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Final Assessment

BA English

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Ans to the Q no 2

Eng 421 - European Literature in Translation.

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# The Stranger - The stranger is the first novel by Albert Camus, published in French as *L'Étranger* in 1942. It was published as *The Outsider* in England and as "The Stranger" in the United States.

The title character of the Stranger is Meursault, a Frenchman who lives in Algiers. The novel is famous for its first lines: "Mother died today. Or

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maybe it was yesterday, I don't know?

They capture Meursault's anomie briefly and brilliantly. After this introduction, the reader follows Meursault through the novel's first-person narration to Marseilles, where he sits vigil at the place of his mother's death. Despite the expressions of grief around him during his mother's funeral, Meursault does not show any outward signs of distress. This removed nature continues throughout all of Meursault's relationships, both platonic and romantic.

Raymond, an unsavoury friend, is eventually arrested for assaulting his mistress and asks Meursault to vouch for him to the police. Meursault agrees without emotion.

Raymond soon encounters a group of men, including the brother of his mistress. The brother, referred to as "the Arab," slashes Raymond with a knife after Raymond strikes the man repeatedly. Meursault happens upon the altercation and shoots the brother dead, not out of

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revenge but, he says, because of the disorienting heat and searing brightness of the sun, which blinds him as it reflects off the brother's knife. This murder is what separates the two parts of the story.

The novel's second part begins with Meursault's pretrial questioning, which primarily focuses on the accused's callousness toward his mother's funeral and his murder of "The Arab."

His lack of remorse, combined with his lack of sadness expressed toward his mother, works against him and

earns him the nickname "Monsieur Antichrist" from the examining magistrate. During the trial itself, Meursault's character witnesses do more harm than good, because they highlight Meursault's apparent apathy and disengagement. Eventually, Meursault is found guilty of murder with malice aforethought and is sentenced to death by guillotine. As he waits for his impending death, he does obsesses over the possibility of his appeal being accepted. A chaplain

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visits Meursault against his wishes, only to be greeted by Meursault's intense atheistic and nihilistic views. In a cathartic explosion of rage, Meursault brings the Chaplain to tears. This, however, brings Meursault peace and helps him to accept his death with open arms.

Camus utilized *The Stranger* as a platform to explore absurdity, a concept central to his writings and at the core of his treatment of questions

about the meaning of life. However Camus did not identify himself as a philosopher. In fact he abjured "armchair" philosophy and argued that sitting around and thinking was not enough. One needed to live life as well.

### Discussion of Meursault alienation:-

Meursault experienced alienation as a direct consequence of his individualistic, absurdist nature and rejection of the traditional views that developed in society. The author describes him as someone who does not care about the death of his mother.



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and the values or traditions that run in his society. Alienation is the state of being alienated or estranged from something or somebody, it is a condition of the mind. In the stranger novel Camus describe the problem of the essence of life. This problem Camus always brings up in Meursault's thoughts; the description of humans in interpreting life. This intersects with Camus idea of absurdity and human existence. For Meursault, life is nothing more than a series of activities that must be lived. This is the

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view of the figure of the absurdity.  
Life is true death.

Meursault lives his personal life in a  
monotonous and mechanistic manner.

This can be seen from his habits.

Meursault never thinks about dreams,  
desires, or goals in the future. The  
death of his mother, the presence  
of his girlfriend and his friends  
could not totally touch his feelings.

He refused promotion. However, Meursault  
felt something different on the first  
day she was imprisoned. However this  
feeling did not last long.

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Meurtsault then returned to his idealism of not caring about what happened to him.

Meurtsault lives in a very ethical social life. His society is adherent to traditionalist religious beliefs.

It relates to the values, norms and ethics of life which are quite strong. In this life society, someone's actions and behavior are linked to the way that has been established and governed by the agreed values, norms and ethics. However Meurtsault has committed actions that are contrary

to the norms or values adopted by society in general. Another immodesty which made him look like a stranger ~~the alienation~~ to others, was the way he treated others.

The characteristic of Meursault is one of the reasons which strengthens the alienation of Meursault. His way to become an existentialist cannot be accepted by his society or society's views totally in general. Selfishness is one of Meursault's expressions of his society as an absurdist. It relates to Sartre's concept about

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"Each expression of the estranged state contradicts man's essential being his potency for goodness." It means that Meursault has been shackled by his self-alienation.

Meursault couldn't control what's inside of him. The alienation will trigger his social alienation. Meursault was trapped by his own egotism, even though he had good intentions not to interfere with other people's business.

The alienation and existentialism in Albert Camus, *The Stranger* are embodied in the character Meursault.

