

Topic Page: [Camus, Albert, 1913–1960](#)

Definition: **Camus, Albert** from *Philip's Encyclopedia*

French novelist, playwright, and essayist. An active figure in the French Resistance, Camus achieved recognition with his debut novel *The Outsider* (1942), a work permeated with the sense of individual alienation that underlies much of his writing. His later work include the novels *The Plague* (1947) and *The Fall* (1956), and the essay *The Rebel* (1951). Camus has been associated with existentialism and the Theatre of the Absurd. He received the 1957 Nobel Prize in literature.

Summary Article: **Camus, Albert**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

Algerian-born French writer. His works, such as the novels *L'Etranger/The Outsider* (1942) and *La Peste/The Plague* (1948), owe much to existentialism in their emphasis on the absurdity and arbitrariness of life. Other works include *Le Mythe de Sisyphe/The Myth of Sisyphus* (1943) and *L'Homme révolté/The Rebel* (1951). Camus's criticism of communism in the latter book led to a protracted quarrel with the philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1957.

The plays *Le Malentendu/Cross Purpose* and *Caligula* (both 1944), and the novel *L'Etranger* ('the study of an absurd man in an absurd world') explore various aspects of 'the Absurd', while *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* is a philosophical treatment of the same concept. With *Lettres à un ami allemand/Letters to a German Friend* (1945), *La Peste*, the play *L'Etat de siège/State of Siege* (1948), and *L'Homme révolté*, Camus moved away from metaphysical alienation and began to explore the problem of suffering in its more historical manifestations, and the concept of revolt.

Much of Camus's journalism is collected in *Actuelles* (1950–58) and some later essays in *L'Été/Summer* (1954). *Les Justes/The Just Assassins*, Camus's fourth play, appeared in 1950. He also adapted for the stage works by Buzzati, Calderón, Dostoevsky, Faulkner, Larivey, and Lope de Vega. *La Chute/The Fall* (1956) is perhaps Camus's most mature work; it was followed in 1957 by a collection of short stories, *L'Exil et le royaume/Exile and the Kingdom*.

Camus was born in Mondovi, Algeria (then a French colony), and educated at the university of Algiers. After the death of his father in World War I, Camus's family was poor, and he supported himself by a variety of jobs while studying. A possible academic career was cut short by an attack of tuberculosis, so Camus instead furthered his literary interests. He worked at first in a theatre collective and as a journalist, and his early collections of essays, *L'Envers et l'endroit/The Wrong Side and the Right Side* (1937) and *Noces/Nuptials* (1938), spell out clearly the themes and dichotomies which characterized his later work. He moved to Paris in 1939 where he was active in the Resistance during World War II and edited the left-wing newspaper *Combat* with Sartre 1944–48. He was killed in a car crash.

quotations

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