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Laxmi R Vali Balla
Research Scholar, JNTUK
Asst. Professor of English,
FED, Godavari Institute of
Engineering & Technology
Rajahmundry, Andhra
Pradesh, India.

Correspondence:
Laxmi R Vali Balla
Research Scholar, JNTUK
Asst. Professor of English,
FED, Godavari Institute of
Engineering & Technology
Rajahmundry, Andhra
Pradesh, India.

Who am I.....? I am.....: A Journey from Absurdity to Positivity

Laxmi R Vali Balla

Abstract

“Who am I?” “Why do I born and die?”, “Why do I suffer?”, “What is Death?” “Where does God exist?” Obviously, the above absurd questions make confusion in human mind and makes man to think beyond his reality. Sometimes, layman is in such a confusion that why does he live or die in uncertainty. For instance, the whole humanity experienced uncertainty of loneliness and meaningless during the period of Covid-19. Many scholastic writers opined on human existence and absurdity in their own style and philosophy. In 1961, Martin Esslin states in his work *Theatre of Absurd* that modern existence is absurd, uncertain and meaningless. Absurd playwrights like Samuel Beckett, Harold Pinter, Girish Karnad and Badal Sircar enlighten the humanity with their dramatic plays in real time absurd concepts. It is the fact that life is cycle of happiness and problems as no one can escape from it. The origin of suffering in human life is explained vividly in religious books like The Mahabharata, The Bible, and The Four Noble Truths etc. The suffering can pave the success in mankind with the acceptance of positivity. The paper is aimed to explore how positivity can help mankind to find solution in the problematic situations. The author wants to explore the self-identity in each individual with the fragrance of positive thinking. By inculcating right attitude modern man can turn his sorrow into happiness with the acceptance of life as it is.

Keywords: Absurdity, loneliness, attitude, hope, identity and success.

1.1 Introduction

“Who am I?” “Why do I born?” “Why do I suffer?” are some questions create dilemma in every one’s mind as no one has clear idea on human existence. It is difficult to get answers for the enigmatic questions even for intellectual philosophers or scientists. The Absurd philosophers believe that human life is meaningless as well purposeless, hence the mankind has to create a purpose in order to get a meaning in his life. The absurd philosophy states that accepting the absurdity as it is with hopeful mind is the solution for many enigmatic situations in the modern world. Otherwise, dilemmatic conditions of the society make man more confuse which forces him to lose identity of his own. The hope against the absurdity was the only choice for survival in the present scenario. Once the modern man adopts the absurdity with open mindedness, he allows clarity of thought in his decisions.

During the Covid-19, the whole world experienced absurdity in human life with its complexities like enigma, loss of hope, isolation, depression, anxiety, uncertainty, fear of death, sudden death, huge loss of humanity. So many people were lost their lives with the fear of sudden calamity of human life. When the whole world was in hopelessness condition, the questions like “Where does God exist?”, “Why God does allow suffering?” might have experienced by each an individual. It is fact that there is no guarantee for life, no reason for death and no meaning for existence hence it’s better to accept the absurdity as it is.

1.2 Absurdity: A Part and Parcel of Life

In literature, the word “Absurd” is first coined by Hungarian born British dramatist and critic Martin Esslin in his book titled *The Theatre of Absurd* in 1961, taken from Albert Camus’s essay *The Myth of Sisyphus*. Modern absurd writers like Samuel Beckett, Harold Pinter, Girish Karnad, Badal Sircar and many other depicted the human life as meaningless and purposeless. The prime motive of this paper is how positivity of thought would change absurdity in life,

which is part and parcel in human existence. As per dictionary, “Absurd” is incongruous, unreasonable and illogical. In the same way human life begins as well as ends with dilemmatic and illogical questions such as “Who am I?”

“Why do I born and die?”, “Why do I suffer?”, “What is Death?” “Where does God exist?” The following table clearly suggests the power of positivity in times of tribulations and confusions.

S. No	Absurdity	Positivity
1	Who am I?	I am a human being. I am an optimist. I am confident to face the world as it is. I am an active person.
2	Why do I only a sufferer?	I am better than ---- that -----issue. I am an observer. Draw a big line
3	Why do I live/ die?	I must create a purpose and die with a meaning for my birth.
4	Where does God exist?	It is purely on belief. I am a believer / I am not a believer but I must respect other’s opinion.
5	What is Birth and Death?	It is an enigmatic question to give an answer. Accept the Enigma in life

1.3 Human Suffering: An Attachment

Life is a challenge to balance both happiness and sufferings in an effective way. “Happy Life” is ever welcoming wish for mankind whereas even a thought of suffering in human life is unwelcomed. It is the fact that life is cycle of happiness and problems as no one can escape from it. The origin of suffering in human life is explained vividly in religious books like The Mahabharata, The Bible, and The Four Noble Truths etc. In the Mahabharata, the lord Krishna motivated Arjuna in the battle field about attachment which causes worries. He opined that victory lies on focused mind where man has to attach to the detachment of worldly things and relationships. According to Genesis, the first chapter in the Bible, suffering came from Garden of Eden due to the disobedience of man, Adam. In Buddhism, the monks believe that the root cause of suffering is attachment. If man attaches to the worldly things like recognition, money, wealth, love and expectations automatically he has to welcome both misery and happiness.

The truth is that sufferings can also make man to move forward to achieve success. It’s not as simple as the statement because man has to develop right way of approach in the period of negativity. To face the reality of life, one must inculcate the right approach that is “Right Attitude” which supports him in difficulties without an excuse or an escape. Attitude is an emotion which creates either an environment of positive or negative. Winston Churchill, former British Prime minister, a great speaker remarked that attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference in determining one’s personality. Attitude creates a ray of positive environment with hope in everyone’s life because “mental attitude, i.e., the way you think, feel and believe determines your destiny.” (Murphy, 166). Obviously, response towards any person or situation decides the man’s ability of thinking in a positive or negative.

Attitude is guided by mind and emotions which are common in human behaviors. It transmits the message directly to other as communication does. When a person is confronted with a difficult situation, the action towards the problem is his attitude. Everyone has to learn to handle negative attitudes like fear, anxiety, tension, over thinking which would emerge from unconscious mind unknowingly. If man goes with self-improvement, his mind would open the doors with productive attitudes like positive-going, patience, compassion, enthusiasm and confidence. If not so, negativity closes all doors of possibilities. As everyone knows that how positive minded people has come to normalcy in times of

pandemic with self-belief and positive environment. The author wants to highlight the power of positive thinking in times troubles and sufferings with right attitude.

2. Attitude: Makes a Big Difference

Attitude is simply a response in human behaviors. It transmits the message directly to other as what communication does. When a person is confronted with a difficult situation, the action towards the problem is his attitude. Attitude is in four categories such as Positive Attitude, Negative Attitude, Neutral Attitude and Right Attitude. Everyone has to know the tips to handle negative attitudes like fear, anxiety, tension, over thinking which would emerge from unconscious mind unknowingly. Dr. Shalini Verma opines in *Body Language: Your Success Mantra* as “usually body language occurs unconsciously.” (Verma, Shalini 2) If man goes with self-analysis, his mind would open the doors with productive attitudes like open body language, positive-going, patience, compassion, enthusiasm and confidence. If not so, pessimism closes all the doors of optimism. In The Myth of Sisyphus, Albert Camus highlighted the positive mindset of Sisyphus. As per Greek mythology Sisyphus was a king who was punished after death to push a huge stone. He came to starting point again as it was in cyclic mode. Though the punishment was unending he was hopefully waiting for his success with a smile on his face which resembles hope against hope in a dreadful situation. Albert Camus suggests the humanity to adapt positive attitude in absurdity without any regrets and pain.

Optimistic people react positively even to the unexpected problems and moreover they are ready to face the situations without escaping nature. The open mindedness will not allow finding fault in others hence they think broadly in problematic situations. Secondly, narrow mindset people not only show their closed body language to others but also not allow their mind to listen any suggestions. In the same way, Negative minded people anxious to blame others and ignore the suggestions. In contrast, right minded persons pay attention to the fact in which they strongly declare “truth as truth” “false as false” without hurting others. Hence, they have ability to solve any problem with their open-minded thoughts and logical reasons.

2.1 Positivity: Right Attitude at Absurd Situations

The following list of Absurdities can be handled with of simple activities of Positivity.

S. No	Absurdity	Negative Attitude	Positive Attitude	Positivity
1.	Sufferings	Why do I only suffer?	Suffering is part and parcel of life	Draw a big line ---- / -----
2	Death	I want to live....	Accept the fact	Preparedness
3	Dilemma	Over thinking	Clarity of thought	Open mindedness
4	Loneliness	Attachment	Using the space	Self- Care
5	Search for Identity	Focusing on weaknesses	Identifying own strengths	Self-belief
6	Meaninglessness	Lack of purpose	Create Purpose	Success
7	Enigma	Think Big	Birth and Death is Enigma	Accept the Absurdity

2.2 Suffering: Draw a Big Line

Life is a cycle of sufferings and happiness. Usually, any problem weakens the mind to feel bad. At that point, strong minded people allow productive positive elements like patience, self- analysis, self- belief, will power which will develop open relaxed mindset to think big. The optimist identifies reasons for the problem without escaping the situation. When he looks into the world, his problem will be smaller than the other as he has to draw a big line with positive thinking. The absurdity of suffering and isolation is ended with positivity of broad-minded thinking. Sisyphus called an absurd hero in the history of literature as he welcomed the suffering without leaving the smile on his face. Accepting the suffering in the negativity welcomes optimism in the environment. The extraordinary story of “The Café Coffee Day” Malavika Hegde is the best example for positive minded personality rather than her husband who committed suicide in 2019 for the debts. It is the fact that financial crisis of negativity made him to feel unworthy so he committed suicide as Camus that stated “There is but one truly serious philosophical problem and that is suicide.” (Camus, 10). Suicide is not only a foolish act but also a psychological and a philosophical problem and strongly believes that life is not worthy to live for him. So, he doesn’t give value for his life and also for family members. The positive mindset allows a person to think big whereas in depression the person’s mind can’t allow himself to find a solution. The story of Malavika Hegde is proven that her positive mindset (Drawing) made the difference between a big line (big problem) to a small line (small problem).

2.3 Death: Preparedness

Birth and Death is an enigma, even intellectuals are not given a clear idea on both. The absurdity of birth and death is common for living things. When man accepts the fact that birth and death is not in the hands of any he can understand the human absurdity. Buddhism preaches that one must break the cycle of birth and death for the attainment. One must prepare for death to meet death, through which attainment of soul is possible. Similarly, through Jesus Christ, the soul has to meet the master for the attainment in Kingdom. Christianity believes that after death, the soul has a life in the Kingdom of Heaven. As Shakespeare, the great literary legend stated that “All the world’s a stage, and all the men and women merely players”. It is well-known pretty fact that life is temporary, the player has to leave when the game ends on this stage of earth. Samuel Beckett’s Endgame is the best play for human absurdity in which the playwright depicts human enigma with minimized characters and meaningless conversation that resembles negativity of pessimism. Ashkan Shobeiri and Azadeh Shobeiri remarked in the article “Samuel Beckett’s Absurdism: Pessimism or Optimism?” the characters in Beckett’s plays reflect what they truly mean through their words which are not ambiguous, and all this is evidence that Beckett’s absurdism

is pessimistic.

2.4 Search for Identity: Strives for Identity

Modern man feels that life is meaningless as he is not recognized by the society. He strives for his recognition but he deceives by the selfishness of wicked people of the society. The absurd playwrights like Samuel Beckett, Harold Pinter, Girish Karnad and Badal Sircar well depicted meaningless of human life in their plays. In Badal Sircar’s Evam Indrajit, the protagonist has lost his interest in his life when he feels that no one cares and loves for him. The identity crisis is also well depicted in Eugene O’ Neills play The Hairy Ape. The protagonist Yank suffers from social alienation due to his attachment of identity at his own place. Search for identity is one of the modern complexities, so layman has to face the world as it without finding fault of others as it resembles his negativity. The author wants to suggest that develop self-esteem in times of disappointments to face the harsh realities of the world otherwise they become barriers in the path of success.

3. Know Thyself with Positivity

3.1 Self Introspection

It is the first and foremost practice to focus on self. In this process, man has to focus on weaknesses rather than strengths. The proverb “To err is human; to forgive is divine” “is helpful for the man to support himself or excuse the others for social well-being. The self-examination helps a lot in taking the risks in life as a challenge. Self-belief, self-respect, self-analysis, self-esteem, self-questioning, self-confidence are a part of “Self”.

Positive attitude: I am sincere at my workplace. (Self-belief)
Negative attitude: I only sincere at my workplace. (Over confidence)

3.2 Adaptability

Adjust the mind with positive vibes which will develop positive environment. One must be like water because it changes according to shape of the container.

Positive attitude: I am ready to work anywhere in India. (I can)

Negative attitude: I only work at my hometown. (I can’t)

3.3 Setbacks

Setbacks are part of life but negative mindset people cannot take it easily. They find fault in others rather than doing self-analysis. The positive mindset allows the person to focus more on his mistakes rather than disappointment. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam was called missile man of India because he faced many setbacks in the completion of Project SLV-3. At first, it was a failure in 1979 due to technical issues of control system of a rocket. Kalam succeeded in 1980 with his self-analysis and self-belief.

3.4 Hope against Hope

Hope is an optimistic state of mind. It plays a prominent role in negative circumstances. During Covid-19, everyone experienced the hopeless condition of dilemma but still rays of positive vibes regain the continuity of life. Psychological barriers like fear of death, dilemma, tension, confusion affected the patient more than the virus. During the battle, many of them were survived with valiant mindset of positivity. The author wants to say that hope against the hope is the only solution in unexpected calamities.

3.5 Life is meant for Happiness

As per The Theatre of Absurd, "Absurd" means out of harmony in musical context. The whole humanity strives for harmony in the survival. It is the fact that man accepts absurdity in life to achieve harmony in individual as well as in society. Finally, every human being must understand that social harmony promotes happiness across the globe. One must be conscious to achieve a happy life in and around the society with positivity because happiness comes from within the self. Hence it can be divided into internal happiness and external happiness. It must be understood that without internal peace of thought no one can achieve a happy life.

4. Conclusion

The author wants to conclude that though the human journey is absurd, the man has to strive for his well-being in the society. The dark side of human life will turn into happiness with the inculcation of positive thinking. The absurdities like fear, anxiety, enigma, loneliness can be handled by positive thoughts. Friedrich Nietzsche, German philosopher believes that continuous effort to overcome the barriers is considered "Will power" which turns negative thoughts to positive. To achieve success in life one has to explore purpose in purposeless survival, meaning in meaningless existence and moreover hope in hopeless conditions. In fact, man knows that striving for worldly things is no use because life is not permanent on this earth. It is concluded that absurdity is part and parcel of human existence hence the humanity has to accept the absurdity as it is with positive thought of hope to achieve success and happiness in life.

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