

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CONCLUSION

After analyzing the portrayal of the protagonists in *The Stranger* and *The Trial* in previous chapters, I will now provide a number of conclusions. As I have stated in the beginning, the purpose of the analysis is to show how the authors portray the protagonists and what the purposes of the authors are in creating such characters.

The first protagonist that I analyze is Meursault in *The Stranger*. In this novel, Meursault is stuck in the society that expects him to follow its rules and ethics. Meursault is a static character with self-indulgent, cold-hearted, and apathetic characteristics as his major traits. In the novel, Meursault's being self-indulgent is shown when his mother dies; he is not mourning for his mother, instead he chooses to enjoy his vacation because he gets a day off from work. He also enjoys his sexual relationship with his ex-co-worker, Marie Cardona, without intention to have any commitment. Besides being a self-indulgent person, he is also cold-hearted; he cold-heartedly kills an Arab man and shoots the dead body a couple of time. He is also an apathetic person who shows lack of sympathy and always expresses his immediate feeling even if it hurts other people. Although he is put in prison and sentenced to death, he does not care about anything at all because he simply

knows that his life is not worth living. By being self-indulgent, cold-hearted, and apathetic, Meursault can live and enjoy his life the way he wants and he can be himself. However, even though he could live his life as he wants, the society despises him because he does not follow the rules and ethics of the society. Thus, he is labelled as “the stranger” in his society and has to face the consequences for it.

The second character that I analyze is Josef K in *The Trial*. In this novel, K is a static character portrayed as a resourceful, perseverant, and logical person. In the novel, K is accused with a crime that he has never done and later on his case becomes unsolvable. At first, instead of giving up and being hopeless, K becomes resourceful by looking for helps from several people that have knowledge about law and have connection to the court. Moreover, he is also being perseverant by not easily giving up in solving his case. He decided to go to the court even though he is not summoned. Besides being resourceful and perseverant, he is also a logical person; he logically tries to solve his case in the most sensible way. But none of his efforts gives any result that he wants because of the absurdity of the trial and his surroundings. Thus, being resourceful, perseverant, and logical does not help him to win his case. In the end he dies in vain because the absurd “trial” prevents him from achieving his freedom. He also cannot enjoy his life because he spends the rest of his life looking for an answer that he is unable to get.

*The Stranger* and *The Trial* share some similarities. Both novels talk about individuals who are stuck in their society and both protagonists are looking for the meaning of their life. Both protagonists are two people who have to face conflict with the society around them. Another similarity is the fact that in the end of the story, both protagonists are sentenced to death.

Besides similarities, there are also differences between the two novels. One of the differences lies in the kind of society that they live in. In *The Stranger*, Meursault is stuck in the society that expects him to follow its rules and ethics. While in *The Trial*, Josef K is stuck in the absurd society and the absurd trial. Another difference between the two novels lies on how both protagonists face their society. In *The Stranger*, Meursault chooses to ignore the society's rules and lives as he wants. On the other hand, in *The Trial*, Josef K chooses to deal with the society's rules in the most sensible way. Another difference between the two novels is in the absurdity. In *The Stranger*, Meursault is the one who is absurd, while his society is normal. Meanwhile, in *The Trial*, the society around Josef K is absurd while Josef K is quite a normal person.

I believe that both authors have the same purpose in creating their protagonists. The purpose of the authors in making such characters is to show the process of a man in finding his freedom and the meaning of his life. In order to understand the purpose of the authors in creating the characters, I refer to the existential theories by Friedrich Nietzsche regarding individual existence as the background of my analysis on both absurd novels. Friedrich Nietzsche existential view states that "God was dead and life was meaningless so people can freely act the way they want or choose whatever values to their interest" ("Friedrich Nietzsche").

By portraying Meursault, Albert Camus seems to be in agreement with Nietzsche's existential view that people can live freely the way they want as Meursault is portrayed as a person who lives the way he wants. Meanwhile, Franz Kafka, by portraying Josef K, seems to oppose Nietzsche's existential view that people can live freely the way they want because in the story K cannot live the way

he wants as his freedom is limited by the influence of the society around him, which in his case by his trial.

Both novels show how the protagonists are stuck in their society and choose their own way to deal with the society in order to get their meaning of life. In both novels, the ways they are dealing with the society are reflected in the characteristics of the two protagonists. On the one hand, Meursault chooses to be ignorant towards the rules and ethics of the society as his way to get his meaning of his life which he manages to get. On the other hand, Josef K chooses to deal with the society as his way to find his meaning of life which he fails to get.

To conclude, by portraying Meursault, Albert Camus is trying to show that even though Meursault rebels against his society, he still can find his meaning of life by living his life as he wants and he dies without any regret. Albert Camus wants to show that people who are different from their society can still find their meaning of life and find satisfaction just like in Meursault's case. At the same time, by portraying Josef K, Franz Kafka is trying to show that Josef K is willing to follow the rules and norms of the society but still cannot find his meaning of life because of the trial he has gone through. Not only does he fail to find his meaning of life but he also has to die with regret because he thinks that he does not deserve to die that way. Thus, by following the society's expectation people get no warrant that they can find their meaning of life.

Finally, in my opinion, *The Stranger* is trying to deliver a message that sometimes we have to contradict the society's norm and expectation in order to find something that is valuable to ourselves. Thus, by finding something that is valuable to ourselves, people can define their meaning of life. Just like in Meursault's case when he tries to rebel against his society in order to find his meaning of life in spite of the fact that rules are made to be obeyed or followed, it

does not mean that people have to obey or follow all the rules as long as their choice does not harm or hurt other people. While in *The Trial*, it shows that sometimes life can be unfair and no matter how hard people are looking for any reason for their unfair life, there is just no reason behind it. Just like in Josef K's case when he is unfairly accused with a crime he never did and no matter how hard he tries to look for the reason for his case, there is just no reason behind his case. Both novels have their own way to deliver the message regarding existentialism to the reader. The authors may choose to portray some elements in an extreme way in order to show the absurdity in life. For instance, the way Albert Camus portray Meursault in *The Stranger* and how Franz Kafka portrays K's society in *The Trial*. Despite the fact that both novels are absurd, in a way, what the authors want to deliver is far from absurd. Surprisingly, it might truly happen in the real life as people tries to find what is important and meaningful for them in life.

