Member and guest feedback for *The Stranger*

I was totally absorbed for the first two-thirds of the film and trying to work out whether Mersault was autistic, nihilistic or a psychopath! And whether his honesty was impressive or destructive or both. Either way, Marie was going to get hurt. But I felt the film lost momentum after he was arrested and in prison, though the trial scenes were interesting.

A clearly well-made film, in excellent black and white which gave the good impression of its supposed time (1940s) and of the elegance of parts of Algiers at the time. The subject matter however was awful - boring, depressing and unbelievable. Camus (whom as a teenager in the late 1950s I had admired), or rather his ideas, have not aged well. The grossly unlikeable Meuniere was at the same time utterly unconvincing in his behaviour. I suppose the theme was nihilistic existentialism but perhaps that philosophy has thankfully passed away. The dreadful disdain of the French to the majority local population was perhaps all too familiar to those with experience or understanding of our own British colonies and was still practiced by us many years later than shown here. I think Camus's idea was to shine an unfavourable light on this aspect of French colonialism - good for him then.

The only words I have are “I don’t know - why should I have anything to say”. This film was archetypal nihilism and being generally devoid of humanity and compassion I can’t understand why it is considered a film of merit. I certainly wouldn’t recommend it.

Fabulous.

The cinematography, the atmosphere, the mise-en-scene were all brilliant and I enjoyed much of the acting. For this reason, I give it an OK. The character driven narrative, however, struck me as banal and I never felt any kinship with Meursault who came across as solipsistic, emotionally obtuse and suffering perhaps from autism before it had become clinically recognised. Camus seems to think his character is an enigma of self-deprecating honesty and worthy of sympathy. Perhaps Camus himself was on the neurologically diverse spectrum? I never liked the novel when I read it 60 years ago and seeing a film version today made me realise how superior the cinema of the absurd is in the hands of movie makers like Bunuel and Fellini who wrote their own stories rather than adapt from modern classics.

Cinematography was exceptional, with clever use of focus pulling and perspectives.

Rather long and miserable. Quite atmospheric in black and white but very dull. Guess that is to be expected with Camus and his existentialist approach.

Nothing touched this young man who seemed to accept without emotion whatever came his way in life. Until the desire for sex was ‘ignited’ with his girlfriend and later the sun burning into his eyes from the glint of the knife held by the protagonist again ‘inflamed’ him enough to use his gun’. It was as though he had never had the desire to

disturb himself with the goings on of the world around despite being condemned to death.

A classy production with a real authenticity of the period. The lead was captivating with a real disregard for everything. Highly watchable. A strong adaptation of Camus's novel.

I read L'Etranger in the late seventies and was looking forward to witnessing it unfold on screen and to seeing how my memories of the story had held up over the years. I couldn't quite remember what happened at the end and, 50 years on, my recollections generally were rather sketchy.

A really slow painful watch for me personally, sorry.

This film had a lot of strong points. It was beautifully shot and the careful depiction of inter-war Algiers was enhanced by the use of B&W film. The acting was very good. I also thought Ozon did a good job interpreting the book. However, I think it was probably 20 minutes too long because it had to carry an unlikely narrative that required an over-elaborate explanation. For this I probably blame Camus.

I loved it.

A difficult story to love in the first place, the film succeeds in adapting Mersault's inner monologue from the Camus classic into a watchable film and immersing us beautifully in 1940s Algiers. The film is let down by its final stretch - the judicial process - too slow and veering into melodrama. Otherwise, another great choice.

Very atmospheric, mysterious, stylish in black and white. I applaud the decision to give the murdered man a name and to acknowledge the point of view of his sister (i.e. the colonised), even though it might be said to detract from the alienation so strongly felt in the novel.

A consistent examination of his vision whether the viewer likes it or not!

Filmic brilliance but narrative inertia - stunning authenticity scene by scene - beautiful main French leads characters (and less salubrious schemers and grifters) set in a threatening anxious world of an imperial empire imposed on Algeria and its people and culture. Who is the Stranger? Who are the aliens? The indifference of Mersault to his own life, his mother's death and his girlfriend much less the fate of the 'indigents' is profound. I was infuriated by his stance and his obscenely obtuse rationale about his calculated murder of the revenge seeking brother. His detention and then his experience of personal kindness by an 'indigen' only served to dramatise the amoral act he inflicted on the brother of the pimp's prostitute. A raw exhausting disturbing difficult, brilliant film. Difficult to sleep after its impact!

A very clever, atmospheric and beautifully filmed black & white film with excellent performances. Unfortunately, the main protagonist was so cold and unpleasant, I didn't care what happened to him - and nor did he!

Despite having read Camus' novella, I struggled to understand the depth of Meursault's ennui and indifference and indeed his apparent epiphany at the end (although I appreciate that the speech was lifted from Camus' text). The strongest element of the film for me was the cinematography, which I thought was outstanding.

Not an easy watch but a beautifully observed film. The black and white print and Ozon's attention to period detail gave a convincing impression of Algeria in the 1950s and French colonialism. I doubt that the definition of autism was around when the novella was published in the early 1940s but looking at Mersault and his actions in the light of current mental health attitudes made his trial and punishment heartbreaking. Convincing performances and brilliant direction sustained the drama and suspense throughout the film. The guillotine on the top of the hill was devastating.

Deliberately disengaging? Beautifully shot but at times too much of a slow burn for me.

Fantastic acting and directing. Disturbingly griping in a mad existentially French manner, with the value of life being revealed only in death. Loved the monochrome.

Sadly an OK - Whilst in many ways a reflection on feelings and emotions, somehow, I couldn't myself feel anything for the character. It was also very slow film.

An excellent film, very thought provoking.

it was over long and I found the monologue at the end a bit preachy and lecturing. It's a very old-fashioned technique but I don't think that I can mark it down for being old fashioned it is a classic. On the positive, I am not sorry to have seen it and I thought it was well made.

An outstanding film. The cinematography was astonishingly good. Fascinating subject matter (good source material!). Wonderful performances all round. Truly memorable.

This is a stylised, polished and well-acted film. I enjoyed watching the cinematography and appreciating how it gave us a real sense of time and place. Unfortunately, the film is just not to me taste in terms of story and characterisation. I studied existentialism a long time ago and didn't understand it then, so 40 years later, there's little hope!

Undoubtedly, a "good" film. Fantastic lighting, composition, cinematography and a very good lead in Benjamin Voisin (like a young Brando). Although I could appreciate the artistic merits of the film, I found the book tedious when I read it and I felt the same about the film.

A would-be didactic film - attractive if you are interested in philosophical argument - but what percentage of the audience (which should have included Sartre) would adhere to that? Once one realised - quite early on - that philosophical premises were to be presented and queried, it was difficult to embrace and warm to the plot and its characters. Was the Director really interested in the emotional relationship between the

two main characters or was their reaction to each other simply there to demonstrate a philosophical theory on the part of the man? And who cared about the dog? No, characters were merely ciphers to carry a premise or a hypothesis. Should such a film be made at all? Is it self-destructive to burden extensively a plot with philosophical argument? Possibly, but Hamlet does it. Unfortunately, this film was not Hamlet nor anything near it.

The film was OK but really did not do full justice to the book. My personal view is that the book is pretty unfilmable in any case. People should all read the book if they have not done so already.

A good representation of the book. Well-acted but perhaps a little over-long.

I now remember why I had such a dislike of studying French A-Level! Camus has the ability to frustrate and suck energy from my very being! The film was beautifully shot, but I came away wishing I'd not seen it, due to the absolute lack of any emotion from the main character (even if I am aware, it's part of the written character, I just wanted to grab him and shake him to his senses!)

This film captured very well the essence of the book.

An interesting take, focusing on the clash between the colonists and the existing population, racism etc. I studied the book for French A -level and still feel like I know it inside-out - so for me the film clashed with my internal visual images, prompting a rethink about how we view classic pieces of literature/film at different times in our lives. Meursault in the film version seemed exceedingly young to me - but is that because I was only 17 when I first encountered the work and so naturally imagined him as aged?

It would be very easy to write a fairly involved review of *The Stranger* and the philosophical theories behind the storyline. But on reflection, and with the aim of keeping it succinct, it was beautifully atmospheric and all in all, I think Marie had a lucky escape in the long run.

A little too stylised and drawn out at times for me but I did love the atmosphere created by the black and white film, the focus on French colonial attitudes and the excellent acting by Benjamin Voisin and Pierre Lottin.

It's beautiful to watch, it recreates the period faithfully and main performers are excellent. It was let down by the absurd court scene and for me, because Meursault's actions seem incoherent and unjustified - not 'absurdist,' just - pointless.

Soulless - intentionally.

Second time for me and a film I had been looking forward to seeing once again. I remained greatly impressed by the realisation of 30s Algiers and the depiction of the racial cum class divide of the time. The acting and the stylish classy direction were flawless. This time round my appreciation of the film went down slightly, however. I

found the internalising philosophical introspection prior to Mersault's execution contained too many longeurs and the film could have been 15 minutes shorter and so it just missed an Excellent score. Still, the theme of alienation is relevant to all ages and ultimately Mersault was guillotined for his lack of emotion at his mother's funeral rather than the killing of an Arab, which as his defence lawyer pointed out, was really neither here nor there. The novel first appeared in June 1942 and I can't help wondering what the war-time censors in France made of it. Both protagonists needed their heads examined. Marie for wanting to marry someone so indifferent and Mersault for not realising he really had it made. Rebecca Marder was just as stunning and I am sure Benjamin Voisin's taut buttocks caused a few eyelids to flutter. Upon first viewing I couldn't help thinking that playing The Cure's *Killing an Arab* (and yes, I know it is influenced by the novel) at the end credits was musically inapposite as I thought the score was perfect but it didn't rankle so much this time.

This film was disturbing. The main character though showed glimpses of concern came across as heartless not being able to accept being loved. Where there is no love there is no soul. How tragic.

Beautifully crafted but heavy going.

Not my favourite film.

The characters were very well drawn. I could almost imagine the smell of the smoke from the cigarettes at times The black-and-white cinematography offered vignettes I could enjoy as photographs on the walls of my home. Yet another great choice by the team.

I found the film rather tedious and my seat uncomfortable! However, on reflection it did stay with me, particularly the scene at the end with Meursault and the Chaplain.

I had not read the pre-screening description so was confused for a while with its 40-50s look but some of its more modern approach to sexual themes. Note to self: read pre-screening notes! I read the book a long time ago and was shaken by revisiting controversial ideas which have reared their head once more. The lead actor’s portrayal of Meursault’s unfeeling and remote personality embodied the novel’s existentialist point-of-view and was complemented by some really beautiful cinematography. I felt the final priest scenes were not as successful and seemed to break with the motif established earlier – the film became more about religious dogmatism, rather than exploring colonialism, racism and existentialism.