

V. Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis-work is to re-examine the existential tendencies in Albert Camus's works. However, after having a thorough affair with Camus's literary and journalistic output, it can be safely argued that Camus is much more than merely an existentialist. As is evident from the discussion from the earlier chapters, Camus personally tried to distance himself from the ideology of existentialism. But, this is also true that there is nothing wrong to confer him an existentialist on certain points of his philosophical and literary temper. Like other existentialist, Camus affirms the incomprehensiveness and meaninglessness of the world as he rejects the idea of any Superior who is assumed to provide any meaning in this wilderness. On the contrary, like many existentialists, he believes in the integrity of man and his ability to revolt against this wilderness, even acknowledging, beforehand, his defeat in this struggle. Moreover, like other existentialists, Camus puts the individual above all the traditional values and ideologies. However, despite some basic similarities with the well-known existentialists, Camus has his own uniqueness. Unlike Sartre, Camus doesn't fully reject the existence of a common human nature; however, he rejects the presence of any God as an initiator of human nature. For Camus, it is the presence of the human nature that becomes an emphatic inspiration for the birth of rebellion against injustice. It is because of this common tendency that man realizes human solidarity and therefore, to save and empower this solidarity, rebels against the unjust.

As has been mentioned earlier, Camus spared no occasion to distance himself from the label of existentialism. The reasons for this denial on Camus's part are various. First, he can't approve the philosophical suicide of the theistic existentialists who, on one hand, accept the world as meaningless and hopeless, but on the other hand, invent the concept of God to face the absurd world. For Camus, their fear-

generated God enhances nothing but the absurdity of the already incomprehensible world. Second reason, that seems to deter Camus from accepting the existential tag, is the fact of Sartre's being accepted as the face of contemporary existentialism. Camus doesn't want to be identified with Sartrean ideology, because despite having some similarities, there is a vital difference in Camus and Sartrean ideologies. While Sartre is more philosophical, Camus believes in the practice of his ideas. Again, for Sartre, the absurd is a consistent and permanent tendency of the world which ends all doors for hope, for Camus, the absurd is a sudden realization of the confrontation and paradox between the mind that hopes and the world that gives. Moreover, Camus's absurd is not a blocking point rather a starting point of his ideology. For Camus, it is the absurdity of the world which realizes the ethics of human solidarity and revolt. Hence, contrary to the almost pessimistic outlook of his contemporary intellectuals, Camus's absurd is an initiator of a much more positive ethics of human solidarity and revolt. Here, one thing is noteworthy i.e. Camus seems nowhere in opposition to the existential ethics. On the contrary, he seems to remain faithful to the existentialism by applying his ideas in practical situations. In comparison to Camus, Sartre seems to fail to live the very essence of existentialism which argues that the reality of one's life doesn't lie in the fixed pattern of any ideology or philosophy, but in the choices we make and the actions we do. Sartre, throughout his life, talked much about the existential situation of man in the absurd world, his individuality in the face of fixed traditional values and ideologies, his freedom to choose which finally decides his being, and his responsibility for his choice. All these issues put him into the category of existentialism. But it appears as if Sartre is an existentialist only in black and white as he fails to apply his existential ideology in practice by preferring the authoritarian ideology of the Stalin regime over the humanistic value of individual freedom. While

Camus never recognized the totalitarian party of USSR under Stalin regime, Sartre found in the USSR the only hope for the realization of the proletarian dreams. Hence, the very supporter of individual freedom put his faith in the fixity, infallibility, and omnipotence of the Marxist ideology. Even he failed to condemn the concentration camps in Stalin regime in the name of political realism.

Contrary to Sartre, Camus rejects both political realism in the name of which the political parties exploit individual democratic rights, and the infallibility of any political ideology. Even while joining the Communist Party of France for a short period of two years, Camus doesn't hide his doubts about the party-propaganda. Camus's *The Rebel* is a fine critique of the totalitarian and all-powerful political or ideological philosophies. It is because of this reason that Camus is an anti-communist, anti-capitalist, and a humanitarian socialist who believes in the democratic values at the universal level and always works for a philosophy that doesn't boast of its self-righteousness, but always appears eager to amend itself.

It is often argued that existentialism is an irresponsible ideology since it fails to justify morality. In another words, it can be argued that since there is no God (an argument which blocks all the roads for morality and guiding principles and leaves man as the sole master of his being), there is no criteria through which a murderer can be punished or a life-saver can be rewarded. Though Sartre has attached much importance to personal as well as social responsibility with the choice a person makes, however, he regrets for this inclusion in his philosophy, because he fails to prove his point logically. And at a time, during the Nazi pogrom, Sartre accepts that logically the Nazi ideology can't be refuted because of the absence of any objective values.

But Camus, very logically, brings the idea of responsibility in the sphere of existentialism and refutes both suicide and murder. In his philosophical essay, *The*

Myth of Sisyphus, Camus logically proves that suicide is not the logical outcome of the absurd. On the contrary, acceptance of suicide is the acceptance of the victory of the absurdity of the world over the ethics of the human solidarity which man discovers in the face of the absurd. Furthermore, man's integrity lies in a constant struggle with the absurd, and suicide, which is the end of this conflict, mars both man's integrity and the absurd. Using this same logic in *The Rebel*, Camus refutes murder and argues that since the absurd rejects suicide, it gives respect to the life-instinct in this rejection. And since, the absurdity of the world is a reality for all human beings; this life-instinct is not the sole right of a single fellow. Therefore, murder will deny the absurd. In this way, Camus easily answers the charges of irresponsibility put against existentialism.

However, it will be a partiality to confine Camus into the bounds of existentialism, because apart from being a writer of the human situation and the absurdity confronted my man in this wilderness, Camus is a moral humanist of first rank. He affirms the validity of such values like justice, freedom, and fraternity, which strengthen and identify the higher value of human solidarity. However, Camus doesn't think these values to be discerned from some unknown Heaven, but simply discovered through the lived experiences of humanity. One thing more, Camus doesn't believe in the absoluteness of these values but in their balanced equilibrium. He respects limits and relativity in almost all spheres of life. Hence, his purpose is to create a positive morality, and not a system of ethics, which is capable of providing guidance for secular conduct.

Though it is often argued that Camus failed at political levels, however, the reality is that his adversaries, who assume his failure, conceive politics in totality and absoluteness. For them, everything is justified for some higher political ends. But

Camus talks about a relative balance between political ends and the means adopted to gain those ends. He denies political realism and pleads throughout his career for the humanitarian plea that ends can never justify the means. It is because of this reason that he condemned the acts of political violence committed in the name of some justice to be realized in the far future. Though Camus apparently appears to favour limited political violence, he nowhere justifies or legitimizes it in any case. Therefore, on the issues of political violence and the relationship between ends and means, Camus resembles Mahatma Gandhi. Camus's reluctance to accept violence even in limited circumstances, symbolizes his yearning for the existential value of life. The same respect for life is indicated through his robust protest against capital punishment. And one can argue that it is because of the arguments given by such humanists like Camus that the world is progressing towards the goal of a capital-punishment-free world. Camus's rejection for this inhumane practice, once again, exemplifies his rejection of the absoluteness of the State. He wants to make the world realize that we are already condemned to death for the very reason of our being alive, and therefore, to cut short the already condemned life in between in the name of humanity is itself inhumane. Death penalty not only violates the value of human solidarity, it enhances the absurdity of the world.

Camus establishes himself as an epitome of democratic value and universal human rights. He can't accept the arbitrary totalitarianism or the bloody Nazism based on extreme nihilism. And it is for the democratic rights of people that he indulged himself into the French Resistance against Nazi Occupation, Spain's struggle against the dictatorship of the Franco regime, and the Algerian struggle for democratic rights. Camus is misunderstood by many on the question of Algerian conflict. The reason for his denial of support to the FLN was the religious fanaticism of the FLN. Camus

dreamt for a democratic Algeria and could never accept the cosmopolitan Algeria being degenerated into an extremist Muslim nation. This degradation contradicts not only to the rights of the minorities and other ethnic groups in Algeria, but also to the Mediterranean culture imagined by Camus.

Camus's dream is to see the democratic principles being flourished not only on national levels but on the international level too. His protest against the conception of the veto powers exemplifies his belief in equality and fraternity among nations. Camus proves his farsightedness in his understanding of the international politics. He argues that the veto powers provided to five countries will mar the democratic nature of the UNO and will surely transform it into a puppet institution. The same is happening today. The veto powers like America, France, and England use their dictatorial powers to impose their decisions on other countries and enjoy a permanent monopoly on the world.

To conclude, the argumentative discussion on Camus may be summed up with the idea that Camus can't be fixed within the confines, not only of existentialism, but of any philosophy. His ideas are far above from the extremity of existentialism, socialism, communism, or any other such 'ism'. He appears as an existentialist with his interest in the existential condition of man. But in his rejection of both the conception of the absoluteness of the absurd God and that of history, Camus becomes anti-existentialist. He comes out as an absurdist with his enquiry into the Sisyphean reality of human life, but he equally surpasses the absurd sphere and enters into the realms of rebellion with his determination to revolt against the absurd. Once again, he rejects the absoluteness of revolution too. He respects Communism for its ideals for the welfare of the proletarians, but equally rejects its deification of history in the name of these ideals. He struggles for national liberation but is ready to cross the limits of

nationalism for a more profound ideal of internationalism. He propagates the democratic ideals of freedom and justice, but equally rejects their absoluteness. Hence, Camus's is a cosmopolitan, practical, and relative ideology which rejects extremity and respects the limits.