

The Issue of Psychological Portrayal And Artistic Skill In The Work "The Stranger"

Mirali G'iyosov

Lecturer of the Department of World Literature Uzbekistan State World Languages University, Uzbekistan

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Abstract: The novella "The Stranger" by Albert Camus, a writer with an unconventional approach and unique creative works, requires deep contemplation. Indeed, Camus describes both the work and each situation in it in a philosophical manner.

In particular, as many have analyzed, the paranormal character in the work not only holds up a mirror to society, but society also reflects this individual.

Keywords: Paranormal character, "wrong path," "The Stranger," Meursault, belief;

Introduction: The writer realistically depicts Meursault's life in prison and the behavior of law enforcement officers.

The accidental crime eventually takes on such a form that Meursault himself begins to believe he is a person prone to crime:

"From what I understand, his thoughts imply that I killed someone with a premeditated plan. In any case, he tried to prove this."

..."but still, it seemed strange that he clung to me with such anger."

In the work, the true face of a society turning towards falsehood and selfishness is revealed through the paranormal character.

The reader understands that the people around Meursault - those who sentenced him to death - are playing a game. And what was at stake was Meursault's life. When they invite Meursault to this game, he is required to lose to them and be like them. Meursault does not accept this offer; he doesn't even know how to do it. He doesn't want to disguise what's going through his mind.

In essence, Meursault is punished not for his behavior at the time of his mother's death or for killing an Arab, but, as Camus himself notes, "for not joining the game of those around him... He refuses to lie... and society feels threatened by this."

The greatness of Camus's philosophy lies precisely in

this: while the incorrect formation of religious concepts is a problem of non-believers, the increasing number of hypocrites in society is a universal problem that has persisted for centuries.

From the outside, it seems that among the defenders of the law, only the lawyer is genuinely concerned about Meursault. But at the end of his speech, when his colleagues congratulate him saying "That was great, my dear," it becomes clear that in reality, he too is only resorting to such dedication to win in court.

Looking at the gathered reporters, Meursault involuntarily exclaims, "So many people?" They had all gathered for a process that would raise the fame of free theater and media, drawing crowds around them. "For newspapers, it's a dead season now. No decent story was found, only you and this patricide." Reading these lines, it's noteworthy how it shows that people are actually even more cold-blooded than Meursault. Yes, he accidentally killed someone. He doesn't even feel it. And he's not remorseful. But he didn't live waiting for someone's murder or death to become a "decent story," like the people around him. He didn't pretend. A society that is more paranormal than Meursault has no need for a person who doesn't know how to lie and be hypocritical. This is where the point and essence of the work lie.

The sixty-fourth verse of Surah At-Tawbah also mentions that the hypocrites fear that what is in their hearts will be revealed.

Even though he wasn't Muslim, as a human being, the situation in the society surrounding Meursault and in Meursault himself was exactly the same. As noted above, this is precisely why society feels threatened.

Albert Camus's work "The Stranger" gained great fame in world literature for raising painful problems for humanity and has not lost its relevance to this day.

The writer's skill is also evident in comparisons. Despite cursing it so much, when describing how old Salamano wept after losing his dog, it states, "A person becomes attached even to animals and shows affection." This makes the reader wonder how Meursault could not shed sincere tears for his own mother.

At the meeting with Marie in prison, the writer demonstrates the warm relationship between mother and son in front of Meursault, as if telling his protagonist to "take note."

Through the protagonist's death sentence, the writer seems to say to Meursault, "Life was meaningless to you anyway, here's what you've been waiting for." From another perspective, there was no way for Meursault to survive in this society that was foreign to him.

Even for those who open their hearts to him, Meursault cannot give a place in his heart (Raymond, Marie, Celeste). As can be seen, Meursault himself rejects society. It is not without reason that the writer quotes the doorman's words about lights: "when they're on, they all burn equally; when one goes out, they all go out." Humanity is essentially the same. It cannot live without society. It needs a sense of togetherness. Meursault, however, doesn't want to take anyone to heart or care too much for anyone, and at the end of the work, he himself is met with such a "cold attitude." This protagonist, who initially did not accept society and looked at those around him with cold eyes, as if they were mere "objects," begins to reach out to those around him during his time in prison, but is treated with the same attitude he once showed.

Based on the above information, we can see that Camus made the most fitting judgment for his protagonist. At the same time, through the tragic fate of Meursault, who lives under the influence of absurdist ideas, the writer seems to predict the fate of absurdism.

To express the character's cold nature, he includes only thoughts about material things in his speech. We can see that Meursault, who judged life as meaningless, actually searched for meaning in it, albeit in the wrong way, through his ventures into various paths such as women, lust, and crime. But even by its name, the "wrong path" never helps a person understand the

meaning and essence of life.

The writer cites the basis of Meursault's arrival at this meaninglessness from the protagonist's perspective:

"Although my mother wasn't an atheist, she had never shown any interest in religion throughout her life."

Furthermore, within the work, Camus provides details of a crime, as if trying to warn both Meursault and the reader that "everyone in this world reaps what they sow." Indeed, the fact that a person who wanted to kill a mother and daughter whose fate was narrated and claim their wealth ultimately turns out to be their own flesh and blood encourages the reader to deep contemplation.

When sentenced to death, the following words from Meursault's language acquire a philosophical meaning:

"Everyone in the world is chosen. There are no others. Sooner or later, everyone will be judged and sentenced."

In these sentences, the word "court" is used symbolically to refer to the final destination and eternal fate awaiting all people.

Overall, the work is highly valuable because every element, character, or event in it is included for a reason, reflecting the great writer's profound intellectual views. The plot addresses not only issues of a particular socio-political era but also universal problems common to humanity across all periods. This very quality attests to the writer's exceptional skill and vast intellect.

Another praiseworthy aspect of the creator is that in this work, there is not a single character included merely for the plot's sake; there is not a single statement made without purpose. Understanding its underlying meaning requires effort, knowledge, and reflection.

In most literary works, when narrating the protagonist's life, their emotional experiences are also reflected, which enhances the impact of the work. However, in Albert Camus's novella "The Stranger," we see the opposite. From the beginning to the end of Meursault's story, there is almost no mention of his mental state or inner experiences. Events are described as if coldly narrated from the protagonist's perspective. The hero describes situations based solely on his physical condition. He expresses pleasure only in material things. He only enjoys coffee with milk, relationships with women, and traveling to various destinations for leisure. But even from these, Meursault feels nothing. He explains his state after his mother's death by saying, "I was just tired; I usually behave this way when I'm not feeling well physically." Perhaps a typical person might behave like Meursault

when fatigued, but whether woman or man, people generally experience their life's sad or joyful moments surrounded by hidden or overt feelings and emotions. Although men are relatively less emotional, they are not completely devoid of feelings.

On this topic, Professor E. Goziev provides the following information about emotions in his textbook "General Psychology":

"When a person perceives objects and phenomena in the external environment, they are never completely indifferent to these things. The human process of reflection is always active."

Moreover, we cannot find any emotional reaction in Meursault's personality to any situation.

The following scientific data can show that this is not a normal situation:

"Emotion is a unique process of reflecting our feelings, in which the inner experiences and relationships that arise in us during the process of perceiving things and events are expressed.

Emotions, in terms of their origin, are connected with a person's needs, interests, and aspirations."

This concept, which applies to every person, seems alien to Meursault. Only in one situation - when he is sentenced to death - does the main character begin to understand what events are happening to him. Since the emergence of emotions, as mentioned above, depends on human needs, interests, and aspirations, another situation seems paranormal to us: Meursault lacks these very interests, needs, and aspirations. Even when offered a position by his boss, he experiences no emotional response: no sense of pride, joy, or excitement. Whereas a normal man, although not as emotional as a woman, would at least feel a sense of pride in his profession and material achievements. For Meursault, everything is meaningless, insignificant, and colorless.

That's precisely why the writer (!) has the crime committed not by Celeste, Raymond, or Mason, but specifically by Meursault. Prison and death sentence were needed to make Meursault understand that he too was a human being, why he was living, and the meaning of his life.

Why specifically the death penalty? Moreover, not because he killed the Arab, but because he behaved coldly after his mother's death, engaged in immoral relationships, drank coffee and smoked cigarettes over his mother's coffin, and didn't shed a single tear. The fact is, society didn't want to include in its ranks a person who had extinguished their human feelings. Society coldly sentenced to death the person who was indifferent to the death of another human being.

The fact that Meursault didn't understand or feel where he really was even in prison is clearly expressed in the following sentences:

"I wanted to say that they were criminals, that's why they cried. But I immediately thought that I myself was one of them."

As he entered the prison, emotions, though negative, began to enter Meursault's life. The fact that he couldn't get rid of his craving for smoking, that his physical relationship with Marie had stopped, and in general, that his physical needs weren't being met, began to depress him, because Meursault tried to find the meaning of his life in these very things - although he couldn't find it. When he shot the Arab, Meursault felt no emotion. There was neither fear, nor remorse, nor astonishment at what he had done. True, he didn't deliberately shoot the Arab. But with the same notion of "what's the difference?" he fired at him several times. This situation does not correspond to any criteria or logic of humanity. Through the example of Meursault, the philosopher Camus demonstrated the degree of danger and illogical nature of the philosophy of absurdity for humanity.

If we examine Meursault's character from multiple angles rather than just one perspective, we witness how the tragic circumstances in his life positively impact his psyche and begin to awaken his soul. Specifically, after his mother's death, while staying with members of society - the doorkeeper and those attending his mother's funeral - Meursault himself notes feeling a sense of kinship and describes this situation as "very strange." (To us, it's very strange that he finds this situation "very strange") For Meursault, who mainly interacted with colleagues for work and didn't even have mourning clothes, this was truly an unusual situation. Celeste's participation in the trial as a witness for his defense also brings positive emotions to Meursault's psyche. That's why he says, "For the first time in my life, I wanted to embrace a man."

As the trial nears its end, only when the lawyer is still explaining something does the protagonist experience genuine emotions and anguish:

"Only at the end, when my defense attorney was still explaining something, do I remember the sound of a horn that had seeped through all the walls and the spacious room of the courthouse, reaching my ears - an ice cream vendor's cart passing by. And then, memories of life that had given me the smallest and most precise joys came flooding back - the scents of past summers I was now deprived of, the beloved streets, the colors of the evening sky, Marie's laughter, her dress."

Realizing he has been sentenced to death, during the conversation with the priest, we witness Meursault

finally revealing his emotions openly:

"Here, I don't even know what it was, something overflowed inside me. I shouted at the top of my lungs, cursed him, and said I didn't need his prayers. I grabbed his robe by the collar. Trembling with rage and joy, I poured out everything that had accumulated in my heart."

At this point, based on his phrase "everything that had accumulated in my heart," we wonder: what kind of person is Meursault? Is he truly so cold and unfeeling, or a complex character who suppresses his own experiences? Does he really view everything with such indifference? When did this indifference begin in him? Could it be that he had lived in this state since birth, since childhood?

The answer to our question is reflected in Meursault's following confession:

..."I have always waited for this moment, for this morning. Then my rightness will be proven."

The aforementioned moment and morning refer to the dawn when Meursault's death is expected. The word "rightness" implies "we'll all die one day anyway, everything is pointless and illogical."

This very meaning, this very conclusion underlies Meursault's actions throughout the story, the "what difference does it make?" attitude, the reflection that is repeatedly used in his speech, the hero's emotional experiences, and his attitude towards his surroundings. Meursault, who sensed that he would die one day anyway and, as he said, "expected" it, doesn't even feel why he's living, or in general, that he's living at all.

At this point, based on the hero's psychological state, we witness how absurdism leads a person to depression, and how concepts like "we'll die one day anyway" and "there's no logic in living" bring their soul to the brink of death even before their body perishes.

At the core of this situation lies the absence of pure religious concepts and knowledge, and a lack of religious upbringing. After all, sacred books state that a person does not come to this world without reason. The second verse of Surah Al-Mulk in the Holy Quran also mentions the reason for the creation of death and life:

"He is the One who created death and life to test which of you is best in deed."

In fact, our sacred religion provides the most perfect answers to all questions that arise during a person's lifetime, and its holy book is great because humankind has not and cannot make any changes to it.

The religion that Meursault and the society around him profess is an exception to this perfection. As we know,

in the Holy Quran, the Bible, the holy book of Christianity, is included among the divine books. According to the Quran, the Gospel foretold the birth of Muhammad, but Christians distorted the original text of the Gospel. The people who, instead of Allah, elevated His messenger to the level of God and initially condemned even the prophet to death will eventually face destruction like Meursault. How can a religion or sacred book, which people have altered according to their own desires, show them the meaning of life or comfort their hearts?

In his conversation with the priest, Meursault repeatedly states that he does not believe in God. The investigator receives the same answer from him. After the words of both the priest and the investigator, Meursault's heart feels not the slightest emotion.

Because, as he himself says, even a priest "lives like a dead man." Even in our blessed religion of Islam, Allah does not call people to completely turn away from this world or retreat into seclusion. Indeed, the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) also says in the blessed hadiths:

"Those who abandon the world for the Hereafter, or the Hereafter for the world, are not the best among you. The best among you are those who take their share from both." In another hadith on this topic, it is said: "What an excellent mount this world is. Ride it. It will lead you to the Hereafter."

Based on the above information, we can correctly understand Meursault's attitude towards God and the priest. This situation in Meursault has taken root in the consciousness of an entire society. Meursault, as we mentioned, demonstrates his subconscious state and experiences without wearing a mask.

In essence, Camus himself has a similar attitude towards God. "I am not an atheist. I don't believe in God's existence, but I feel His presence," he says. Perhaps behind these words, the philosopher meant to say, "I feel God's existence deep within me, but I don't recognize the Gods you have created."

In reality, not everyone who claims to believe in the existence of the Creator acts in accordance with their words. However, feeling His existence signifies that there is a great love in the depths of a person's heart that prevents them from many base actions.

In short, without spiritual experiences, a person is not human. The origin of this paranormal mentality in our protagonist Meursault leads back to the issue of faith, which has been the most delicate and pressing matter for everyone.

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