

## AN ABSURDIST'S DESIRES IN ALBERT CAMUS' *THE STRANGER*

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### Abstrak

Albert Camus 'Stranger' menceritakan tentang kisah seorang absurdist bernama Meursault. Dia menolak konstruksi sosial dan makna dari kehidupan. Namun, sebagai subjek, Meursault dibangun oleh struktur simbolik yang menyediakan makna di balik itu. Jadi, segala sesuatu yang dilakukan Meursault bisa jadi adalah sesuatu yang simbolik dan cara Meursault untuk memiliki perspektif radikal sendiri dan perilaku pasti dipicu oleh sesuatu; itu bersumber oleh keinginannya, sementara dalam perspektif Lacan, ada dua jenis keinginan; keinginan untuk memenuhi dan keinginan untuk menjadi. Dengan demikian, pertanyaan yang dapat disampaikan adalah; (1) Bagaimana keinginan Meursault ini digambarkan dalam novel Albert Camus 'Stranger'? (2) Bagaimana Meursault membagi keinginan – keinginannya dalam filosofi absurd nya di Albert Camus 'Stranger'? Untuk membentuk hasil analisis yang stabil, metode yang digunakan adalah pendekatan objektif dan interpretasi. Berdasarkan pada analisis, keinginan subjek selalu simbolik karena muncul dari struktur simbolis yang mengutuk untuk tunduk dan terus mengikuti. Sebagai seseorang yang absurd, Meursault mencoba untuk melihat bahwa dunia tidak ada artinya dan kematian adalah kebebasan utama. Cara dia untuk melihat hal itu disebabkan oleh keinginannya untuk memenuhi. Di sisi lain, Meursault yang menolak masyarakat, pada kenyataannya perlu masyarakat untuk mewujudkan pandangannya, sementara itu hal itu benar-benar menunjukkan bahwa apa yang dia inginkan adalah apa yang orang lain menginginkan darinya. Ini adalah bukti bagaimana keinginan dari subjek menunjukkan ketidaksadaran.

**Katakunci:** Absurd, Keinginan Memenuhi, Keinginan untuk Menjadi dan Lacan.

### Abstract

Albert Camus' *The Stranger* tells a story of an absurdist, named Meursault. He rejects social constructions and meaning of life. However, as a subject, Meursault is constructed by symbolical structure which provides meanings behind it. So, everything Meursault does can be symbolic and the way Meursault has his own radical perspective and behaviors must be triggered by something; it is sourced by his desire while in Lacan's perspective, there two kind of desires; fulfilling desire and becoming desire. Thus, the questions can be conveyed are; (1) How are Meursault's desires portrayed in Albert Camus' *The Stranger*? (2) How do Meursault's desires affect to his absurd philosophy in Albert Camus' *The Stranger*? To shape the stable result of the analysis, the used method is objective approach and interpretation. Established on the analysis, the desires of subject are always symbolic because it emerges from the symbolical structure which curses subject to keep following it. As an absurd, Meursault tries to see that world is meaningless and the death is the ultimate freedom. The way to see it is caused by his fulfilling desire. On the other hand, Meursault who rejects society, at the fact needs society to realize his view, while it actually shows that what he wants is what the other wants from him. This is how desires of subject show unconsciously.

**Keywords:** Absurd, Fulfilling Desire, Becoming Desire and Lacan.

### INTRODUCTION

Desire, it is a word with complicated definition in psychology. There are so many terms for defining what desire is, such as in Hegel's term that "desire—even in its most basic primitive form of necessity—seeks to fulfill and embody this essential merger of subject and object" and therefore, self is always about seeking something new and never achieving satisfaction" (Drob, 2009: 1). On the other hand, for Sartre, "desire is fundamentally a drive towards recognition and thus an attempt to unify one's

subjectivity with one's comprehension of the self as an object" (Drob, 2009: 5). Different from those two, Freud sees desire "proceeds through phases, zones—oral, anal, phallic, genital" (Drob, 2009: 7). What Freud sees is that desire relates to the condition of sexuality or libido.

Looking to those definitions, it can be seen that desire is about what human looks for and why it is never fulfilled. The problem is, when it is applied to a nihilistic (desire-less) person just like Meursault in Camus' *The Stranger*. Meursault can be seen as a man who is so

passionless, emotionless and even hopeless in life. Thus, to see Meursault's desire can be an interesting thing to analyze. Moreover, Meursault seems to have problems with social interaction and purpose of life. Thus, this problem becomes the great part to see as an analysis.

To get it deeper, there is an exploration about what happens in Meursault in the novel. Meursault is a young Algerian pied-noir and his mother is just dead but he receives this fact without frustration. He continuously asks his boss for two days dispensation to attend the funeral. It is the tradition of Meursault's culture for the grieving to stay all night in vigil next to the coffin. The strange thing is, even at the vigil and during the funeral to the following days, Meursault expresses no anguish, sorrow or even regret. He even just feels boring of sitting through the vigil and disturbed by the light of the sun during the funeral procession to the cemetery. The following day, back in Algiers, Meursault goes swimming in the sea and encounters a girl, Marie, whom he sees ambiguously, after that they go to the cinema together to watch a comedy, go back to Meursault's apartment to have sex. Meursault, again, shows no more emotion or fondness towards Marie just like what he expressed at his mother's funeral, even when Marie asks Meursault to marry her and he accepts only because Marie wants it. At home, as well as his relationship with Marie, he develops a relationship with his disgusting neighbor, Raymond Sintes, a gangster who conduct violence to women. One day, this friendship leads him to a beach and meets two Arabs and one of the Arabs had a knife. Meursault, who is walking alone on the beach, comes across one of the Arabs and the conflict happens to result in Meursault killing the man with a single shot and then firing four more bullets into the sluggish body.

Continuously, Meursault is under execution for the murder of the Arab. During his trial and imprisonment, until the day before his execution, Meursault keeps the same indifference seen in the first Meursault, no regret and no worry. He displays the same reluctance that he does not feel anything. Many lawyers offer help to cancel the punishment but Meursault does not reject his murder custody, he either he express emotion or remorse for his victim. He is even cautioned by his lawyer that the prosecution will use unusual behavior at his mother's funeral to open Meursault's nothingness but in the same way, Meursault rejects to express dramatic remorse over the Arab and he still does not make a spectacle of crying over his mother during the trial. During the trial, Meursault still expresses the same disinterested attitude he has demonstrated as usual. To him, although he is attentive that he is the subject of conversation, he takes it as if they are talking about someone else because he is more interested in something else such as the different

colors of the fans used by the jury-members, the sunlight, and even the noise coming from the outside of court-room window.

Meursault wastes the time to feel as if he is not in court in prison during his execution and he seems too commit that life is nothingness. After these thoughts, Meursault is encountered to the prison chaplain who endeavors Meursault's confession and spiritual condemnation. He refuses the chaplain out of his cell and he loves his painful promises of another life after this damn one. After the chaplain is gone, Meursault, for the first time, is filled with the affectionate indifference of the world and imagining that there will be many people attending his execution and that they all welcome him with shrieks of hatred.

Strange and absurd can be the right words to see something happened in Meursault. He strangely refuses to the society and seems to see the nothingness in his insight. By looking to his characteristic psychologically, it is so interesting to analyze something concealed under his perspective of nothingness and social alienation. Therefore, this focus can be seen on desire of an absurdist, Meursault, who seems desire-less. Then it can be thought carefully that Camus is an absurdist, specifically if it is seen through his philosophical Meursault in his *The Stranger*. In January 1955, Camus said,

"I summarized *The Stranger* a long time ago, with a remark I admit was highly paradoxical: 'In our society any man who does not weep at his mother's funeral runs the risk of being sentenced to death.' I only meant that the hero of my book is condemned because he does not play the game." (Carroll, 2007: 27).

By reading at the statement, it can be seen that Camus sees the world as a game that has been arranged, thus neither he nor Meursault will not get involved in it. Human is arranged to do so, so there is no free human if human is just following those settings. It also shows the philosophical thought of absurdity. Although it is a radical and simply thought, Viggiani states that *The Stranger* can show absurdity in simple example in a book. However, most people see it is as a rich work which is created in a complex thought and full of hidden meanings (see Viggiani, 1956: 865—887). Thus, this novel is one of great Camus' works that shows his ability as writer and as a philosopher of absurdity. Moreover, Lucian Robinson, in his review about Albert Camus' *The Outsider* in *The Guardian* writes that,

Camus called Meursault "a man who ... agrees to die for the truth" and characterized him as "the only Christ that we deserve". Smith (the translator of *The Stranger*) fortifies the novel's biblical resonances by translating the final sentence as "So that it might be finished, so that I

might feel less alone, I could only hope that there would be many, many spectators on the day of my execution and that they would greet me with cries of hatred”, playing on Jesus's last words in the King James Bible (“It is finished”), to which Camus's original referred but which becomes lost if translated literally (Robinson, 2012, italic is added).

It means that this novel contains of an important issue in absurdist thought, especially about existentialism. Existentialism is related to absurd thought as it is noted by Claire Messud in *The New York Review of Books*; “It (The Stranger) is considered—to what would have been Camus’s irritation—the exemplary existentialist novel” (Messud, 2014). Although, Camus himself in *Les Nouvelles littéraires*, published in November 15 1945, says that “Non, je ne suis pas existentialiste [...] et le seul livre d'idées que j'ai publié: le Mythe de Sisyphe, était dirigé contre les philosophes dits existentialistes [...]” (Camus, 1945: 1424-7) that means “No, I am not an existentialist [...] and the only book of ideas that I published: The Myth of Sisyphus, was directed against the so-called existentialist philosophers [...]” However, whether it is an existentialist or absurdist thought, to think absurd means to exist and exile from the curse of Sisyphus’s myth. Sisyphus shows human’s life as the fake thing, thus rebellion is the only way to release and to condemn the curse.

In his early works, Camus says about the concept of absurdity as the pure circumstance of human challenging to the outside world. This absurdity thought shows that human is trapped to a construction such as harmony, meaning, and cheerfulness. Absurd philosophy opposes to the world and sees that world is actually chaotic and nothing. Camus says that “the absurd is born of this confrontation between the human need and the unreasonable silence of the world” (Camus, 1991a: 28). In the beginning, Camus sees absurdity as a leading principle but he starts to realize that absurdity makes human having faith in nothing as meaning, if nothing has meaning, and then meaning has nothing. If there is no meaning (nothing), there is no value, and if there is no value, there is no limitation and human can set to free. “If we believe in nothing, if nothing has any meaning [...] then everything is possible and nothing has any importance” (Camus, 1991b: 5).

Camus understands that the view of the absurd is not educational or normative in general view and it even looks like to agree for radical doctrine. However, in Camus’ perspective, with rejecting to values, human will see the only real guiding principle which is efficacy or valuable to demonstrate human strength (Camus, 1991b: 5). This idea is originally influenced by the destruction in the World War II, because during this period, Camus is watching the

orderly extinction of human’s life as ideas of glory, wealth, happiness, peace, and so on. If everybody is died in the war, there is no one enjoys those things, so it is very absurd to see the war as the way of life. He notes it in his great journal that, “often the values on which our life is built have almost collapsed. But never before have these values and those we love been threatened all together and all at the same time. Never before have we been so completely handed over to total destruction” (Camus, 1996a: 149).

In this understanding, absurd is continuously associated to nihilism. Camus sees that destructive action as the consequence of doing absurd is a logical crime. He writes in his essay, *The Rebel* by saying that a nihilist “is not one who believes in nothing, but one who does not believe in what exists” (Camus, 1991b: 69). Nihilism should be understood as a thought of revolutionary or a perfectionistic doctrine which tries to break the fake value of human’s life, “but in the inability to believe in what is, to see what is happening, and to live life as it is offered. This infirmity is at the root of all idealism” (Camus, 1991b: 67).

The most common thing of this thought is seeing all of orders in the world is fake and it does not exist. Only being nihilist and absurdist, the world can see the truth. That is the best thing can be seen from absurd thought, especially from Camus’ view. To the novel, Camus shows his thought in Meursault who rejects the fake world which is stealing its absurdity.

Related to this condition, Meursault applies the absurd thought in its practice. However, if common people desire for order system and idea, and an absurdist has desire to break it up, can it be said that an absurdist also has desire and the desire is to break the desire of common people? It is the interesting question coming to what desire is in an absurdist. This problem brings back to the problematical issue about desire, while this is related to ethical and social problem. Thus, one of the unforgettable psychoanalysts to talk about desire like that is Jacques Lacan.

In Lacan terms, “desire is always desire of the other” and this is symbolical condition, because desire signifies the minus condition of need to its demand (just the signification, not real fulfilling what is desired). On the other hand, demand minus need is a desire. Desire also is not desire of the self, but desire of the other. Therefore, what self wants is filling what the other wants. In the seminar of 1960-1, Lacan says about the connection of anxiety and desire. Anxiety is a way of filling desire when the object (which is desired) is missing and contrariwise, desire is a remedy for anxiety, something easier to bear than anxiety itself (Lacan, 1991: 430). However, Lacan also says that the cause of anxiety is not always from

subject's internal side, but it can often come from another side, "if anxiety is a signal, it means it can come from another" (Lacan, 1991: 427).

With the concepts of desire, the problem becomes more interesting because Meursault is misanthropic or anti-social man, and he desires in nothing but nothingness. When it is looked deeper, Meursault, after seeing nothingness, commits to allow his self to solve his death.

Nothingness can be the point to see the absurd way of life in Meursault's personality, then to see it in psychological way, this can be so interesting, especially to see the desire of the absurdist toward nothingness and rejection to the society like that. Therefore, to clarify this background, it can be simply said that this research is sourced from the perspective of absurd thought which brings to nothingness and anti-socialism. The nothingness itself can be the object to desire and anti-socialism itself can be the way Meursault live as subject. This paradox becomes the problem to analyze. At the end, this research challengingly proposes a title, "An Absurdist's Desire in Albert Camus' the Stranger." Therefore, it is interesting to discover this complex personality through the formulated problems developed below:

1. How are Meursault's desires portrayed in Albert Camus' *The Stranger*?
2. How do Meursault's desires affect to his absurd philosophy in Albert Camus' *The Stranger*?

## METHOD

Method comprises of the steps and it trails to; Reading novel, Inventorying data, classification data, and tabling the data. Besides that, the technique is interpreting the data with mimetic approach in order to relate it with the social reality.

## ABSURDISM: A LETTER TO CAMUS

The absurd has a long and complex extraction, especially with many dissimilar descriptions and definitions of the word and the concept of it. (see Fotiade, 2001: 2-4; Cornwell, 2006: 2-32). However, if it has to take the red line of all definitions and ambiguities of it, it will be clear if it is known that the absurdist idea is actually how individuals are alive in a world where meaning does not exist and work, even with powerful wish of human for importance to exist. Equally with this view, in Camus's vision, individuals must know that this is the situation where they are given the possibilities to move to a new situation, happiness, even freedom without any attention to the forbidding realities of the circumstances.

More specifically, the absurdist idea is that people live in a universe that has no meaning, despite an intense human desire for meaning to exist. In Camus's view,

individuals must come to recognize that this is the situation; with this recognition, people can then move to a new state, happy, despite the grim realities of the situation. (Bloom, 2008: 13).

In his first major philosophical essay, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Camus improves the idea of the absurd to work as the existential condition of man. This idea is indirectly known by existentialist writers who admire Camus. However, Camus reflects that the absurd is a wider value and it even produces a certain existential dilemmas in its philosophical way. The absurd is the existential situation that emerges from the conflict between the sentimental human being and the emotionlessly uncaring world in where human lives. In Camus's own words, he notes it as "the metaphysical state of the conscious man." (Camus, 1991a: 40). Human actually have a kind of desire for a structure, an order and an arrangement in the world. Also, they actually search for a goal, purpose and happiness in their lives and the world which offers something absolute. Therefore, the alertness of an absurd, for Camus, is the same of getting "the depths of the turning around" (Voegelin, 2002: 369) and from these depths, the one should not stop at any point.

To explain this concept of absurdity, the structure which has been said is both the human being and the world itself. All the system, that has been put and trapped human to do it, cannot be seen as the truth. The truth is always out there, it is beyond to the things have been determined and Camus writes, "I said that the world is absurd, but I was too hasty. This world in itself is not reasonable, that is all that can be said. But what is absurd is the confrontation of this irrational [world] and the wild longing for clarity whose call echoes in the human heart" (Camus, 1991a: 21).

Visibly, Camus recognizes the importance to the idea of absurdity. It is not just one typical of the human interface with the outside world, more than that, it is the describing typical. In this book again, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, he asserts to reveal that the absurd is not everlasting, but it is committed to man's universe. The man's universe means that human is part of the universe so that there is a fulfillment should be recognized. Fulfillment cannot be gotten by any leaps (rationality, system and even planned goal) because this will end to the extent of escaping the absurd itself. As an alternative, man obligate to "forge a unity for himself" (Camus, 1996b: 41) in the real material world.

From here, Camus sees that the absurd as one of three important elements that set up the stage of existence. Absurdity exists from the battle between the two other elements; the first is the "human nostalgia" for harmony or clearness and the second is the "unreasonable silence of the world." (Camus, 1991a: 28). So, the notion of



absurdity is affected by the condition of the two elements. If humans do not have any nostalgia for harmony and the unreasonable silence of the world, it will not seem to be absurd. Everything should not be always intelligible or rational to be trusted, because it is always already flowing. Reason will just take human into its non-existence because it will slave human to be like a setup of machines. Camus seems to strengthen his assumption from his *Writing on Plotinus*, a doctoral dissertation, as he observes that "[...] if things are intelligible, it is because things are beautiful." (McBride, 1992: 126). Comparing intelligibility and beauty seems to compare between the reason and the aesthetic and Camus is clearly struggling to use aesthetics rather than reason, art rather than philosophy, in order to launch the general self-possession of human. By opposing the perspective to see the truth or world, human will find what so called as value, "often the values on which our life is built have almost collapsed. But never before have these values and those we love been threatened all together and all at the same time. Never before have we been so completely handed over to total destruction." (Camus, 1996a: 149).

The manner to include value in his philosophy, for Stephen Eric Bronner, has made Camus to be classified as a philosopher of morality. Camus' moralist "offers a new existential challenge: the possibility of experiencing happiness without hope." (Bronner, 1999: 47). Agreeing to Judt, Camus hopes to reach a condition of how "absolute standards and measures of morality, justice and freedom whenever it was appropriate to do so." (Judt, 1998: 124). In slimmer supposition, to lift up beauty over rationality means to give human's life with freedom rather than fake systems and false rules. Therefore, as Thorson writes in his article, written only four years after Camus's death, Camus is "like Plato, [...] his major task as an intellectual became the search for reasons which would support the restoration of order and justice." (Thorson, 1964: 283)

In the relation of those, if the happenings of the world explain some rational harmony of resolution, then the nostalgia of human will never discovery the existence to be absurd. Camus strengthens the note that the existence of the absurd, by displaying the human nostalgia for harmony and intelligibility, is unreal and he adds that the irrational world will never fulfill this nostalgia but it is the real one from absurd way.

The concept of "human nostalgia" itself is on loan from the idea of one of Neo-Platonist philosophers, Plotinus (see also Herbert Hochberg, Albert Camus and the *Ethics of Absurdity*) who sees that human nostalgia is from the own personal experiences and it is using a scheme as Descartes's doubt. To doubt means to think and to think means to conclude the truth. However,

Camus explains that he "[...] can negate everything of that part of me that lives on vague nostalgias, except this desire for unity, this longing to solve, this need for clarity and cohesion." (Camus, 1991a: 51). It depicts that Camus does not conclude the search to an end of a goal. It is just an aim which is in process because goal means a systematic idea rationally.

The nausea toward rationality can be understood because of the curse of Sisyphus. Goal will never satisfy human and even truth which is provided by rationality. Human should free as human rather than as a machine of rationality. Walsh concludes Camus' idea as quoted below, When all doctrines and principles have become opaque, then it becomes a matter of necessity to return to the sources in experience on which all truth ultimately rests. [...] This is why the thinkers who have worked through the crisis of modernity prefer to communicate their insights through novels. [...] the medium of fictional literature allows a more immediate presentation of the experience. [For Camus] the novel as a means of exploring the directional tensions of reality, rather than as a vehicle for expounding the author's own monological point of view. (Walsh, 1990: 219-220).

All the way to oppose rationality has brought Camus to consider fiction and it is certainly the precise act of negating all certainties from uncertainties which is actually produced by rationality. Camus recognizes reason as the power that pushes the human nostalgia for being confusion. This desire for intelligibility, recognized as reason, is certainly fixed to the world where human lives in an effort to discovery the meaning of life. Camus claims that the rational hunt of understanding will always poison and manipulate human's life as he writes implicitly that "understanding the world for a man is reducing it to the human, stamping it with his seal." (Camus, 1991a: 17). Reason always strains in demands, not only in the existence of the composed sense of reality, but also in the pre-existence of the sense of reality. The intended problem is language or symbolical world. Cecil L. Eubanks and Peter A. Petrakis, in their journal entitled *Reconstructing the World: Albert Camus and the Symbolization of Experience*, writes this Camus' assertion, "necessarily ambiguous and containing elements of the non-rational, symbols act as meditations between the so-called empirical world and the world of imagination. They are not literal descriptions of that empirical reality, nor are they simply flights of fancy. Symbols are both bound and free (Cecil & Petrakis, 1999: 295-296).

Camus's adds it innocently that, "I don't know whether this world has any meaning that transcends it. But I know that I do not know that meaning and that it is impossible for me just now to know it." (Camus, 1991a:

51). Camus rubbishes any effort to trait meaning to the world which is separated from the field of human experience as he explains that there are "two certainties—appetite for the absolute and for unity and the impossibility of reducing this world to a rational and reasonable principle." (Camus, 1991a: 51). By this statement, Camus has offended this human principle as the game that traps to be played as Camus states in the preface of *Lyrical and Critical Essays*, "the hero of my book is condemned because he does not play the game" (Camus, 1970: 335-336) and "[...] there is thus a metaphysical honor in enduring the world's absurdity." (Camus, 1991a: 93). And here, Camus does not assume that reason is reliable and the limited nature of human reason contributes to the existence of the absurd. Camus recognizes the limit of human reason as a vital element of the absurd. The capability to diagnose these limits founded on practical experience is known as lucidity as Camus writes, "If there is an absurd, it is in man's universe. The moment the notion transforms itself into eternity's springboard, it ceases to be linked to human lucidity." (Camus, 1991a: 35). Also he strengthens that "the absurd is lucid reasoning noticing its limits." (Camus, 1991a: 49).

The capacity of doing lucidity prevents false understanding in experience because when reason is aroused and lucidity is locked up. From Camus's explanation, "this ridiculous reason is what sets me in opposition to all creation" (Camus, 1991a: 51) and human should think something beyond rationality. Everything is actually comes from nothing and it means that "if we believe in nothing, if nothing has any meaning and if we can affirm no values whatsoever, then everything is possible and nothing has any importance." (Camus, 1991b: 5). This also has led Camus to believe in nothing and to be an absurdist who is atheist as Todd notes that "Camus had freed himself from God, but not from the need to construct a code of behavior." (Todd, 2000: 45)

This all is coined in one condition that explains how absurd should be understood as it is explained in *The Myth of Sisyphus*. Controversially, Camus completes this idea with saying that suicide is an irrational response for the man who understands his absurd fate; "Living an experience, a particular fate, is accepting it fully. Now, no one will live this fate knowing it to be absurd, unless he does everything to keep before him that absurd brought to light by that consciousness. Negating one of the terms of the opposition on which he lives amounts to escaping it" (Camus, 1991a: 53).

The absurdity of life is the predictability of death so that suicide sums to the whole recognition of the absurd consequence and it is death. An absurdist can diagnose

the truthful existence of death through lucidity, but he/she cannot receive the consequence, "in its way, suicide settles the absurd. It engulfs the absurd in the same death, it is simultaneously awareness and rejection of death." (Camus, 1991a: 54).

Accordingly, Camus distinguishes revolt or rebellion as the logical consequence of absurdist reasoning; "that revolt is the certainty of a crushing fate, without the resignation that ought to accompany it" (Camus, 1991a: 54) and this idea is mostly exploited in *The Rebel*. Camus's focus in *The Rebel* is not criminalities such as Meursault's crime in *The Stranger*, but it is the "logical crime" that is intentional and often defensible for unexplainable reason (see Camus, 1991b: 3).

Rebellion is born of the spectacle of irrationality, confronted with an unjust and incomprehensible condition. But its blind impulse is to demand order in the midst of chaos and unity in the very heart of the ephemeral. It protests, it demands, it insists that the outrage be brought to an end, and that what up to now has been built on shifting sands should henceforth be founded on rock. [...] Camus considered this protest to be evidence of the absurdity of existence, but rebellion also serves as evidence for the existence of values. If one rebels against the absurd, obviously there is something of value—presumably something that is not absurd—for which to fight. "Not every value entails rebellion, but every act of rebellion tacitly invokes a value." (Camus, 1991b: 10 & 14).

Camus continues it by adding that, "when he rebels, a man identifies himself with other men and so surpasses himself, and from this point of view human solidarity is metaphysical." (Camus, 1991b: 17). The metaphysical experience is actually the atmosphere which cannot be explained and the truth rotates around it as its process. Thus, to see an absurdist action, common people will never understand and that is why, it is always strange to read the earliest part of Meursault when he replies nothing expression about his mother's death; "after all, I don't see why I should apologize for being interested in those who live outside Grace. It is high time we began concerning ourselves with them, since they are most numerous." (Camus, 1970: 345-346.). This becomes the important point to take that Absurd philosophy Camus has offered is actually having a center to set human free from fake world.

## LACAN'S TRIADIC ORDER

Lacan's treat on psychoanalysis is distributed into three phases/orders; they are the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real. The Imaginary is actually the leading phase of a subject to know the world. It is like a baby who does not know who he or she is. The baby even

does not about whether the one he or she sees is him or herself, so that it is also known as the Mirror stage. The Mirror stage has always been viewed by Lacan as a solid piece of theorizing, a paradigm retaining its value to explain human self-consciousness, aggressivity, rivalry, narcissism, jealousy and fascination with images in general. (see Nobus, 1998: 104). Hereby, Lacan values that human grows just like a *hommelette* (broken egg) which cannot patch the fragmented part into the original one. Subject is empty and the way subject knows about him/herself is through the other one. The life of the subject is also subjective of something outside the subject; "Each human being is in the being of the other" (Lacan, 1988b: 72). At this order, subject still does not know what "meaning" is, therefore subject does not included in society (society has ruled the "meaning" such as Law, Morality, Ethic and other rules) and it means that Mirror stage shows that subject is still individual because the prior is the ego rather than the social or the other's wants. "The mirror stage is a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation—and which manufactures for all the subject, caught up in the lure of spatial identification [...]—and, lastly, to the assumption of the armour of an alienating identity" (Lacan, 1977: 4).

It is different with the Imaginer, the Symbolic should be understood as an order when the subject is castrated by symbolical world; something which is carved in language and it is understood as something external of the subject. The process, of course, is through language mechanisms, especially the signifiers. Lacan analogizes it with his elemental practice, "it is the discourse of the circuit in which I am integrated ... because one can't stop the chain of discourse, and it is precisely my duty to transmit it in its aberrant form to someone else" (Lacan, 1988b: 89).

Accordingly, the Symbolic is similar to dynamism from external to the subject to receive without any negotiation to reject it. Subject is like a void can and it is filled by something or subject is like a dead machine then a system is set up to do it unconsciously. Subject is only accepting it without any negotiation to deny it. By receiving this, subject can comprehend something such as meaning, him/herself, and the big Other (it will be discussed in the next part). From being castrated by the symbolical structure, subject finally becomes the subject of symbolic and this why subject's unconscious is structured like language. Living under symbolic makes something real becomes unreal because the meaning sometimes blurs it away such as people who suffer for "Nationality", suffer for "God", suffer for "Money" and even suffer for "being Beautiful" and other names which

are transcendent. As long as subject lives under this symbolic, subject never enter the Real order.

The Real is an order after the Symbolic but subject is too afraid to face it and even to enter in it. For Lacan, our reality consists of symbols and the process of signification so that something can be called as reality must be covered with the symbolic order or social reality. For example, people will see flag (made of cloths) as "Nationality" or people will recognize money (the paper with presidents picture on it) as "Pride" or something else. The real ones (cloths, paper and other things) are erased and buried by its symbolic meaning. Thus, the Real becomes the unknown order (because subject never realizes it and has been adapted not to be with it but the symbolic) that exists at the edge of this socio-symbolic universe whose insistent pressure surround subject unceasingly without being recognized. The Real is also a very contradictory idea; it chains and stabilizes the social reality (the social world cannot exist without it) but it also destabilizes that reality. As an similarity, the Real is "like spat-out chewing gum in the street, remains glued to one's heel." (Lacan, 1988c: 40). This example shows that people do not see and recognize that there is always something there but it is not noticed and even it is ignored because people are forced to pay attention for something bared to see (cloths, skirt, make-ups, hairs, perfume and other things). The glue is like an object, it is an "object that is nowhere articulated, it is a lost object, but paradoxically an object that was never there in the first place to be lost" (Lacan, 1992: 58) and it is "the cause of the most fundamental human passion" (Lacan, 1992: 97).

The presence of the Real through an object is what it is called as semblance, and the object is known as the *objet petit a*, or object cause of desire. It functions to fill subject's search for the unreachable the big Other. The symbolic will never be searched because what subject knows about something to be chased is just the semblance object and a moment to reach it (I am happy if I have Land Rovers) just gives *jouissance*, a term that means "combination between pleasure and pain." (Homer, 2005: 89). In Lacan's terminology, *jouissance* persists and makes subject feels that it is undeniable call. The call from outside seems to ask "isn't there something else you could do, something different you could try?" rather than to order "Let's do that again!" (see Fink, 2002: 35). However, the discussion about it will be exploited more in this following part.

## DESIRE(D) IN LACAN'S PERSPECTIVE

Desire (*désir*) in Lacan's perspective is the term used in the French translations of Freud's term *Wunsch*, which is translated as wish by Strachey in the Standard Edition. Therefore, Lacan's English translators are in a dilemma

because whether they should translate *désir* to wish which is closer to Freud's *Wunsch*, or they should translate *désir* as desire which is closer to the French term but far from Freud's term. However, all of Lacan's English translators finally have decided that the English term desire should be carried as a category in which it is far wider although it is more abstract than any employed by Freud himself (see Macey, 1995: 80).

Desire is one of important concepts in Lacan's thought as Lacan who follows Baruch Spinoza in arguing that "desire is the essence of man" (Lacan, 1964: 275; see Spinoza, 1677: 128) and it becomes, at the same time, the heart of human existence as the fundamental issue of psychoanalysis. Lacan's thought of desire is always about unconscious desire because Lacan sees conscious desire as the unconscious desire that affects subject's psyche as he says that "the motives of the unconscious are limited [...] to sexual desire [...]. The other great generic desire, that of hunger, is not represented." (Lacan, 1966: 142). Therefore, it is only possible to recognize one's desire when it is articulated in speech (represented) as Lacan articulates that "it is only once it is formulated, named in the presence of the other, that desire, whatever it is, is recognized in the full sense of the term." (Lacan, 1988a: 183). Finally, in psychoanalysis, "what's important is to teach the subject to name, to articulate, to bring this desire into existence." (Lacan, 1988b: 228).

On the other hand, there is a limit to how far desire can be articulated in speech because of a fundamental "incompatibility between desire and speech" (Lacan, 1966: 275). It is very important to know that the unconscious is not something which is not known, but it is something which cannot be known. So, every time speech tries to articulate desire, there is always a leftover, a surplus, or excess which go beyond speech. Here, Lacan relates desire with demand and need as he insists on differentiating between these three concepts in 1957 and it develops in 1958 (see Lacan, 1994: 100-101 & 125).

Need itself is a purely biological instinct. It is a hungriness which arises according to the necessities of the organism and which decreases completely (although it can be temporarily) when it is satisfied. The subject is unable to satisfy the own needs and subject depends on the other to satisfy, so the subject must express the needs outspokenly (in language) and the need changes into a demand because it must be expressed in demand. Here, the demand presently has a double function; serving both as an articulation of the need and as a demand for love (care) but it has to be noted that "desire is neither the appetite for satisfaction, nor the demand for love, but the difference that results from the subtraction of the first from the second" (Lacan, 1966: 287) and it "[...] begins to

take shape in the margin in which demand becomes separated from need." (Lacan, 1966: 311).

If a need can be satisfied and then stop motivating the subject until another need arises, desire can never be satisfied because it is constant in its pressure eternally. In conclusion, to say about desire, it means that to say about two kind of desires; it is to fulfill and to become what the (big) Other wants. There is always desire but desire has no object, it is only the desire for something missing, and it contains a never-ending search for the missing object; "in the absence of a real object, the infant reproduces the experience of the original satisfaction in a hallucinated form." (Laplanche & Pontalis 1986: 24). For that reason, the important opinion, the relationship between fantasy and desire is that, "fantasy is not the object of desire, but its setting" (Laplanche & Pontalis 1986: 26) and it functions "as an empty surface, as a kind of screen for the projection of desires." (Žižek, 1992: 8). Therefore, to say it frankly, fantasy (Che Vuoi? or what do You want from me?) is not a condition in which a one desires for something and then fantasizing it, but it is actually the scheme that makes the subject desire for something and it exists before desire.

## MEURSAULT' ABSURD HORIZON IN HIS DESIRES

It is actually the synonymous generalization of absurd philosophy presented in this novel and Meursault should be seen as an absurdist, not only because he is the main character, but also because he applies what Camus rules on the dice of the social world as an absurd one.

The question then can be offered about Meursault, who nearly closes to be said as the absurdist. Meursault is a sociopathic half-man and half-inhuman who likes smoking cigarettes and once he shoots people (the Arab). He is the protagonist-narrator of his absurdist narration. He is an isolated and deathly straightforward man who rejects to lie about himself to save his life. He is a simple man, whose tempers are verbalized agonizingly by the supremacies of nature than by the rationality. He is an independent man who will not accept God or any of society's prescriptions for happiness; a young jerk, a bit ambitionless and uninterested in exploring opportunities for growth.

However, there is a distinct dark side to Meursault even before he pulls the trigger. He is calm and not particularly obedient and he does not see a difference between being in love and being in lust because Meursault. The way he stubbornly refuses to believe in life after death, to seek God out to escape execution, is just ended by his calmness about or acceptance of death.

If it is looked on the surface, it is tough to see any transformation within Meursault. He starts off



uninterested in life, and he ends up with uninterested in life. Meursault makes no decisions at the beginning of the book. If he is happy, it is because he is passively so. If he is annoyed, he is passively annoyed. Meursault cannot even commit actions on his own self. Marriage, no marriage, and he does not care of it. As he has told in his narration time and time again, it is all the same, either way. He does not even shoot the Arab according to his narration, "the trigger gave." Now, there is an interesting (and incredibly important) line, before the murder, "We [Raymond and Meursault] stared at each other without blinking, and everything came to a stop there between the sea, the sand, and the sun, and the double silence of the flute and the water. It was then that I realized that you could either shoot or not shoot" (Camus, 1989: 56).

Even if there is no meaning to life, every person faces a choice in every situation. No fate and no controlling divinity mean the essential individual freedom. At this point in the novel, conversely, Meursault's sense of disinterestedness prevents his thinking or acting rationally. Consequently, while he considers that choice exists, he has not been able to commit to creating one. He realizes the existence of a choice, but only for a momentum. After that, he is back to indecision choice after all.

To note the absurd philosophy again, it is important to notice how dispassionate Meursault is behaved. He simply does not care of anything even when his mother is passed away as he narrates that, "Maman died today. Or yesterday maybe, I don't know. I got a telegram from the home: "Mother deceased. Funeral tomorrow. Faithfully yours." That doesn't mean anything. Maybe it was yesterday" (Camus, 1989: 1).

This is the opening condemnations of the novel expresses Meursault's absurdist viewpoint on life, his responsive unimportance, insignificance, inconsequence, meaninglessness, triviality or even indifference becomes the major part to irritate human's ethic. Moreover, the unresponsiveness and the detachment to people, also his passive but quiet alienation from the rest of society, have disturbed every normal human, especially about how to do something for mother's funeral. It is also a huge sporadic clue that the protagonist is ignorant and apathetic. He does not even recognize which day his mother passed away and to Meursault, it "doesn't mean anything" anyway. The way to be like this means that Meursault seems to have his own perspective that he does not have to be sad, death is something usual and it must happen to every one therefore he does not have to be so pathetic and afraid of it. This assumption leads to the entrance of the passivity to face life. People may be annoyed by his response but for Meursault, it is the closest he ever gets to being a simple

happy. Thus, the simplification of Meursault's view is that this guy is one cold-fish.

As cold as and as calm as he does, Meursault keeps going to his mother funeral. During the way to go, he meets a soldier but he does not care of him although he invites to talk; "[A] soldier [...] smiled at me and asked if I'd been traveling long. I said, "Yes," just so I wouldn't have to say anything else." (Camus, 1989: 4). This is the fabulous characteristic of his particular trademark of passivity and/or absurdism, Meursault does something just so he will not have to do something else, not even with a soldier. For common people, soldiers a state apparatus and they must have something to be respected. People will be afraid to ignore them because their existence indicates that there is something to be restricted or tough problem such as war, rebellion, resistance, or political demonstration. However, the fear caused by the soldiers' value does not affect to Meursault. It is very interesting to see that Meursault's view on the social construction is different from the society commonly; he has his own value and everything constructed by the society is something unnatural. Therefore, for him, social order is so absurd to be obeyed and followed, while when he is out of this structure, he is judged by the society as an absurd one. It is when he has in the funeral and he meets his mother's friends.

Meursault is like a hollow content, he is like a spectator in social life, and may even be somewhat solipsistic. Solipsism is the credence that a one is the only thing he/she can truly know to exists, such as he knows that he is not a creation of the imagination, but he cannot say the same for everyone else around him. It means that a solipsistic one will always trust him as the only thing in the world that can see the truth of him but he cannot tell it to anyone because he must think that people will never be able to understand it. If this is a true fact, it will explain the reason why Meursault finds it problematic to sympathize or empathize in any way to other people.

This is what happens inside of Meursault, the ignorance and the neglecting to express something is actually something blur to explain because he is the only one who knows it. His mother's friends cannot understand him even the nurse. The nurse comes and seems to teach Meursault about death; "She said, "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." She was right. There was no way out." (Camus, 1989:17). The nurse says both the weather conditions and human condition that the sun's hotness is inevitable, unavoidable, unpreventable, inexorable, inescapable and patent, and it is just as death which is absolutely going to happen. There was no way out to escape and to stop it working except through acceptance against it.

Camus agrees to what the nurse sees to this life that everything has been absolutely under control and human just does something which wastes their time. Death will come, curse will always work, and happiness will end in nothing. Human cannot avoid death so thus, the thing can be done is waiting for it. This reaction, of course, invites the questions from the people around, especially when they look Meursault's reaction of his mother's burial. After the burial, he is still the same, no expression and nothing felt to have happened; "It occurred to me that anyway one more Sunday was over that Maman was buried now, that I was going back to work, and that, really, nothing had changed." (Camus, 1989: 24).

Meursault is capable to say that "nothing had changed" after his mother's death and it indicates that he has no burden to be imposed on his life. There is nothing important to weep and cry; it is just the circulation of life and he is not living with her anyway. This is logic basically, but not emotionally and sensitively, it is very crucial that Meursault has dead heart. His heart does not function and he uses his radical logic and this logical perspective is the most essential thing for life as the curse of Sisyphus in the previous references. Something which is seen by human as the fate and destination, is actually something which is so illogical because human is willing to receives the sorrow for something good after while it will end with sorrow. The important for life is just waiting for death and human must know that is why it is not important to be shocked, surprised and sad if human knows that the others are dead because they actually have already known it.

On the other plot, Meursault narrates that he is in the social relation to Raymond as a friend, but of course he is still passive for this relation. This is how Meursault views people at the beginning of his narration. He either wants nothing to do with them or he falls casually into supposed friendships as like with Raymond. Once moment, Meursault joins Raymond for dinner not because he has a good reason, but because there is no reason exciting as a dissimilar response; he says, "I've got some blood sausage and some wine at my place. How about joining me?" I figured it would save me the trouble of having to cook for myself, so I accepted." (Camus, 1989: 28). It means that he has no other purpose of joining Raymond, neither for friendship nor companionship, but for nothing and no reason behind it. It is proven by a reason when he has been at Raymond's dinner, Meursault has no willing to say something, he says, "I didn't say anything, and he asked me again if I wanted to be pals. I said it was fine with me: he seemed pleased." (Camus, 1989: 29). Raymond Sintès speaks to Meursault, he tries to pull him in to a conversation for closing the relation, but Meursault passively responds and minimally replies what Raymond

needs for the response. He does not reply to ask and talk, and he even notices the reactions of Raymond with a weird gaze because Raymond "seemed pleased" of what Meursault reacts to him while Meursault does not interest to talk with him as what he does by watching him through a fish tank.

He [Raymond] asked if I thought she was cheating on him, and it seemed to me she was; if I thought she should be punished and what I would do in his place, and I said you can't ever be sure, but I understood his wanting to punish her. [...] I tried my best to please Raymond because I didn't have any reason not to please him. (Camus, 1989: 32).

Meursault's response to Raymond's question indicates his confidence that one can never be sure about anything in life. Raymond seems to ask the suggestion for Meursault that his girl can be cheating, but for sure, Meursault has no reason not to respond it in a good way, therefore he pleases Raymond. Meursault actually does not have anything to do with Raymond's demand secretly in his mind, however, this even becomes the point Meursault sees that there is always something affects human's thought and it is always already conditioned by something outside of human's will, whatever it is called, it can be fate, destiny, or providence, but for Meursault, it is the curse and human should not follow its rules.

Moreover, Meursault himself, on the other hand, does not feel any of these normal emotions in him. Here, the major theme can be seen is the anti-social perspective Meursault has done to Raymond, he joins in his dinner but he does not want to talk to Raymond. It means that there is something absurd happened in this case, what Meursault does is something out of social context, he does something people do not do. He does not care of people and he just cares of him. He has his own perspective and world; no one can interrupt and enter his dimension. This absurd way is applied tightly in his reaction to Raymond and it represents Meursault's social relation.

Again, once moment when his boss offers him a position in his job, Meursault seems not to care about it, while most of people will have something for this changing.

I said that people never change their lives, that in any case one life was as good as another and that I wasn't dissatisfied with mine here at all. [...] I would rather not have upset him, but I couldn't see any reason to change my life. Looking back on it, I wasn't unhappy. When I was a student, I had lots of ambitions like that. But when I had to give up my studies I learned very quickly that none of it really mattered. (Camus, 1989: 41).

Meursault's response to his boss's offer of a position in Paris deceives his credence that the certain uselessness

surrounds the change and human existence. His response and comment also indicate that each individual's existence is fundamentally identical to everybody else's, and that there is no logical sense in changing human own life, something that can be changed is just he surface while the existence without the value, all are same. This is most important part should be observed; Meursault runs the novel and runs back to this idea of existential equality at the end of the novel, at which point he affirms the reason for it such as a truest claim that everyone will die soon or later. Meursault is so unemotional here that he cannot recognize much of a difference between unhappy and happy, hopeful and hopeless, neither both because he is just a content or a little chunk of rubbish in middle of the road. Life will keep going, with or without him. Human's life is the analogy of how something natural has been created, there is something cannot be covered that existentially, everybody are same, and everybody will have something same in the end of their life, buried in funeral with death.

Most of these issues may lead this discussion into passivity, while the more important thing to see this as the rebellion against the system stuck in the social construction. Either way, Meursault looks so more interested in the route of a resistance than any sort of connection, relation, and companion to other people. However, the important thing is the approach that Meursault cannot understand people and people cannot understand him. Meursault observes the people cautiously, he even utters that, "not one detail of their faces or clothes escape" him, but it is still "hard for [him] to believe they really exist." Thus, there remain a number of pieces of the Meursault horizon; Meursault is passive, unemotional, ignorant of himself, and social nonchalance.

Apparently, all of these individualities are related to the condition where Meursault suffers, however, it is indeed the process of suffering. The suffering is the key of how people lives in suffering like Sisyphus. This is absurd life where human cannot abandon and release the suffering, so that Meursault, he is the example of how human is cursed to be trapped in the form of life's problem.

This passivity is also shown in the case when Meursault is imprisoned. Meursault seems not to care to the law. He does not want to pay any attention to anything. He even shakes the policeman's hand coolly as if he will not be sentenced to die. The police is the one who has the control for the law which is imposed to Meursault but Meursault does not have any fear to him. His ignorance and unawareness to the law becomes the other important characters shown by Meursault and this is one of important part of Meursault's absurdity.

At first, I didn't take him seriously. I was led into a curtained room; there was a single lamp on his desk which was shining on a chair where he had me sit while he remained standing in the shadows. I had read descriptions of scenes like this in books and it all seemed like a game to me. [...] On my way out, I was even going to shake his [the policeman's] hand, but just in time, I remembered that I had killed a man. (Camus, 1989: 63).

Meursault does not want to take the investigation seriously; he feels that he has done nothing wrong. It shows difficult for him to look himself as a criminal, because he really believes in the easiness of his case that he was at the wrong place at the wrong time when the assassination happened. For Meursault, he was just destined to be at the beach and encountered to the Arabs. Everything has been decided so that is why life is all a matter of absurd and people may say it as the bad luck for Meursault. Of course, Meursault takes it easy because it is just the way life goes to be like a game and human is the player of the absurd setup game.

Meursault feels little or no personal regret for having murdered the Arab; nonetheless, he currently sees that he has done something immoral according to society's principles which are morally. For Meursault, what the society sees is the absurd one because they are trapped in the values which they create and they follow what they create while it is not natural. It is just a game and the game traps human. Over again, he is unable to feel emotion for himself and he categorizes it logically and objectively based on his own rationality.

Besides that, in the custodial time, a chaplain is sent to Meursault for enlighten Meursault's soul after being a murderer. Meursault is considered to be guilty and full of sin because of killing other human. This speech and sermon from the chaplain to Meursault just become nothing. Meursault does not take it seriously. The sermon is just the twitter of unimportant things. For Meursault the existence of the chaplain in front of him just results the debate for him because he has own perspective rather than taking the sermon of the chaplain.

[...] drawing himself up to his full height and asking me if I believed in God. I said no. He sat down indignantly. He said it was impossible; all men believed in God, even those who turn their backs on him. That was his belief, and if he were ever to doubt it, his life would become meaningless. "Do you want my life to be meaningless?" He shouted. As far as I could see, it didn't have anything to do with me, and I told him so. But from across the table he had already thrust the crucifix in my face and was screaming irrationally, "I am a Christian. I ask Him to forgive you your sins. How can you not believe that He suffered for you?" (Camus, 1989: 69).

From the quotation above, the point that can be seen is the argumentation from Meursault; he does not believe in God. So, the meeting between the atheist and the religious man can emerge the debatable argumentation. Meursault does not believe in God because he believes that man should be free (according to Camus' philosophy and what Meursault has done for his entire life) while the chaplain is a Christian. As Christian, the chaplain wants to show his Love as what Jesus has taught to the people, so that is why he wants to pray for God to forgive Meursault. These oppositional characters become the raising part of the conflict and what Meursault does to the chaplain by neglecting God, shows that God in human belief is also the part of curse that traps human to rebel their life. Sisyphus lifts the stone to the summit of mount then the stone is rolled down again and he has to lift it up again endlessly. The One who curses Sisyphus is God while if he knows that the stone will be rolled down, Sisyphus should not lift it up because it just wastes the time. For Meursault, the one who believes in God seems to be so naïve as if life is God's own and human is cursed to live in life. If that so, Meursault can be right on the way he rejects the life by passionless because everything will be ended in nothing and human just follow it. The only thing should be done is breaking the curse and it is rebellion. Being passive and rejecting social rule show that Meursault is an absurdist; he becomes the absurd man for society while he is free from the absurd curse in human life. He rejects the justice which puts the meaning of his existence on his faith in God. Meursault rejects the meaning that the rest of society seems so twisted on accepting and dismisses it instead as irrational.

Finally, to conclude the absurd aspects in Meursault, it is very important to understand that Meursault tries to reject society, especially to every rule and law. The morality of an absurd is immorality for the society. However, there is also important to understand that the passivity here refers to silence as rebellion. Meursault is not only accepting but he plays the game with another way. He does not want to be ruled by the society and he becomes free.

Meursault is mentally separated from the world around him. Happenings that would be very important for most people generally, such as a marriage proposal or the mother's death, do not become the problems to him. It is not a sentimental level in his emotion. His emotion is being emotionless. He simply does not care of either his mother's death or Marie's marriage proposal. Meursault declares it directly and openly and it means that he actually an honest. He does not think of hiding his absence of feeling by removing false/fake tears over his mother's death. For him, it may be very absurd to know that human really knows about death, everyone must be

dead. Therefore, it is so strange to know that human cries after someone's death because they know it very well that death will come. There is nothing to cry and there is nothing to regret, it is an absolute phase of human and all human know it well. In showing his meaninglessness, Meursault indirectly challenges society's moral standards which dictate that people should feel sad over death. Because Meursault does not feel sad, society sees him as an stranger, a danger, even a monster. At his trial or court-martial, for instance, the fact shows that he has no sentimental response to his mother's death and it harms his character socially as if he does not care of another person's life. On the other hands, Meursault should be seen as neither moral nor immoral. He is neither immoral nor moral because he simply does not determine the difference between good and bad in morality inside his own perspective. For example, when Raymond asks him to write a letter that will cover Raymond's violence over his mistress, Meursault uninterestedly agrees because he feels that he does not have any reason to say no. He does not put any value of decision on his act and he writes the letter principally because he has the time and the capacity to do so. If he does not have it, he will not do it.

Continuously, it elaborates the desire of an absurdist who apparently seems not to desire, so it is like chasing in a phantom circle. However, the important clue to hint in this ambiguous case here is the position of an absurdist. The absurdist cannot disappear from a fact that he is a subject in whom he is under dictation of symbolical structure, thus Meursault disposition of the social will guide this analysis into the desire he has, as Lacan determines that desire is always the desire for the Other; either fulfilling the lack of the big Other and becoming the other through the big Other.

## **DEFENDING THE TWISTED: DESIRES' EFFECT ON MEURSAULT'S ABSURDITY**

After knowing those explanations, subject is a twisted creature because he cannot abandon the external effect. For instance, when a man does good thing, other people can accept it and the other can reject it. Doing good thing and doing bad thing must have the impact and the impact is not from what subject does, but from the external side (the other) who has the missing part of understanding to each other. It is also caused by the fact that there is no certain meaning in symbolical structure; it is just the chains of signifiers, language without absolute meaning behind it.

As an absurdist, Meursault seems to try to escape from symbolical structure and it shown by his rejection against society, morality, law and even the meaning of



life. But, it becomes the paradox when it is known that Meursault is still living socially and he even does not have the answer how he has to live. He just decides to see that life is just waiting for death and death is the ultimate answer for life because taking death will end the suffering of human in life. Being anti-social but still socially and taking life in death are actually part of psychological impact from how desire dictates him as a subject.

Subject is always already constructed by symbolical structure, so that Meursault cannot abandon what has constructed him. It is like talking about a house made by woods, the house cannot exist without the woods because the woods sustain the house to keep standing up. Alike subject, subject is constructed by symbolical structure, therefore everything subject does must be the effect of language, especially about the meaning behind the language. Unluckily, the meaning is the big Other, it is unknown structure that deceives human life. The big Other cannot be understood clearly because it does not exist. People just can understand it through its representations and subject cannot present it totally and wholly. Therefore, it is important to know that even for an absurdist who rejects social form and receiving radical sense of death,

Understanding this calculation, it concludes the impact of desire against the absurd perspective Meursault has. It means that an absurdist also has desire and the desire has the impact toward the absurd perspective in an absurdist, like Meursault. Before talking too much about nothingness or meaninglessness in absurd perspective, it should be understood that the way Meursault thinks about those is triggered by the fantasy. Fantasy is the provider for the scheme for subject to keep his desire or to keep the subject finds a way to fill the call of the big Other. Meursault realizes that life is full of symbolic structures such as law, moral value, social rules and other symbolical structures. Then, Meursault sees the reality of life that life is just a phase to waste and to wait for death. So, life is nothing and meaningless. This perspective is grasped from how fantasy provides the way to see the reality behind the symbolical structures but fantasy keeps Meursault desire to live his meaningless life with doing social things. These social things finally show Meursault's becoming desire.

Meursault tries to reject and ignore his social relations such as to Raymond and to Marie. However, it is important to see that Meursault shows his contradiction by keeping his meaningless life with Raymond and Marie. As it has been shown before that Meursault helps Raymond and he also goes to beach with Raymond that finally leads him to kill Raymond's enemy, the Arab. Besides that, Meursault also goes with Marie, he has

informal relation with Marie. Sexual relation with Marie indicates that Meursault is trapped to his desire which is symbolic. In Lacanian's perspective, sexual relationship does not exist as well as the big Other because sexual relationship is just a relation of two subjects who scrubs their flesh to each other. The man imagines that he is riding horse while the woman imagines that he is ridden by Tom Cruise. Their imagination never meets to each other, moreover, what the man wants is the woman enjoys the penetration while what the woman wants is the man enjoys her vagina. The man's desire is what the woman desires to him while the woman's desire is what the man desires to her. If he wants what she wants while she wants what he wants, these demands will never meet. If these demands never meet, it means that sexual relation does not exist unless two fleshs which are polished to each other and what makes they reach ejaculation or the peak of their enjoyment is their own imagination. If Meursault has relation with Marie, especially sexual relation it has shown important thing that absurdist's desire to reject social relation can be also becoming desire.

## CONCLUSION

Albert Camus' *The Stranger* tells a story of an absurdist, Meursault. He sees the life as a meaninglessness, that is why, in the very beginning of the story, there is told that he does not care of his mother's death. And at the end of story, he sees that life just waits for death because life is nothingness of meaninglessness. However, it is also known that even he rejects society, sees that world is nothingness and meaninglessness and understands that death is the ultimate releasing of the curse of life, Meursault at the reality shows the contradiction on it.

The first, he knows the reality of the world that meaning does not exist while he sees that death is the ultimate thing. Paradoxically, seeing death as the ultimate thing, or seeing the world as the meaninglessness is actually a kind of meaning. So, these contradictions lead this study finds its way to see what an absurdist looks for; it is grounded from his desire. First, he lives socially while he says that he does care of his mother's death.

To explore the first contradiction is seeing Meursault as an individual who rejects meaning in the world; it can be rule, law, social construction and other things. However, the way he rejects meaning is by showing that life is meaninglessness and human just lives for waiting for death. Meaninglessness and death are actually meaning. To reject meaning while offer the negation of meaning that life is nothingness is also actually the meaning. It means that he cannot abandon the existence of meaning in his view. It indicates that as a subject, he lives



under symbolical structure and it turns to be the unknown symbolical structure that he sees death is the ultimate thing for life.

The second explanation that should be known is that Meursault actually needs social relation. He rejects society but he actually cannot live without society. For example, he sees that death is common thing and everybody must die, so he does not care his mother's death. But, in fact, he lives socially; he has the relation to Raymond and Marie. He helps Raymond with saying that he has no reason not to help although he does not need to help Raymond whether he has or does not have reason. The point is, he should not help the other. The fact that he helps Raymond indicates that he has desire while desire is desire of the other. So, the way Meursault helps Raymond precisely shows his desire as the desire of the other. In other hand, Meursault seems to seek the sexual pleasure in his relation to Marie. In Lacanian's perspective, sexual relation does not exist because the pleasure which is got is exactly the pleasure of jouissance, it is fake because it gives the pain on the other side. Sexual relation is symbolical structure of two lovers who scrub their flesh to each other and what makes they get the pleasure is caused by their imaginative (unreal) creation in their mind. This imagination is coming from what the fantasy provides to subject so that subject does know the reality they are doing (scrubbing two flesh). Finally, this is what Lacan says as the symbolical structure, giving the meaning which covers the reality.

Understanding these explanations conclude in a situation that shows the paradox of an absurdist, like Meursault. Even for an absurdist, Meursault cannot abandon the value of symbolical structure because subject is constructed by the symbolical structure. So, everything subject does must be sourced by desire while every desire is symbolic because desire is always desire for the other and it always makes the subject fulfill the question of the big Other. The way to see desire as symbolic is through seeing that desire is demand without need. Eating is need but when a man chooses good-tasted food to eat it turns to be demand. Behind this demand, there is desire from how he chooses the food. This is like what the absurdist does, the way the absurdist sees the world precisely shows his desire to fill the big Other, it can be the nothingness, the meaninglessness, or even the death. It is the fantasy's creation which makes Meursault think like that and it is just a symbolic. On the other hand, Meursault cannot release his relation to social relation because this society helps him to know what he really wants.

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