

The outsider



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The Outsider Analytical essay Question: Mersault is as much a victim of his own attitude to life and society as he is of the judicial system. Discuss ??? The Outsider??™ by Albert Camus is based on the first person narrative of the protagonist Mersault.

Throughout the novel, it is comprehensible that Mersault is different and indifferent towards the society he lives in. It is also understandable that Mersault lives life according to his own rules. Mersault, with such detached personality in opposition to the society, exhibits a startling lack of emotions towards the events that most may consider to be important; death of his mother. Mersault??™s rejection of living life according to society??™s rules direct him into trouble with the very society he is trying to avoid. Mersault??™s character and habits make him unique when it comes to comparing with the people of society. Mersault??™s inability to express emotion is an example of his nonconformist character. When he hears of the death of his mother through a telegram, Mersault is unattached, and can be considered uncaring. He speaks without regret for his loss, merely stating, ??? Mother died today.

Or yesterday maybe, I don??™t know.??? His only concern is that of his uncertainty of the date, with no mention of it??™s??™ effect on him.? Camus further distances Mersault from the society in which he lives through his lack of morals. He is a stranger to social custom. His friend, Raymond, tells Mersault about the woman he lived with who he had recently discovered was cheating on him, and how he beat her.

He wants to discipline this girl even though he still has sexual feelings for her. Raymond asks Mersault what he thinks about the whole thing and Mersault answers, "I didn't think anything but that it was interesting". Mersault has no definite opinion of his own. He always appears to be in accord with what everyone else has to say. Mersault expresses no condemnation of Raymond's physical abuse of his mistress.

The conversation continues, "He asked if I thought she was cheating on him, and it seemed to me she was; if I thought she should be punished and what I would do in his place, and I said you can't ever be sure, but I understood his wanting to punish her". Mersault has no scruples. He has no need for them. Values for him do not enter his life, for they don't have an impact on him. Mersault continues to please Raymond by writing a nasty letter that will help Raymond torment his mistress, "one with a punch and also some things in it to make her sorry for what she's done". Mersault doesn't think about the consequences in writing a mean letter to a woman he has never met, nor the impact it might have on her.

He writes the letter because it makes no difference to him one way or another, thus he has no moral obligations. Another situation that characterizes Mersault as being immoral is when he shoots and kills an Arab man, "Then I fired four more times at the motionless body where the bullets lodged without leaving a trace. And it was like knocking four quick times on the door of unhappiness". Mersault shoots the Arab; the Arab falls down on the sand dead.

However, Mersault continues to shoot him four more times. He only describes it as sharp knocks on the door of unhappiness. While awaiting his execution, Mersault takes the final step in the development of his consciousness.

Whereas during his trial Mersault passively observed the judgments leveled against him, in prison he begins to ponder the fact of his inevitable death. He begins to see his life as having a past, present, and future, and concludes that there is no difference between dying soon by execution any dying decades later of natural causes. This capacity of self-analysis is a new development for Mersault, and it contrasts greatly with his level of self-awareness earlier in the novel.

Once Mersault dismisses his perceived difference between execution and natural death, he must deal with the concept of hope. Hope only tortures him, because it creates the false illusion that he can change the fact of his death. The leap of hope he feels at the idea of having another twenty years of life prevents him from making the most of his final days or hours. Hope disturbs his calm and understanding, and prevents him from fully coming to grips with his situation. In his heightened state of consciousness prior to his execution, Mersault says that he comes recognize the ??? gentle indifference of the world.??? Mersault decides that, like him, the world does not pass judgments, nor does it rationally order or control the events of human existence. Yet Mersault does not despair at this fact. Instead, he draws from it a kind of freedom.

Without the need for false hope or illusions of order and meaning, Mersault feels free to live a simpler, less burdened life. Albert Camus portrays Mersault, as an extreme nonconformist who will not ??? play the game??? society has chosen for him. Camus seems to indicate that Mersault is almost oblivious and totally unruffled and untouched by events and people around him. His reactions to life and to people distance him from his emotions, positive or negative, and from intimate relationships with others, thus he is called by title, ??? The Outsider.??? His indifference to detail and time will categorize Mersault??™s personality throughout the novel.