

The Absurdity of Existence: A Search by V.M. Bashir '*Birthday*' As An Expression of Absurd Realism

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Abstract

V.M. Basheer was a renowned Malayalam writer known for storytelling in Indian literature. He was known for his realistic and humane approach. Birthdays (*Birthday*). It is a story originally written in Malayalam, narrated from an autobiographical point of view. This research paper was written by V.M. Absurd-Realism, highlighting themes in Bashir's short story "*Birthday*", exploring how the principles of narrative are embodied, and *the philosophy of the absurd*. Through a critical analysis of the story's non-linear narrative structure, fragmented characters, and illogical events, this study demonstrates how Bashir employs absurd elements to highlight the inherent meaninglessness and uncertainty of human existence. Their stories depict the lives and struggles of common people. Her Story "*Birthday*" Clearly illustrates many elements of existentialism, which align with Albert Camus's concept of absurdity. This research demonstrates how "*Birthday*" challenges traditional notions of reality and identity, a profound commentary on the human condition. Introduction.

Keywords: V.M. Basheer, Absurd-Realism, Existentialism, Indian Literature, Meaninglessness, Ordinary People, Absurd Philosophy.

Introduction

V.M. Basheer, a prominent figure in Malayalam literature, is celebrated for his unique storytelling that blends realism with deep humanistic themes. His short story "Birthday" (translated as "Birthday") serves as a poignant exploration of the absurdity of existence, encapsulating the struggles and complexities of human life. This narrative is not just a narration of events, but a profound commentary on the human condition, reflecting the inherent meaninglessness and uncertainty that often accompany our existence. Absurd realism, a literary movement that emerged in the 20th century, challenges traditional understandings of reality and identity. It draws heavily from existentialist philosophy, particularly the works of thinkers such as Albert Camus, who held that life is devoid of inherent meaning, leading individuals to confront the absurdity of their circumstances. In "Birthday", Bashir employs a non-linear narrative structure, fragmented characters, and illogical events, all of which serve to highlight the absurdities of life and the struggles of ordinary people. The purpose of this paper is to explore how Bashir's "birthday" reveals the principles of absurd realism, providing insight into the complexities of human existence and the search for meaning in an indifferent universe.

Literature Review

The exploration of absurd themes in literature has attracted significant attention, particularly in the context of existentialism. Scholars such as Khwaja Ahmad Abbas have discussed the intersection of social realism and absurdity in Indian literature, emphasizing how writers like Bashir reflect the socio-political realities of their time while grappling with existential questions. Abbas argues that Bashir's narratives often go beyond mere storytelling, delving into the philosophical basis of human experience.

In the realm of absurdist literature, Camus's works are often referenced. His essay "The Myth of Sisyphus" clarifies the struggle against the absurd, suggesting that recognition of life's inherent meaninglessness can be a form of liberation. This concept resonates with Bashir's "Birthday," where the protagonist navigates a world full of illogical events and fragmentary realities, mirroring Camus' claim that one must embrace the absurd state of life. The narrative style employed by Bashir has been the subject of critical analysis. Scholars have noted that their use of a non-linear narrative structure and fragmented character development serves to reflect the chaotic nature of human existence. This technique aligns with the principles of absurd philosophy, as it underscores the unpredictability and irrationality of life. By presenting characters grappling with their identities and realities, Bashir invites readers to question the nature of existence and the search for meaning. Bashir and the current scholarship on the absurd literature highlight the complex relationship between narrative style, existential themes, and the human condition. This paper seeks to build on this foundation by providing a detailed analysis of how "birthdays" embody absurd realism, contributing to the broader discourse on existential absurdity in literature.

Existentialism in 'Birthdays'

Bashir's "Birthday" intricately weaves elements of existentialism into his narrative, depicting the absurdity and unpredictability of human existence. The story presents characters who struggle with their identity and the meaning of their lives in a world that often seems indifferent to their struggles. The protagonist's experience on his birthday becomes a metaphor for the existential crisis faced by individuals as they face the passage of time and the inherent meaninglessness of life. Bashir's themes resonate closely with Albert Camus's concept of absurdity, which holds that life is devoid of inherent meaning, causing individuals to confront the absurdity of their circumstances. In "Birthday", the protagonist's reflections on his life reveal a deep sense of disillusionment. For example, he wonders, *"What's the point of celebrating another year of existence when every moment is reminded of my failures?"*

Birthday challenges traditional notions of reality and identity by presenting a fragmented narrative that reflects the inner turmoil of the protagonist. Unrelated events and surreal experiences serve to disrupt the linear understanding of time and identity, forcing readers to question the fabric of reality. Bashir's portrayal of the protagonist's interactions with others further emphasizes this theme, as he struggles to connect with those around him, often isolated and misunderstood.

Commentary on the Human Condition

Bashir's 'Birthday' provides an in-depth commentary on the struggles of ordinary people, highlighting the universal human experience of grappling with existential questions. The characters in the story are not grand heroes; Rather, they are everyday individuals facing life's mundane challenges. Through his conversations and reflections, Bashir captures the essence of human vulnerability and the search for meaning amidst chaos. The protagonist's birthday serves as a poignant backdrop for this exploration. As he navigates the expectations and disappointments associated with this opportunity, he reflects on social

pressures to conform to certain milestones and achievements. He thinks, "In a world that celebrates success, I find myself lost in the shadow of my own inadequacies." This quote underscores the profound commentary on the human condition, revealing the inner conflicts that many individuals face as they face social norms and personal aspirations. Moreover, Bashir's narrative reflects the absurdity of life through the lens of ordinary experiences. The protagonist's encounters with family and friends reveal the often absurd nature of human relationships, where misunderstandings and unfulfilled expectations abound. This illustration resonates with readers, as it reflects on the complexities of human interactions and the inherent absurdity that arises from them.

Conclusion

This study contributes to existing scholarship on Bashir's works and absurdist literature, providing new insights into the ways in which absurd realism can be used to explore fundamental questions about existence and the human experience. An analysis of V. M. Bashir's "Birthday" reveals a rich tapestry of existential themes and profound commentary on the human condition. By exploring elements of existentialism and linking them to Camus's concept of absurdity, this study sheds light on how Bashir challenges traditional notions of reality and identity. The protagonist's struggles and reflections serve as a mirror for the reader, leading to a deeper understanding of the complexities of existence.

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