

Study Guide for *The Stranger* part 2

A little more historical stuff about Camus:

During WWII, Camus went to Paris to join the anti-Nazi movement. It was during this time that he developed his philosophy of the absurd--the assertion that life ultimately has no rational meaning. This philosophy shows itself in Camus's fiction in a variety of modes. For example, Camus's fiction often tends to imply that no moral order actually has a rational basis, though we still have moral obligations. These philosophical views are captured in Camus's work in his exploration of the character of the absurd hero. The absurd hero is a hero because he achieves the ultimate rebellion--that which resists the illusion of a rational order while also resisting despair. We must act morally and resist despair, despite the fact that it is not intrinsically rational to do so. Such a view makes Camus more of an optimist: the suggestion is that we are innately good, and have the capacity to be absurd heroes.

1. In part 2 you get a better feeling that Mersault is operating under a kind of philosophical view, what is that view? How does it compare to the UM's?
2. Directly compare and contrast Mersault and UM.
3. In what ways does Mersault depict an absurd hero?
4. Is there philosophical overlap between anti-heroes and absurd heroes?