

Title: The Absurdist's Answer in the Face of Death: Embrace the Inevitable

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The often-denied truth is that we are ontologically dependent on the centrality of death in life, and only by facing death directly can we come to terms with the reality of our existence. This doctrine is espoused in the absurdist philosophy of Albert Camus, who encourages us to face life's absurdity and confront the choices placed before us as a result of this confrontation. We can either choose to remain in the "act of eluding," or accept and endure. Camus likens this endurance to that of the mythological figure Sisyphus, whom the gods ordained to roll a boulder up a mountain only to watch it fall down, in perpetuity. Yet, Camus remains adamant that life is worth living, concluding that "one must imagine Sisyphus happy" (Camus 123). Life, despite its futility, "requires revolt," taking form in the freedom to give meaning, to "forge an...anti-nihilistic philosophy from a starkly nihilistic position" (Cox 159). The journey of the narrator in Rilke's elegies is exactly that of Sisyphus and of every human. We see him go through despair, hope, defeat, and ultimate acceptance in the face of this existential dilemma, reaching the same conclusion: "Whoever does not sometimes give full consent...to the dreadfulness of life, can never possess the unutterable richness of existence..." (Kline 58). This is a topic in academia that often goes ignored. Both Rilke and Camus address this fundamental question, advocating an embracing of both life and death, which stands as a model of human belief and purpose.

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