

Existentialism and Art

Primary Sources:

Camus, "Return to Tipasa" in *The Myth of Sisyphus*, pp.195-204

Tolstoy, *What is Art?* (Handout)

Background:

In "Return to Tipasa", Camus recounts a story of affirming life over despair. This tale is particularly poignant since it implicitly refers to the horrors of World War II and the Holocaust. Given these horrific events, Camus wishes to still affirm life, realizing that if he does not, then the Nazi's would still have a small victory.

In *What is Art?* Tolstoy provides a definition of art as a method of communicating a whole world or life. Tolstoy also believes that the message communicated is necessary moral and that art is the best means of communicating such information.

Questions:

- What is art according to Tolstoy?
- Do you think art is the only or best way to attempt to communicate the "truths" of existentialism?