

Camus *The Stranger*

This handy guide places Albert Camus' *The Stranger*, one of the seminal texts of existentialism and twentieth-century literature in general, in the context of French and French-Algerian history and culture. In it, Patrick McCarthy examines the way the work undermines traditional concepts of fiction. In addition, he explores the parallels and the contrasts between Albert Camus' work and that of Jean-Paul Sartre. Overall, this account provides students with a useful companion to *The Stranger*. This second edition boasts a revised guide to further reading and a new chapter on Camus and the Algerian War.

- Widely used volume now available to a new generation of students
- Takes into account historical contexts to shed light on the text
- Clear and concise
- Includes fully updated guide to further reading

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Preface

This book is an examination of Camus's *The Stranger*, a work that is regarded as a twentieth-century classic. The main section, Chapter 2, begins with an analysis of the language of the novel, and then deals with the many problems posed by the narrative structure, the relationship between Part 1 and Part 2, and so on. Much has been written on *The Stranger* and this chapter is an attempt to synthesize existing interpretations. One theme has been singled out, namely, the treatment of the Arab, because it seems to me to have been somewhat neglected. But even here no attempt is made to offer a completely new reading.

The other chapters provide supplementary information. Chapter 1 begins with a biographical sketch of the young Camus and readers who believe that the link between a man and his work is unimportant, may prefer to skip it. The remainder of the chapter deals with the historical context – or more precisely the conflicting contexts – in which *The Stranger* may be set. Chapter 3 examines the parallels and contrasts between the novel and some of Camus's other early books; it also discusses the young Sartre. Chapter 4 offers perspectives on Camus' complex relation to Algeria and its troubled history. Chapter 5 summarizes the reasons why *The Stranger* is regarded as a classic, sets some of the criticism written on it in a historical context and makes suggestions for further reading.

An attempt has been made to write simply and without unnecessary jargon. All quotations have been translated into English by me and such translations have been kept as literal as possible. References to *The Stranger* are to the most accessible edition: *L'Étranger* (Paris: Gallimard, Folio, 1984). Other references to Camus's writing are to the two-volume Pléiade edition (Paris: Gallimard, 1972 and 1974) of his *Collected Works*. Titles are given in English wherever possible,