

rejection of any value that would deprive his life of its full tragic intensity. He used the example of other thinkers, as he was to do in *L'Homme revolte*, in order to make his own ideas stand out more clearly by contrast. 'One finds one's way,' he writes, describing his own technique, 'by discovering the paths which lead away from it.' The writers examined in *The Myth of Sisyphus* show how difficult it is to maintain the tension of refusal demanded by the absurd. As far as Camus's own thought was concerned there was nothing essentially new in *The Myth of Sisyphus*. It was a coincidence between the ideas which Camus had already expressed in his early lyrical essays and the climate of opinion in the early 1940's that made Claude Mauriac describe *The Myth of Sisyphus*, in retrospect, as 'a revelation and the putting into order of the spiritual confusion in which, like most young men of my age, I then found myself' *The Myth of Sisyphus* was for Camus the intellectual justification in the context of contemporary philosophy of what he had instinctively felt and expressed in *L'Envers et l'Endroit* and *Noces*. It is because life ends so completely in death, and because there is no transcendence to give it significance, that its price is infinite. This is the central thought in both *The Myth of Sisyphus* and in Camus's early essays. It is not mere coincidence that, bathed about as he was by the atmosphere of the Mediterranean, Camus should have put at the beginning of *The Myth of Sisyphus* the same quotation which heads Valery's *Le Cimetiere marin*. 'Oh my soul, seek not after immortal life, but exhaust the fullness of the present.' (pp. 4-9)

there is
nothing past
this life

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