the fancy illusions of the world around him and everything seems hostile and this hostility awakens what is inhuman inside man. The world crumbles as the bubble of hopes bursts.

The absurd man, with his desolate heart flooded with strangeness, turns to face the hostile world. The only options left are either to give up one's life or to live it with a rebellious attitude. Camus stresses upon assuming the philosophical position of revolt which illuminates the candle of the absurd. Man must revolt against the daily chain of gestures such as routine. A man once liberated from the chains of future hopes and past regrets gets inner freedom as his actions belong to the realm of present. Camus describes this state in these words: "...In a universe suddenly deprived of illusions and enlightenment, man feels himself a stranger. This exile is without remedy since he is deprived of memories of a lost country or of hope for a promised land" (qtd in Brombert, 1948, p.119). The false beliefs strips man of the pure joys of earth whereas deprivation of the future hopes makes man available to the present moment and so the absurd man wins the freedom of thought and action. An absurd man chooses not to live under false shadows and chooses to walk under the blazing sun and his walk, on an open road, expresses intense disdain and complete indifference towards time and societal codes. The liberating experience of the absurd man, his freedom, his revolt, his violation of the particular set patterns and the void in his soul put him in the company of Foucault's *others*. Meursault from *The Stranger*

and *Caligula's* titular hero, become the *others* when they reject to obey stifling rules of society.

The Stranger is the story of a recluse Meursault. His life becomes an object of interest soon after his mother's death in old people's home. He does not weep at his mother's death and violates certain 'common-sense' taboos such as dozing off at the vigil, smoking a cigarette near his mother's dead body and having coffee. Later in the novel, Meursault, in his attempt to help a friend, ends up killing an Arab. He is consequently arrested and put on trial where the full force of societal anger and the power of authorities of delimitation grind him. The court is interested, not in the murderer, but in an indifferent son. He is literally sentenced to death for being less than an ideal son.

Meursault, in *The Stranger*, confronts the absurd the day his mother's last rites are being performed. While the funeral procession marches towards the church on one of the hottest days of the summer, Meursault is told by a nurse, "If you go slowly, you risk getting sunstroke. But if you go too fast, you work up a sweat and then catch a chill inside the church" (Camus, 1988, p.17). Meursault silently ponders, "There's no way out" (p.17). He becomes cognizant of the dysfunctional structure of the universe where there's no middle ground. Later in the novel he commits a voluntary/involuntary murder under the duress of murderous sun on the beach. He is put on trial where things take an absurd turn. The court instead of discussing the details of the murder, focus more on Meursault's attitude towards his mother particularly his mannerism on her death. Meursault does not understand the connection between the two unrelated issues but his lawyer enlightens him with these words, "it was obvious [he] had never had any dealings with the law" (p.65). Meursault did not shed a single tear and during vigil smoked a cigarette, had coffee and later dozed off. The prosecutor, dwells on these details to brand Meursault a monster and demands his head as his conduct could become contagious. Meursault, resultantly, is guillotined not for killing a man but showing indifference towards his mother. *The Stranger* is the story of a man who is scapegoated because of the dysfunctional nature of the universe and its shadow – the human world.

Caligula, the moon desiring Roman Emperor, wants to do the impossible – that is to bring the dead back to life. The death of his beloved sister Drusilla, opens him up to the absurd world where heart does not attain what it desires. He cannot have his sister back. He realises the illusions he had been living with – the illusion of absolute power. He realises the absurd truth that "men die; and they are not happy" (Camus, 1962, p. 17). The society, on the other hand, laying its foundation on hopes and illusions, has fed men with lies and forces them to mask their faces in order to suffocate the truth. The rational principles of society are indifferent to the gentle breeze drifting inside man's heart which often, when stifled, turns into a storm. Since the whole Roman Empire lives in illusions, it must be divested of all the false beliefs. In order to make them realise the absurdity of the lives they are living, he introduces

dramatic changes in the way the empire is run. He deprives the wealthy of their power, starts a famine and murders many. The society is threatened. The first patrician suggests the recovery of the ailment by saying "He's a mere boy; we'll make him see reason" and in the case of impossibility of recovery, they know what to do as he suggests: "my friend, don't forget I once wrote a manual of revolutions. You'll find all the rules here" (p.13).

Within every discourse lie the codes of conduct which every individual has to obey in order to be a part of the society. Those who flout those necessary codes, considered natural by members of society, become the objects of the discourse. The absurd hero Caligula, being the emperor of the Roman Empire, is the possessor of outlandish power. Reading the play from Foucault's understanding of power, one needs to remember that no one is out of the power relations. Power comes from everywhere. Caligula, too, has to behave in a certain way. Society places certain fail safe ethical codes of conduct for emperors too. They should learn to exercise their power for the nation as second patrician suggests "Yes, exactly the emperor we wanted; conscientious and inexperienced" (p.12). But the transformation of Caligula after the death of his sister brings about an unprecedented shock for the Roman aristocrats. First patrician remarks "But it's going too far, setting all Rome in a turmoil because the girl has died" (p.12).

The notified violations of particular behavioural canons lead one to be categorized among the marginalized group. In Foucault's words, the non-observance of normative behaviour suggested by a particular discourse leads one to be registered under the list of the objects of exclusion, which he has described as the *formation of objects*. The formation of objects by the *authorities of delimitation* starts with *planes of emergence*. In *The Stranger* Judiciary, whereas in *Caligula*, the whole Empire serves as authorities of delimitation.

The *planes of emergence* are those surfaces which foreground abnormal behaviour. Meursault's strictly moral Algerian society examines every sort of behaviour of its members. The investigation into Meursault's private life while validating the nature of his crime confirms that for the society, man's criminal status is based on the way he behaves in his personal life. The first surface involves the *family*: his relationship with his mother is given so much importance in the court that in the end he is accused of being indifferent to her before and after death. Moreover, his affection-less attitude towards his mother is the first thing which the society takes notice of as the director tells the court that "he had been surprised by [his] calm the day of the funeral" (Camus, 1988, p.89). Meursault's indifferent behaviour towards his mother becomes, for the whole society, an emblem of dissent towards family values, and such a dissent could destroy the whole social fabric. Therefore, it comes as no surprise when the prosecutor blames Meursault for the crime of parricide to be heard in the court tomorrow, "I am convinced gentlemen that you will not think it too bold of me if I suggest to you that the man who is seated in the dock is also guilty

of the murder to be tried in this court tomorrow" (p.102).

The *work place* and *social group* are other planes of emergence pried into by the court. The people included in his social circle including Celeste, Salamano, Masson, Raymond and Marie are questioned regarding his behaviour and what they think about his criminal act. Celeste, the owner of the café Meursault frequents, is even asked whether Meursault paid his bills or not. His brief friendship with Raymond, who is a procurer, is what goes against Meursault. His sexual behaviour is also taken under consideration and that is where the prosecutor strikes him with another accusation that he was involved in the shameful debauchery the day after his mother's death.

After Meursault's arrest the examining magistrate, a devout Christian tries his utmost to make him repent. Here, *religion* becomes another plane of emergence for Meursault when he rejects the crucifix brandished in his face which leaves the magistrate terrified as he remarks, "I have never seen a soul as hardened as yours" (Camus, 1988, p.69). The whole episode ends with the examining magistrate branding Meursault as 'anti-Christ'. The figure of Meursault, thus, becomes a threat to the religious beliefs of the whole society.

By ridiculing the aristocrats, taking off their money and and issuing their death notices, Caligula terrifies and turns them against himself as the First Patrician states, "Fellow conspirators, will you tolerate to live in a country in which patricians are forced to run, like slaves, besides the Emperor's litter?" (Camus, 1962, p.24). When Caligula realises that he could never have the moon, he takes the matter into his own hands. He impersonates Venus, the Roman goddess whose symbol is moon. The moon, for Caligula, represents order, harmony and meaning. The way Caligula parodies Venus threatens the very religious core of the society. The Roman aristocracy does not dare question the emperor's religious beliefs, but challenging the collective beliefs of the society is something outrageous and punishable. The hatred Scipio manifests at this event validates this point, "I rather think you've done everything that was needed to rouse against you a legion of human gods" (p.38).

For the formation of the objects of exclusion, every discourse installs its own *grids of specification* to specify the outlook of objects. Under the light of moral discourse, Meursault is specified a 'menace' and 'monster' by virtue of lacking basic humanly instincts, moral values and the emotions which lie at the core of every human heart. The observatory of that moral society sees in Meursault: insensitivity, abysmal void, defunct moral sense, criminal and animalistic instincts, therefore, lacking any real connection with humanity, his head should be cut off in order to save the other members of society.

Foucault maintains that only the establishment of the planes of emergence, delimiting authorities and specification grids do not make the whole system of

exclusion, but the whole complex network relations. These relations include the installation of the framework of the values and prohibitions of a family in the judicial norms. The relations that make the court investigate Meursault's behaviour at his mother's death or his knowledge about his mother's age or his prohibited relationship with his mistress in order to decide his criminal action and equate his crime with the crime of parricide.

Meursault and Caligula are familiar yet strange figures of absurd men who have lost any real connection with the world. In this perspective, they resemble madmen so closely. For Foucault the reason behind society's disgust and hatred towards madmen lies in the fact that they do what other members of the society wished they themselves could have done, but the societal pressure forces them to keep their desires in check. A madman rejects the mask of feigned rationality and disobeys the incarcerating rules governing social setup. Any individual rising up against the system is a threat which must be eliminated. Meursault and Caligula are what others wished they were. The cowardice of the others to challenge the system and follow their own inner voice makes them squash individuals like Meursault and Caligula who remind them of their own slavery.

The animality of such individuals, like madness, is another painful reminder to the society of their own hidden animality. It takes a thief to recognise another thief. For Girard (2005), every member of society harbours violent instincts and such instincts, if acted upon, threaten the very existence of society, therefore, a scapegoat must be procured to appease societal hunger for violence to maintain social harmony. The animalistic desire for violence is appeased when authorities of delimitation turn individuals like Meursault and Caligula into objects. Meursault receives the title of a monster because he disregards everything human. This apathetic attitude towards the things humans hold sacred brings Meursault close to what society considers a beast. Moreover, his rejection of the modes of correction or restoration into the normal state is what makes society fearful. The stray sheep must be shown the right path. During his final moments, the prison chaplain repeatedly urges Meursault to turn to God, but he has no time for it because he wants to spend his final moments with his own thoughts. The chaplain, the moral compass of the society, fails to bring the stray sheep to the fold and his failure is attributed to Meursault's beastly nature.

In *Caligula*, animalistic traits can also be traced out. Caligula's indifferent behaviour towards people's suffering is more evident as compared to Meursault. Being an emperor, instead of playing the role of a public servant, he chooses to play the part of nature and so continues to find out new ways to inflict pain. Throughout the play, Camus has depicted the terror that society feels from Caligula. People try to keep their mouth shut so that they would not infuriate Caligula, who is ready to kill people any moment. Caligula seems to feed upon the suffering of people as he prefers to be accompanied by the dead ones. Many times Scipio and Caesonia try to bring him back to his previous state but he continues to rely upon his new state and refuses

to give away this self. Camus has used a beautiful expression to describe this state. He remarks that "A face that toils so close to the stone is already stone itself" (Camus, 1962, p.76). The decision of leading a life with the realization of the absurd connection leads man to bridge the gulf between man and the universe and by imagining one's walk on that bridge, one can visualize the transfusion of soft humanistic elements into the tough ones which belong to the anti-nature. Moreover, this conversion gives strength to man to carry the weight that normal men are unable to bear and to endure the torment which he does not know the end of. This quality resembles with that of madmen who attain this remarkable quality to endure the harsh conditions.

Caligula and Meursault, for Larson (2013) are "nature's executioners" (p.360), endowed with destructive power possessed by nature. Under the reflection of Sade's theory of nature, he studies absurd men and defines them as the spokesmen of the Nature. According to him, the murder scene in *The Stranger* stages the conspiracy of Nature against humanity: the way Sun blinds Meursault's eyes by striking him with its blazing light and glistens at the gun, the way Sky rains down fire, the way sand shimmers with heat and sea gives the image of molten matter makes one to think that Nature is infusing in Meursault the elements of rage, violence and destruction. Just like Meursault, Caligula becomes the weapon of Nature in achieving its goal of destroying its creatures in order to recreate it. Caligula's wish to destroy the false structure of the universe to make it again resembles with that of Nature, the only difference is that Caligula's wish is coupled with his innocent desire to be happy and make others happy by embellishing the structure of the universe with harmony and equality. This reflection of Sade's philosophy in Camus' characters, once again, labels them as violent and places them opposite to society.

Absurdity can be accredited as philosophical madness as absurd heroes are obsessed with the single philosophical truth that destabilizes the position of man in society. From the very encounter of man with that absurd truth, the discord between man and society begins. If one wishes to find out the reason behind the initiation of this disagreement, one needs to look at the void in the soul of the absurd man which breaks away all the ordering chains by engulfing the meaning which society gives to life by inventing illusory bubbles. Behind the force of society, struggling against the absurdity, which always tends to erase absurd men from the face of society lies the simple faith of men who want to live a happy life as suggested by Caligula in the last act. Absurdity possesses the dark reality, the reality which makes men devoid of happiness and satisfaction. The magistrate's question "Do you want my life to be meaningless?" expresses the fear society feels from the madness of absurd men (Camus, 1988, p.69).

Meursault's refusal to mourn the death of his mother and lack of participation in the final rites are a threat to the familial values of Algeria. Instead of Meursault setting an example, the society must make an example out of him to prevent such incidents in the future. The court does not take into account the very reasons why

Meursault behaved indifferently. The answer would reflect badly on the very society itself, therefore, the society and the court chose to ignore it altogether. The Director of the old people's home, at first, appears to understand Meursault's decision of sending his mother there. The director remarks "You don't have to justify yourself, my dear boy. I've read your mother's file. You weren't able to provide for her properly. She needed someone to look after her. You earn only a modest salary. And the truth of the matter is, she was happier here" (p.4). The same director testifies against him in the court. The director understands that Meursault is just one individual and he cannot enrage the whole society at the expense of being honest in the court. The society, rather than looking into its economic structure which cannot furnish enough resources for a son to look after her well-being, denounces Meursault. The court ignores the fact that Meursault's mother was happy at the old people's home. Meursault, moments before his execution, finally becomes one with his mother, "I felt as if I understood why at the end of her life she had taken a "fiance," why she had played at beginning again. Even there, in that home where lives were fading out, evening was a kind of wistful respite. So close to death, Maman must have felt free then and ready to live it all again. Nobody, nobody had the right to cry over her" (p.122).

After discussing the reasons which make absurd men dangerous for the society, absurd heroes should be described in person. They could be called as true artists who craft their lives according to what describes their true essence, irrespective of any outside impurity as Caligula says that "I'm the only true artist Rome has known-the only one, believe me-to match his inspiration with his deeds" (Camus, 1962, p.51). Stoltzfus (1983) describes the art work of Caligula by highlighting the use of mirror in the play. He says that Caligula desires to project his image in the mirror. He describes mirror as a point of contact and transition between art and reality and Caligula distorts reality by setting his eyes on the reflection in the mirror. He tries to reverse the values and laws of society and so convert it into an artistic model and his model gets shattered with the breaking of mirror in the end. This happens because society does not accept such craziness as it gets afraid of the originality which has come out of something which is chaotic. Just like Caligula's *danse macabre*, the murder scene in *The Stranger* visualizes the discord of Meursault with outside reality and his absorption in the act. The aggressive speech of Meursault in the last chapter proves that absurd man is the artist which does not allow anything to contaminate his art, no matter how dangerous the stand.

For Wicks, "Within Foucault's thought, the ecstasy of liberation flow a steady thematic undercurrent-one which is comparable to Camus's emphasis upon the 'flame of life'" (2003, p.220). Societal agents, when fail to extinguish the 'flame of life', turn aggressive and become the animals they swore to keep at bay from society's threshold. The analysis and the presence of Renaissance like situation in modern day society, throws light on how, instead of progressing, humanity has regressed. The reminders of regression: the madmen, the lepers, the different, must be eliminated to

create a dystopian utopia.

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