

The stranger is
written by albert
camus essay



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The Stranger is written by Albert Camus and this novel is widely considered to be written in an existentialist point of view. Existentialism would be the principle by which the existence of man is defined to have no higher meaning and implications. That is existence would have no range that is beyond physical. Human life is not governed by a special purpose or even by beliefs and religions, There is nothing more that could be implied other than physical form.

As a tool, this novel can be used as assessment of society's relationship with the readers. It is necessary that novels should possess qualities that would transcend normal literary standards and be able to directly affect reader outlook on life. Existentialism as the topic to be tackled would be analyzed and would give derivatives such as reflections and a new point of view that would help the readers comprehend the ideas that are presented not only in the scope of the novel, but also its applications in real life. The novel discusses and dissects society at large where in existing philosophies are present and has a great bearing on the outlook of the people. Considering existentialism, it would be contradictory to the existence of society, Mainly society believes of a higher notion of order, and is built upon a purpose and a higher order of existence. The novel being prominent and well known, could very well mirror the ideas that are claimed to run society at large.

The implications of the novel itself, that is the idea of living for nothingness, is a sensitive yet essential idea that is commonly overlooked by people in their lives. The novel would point out the idea of having a life that is empty. It is exemplified several times in the novel, which shows detachment of the main character from the normal feelings we achieve when participating in

the social process of society. What the central theme is pointing out is the idea of finding meaning in every level of existence that we achieve. To be a stranger to yourself, is to be a person that is constantly lost and unaware of his direction, unable to find happiness in life that is given to him, and a person that has nothing to care for. Progression of events would lead, sooner or later, to the ultimate situation where in we realize the value of what was present, and there we derive meaning from the past and the meaning that we need to find and accept for the coming future. The story revolves around Muersault and a time in his life in which he was faced with grave problems and situations that showed his deep and innermost self.

Muersault lived in Algeirs for a time. It was there where he received a telegram stating the death of his mother. He went to Marengo for the funeral. His mother stayed at a receiving home for old people. It was also there where the funeral takes place.

As Muersault arrives, he goes directly to the home for the aged and inquired with the manager of the home. Manager was warm to him and accompanied him for a time during the funeral. One night Muerasualt stayed and watched over his mother for a whole night. The manager joined him and conversed with him. Muersault being an introvert, preferred not to converse so much. He was quite irritated with the manager. After a while he went to sleep. The following day, the funeral parade was held which took him to a small village.

Muersault was bored every time and shows no distinct emotion of sadness at all. He even refused an offer from the manager to see his mother's face. He insisted that the only significance is his presence before she goes away.

He immediately went back to Algiers after the burial. Back at Algiers, Muersault had not much to do since the schedule of his return to work would be the next day. He went around and decided to go to the local beach.

There he had a chance encounter with Marie Cardona, a former employee at the company he works for. They easily get acquainted with each other and went on later to go out. They got along fine considering how Muersault would act around another person, at least he accommodated her and had a good conversation and did many other things together. Muersault resumed his daily life after the trip to Marengo and a day off. He went back to work and did his daily itineraries. One night, he passed by his neighbor Raymond and they went for dinner to talk about some things on the mind of Raymond.

It seems Raymond wanted to get even with his former lover who apparently cheated on him and caused him to have troubles with her brother. He was asking the employ of Raymond in this matter. Raymond, seeing no significant treat and personal implications that might have negative implications on his behalf, agreed to help. Marie Cardona showed attachment to Muersault and visited him frequently. Marie made the moves of showing interest but Muersault seems to be very indifferent and unresponsive. She goes as far as asking him for marriage. Muersault being very constrained in showing emotions, not even showed eagerness and thankfulness for the proposition.

But seeing no bad reasons to accept this offer, he agrees quite impersonally. One night when both of them stayed together at his residence, they hear a loud sound somewhere in the complex. When they looked around, it was Raymond that was being restrained by the police. His former lover apparently complained of harassment to the authorities.

He beat up his former lover several times for infidelity. He was taken to a station to answer the accusations that was placed against him. After getting out of the station and answering his side of the case, Raymond and Muersault went to the local beach to reflect on their plans. They stayed on a beach house together with Marie. One time, they saw two arabs, one of which was the brother of the former lover of Raymond. Raymond being furious for his former lover's attempt to send him to prison, confronts her brother and incite a fight. It resulted to Raymond's stabbing and injury. Muersault later returned and shot the Arab.

Muersault was arrested after the incident and was brought to trial in the local court for this crime. One of the main issues that was put against him even by his lawyers is his impersonal and passive side that was pointed out by the magistrate and the prosecution. Witnesses were called that attested to his unresponsiveness during his mother's funeral. He was claimed to have shown no grief, sadness and tears in front of his mother's dead body. He himself testified that he has no belief in God whatsoever. He was branded as an anti Christ and was imprisoned during his trial.

Many have concluded that his lack of feelings and sensitivity would be a threat to society as he could do horrible and heinous crimes without remorse

and hesitation. This being the main argument against him, lead to his sentencing to death by beheading. His prison life was very uncomfortable at first, and he did not easily adjust to the lack necessity that was the life of a prisoner. After a time, he was able to embrace his faith. That death is just the end of nothingness.

And his death is not something to be given hope for salvation but rather only anticipation since its occurrence is nothing more than a process that is irrelevant. He was able to reflect on the way of life he has lived and firmly stood that the meaningless of life is a reality, which is affirmed by what has happened to him. He did not care anymore for he concluded that world is imperfect and things like inequality would happen to anyone. The last attempt of a priest to him was useless. A crucifix was presented him a choice, by which anyone can come back to God anytime of their lives, even at the hour of our death. Although he rejected it, he was able to conclude that death being the endpoint of his existence is inevitable. That the end of his nothingness is what will happen, and that is what he believed is the truth. From this he was able to know his own beliefs which gave him direction.

It made him a stranger to himself no more. The novel depicting a life that had no meaning and a death which had a meaning in itself, which is the end of nothingness. This is the purpose by which the novel is created. To exemplify existentialism. It points out a way to rid the human life of complications such as beliefs, religions and notions that would deem unnecessary since life exists nothing more than the physical world we know.

That is why it is useless to put meaning and purpose for an object, a group or a person that would imply what is more than we could see and feel since there is no higher order of things that gives value. That death being inevitable is the final point by which all things will go. Historians would argue that the novel is a reflection of society's acts that would justify to nothing more than useless. Time has been witness to events such as war and conflicts that would initially start out to have a purpose or meaning but at some point, it would lose justification, and would be implemented for the purpose that is not in line with society's objective.

Emptiness and existentialism would be in line at this point. The novel would be realistically seen as portrayed by many societies as they engage in activities that have no significance when it comes to having a higher order of this. This is constantly happening in major countries that are engaged in pointless political and social battle that would only lead to emptiness. An example would be the Israel-Palestinian war, were in the view point of war for each country has been blurred to a point that there is no real justification.

Existentialism would be present as they reduce their existence to nothing more than worldly or physical purpose of being in conflict with each other. The higher order for this two nations when it comes to these issue, is not present and lacking. The character of Muersault have shown the idea of irrelevance. The idea of irrelevance would be the fact that there are no higher reasons for the existence of human beings and there is no real purpose that is, we exist for the sake of existing and nothing else. It is evident in Muersault's reaction on most things that had happened. He does not think of even the logical and emotional implications of his actions and <https://assignbuster.com/the-stranger-is-written-by-albert-camus-essay/>

the things had happened to him. He views everything on an impersonal manner and does things for the purpose of convenience and with no real purpose of meaning.

It can be exemplified during the time that he went to his mother's funeral, his engagement with Maria Cardona, his participation of the torment of Raymond's former lover and his murder of the Arab which is her brother. He showed no remorse and extreme sadness when his mother died. He did not even look at her face for the last time.

He went at the place of the funeral for the sake of going, physically, not savoring the emotional joy of seeing his mother for the last time. His engagement with Maria had no emotional and spiritual implications. He did not even showed an act of ultimate love to prove the worth and credibility of the engagement. He agreed to marry her so as not to disappoint her and it looked as though its a convenient option for him to have a wife rather than being alone. The purpose of marriage that goes beyond the being partners which allows both husband and wife to have a life long commitment was totally ignored. With regards to his participation with Raymond's scheme against his infidel former lover, he did not consider the fact that he had no real business of being involved, he acted on the purpose of helping a friend to destroy someone. The mind of a careless and cynical person would disregard his character just to get anything in value.

But with Muersault, the condition was far more incomprehensible and illogical. He had no gains in doing an evil deed, just to satisfy a misguided

friend. He does a bad act not to enrich himself or to gain riches, but to do something bad. The most horrific of his acts was murder.

Again he did it even though the Arab had no direct connection with him. What more, is that he shot the Arab without a feeling of guilt and remorse. Clearly his human side of emotions and feelings is absent if not unclear. His decisions is not by logical thinking, but by passive acceptance and point of view. This serves the readers to be able to grasp and question the concept of having a worthy and reasonable existence.

The main character also shows a view of life as worthless. His life and the life of others was not valued in the sense that the decisions he took reflected no firm concern over the betterment and development of their life. His participation with Maria, His mother and Raymond, had no emotional content whatsoever.

He lacked the ability of remorse, self examination and expression. He is an existing being, nothing else. His existence defined by living his everyday life and doing his job or task, not particularly for self gratification. The human in him is dead.

The topic of death in the novel is discussed in two manners. Specifically, Muersault sees death as the period of his existence. Since he does not value his life enough to think of leaving a legacy, he does not think of the afterlife. As an impersonal being, he gives no importance on what people will think about him when he is gone, at the same time he does not value the implications of his every actions.

Actions that would justify the condition of the after life. Death as a physical manifestation is decay, which will rid his body forever. That as his view point.

Maybe he does not believe in the existence of souls. And the existence of heaven and hell obviously has no bearing on his actions. Considering he does not weigh good and evil in his life, he believes in nothing, not even God.

Representations of society have been presented in the novel to show comparison by which existentialism is exemplified. The court is a reflection of a society justifying the system by which man lives. Meursault was put to trial in order to justify his actions, meaning, looking into possible motives and analyzing the logic behind those motives and actions. Since society is built upon the notion of development and innovation, that is, maintaining our lives and constantly looking for new ways for betterment, the existence of Meursault in the novel is completely contradictory. The court as a tool to comprehend Meursault on a personal level appeared to have failed. It is similar to the comparison of society with Meursault, which would have opposite directions.

Society is built on a system of beliefs that would prove the importance of the whole with a greater purpose. While with Meursault, his existence is justified by no belief for a higher order, only a simple and plain view. The crucifix also can be regarded as acceptance of a higher order of things by which we comply to a purpose that is greater than us. Religion is a reflection of order since it would be adhering to something that is incomprehensible by scientific knowledge, but at the same time gives us direction in life that would allow us to achieve things that would be considered beyond our reach. As Meursault did the final act of rejecting the crucifix, he affirmed his belief that existence of his is not by God, nature or something extraordinary.

It simply his physical being that would be reduced to a decaying body. He loss his estrangement to himself, as he was able to accept his death in a way that he firmly believes in all of his being. Society being full of varied and diverse people, would have produced a Muersault that is evident on what is happening right now, not just on a personal level, but also on national and international basis. Inequality would produce such products since it would be the substance of their lives. The novel as a reflection of real life is highly probable due to the decay our society has experienced, time and again. The innocence of evil doings is rampant since the norms of our society has been greatly compromised, both spiritually and morally, that are the main points that govern our existence in the level that would put as above the physical aspect of our being. Personally, existentialism way of thinking is rampant in the moral consideration of politics in society.

Personally, discrimination of people has been present and have been in place for a long time now. Racial and age discrimination would be a reflection of the the view by which existence is viewed as empty. REFERENCES Zarate, Oscar. *Introducing Existentialism*. Cambridge, UK: Icon, 2001.

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