Albert Camus’ Biography:
Part One

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Life in Algeria

- Born in Mondovi, Algeria in 1913
  - From family of pieds noirs (Black feet)
    - People of French and other European ancestry who were born or lived in French North Africa
  - Poor French family had colonized from an earlier generation
- Father, Lucien Camus, died one year following his birth as a result of infected wounds from the Battle of Marne
  - “... he’d gone to watch a murderer be executed” (110).
- Mother, an illiterate house cleaner, provided a life without material possessions
Life in Algeria

- Camus occupied himself with school and sports
  - Soccer
  - Accepted to the School of Philosophers at the University of Algiers
    - Due to him contracting tuberculosis, Camus was only able to study part-time along with getting odd jobs
- Following graduation and obtaining his degree he joined the French Communist Party after the rise of Fascism in Europe
- In 1934, Camus married Simone Hié, but they soon divorced two years later
  - “She just wanted to know if I would accept the same proposal from another woman, with whom I was involved in the same way. I said ‘Sure’” (42).
Life in Algeria

- *Theatre du Travail*
  - In 1935, Camus joined this theater group and developed the idea of moralism, social justice

- In 1938, Camus became a journalist for an anti-colonialist newspaper called the Alger-Republicain
  - He reported specifically on Kabylie region to attract public notice and eventually rousing the Algerian government to take action
    - He lost the job because of this action
Life in Algeria

- The German army invaded France when he arrived Paris to work for another paper
  - He returned to North Africa and worked as a teacher in Oran, Algeria
- As a pacifist, Camus constantly wrote articles criticizing the war in Europe openly
  - “Threat to national security”
    - Made a home in Southern France and could not return because of allied invasion in Algeria
- On 15 December 1941, Camus witnessed the killing of Gabriel Péri
  - This event crystallized his revolt against the Germans
- In 1942, Camus completed his first two books, *The Stranger* and *The Myth of Sisyphus*
Life in Algeria

- In 1943 he joined the French Resistance and completely rejected Communism in 1944
- Algeria was liberated in 1944 and came into contact with many figures that influenced his “absurd” philosophies
  - Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Arthur Koestler, and Maria Casares
The Algerian War

- The Algerian War began in 1954
  - France had occupied and oppressed the Arab culture within Algeria
    - The Arabs organized to form groups in order to overthrow its colonial rulers
  - The liberationists wanted to declare independence from France; however, France wanted to keep Algeria as a colony
    - The war became a bloodbath between Algeria and its leader, France
- Albert Camus was devastated with the result of the lack of immediate compromise
  - Still, he identified with being Algerian
“Algerian Chronicles”
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- Published in France in 1958
- Algerian War brought about the collapse of the Fourth French Republic
- Collection of articles and letters reflecting his opinion on the eighth year of the Algerian war
- The most famous of which was “Letter to an Algerian Militant”
- The Chronicles are largely against violence
  - Dreamed of a peaceful Algerian nation where everyone lived as one
In 1943 he joined a French newspaper, as an editor, called “Combat”
  ○ Used for underground intelligence and sabotaging the opponent
● Second stint with journalism
  ○ Worked at Le Soir in Algeria
● In his newspaper articles he wanted to combine strong political action to a sense of morals
● Articles disparaged the actions of the Germans
  ○ If Camus was caught the Germans could kill him
● During the war he started to become more absurd
  ○ “Maman died today. Or yesterday maybe, I don’t know” (1).
Involvement in Combat Resistance

- People believe his involvement was greatly exaggerated
- Opposed the United States use of the Atomic bomb
  - This alludes back to the idea that he loved political moves yet hated when political moves become more important than ethics
  - He believed it was a great move politically because it ended the war, but he opposed it because he thought that it was wrong morally because it killed mainly innocent civilians
- After the war the newspaper became commercial
How does Camus’ family life display an influence within *The Stranger*?
How does the setting and the context of the novel relate to Camus’ early life?
Why do you believe that Camus intentionally antagonizes the Arabs in his novel, but he sided with them in the war?
What parallels can be seen in Camus’ character, Mersault, and himself?
Parallels Between Camus and The Stranger

- The Stranger is an illustration of Camus’s absurdist worldview
- The character Mersault have close resemblance to Camus
  - Life has no rational meaning or order
  - Meursault is a stranger in the society
  - Meursault life and attitude possess a strange rational order
- Meursault is known as a social wreckage like Camus
- Meursault and Camus stayed true to their opinion until the end
Is there irony in Camus’ assertion against non-violence and his work, *The Stranger*?
Works Cited


http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/12/books/review/algerian-chronicles-by-albert-camus.html?_r=0

http://www.gradesaver.com/author/albert-camus