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### **IMAGE OF MEURSAULT IN THE STORY “THE STRANGER” BY ALBERT CAMUS**

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#### **Abstract**

Albert Camus is one of the prominent representatives of world literature of the 20th century, and is considered one of the creators who took an important place in French philosophy and literature. This article describes the character of a person who is indifferent to his fate, his emotions, and the behavior of a person who is indifferent to the values of society through the image of Marcel Meursault, the main character of Albert Camus' story “The Stranger”. In this work, the author describes existentialism and absurdist literature by researching the role and difficulties of man in modern society.

**Keywords:** Albert Camus, Meursault, society, alien, existentialism, absurd, indifference, Dostoevsky, Friedlander.



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### **Introduction**

The story “The Stranger” has been evaluated as “the best work of French literature of the 20th century, more precisely, of Camus’s generation”, “one of the greatest philosophical myths of the century”. Despite the fact that it has been more than 60 years since its creation, “The Stranger” is still one of the most popular works in France. The work gained fame not only in his homeland, but also in many countries of the world. Through this short story, the writer, in the person of a single hero, shed light on the most urgent problems of the life of the entire French society, not only on the French society, but also on the spiritual and moral views of the entire humanity. The work is a classic expression of the ideas of existentialism. It talks about a person named Meursault, whose identity is described in the title of the work.

### **Analysis and Results**

Why is Meursault a stranger? Because he does not recognize the rules established by society and is constantly inculcated, he does not follow them. If a person does not think like others, no one will try to understand him. For this very reason, he was a stranger to everyone. Through this work, Camus explains the importance of accepting a person as he is simply for his existence. The writer himself wrote about this work: “Disobeying the rules of etiquette established in society just for the sake of formality!” - he assessed. The main idea of the work revealed such situations as people's lack of love for each other, devaluing of the rules of etiquette in society, lack of faith, lack of faith in God, lack of trust in the future among people, living only with the present. Meursault is alienated from society, from the rules of etiquette established in society. He does not know why he lives in life; he seems to live without any purpose. No one needs him, not even his



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mother. Meursault is like unconscious person. His life is very carefree and carefree. He is not affected by any human feelings or experiences.

Through the story “The Stranger”, Albert Camus was able to fully reveal the image of people in the society of that time. He expressed his views on the existence of people like Meursault in society and how humanity will go if it loses its spiritual and moral image. It is as if the society created Merson, and then squeezed him out of himself again.

Some literary experts, in particular, G. Fridlender and Ye. Kushkin believes that Camus was inspired by F. Dostoyevsky’s work “Crime and Punishment” to create the story “The Stranger”. Dostoevsky’s influence on Camus is clearly visible in the story “The Stranger”. Camus always regarded Dostoevsky as his teacher and role model. In particular, if we compare Raskolnikov, the hero of the novel “Crime and Punishment” and Meursault, the hero of the story “The Stranger”, we can observe that the names of the heroes are “speaking”. That is, the name has an additional meaning.

These two heroes are united by the episode of murder. According to Friedlander, Meursault is a murderer, just like Raskolnikov. Not only a murderer, but an unusual murderer like Raskolnikov. Although his crime has a different purpose, Meursault is not like Raskolnikov in terms of his mental structure. Camus gave the “Stranger” a form of confession. It is known that Dostoyevsky also intended to write “Crime and Punishment” in the form of confessions or heroic notes. However, we believe that Meursault is more similar to another creature of Dostoyevsky than to Raskolnikov, the nameless hero of “Notes from the Underground”. The French critic Roland Barthes considered “The Stranger” to be a prose of “zero degree of writing” [7; page 102].

The dominant feature of Meursault’s character, i.e. the philosophical conclusion derived from it, is the hero’s “indifference” motive. This can be interpreted as his



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conscious withdrawal from the upcoming competition. He becomes a “stranger” to himself in existence. Various events of the world, which can lead to certain actions of the hero, pass before him. However, he is indifferent to everything and does not go deeply into any of the options. The motive of indifference is directly related to freedom, one of the main categories of existentialism. A. Camus said: “This world is not important. And a person who understands this will achieve freedom”.

In existentialism, death is interpreted not as the end of life, but as a terrible shadow that darkens life. It is not about the objective fact of death, but about waiting for it. Jaspers said: “Learning to live and knowing how to die are the same thing.” Thus, the hero of the story understands and accepts death, its inevitability. We can see that the hero is empty, that is, he has no inner world. That is why we make the mistake of attaching our feelings and concepts to his purely visual observations. Meursault appears to be a foreign body in the established organism of society. He does not cry at his mother's funeral, and even dares to smoke a cigarette in front of the coffin.

Officially, such behavior does not have any criminal character, but it is contrary to public morality. After the death of the mother, one should grieve, not enjoy life. Society hates those who do not want to live by its laws. Society tries to get rid of such people like it gets rid of a bad disease. At the end of the story, the prosecutor tells the court that Meursault is guilty of immoral behavior rather than killing an Arab. Camus puts his hero in a “borderline situation” typical of existentialists, that is, in a situation of choice before death, in which, according to the philosophy of existentialism, enlightenment occurs. Meursault chooses the freedom to know that the world is absurd. He refuses to go to Mora and accepts death. Heidegger and later Camus believed that to be free is not to be “like everyone else”, but to act and think. Camus' hero embodies these requirements.



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In the story “Stranger”, it is completely clear what and to whom Meursault is a stranger, he is a stranger to the society he lives in and the people around him. He is a “white crow”, he was sentenced to death because he did not join the game of those around him. The court called him a “soulless animal” and sentenced him to death. On the last night, Meursault opposes the priest’s consolation and realizes that life is absurd, but this absurdity must be faced with an open face.

Albert Camus created a hero who does not give a concrete meaning to life. But according to the worldview of the writer, one should always try to find the idea of existence, to strengthen it and to follow it. Nor does Meursault take solace in religion. The hero is far from it. Only everything on earth has value for him. And he is great. It cannot be replaced by the hope of eternal life. The character of Meursault is considered to be a person who is loyal to his feelings and does not obey the norms of society.

As Shkunaeva noted, Meursault is not aggressive and free from aggression and self-interest. But on the other hand, he is almost apathetic and indifferent [6; page 171]. Sometimes it is hard to believe that a young man can be so indifferent to the social side of life. Roland Barthes emphasized the undoubted advantages of the novel style, its difficulty to reach the “zero level of writing”.

Meursault is definitely a positive character. The author himself expressed the following opinion about this: “I just wanted to say that the hero of my novel was condemned for not behaving differently. In this sense, he is a stranger to the society in which he lives, he wanders away from others, at the edges of life - in a closed, lonely, emotional life”. We clearly see the position of absurdist literature in Albert Camus, and we also witness the writer’s opposition to conformism, a society that does not accept those who are different.

The end of the novel leads the reader to the idea that the “stranger” is slightly deceiving himself. He says, “I do not care.” But this is not entirely true. The guy



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has the ability to be “on the same wave” with nature, which calms him down. All Meursault’s experiences show how sensitively he perceives reality. Emotional pleasures and elements of nature are like a beautiful gift that tells the story of the hero’s world, and his feelings are perceived as a figurative language. Sometimes even more expressive than human speech, because speech is sometimes unable to convey experiences.

### **Conclusion**

The story “The Stranger” is one of the unique works that reveal the insensitive, alien attitude of people to each other, as well as the indifference and indifference of a person to his fate. The events in the work force a person to think deeply. Meursault is a person with his own opinion, he lives without agreeing with the opinions of others. Because of this, society sees him as an insensitive person.

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