

How does geographical circumstance affect the outcome of the outsider?

[Law](#), [Capital Punishment](#)



How does Geographical Circumstance affect the Outcome of the Book? Our lives are a product of the society we live in and the essence of who we are is directly influenced by our surroundings. Geography is a big fact that influences the outcome of this book because of the colonial power that controls the country. The setting of the story, Algeria is part of the reason that leads to the punishment that Meursault receives. On top of that there are flaws in the French judicial system that allow for Meursault to receive a death sentence. Religion also plays a big part in the outcome of the book because of its influences the way that society looks at criminals. Based on the circumstances Meursault was indeed very unfortunate to be sentence to death. All of the factors that arose due to the location of the story worked against Meursault's freedom, and instead led to his undeserved death sentence. Had the trial been held in another country, or had the story taken place in another location, like Canada for example, the outcome would have been very different. Due to the location of the colony and the colonial power that governs it, there are several religious influences on the trial. For example there seems to be very little separation between church and state because the examining magistrate " thrust the crucifix under his nose," (p. 68) while he was questioning Meursault. On top of the influence Christianity has, Islam is also present, since it is a predominantly Arab country. This is shown during his final speech when the prosecutor says, " he'd peered into his soul and found nothing." (p. 97) Once again religion's influence on society is exposed and we see that Meursault was not only being tired by the law of he land, but also by its religions, something which would never happen in Canada during this time period. When Meursault's lawyer also discusses his

soul it show how deeply ingrained religion is within the people who live in this country. It is obvious how the so-called 'law' is tilted against Meursault, since he is a non-believer in God. What further adds to his problems is that the sentiment of the people is that if you do not believe in God you cannot be sorry for your sins or ask for forgiveness. Therefore they conclude Meursault is not remorseful for what he has done. Meursault also refuses to life, something that is considered to be the right thing to do in many religions. Ironically, this quality is what ends up sentencing him to have his head cut off. One could almost say he was willing to die for the truth. Even if religion was disregarded as a factor determining Meursault's death sentence, there are still obvious flaws with how the trial proceeded. In Canada, Meursault's trial would have never reached as far as it did in Algeria. Most importantly he would have had his lawyer present when he went to see the examining magistrate for the first time. Even though Canada doesn't have the death penalty, Meursault wouldn't even receive the equivalent, life in prison. At most he would have been charged with manslaughter, or criminal negligence causing death. In fact, if the trial had proceeded as unfairly as it had in Algeria, the case might have even been dismissed. The proceedings were so ridiculous that Meursault was tried for everything except the murder he had actually committed. The prosecutor not only held him responsible for his mother's natural death and a parricide he had nothing to do with, but also for being "a man whose heart is so empty, that it forms a chasm which threatens to engulf society." (p. 98) What is even stranger than the prosecutor's remarks is that no one from, the judge to the jury to even Meursault's lawyer objected to these unrelated accusations. This would

never have been acceptable in Canada, and if a prosecutor had made those remarks people would think of him as a joke. Finally, the physical geography, namely the climate had a big part to play, because throughout the book it is proven that Meursault is primarily influenced by his physical needs. In fact he even stated, " my physical need often distorted my feelings." (p. 65) This trait of Meursault combined with the hot day set up ideal circumstances for Meursault to commit the murder. He was so hot, hadn't been hydrated for so long, and had sweat pouring down his face into his eyes, all because of the location and its climate. All these effects along with the blazing hot sun that blinded him caused his physical instincts to overcome his emotion and subsequently, his ability to make rational decisions. In the courtroom the climate also affected his decisions. For example during the latter part of his trial he was feeling " so hot and surprised that [he] felt dizzy." (p. 99) This later led him to offer a poor defense by saying " it was because of the sun" (p. 99) that he killed the Arab. In conclusion, it is obvious that this story would never have ended the same way had it occurred in Canada not only because of religious influence and unfair courtroom proceedings, but also because of climate. It was unfortunate that the story ended the way it did because Meursault certainly didn't deserve the punishment he received. Even though he showed little or no remorse for his crime, he was nevertheless tried unfairly. Had he spoken up for himself, or had the trial been held in a country like Canada, I have no doubt that he would receive no more than a few years in jail for manslaughter.