

**Brother From Another Mother:**  
**The Narratorial Structure of Osamu Dazai's**  
*No Longer Human* and Albert Camus' *The Stranger*

Capstone Project

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## Abstract

The research project focuses on the analysis of narration in Osamu Dazai's *No Longer Human* (人間失格, 1948) in comparison with Albert Camus's *The Stranger* (*L'Étranger*, 1942). How do the circular/linear structure and the I-Novel (shishōsetsu is an old Asian genre of autofiction confession novels) genre conventions affect the absence of a climax in the narrative of those novels?

In most of the past English-language articles and essays (Hoye 2011; Muratore 2011; Ueda 1990; Wolfe 1990), the nature of Dazai's and Camus' narrative has been closely related to the thematic pattern of suicidal narrative or existentialism and the surface-level of basic plot symbolisms. Not much of a comparative analysis has been done in narratological terms except for informal online posts examining similarities between Dazai and Camus<sup>1</sup>. The capstone project seeks to fill that gap and deepen our understanding of non-Western narrative by addressing *No Longer Human* as a unique piece that might reform even some basic theoretical categories within the narrative theory field. That is because the Eastern narrative tradition was mostly autonomously developing its unique plotless narration till the 19th century and then was affected by Western cultures (Wolfe 15). Dazai is a member of the 3rd generation of modern Japanese writers affected by Western literature and yet he is called the last I-Novel, which makes his novel a mix of both traditions (Lyons 4; Wolfe XV). This kind of unique work always broadens the understanding of possible borders that literary prose can achieve.

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<sup>1</sup> See “*The Stranger* and *No Longer Human*” at <https://storypower.criticsandbuilders.com/2021/10/10/the-stranger-and-no-longer-human/>; “A Comparison Between *No Longer Human* and *The Stranger*” at <https://storypower.criticsandbuilders.com/2023/10/05/a-comparison-between-the-stranger-and-no-longer-human/>; “Same-same but Different; Mersault and Yozo” at <https://gerardanarumi.medium.com/same-same-but-different-mersault-and-yozo-735ac9307aa5>

The main findings were obtained by close reading and delineation of general narrative terms such as focalization, narrator, and climax, conceptualized by Gérard Genette (1983). They are used to show how the generic concepts of the Japanese I-Novel we may trace in both works either follow or do not fit the established categories. By this I mean the feature of I-Novel being strongly autobiographical and plotless, while Western authors traditionally were detached from the work and prose was strongly plot-based. The prologue and suicide scene for *No Longer Human* show the two-levelled narration, biographical origins and detachment. The murder scene and confession scene for *The Stranger* show the climax point that changes the narration and plotless nature of the novel. Those scenes provide most of the narrative devices and carry the same false climax points. Analysis showed the presence of narrative circularity and two unreliable narrators in *No Longer Human*. The final step is to contrast Dazai's narrative discourse to Camus's much less polymorphic linear structure.

One of the unforeseen discoveries is the nature of *The Stranger* as the French variation of the I-Novel, followed by more similarities in the background of the genesis of novels. The autobiographical notion is easily traced in *The Stranger*, the same as the personal beliefs are confessed. Finding notions of I-Novel outside of Asia can be the new approach to analysing non-Asian literature in narratological terms. It can help to trace the development of literary traditions and potentially find or predict the future modifications of prose fiction.

## Introduction

Shūji Tsushima's, better known as Osamu Dazai (1909-1948), novel *No Longer Human* (人間失格)<sup>2</sup> published in 1948 is in the list of classics of modern Japanese literature (Dazai). Modern Japanese literature is the term used for works of fiction written in the late Meiji period (1868-1912), Taisho period (1912-1925) and Showa period (1926-1945) (Karatani 8). Dazai's novel is a depressing story that only sucks all its readers' hope away, like the dementors from *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (Rowling 187). *No Longer Human* shows the destructive personality of the main character: a few suicide attempts, several types of addiction, misogyny, prostitution, and cheating. Ōba Yōzō is a character who lives his madly dark life.

Osamu Dazai's narratorial structure in that novel is the main thing this paper explores. In this paper, one of the core points in analyzing Dazai is to study the nature of the I-Novel (shishōsetsu), widely used in Japan, and compare it to Western Literature. Dazai exploits the I-Novel narration in most of his works but the project will focus on his last novel as it is the most exemplary in terms of following the tradition and breaking it at the same time. That is a significant aspect to study in narratological terms. *No Longer Human* is a non-typical Japanese I-Novel but also one of the first writings with significant Western influence. Japanese society was influenced by Western cultures during the Meiji (1868-1912) and Taisho (1912-1925) periods (Wolfe 26). Dazai was a member of the 3rd generation of modern Japanese writers influenced by Western culture (Lyons 4). In this paper, *No Longer Human* is studied in comparison with the Western analogue of what looks like a very similar text, Albert Camus' *The Stranger* (*L'Étranger*, 1942). The narrative in the two novels can be considered quite anomalous in terms of the traditionalist/realist conventions. Comparison between Dazai and Camus can

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<sup>2</sup> *Ningen Shikkaku*.

contribute to the existing theories of first-person narration by providing an example of apparently the same tools and techniques that are used outside of the Western (European or American) narrative idiom. Alan S. Wolfe previously found a connection between them as existentialist writers but didn't cover the narratorial differences (4).

Albert Camus is one of the most well-known 20th-century French Writers. He was an enemy of the French ruling class and always felt like an outsider in the world, so no geographic or social circumstances he would find himself in had any effect on his outsider feeling, as he was Algerian (Muratore ix). His character Meursault is alienated, trying to be aside from the attention of society. However, the development of his relationships with other characters ruins his quiet mind and makes him an ideological conformist. He is shown to be attached to the friend group (Raymond, Marie, and later Mason) and led by their ideology. That's not an initial state of Meursault's personality but later in prison, his mind is again freed from the external impact and ideologies so he returns to his true self. The destructive nature of his narrator and main character were also important elements to compare with Dazai's *Ōba Yōzō*.

Novels were written during the war or early post-war period to determine the personal matters of every individual after the war. That was the moment to ask existential questions. As for Dazai, it was a reflection of his own life experience and Japan's current situation after the Hiroshima and Nagasaki incidents. For Camus, the writing and publication of the novel was during the occupation of France during WWII by Nazi Germany. Authors were motivated by their societies' current situations to show through their novels the pure reflection of human nature. Another important point in their relativity is the fact that early post-war Japan was influenced by French literature (Gessel & Rimmer 9). This connection with French literature

potentially can have intersections of literary backgrounds for both Camus and Dazai to have a common stylistic, ideological or structural approach in their novels.

The author is the one who creates the story world and chooses how to arrange its events into a narrative discourse. Gerard Genette (25-26) gives three different modes of narrative that can be summed into the way of telling the events and actions through a particular point of view. A mandatory aspect of any narrative is the presence of a narrator who determines the point of view from which the story is told. Genette's term for the point of view is *focalization*. It is divided into three states: zero, internal and external *focalizations*. The focalization is not supposed to be constant and can be changed throughout the narration. The main concern of this paper is to determine the narratorial structure.

Dazai's work was written in the Japanese tradition of the I-Novel, also known as *shishōsetsu* or *watakushi shōsetsu*, one of the most famous forms of modern Japanese literature. The work of an author as *shishōsetsu* is an autobiographical piece ranging from a couple of pages to a Western standard short novel or novella with a focus on emotional intensity (Walker 293). The main feature of *shishōsetsu* is that the biography of the author is told in a 1st or 3rd person single voice, close to real life but modified with a couple of fictional elements for the sake of art. This genre emerged under the influence of Western modernity and became very popular starting in the 1920s (Suzuki 1-2). Dazai breaks the rule of a single voice and uses two narrators in the novel. This paper will claim that the usage of 2 narrators makes it easier for Dazai as a person to depersonalize his autobiography and separate himself from his younger self.

There is not so much research on Japanese narration outside of Japan. Neither English-speaking nor Russian-speaking post-Soviet countries have studied Japanese literature closely, and Dazai appears to be particularly overlooked in both Anglophone and Russophone

scholarly traditions. His persona was rediscovered and popularized lately because of new academic research, Japanese anime and manga series<sup>3</sup>. But Dazai was quite a famous figure in his lifetime and shortly after his death (Lyons 1-3). From this study's perspective, his last novel may provide an opportunity for a (re)discovery of the narrative technique in the modern Japanese I-Novel. New insights into his work can create new impulses for scholarly interest in his work and a range of related subjects in narrative theory and comparative/world literature studies.

The study will demonstrate that Dazai's narrative in *No Longer Human* has no climax points and is an emotionally self-focused retrospective view of the central character's past that undermines the classical narrative conventions of the novel, breaking rules of the I-Novel and consciously following them. It has detached narrators that originate from the author's biography, the metaleptic separation into two characters and narrators that are a personification of Dazai in different eras of his life. At the same time, Camus on the other side of the world writes his text following the I-Novel tradition unconsciously. His fiction originates from philosophy, which theoretically was the origin of the stream of consciousness coming from the Lockean idea of mind and interior dialogue (soliloquy) tradition (Scholes et al. 177-185). Stream of consciousness as a narrative is very close to the confessional and open-minded narrative of the traditional I-Novel. In Camus' case, the novel is not autofictional but his main character shares a lot of details with the author's biography. The nature of his narrator Meursault is complicated to determine but the fact of attachment and plotlessness created by the emotionless narrator is explicitly analysed.

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<sup>3</sup> There are several new papers published last years; anime and manga series that are adaptations of Dazai's works or portary him as an active character.

## Osamu Dazai

*No Longer Human* is an autobiographical work, like any other I-Novel. It was hugely influenced by Dazai's life and that fact should be mentioned for a better understanding of the narratorial structure. Fortunately, for us to find autobiographical references in the novel, Phyllis Lyons documented Dazai's life in his *Saga of Dazai Osamu*. Dazai was born in 1909 in a wealthy Japanese family. He went to school and then to college but never graduated the latter. At several points in his life, he committed five suicide attempts but only the last one in 1948 was successful (Lyons 3-4).

Dazai was the most famous member of the Buraiha group. Japanese writers of the Buraiha movement followed the path of decadence described in their works spending time in pubs and ignoring the common values and norms of society. While that movement was never officially acknowledged as an active literary movement, the fact of its existence is undeniable. Dazai is the most successful member of the group, and his latest post-war novels and short stories best represent its notions (Sakakibara 190). *No Longer Human* is the novel where Dazai questions the criteria that define the humanity of any person. That was an attempt to ask how people should live in the new postwar world. After WW II, most of the old writers disappeared from the Japanese literary scene, while newcomers produced a lot of works with their war experience (Gessel & Rimmer 9). Dazai was no different, his post-war novels raised questions about existentialism and humanity.

Japan suffered a lot by the end of the war. 2.5 million people died, 2 atomic bombs struck Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and a lot of soldiers committed suicide (seppuku). This notion of defeat led to the rise of the culture of exhaustion (kyōdatsu) and alcoholism (kasutori) in the early postwar years among citizens (Gordon 225-229). Sentimental self-pity was contrasted with

decadent money spent in one day with no hope for the future, those were two conditions of most of the population. The latter is what is closer to Dazai and his characters. Overall, the notion of both cultures is inseparable from early post-war literature. Gessel and Rimmer interpret the use of suicidal/self-destructive narrative in postwar Japanese literature not only as an autobiographical reference or rebirth/redemption point but as a war outcome, that males died at war while women were left alone in the country (2-3). Meaning that the suicidal path of the character of that period was to follow the path of male soldiers who died, again sticking to the tradition of seppuku.

Meiji writers were self-centred and overall Japanese literature of that time was tasteless according to the European readers (Wolfe 103). That can be explained by the use of plotless narration and chronological characters all following the I-Novel tradition. So-called ‘taste’ of the text can be categorized by narration and linguistic/language choice. Narration is the presence of the story and storyteller. Take away a storyteller and it is Drama, take away the story and it is what? Poetry? It is well known that all artists learn one way or another from their predecessors and that is true for artists all around the world. 20th-century writers moved away or stayed within tradition developing the accepted narrative traditions further (Scholes et al. 15-16). Dazai as a descendent of Japanese literary tradition and also influenced by French literature in college and Western literature overall in Japan is a writer of a unique narration. If the story does not contain a plot/story then it can be considered as plotless, a type of text Ryūnoske Akutagawa argued for with Junichiro Tanizaki (Karatani 155).

Ryūnoske Akutagawa argued that plot was not so necessary for Japanese literature, especially I-Novels that were “slice of life” narrated literary works. In his works, Akutagawa tried to create a *shishōsetsu*-like text following international trends that were strongly felt in

Japan after WW I (Karatani 157). Akutagawa did not neglect the necessity of a plot for the text but perceived the ‘purity’ of the text to be the highest form of literature. Purity there meant to be in language form as good as possible so that the main interest in the text is gained not through curiosity about the plot but textual aesthetics. Unintentionally, Akutagawa found an answer to the previous question “What is narration without a story” and it’s a plotless text. Akutagawa explained this purity of literary texts through haiku and paintings, showing that a text can survive without a plot in the form of *shishōsetsu*-like art that doesn’t have to be explained to the audience.

On the other hand, Junichiro Tanizaki argued that Japanese authors were all incapable of writing well-structured novels with interesting plots (Karatani 161). In his opinion, the great novel was the one that can open up for the reader with every new scene making the plot a central point of the text. This is mostly a constructionist view of the text and that was called *monogatari* text in Japan (Karatani 162). In this argument, Akutagawa and Tanizaki both were slightly right about the future of Japanese modern literature.

By Western tradition, the fictional self in the I-narrative should be put aside from the actual self of the author (Lanser 206). That idea was also proposed by Gerrard Genette, that the fictional narrator character should not be taken as the I of the author. Thus the complexity of identifying the I in the homodiegetic narratives occurs when it comes to the specification of the I-Novel that is directly related to the authors’ self I. I-Novel differs from Western autobiographical novels. Western authors are alienated from their fictional selves while Japanese writers are undividable (Wolfe 107). Japanese writers falsely thought that the nonseparated ‘I’ of the author and narrator was natural and came from Europe, as they tried to modernize their view

of literature (Karatani 157). But that only made Japanese literature more different from other parts of the world due to the close relationship with authors' biographies.

Even being autobiographical, I-Novels, again, do not require a centralized plot. Plot not being the central part of the I-Novel made it possible for writers to end the story at any moment (Karatani 159). That attribute contributed to the short length of most of the *shishōsetsu*. Japanese *shishōsetsu* is about the author's confession. The author represents the paradigm of the story and yet has a unifying personification of the nation in his decadent nature. Authors usually derive from their past and yet haven't acknowledged their present and future selves (Wolfe 100). This detachment from their background or vision of the future leaves it to be the narration of the moment that is only happening with no connection to the past or future, all in the vacuum of the scene/story.

The notion of confession as a system in literature might have its beginning in Christian practices (Karatani 80). That to speak derived from the Christian tradition of church confessions. Confessional narrative in Europe also existed but was less autobiographical and more picaresque. The first autobiographical confession narrative text was St. Augustine's *Confessions* (*Confessiones*). Most of the known narrative forms were developed in Europe during the Roman Empire but the autobiography was less explored than others. (Scholes et al. 73). That makes the study of the Japanese I-Novel an important new branch in narrative theory. Personal autobiographical texts can be traced in Europe back to the 18th century in the works of French Mme. de La Fayette and English Daniel Defoe (Scholes et al. 191). So, the autobiographical works existed but again they were not the same as the "I" in those novels was again detached from the author's "I".

## Narrative Theory

To analyse and categorize the I-Novel attributes in Dazai's and Camus' novels it's important to describe theoretical terms used in this paper. The narratology shows the distinction between the story and discourse, as one is "what" is told and the latter is "how" it's told (Shen 2005, 137). The most authoritative work on narrative discourse is Gerrard Genette's *Narrative Discourse (Discours du récit, 1972/1980)*. Genette describes "how" the story is delivered by using 3 components essential for narrative discourse: tense, *mood*, and *voice* (11). *Tense* is the presentation of time in the story and the time of discourse, showing their relationship. *Tense* is divided into 3 part categories: *order*, *duration*, and *frequency*. The *order* describes the relationship between chronological order and the discourse order of events. *Duration* shows the duration of events and scenes in the discourse, the relationship between the text and the actual period of events. *Frequency* refers to the frequency and repetitions of elements or events in the discourse. With those categories of tense narratologists can identify a rhythm of the discourse.

*Order* brings in a new term *anachrony* (Genette 35). *Anachrony* is the distortion of the direct chronology of events in the narrative. When anachronic events are put in chronological order we can see the impact of the narrative on the perception of events. *Anachrony* consists of two elements in the narrative: *analepsis* and *prolepsis*. *Analepsis* is what is usually known as a flashback, or the past event that is retold as being past relative to the current narrative time (Genette 48). And *prolepsis* is a flashforward, the future event that will happen in the narration (Genette 67). Both *analepsis* and *prolepsis* can be categorized as internal or external, meaning that the recounted event from the past or future is either present in the time of the narration or it's outside of it.

*Duration* is a concept responsible for the concept of *anisochnrony*. *Anisochnrony* defines the difference between the time of the narration and with actual time of the scene (Genette 86). *Anisochnrony* consists of components like *scene*, *summary*, *pause* and *ellipsis*. The *summary* follows that idea by describing how the summary of the event cuts the time of the event, meaning that the narration time is less than storytime (Genette 95). *Scene* is the moment of narration where the narration time and story time are equal (Genette 109). *Pause* is about descriptive pauses that slow down the narration pace, meaning that the narration time is longer than the storytime (Genette 99). *Ellipsis* is the element of the narration that has no narration time but can take an almost endless amount of storytime (Genette 106). And they are either *explicit* or *implicit*, meaning clearly defined time skip or non-obvious.

*Frequency* is defining the repetitiveness of a particular event in the narrative. Categories within *frequency* are *singular* (one event narrated once, or *n* events narrated *n* times), *repeating* (one event narrated *n* times), and *iterative* (*n* events narrated once) (Genette 113-116).

The *mood* is the way the narrative is presented in the discourse. The style of narration affects the perception of the narration and is categorised into *narrated* speech, *transposed* speech and *reported* speech (Genette 171-172). *Mood* is also responsible for *focalization*. The idea of *focalization* as a “centre of consciousness” was proposed by Henry James in 1971 (Miller 124). That means positioning the story through a certain individual or collective consciousness. It differs from the term point of view as it doesn’t centralise around the vision but rather shows a tool through which the story world is presented. *Focalization* is separated into 3 categories: *zero focalization* (omniscient), *internal focalization* and *external focalization* (Genette 189). *Zero focalization* means that narration is omniscient. *Internal focalization* is when the narration is limited to the characters’ knowledge. *External focalization* means that the audience is limited in

access to characters' thoughts but observe everything around them. Additionally, *internal focalization* can be defined as singular, variable, or multiple, meaning that there can be one *focalizer*, several *focalizers*, or several *focalizers* for the same events.

*Voice* as the last category refers to the presence of the narration in the discourse. This gives us ideas about the nature of the narrator and the time of the narration. No narration goes without a narrator, the voice who shows the story world through retelling what he sees. In literature, we usually encounter several different types of narrators. Genette came up with a classification of narrators dividing them into positions with respect to the story world (also called *diegesis*) (248). The first pair of characteristics is the *extradiegetic* and *intradiegetic* positions representing the connection of the narrator to the story world. *Extradiegetic* narration means that the narrator's diegetic level is higher than his narrative (someone outside of the story world, an omniscient narrator, or a character's retrospective narrative), and *intradiegetic* is the narrator whose narrative has the same level. Second the *heterodiegetic* and *homodiegetic* represent the relationship of the narrator to the narrative, not present as a character or present. A combination of those 2 characteristics results in 4 main types of narrators in the story: 1) *extradiegetic-heterodiegetic*; 2) *extradiegetic-homodiegetic*; 3) *intradiegetic-heterodiegetic*; 4) *intradiegetic-homodiegetic (autodiegetic)*.

The time of narration is the same important as previous terms and is divided into 4 categories: *subsequent* narration (past), *prior* narration (future/prediction), *simultaneous* narration (present/action), and *interpolated* narration (past + present/between the action scenes) (Genette 216-217).

The research hugely relies on first-person narration and the concept of *stream-of-consciousness*. First-person narrative developed long ago but the

*stream-of-consciousness* is quite a young narrative tradition as early fiction didn't have many inner monologues as the basis of narration. They were used quite rarely for special occasions to show characters' inner thoughts and feelings but not as the central narrative (Scholes et al. 177-178). This type of narration developed from the philosophical texts and thus might partially explain why certain *stream-of-consciousness* narrations do not follow classic literary tradition's terms. It is the narration that is based on the consciousness of the character, not a written text or report that can be recounted.

Stories are usually occupied by characters that are either *developmental* or *chronological* (Scholes et al. 169). Well/round-developed characters are also quite a young tradition compared to epic novels. Most modern novels use *developing* characters that gain some character traits from the beginning and change throughout the story. Other novels use *chronological* characters whose traits are constant and don't change but they are revealed episodically and develop readers' perception of the character. This definition of character is going to be examined as the characters of the two selected novels are resisting the development of any type.

It's important to analyse and study texts we read as "All good reading is a formalist reading" (Miller 126). Formalist reading can deepen our understanding of those works, and simultaneously explore unseen new literary techniques or new ways to use already discovered ones. One example is to find the features of I-Novel in Dazai's works that follow or break the tradition, to be then used in the analysis of other writers.

## “The Flowers of Buffoonery”

Ōba Yōzō - main fictional character

Narrator - the narrator of the story (Osamu Dazai)

“The Flowers of Buffoonery”<sup>4</sup> (道化の華<sup>5</sup>) is Dazai’s early prototype of *No Longer Human*. It is a piece written in 1935. *No Longer Human* is a prolonged and modified version of The Flowers of Buffoonery. Dazai rewrote it to a longer novel as he didn’t like what it looked like several years after its publication, while previously he referred to it as “simple, straightforward, classical beauty” (Ueda 165). The change of view on his previous work can show the development of his literary style through time and indicate that he is not the same as classic Japanese novelists. The story constitutes one of the episodes that will be in the novel. The main character is the same character that was used in the novel. Taking a look into the initial piece can open up the view and the transition from the pure I-Novel form into the break of the I-Novel tradition in *No Longer Human*.

Summary of the short story: Dazai as narrator is talking about his experience in the hospital but has a hard time with himself as the main character, so he creates a fictional character named Ōba Yōzō. Ōba Yōzō wakes up in the hospital after the suicide attempt with his beloved woman and goes through the process of rehabilitation. The story talks about his days in the hospital while at the same time, Dazai as the narrator interrupts the narrative to share his ideas or emotions.

The opening passage of the story is Dazai as the narrator explaining his situation at that point in life when he lost his partner after the double suicide, jumping from the cliff. But Dazai

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<sup>4</sup> Initially titled “The Sea”; alternative translation “Flowers of a Clown”.

<sup>5</sup> *Dōke no Hana*.

survived. To finish the suffering period he chose to write this story but not in a direct autobiographical sense.

“Welcome to Sadness. Population one.”... Shall I go on? But why bother, friends, if you’ll only look at me with pity in your eyes? (Dazai, *The Flowers of Buffoonery* 5)

He created the character Ōba Yōzō, and he made those first and second names perfectly fit into the character:

To begin, who is this Yozo Oba character? I wrote him into being, drunk on a substance far more potent than alcohol. There could be no better name for my protagonist. “Oba” flawlessly encapsulates his vigorous spirit, while “Yozo,” I must say, has pizzazz. (Dazai, *The Flowers of Buffoonery* 5)

Dazai clearly states that the story is both real and fictional as he announces from the beginning that the story is his but he had to change the name. He writes self-reflectively, and the narrator is indeed Dazai as there is no detachment from the narrator and Dazai’s eyes, which is a feature of I-Novel in a pure state. It’s not usual European detachment but announced detachment with an autobiographical basis and not making the character and the story different but acclaim it as something related. The story tells about Ōba Yōzō in the hospital recovering after being saved from the suicide attempt. Focalization here is around Ōba Yōzō, and it’s surrounded and interrupted by the narrator’s commentary. The narration is plotless, a slice-of-life genre with no actual plot but a collection of short moments in the hospital in the life of Ōba Yōzō.

Dazai/narrator’s commentary is *paralepsis* (two narratives happening simultaneously) that is happening at the same time as narration but outside the story (Genette 195-197). So, the narration in this short story has two levels. It all depends on the frame we take for analysis.

Dazai's commentary with confessions and apologies framework is different and Ōba Yōzō's hospital rehabilitation framework is different. Starting from the narrator, Dazai is an *autodiegetic* narrator in his story, while for the story of Ōba Yōzō, he is the *heterodiegetic-extradiegetic* narrator. The time of narration is mostly subsequent or interpolated in both Dazai and Yōzō's cases. *Focalization* is *internal* and *zero* for Dazai and Ōba Yōzō respectively. Characters of both the narrator and the protagonist are neither developmental nor chronological, as there is no development or reveal of personal traits. Ōba Yōzō from the beginning does not develop anyway. But this can be interpreted with the fact that it is happening after the incident (suicide) and the character is already developed, but for the time of narration, it is absent. He is portrayed the same in every scene, making him a static character that does not relate to the *developmental* or *chronological* type of characters.

In this sense, "The Flowers of Buffoonery" is written in a typical I-Novel style, short and abrupt at moments. It can be finished at any point, especially at moments when the narrator interrupts the story with personal commentaries. Every short episode about Ōba Yōzō can be a point to end the story as they are also very abruptly ended.

Creating the narrative scheme of the story comes this way:

A - Dazai's Introduction (1)

B - Oba Yodzo wakes up in the hospital (2)

C - Hospital story 1 (3)

D - Dazai commentary 1 (4)

E - Hospital story 2 (5)

F - Dazai commentary 2 (6)

## A(1)-B(2)-C(3)-D(4)-E(5)-F(6)

The use of the chronological narration, *reported* speech and singularity of events makes it an I-Novel, with no particular plot, clearly showing the slice-of-life narration in action. Keeping the above feature of the I-Novel structured first instance of Ōba Yōzō's story it can be applied to the analysis of *No Longer Human*.

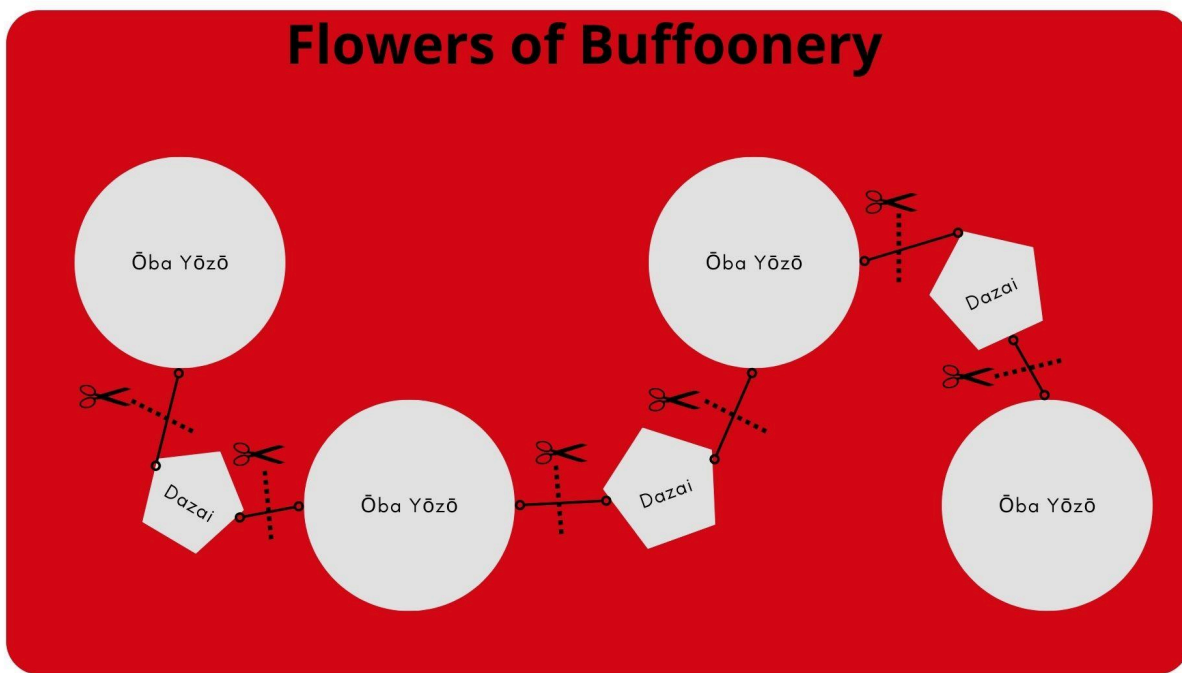


Fig. 1. I-Novel Endings

The structure of the story is quite simple and it is linear (see fig. 1). This defines the nature of the I-Novel as cut out at any point. If we take a stop at any point after Dazai's commentary or episode of Yōzō's day in the hospital, it can fit to be the ending sentence.

Welcome to Darkness. Population none (Dazai, *The Flowers of Buffoonery* 12)

I might even put it this way, for good measure: deleting that first line would mean erasing my entire life thus far.” (Dazai, *The Flowers of Buffoonery* 12)

And while they dance across the surface with their smiles and their handshakes, in their minds they’re both saying the same thing: what an idiot!”(Dazai, *The Flowers of Buffoonery* 14)

Not to get your hopes up. Clumsy good-for-nothing fool that I am. All right, here goes nothing. (Dazai, *The Flowers of Buffoonery* 14)

Reading those 4 initial endings can be a fair end of the story. The main reason behind that is that the short story does not have a rhythmic pattern that changes or creates a space for a more complex narrative. Without a change of pace the story is static and so is the main character. With no change all along the story, the end can be anywhere as there is no difference between the beginning and the end, or the middle part of the story and the end.

But that was not the endpoint of the story as then Dazai wrote *No Longer Human* because he found “Flower of Buffoonery” to be too close to reality. If the short story is directly stated as an autobiography and reflects Dazai’s real-life experience in the hospital after the suicide attempt, the novel is more fictionalized but according to the development of the I-Novel concept he stayed within a tradition. The concept of I-Novel, or non-Western narrative, developed long ago in Asia and the truth of the text, and its direct connection with autobiography always carried the main importance in the evaluation of writers’ works (Gu 323; Shen 2007, 171). That could show the way he changed his narrative in the novel compared to the short story and the overall development of the I-Novel tradition into “the last I-Novelist” work.

## ***No Longer Human***

List of characters:

The Unnamed narrator - the narrator of the prologue and the epilogue

Ōba Yōzō - the painter, the main character and narrator of notebooks

Madam of Kyobashi bar - the minor character who gives Yozo's notebooks and the photos of Yozo to the Unnamed narrator

Horiki - Yōzō's friend

Takaechi - Yōzō's childhood friend

Yoshiko - Yōzō's girlfriend

Summary of the novel: prologue talks about three photographs of the main character of the novel. The main part of the novel divided into 3 notebooks is a story about Ōba Yōzō. He is also the narrator of his own story. The first notebook describes his childhood in a wealthy family, clownish personality, molestation by servants and school life. The second notebook tells his story of a college, decadent lifestyle with his friend Horiki and a double suicide attempt. The last notebook describes Yōzō's life as an adult after the suicide attempt, alcohol, and drug addictions, and ends with his degradation as a human being. The epilogue of the novel, narrated again by the Unnamed narrator, describes the moment he received Yōzō's photographs and notebooks.

“I have seen three pictures of the man. The first, a childhood photograph you might call it, shows him about the age of ten, a small boy surrounded by a great many women (his sisters and cousins, no doubt)” (Dazai, *No Longer Human* 6). Readers are brought into the prologue to look at three pictures of a man: as a ten-year-old, and later as a teenager and as an adult. All of them are disgusting to the narrator of the epilogue. At the same moment, the narrator summarises what happened to the person in the picture. The second and main part of the novel is 3 notebooks

written by the main character named Ōba Yōzō. It starts with the confession. “Mine has been a life of much shame” (Dazai, *No Longer Human* 8). What follows is a bitter story of the protagonist’s childhood, school and college years, suicide attempts, addictions and asylum. The notebook narrative finally takes us to the point when the main character is 27 and completely degraded as a human being, whereupon the story is aborted and Ōba Yōzō’s narrative ends. In the epilogue, the Unnamed narrator of the prologue comes back and now acts as the main character in his own story of receiving those notebooks and photos from the madam of the Kyobashi bar.

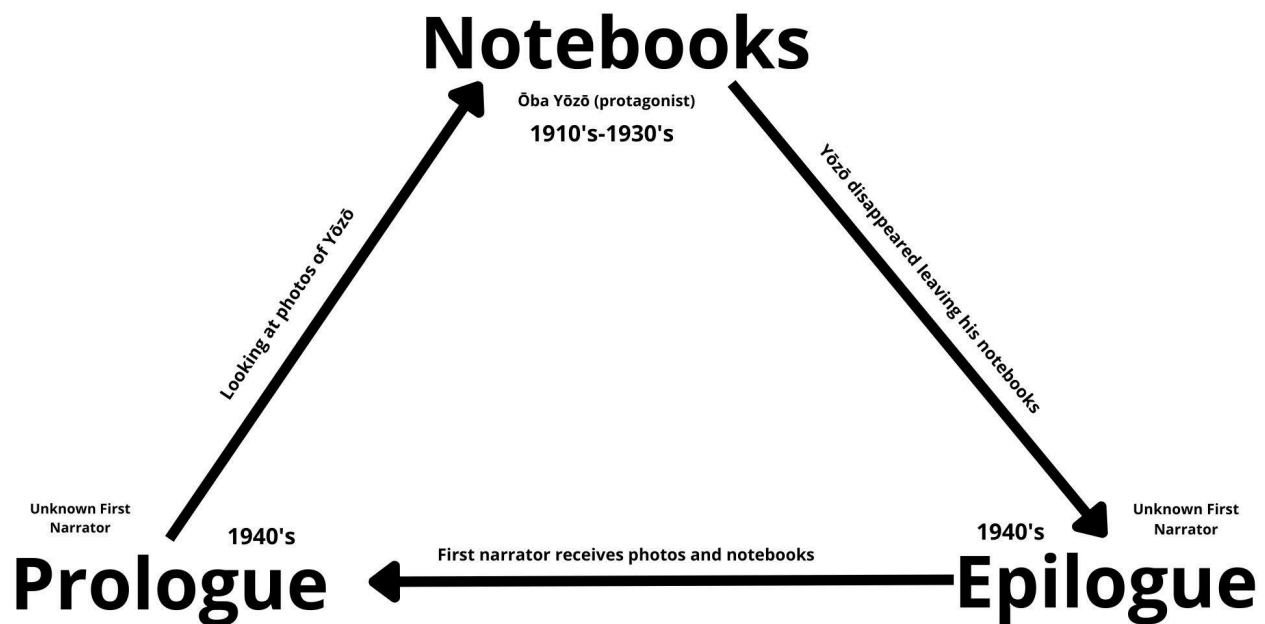


Fig. 2 Timeline and Chronology

The story opens up with an Unnamed narrator whom different interpretations can identify as Dazai, some random irrelevant character or the main character Ōba Yōzō, the narrator of the main part of the novel. Marco Caracciolo writes that it’s limiting us if we take the character only

as words on paper to analyze (6). The nature of every narrator we can identify is always giving important details and ways of interpretation. Taking into account that the novel is autobiographical we can argue that both narrators of the novel are representing Dazai. That would be a retrospective view of the two narrators/characters. But it is not a secret that Yōzō's life repeats Dazai's path close enough to make its autobiographical origins undoubtable. The novel was written in 1948, while the story takes place in the 1910s to 1930s "The events described in the notebooks seem to relate mainly to the Tokyo of 1930 or so, but it was not until about 1935," and by the end of the third notebook, Yōzō is 27 years old, so his childhood like Dazai's own, fall in the 1910s (*No Longer Human* 43-44) (see fig. 2). The prologue with the epilogue is from the 1940s, as it is around ten years after the story of the notebooks stops, according to the madam of Kyobashi. That shows that Dazai's narrators represent him in his different parts of life (see fig. 3). That is an important interpretation that can lead to the fact that the main character, Yōzō, and the Unnamed narrator are both one character, as that what can be seen in Dazai's "The Flowers of Buffoonery". That possibility adds to the complexity of the narrative but also lets the two narrators complement each other so their views and perceptions are mutually understandable to each other. That gives us two different narrators, one that is subjective (Yōzō) and the other that is new and subjective (the Unnamed) because he has a complete picture of the events in the Yozo's narratorial future, i.e. what Yozo does not know when he ceases writing things down in his notebooks. The subjectiveness of both narrators is undeniable as the nature of the I-Novel is to show the true subjective self of the author (Wolfe 110). In the case of Dazai, we have past and present versions of his identity but they both are true subjective identities. Readers can look at events from different perspectives with different time scales and make their interpretations.

# Dazai

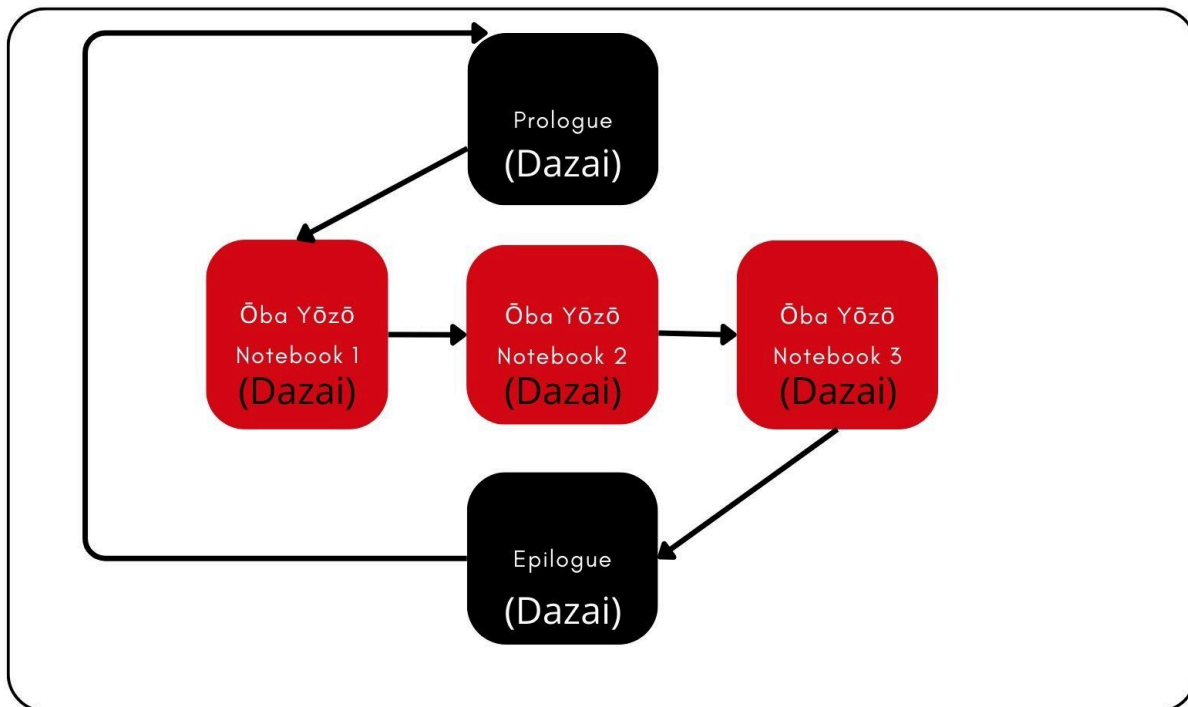


Fig. 3 The Presence of Dazai

The common interpretation of the novel is that both narrators are completely different persons and have no connections, so the Unnamed narrator is only the external tool to amplify the voice of Yōzō by publishing the notebooks after many years. That interpretation cannot be discredited, as any other, because even autobiographical works of fiction are still works of fiction. But again referencing “The Flowers of Buffoonery”, it can be seen that in the case of *No Longer Human* Dazai drew a line between himself and the main character of the novel without explanations like who is Yōzō. This kind of time-based separation between the two characters can be interpreted as prewar Dazai’s state in Yōzō and postwar Dazai’s state as the Unnamed narrator. Lyons also suggests that *No Longer Human* narrators are both representations of Dazai, but he does not appear in the novel himself, in the best form he could write, as his previous

works were only attempts to make it (17). Some of his early works had a similar outline to Yōzō's story, while "The Flower of Buffoonery" has a similar narrative structure with two narrative levels.

As *No Longer Human* has two narrators that are *autodiegetic* and *metadiegetic* (a narrative within a narrative) that are not the same, there should be a *metalepsis* (change of narrative levels) between them making it a two-level narrative structure (Genette 228-234). As the narrative discourse is led by the narrator the application of analysis of each narrator should be done separately. But they cannot be taken as two separate/equal narrators, as the Unnamed narrator is superior to Yōzō because his notebooks' story is within the Unnamed narrator's discourse. At the same time, the power of discourse by the Unnamed narrator is only limited in the Prologue and Epilogue, which makes Yōzō's notebooks a part of it but also a distinct narrative voice. But those voices cannot be completely separated from each other as they create a complex point of view on the story. Meaning that each level of narration should be analysed separately and also simultaneously.

So the analysis of the narrative discourse here means making a two-level anachronic scheme relative to the Unnamed narrator and Ōba Yōzō. In *No Longer Human*, the detachment is different as it is only implied that the outer Unnamed narrator is Dazai himself or maybe not. So there would be two anachronic schemes.

The narrative scheme of the novel from the Unnamed narrator's perspective is this:

A - Prologue (6/5) (autodiegetic)

B - Notebook 1 (1) (metadiegetic)

C - Notebook 2 (2) (metadiegetic)

D - Notebook 3 part 1 (3) (metadiegetic)

E - Notebook 3 part 2 (4) (metadiegetic)

F - Epilogue (5) (autodiegetic)

**A6/5 - (B1 - C2 - D3 - E4) - F5**

The narrative scheme for Ōba Yōzō's perspective is:

A - Notebook 1 (1) (extradiegetic-homodiegetic)

B - Notebook 2 (2) (extradiegetic-homodiegetic)

C - Notebook 3 part 1 (3) (extradiegetic-homodiegetic)

D - Notebook 3 part 2 (4) (extradiegetic-homodiegetic)

**A1 - B2 - C3 - D4**

These two schemes are different only because of the asynchronous nature of narrative of the Unnamed narrator. Here, if we continue with the idea that Yōzō is the representation of the prewar and more I-Novelist Dazai, we can make a direct connection between this and “The Flowers of Buffoonery”. The narrative in the prologue and epilogue parts is a postwar, more modern narrative with European influence. Taking into account that only the presence of the prologue and epilogue significantly breaks the traditional form of the I-Novel, we can classify it as an I-Novel written inside of another novel. Thus, *No Longer Human* is breaking free from traditions and yet follows them.

Even if the novel breaks traditional form with the prologue and epilogue parts, it still appreciates the art of the I-Novel. As it was said, Ryūnosuke Akutagawa said that not the plot but the power of prose and its beauty are the most significant parts of the novel. And *No Longer Human* does not contain huge plot twists. Prologue gives away all the future events that are going to happen to Yōzō. So, the reader already has a plot summary. On the other hand, in an I-Novelist's work, a knowledgeable audience beforehand knows that the work is based on the author's biography, so the general plot is known even without the prologue. But it is still important to get into narrative structure simply because "In a plot-summary we often cannot tell a great work from a feeble one" (Scholes et al. 239). So, the reveal of the plot does not affect the value of the work for the reader.

The epilogue moves the reader back to the beginning of the story. At this moment it is up to the reader to find a place to stop and finish the novel. Because I-Novels are slice-of-life narrated works that can be finished at any point without a significant loss of a plot. So, the cyclicity of the novel, even if it breaks the traditional form, still works for the same goal.

As can be seen from the summary, the story is cyclic (see fig. 3). It starts with the narrator already looking at photos, but we never get to know whether he read those notebooks before or makes his assumptions intuitively. The second part, the notebooks, is all chronologically narrated, as we are going only forward without any flashbacks. The last part, the epilogue takes us further, ten years later to the 1940s when the narrator takes and looks at photos which returns us to the prologue scene. There is a specific arguable line that "The photographs, however, fascinated me, and I decided after all to accept the notebooks" (Dazai, *No Longer Human* 33). With this line, it's not so obvious that the prologue takes place after the epilogue chronologically but can be merged inside the epilogue based on that line. This kind of cyclic

narrative makes the rereading of the story complex and endless as it can be reread infinitely many times.

### **The Unnamed Narrator**

For this story, it can be claimed that the *focalization* here is variable and multiple depending on the scenes that are taken into analysis. The nature of the Unnamed narrator from the prologue is intradiegetic-homodiegetic regarding the prologue and epilogue where he is present. However, he cannot be categorized in the main part of the novel as his narration is absent from the notebooks and the role of the narrator is taken by Yōzō. Thus, to examine the nature of the Unnamed narrator we have to analyze the prologue.

### **Prologue**

The prologue unveils the major parts of the plot in the very beginning. The prologue is *analeptic*, the term for the information about the past event for the present time in the text (Genette 40). Because the moment in the text that describes the photos is talking about the past of the discourse present time. But as the reader for the first time reading all that is happening is actually in the present time. So, the factor of the events happening in the prologue is characterizing the image of our future protagonist before the character is introduced:

The first, a childhood photograph you might call it, shows him about the age of ten, a small boy surrounded by a great many women (his sisters and cousins, no doubt)... The face in the second snapshot is startlingly unlike the first. He is a student in this picture... The remaining photograph is the most monstrous of all. It is quite impossible in this one even to guess the age. (Dazai, *No Longer Human* 7)

In this part of the novel, the future decline of the character is already given. But the purpose of this scene is not only to give the reader presuppositions before the main part of the

story. The reader sees the story from the above point of view before getting detailed narration from the inside of the story by the second intradiegetic-homodiegetic narrator, Yōzō. The main part of those descriptions is the fact that “This time he is not smiling” (Dazai, *The Flowers of Buffoonery* 7). The reader is already given the approximate moment of the major climax point in the novel. Retrospectively looking at this description it’s notable that the last photo was not mentioned in the notebooks unlike the first one. It’s the only picture when Yōzō is not imitating a human being but showing his true self. And as a prologue that part makes the reader ask questions: What happened between photos? That technique stimulates the interest of the reader to know more about the story in the detailed description, while they already know the trajectory of development of the characters.

Apart from creating the interest in further events and creation of presuppositions it also results in the stories’ circular structure. Circularity makes it hard to categorize whether it’s a *prolepsis* or *analepsis*. But also the fact that it’s circular gives a clear assumption that the novel should be read more than once. Technically, events described in the prologue with the repetition of those events in the main part of the narrative can be *repeating* events. Following this idea, the narrative time here is *subsequent*, but talking about the future of the narraton.

Another important addition to the narrative is the change of the narrator or *metalepsis*. The prologue gives potentially the objective narrator even if it’s in the first person point of view. The problem of identifying if that is subjective or objective is the fact that the timeline of the prologue and epilogue are not stated clearly in the text. The moment when the prologue takes place might be either before reading the notebooks by the narrator or after reading them. It is important to understand the objective view of the relationship between the narrator in the prologue and the main character Yōzō. In the epilogue, it’s written “The photographs, however,

fascinated me, and I decided after all to accept the notebooks” (Dazai, *No Longer Human* 33). That can be the exact moment of the prologue taking place in the text. This complicated way of characterizing the chronology of the prologue creates new branches of interpretation resulting in the expansion of the meanings of the text. This creates another question: If the narrator didn't read notebooks before, then how did he come up with a complete understanding of Yōzō's impressions and feelings on photos? Alternatively, if notebooks were read before the prologue, then what's the point of uncertainty about the character's story and use of the exact descriptions but with all different adjectives?

Some sentences and phrases make the connection between the Unnamed narrator and Yōzō leading to the uncertain conclusion: “(his sisters and cousins, no doubt)”, “Pretense, insincerity, fatuousness—none of these words quite covers it.”, “I open my eyes and look at the photograph a second time I still cannot remember it.” Those sentences in the prologue suggest that the moment in the epilogue is the moment written in the prologue. If the Unnamed narrator read notebooks before the prologue then there would be no point in adding “no doubt” in the first example but it is not clear. For the second example, the use of adjectives that describe Yōzō are very close to those that Yōzō uses himself, yet it can be coincidence. Lastly, a second glance at the photos, means that previously he had seen the photos but the time between them is not clearly stated, as it can be 1 second or 1 day. So, these examples are obscure moments of narrative that make the sense of the prologue in the story ambiguous.

But as the ultimate example, there is an immediate description of the last appearance of Yōzō: “It has no individuality” (Dazai, *No Longer Human* 8). Yōzō doesn't describe himself with this particular phrase or any similar word expression. But the assumption can be made that this individuality is a reference to Yōzō's “Disqualified as a human being” at the end of the 3rd

notebook. And yet, it cannot be taken as a certain sign. So, we can say that being human is being individual, and unique. Problems of claiming that statement are again uncertain of the objective representation of the story through any narrator. The question still exists “What is to be a human?” That is exactly what Dazai and the Buraiha movement tried to achieve, finding a new meaning of a human life and how to continue to live after the war.

Working with the prologue it can be hard to distinguish between the objective view of the narrator and the influence of the notebooks on the narrator. But with the above set examples implying the placement of the prologue in the narration of the novel and that the Unnamed narrator is also a personification of Dazai but in the postwar period, we can claim that prologue indeed can take place in the epilogue.

### **The Notebooks**

When it comes to the notebooks, it is obvious that Yōzō survived till his last photo. But still, there is tension and uncertainty when the suicide attempt scene comes close. How is that? There is no climax and additionally, the protagonist is resisting any development or change in the plot. This creates a narrative with no climax or false climax points. That is proved by the prologue and by the entrance sentence in the first notebook: “Mine has been a life of much shame. I can't even guess myself what it must be to live the life of a human being” (Dazai, *No Longer Human* 8). That shows the reader that the narrator is writing about his past and that all the upcoming events are already resolved by the time he writes notebooks. So, that again results in the understanding of no danger to the protagonist's life in the novel.

Yōzō as a character describes himself very fast and clearly, so his future interactions and actions are completely understandable and won't contribute to his development as a character in a notable sense. He pities himself and describes his role in his life as a clown. Clowning around

with other characters and making fun of himself worked as his way to socialize and keep in touch with people around him. This clowning around also justifies his relationship with men and women. Men are described as seeing through his clownish mask, while women find his pity mask as an attractive detail. As a result, Yōzō will be mostly surrounded by women, while men will eventually mean trouble for him.

Moreover, in the notebooks, we are constantly reminded of the prophecy by Takaechi (Yōzō's childhood friend). That's the main evidence of the *prolepsis* and *prior* narrative time in notebooks. Because notebooks are all written chronologically and no asynchronous points are there. Only prophecy and some episodic main character's commentary. That leaves us with the simplest and most ordinary 1st person chronological narration in notebooks. That incorporates the same commentaries as "The Flowers of Buffoonery" but in this case, they are part of the same narrator's narrative.

"bet lots of women will fall for you!" It was his illiterate approximation of a compliment. This, I was to learn in later years, was a kind of demoniacal prophecy, more horrible than Takeichi could have realized. (Dazai, *No Longer Human* 13)

The use of repetition of Takaechi's prophecy is a tool for returning back to the initial point and a reminder about character development. And the development of the character here can be only a retrospective view of the character's path. Constant repetition of that idea is the stylistic choice but for the narrative purposes it also constantly reminds the reader of the time of narration for Yōzō. It has that sense of inevitability of the future but again makes the tension of climactic scenes less significant, as the future character is safe and all the major changes in his life were given in the prologue, while his main character trait is shown through this prophecy.

On the other hand, that is not a direct quote of what Takaechi said, meaning that it is Yōzō's subjective perception of compliments. He says "illiterate approximation of a compliment", which is a *summary* of some previous interaction between them. So, in this episode and later repetitions we only get to see what Yōzō thought with no clear opinion or expression of other characters. In Yōzō's narrative, we have a scene of a word game played with his other friend, Horiki, where we can observe a unique interaction between characters. Horiki and his opinion are given directly with little or no summary of phrases and additionally have a sense of contradiction with Yōzō's opinion.

### **The Word Game Episode**

"We began a guessing game of tragic and comic nouns" (Dazai, *No Longer Human* 27).

In this scene, Horiki, the only friend of Yōzō, comes to play a word game in the summer evening. That's a game invented by Yōzō: one player says a word and asks the other to define it as either comic or tragic. With no clear explanation for the reader, the game begins, and Yōzō even states that a person who fails to understand the game could not be involved in a discussion of art. Tobacco is comic, injections are tragic; death is comic, cartoonist is extremely tragic (Dazai, *No Longer Human* 28). That is followed by the game of antonyms with its own rules and findings that Horiki and Yōzō agreed on.

Verbal exchanges in that scene are important to represent other characters portrayed in the novel. Horiki and Yōzō's game is going through dialogues that are not interrupted by the additional description of the character's activity or visually emotional state. That way it creates a constant word exchange between Horiki and Yōzō and shows that they do not contradict each other. At some point, their dialogue seems like a monologue of Yōzō. But it is shown as Yōzō just following Horiki as pointed out in the text. "It is quite impossible for me to contradict

anyone to his face” (Dazai, *No Longer Human* 33). Again, none of the characters even in the prologue or epilogue, none of them contradict Yōzō. This can be due to the fact that it is Yōzō’s notebooks because the portrayal of the story is strongly biased with his view on things. But also can be a result of his clownish personality, as it protects him from any critique. That potentially can take out character development in interaction between characters.

Characters in the novel are mostly static and Yōzō is the only one experiencing the change of character in some way. Characters are not forcing any changes, not a single opinion is changed and nothing is happening. Out of all the secondary characters, only Yoshiko has a shocking experience that changes her personality. The major climactic points with suicide attempts are tense but not an actual climax happens. Even Yōzō is resisting any development, first of all, because the narrative comes from the future Yōzō and secondly because his character change happens momentarily. Taking all this into account, it seems that narration in the novel is done in an anti-climactic or false-climactic and linear way. By linear here it means that no complexity or conflict is met by the main character.

He even chooses to skip some details or stories that could be crucial to understanding something new about the character. One of the sentences showing it is in the first description of Yoshiko, his wife:

Many years ago there was a Persian . . . no, let's skip it. (Dazai, *No Longer Human* 30)

So, the potential conflicts in the story are taken out for the sake of a linear uninterrupted narrative. Maybe Horiki would have more contradictory ideas or words for the game but they were carefully taken away, or they were not. And that gives an idea of Dazai’s subjective identity having a little critique in it. This is an interesting case proposing the idea of Horiki or his opinion

in this scene represents Dazai's own critique of himself or the audience of his works. Making it a self-reflective piece on another level. Shutting down the development of dialogue in that direction is also a response or sign to show that no critique or opinion different from Dazai's true self is included in the narrative.

Moving from this ideological conflict, the word game scene is interrupted by the scene of Yoshiko's rape by a stranger. Yoshiko is the young girl Yōzō married in the third notebook.

A small window opened over my room, through which I could see the interior.

The light was lit and two animals were visible.

My eyes swam, but I murmured to myself through my violent breathing, "This is just another aspect of the behavior of human beings. There's nothing to be surprised at." I stood petrified on the staircase, not even thinking to help Yoshiko." (Dazai, *No Longer Human* 33)

This scene is written in the *reported* speech, as it tries to show the real-life/natural image of the scene with passive voice and active representation of Yōzō's thoughts. Even in this scene, the reader can see that Yōzō is a passive character. Here it could have been a chance for him to act in many ways but he chose to stand aside. In my opinion, this scene shows clearly how all the character-developing moments and climax points are going around Yōzō but he just ignores or misses them.

The silence in Dazai's texts works as a *pause* between scenes. By silence here I mean the climactic moment of the most psychological density over the narrative when the character is stunned. In this stunningness, the narrative implies that the reader should stop too as it usually occurs close to the end of the scene. In this case, the scene of Yoshiko's rape is a good example of both interruption of the previous scene and a slowdown of the story's pacing after a relatively

fast word game episode. That pacing is not only change is not only shown in the implied *pause* but also in the number of dialogue lines that were taking the majority of the narrative in the previous scene. While the rape scene and after that the narrative is mostly descriptive having more *summaries* and *implicit ellipses*. That rhythm of pace change or *anochrony* is repeated throughout the novel. But the silence of Dazai's work is not present only during the climactic moments but also can be seen in the change between notebooks, prologue and epilogue, especially during the final scene of the third notebook.

Now I have neither happiness nor unhappiness.

*Everything passes.*

That is the one and only thing I have thought resembled a truth in the society of human beings where I have dwelled up to now as in a burning hell.

*Everything passes.*

This year I am twenty-seven. My hair has become much greyer. Most people would take me for over forty. (Dazai, *No Longer Human* 38)

In that scene, Yōzō is again slowing down the pace of the narrative to finally stop it with the last line. Slow down appears here due to the repeated phrase “*everything passes*” highlighted in *Italics* to show the elliptical notion of the last years of his life without direct writing of elliptical scenes at all and then it goes to a summary of his appearance. Silence occurs naturally as the story is finished on Yōzō's part, his narrative stops and any ‘sound’ is absent. Also, it is again a major psychologically dense scene that implies a reader to stop before proceeding further. And that pause before the epilogue is very important as it is a point of *metalepsis* or change of the narrator.

## Epilogue

After analysis of the notebooks, it is important to look closely at the epilogue of the novel. It's the epilogue that gives us another person's opinion on Yōzō. If the epilogue only had the Unnamed narrator and later all the notebooks expressed all the events and opinions of Yōzō, in the epilogue we can see the Kyobashi bar madam's words describing this whole story. Robert Rolf indicates the importance of that commentary in his essay on Dazai's novel (25). The madam blames Yozo's father and insists, "The Yōzō we knew was so easy-going and amusing, and if only he hadn't drunk—no, even though he did drink—he was a good boy, an angel" (Dazai, *No Longer Human* 39).

This excerpt gives the final of the three views on Yōzō in the whole book. There are no other direct comments from other characters in the story that can be classified as closer to the truth than what's happening with the madam of the Kyobashi bar. That again raises the question of the objectivity of all the happening events. The fact that the Kyobashi bar madam did not contradict Yōzō's words about women's opinions about him does not add more to the argument of either side, it only complicates it even further. No other female character expresses their opinion about Yōzō in the text directly. Therefore it is either Yōzō being completely sane and objective, letting the reader believe in everything that happens to him in the story or not believing the madam of Kyobashi and Yōzō. The reason to consider the madam of Kyobashi is that she, apart from the Unnamed narrator, is the only character speaking outside of Yōzō's narrative. Other characters do not have a chance to express their opinion on Yōzō's life and personality, except for the word game that still ends up not contradicting Yōzō's own opinion.

But most importantly that epilogue redirects the reader back to the prologue again creating that complete circular narrative, as if calling the reader to reread the piece. And unlike

other classical novels, rereading doesn't affect the unexpected plot twists, because the novel itself reveals all the plot in the prologue and later in the text those future events are always mentioned in advance. That creates a picture without any twists and turns, a book understood from the first couple of pages. But the creation of uncertain moments and leaving aside some important details such as the timeline of notebook writing and the moments captured in the second and third photos opens the space for further interpretation.

The final important aspect to add again to the nature of the Unnamed narrator is the line:

He is an acquaintance from university days, and now teaches at a woman's college. (Dazai, *No Longer Human* 39)

It goes back to Dazai's biography. Dazai studied French literature at the Tokyo Imperial University but never graduated (Lyons 29). Here again, it can be said that the Unnamed narrator is also Dazai's personification in the novel. This relationship with French literature that Dazai had even without knowing a single word of French suggested finding a text that would be similar to his work among French contemporaries. And the closest connections were found between Dazai and Camus. That is not an obvious connection but it was caught previously by Wolfe and recently by a few short online posts on Dazai and Camus comparison<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> See "*The Stranger* and *No Longer Human*" at <https://storypower.criticsandbuilders.com/2021/10/10/the-stranger-and-no-longer-human/>; "A Comparison Between *No Longer Human* and *The Stranger*" at <https://storypower.criticsandbuilders.com/2023/10/05/a-comparison-between-the-stranger-and-no-longer-human/>; "Same-same but Different; Mersault and Yozo" at <https://gerardanarumi.medium.com/same-same-but-different-mersault-and-yozo-735ac9307aa5>

## The Stranger

List of Characters

Meursault - the protagonist

The Priest - his interlocutor in the final scene in the jail

Arabs - the brothers of a girl that Raymond had beaten

Raymond - Meursault's friend

Meursault's mother dies and he goes to her funeral. Without any emotions he spends the day and comes back to work as if nothing happened. Then after several days of his ordinary life, he goes to Masson's for a weekend with his friend Raymond and his girlfriend Marie. At the beach, they meet Arabs who are a brother of Raymond's ex-girlfriend whom he had beaten weeks ago and didn't get arrested. Meursault shoots and kills one of them when they are alone. He was caught and sent to jail. He was then sentenced to death. In the end, Meursault has a conversation with Priest where he partially opens up and accepts his destiny. The novel ends with his execution.

Meursault never develops as a character but is static, he is neither a *developmental* nor a *chronological* character. He is an outcast of the society and stays within his state for most of the novel. He doesn't know what will happen and when but certainly knows that he will be executed and so his life is useless. Nothing is important, he can only wait for his execution as days go and go. The narrative is depersonalized, Meursault is just depicted as a non-human character expressing his observation of the world like a feelingless person (Muratore 1). The novel opens up with the line "Maman died today. Or yesterday maybe, I don't know" (Camus 3). It shows Meursault's complete calmness regarding his family member's death. That's an unusual reaction, as for other novels there is at least some reaction, while Meursault stays neutral.

Narration from Meursault's point of view makes it honest and completely one-sided, like the Japanese confessional I-Novel. He even resists any potential change in him from himself and from the other characters. Totalitarian impulse of the time, fighting the society for people like him. It is here the flow of consciousness that lets the narration stay true to the point of the narrator/main character and yet not be the omniscient 100 per cent objective observer. The notion of *The Stranger* being a partially autobiographical novel comes from several details of the novel. First of all, Merault's father is missing from the story for the most part, as Camus' father died a year after his birth. That can show why and how Camus' story is centred around the mother figure and her death as the starting point. Then the fact of him being Algerian and fighting for the rights of Algerian people in France, a member of the Communist Party with partially racist views makes the action of Meursault towards Arabs more relevant to Camus' life. Of course, Camus studied philosophy in college and there is no data to show his interest in Japanese literature and specific examples. However, the philosophical basis of his works is strongly related to the stream-of-consciousness concept and thus can explain the plotless narration.

Meursault in the first half has a house and a normal life but goes out and travels freely. He knows people and even trying to alienate can't resist keeping track of people's habits and their names. In the second part of the novel this changes. He is no longer free and has a place to alienate from everyone. He doesn't remember names, only titles of people who work in jail, priests, and judges. The only people whose name was said are his friend and girlfriend, Raymond and Marie, from the first half. And that goes on and on with his final realization. He wanted to have a peaceful life without any attention. His time in jail turned out to be the perfect life for him and the only torture was not knowing when this all would end. The only feeling and acceptance

of death and execution made him calm and in the end, Meursault wanted to be the center of attention. But he was the centre of attention for journalists and everyone else because of his case.

If we make a scheme of the narration based on major scenes it will be:

A - mother died - 3

B - going to the funeral - 4

C - working and going out - 5

D - life with mother - 2

E - Raymond beating his ex - 6

F - going to Mason's - 7

G - killing arab - 8

H - going to jail - 9

I - recounting the day of the funeral - 4

J - the execution with father - 1

K - priest confession -10

L - Mersault's execution - 11

**A(3)-B(4)-C(5)-D(2)-E(6)-F(7)-G(8)-H(9)-I(4)-J(1)-K(10)-L(11)**

The scheme above shows that the story is not linear and some episodes are *analeptic*, while none are *proleptic*. This is due to the fact that the narration in Mersault's head is *simultaneous*. Because Mersault is present every time in each episode and does not have any knowledge about his future destiny. That raises the question of the source of the narrative and it

is Mersault's consciousness. Having Mersault's consciousness we can assume that the level of narration will not be changed and narration will be *singular*, consistent with the initial style. But the narration in the story is divided into the pre-murder and post-murder. Narration in those stories changes and affects the portrayal of the story world around Meursault. Taking out the climax point with the murder, there would be two equal parts that can be autonomous stories. That climax point doesn't affect Mersault's character notably for the reader but affects the narrative. Following that idea, if the narrative is based on Mersault's consciousness, then Mersault is affected too, so the final reveal of his personality change is foreshadowed early enough. So, there are two different parts, with no *proleptic* scenes, yet it contains foreshadowing.

### **Part 1**

“Maman died today. Or yesterday maybe, I don't know” (Camus 3). That's a memory that is the most *repetitive* in the novel. It is the part of the novel that will be internal *analepsis* (*analepsis* inside of the narrative) till the end of the novel. Meursault will refer to that episode of his unemotional state quite often. By this opening passage, the character of Meursault is shown to the fullest extent. I mean that his character does not change after that and stays the same till the very end of the novel. Making him some sort of a static character whose life does not affect him, and actually is not climactic enough to change the main character.

The absence of development in Meursault's character can be seen in the plotless or slice-of-life narrative. Accepting that the narration is going through Meursault's stream-of-consciousness, the plotlessness of the novel can be justified. There is no central plot that is going on but that idea of Meursault being unemotional, meaning that the novel is not plot centered but more style/atmosphere centered piece. Empathic feelings are important in that story and Meursault clearly lacks them in order to make the story strange enough for a general

audience. As the technique fitting for this purpose, stream of consciousness uses a plotless or *reported* speech to create the distance between the story and the narrator. Which again makes Meursault as a narrator alienated from his story and his character in some way.

Part I of the story shows Meursault as an ordinary man combined with the image of an unemotional man. The main idea comes from the philosophical background of the novel, as Camus was a philosopher from the beginning. Due to this speciality, the narration in the story is built around a character who is a philosophical idea of an average person driven to the absurd state of an unemotional character.

Everyone tries to save their perfect image in the eyes of Meursault, and that makes the view of the world around him and people unreliable and biased not toward Meursault but by people's own opinion of their image and their perception of Meursault (Muratore 10). Thus the nature of the narrator is formed by the outside character when it comes to the image of Meursault's social circle. It's shown through the opinion of people around that Meursault is an unemotional freak, while he should have already felt bad about his mother's death. This depiction of Meursault is the only way to understand his personality, as the novel lacks episodes of Meursault's self-reflection and explicit self-identifications in Part I of the novel. But Part I of the novel ends with a climax point, a murder scene, that changes the narrative to a more self-reflective one. A major climax point of the whole novel divides it into two parts that are inseparable yet very different in terms of character development and the style of narration.

### **Murder Scene**

It was the same sun, the same light still shining on the same sand as before. For two hours the day had stood still; for two hours it had been anchored in a sea of

molten lead. On the horizon, a tiny steamer went by, and I made out the black dot from the corner of my eye because I hadn't stopped watching the Arab.

It occurred to me that all I had to do was turn around and that would be the end of it. (Camus 58)

This scene is a turning point as that is the special scene that repeats previous points about Mersault being led or portrayed by the surroundings. In this case, we do not have people around but nature. And nature as the driving force should be accepted as the most authoritative. Simply that authority is justified in the entry paragraph of the novel, as the mother's death is a natural event. So, nature in this scene is shown by the sun and beach. It is seen that Meursault does not describe his own actions but falls for observing his surroundings.

The image of the objects around and the portrayal of Mersault's own actions and appearance is very important to acknowledge. In this very scene, the presence of Mersault is decreased to a minimum, as it was said, the narrative focused on the surroundings rather than on Mersault. That is a perfect example of a descriptive *pause* or the slow down of the story's pace. In reality, that scene might have happened way faster than it was narrated but that change of pacing increased the tension of the scene to prepare the reader for a major climax point. That created a contrast between the previous scenes of Mersault's walking on the beach and the murder scene because the walking scene is at a normal pace or faster compared to the murder pace. This rhythmic change will be used more often in Part II of the novel to move it from the plotless narration of Part I.

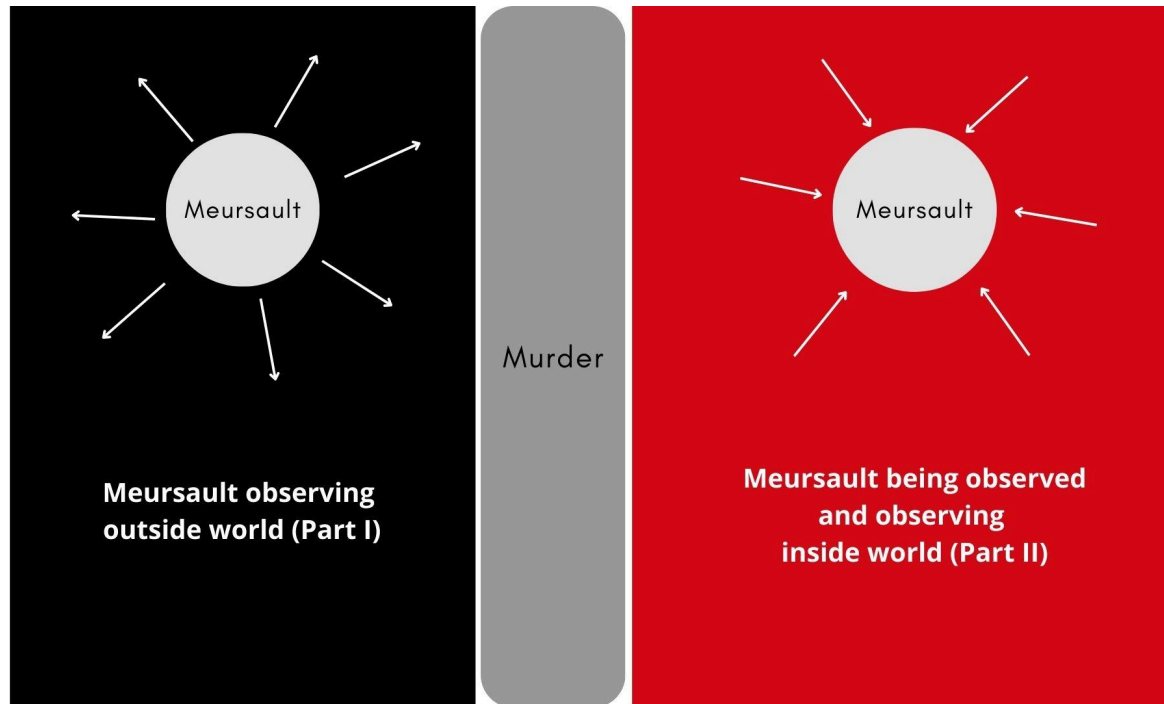


Fig. 4 Climax Point Effect

Even though it is the climax point in the novel it also divides the novel into two different narrative styles (see fig. 4). If part I was plotless and the character of Meursault did not develop at all, only leading to his downfall in this murder scene, in part II Meursault is not static but a developing character. That is because in Part II he starts to rediscover himself and evaluate his life after the dialogue with the chaplain.

In the passage above the narrative changes from using more of the *reported* speech to using more of the *narrated* or *transposed* speech. Making it more artificial and closer to the classic novel structure and character development. Going from the sun and beach to his own feelings about the murder Meursault becomes more and more self-centred.

But I took a step, one step, forward. And this time, without getting up, the Arab drew his knife and held it up to me in the sun. The light shot off the steel and it was like a long flashing blade cutting at my forehead. At the same instant the sweat in my eye brows dripped down over my eyelids all at once and covered them with a warm, thick film. My eyes were blinded behind the curtain of tears and salt. All I could feel were the cymbals of sunlight crashing on my forehead and, indistinctly, the dazzling spear flying up from the knife in front of me. (Camus 59)

Again this part follows the previous excerpt, as it is written in the *reported* speech meaning that actions at the moment are out of character control. They happened naturally and Meursault only observed the mere moment and had no guilt or responsibility for that action. This scene is intentionally tense by prolonging the moment in narration while in reality, it would take a second to happen, while in the narration it takes way more to describe every little detail such as sweat drop and salt, sun and knife movement. Even his single step is narrated to make it a longer scene. After that episode, the reader might imply that such a psychologically dense scene, a climax point of the novel, should be continued with silence and pause. That's because of the tension and the unpredictable murder that should not have happened according to the personality of Meursault in Part I. After that episode Meursault will be more self-focused and start some kind of self-reflective philosophical debate in his head and later with the chaplain.

## **Part 2**

Imprisonment of Meursault results in changing his state to the same as his mother's. They are changing their positions. Before her death, Meursault's mother lived in the old people's home in Marengo. She went there as there was no better choice for an old woman. This closed

governmental institution had good facilities for old people, better than Meursault could provide at his apartment. The same is true with Mersault, as he is placed in prison against his will and the condition of his life there is no worse than his apartment. Technically speaking the only thing that changed for Mersault at that point is that he is a murderer, while on the other his life is the same. Being a murderer brings a limitation of your freedom and interaction with people. If in Part I of the novel Meursault's personality was built around his friends' group, imprisonment gave him an opportunity for self-reflection (see fig. 4).

But naturally, you can't always be reasonable. At other times, for instance, I would make up new laws. I would reform the penal code. I'd realized that the most important thing was to give the condemned man a chance. Even one in a thousand was good enough to set things right. So it seemed to me that you could come up with a mixture of chemicals that if ingested by the patient (that's the word I'd use: "patient") would kill him nine times out of ten. (Camus 111)

In the excerpt above we can see that Meursault is becoming self-reflective and the centre of his narrative is becoming his identity and opinion with little or no switch to surroundings and other characters' opinions. What is significant about this excerpt from others that possess the same examples of self-reflection is the use of additional confirmation in brackets. That is rarely used in the novel way to clarify or justify Mersault's narrative. This shows that Camus while writing this scene wanted to stay true to the identity of his character and express his subjective view on things. This expression, "patient", can be interpreted as either every prisoner being sick or some mental condition making Mersault different. The latter could potentially describe the stream of consciousness and the obscure absence of empathy in Part I. Either way, that is the first notion of empathy of any kind, even though it's born from the character's pure egoism. That

empathy is the seed that later grows and Mersault's personality changes after a conversation with the chaplain. The chaplain conversation is another major scene that is significant to analyse to see the nature of Mersault's narrative and the features of Camus' character development.

### **Conversation With Chaplain**

The conversation between Meursault and the priest is the signifying scene showing the development of the character. But even though the development of the character is present, development is not gradual but episodic, happening in a moment. That is a moment that contains a climax point and at the same time prepares the ground for the final scene of execution.

“ “Why have you refused to see me?” he asked. I said that I didn't believe in God. He wanted to know if I was sure and I said that I didn't see any reason to ask myself that question: it seemed unimportant. He then leaned back against the wall, hands flat on his thighs. Almost as if it wasn't me he was talking to, he remarked that sometimes we think we're sure when in fact we're not. I didn't say anything. He looked at me and asked, “What do you think?” I said it was possible.” (Camus 116)

Analyzing the scene above we can see that the narrative tries to summarize Mersault's words, again making us, as readers, unaware of the whole conversation. If the chaplain's phrases are present in a *reported* speech, Mersault's replies are all *narrated*. That explicitly shows that the narrative is subjectively inverted, but we cannot understand to what extent the reality of the conversation was changed. It was a conversation with a competition of two ideologies, as Meursault himself called it a “game”. “At that he stood up and looked me straight in the eye. It was a game I knew well” (Camus 117). That game is a debate between them to show whose

ideology is right. The narrative skips Mersault's expressions in the direct contact with other characters but when he is alone we can see that he expresses his ideas directly, as it was with the "patient" case.

Interestingly even if Meursault and the chaplain can not find a common ground to talk, they do not start a conflict with each other. Their conversation is more of an investigation of each other's ideology.

"You're wrong, my son," he said. "More could be asked of you. And it may be asked." "And what's that?" "You could be asked to see." "See what?" (Camus 118)

In this excerpt, we can see the only negation of Mersault's opinion in his narrative. The word "wrong" was only addressed to Mersault in this scene, while all the previous times it was about someone else. It was either someone who accepted their area wrong or Mersault claimed someone was wrong. But this very idea of Mersault being wrong is a singular episode that has something to do with Camus' and Mersault's opinion of their subjective identity. Where can these doubts come from? It can be either part of their identity, to critique it, or it can be a representation of the audience. If the critique is understandable without a further explanation, the audience is not so clear. Throughout the novel, other characters can be an audience, but what truly makes a conversation with the chaplain so important and distinct from other character interactions is that it's the only genuine dialogue. Because in Part I we have Mersault with a personality driven by his surroundings, while Part II offers a new personality that is more explicit and true to its subjective opinions. Additionally, the chaplain is the only character that has a chance to respond to Mersault and at the same time is the key reason for his character development.

“Then, I don't know why, but something inside me snapped” (Camus 120).

That development is explicitly stated in the excerpt above. That phrase started a whole new empathetic and philosophical monologue in Mersault's narrative. It also gives another potential explanation of Mersault's transformation connecting it to the upcoming inevitable execution. That sentence is in the middle of the chaplain and Mersault's conversation and has a fast pacing due to the use of *reported* speech dialogues and summaries of Mersault's responses that fasten his replies and move the narrative further.

So close to death, Maman must have felt free then and ready to live it all again.  
(Camus 122)

From this passage right after the chaplain left him the time in narrative becomes *interpolated*, making it a complex of past and present narrated at the same time. The connection to a mother figure and references to the opening passage with the mother's death make this story go back and forth creating a summary of his past. The very thing many people close to death described as rewatching your life before death. Whether it is done consciously or unconsciously, that is the last paragraph of the novel.

### **Execution**

For everything to be consummated, for me to feel less alone, I had only to wish that there be a large crowd of spectators the day of my execution and that they greet me with cries of hate. (Camus 123)

As it can be seen the novel ends with Meursault's execution as his stream of consciousness is stopped. This is the moment his life ends. This is the end in any of the possible

interpretations, so the novel will not move further without Meursault. But that is also a slowed-down scene, because of the created pace in the previous passages with the chaplain. What follows that ending is silence, because nothing comes after that. But not only because that is the end of the narrative with no way to continue it, here it is also a climax point with a dense psychological outburst for the audience. Theoretically, that ending implies the reader pauses and processes what happened, or whatever else but does not go any further, even if there is no further.

Despite being the major point of the story, the execution is presented in the narrative only in a few sentences. We can think that the action of execution itself does not carry any importance or meaning for the narrative. It is not a bursting climax point but a soothing one. The tension created by the upcoming execution was the driving force of Meursault's self-reflection in prison. In fact, the idea of execution and its announcement can be the only notions of the prior narrative in the story, but it can not be classified as a prior narrative, because the execution was never narrated before the actual process.

The above analysis of *The Stranger* had a lot of similarities with Dazai's two works but at the same time, they are very different. To compare and contrast three pieces I collected and structured the obtained data on all three texts. Comparative analysis of the discussed 3 texts can lead to amusing conclusions.

## Comparative Analysis

Category/Text	“The Flowers of Buffoonery”	<i>No Longer Human</i>	<i>The Stranger</i>
Publication	Prewar 1935	Postwar 1949	War/postwar 1942
Structure	Linear/Metaleptic	Circular/Metaleptic	Linear, Finite
Narrators	Singular (autodiegetic/heterodiegetic-extradiegetic)	Variable 2 (autodiegetic; Extradiegetic-homodiegetic)	Singular (autodiegetic)
Protagonist	Autobiographical	Autobiographical and fictional	Has references to authors biography, mostly fictional
Narrative levels	2	2	1
Focalization	<i>Internal; Zero</i>	<i>Internal; Internal</i>	<i>Internal</i>
Source of Narrative	Authors discourse	Notes and Notebook	Stream of Consciousness
Time of Narration	Subsequent/ Simultaneous	Subsequent/ Subsequent	Simultaneous/ Subsequent
Structural Features	Constant narration	Prologue, 4 chapters of	Part I and Part II

	level changes	Notebook, Epilogue	separated by Climax
POV	1st and 3rd person	1st person	1st person
Character	Chronological	Developmental (Degradation/resistant to changes)	Chronological/ Developmental

Table 1 Comparative Data Collection

There are a lot of similarities and differences between the novels (see table 1).

Nature of the two main character is close to each other. Their narration is also the same in terms of alienation from society and at the same time being the centre of attention. But that development is going in opposite directions. For Yōzō, it is going from being the centre of attention to complete alienation from society. Yōzō is from a wealthy family, is an artist and is popular among women in the beginning, and ends up losing it all by the end of 3rd notebook. For Meursault, it is being alienated from society, becoming the centre of attention during the trial and finally being left. At the beginning of the novel, Meursault is an ordinary citizen with an apartment, a couple of friends, a workplace and a relationship with Marie but imprisonment takes all giving in return for his trial in court. There's not much of a backstory, only his maman couldn't provide him with a wealthy life or a positioned workplace. That makes the origin of those two main characters different. Their paths are from working-class middle-aged man to execution for Meursault and wealthy son of an aristocrat to poor caricature artist after rehab. But in this comparison we can not say if in "The Flowers of Buffoonery" the origin of Yōzō is

different from *No Longer Human*. But assuming that they are exactly the same character this uncertainty can be resolved.

In “The Flowers of Buffoonery” Yōzō is a static character, or chronological, but his personality is not described or developed to the very end of the short story. While in *No Longer Human* Yōzō is resisting development which leads to his degradation. Camus’ Meursault is also a chronological character till the very last conversation with the chaplain. But after that he appears to be developing character with all the self reflective thought. The reason for Meursault's difference is that in Part I he did not react at anything and thus ended up not developing till the very last moment of self-evaluation and insights. That is also due to the plotless narrative of Part I that is very similar to the narrative of “The Flowers of Buffoonery”. While Part II is structurally closer to *No Longer Human* that has a development of a character revealed or achieved only by the end or before a climax point of the narrative. Moreover, those climax points or endings are also psychologically dense in both novels and imply a pause for a reader.

Novels has two similar scenes of dialogue where secondary characters are contradicting to the main character in some way. Dialogue scenes in “The Flowers of Buffoonery” are different compared to the novels, as no characters are contradicting opinion of Yōzō. While *No Longer Human* and *The Stranger* has a little of a self criticism.

Interestingly Dazai is not connected to a European philosophical background and is unaware of Plato with Aristotle or any other philosopher (Hoye 88). While they are exploring the same idea with Camus, who surely has studied old philosophers. Their texts go into exploration of the existential questions of their societies. In this case Dazai’s two *focalizers* in both texts, Yōzō and second narrator (the Unnamed narrator or Dazai), are used to explore this idea from two points of view. While Camus has one *focalizer*, Meursault, but his narrative changes from

Part I to Part II. Those are two different methods but the aim was the same. In Dazai's stories Yōzō is an acting character, focalization around him is an important aspect, but most importantly it goes into self reflection or reflection on Yōzō's actions by the *external* narrator. And this self-reflection could appear only as a *subsequent* narrative, as to self reflect, there should be an action to reflect on. In *The Stranger* self reflection of Meursault cannot happen before Part II, as Part I is taken as an action for self reflection. That's why narrative in Part I is *simultaneous* and in Part II we can see more of *subsequent* or *interpolated* narrative.

Meursault has no talent compared to Yōzō who was a talented painter and comedian in a way. Making Meursault a character without significant strong and weak sides, talents or unusual addictions makes him a blurry image that can represent any person. There for sure is a lot of psychological research made but as a narrative technique that makes him a universal tool. There is not much of a thing about him and his life before the funeral, so we catch up with the character at the time of his adulthood, with no age and no distinct physical features. But that is not applicable for Yōzō, as he cannot represent any person. Yōzō's life is described in details from childhood to adulthood, so he is not a universal character at any case. That is the main difference between Camus and Dazai's I-Novels.

In Dazai's work, we see how he changed from being very autobiographical in "The Flowers of Buffoonery" to more fictional in *No Longer Human* but still got the important aspect of the I-Novel, his true subjective self was created in prose by the character of Yōzō. The same cannot be said about Camus, even if his philosophy is directly represented in Meursault's story. Camus made some autobiographical references but the main point was to show his own subjective philosophical ideas, for that purpose he wrote more fictional characters than he probably could. With the amount of autobiography incorporated in Camus' novel it hard to claim

that it is his pure authentic subjective self portrayed by a fictional character. But Dazai also moved from autobiography to more fictional character and that creates a fairly expandable border to claim someone an I-Novelist or not. Again, Dazai considered as the last I-Novelist, moved from truth to fiction to portray a more clear self in prose. If we cannot yet define the exact borderline amount for autobiographical references to be considered an I-Novel, then Camus with his novel can be considered as almost I-Novelist.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the I-Novel genre in Japan developed for a long time and found itself at some point in Dazai's short story and novel. Some scholars call Dazai the last I-Novelist in Japan, making clear that the genre is not the same after his works' influence. Following the transition of his narrative style we can see the development of the I-Novel and the above comparative analysis proved that I-Novel in the sense of Dazai's short story "The Flowers of Buffoonery" and his last novel *No Longer Human* can be found outside of the Japanese literary world. Camus shares some similarities with Dazai's two versions of Ōba Yōzō's stories. Even using different narrative styles, character and settings they both ask the same question in their novel. They explore the existential question of a humankind. But as for narrative theory we succeeded to understand that an I-Novel in 20th century became less connected to autobiography of the author, but had another aim. The main feature of the I-Novel in Dazai's example is to achieve an image of a true subjective self with a strong autobiographical references. And it still has features of the I-Novel as a plotless narrative and ending the novel at any point. But he stepped aside of the simple plotless narrative when he used a circular narrative. And in this sense Camus can be acclaimed as almost and I-Novelist, because his novel has some autobiographical references and shows his true subjective philosophical self. Further exploration of nature of the I-Novel and its transformation should give a more clear conclusion with more examples from both Japanese and Non-Japanese I-Novel examples.

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