

Abstract

Life with the advance of modern civilization has lost its original value and death seems to be the next prey of this menace. Death as a fatalistic phenomenon has always occupied the minds of the writers, right from antiquity to the modern existentialists. It is a recurring theme in literature and philosophy. Some exhibit complete indifference towards the reality of death and preach an Epicurean model of life. The existentialists believe that death is very much a part of being and its consciousness imparts meaning to life. But this could also lead to panic and fear. Such a negative and oppressive mode of existence is as harmful for the positive manifestation of life as is the attitude of utter indifference. Albert Camus, on the other hand, argues that even death can become a happy experience provided that life is lived ontologically with the consciousness of the absurd. The rejection of dogmas about religion, God and other absolutes reinvigorates the individual and establishes the environment of defiance to confront the absurdity of existence rather than escape. Life lived in the Sisyphean manner transforms the obsolete approach towards death radically. This might seem an overstatement in the face of traditional beliefs but Camus' notion of a Happy Death is valiant, and demonstrates utter disdain towards the old fashioned stance, with the plea to adopt a non-conformist attitude toward life. To attain this goal, Camus builds the case logically and proves to be a great exponent of moderation in life and politics. He advocates ceaseless reorientation of the self in his works and his career is a complete exemplification of it. This dissertation proceeds through the stages of confronting the absurd, lucid revolt, and freedom and intensity, as Camus proposes, to find out whether it is possible to experience a happy death, and offers a detailed analytical and comparative exposition of Camus' idea of the ontological death with reference to his philosophical and literary works. It deals with the question that how far the Camusian treatment of death is relevant to the prevailing political and ideological crises that has transfixed many of the third world countries into the mire of extremism which Camus sternly detests on the basis of his notion of personal revolt and negation of collective and systematic revolutions. It also highlights the potential, this attitude owns in rendering a solution to the present predicament in lieu of Camus' era of absurdity.