“The Stranger” Novel Review

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It is believed that existentialism in literature comes from the sources of the work of the French writer Albert Camus. Along with the work of Sartre, the works of Camus, in particular, the novel “The Stranger,” became the embodiment of the search for the freedom of the human person from the public shackles, introduced into the framework of the stable postulates of generally accepted morality. The existentialist personality is not a fighter on the barricades or a theorist of new revolutionary ideas. It can be seen following quote that Meursault is not bothered by Arab’s threatening action when held a knife in his hand. “The scorching blade slashed at my eyelashes and stabbed at my stinging eyes.” (Camus, 59) He’s a rebel “inside himself.” His struggle is a kind of defense against fear of a hostile society, instilling in him an aversion, confusion, and anxiety. Albert Camus made the main problem of his existential philosophy the problem of the meaning of life. The main thesis of the philosopher – the life of man, in essence, is meaningless. Most people live with their small worries and joys from Monday to Sunday, year after year and do not give meaning to their lives. Those who fill life with meaning, spend energy, rush forward, sooner or later realize that ahead (where they go with all their might) – death, Nothing. Everyone is mortal – and filling life with meaning and not filling. A person’s life is absurd (in translation, it has no grounds).

Death and the Meaninglessness of External Life

Contact with death is especially close and sudden what previously seemed important to a person’s hobbies, careers, and wealth is losing their relevance and seems meaningless, not worthwhile for being itself. With contact with the surrounding world and nature, man was helpless before nature existed for millions of years. *“I probably did love Maman, but that didn’t mean anything. At one time or another, all normal people have wished their loved ones were dead.” (Camus, 65)*. As a result, the meaning of life, according to Camus, is not in the external world (successes, failures, relationships) but in the very existence of man.

Camus’s Algerian Experience and Romantic Existentialism

This stereotyped existential series of experiences was corrected by the life experience of Camus. He was born in Algeria in a very poor family: his father was an agricultural worker, a year later, he was killed at the front, and his mother earned a living by cleaning. For this reason, for Albert Camus, the

“human destiny” always assumed “the conditions of human existence,” the inhuman conditions of poverty, which were not forgotten. *“I explained to him, however, that my nature was such that my physical needs often got in the way of my feelings” (Camus, 65).* They did not, to a small degree, stimulate Camus’ rebellion, although he did not want politics, his distrust of elite, “pure” art, and his preference for art that does not forget about those who bear the burden of history. From the powerful stimulus of the initial Algerian impressions, there was “romantic existentialism” by Albert Camus. He reported on the intention to write about his contemporary, cured of the torment by a long contemplation of nature. Early Camus is dominated by the pagan experience of the beauty of the world, the joy of contact with it, the sea and the sun of Algeria, from a “corporeal” being. Acutely aware of existentialist alienation, Camus does not abandon the need for constant “contact,” in “favor,” in love – “absurd reigns – saves love.”

Meursault’s Rejection of Formal Morality

On the double-metaphysical and social-the, the meaning of the novel was pointed out by Camus, who explained the strange behavior of Meursault, first of all by his reluctance to obey life on the fashionable catalogs. *“I said it didn’t make any difference to me and that we could if she wanted to” (Camus, 41).* In the plot of “Stranger,” Camus saw in “distrust of formal morality.” The clash of “just a person” with a society that forcibly “catalogs” everyone and places it within the framework of “rules,” established norms, and generally accepted views becomes open and irreconcilable in the second part of the novel. Meursault went beyond this framework – he is judged and condemned. Not so much for the fact that he killed a man, but because he behaves “not according to the rules,” enjoyed drinking coffee during his mother’s funeral, etc.

Nature, Freedom, and the Unmotivated Crime

Meursault is “not of this world” because he belongs to a different world, which is the natural world. At the time of the murder, he felt himself part of the cosmic landscape; his movements were directed by the sun. *“Then he wanted to know if I had hired an attorney (the magistrate). I admitted I hadn’t and inquired whether it was really necessary to have one.” (Camus, 63)* But even before this moment, Meursault appears to be a natural person who can, for a long time and without any apparent reason, look at the sky. Meursault is an alien, an alien; its planet is the sea and the sun. Meursault is a romantic, belated pagan. It is a “symbolic existentialism.” The blinding sun of Algeria illuminates the actions of the hero, which cannot be reduced to social motivations of behavior, to rebellion against formal morality. Murder in the “Stranger” is another “unmotivated crime.” Meursault along with Raskolnikov and Lafcadio; the difference between them is that Meursault does not ask about the limits of the possible, it goes without saying that everything is possible for him! He is free; he is “allowed.”

Absurdity, Death, and Meursault’s Freedom

Meursault is free because “the absurd reigns,” and he realizes himself as the hero of an absurd world in which there is no God, there is no sense, and there is one truth – the truth of death. *“I felt that I had been happy and that I was happy again.” (Camus, 123).* Roman Camus with death begins; death is the central point of the narrative and its finale. Finally, in the foreshortening of which everything is evaluated – and everything has no price, it does not matter. Meursault is sentenced to death – like all mortals, and therefore he is not subject to trial, the absence of meaning frees him from guilt, from sin. Meursault does not live and exists, without a plan, without an idea, from case to case, from one moment to another. Sartre noticed how the narrative was built, and it has been found that every phrase is a momentary moment. Every phrase is like an island. And we jump from phrase to phrase, from nonbeing to non-existence. Human behavior is now determined not by the all-powerful absurdity that has depreciated the action but by choosing a relatively specific task that has value and evaluates everyone.

Works Cited

Camus, Albert. *The Stranger*. New York: Vintage Books: A Division of Random House, 1960. 123 Print.