

TRUTH AND HONESTY IN ALBERT CAMUS'S ABSURD HERO, MEURSAULT

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Abstract

Many writers had already elaborated upon matters of truth and honesty, when Albert Camus characterized Meursault, the protagonist of his best selling novel *The Outsider*, as an honest man who 'refuses to lie...for the sake of truth'. At that time, Camus had an international fame in the world of literature, and he explained the novel and his absurd hero, Meursault, in a preface to an English language edition of *L'Etranger*. Yet, some commentators and critics found Camus's explanation strange and reacted against his commentaries. Chief among them is Conor Cruise O'Brien who believes that Meursault of the actual novel is not the same that Camus characterized in the explanation of the novel. O'Brien points out that Meursault of the story lies, and he is indifferent to truth. This paper is a critical examination of O'Brien's and other critics' commentaries which stand for and against Camus's own commentaries on his absurd character, Meursault, to lead us to the heart of the matter of Camus's understanding of terms such as honesty and truth. In doing so, despite the fact that Camus is the creator of Meursault, his commentary on Meursault is analysed next to other critics' commentaries, and not as a dominant one.

Keywords: truth, honesty, Meursault, Albert Camus, *The Outsider*

1. Introduction

Albert Camus's explanation about the meaning of his novel, *L'Etranger*, and particularly his description of his protagonist, Meursault, in the preface to an English language edition of the novel, triggered some commentators' reactions of either accepting or rejecting Camus's commentary. It is bewildering for the reader as, on the one hand, Camus considers his hero, Meursault, to be an honest man who has a strong passion for the truth. He is a man who refuses to lie to simplify life and, because of this, he is seen as a contemporary Christ by his creator, Camus. The same person, on the other hand, based on some other commentaries, is seen as a liar, and as "a menace to society" who has no sense of humanism or understanding at all. All these contradictory commentaries have been written about the same person and the same story, revealing to us that the work of literature is subject to many interpretations. In this regard, this section may motivate readers to re-read

the novel, with a critical mind, in order to determine which of the commentaries are more plausible: hence putting the innocence and truthfulness of Albert Camus's absurd hero at the centre of the argument.

In this section, some serious matters, such as truth and honesty in Meursault, are being examined, which helps indirectly to discover Camus's absurdism more profoundly. In doing so, the analysis of an absurd man, such as Meursault, from different perspectives is needed. Since Camus has given us some examples of his absurd characters, the seducer, the conqueror, the actor and Sisyphus, and finding out that, through the absurd, they gain happiness, then Camus takes one step forward and comments on his absurd man, Meursault, as one who is noble and is the only Christ we deserve. It is clear that through idealizing Meursault and comparing him with the most noble human, Christ, Camus is a moralist, and that his absurdism is not in serious disagreement with moralism, rather it supports it.

2. Albert Camus's Commentary about *The Outsider*

For the purposes of our discussion, some familiarity with Camus's commentary in the preface to an English language edition of *L'Etranger* is necessary in order to understand his original account of the protagonist:

...the hero of the book is condemned because he doesn't play the game. In this sense, he is a stranger to [the] society in which he lives; he drifts in the margin, in the suburb of private, solitary, sensual life. This is why some readers are tempted to consider him as a waif. You will have a more precise idea of this character, or one at all events in closer conformity with the intentions of the author, if you ask yourself in what way Meursault doesn't play the game. The answer is simple: he refuses to lie. Lying is not only what is not true. It is also and especially saying more than is true and, as far as the human heart is concerned, saying more than one feels. This is what we do everyday to simplify life. Meursault, despite appearances, does not wish to simplify life. He says what is true. He refuses to disguise his feelings and immediately society feels threatened. He is asked, for example, to say that he regrets his crime according to the ritual formula. He replies that he feels about it more annoyance than real regret and his shade of meaning condemns him.

Meursault for me is not a waif, but a man who is poor and naked, in love with the sun which leaves no shadows. Far from it being true that he lacks all sensibility, a deep tenacious passion animates him, a passion for the absolute and for the truth. It is a still negative truth, the truth of being and of feeling, but one without which no victory over oneself and over the world will ever be possible.

You would not be far wrong then in reading *The Stranger* as a story of a man who, without any heroics, accepts death for the sake of truth. I have sometimes said, and always paradoxically, that I have tried to portray in this character the only Christ we deserved. You will understand after these explanations that I said this without any intention of blasphemy and only with the slightly ironic affection which an artist has the right to feel towards the characters whom he has created. (VI)

Avi Sagi, a critic and scholar of Camus's work, concurs with Camus that Meursault is a hero because Meursault acts according to his true feelings. Moreover, Sagi agrees with Camus that Meursault does not lie (2002:92). Yet Sagi does not provide additional explanation; he merely reasons with Solomon's justification. Likewise, Steven Poser interprets Meursault as an honest man who does not lie. To Poser, Meursault does not pretend to feel something that he does not feel. Therefore, his honesty in revealing his true feelings does hurt people, and "society feels threatened" (2000:260). To support his explanation, Poser cites Meursault's response to Marie when he is asked whether he loves her: "Then she asked me again if I loved her. I replied as much as before, that her question meant nothing or next to nothing – but I supposed I didn't" (*The Outsider*, 1946:48). Besides, Meursault's refusal to hide his true feelings, when he revealed his indifference to life and the triviality of God to the lawyer assigned to defend him shows his apathy when his lawyer lashes out, "Do you wish my life to have no meaning?" (*The Outsider*, 1946:73).

3. Conor Cruise O'Brien's Interpretation

The influence of Camus's explanation about Meursault was clearly seen in O'Brien's students' essays as he reported that most of his students, under the influence of Camus's commentaries, considered Meursault "as a hero and martyr for the truth" (1970:21). Yet, O'Brien states that the Meursault of the story is different from the one whom Camus explained. O'Brien says, 'Meursault in the novel lies', and by writing a letter to Raymond's Arab ex-girlfriend, Meursault helps Raymond to deceive and then humiliate the Arab girl. Afterwards, when the police come to arrest Raymond for beating up the Arab girl, he lies to the police to get Raymond discharged. Regarding these episodes, O'Brien concludes that Meursault is indifferent both to the matters of truth and cruelty, as well. Consequently, his indifference to these serious matters leads to the killing of the Arab man. O'Brien believes that there is a sort of complexity in *The Outsider* which does not let us see everything clearly and approve of Meursault's behaviour. Accordingly, Meursault is just honest, and he does not lie in terms of his own feelings. O'Brien states that Meursault is indifferent to others' pleasures and pains yet, logically, there is

no reason why he does not lie to save himself when he is in trouble. He refuses to send for the police, because he dislikes the police. The reason why he dislikes the police is not because he suffers from social oppression or injustice, as he did commit a social injustice by writing a letter to Raymond's ex-girlfriend. The reason is simply because he does not have a good feeling towards the police, and he tells the truth about his feelings. O'Brien also posits:

And just as Meursault is scrupulous in regard to his own feelings and indifferent to the society around him, so Camus is rigorous in his treatment of the psychology of Meursault—in the novel, not in his retrospective commentaries on it—and lax in his presentation of the society which condemns Meursault to death. (1970:22)

4. Josef McBride's Interpretation

Josef McBride agrees with O'Brien that an honest man does not lie when it could be harmful to others. McBride posits that it is correct that Meursault helps Raymond humiliate the Arab girl, he also gives false information to the police. Yet McBride thinks that Meursault has failed only by saying what is objectively true. McBride disagrees with O'Brien that the Meursault in the novel is different to the one that Camus comments on and explains. He says, 'O'Brien does not realize that the novel operates at two levels of truth, with the result that when Camus describes his hero as an honest man he is speaking at one level, O'Brien at the other' (1992:52). Therefore, he rejects this interpretation that Meursault is honest only in terms of his own feelings. He points out that to fail to understand Meursault's honesty is to fail to appreciate the extent of Meursault's commitment to the absurd.

According to McBride, one level of truth is that Meursault should not lie. He must refuse to lie to the police in order for Raymond to be discharged. Meursault lies, so he is dishonest. Regarding this, O'Brien is correct. Yet McBride refers to another level of truth which is not considered by O'Brien, and that is the level of truth for an absurd man. An absurd man must not lie as long as it is untrue for himself. It is a lie, for example, if an absurd man says that life is meaningful, or that there is a scale of moral values. McBride posits that Camus is quite aware of these two levels of truth, when he describes Meursault as an honest man. Camus does know that Meursault lies at the level of commonsense (first level), yet what Camus suggests is that Meursault, in the whole novel, refuses to say other than what he thinks to be true, or more than he thinks to be true. Meursault in the novel does not say anything different to what he feels, or more than he feels. In order to get the point, McBride states that one must see the issue more deeply and avoid moving only on the surface of the issue. What is on the surface is that Meursault writes the letter and lies to the police. To reach a

deeper level, one must look for the reason: 'I wrote the letter. I didn't take much trouble over it, but I wanted to satisfy Raymond, as I'd no reason not to satisfy him' (*The Outsider*, 1946:40). Meursault wants to satisfy Raymond, and this is what he feels is right at that time. He does it based on what he thinks is true, and based on what he truly feels. He is, therefore, honest to his own feelings at that moment, and he says nothing more than what he feels. He also behaves in the same way when he reports to the police. Meursault cannot find any reason to reject his friend's request. McBride says:

He [Meursault] could not refuse the request on moral grounds, because he believed that in an absurd world the authentic man is not bound by any moral code. Meursault decided to help Raymond, because his own 'revolt' would permit no reason, oral or otherwise, why he should refuse to do so. (1992:53)

Despite this, in our opinion, Meursault in the novel, especially in the first book, does not try to philosophize on life. He is an observer and sees everything in detail, but he makes no judgements. In the second book, when he is in jail, he starts to reflect philosophically about some serious matters, such as life and death, yet none of his philosophical thoughts shows that he is aware of the philosophy of the absurd. Hence, he is not a philosopher. McBride believes that Meursault's decisions are within the category of his own moral code. Therefore, it shows Meursault's honesty, even if he takes Raymond's side. McBride states that if Meursault had rejected Raymond's request and had refused to react based on his true feelings, because of some established moral values, then he would have been lying. In so doing, McBride concludes that Camus's thoughts are accurate in the case of explaining Meursault as an honest man who does not lie, because Meursault's honesty is limited only to the second level.

Next, McBride turns to the second claim of O'Brien, which is that 'There is just one category of phenomena about which Meursault will not lie, and that is his own feelings' O'Brien (1970:21). McBride believes that O'Brien's second claim is inaccurate, as well. To support why O'Brien's second claim is faulty, McBride quotes a passage from the novel where the term 'truth-of-feeling' cannot be understood:

What difference could they make to me, the death of others, or a mother's love, or his God; or the way one decides to live, the fate one thinks one chooses, since one and the same fate was bound to 'choose' not only me but thousands of millions of privileged people who, like him, called themselves my brothers. Surely, surely he must see that? Every man alive was privileged; there was only one class of men, the privileged class. All alike would be condemned to die one day; his turn, too, would come like the others'. And what difference

could it make if, after being charged with murder, he were executed because he didn't weep at his mother's funeral, since it all came to the same thing in the end? The same thing for Salamano's wife and for Salamano's dog. That little robot woman was as 'guilty' as the girl from Paris who had married Masson, or as Marie, who wanted me to marry her. What did it matter if Raymond was as much my pal as Celeste, who was a far worthier man? What did it matter if at this very moment Marie was kissing a new boyfriend? (*The Outsider*, 1946:118-19)

McBride posits that the above passage does show that Meursault is more concerned about the 'truth-of-being', rather than about the 'truth-of-feeling'.

O'Brien believes that the great success of *The Outsider* resides in its 'combination of a real and infectious joy of living with a view of society, which appears to be, and is not, uncompromisingly harsh' (1970:24). O'Brien declares that Camus put some scenes in the novel which provoke the reader to sympathize with Meursault, and consider him innocent. Meursault's will to live, on the one hand, and the trial scene, on the other, which shows the unrealities of the court and its misjudgments, and finally his argument with the chaplain, are scenes which persuade the reader to take Meursault's side and sympathize with him. O'Brien also says that Camus makes the act of killing a human less serious by dehumanizing him. According to O'Brien, all the characters in the novel have names, such as Meursault, Raymond, Marie and Salamano, but the man who is shot by Meursault does not have a name. He is called an Arab, and when Meursault shoots him and kills him, the reader does not have the sense that he is shooting a human, yet he is shooting an Arab man. McBride claims that O'Brien is flawed in this sense, and that he was not able to get to the heart of the matter. Meursault's discussion with the priest is the key to understanding him well. Through discussion, his otherness is revealed. As Camus explained in *The Myth of Sisyphus*, all humans behave the same when confronting death. Meursault also sees death as something which makes human life meaningless. Therefore, McBride states that Meursault's attitude towards life is similar to that of Jean-Paul Sartre. Since life is meaningless, he does not show sorrow for his mother's death. Why should he be deeply sorrowful about something that is inevitable in all humans' lives? That is why between choosing to shoot the Arab or not shooting, he eventually shoots. He does not commit the crime because he saw the Arab as less than human. In fact, he sees everyone, even himself, as less than human. According to McBride, it is impossible to fully comprehend Camus's words if we limit Meursault's honesty to the 'truth-of-feeling' only. Therefore, to view Meursault as someone who is consistent both in his truth of feeling and in his behavior, and in his feeling of indifference, is the feeling of an absurd man. At every

stage, he acts based on what he believes and what he feels, regardless of other factors. This is what he does when he smokes in the presence of his mother's dead body. 'But I wasn't sure if I should smoke, under the circumstances – in mother presence. I thought it over; really it didn't seem to matter, so I offered the porter a cigarette and we both smoked' (*The Outsider*, 1946:18). Meursault is the same when he lies on behalf of Raymond. He does so based on what he feels and believes. McBride finally concludes, 'He [Meursault] is honest about his view of life and about his own feelings. His feelings and his actions are, furthermore, perfectly in line with his view of life' (1992:56). This honesty, according to McBride, may not be in us, yet it is honesty in Camus's sense.

5. Robert C. Solomon's Interpretation

Another great critic of *The Outsider* is Robert C. Solomon. He analyses some of the interpretations of *The Outsider*, and then argues that almost all commentaries about the novel are incorrect. He states that probably, for O'Brien, there is no difference between telling a lie and being indifferent to the truth. In the passage where Meursault writes a letter to Raymond's girlfriend, this shows Meursault's indifference rather than his lying: 'I agreed it wasn't a bad plan; it would punish her all right' (*The Outsider*, 1946: 40). Furthermore, Solomon points out that there is nothing in the letter and in Meursault's testimony to the police that was a lie. Regarding Camus's commentary, 'Lying is not only saying what is not true. It is also and especially more than is true...'. Solomon finishes by saying that lying could be also saying less than the truth. In this regard, according to Solomon, O'Brien is right, because Meursault does not say the whole truth; therefore, he is less than the ideal honest man that Camus describes (Solomon 1987:248).

It should be added that, in the case of Meursault's testimony to the police, O'Brien exaggerates a bit when saying that Meursault 'lies to the police to get Raymond discharged' (1970:21). It is pertinent to refer to the text in the novel again:

Then Raymond said that what he really wanted was for me to act as his witness. I told him I had no objection; only I didn't know what he expected me to say. 'It's quite simple,' he replied. 'You've only got to tell them that the girl had let me down.' So I agreed to be his witness. (*The Outsider*, 1946:44-5)

As written in the text, Meursault just wanted to make his friend, Raymond, happy, and he agreed to tell the police that the girl had let Raymond down. The truth was that the Arab girl had truly let Raymond down, so this was correct; thus, Raymond wanted to take his revenge and teach her a lesson.

Meursault listened to Raymond's story first, and then he agreed to help him, which did not contradict what he felt and believed.

Solomon's dispute over the issue is fundamentally different. He does not argue about whether Meursault is honest or lies, yet he thinks that Meursault's character is not in the realm of falsity and truth. Solomon states that posing questions about Meursault's honesty or dishonesty is essentially wrong. He states that the character of Meursault is limited to the simple realms of 'seeing' and 'lived experience.' Meursault is not at a level of consciousness to understand serious matters such as truth and falsity. Furthermore, he points out, 'he [Meursault] does not even have feelings, much less feelings about his feelings, to which he is supposed to be so true' Solomon (248). Solomon clarifies the issue of feelings in Meursault, firstly by rejecting the idea that Meursault has no feelings at all. He directly points out that Meursault enjoys the sun, the sea and Marie's body, and is descriptive in these terms. Yet he does not feel guilt or have any regrets for killing the Arab, nor does he show grief over his mother's death. When he is asked by Marie if he loves her, he gives her a strange answer. Here, Solomon claims that Meursault probably does not understand Marie's question, because he does not have the ability to judge. Therefore, because of this lack of judgment, Solomon concludes, Meursault cannot be true to his own feelings. Meursault's feelings 'are emotionally emasculated and [a] crippled portrait of human experience' Solomon (1987:249). Solomon also rejects Camus's explanation that Meursault is honest because he does not say more than he feels. He believes that Meursault has a 'poverty of consciousness' and a lack of judgment; therefore, he cannot have humanistic feelings. In this regard, Solomon demotes Meursault as a non-human, as coined by the prosecutor, earlier. For Solomon, Meursault is neither hero nor anti-hero. Meursault, in fact, has no personality. Solomon says, 'Meursault is Sartre's nothingness of consciousness, John Barth's Jacob Horner, but unlike Sartre or Horner, Meursault does not see himself as nothing, he simply is nothing; he does not see himself as anything at all' (1987:251). Solomon agrees with the prosecutor that Meursault lacks the human dimension. Solomon characterizes Meursault thus:

Meursault has no expectations, no desires other than immediate needs and urges, no sense of responsibility so no sense of guilt or regret, no ability to make moral judgments—and so feel neither disgust nor alarm at the sight of cruelty or danger. He has no conception of either commitment or fidelity, so such notions as love, marriage and honesty have no meaning to him. He has no ambition, no dissatisfaction. (Even in prison he says, 'I have everything I want.') He can feel vexation, an immediate feeling of malcontent and resentment, but not regret, which requires a view of oneself and the

past for which one is responsible. He can feel desire but not love; he feels fondness for his mother but not grief. (1987:251)

Moreover, Solomon points out that Meursault cannot be a sample of Descartes' human that exists because he thinks. He just simply is. There is no self-consciousness, so no feelings in him. Meursault has no concept of love at all. This is not because he does not love Marie. His feelings towards Marie are limited only to physical enjoyment. Solomon states that love is not limited to feelings, especially sensuous love; however, part of it is sensuous. For Solomon, love is 'a system of judgments, meanings, expectations, intentions, regrets, reflections, fears, obsessions, needs and desires, abstract demands and metaphysical longings' (1987:253), all of which Meursault lacks. Furthermore, Meursault has no concept of friendship, or of the abstract love that a son must have for his mother. For Solomon, Camus's commentary about Meursault, who does not pretend to simplify life as others do, is peculiar. Solomon believes that it is not a matter of pretending when Meursault does not love Marie, though he agrees to marry her. Accordingly, it is a matter of refusal to understand. He does not understand what Marie means. In the case of pretending, Solomon points out, 'To pretend, one must have a conception of what one does feel as opposed to what one apparently feels ... It is true that Meursault does not pretend to feel what he does not feel. But this no more makes him sincere than his awkward silence makes him honest' (1987:254). Then, Solomon concludes that it is through understanding others' feelings that one can understand one's own feelings. Meursault cannot understand people's feelings; therefore, he cannot comprehend his own feelings truly. That is why he is indifferent to people, and this indifference is the result of two factors: lack of interpretation and lack of judgment. He sees people as 'little robots'.

6. Conclusion

We do not agree with McBride and Solomon on some issues. McBride has tried to justify Camus's commentaries by criticizing O'Brien's explanation of the novel. Yet, we think that McBride's justification does not support Camus's explanations that much. McBride explains the two levels of truth in the novel and how O'Brien's limited vision failed to recognize the second one, which is the level of truth for an absurd man. Meursault, for example, writes a letter to Raymond's ex-girlfriend to persuade her to return to Raymond. In this case, Meursault just wants to help Raymond and, according to McBride, Meursault's honesty in terms of his own true feelings compels him to do this for Raymond. McBride concludes that Meursault is honest in terms of his own feelings and whatever he believes to be true. Therefore, McBride's core explanation is not in conflict with that of O'Brien who limits Meursault's honesty to his own feelings. Moreover, McBride's gives a

definition of 'truth-of-being'; although he finds in Meursault more than 'truth-of feeling', which is recognized in Meursault's character by O'Brien, this does not prove that O'Brien is inaccurate. It is obvious that the Meursault of the story, in the first book, before being jailed for the act of murder, is driven by his own feelings, and is indifferent to the matter of 'truth-of-being'. Yet, Meursault has a developing character and, in the second book, in prison, he engages with the 'truth-of-being', and sounds like a philosopher. Therefore, the passage at the end of the novel, which is quoted by McBride to support his claim about Meursault's consideration of the matter of 'truth-of-being' rather than 'truth-of-feeling', only shows Meursault's philosophical viewpoint about matters of life and death that he had never thought about before being in prison. Most of the commentaries on Meursault's character are about the time he is in society. His behaviour is judged when he lives among people, and is a member of society. It is clear that, at this stage, Meursault does not think about serious matters, such as life and death, and is driven by his own true feelings (truth-of-feeling).

We also think that Solomon interprets Meursault's character very unkindly. In so doing, he is also very unkind to his creator, Camus, and attributes some of Meursault's weaknesses to Camus, thus putting them in the same boat. Solomon, as an existentialist (he admits, in the preface of his book, *From Hegel to Existentialism*, that he is an existentialist), is supposed to be familiar with Camus's ideas about individualism, yet his commentary lacks those ideas. Meursault must appear to be a strange character to those who are not familiar with Camus's philosophy of the absurd and existentialism. *The Outsider* was Camus's bestseller, though a great number of readers are unfamiliar with Camus's philosophy. Yet the novel has enormous influence on them. Meursault, in fact, rebels against the conventions of society. In the first part, he is not aware of his rebellion. He just lives his life, in a way he likes and enjoys. In the second part, especially in prison, he begins to think about his life philosophically, and he shifts to being an absurd hero when he becomes aware, like Sisyphus. That is why he is happy at the end of his life, immediately before his execution. He is not unhappy with the verdict of death as long as he knows that everybody is condemned to it, whether by society or by nature.

Meursault is not an intellectual. He is rather an individual who does not care about people's conventions. Camus depicts how the masses are unable to understand individuals. Therefore, the masses treat individuals unkindly if individuals do not accept the rules of the game. Insofar as freedom is pivotal for Camus, he does not believe in collectivism, because it puts limitations on the individual's freedom. Camus believes that humans should choose their own way of life, free from the frameworks of custom, religion and philosophy.

In every situation, Meursault acts in accordance with his own true feelings. He is true to himself when he wants to smoke in the presence of his dead mother's body. He smokes, regardless of how others may judge him, as he does not judge them. Solomon's interpretation is far-fetched for us, in stating that Meursault has no feelings at all; or if he has, they are only sensuous. As an individual, he lives his life and has his own likes and dislikes; however, it should be admitted that physical pleasures are crucial for him. He sent his mother to the nursing home, because he could not afford to keep her in his flat. His mother's death was not a shock for him, because she was old. During the funeral, he does not pretend that he is deeply sorrowful, because actually he is not. This is something that most people do, according to Camus, to simplify life. This is something that society expects people to do, and whoever refuses is 'a menace to society' or, according to Solomon, does not have the abstract love that a son must have for his mother. If Meursault does not love Marie, it is not a matter of a refusal to understand, because it is possible for men and women to be in a relationship yet not love each other. If Meursault sleeps with his girlfriend, Marie, he should not be expected to fall in love with her. It shows his honesty when he admits to Marie that he does not love her. Love and marriage are conventional concepts for him. Marriage is not a serious matter for Meursault, as it is not a serious matter for a great number of people. Marriage is a convention, and conventions are not truly in the hearts of people whose lives are based on existentialist tenets.

Solomon also posits that the last part of the book, which is about Meursault's feeling of happiness before his execution, is inconsistent with all that has gone before. Meursault's sense of indifference to what is happening to him is also a distortion. Accordingly, Camus falsifies this part to show that his hero is ready to die, and that he 'Accepts death for the sake of the truth'. Some critics compare the last moment of Christ, whose crucifixion was filled with the cries of hatred from the crowd, with Meursault's suspense on the day of his execution, when a huge crowd of spectators greeted him 'with howls of execration' (*The Outsider*, 1946:120). It is hard for us also to believe that Meursault is a martyr for truth, or to see him as a reincarnation of the myth of Christ, or 'the only Christ we deserved'. In fact, Meursault is a simple office clerk, who is misjudged by the court for showing neither deep sadness at his mother's death, nor believing in a life after death and the supernatural, even God. It is true that Meursault was a victim of judicial error, like Christ. At the time of his persecution, Meursault was young, perhaps in his early thirties, like Christ, but he is not an innocent man because he killed another human. He shot him five times. The first shot could be considered as being defensive in nature. But what about the other four shots? He thinks he can shoot or not shoot, but finally he shoots four

bullets into the Arab's inert body. He does not show any repentance for what he did. He is just sorry. This makes the issue more complicated and unjustifiable, and makes it difficult to empathize with him as an innocent person. Furthermore, Meursault does not sacrifice his life for anybody, as Christ did. His death does not change anything. He does not carry upon himself the burden of humanity like Christ; therefore, to compare him with Christ is not an apt comparison. Hence, we cannot accept Camus's commentary that, 'a deep tenacious passion animates him, a passion for the absolute and for the truth'.

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