



Pedagogical Suicide, Philosophy of Nihilism, Absurdity and Existentialism in Albert Camus' *The Myth of Sisyphus* and Its Impact on Post-Independence Odia Literature

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ABSTRACT

The paper tries to unveil the eternal messages of the text '*The Myth of Sisyphus*' which is very useful for each and every nation today and of course for all time to come. How Camus has his deals with the philosophy of absurd and the concept of suicide- are well analysed in order to find a better alternative to live the life. Suicide has been a major problem of the entire world starting from teen agers to the elderly group. For the scribblers like Camus and Kafka 'Suicide' is a major issue for the human existence. But stress has been given here on the optimistic attitude of Camus over the failure and frequent attempts of Sisyphus, the tragic hero of his creation. All of his four parts have been well analysed here in this discussion with brief and significant points. However, eventually we unveil here the art and the science of overcoming from absurdity, the sole and central cause of suicide. On the other hand, how human existence is significant and how he can realize this in every odd, the formulae have been decoded right here in the paper. On the basis and reference to the above doctrines and ideas the impact of these things on Odia literature has been focused.

Keywords: *Suicide, Pedagogical Suicide, Existentialism, Absurdity*

1. INTRODUCTION

The Myth of Sisyphus is one of the best philosophical writings of Camus. Its major and important most contribution to the world of philosophy is its vibrant optimistic attitude. The original name of the text was

Le Mythe de Sisyphe in French. The original edition in French was published in 1942 and the essay was translated by Justin O'Brine with the title '*The Myth of Sisyphus*' which was brought out in 1955. The essay picks out the latent secrets of life and death, the philosophy of death and life and happiness. In the meanwhile he defines and illustrates the philosophy of 'absurd'. He speaks about the logics and connections between reason and meaning. In this particular essay, he has tried to enlighten and focus on the man's futile search for meaning, unity and limpidity in the countenance of an unintelligible world devoid of Divinity and sempiternal and perdurable truths and values. Man needs this realization badly for the true taste of life. But, for this realization, for this perception and discernment of the absurd do we need to suicide? Camus has strictly denies and say, "No, all it needs is revolt". He has, in fact, given the meaning of life by means of 'absurd'. In the essay, particularly, the final chapter gives a sketch of the life of Sisyphus which has its in depth relationship with the absurd life of mankind of the age. Sisyphus has done the meaningless job again and again, i.e., to push the boulder up a mountain only to see it roll down again. The complexity and all the problems of life can be solved by adopting the philosophy what Camus shows in Sisyphus. One must love to work in order to fill his/her own heart. There must not be contentment but one should love duty. Again, s/he must love to work restlessly in order to get that contentment to do the job with perfection may not why it be recurring or repeating in nature.

2. A Silhouette of the Thrust of *The Myth of Sisyphus*

Camus outlines various approaches to the life full of absurdity. Human beings are tragically human beings. Where he proposes God disposes the same thing. This fate of human being especially of the modern man is the fate of the character Sisyphus from the Greek Mythology and vice versa. Sisyphus knows the job is meaningless and it has no successful end. Still he does it repeatedly. It gives him one kind of pleasure which he churns from the busy doings. He was condemned to repeat the absurd task of pushing up the boulder to the tip of the mountain. The only consequence of which is to see the same roll down the mountain repeatedly. In the concluding lines Camus says, "The struggle itself [...] is enough to fill a man's heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy". Hence, he is the hero of the matter. He loves to do his duty in fact and in that he finds the pleasure. We can take here the sayings of Lord Shree Krishna in the *Bhagbat Gita* that we must be happy of our duty not by the products of the same. Camus has several works which also have some serious deals with absurdity. They are: the 1942 novel '*The Stranger*' (Novel), the plays '*The Misunderstanding*' (1942) and '*Caligula*' (1944) and the essay '*The Rebel*' (1951). Camus got the opportunity and the fate of course to get the Prestigious Nobel Prize in 1957. His famous works were of course his novels *La Peste* (*The Plague*) and *L'Étranger* (*The Stranger*) and the philosophical essay *The Myth of Sisyphus*. We can tell his a philosopher basically but apart from that he had a unique identity of a journalist. This immortal author faced his physical death with a car accident in France and passed away in 1960.

3. The Philosophical Debates between Life and Death in *The Myth of Sisyphus*

The Myth of Sisyphus is a full-fledged philosophical pool of literature. Camus has rightly pointed out a number of significant things with regard to life and the spirit and the existence of life. Camus' view-point is very clear and momentous here in this particular text. He concentrates on 'Suicide' and designates it as the only philosophical question with the existence of life. Camus clears his view-point and idea that one must decide at first that should he continue to live or die and then s/he must think of the other business or the byproducts of life. The conception of meaninglessness of own lives make people really meaningless and their lives go in vain. They scarify their lives in meaningless causes. This is stupidity.

Camus, therefore clearly states that one must think, conceive and contemplate about his/her own life very seriously and vividly in order to decide only this whether s/he should live or not. If this is decided once, then the objectives of life are very clear and transparent before you. No one dies for a scientific or any philosophical dissension or contretemps. This advocates that question of meaning supersedes all other scientific and philosophical arguments, debates and dubiety. Camus concludes this thing with the following few words: "I therefore conclude that the meaning of life is the most urgent of questions." [1] Life is the most significant object here, before the author. Therefore he has chosen an optimal and worthy example of Sisyphus from the Greek Mythology.

4. Absurdity & Suicide: Problems and Solutions

Camus focuses on the central philosophy which leads us to suicide. Camus rightly argued in the text that "beginning to think is beginning to be undermined ... the worm is in man's heart." [2] Man is a product who can think and can have a planned dream. He can propose and can make a palace of imagination. But when it collides with the diamond-strong wall of reality, it falls down to be mingled with dust. This rejection of time or Nature or fate or any other kind of thing whatever we may think, gives him a shock. This emanates from the unplumbed within. This is the junction where the fount must be sought. Says Camus that killing self is one kind of confession of an admittance of all the habits and essences of life are not available and are not worth the trouble. By rejecting reasons we become alienated, lonely and deserted in life. Only by means of reasons we can walk well in life. The day, the time until which we accept the logic and reason of life and our motto is clear we continue breathing happily. But when we reject these reasons and become a reasonless being we start falling from the height of living. We soon become alienated. The world seems to be more and more different and hostile. We start feeling and accepting by the by ourselves as a stranger. This is the state of mind where we face a severe transition and this is called 'absurdity'. This feeling particularly, this sensation takes us to the verge of the shore of death. This sensation may lead us to suicide; to quit from life. This world, this life, the pain and problems and happiness of course are the individual patterns of life. We have to follow and understand and should enjoy this pattern, this design and the particular symphony of life. We must churn out happiness out of this

pattern. This is the art of living. Camus has given the secret of life under the guise of absurdity, nihilism and suicide. He is an existentialist. He loves to live and feel the life. His protagonist Sisyphus is like that. The antagonists are fate, time and other things. Still we have to defeat those factors and start living hopefully. Camus suggests that in the story of Sisyphus one must think that he is enjoying the job. Doing nothing is a cursed life. If nothing happens, if nobody comes, nobody goes even anything bad or unpleasant than it is so tragic and painful in life. No go, no life. Life is a continuous run with ambition. Hence, it must be full of objects, determination and happenings.

Absurdity and suicide are the two important aspects of modern life. Suicide precedes absurdity. But there is question on it. Is suicide a solution of all the problems that relate absurdity? Life is not at all absurd. But one makes it absurd only by means of his/her own philosophy, own thinking and own attitude. Those who accept the phenomenon of absurdity in life, it is of course a reasonable response to them. In fact, one's conduct should follow from one's conviction and contention; one's creed and canon. Yes, it is true that conduct does not always follow the standpoint of a being. Even several controversies are also there in people. Those who argue for suicide continue to live and alternatively those who profess that life is meaningful commit suicide.

Yet individuals are latched onto this world by instinct, intuition and knack, by a will to live that precedes philosophical reflection. Thus, they evade questions of suicide and meaning by combining instinct with the hope that something gives life meaning. Yet sometimes the repetition of life brings absurdity. It has a clear-cut adverse impact on the conscious mind of a man. Says Camus, "Rising, streetcar, four hours in the office or factory, meal, four hours of work, meal, sleep, and Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday..."[3] Until the last breath of life there is a chance to think about suicide. It forces a person to answer the essential questions of life 'should I go on?' and this is probably the greatest thing, the deepest philosophy of life we deal with. We know nothing about the ultimate end of life-death. "This heart within me I can feel, and I judge that it exists. This world I can touch, and I likewise judge that it exists. There ends all my knowledge, and the rest is construction."[4] It is equally difficult for a being to know him/herself just as to know death.

"This very heart which is mine will forever remain indefinable to me. Between the certainty I have of my existence and the content I try to give to that assurance, the gap will never be filled. Forever I shall be a stranger to myself..."[5] This heart of a person, means this self-identity is a very delicate thing. To this, it is harder to know. The day and the hour we start knowing ourselves we get the ultimate knowledge. This is the knowledge of existence and this is self-consciousness too. Richard Barnett says in his essay "Suicide and Atheism: Camus and *The Myth of Sisyphus*"- "This dissatisfaction with conventional morality was present on the personal, as well as philosophical, level. In the vast Western industrial and post-industrial societies, the concept of personal freedom and individuality became compromised. In the face of mass conformity – the 'herd morality', as Martin Heidegger described it – could each individual assert his or her own unique identity? At the start of the century an increasingly pessimistic Friedrich Nietzsche had prophesied 'the death of God', and the events following his prediction had for many destroyed any possibility of faith in a benevolent creator. The question of meaning was once again raised. Where could the human race look for truth, for knowledge, for some comprehension of what had happened? Religious belief provided little more than a dead end. Science and rationality seemed empty after so much incomprehensible suffering. Political and social structures provided no answers; were they not to blame, at least in part, for encouraging hatred and division? This problem – the source of meaning in a Godless universe – was at the core of existentialist theory, and was addressed directly by Albert Camus in *The Myth of Sisyphus*." [6]

In fact, when we fail to understand our inner self and the meaning of the outer world even after our thousand wills and desires the life turns absurd to us. Where there is absurdity there is an inability to know the self, the inner personality and reality. Therefore Camus says, "...what is absurd is the confrontation of this irrational and the wild longing for clarity whose call echoes in the human heart."[7] Everything is followed by a pattern, a kind of design. The entire world is a codified meaningful object to us and it is codified differently for different beings. When a man fails to decode the same s/he feels desperate and hopeless and everything looks absurd to him. "But I know that I do not know that meaning and that it is impossible for me just now to know it."[8] From the very beginning of our understanding and knowledge

we start knowing ourselves and to the world around us. We try and in this trying we live our life. To get the meaning of the design and the ultimate pattern makes us more strong and failing from which makes us equally weaker. In response, we are tempted to leap into reliance and more particularly belief of self, but the honest know that they do not understand, and they must learn “to live without appeal...”[9] From this angle of philosophy we need to learn the art of life but an appeal. Camus has given some beautiful advices in this regard. The problem of absurdity can occur to any modern man. However, we must exercise our freedom, try to know the world around us the more we can, and finally should revolt against the absurd till the final breath. This is the best thing ever we can do. This is the art of encountering absurdity in life and of course, the science to deal the cases carefully.

The Myth of Sisyphus is a beautiful example of the real situation of any modern man. It is as symbolic as amusing. It has a symbolic approach in its one end and a serious approach at the other hand. Both the ends and hands of the text are significant and just for the existence of life. In the Myth of Sisyphus, it is very clearly demonstrated-the ultimate destiny of modern man. It is said by many of the critics that the fate of Sisyphus is the fate of any person, any man or any woman of the present hour before or beside us. How man proposes and god disposes-the best example is the story of the Myth of Sisyphus I think. The miserable condition of human being is very clear here. If we follow the ideas of the Bible, we will catch a cursed sketch of human being. Similarly, we can see here the clearer picture of the cursed fate of Sisyphus. Sisyphus was condemned by the Gods to roll the gigantic rock to the top of the mountain, whereupon its own mass makes it fall down again. The labour and attempts of Sisyphus were futile in many respects. Gods in exasperation cursed Sisyphus this peculiar but painful job. His crimes seem slight, yet his preference for the natural world instead of the underworld incurred the wrath pique and displeasure of the gods: “His scorn of the gods, his hatred of death, and his passion for life won him that unspeakable penalty in which the whole being is exerted toward accomplishing nothing.”[10] Yet Camus can see the other part in the attitude of Sisyphus. When Sisyphus goes back down the mountain Camus takes that in another way.

He is conscious about his tragic and painful fate. Yet it also gives a scope to Sisyphus to scorn the gods which also in another hand gives him a kind of contentment. We must accept the happiness as well as the tragedy as the either sides of a coin. If there is a stone to rest, there may be a serpent underneath it. This is the reality of the world. Fate may be hostile for life, it may even show that life has no purpose but still one can bravely respond the odds and face the challenges of life. “This universe henceforth without a master seems to him neither sterile nor futile. Each atom of that stone, each mineral of that night-filled mountain, in itself forms a world. The struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man’s heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy.”[11] Camus is very much optimistic till the end of the text. He argues that life is fatuous, nonsensical and absurd. It is unintelligible and inconsequential too. Still one can revolt against all the hindrances and impediments. This problem is coined as absurdity. We should find an alternative, a modicum of merriment, or a scope for beatitude and jouissance.

Man is a store house of wishes and desires and hopes. No hope, no life. Can a person imagine his life without any hope? If so, he might be God or any Demon but not at all a human being. But the wills and desire we cannot live. That does not let us go to the verge of suicide. “Essentially Camus asks if there is a third alternative between acceptance of life’s absurdity or its denial by embracing dubious metaphysical propositions. Can we live without the hope that life is meaningful, but without the despair that leads to suicide? If the contrast is posed this starkly it seems an alternative appears—we can proceed defiantly forward. We can live without faith, without hope, and without appeal.”[12] We, therefore, should be away from appeals as these are intellectually dishonest. However, we can have several other alternatives than accepting the absurd, embracing the upbeat metaphysics or Camus’ defiance. We can also have an alternative way of living the life with this condition and conception that we don’t understand anything, we don’t know anything. Neither have we had any attachment with any kind of meaning of life nor to any absurd matter to that but still continue to live as we just love to live. In another way we can bring out more meaningful designs of life by living it simply and not being sure of anything. This has a potency to transform the reality better. This is the art of living the life with peace and pleasure.

In the Appendix of the essay Camus has given the solution as his suggestion of the problem. The title of the appendix is '*Hope and the Absurd in the work of Franz Kafka*'. While Albert Camus acknowledges that Kafka's work limns and delineates an exquisite description of the absurd nicks, he maintains that Kafka flunks as an absurd scribbler since his graft of oeuvre retains a scintilla of expectation. Richard Barnett says- "Kierkegaard's work began as a reaction to the rationalist school of Immanuel Kant and George Hegel. Opposing Kant's notion of religious faith as an essentially rational concept, Kierkegaard claimed that faith was necessarily irrational. It could not be subject to logical analysis and proof, as this would destroy its meaning. Faith, he asserted, should be a matter of fervent devotion, a 'leap in the dark'. True existence is not just 'being there'. Each individual must choose his or her way of life freely, and be passionately committed to it. In asserting the primacy of the individual and their free choice, Kierkegaard also created a notion of 'subjective truth'. The ethical choices that confront humans on a day-to-day basis are not accessible to reason and cannot be shown to have 'true' or 'false' answers. Such choices cannot therefore be made on rational grounds, but rather should be resolutions in the face of the objectively unknown." [13] However, Camus says in his way that hope must be there, struggle must be there and with that there must be a head and a heart to accept the hindrances of life. This is the solution of suicide and in fact, in this way, one can better taste his/her life.

5. Absurd Reasoning Versus Camus' Philosophy via Existentialism

In life, sometimes we really feel meaninglessness. We feel the life without reason than meaning thereby. But here is a question before us that whether it really lead us to suicide or not? Again, is it really the solution of the feeling or does it make any meaning? Camus has seriously looked into this philosophical matter. Richard Barnett says in this regard-

"Existentialism is perhaps one of the most misrepresented schools of philosophy. The word alone conjures up images of sour-faced Frenchmen in black polonecks, sitting in boulevard cafes and holding forth on the pointlessness of existence whilst puffing on a Gauloise. On a more serious level, existentialism is often depicted as a bleak and nihilistic world-view, dismissing human life as meaningless and ethics as an illusion. However, even a cursory reading of the key

existentialist texts does not support these criticisms. The father of existentialism, Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855), was a fundamentalist Christian whose stated aim was 'to go back into the monastery out of which Luther broke' – in other words, to return to the stark, uncompromising beliefs of pre-Reformation Christianity. Although the movement later became avowedly atheistic in outlook, Kierkegaard's ideas provided the framework in which later writers such as Camus and Sartre operated. To understand their outlook, it is therefore necessary to take at least a brief look at this structure." [14]

He says that life is nonsensical, meaningless and at the same time human beings search for continuous meaning and sense. Not only in various events and sub-events of life but also in the life itself human beings strive for meaning. Many of the religious explanations have been disapproved by the logical mind of science. But so far about the matter of existence concerned science can describe the same. It can really explain the human origin as well as the psychological and mental needs of human beings. The philosophers like Spinoza have been firmly believed in this. Life is absurd itself. We live upon hopes. Hopes live upon tomorrow. But that 'tomorrow' brings death closer to us underneath our hope. Yet human beings search for meaning, hope and live on expectations even though it appears the reverse. Science tries to profess the mundane world and tries to establish logics in it but at the same time its microscopic explanations lead us to more and more absurdity. "It is not the world that is absurd, nor human thought: the absurd arises when the human need to understand meets the unreasonableness of the world, when "my appetite for the absolute and for unity" meets "the impossibility of reducing this world to a rational and reasonable principle." He then characterizes a number of philosophies that describe and attempt to deal with this feeling of the absurd, by Heidegger, Jaspers, Shestov, Kierkegaard, and Husserl. All of these, he claims, commit "philosophical suicide" by reaching conclusions that contradict the original absurd position, either by abandoning reason and turning to God, as in the case of Kierkegaard and Shestov, or by elevating reason and ultimately arriving at ubiquitous Platonic forms and an abstract god, as in the case of Husserl." [15] For Camus, absurd is the condition of contradiction between the desire of human being, reasons and the

unreasonable world. However this situation of absurd gives birth to suicidal tendency or urge. But it should not be accepted at any cost any time. It requires strong confrontation, challenge and tireless revolt. If we ask about the metaphysical freedom of human being it looks very odd one generally. But when in this sense and situation a man loses interest s/he falls in the pit called absurd. And when human freedom in metaphysical sense loses interest to the absurd man, he certainly gains freedom in a very concrete sense. Absurd or the condition of absurdity implies the dealings of all those that the unreasonable world reflects. "What counts is not the best living but the most living." Therefore, Camus finds three consequences from fully acknowledging the absurd: revolt, freedom, and passion. Camus brings his idea and reason with the image of Sisyphus, a mythical King of Corinth. There Sisyphus scorns the Gods and escaped from the Underworld. He was condemned to spend all of eternity pushing a gigantic rock up a mountain, only for it to roll back down to the bottom, which seems meaningless and absurd by the by. This unending and repeating task yields no respite and no sense and no meaning of course. This is the metaphor that Camus chooses for the destiny of modern man and the entire humanity. If we discard the notion of God, Heaven and Hell, we are certainly left with a titanic and unending struggle which keeps no meaning in it and ultimately we start going into an absurd world. Here, death is not only the end of struggle, or life but it is a blessing in disguise. However, Camus asks question before death at the verge of dying hope of mankind. Can a man be happy if he dies before he starts? This is the question of Camus. In this world, Camus' individual is forced to confront the damper and deterrents of his knowledge:

"I don't know whether this world has a meaning that transcends it. But I know that I cannot know that meaning and that it is impossible for me just now to know it. What can a meaning outside my condition mean to me? I can understand only in human terms... I do not want to found anything on the incomprehensible. I want to know whether I can live with what I know and with that alone." [16]

Camus begins his second spell from Don Juan, the serial seducer who lives the life from three sixty degree. Camus has his serious deals with absurd life. He explains the passionate living of Juan. "There is no noble love but that which recognizes itself to be both

short-lived and exceptional." Then he tells about the actor, who depicts ephemeral and fugacious lives for an evanescent fame. "He demonstrates to what degree appearing creates being." "In those three hours he travels the whole course of the dead-end path that the man in the audience takes a lifetime to cover." The third example of Camus as an absurd being is the conqueror, the warrior who usually eschews, and waives and forswears all promises and commitments of eternity and perpetuity to transform and engross altogether thoroughly in human history. He espouses an action over serious contemplation, aware of the fact that nothing lasts forever and no victory is eventual. In this particular regard says Richard Barnett-

"This theme of existentialism was developed not only in philosophy, but also in some of the most important literature of the period. In *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880) Fyodor Dostoyevsky explored the tensions between the conservative Russian ruling classes and a younger generation coming to terms with the irrationality of everyday life. Much of Leo Tolstoy's writings (in particular the monumental *War and Peace* (1869)) are suffused with a sense of absurdity: he portrays the human race as a mass of isolated individuals cast adrift in a world that neither loves nor hates them, but rather is completely indifferent to their sufferings. In the early decades of the 20th century existentialism as a philosophy developed in this direction. Kierkegaard's profound belief in the existence of a benevolent creator was differentiated from the 'leap of faith' necessary to imbue life with meaning." [17]

Art is something which is itself the expression of complexity. The entire world is complex. Human feelings and psychology is complex in many respects. Therefore there is art. Camus has his serious deals with absurdity and proves himself as an absurd writer who has his deals with absurdity. It is very hard and difficult to explain the entire pattern of both the inner and outer world. Therefore the absurd art is absurd art is restricted to a description of the myriad experiences in the world. Therefore may be it said that- "If the world were clear, art would not exist." It is equally important and true that an absurd creation also must refrain from judging and from alluding to even the slightest shadow of hope. Camus has rightly told about this in his third and final chapter of the book.

Literature is not at all what we call sheer darkness. It is rather the scope and a glimmer of hope to escape mankind from the same. It must be optimistic at the end of the, that means it must bear a lantern at its hand. Therefore Camus' tentacles of talents zero in the works of Dostoyevsky. Particularly, he has focused on the works like *'The Brother Karamazov'*, *'The Diary of a Writer'* and *The Possessed*. We can better mark that all these things start from an odd and absurd position and end with a scintilla of hope coated with florescent cilia around it. These explore the concept of philosophical suicide. However, both *The Diary* and his last novel, *The Brothers Karamazov*, ultimately discover a route to aspiration, trust and expectation and thus fail to be truly absurd creations.

This is the phase of the book where Camus has brought out the Greek mythological character and his fate before us and here also he has given the solution of suicide and absurdity. Richard Barnett says, "Life is not absurd; the Absurd *is* life. This painful and futile struggle that we are all condemned to participate in (for, as Sartre pointed out, the only choice that is denied to us is to opt out) is all that we know. It is the only reality we have; all else is faith." [18] In the final chapter, Camus not only outlines the theme or the practices of Sisyphus who defied the deities and put death in chains. However, this phenomenon made the entire earth full of deathlessness. Nobody died in that period. Nobody was granted death at that period of time. Even one cannot get it though s/he wants it badly. When Death escaped himself from the chains and eventually liberated it came time for Sisyphus himself to die. At this point of time, he concocted a deceit which let him escape from the underworld. After that when he was finally captured, the gods decided on his punishment for all eternity. It was so peculiar and funny but at the same time it was so painful and absurd. It was hardly a scope for any human being to think about his existence. It is not quite easy as we think. He would have to push a gigantic rock up a mountain; upon reaching the top, the rock would roll down again, leaving Sisyphus to start over- this was the punishment as well as a typical fate of the period. This is the entire fate of modern man. A modern man's life is completely full of these kinds of tragedy. He wishes. But those are disposed. But Camus has never sketched Sisyphus as a defeated man or an overthrown personality. He is a hero and very interestingly he is the unique tragic hero. He has never been turned down by any set back or impediment. He has done his job very particularly.

Rather it seems from the actions of Sisyphus that he has obviated the artificial setbacks made by the gods. By the way, he lives the life to the fullest, avoids and rejects death and hates it a lot. And he is condemned to a meaningless and absurd job. Richard Barnett says,—"What Camus produced in *The Myth of Sisyphus* was perhaps the most uncompromising and individual atheist polemic of the 20th century. As such, it has found many critics. Some have argued that it proposes little more than an inverted system of faith, riven with contradictions and quasi-religious dogma. Others take exception to Camus' rejection of rationality as a means of understanding everyday life. Perhaps most significantly, the uncertain and apparently irrational world in which Camus wrote has been replaced by one that is, at least in the short term, more stable. In the affluent and self-satisfied West of the early 21st century it is difficult to conceive of life as a consuming and passionate struggle against a meaningless death. Despite these criticisms, *The Myth of Sisyphus* still repays generously the effort involved in reading it. As a historical document it displays the astonishing degree to which philosophy could flourish under a repressive occupation. On a more personal level, it is a fascinating journey into the mind of an articulate young man confronted with the realisation that his knowledge of the world is extremely limited. More than that, it is a powerful assertion of human freedom, and a command to the individual to take responsibility for the course of his life. Perhaps most exceptionally, *The Myth of Sisyphus* is a piece of literature with its roots in practical experience, rather than a series of abstract, quasi-mathematical syllogisms. The way in which individuals make their lives meaningful is ultimately a personal, subjective choice, and Camus' work is an elegant and fiercely intelligent contribution to this subject." [19] In this particular text Camus has made a serious deal with the art of living. This is the important most business of course in entire human surrounding because everything is meant for life only. No life no deal.

The way Camus has interpreted the rigorous tries of Sisyphus is really praiseworthy for its newness and learn-worthy. He points at the time when the big and bulky stone rolls down the mountain according to the curse/punishment of the gods. Hence, after the rock rolls down Sisyphus has started for another spell to push it up top to the mountain to start anew. When the gigantic stone falls back down the high mountain-tip Camus states that, "It is during that return, that pause, that Sisyphus interests me. A face that toils so close to

stones is already stone itself! I see that man going back down with a heavy yet measured step toward the torment of which he will never know the end." This is a very significant and unique sequence he has made. He becomes conscious of this kind of painful and wretched condition when the stone falls down. We can mark here the height of dutifulness and truthfulness. Commitment and the height of response to truth is the major thing ever we meet here. It is rarer to do. He does not have any hope, but "there is no fate that cannot be surmounted by scorn." What Sisyphus has done is really a job of an absurd man. He has restlessly wasted his time after a meaningless job. But it is equally true that though the job was meaningful but at the same time it was close to the truthfulness and duty loving attitude. In fact, this makes a man perfect and this kills the boredom of a person. This honest and tireless practice has given him immense pleasure within the pain and meaningless absurdity. It was a kind of time pass. Therefore he kept on pushing and pushing and pushing again and again. It is of course a symbol and symptom of an absurd man. This is the pleasure of work as said by Albert Switzer. He is freed to make him realized the absurd. Camus claims that when Sisyphus acknowledges the futility of his task and the certainty of his fate, he is freed to realize the absurdity of his situation and to reach a state of contented acceptance. With the example of Oedipus, Camus has concluded with this- "all is well." In fact, from the above readings of the text one must think that Camus' viewpoint that "one must imagine Sisyphus happy." This is the way we walk in life. Thus Camus has given clear cut ideas on Suicide, which converge in human existence.

Existentialism is one of the greatest philosophies of the world. It has a greater, wider and deeper impact on the life, literature and society of all time. What Sartre, Camus, Kierkegaard or Nietzsche has said in this light are nothing but the things which coincide at the point called human existence. "It was in the bleakest years of the Second World War – 1942 and 1943 – that the most influential Existentialist texts were published. Sartre's *Being and Time* (1943) is a remarkable statement of optimism and human freedom in the midst of meaninglessness and despair. Like Kierkegaard, Sartre emphasized the importance of individual uniqueness rather than mere mediocrity and conformity. An individual, he argued, is always free to choose (the only freedom he lacks is to not choose), and can always 'negate' (or reject) his own

characteristics and those of the world he lives in. The 'meaning of life' is not something bestowed upon the human race by a higher power, but is created in our actions, our choices and, most importantly, in our commitment to the choices we make. However, this freedom is tempered by a great responsibility: the responsibility to stand by the choices we make and to remain 'authentic' or true to ourselves. It is in making choices, in asserting our ultimate freedom in the face of an uncaring world, that human life can be lived in its fullest and richest sense. Sartre also introduced the notion of *angst* into his philosophy. Critics of existentialism have frequently taken *angst* to represent the ultimate pointlessness of life, and used it as an example of the pessimistic nature of existentialism. A reading of *Being and Time* shows the reverse to be true. *Angst* (or *weltschmerz* – world pain) is an idea employed by many different philosophies under several guises." [20] In this point of view we can say that all these are according to the Biblical concepts. Human nature is essentially sinful according to Bible and hence it is called that life is 'nasty, brutish and short' and therefore importance have been given to enjoy and cherish the eternal life. Sartre has rejected the concept and has said that no human being is sinful from birth. He has rather given a concept of *Angst*. He has gone for argument and has proved too that this *angst* is the natural response of an individual to the realisation that his/her search for higher meaning of the entire design of life and the universe as well and the order of things in this universe is ultimately pointless. However, he says that this is not at all a reason to despair, or regret. *Angst* is a symptom of liberty, a powerful demonstration that life is being lived and enjoyed in complete self-awareness, and should be accepted and celebrated. This is existentialism and this thing is well experienced by through the process called absurdity.

"Camus' first major work, *L'Etranger* (1942), proposed a rather more defiant model of existentialism. Whilst adopting Sartre's essentially optimistic view of existence, Camus went a stage further. He argued that, although human life could be made meaningful in the way that Sartre described, death made all actions ultimately futile. The only response was to accept that we are all 'condemned to death'. Once this occurred every individual should rebel against this 'ultimate negation', throw themselves into life and with every choice affirm their existence in the face of death. Camus described this human

battle with ultimate meaninglessness and indifference as the Absurd.” [21]

The Myth of Sisyphus is the attempt of Camus which gives the most conspicuous and the clearest statement of the philosophy of the Absurd. In it, Albert Camus has directly addressed the question that began this essay: ‘should we commit suicide?’ Camus answers it very strong-headedly with a bright optimistic manner. We find a complex rhetorical and polemical rejection here to the need of faith in god and godly events or power etcetera. Camus looks into the every-day life and gives importance on the way of living. Therefore critics say that Camus’ existentialism is a medicine or antibody against the hardships and torments of life. The philosophy defends the confusing realities which often lead us to absurd. It is a philosophical phenomenon for common man. For the sake of human existence in severe odds and in between thousand impediments it is the art of living, defending and existing self. Camus describes absurd as ‘philosophical suicide’. He further remain far away from religious believe or any kind of doctrine on supreme power. The three basic ingredients of absurd, according to Camus are: Consistency, authenticity, self-awareness. These form an absurd life automatically.

Man has two choices at his hand. S/he can reject it or can accept it. One can kill himself or can enjoy over it. If he kills himself then he will acquire a meaningless death and absurd experience with life. In this way he gives the scope to absurdity and meaningless death to triumph over him. And if the conditions of life turn hostile, then he must rebel against it at least for the sake of life, for the sake of himself. Camus gives stress on the self-awareness of the everyday life. Life is full of tragedy and comedy as well. It can be noted from the careful examination of a life from an industrial society. However, the following few lines can give only a flavour of Camus’ arguments in *The Myth of Sisyphus*. In addition to the tragicomic nature of daily existence he demonstrates the Absurd elements of various lives: the actor, the conqueror, the writer, the seducer and so on. An absurd hero is not a warrior or a poet or any extraordinary person in the society. Rather an absurd hero is a common man from the so called society. He fails to understand the difficult and complex cases of life and often he fails to fight against the fate and odds of time. He accepts the inevitability of death yet he

invests all his courage and ordinary humanly power in order to fight against it:

“I leave Sisyphus at the foot of the mountain! One always finds one’s burden again. But Sisyphus teaches the higher fidelity that negates the gods and raises rocks. He, too, concludes that all is well. This universe henceforth without a master seems to him neither sterile nor futile. Each atom of that stone, each mineral flake of that night-filled mountain, in itself forms a world. The struggle towards the heights is enough to fill a man’s heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy.”[22]

6. Reflection in Odia Literature

The concept of absurdity has been reflected well in Odia literature right after the sixth decade of 19th century. Especially in drama and poetry we encounter this kind of theme and practice in abundance. The suicidal tendencies, the concept of existence, and nihilism have been well reflected in the literature. Not only in Odia literature, but also it has been widely disseminated in each and every Indian literature. We encounter it much earlier in the Bengali, Hindi, Assamese and many other north and north-eastern Indian literatures.

In the neoteric trend of Odia literature, we encounter many poets in a mood of experimenting with various themes of poetry like suicide, existence, nihilism, death, loneliness, spiritual alienation and hopelessness etcetera. Philosophical suicide has been one of the most significant and common approach of modern Odia poets. In Odia literature, especially in poetry we encountered at first this tendency arbitrarily. The particular thing has been available in the market of Odia literature just after the fifties and sixties.

The poetry of Sachhidananda Routray has this ingredient(s) in its blood and lymph. We must look into the marvellous piece of Routray: *Paandulipi* (1947). In the preface (*Naandimukha*) to ‘*Paandulipi*’ Routray has made his viewpoint clear and conspicuous. How poetry and the mind and heart of poet of the age have acquired a new orientation and a special inclination towards this philosophy or these philosophies particularly can be well caught from the words of Routray.

“The writers have determined for their new roles by realising their duties in accordance with the changing trend of time. Routray clears this concept in the message in the preface to *‘Paandulipi’* that the Post-War poetry, Post-Marx and Post-Freud poetry can never be written in any traditional form like the formula based form of Reeti and Satyabaadiyan style.” [23]

The poem *‘Raakshyasa’* (Devil) of Routray, which has been written in 1938 and is placed in *‘Paandulipi’* (1947), is quite close to this philosophy of Camus. Though it is written much earlier than Camus but the particular philosophy is quite older and hence so. “The poem *‘Raakshyasa’* is more psychological, existential and expressionistic.” [24] The hero or the poet himself is happy in living as a devil or a Satan who is fully drunk with the wine of revolution. The poet says that he has drunk the *‘wine of storm’* which means thought of revolution.

“In the poetic experience of Kavita-1971, the failure and fruitlessness of individual life has been expressed with the consciousness of Death and Time. The very first poem of the compilation *‘Janmaastamee-1971’* reveals this kind of philosophy of faithlessness from life [...] and a kind of disbelief in the almighty mythological power[...].” [25]

Death is a common consciousness of this time. The characters of Routray in his poetry are fully conscious and close to death. “Death is a very close phenomenon to the human existence but the psychology and the mental condition of the people of this century particularly is very close to death. In the poetic consciousness of the poet it is also that much natural and continuous.” [26] Most of the modern poets have written about death and they are fully conscious of this particular phenomenon. From different aspects and angles it has been examined on the operation table of modern poetry. The poem *‘Mriyu’* (Death) of Routray is one of the best examples of the same.

Another significant poet and critic of the modern age is Chintamani Behera. He has written a number of poetry books and of course many critical analyses. Though we found Camus’ philosophy a little, still we cannot ignore it. The poems *‘Kabira Byathaa’* (The Pain of a Poet) or *‘Shaitaan pain Gotie Stuti’* (A Prayer for Satan) from the collection *‘Trutiya*

Chakshyu’ (The Third Eye) (1975) have some ingredients of this philosophy in their breath and blood. The line of the poem *‘Kabira Byathaa’* can be cited here.

“Ananta narke mu sadhe hatyaa pachhe karu mote bythaa Kabi hoi chaahen gaaibaaku swarga-narka-sangraamara gaathaa.”

This means the poet is strong headed and he is often ready to tackle various obstacles and hindrances for the sake of his pure passion and freedom. Even he is ready to go to the Hale.

Guruprasad Mohanty’s *‘Samudra Snaana’* (Bay Bath) is the particular volume in which we find this philosophy abundantly. This time is pregnant with fear and sin. The broken part of life is there in life today. So, in the lanes of this city lifeless body and will in this colourless body of this city inside the woollen and *khadada* (winter) clothes, suddenly comes the evil soul of sin and fear of cursed man and appears before one. This is nothing but the condition of Sisyphus only. The fate of modern man is the fate of Sisyphus. Hence, Harekrushna Das is the best example of this kind of poetry. The entire form of Harekrushna Das is full of pain, sufferings and mental and psychological decadence. Harekrushna Das is equally dying daily by the fruitlessness and in vain attempts just like Sisyphus. He is busy enough in order to establish his self, his inner self. He is fighting against the fate tirelessly. This is a high quality existentialist poetry in the entire modern Odia literature. One can see Sisyphus here and there in every turn of this poem. Even one can discover Sisyphus in every page of *‘Samudra Snaana’* (1960). In *‘Kaalapurusha’*, one of the legendary long poems of Guruprasad, “we encounter the hero in a grey, colourless, dead and alive just as the hero of *‘The waste Land’*. Both the heroes of the texts expect life but are dead and devastated.” [27] There is severe conflict between life and death in the hero. “There is life in death and death in life in the text and context of *Kaalapurusha’*” [28] just like the case of Sisyphus. In most of his sonnets we encounter a new Sisyphus each time inside the character of the poems. It seems that Guruprasad has knowingly depicted the sketch of the characters in his poetic world similar to that of Sisyphus. “Harekrushna Das is still decaying in the morass of melancholy and hopelessness. For him, the time has brought no new possibility.” [29] Sometimes he is being alone and some other time he is in dilemma whether he will be in mass or not. But

eventually we see that an existential hero is always alone; both in crowd and loneliness. The heroes of Kaalapurusha or the heroes of the other poems of Mohanty are always alone in their world just like Sisyphus. They struggle with everything in order to establish themselves and it is quite continuous in various forms and levels of their lives. In this way, they become special and unique. In this way, they become existential character like Sisyphus. Different existentialists have viewed differently in order to establish this human existence. Soren Kierkegaard has gone for a theistic solution. He says that one must believe in God. This will solve the problem of human existence. Similarly, in case of Jean Paul Sartre we see a completely reverse design. He says that we must reject the concept of God and his world. By this atheistic vision he wanted to solve this problem of human existence. Friedrich Nietzsche said that this Christianity will kill the basic and fundamental ideas of human being. Some philosophers became rational whereas some other became extremists in order to reveal the secret of existentialism. "Existentialism is the internal appeal of 'Kaalapurusha'." [30] Again, Prasanna Pattanaik says, "From the various symptoms of 'Kaalapurusha' the death consciousness and alienation of the poet is important." [31] Further he adds to his statement that "this ingredient or element has been closely felt in the modern Odia poetry for the first time in the poems of Guruprasad." [32]

Ramakant Rath is a prominent voice in this context. His poetic expedition started with this philosophy. "Both in Eastern and western poetry this kind of consciousness is a familiar aspect. This consciousness takes its origin from the sufferings and hopelessness of the contemporary hour. Like an old and damaged fort the human dreams and desires are breaking gradually into pieces. The rigorous change in this earth cannot avoid or surpass the sharp experiences of human being. [...] Therefore, today we find hopelessness and death in poetry which take their origin from the womb of breakage of hopes and desires." [33] The poems of Rath are mostly based on this particular theme. Death, existence and absurd are three major dimensions of his poetry. He is famous for his absurdity. Even, one critic told in his favour that all the doors of *Anek Kothari* (Many Chambers) are closed for common readers. In his *Ketedinara*, *Anek Kothari*, *Sandigdha Mrugayaa* and *Saptama Rutu* we see this trend and practice is continuing without any huddle. We can encounter it in naked eyes until *Sachtra Andhaara*. However, Ramakanta

has been a fear in the readers till date for his absurd attitude and orientation. Basically, his '*Prema Patra*' (Love Letter), '*Dooratwara Tinoti Ankana*' (Three Sketches of Distance), '*Shaagunaa*' (Vulture), '*Tama Bhaagya*' (Thy Fate), '*Bhaasamaana Dina*' (The Floating Days), '*Dwiteeya Bichaara*' (The Second Judgement) and '*Aamara Bimarsha Bhaagya*' (Our Unsolved Earth) are the particular poems which conspicuously belch these philosophies.

Another significant rainbow of modern Odia literature is Sitakant Mohapatra. He has written a number of poetry in different tastes and attitudes. But this attitude and philosophy is specially kept in the glands of his early and mid phase poems. Maximum poems from his '*Deepti O Diyuti*', '*Samudra*', '*Astapadee*', '*Aaradrushya*' and some other collections are of this kind and they deal with this philosophy.

Kaamalakanta Lenka is one of the most powerful and committed poet of this period who had some serious deals and business with this philosophy and problems of life. He has found there that "perhaps this dismal sky is the key to live life." [34] In each and every moment, we encounter here the 'eternal crosses' of life and death. The poet says it '*Nitya Shringaara*' in his language. The poems like '*Raaja*' (King), '*Agnyaata*' (Unknown), '*Chhaai Chhaaikaa*' (Shadowy), '*Ekaka*' (Unit), '*E jaabat*' (Till Now), '*Yaapare Hueta*' (Perhaps after this) and many such poems carry the potency and beauty of this thing. Death, pain, suffering, hopelessness and the quest of living life are the basic and major ingredients of Lenka's poetry. The small snake of existence crawl underneath all these things in the search of its prey and that is nothing but the charm of life. From the following few expressions we confirm about the attitude of the poet. 'Pain is the deity of living life'; 'the sadness is like an old friendship', 'ungrateful god', 'pretention, thy name is god', 'dead-man's carriage of forty-nine alphabets' and many other expressions and idiomatic meaningful phrases clearly speaks about the orientation and inclination of the poet towards existentialism, death and pedagogical suicide. Many of his collections speak about this fact and phenomenon.

Deepak Mishra is another significant voice of this time that had his primary business with death philosophy and these absurd, suicide and other consciousness. His '*Aranaa Mainshi*', '*Ruk*' and some other significant compilations are the monuments with

these scars. Haarihar Mishra is the poet among these voices who had also his experience in experimenting with new ideas and philosophies in poetry. In his view, life is a vast thing in which all these things like death, suicide, absurd and many more such other things are embedded carefully. He is a very serious and careful poet of this period. We can never ignore the voice of Mishra in this regard.

Saubhagya Kumar Mishra is a versatile poet of the above discussed period. He has a very good entry and catch of both eastern and western philosophy and literary practice. Basically, we discover ever that Saubhagya Mishra applies the eastern assimilated philosophy in some different patterns and frames of western forms and ideas. That is the beauty and specialty of Mishra we find. Eastern ideals and western ideas mingle together like water in milk in his poetry. Saubhagya Kumar is a student and professor of English literature. Hence, he is very close to this particular philosophy and problem. But it is very transparent from his poetry that he is quite sound and clear in Upanishads and Mythologies. But still he has deconstructed many times the eastern myths in various ways. He has better depicted and sketched the western philosophy then the eastern one. One can draw this conclusion upon reading those poems closely and seriously.

Jagannath Prasad Das' *'Kabacha*, (Armature), *'Shaba* (Corpse), *'Darpana* (Mirror), *'Mukhaa* (Mask), *'Bijetaa* (Winner), *'Poorba Purusha* (Ancestor), *'Prathama Prema* (First Love), *'Shesha Seemaanta* (Last Horizon), *'Debee* (Goddess) and *'Anya Dina* (The Other Day) are the poems of this tastes. His other collections are very significant than this. *'Anya Sabu Mrutyu o Anyaanya Kabitaa* and his *'Je Jaahaara Nirjanataa* are the two important collections where the centre is death and death consciousness.

Santosh Kumar Nayak is the significant poet of twenty-first century who has given his best in experimenting with various aspects of his poetry, short story, essays and play too. His *'Soorjya Uinle Raati*' is completely dedicated to this particular philosophy. He has written a number of poems in this book which deal in this phenomenon. His *'Gopapura O'Anyaanya Kabitaa* is really a master piece amongst all. Other than these two we encounter this thing in his *'Soham* compilation of poetry. This philosophy is very much popular among the poets of

Modern Odia literature. Therefore, we find various poets with various approaches and dimensions in their poetry with the concepts of death, suicide and loneliness and other issues of existentialism.

In the field of Odia drama we encounter real and serious experiment in the plays of Manoranjan Das, the key person of Odia Neo-Drama Movement. However, we see various and unbelievable steps in plays in the name of experiments. He is really one of the significant talents in the entire nation. With him, we see some other dynamic playwrights who have some significant roles in it. However, Manoranjan Das has done a number of experiments at random. He has done this practice frequently in his post-independence dramas. *Agaamee* (The Fore coming) has laid that foundation in entire Odia drama to go for a free experiment with theme, language and other techniques. In *Banahansee*, (Wild Swan) particularly, he has gone for a serious deal of experiments and thus has applied many symbols and 'isms' to this. In *Aranya Phasala*, (The Harvest of Forest) *Amrutasya Putraah*, (The Offspring of Ambrosia) and *Nandikaa Kesharee* (*Nandika Keshari*) we encounter Manoranjan in a mood to apply the suicidal tendency in his experimental plays.

In Manoranjan's plays of post fifties period we can clearly encounter the impact of these philosophies. How the fates of modern men like Ushaa, Dr. Caudhury of *Banahanshi*, Sangram of *Aranya Phsala*, Sanaatan and Suchetaa of *Amrutasya Putraah*, or the characters like Nandikaa in *Nandikaa Kesharee* are just like fate of Sisyphus. As if we all the modern men are cursed. We are here supposed to face hopelessness, alienation, spiritual dryness, and many such negative and unwanted things. But this is otherwise a challenge to modern man. We are encountering those challenges everyday in each moment.

"Aranya Phasala (The Wild Harvest), a short play cast in the mould of absurd drama, presents the existential dilemma of the modern man when he has been reduced to a psychological wreck by failing to contain his personal guilt complexes." [35]

In *Aranya Phasala*, we see a clear-cut picture of suicide. Sangram, the main protagonist of the play has committed suicide. He has made a journey of dilemma and cerebral transition in the entire time period of the plot of the play. He had some illegal

relations with Baby and Lily in his college career. But he could not get any one of them as his life partner. Similarly, Subrat is a character who has tried his best to understand the meaning of life and has been entangled with Lily, the wife of Mr. Verma.

“In *Aranya Phasala*, Subrat, a professor of philosophy and his petite wife, Baby, come to a forest dak-bungalow to spend a restful three days, in a bid to escape the monotony of their jaded city life. Verma, the forest contractor and hunter and his wife Lily, a plump woman unsuccessfully struggling to conceal her insatiable desire by appearing brazenly fashionable, join Subrat and Baby a little later. What, at the outset, promises to be a kind of quite family retreat suddenly changes into a frolicsome yet friendly get-together, showing all the symptoms of soon becoming busy and adventurous picnic party in the wild.”[36]

All the characters of the drama have gone through severe cerebral transitions. The quest of sex and experiencing their existence has gone above the head here. Some has changed his entire values and ethical path of life and the other has found suicide as the safe way. Both were searching for their existences. This suicide could be termed as an unsound attempt of the character.

“The characters get bloodied within as they all fail to contain and conceal their private desires, urges and compulsions beneath the crust of civility made of fashion and formalities, the custom-made tools of deception and dissimulation available for the use of civilised man when he wants to clothe his inner cowardice with fine draperies. The bounds of civilization and society, particularly the sanctity of the marriage bond, are further transgressed as Baby becomes a hapless witness to Subrat getting closeted with Lily. The professor becomes compulsive liar thereafter using pretence as a means of self-defence.”[37]

But the very positive side of the character Sangram is his faithfulness to his ‘self’. All but Sangram have cheated with others as well as with their selves. But Sangram has been proved as a loyal and faithful in his disloyalty and unfaithfulness. “The characters become a bunch of marionettes, as it were, being propelled and pushed around by their unrequited passions and hideous desires. The play unfolds their progressive

dehumanization and shows their inability to face reality with any degree of honesty and integrity. They make forays into the realm of fantasy, engage in play-acting, story-telling and project unreal images about themselves, and all these are a part of their pathetic quest for the meaning of life and living, the crux of their existential dilemma. They invent a fanciful analogy between a man and a goat, working out a new equation between a man and animal in terms of their penchant for wildness and preference for domesticity. Only Sangram, the actor, remains faithful unto himself and grows in stature as character a character by revealing a strange capacity for suffering, in a world peopled by the spineless herd. His quest for sanity, security and some plausible solution to the gnawing fear of reality truth within, ends in his morbid act of hara-kiri. The picnic becomes his perdition, the play acting his penitential suffering and finally death brings to him his redemption.” [38]

Another important playwright of the time is Biswajit Das. Nobody can forget the significance and the new experimental attempts in the dramas of Das. The most famous out of them is ‘*Mrugayaa*’, the experimental drama. Biswajit Das’ *Mrugayaa* (The Hunt) is one of the significant dramas of post fifties Odia plays. It has tried to discover the conscious, subconscious and unconscious minds of a human being which often regulate our life over all. Here, he is also careful about this philosophy. In this way we can take the names of Ratnakar Chini. But he has his deals in societal matters and political matters in comparison to others and in this way he has produced his socio-political, socio-existential and political-existential dramas as his best. *Tathaapi Chaanakya* is the tremendous piece of drama of that category. In this he has given the element of love as an existential tool.

Bijay Mishra is second to none in the field of Odia drama. His *Shababaahakamaane* and *Baanaprastha* are the two important most creations in entire Odia literature. In *Baanaprastha* he has show the inheritance of existence and feeling it in others’ body through own mind and soul. One can fight like Sisyphus and finally win against the deadly time and fate. Ramesh Prasad Panigrahi’s name can never be omitted in this regard. He has written many dramas and criticisms of dramas and theory of dramas. His master piece *Mu Ambhe Aambhemaane* is a play which should be discussed in this regard when ever or wherever may not why it is discussed.

Bijay Kumar Satapathy is a committed playwright of the hour. He has brought certain newness in the sky of Odia drama. He is a dramatist who is much more inclined to an oriental life and society. However, in this matter we can never ignore the dramatist and his three important plays. The cases of those three plays especially, '*Ei Je Soorjya Uen*', '*Sonita Swaakshyara*', and '*Pralaya Pare*' are in relation with the above discussed theme. The dramatist says in the preface to his compiled book-

"Now the age of personal tragedy has been finished. This may be coded as the changed value. In 'King Lear', 'Hamlet', or 'Othello' etcetera the tragic environments to which the spectators had viewed and encountered the tragic heroes are no more equal to that of the present situations. It is quite different from the situations and the environments of those days and time. Gone are the days when the spectators were drowned in the sorrow and tragic fate of the hero alone. [...] But today, the situation in which he respire every moment and fighting against the various fatal situations were not at all in those days. The precarious death of humanism, the conspiracies and wrong doings against the sane-social order of the wrong doers white dressed criminals, the treasons, connivances and several collusions of the hammer head sharks of the society; the monsters, has brought this social tragedy. The higher values and ethics are faded and valueless here." [39]

He has thoroughly gone into the socio-political environments and happenings and therefore he says- I have sketched all these pictures in my dramas as a conscious and experienced dramatist. The plays of 1980 and after have been more special and strange in colour and tone only for the drastic and dramatic changes in the socio-political conditions after 1970. "He has been moved deeply and from different angles by these things." [40]

Theatre of cruelty has created problem in the environment. Death of Satiaa from '*Pralaya Pare*', Chitrasena and Chandrikaa from '*Sonita Swakshyara*' and even the deaths of Shreekantha and Maalabikaa in the drama '*Ei Je Soorjya Uen*' clearly speaks this consciousness. But it is not very clear that the dramatist has been moved by Camus or any philosophy of suicide. But yes, he has been moved by the existential policies of the thinkers somewhere.

Kartik Chandra Rath's '*Maansara Phula*' and Jadu Nath Das Mahapatra's '*Athabaa Andhaar*' are the two major dramas in this particular regard. In all the cases we find the hero's consciousness is at the verge of existentialism.

In the Odia dramas, especially after the independence, we can encounter a kind of special treatment both in theme and style. What Camus has suggested in the eventual part of the text '*The Myth of Sisyphus*' has been well interpreted in the plays of the writers. Timelessness, Loneliness, Alienation, a sense of separation, death consciousness and many other existential directions take men away from life. It makes man sometime a creature not by God and some other time God remains absconded. Where God is dead, can a man be able to solve all his problems? What can he do when he fails from each and every angle? No hope, of course. In this phase, especially a glimmer of hope was seen in the sky of Odia literature. Not only in drama but also in various other dimensions we see Odia literature after fifties has a commitment of hope and life despite of intense problems and hazards to life. We can encounter it in Ramesh Panigrahi's '*Aananda Nagaraku Jaatraa*' (An Expedition to Anandanagar). The characters like Biswajit and Maani have set for the quest of peace and pleasure. A spark of hope that makes a life full-fledged and intact is the central theme of the drama. This is the greatest thing ever any existentialist has said. We should possess any wish to go to heaven. Rather we must think to make this mundane earth heaven. Bijay Mishra's '*Parshuram*', Harihar Mishra's '*Nindita Gajapati*', Ramesh Panigrahi's '*Dhurutaraastra Ra Aakhi*', Promod Tripathy's '*Suna Pareekshya Danda Dhaaree*' and Rati Ranjan Mishra's '*Seetaa*' and even Niladribhushan Harichandan's '*Swargaarohana*' are the example of the dramas that keep this kind of philosophy beneath their chest.

Another committed playwright of this time is Narayan Sahu. His play '*Adekhaa Swapna*' (The Unseen Dream) is a perfect example of this thing. The character Deepikaa has committed suicide here. The judiciary, police, law, and the society of course- all have gone against her. She was forced to suicide.

The footprints of existentialism are seen in the dramas like Jibananda Das' '*Mruta Jhankaar*' (The Dead Rhythm), Manoranjan Das' '*Aranya Phasala*', '*Amrutasya Putrah*', Biswajit Das' '*Mruyaa*' and

Ratnakar Chaini's '*Nachiketaa Ubaacha*'. Narayan Sahu's another drama '*Pralaya Pare*' is a marvellous piece in this regard.

In the Odia novels like *Amrutara Santaana* (The Dynasty of the Immortals) by Gopinath Mohanty we encounter such characters that have defeated death and sufferings in their life. They have cheated the death and have overcome from its various tentacles. The line speaks it clearly.

"The *Disari* was right. There was no death, no sorrow." [41]

The characters like Sunaa Dei, Puyu, Pubuli and Piyoti have gone through the red-charcoaled path of life. Many societal, economical and especially psychological setbacks and impediments were there. Still they have fought with utmost courage. Though they have thought to quit but eventually they have proved themselves stronger than the odd destiny. This is the charm of this novel. They are the off spring of the immortals. They have come out of ambrosia. They have no death in their life, no pain, no suffering or no cowardice no failure or no defeat.

"Mohanty was a tireless experimenter, and in his novels he experimented with techniques of fiction unusual in the world literature of his time-such as psychological analysis and the stream of consciousness, to name a few- with great success. His work displays both extraordinary vastness and soulful depth. Each work of his bears the insignia of completeness coupled with an astonishing perfection of handling. His greatest works, *Amrutara Santana* and *Mati Matala*, with their poetic and epic dimension, will remain a paean to the glory of the human spirit, which has the power to triumph over all odds." [42]

Further what the author, Gopinath Mohanty, adds to it we can see below where we can get the concrete proof of his intense and attitude. The scene speaks about the strong headed mind of Sisyphus.

"She descended and continued to walk on briskly; but what was this, what was going on? A new era, a new world! No matter how strong you try to be, your inside churn, your lips quiver and the tears stream into your mouth." [43]

Felix Padel, a noted anthropologist having fluency in Odia, has rightly remarked on the particular theme and characters of the book *Amrutara Santaana* that-

"Gopinath Mohanty's writing is the best antidote to this modern philistinism, informing us with love and patience about the details of Kandha life, and the variety of clans and cultures interacting. In this story, Kalinga represents the southern, mainstream Telugu culture that the girl Piyoti grew up in. But the decay of Kandha culture is a persistent theme in this story, as in other Gopinath writings, as "civilization" creeps closer, with its web of moneylenders and vast network of exploiters." [44]

We see an amalgamation of modernism and primitivism in the entire novel. A dense cultural matrix is found in the entire novel in which the characters dance, the plot moves and the sequences change. We take Mohanty as the second important novelist after Senapati in modern Odia literature. However, one serious reader or any culture-centric reader can never ignore these portions of the novel. However, in this condition we see the characters deeply engaged in the existential pool.

"A strand of modernism is evident in this novel's rejection of "primitivism", reflecting the influence perhaps of Fakir Senapati. The main male characters, Sarabu's son Diudu and brother Lenju, have conspicuous faults. The character of a *Bejuni* is portrayed as an unkempt hag-like figure of fear and superstition. A *Bejuni* is a Kandha woman shaman, who plays a significant female role in the culture, entering trance to let spirits speak through her mouth and dance through her limbs, exercising an authority that can certainly inspire fear. But *Bejuni* I have met an extraordinary dignity, and it is pride of Kandha society that such spiritual authority is exercised by women rather than men." [45]

Yes, modernity has entered into the tribal-social circle. But can we name it modernity alone? Is this pure modernity? Does modernity mean corruption, exploitation and pretention? Of course, it is not. Instead of providing various facilities and helps, the urban people have tried to exploit those people physically, mentally and economically. Still in this

odd condition and against the hostile and unfavourable conditions they have tried to live the life and conserve their ancient culture and tradition.

“Despite the inroads of “corrupting modernity”, Kandha society is resilient, preserving its gently paced wealth of human relationships, not least through vibrant social moments aimed at protecting communities and ecosystems against unthinking exploitation of the earth’s minerals. [...]. *Amrutara Santana* touches on archetypal themes- the rhythms of Mother Earth and her human offspring; the loves and quarrels of Men and Women; set here in the beauties and dangers of the Forest, where the Tiger is an ever-present threat; and the birth of a child, growing up poor, yet inheriting a rich culture in this face of the more persistent threat of a web of deceitful exploiters.” [46]

We can see the daringness and the commitment of the character Puyu towards life. She has proved that life is far important than other problems. One has to face it and solve those. One must not quit. From Puyu, a tribal woman, we get the clear-cut picture of the mentality and the courage to fight against every odd of life for the sake of his existence. Human existence is the primary business of any person, of any society or clan or time. The challenges and fights of self with every odd is nothing but the philosophy of existentialism.

“The novel’s complexity and richness holds all the way to the final scene, where, after her night of resolve, Puyu finally leaves her marital home with her infant in her arms, to encounter the rising sun, and is imbued with a feeling of hope, witnessing the dawn that follows even the darkest night. The novel has a panoramic vision, an epic and Tolstoyean sweep, and reading it is a riveting experience.” [47]

Albert Camus has said in this context that there is nothing absurd and nothing meaningless. He says, “I still think that this world has no longer meaning. But I am also sure that something in it has meaning. This is man, for man alone in the universe insists upon having a meaning.” Life is meaningful even in every odd and in every absurd condition. This is the ultimate lesson of *Amrutara Santaana*.

“On the one hand, one witnesses Puyu, the female protagonist’s trenchant and emotional life; on the other, there is the robust and raw

realism in the handling of the common folk doing about the business of their lives. Between the covers of this great novel, as in any great novel, one is witness to “God’s plenty” as Matthew Arnold said, quoting John Dryden, referring to the pilgrims in Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*; or those who peopled the sub-plots of Shakespeare’s plays- whether it is Bottom and his tribe in *A Mid Summer Night’s Dream*, or Falstaff and his cohorts in the Harry plays, to Thomas Hardy’s rustics, providing boisterous comic relief in his tragic novels. Thus Mohanty’s characters carry on an endless debate whether Sugri Kandha should challenge the punishment by the moneylender for avowedly failing in his duty, which results in the tiger snatching away his cattle.” [48]

Similarly, we can see some Odia novels like Gopinath Mohanty’s ‘*Laya Bilaya*’, ‘*Raahura Chhaayaa*’, Santanu Kumar Acharya’s ‘*Dakshinaabarta*’, ‘*Nara Kinnara*’ and many other novels of some other novelists. We can see the same in some short stories too. The consciousness has been infected up to twenty first century and even till date. Many new authors like Santosh Kumar Nayak have penned in this philosophy. The poetry anthology like ‘*Soorjya Uinle Raati*’, the short story compilations like *Nishwaasara Chaai*’ (The Shadow of Breath), *Nirbaachita Nirjanataa* (Selected Solitude), ‘*Apadebataara Upakathaa*’ (The Sub-story of Devil) etcetera are the books which speak about these things.

Existentialism has been the most important and influential ‘ism’ of all in today’s time. Now, we encounter different types of existentialism in literature. They are: 1. Atheistic existentialism, 2. Christian Existentialism, 3. Nihilistic Existentialism, 4. Standard/ Logical Existentialism, 5. Metaphysical Existentialism, 6. Environmental Existentialism, 7. Visible Existentialism, 8. Conceptual Existentialism, 9. Theistic Existentialism, 10. Thematic and Basic Existentialism, 11. Humanistic Existentialism, 12. Modern Existentialism, 13. Extreme Existentialism and few other types of existentialisms are there. We encounter these types of existentialism in different forms and different types. “There is basically no primary difference between contemporary literary ideals and excellence of existential consciousness,”[49] says Sahoo. Human fate is like this. Every human being is a subject to lose. An eminent Odia critic Dasarathi Das has beautifully said

about this central context. He has tried to illustrate there the nature of Ramakant Rath's poetry and specially the nature of the poems of *Saptama Rutu*.

"The only context of Rath's poetry is human destiny. [...] The meaninglessness of every kind of attempt to eradicate the incompleteness of death-reigned life is the indomitable destiny; unending failure is the ultimate lot of human being. Therefore the human existence is bound to be absurd. The absurd existence of human being is the basis or the life-line of Mr. Rath's poetry. The hero of his poetry is Sisyphus, the absurd hero. The ultimate destiny of Sisyphus is the destiny of human being." [50] One has to live awaiting death and die in order to wait for life to start. In his speech in 1978 Sahitya Akademi award giving ceremony as a poet of an award winning book he had delivered a few lines there. He said, "Sometimes I have sat down to write a love poem and have ended up with a black poem dripping from death and despair and vice-versa." However, we see a great number of events and characters in Odia literature engaged in art and craft of existentialism in different areas of life, especially, concerned with death, suicide and solitude and loneliness.

7. CONCLUSION

Finally, we can see the forms and features of existentialism along with the different angles of suicide. Life becomes absurd. But it is the real and particular junction of time after which we get the scope to taste the life and enjoy the realities beneath the reality. Here, one must take courage and fight against every odd of life. Sisyphus is just an instance. Various characters from the dramas, poetry and fictions of Odia literature we get these existential and similar characters a lot. A number of poets are there whose poems have this philosophy in abundance. Several writers from different belts of Odisha and India have their honest and serious contributions towards these particular philosophies both in the last century and in the twenty-first century as well.

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