DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

MASTER OF ARTS- ENGLISH

SEMESTER -III

THE MODERNS III

SOFT CORE 303

BLOCK-2

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

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First Published in 2019

FOREWORD

The Self Learning Material (SLM) is written with the aim of providing simple and organized study content to all the learners. The SLMs are prepared on the framework of being mutually cohesive, internally consistent and structured as per the university's syllabi. It is a humble attempt to give glimpses of the various approaches and dimensions to the topic of study and to kindle the learner's interest to the subject

We have tried to put together information from various sources into this book that has been written in an engaging style with interesting and relevant examples. It introduces you to the insights of subject concepts and theories and presents them in a way that is easy to understand and comprehend.

We always believe in continuous improvement and would periodically update the content in the very interest of the learners. It may be added that despite enormous efforts and coordination, there is every possibility for some omission or inadequacy in few areas or topics, which would definitely be rectified in future.

We hope you enjoy learning from this book and the experience truly enrich your learning and help you to advance in your career and future endeavours.

THE MODERNS III

BLOCK – 1

BLOCK – 2

BLOCK-2 THE MODERNS III

Introduction to the Block 2

Unit 8 – Eugen Brecht's Life and Career and Theory and Practice of theatre.

Unit 9 – context and summary of Mother Courage and Her Children by Eugen Brecht

Unit 10 - Analysis of "Mother Courage and Her Children" by Eugen Brecht

Unit 11 - Characters, themes, performances, Brecht's reaction, popular culture and English versions of "Mother Courage and Her Children" by Eugen Brecht.

Unit 12 - Life, Literary Career, Political Stance, Algeria, Philosophy, Legacy and Works Of "The Outsider" by Albert Camus.

Unit 13 - Summary of "The Outsider" by Albert Camus.

Unit 14 - Themes, Characters, Critical Analysis, Publication History and English Translations and Adaptations and Allusions Of "The Outsider" By Albert Camus.

UNIT-8. BRECHT – MOTHER COURAGE AND HER CHILDREN -1

STRUCTURE

8.0 OBJECTIVES

After the completion of this unit, you should be able to learn about:

- Eugen Berthold Friedrich Brecht's life and career and theory and practice of theatre.

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Eugen Berthold Friedrich Brecht (1898–1956), known professionally as Bertolt Brecht, was a German theatre practitioner, playwright, and poet. Coming of age during the Weimar Republic, he had his first successes as a playwright in Munich and moved to Berlin in 1924, where he wrote The Threepenny Opera with Kurt Weill and began a lifelong collaboration with the composer Hanns Eisler. Immersed in Marxist thought during this period, he wrote didactic Lehrstücke and became a leading theoretician of epic theatre (which he later preferred to call "dialectical theatre") and the so-called V-effect. During the Nazi period he lived in exile, first in Scandinavia, and during World War II in the United States. Returning to East Berlin after the war, he established the theatre company Berliner

Ensemble with his wife and long-time collaborator, actress Helene Weigel.

8.2 LIFE AND CAREER

Bavaria (1898–1924)

Eugen Berthold Friedrich Brecht (as a child known as Eugen) was born on 10 February 1898 in Augsburg, Bavaria, the son of Berthold Friedrich Brecht (1869–1939) and his wife Sophie, née Brezing (1871–1920). Brecht's mother was a devout Protestant and his father a Roman Catholic (who had been persuaded to have a Protestant wedding). The modest house where he was born is today preserved as a Brecht Museum. His father worked for a paper mill, becoming its managing director in 1914.

Due to his mother's influence, Brecht knew the Bible, a familiarity that would have a lifelong effect on his writing. From her, too, came the "dangerous image of the self-denying woman" that recurs in his drama. Brecht's home life was comfortably middle class, despite what his occasional attempt to claim peasant origins implied. At school in Augsburg he met Caspar Neher, with whom he formed a lifelong creative partnership. Neher designed many of the sets for Brecht's dramas and helped to forge the distinctive visual iconography of their epic theatre.

When Brecht was 16, the First World War broke out. Initially enthusiastic, Brecht soon changed his mind on seeing his classmates "swallowed by the army".Brecht was nearly expelled from school in 1915 for writing an essay in response to the line "Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori" from the Roman poet Horace, calling it Zweckpropaganda ("cheap propaganda for a specific purpose") and arguing that only an empty-headed person could be persuaded to die for their country. His expulsion was only prevented through the intervention of his religion teacher.

On his father's recommendation, Brecht sought a loophole by registering for a medical course at Munich University, where he enrolled in

1917.There he studied drama with Arthur Kutscher, who inspired in the young Brecht an admiration for the iconoclastic dramatist and cabaret-star Frank Wedekind.

From July 1916, Brecht's newspaper articles began appearing under the new name "Bert Brecht" (his first theatre criticism for the Augsburger Volkswille appeared in October 1919). Brecht was drafted into military service in the autumn of 1918, only to be posted back to Augsburg as a medical orderly in a military VD clinic; the war ended a month later.

In July 1919, Brecht and Paula Banholzer (who had begun a relationship in 1917) had a son, Frank. In 1920 Brecht's mother died.

Sometime in either 1920 or 1921, Brecht took a small part in the political cabaret of the Munich comedian Karl Valentin. Brecht's diaries for the next few years record numerous visits to see Valentin perform. Brecht compared Valentin to Charlie Chaplin, for his "virtually complete rejection of mimicry and cheap psychology". Writing in his Messingkauf Dialogues years later, Brecht identified Valentin, along with Wedekind and Büchner, as his "chief influences" at that time:

But the man he learnt most from was the clown Valentin, who performed in a beerhall. He did short sketches in which he played refractory employees, orchestral musicians or photographers, who hated their employers and made them look ridiculous. The employer was played by his partner, Liesl Karlstadt, a popular woman comedian who used to pad herself out and speak in a deep bass voice.

Brecht's first full-length play, Baal (written 1918), arose in response to an argument in one of Kutscher's drama seminars, initiating a trend that persisted throughout his career of creative activity that was generated by a desire to counter another work (both others' and his own, as his many adaptations and re-writes attest). "Anyone can be creative," he quipped, "it's rewriting other people that's a challenge." Brecht completed his second major play, Drums in the Night, in February 1919.

Between November 1921 and April 1922 Brecht made acquaintance with many influential people in the Berlin cultural scene. Amongst them was the playwright Arnolt Bronnen with whom he established a joint venture, the Arnolt Bronnen / Bertolt Brecht Company. Brecht changed the spelling of his first name to Bertolt to rhyme with Arnolt.

In 1922 while still living in Munich, Brecht came to the attention of an influential Berlin critic, Herbert Ihering: "At 24 the writer Bert Brecht has changed Germany's literary complexion overnight"—he enthused in his review of Brecht's first play to be produced, Drums in the Night—"[he] has given our time a new tone, a new melody, a new vision. [...] It is a language you can feel on your tongue, in your gums, your ear, your spinal column." In November it was announced that Brecht had been awarded the prestigious Kleist Prize (intended for unestablished writers and probably Germany's most significant literary award, until it was abolished in 1932) for his first three plays (Baal, Drums in the Night, and In the Jungle, although at that point only Drums had been produced). The citation for the award insisted that: "[Brecht's] language is vivid without being deliberately poetic, symbolical without being over literary. Brecht is a dramatist because his language is felt physically and in the round." That year he married the Viennese opera singer Marianne Zoff. Their daughter, Hanne Hiob, was a successful German actress.

In 1923, Brecht wrote a scenario for what was to become a short slapstick film, Mysteries of a Barbershop, directed by Erich Engel and starring Karl Valentin. Despite a lack of success at the time, its experimental inventiveness and the subsequent success of many of its contributors have meant that it is now considered one of the most important films in German film history. In May of that year, Brecht's In the Jungle premiered in Munich, also directed by Engel. Opening night proved to be a "scandal"—a phenomenon that would characterize many of his later productions during the Weimar Republic—in which Nazis blew whistles and threw stink bombs at the actors on the stage.

In 1924 Brecht worked with the novelist and playwright Lion Feuchtwanger (whom he had met in 1919) on an adaptation of Christopher Marlowe's Edward II that proved to be a milestone in Brecht's early theatrical and dramaturgical development. Brecht's Edward II constituted his first attempt at collaborative writing and was the first of many classic texts he was to adapt. As his first solo directorial début, he later credited it as the germ of his conception of "epic theatre". That September, a job as assistant dramaturg at Max Reinhardt's Deutsches Theater—at the time one of the leading three or four theatres in the world—brought him to Berlin.

Weimar Republic Berlin (1925–1933)

In 1923 Brecht's marriage to Zoff began to break down (though they did not divorce until 1927). Brecht had become involved with both Elisabeth Hauptmann and Helene Weigel. Brecht and Weigel's son, Stefan, was born in October 1924.

In his role as dramaturg, Brecht had much to stimulate him but little work of his own. Reinhardt staged Shaw's Saint Joan, Goldoni's Servant of Two Masters (with the improvisational approach of the commedia dell'arte in which the actors chatted with the prompter about their roles), and Pirandello's Six Characters in Search of an Author in his group of Berlin theatres. A new version of Brecht's third play, now entitled Jungle: Decline of a Family, opened at the Deutsches Theater in October 1924, but was not a success.

At this time Brecht revised his important "transitional poem", "Of Poor BB". In 1925, his publishers provided him with Elisabeth Hauptmann as an assistant for the completion of his collection of poems, Devotions for the Home (Hauspostille, eventually published in January 1927). She continued to work with him after the publisher's commission ran out.

In 1925 in Mannheim the artistic exhibition Neue Sachlichkeit ("New Objectivity") had given its name to the new post-Expressionist movement

in the German arts. With little to do at the Deutsches Theater, Brecht began to develop his Man Equals Man project, which was to become the first product of "the 'Brecht collective'—that shifting group of friends and collaborators on whom he henceforward depended." This collaborative approach to artistic production, together with aspects of Brecht's writing and style of theatrical production, mark Brecht's work from this period as part of the Neue Sachlichkeit movement. The collective's work "mirrored the artistic climate of the middle 1920s," Willett and Manheim argue:

with their attitude of Neue Sachlichkeit (or New Matter-of-Factness), their stressing of the collectivity and downplaying of the individual, and their new cult of Anglo-Saxon imagery and sport. Together the "collective" would go to fights, not only absorbing their terminology and ethos (which permeates Man Equals Man) but also drawing those conclusions for the theatre as a whole which Brecht set down in his theoretical essay "Emphasis on Sport" and tried to realise by means of the harsh lighting, the boxing-ring stage and other anti-illusionistic devices that henceforward appeared in his own productions.

In 1925, Brecht also saw two films that had a significant influence on him: Chaplin's The Gold Rush and Eisenstein's Battleship Potemkin. Brecht had compared Valentin to Chaplin, and the two of them provided models for Galy Gay in Man Equals Man. Brecht later wrote that Chaplin "would in many ways come closer to the epic than to the dramatic theatre's requirements." They met several times during Brecht's time in the United States, and discussed Chaplin's Monsieur Verdoux project, which it is possible Brecht influenced.

In 1926 a series of short stories was published under Brecht's name, though Hauptmann was closely associated with writing them.Following the production of Man Equals Man in Darmstadt that year, Brecht began studying Marxism and socialism in earnest, under the supervision of Hauptmann. "When I read Marx's Capital", a note by Brecht reveals, "I understood my plays." Marx was, it continues, "the only spectator for my plays I'd ever come across." Inspired by the developments in USSR Brecht wrote a number of agitprop plays, praising the bolshevik

collectivism (replaceability of each member of the collective in Man Equals Man) and red terror (The Decision).

In 1927 Brecht became part of the "dramaturgical collective" of Erwin Piscator's first company, which was designed to tackle the problem of finding new plays for its "epic, political, confrontational, documentary theatre".Brecht collaborated with Piscator during the period of the latter's landmark productions, Hoppla, We're Alive! by Toller, Rasputin, The Adventures of the Good Soldier Schweik, and Konjunktur by Lania. Brecht's most significant contribution was to the adaptation of the unfinished episodic comic novel Schweik, which he later described as a "montage from the novel". The Piscator productions influenced Brecht's ideas about staging and design, and alerted him to the radical potentials offered to the "epic" playwright by the development of stage technology (particularly projections).What Brecht took from Piscator "is fairly plain, and he acknowledged it" Willett suggests:

The emphasis on Reason and didacticism, the sense that the new subject matter demanded a new dramatic form, the use of songs to interrupt and comment: all these are found in his notes and essays of the 1920s, and he bolstered them by citing such Piscatorial examples as the step-by-step narrative technique of Schweik and the oil interests handled in Konjunktur ('Petroleum resists the five-act form').
Brecht was struggling at the time with the question of how to dramatize the complex economic relationships of modern capitalism in his unfinished project Joe P. Fleischhacker (which Piscator's theatre announced in its programme for the 1927–28 season). It wasn't until his Saint Joan of the Stockyards (written between 1929–1931) that Brecht solved it.[50] In 1928 he discussed with Piscator plans to stage Shakespeare's Julius Caesar and Brecht's own Drums in the Night, but the productions did not materialize.

1927 also saw the first collaboration between Brecht and the young composer Kurt Weill. Together they began to develop Brecht's Mahagonny project, along thematic lines of the biblical Cities of the Plain

but rendered in terms of the Neue Sachlichkeit's Amerikanismus, which had informed Brecht's previous work. They produced The Little Mahagonny for a music festival in July, as what Weill called a "stylistic exercise" in preparation for the large-scale piece. From that point on Caspar Neher became an integral part of the collaborative effort, with words, music and visuals conceived in relation to one another from the start.The model for their mutual articulation lay in Brecht's newly formulated principle of the "separation of the elements", which he first outlined in "The Modern Theatre Is the Epic Theatre" (1930). The principle, a variety of montage, proposed by-passing the "great struggle for supremacy between words, music and production" as Brecht put it, by showing each as self-contained, independent works of art that adopt attitudes towards one another.

In 1930 Brecht married Weigel; their daughter Barbara Brecht was born soon after the wedding.She also became an actress and would later share the copyrights of Brecht's work with her siblings.

Brecht formed a writing collective which became prolific and very influential. Elisabeth Hauptmann, Margarete Steffin, Emil Burri, Ruth Berlau and others worked with Brecht and produced the multiple teaching plays, which attempted to create a new dramaturgy for participants rather than passive audiences. These addressed themselves to the massive worker arts organisation that existed in Germany and Austria in the 1920s. So did Brecht's first great play, Saint Joan of the Stockyards, which attempts to portray the drama in financial transactions.

This collective adapted John Gay's The Beggar's Opera, with Brecht's lyrics set to music by Kurt Weill. Retitled The Threepenny Opera (Die Dreigroschenoper) it was the biggest hit in Berlin of the 1920s and a renewing influence on the musical worldwide. One of its most famous lines underscored the hypocrisy of conventional morality imposed by the Church, working in conjunction with the established order, in the face of working-class hunger and deprivation:

Erst kommt das Fressen
Dann kommt die Moral.
First the grub (lit. "eating like animals, gorging")
Then the morality.

The success of The Threepenny Opera was followed by the quickly thrown together Happy End. It was a personal and a commercial failure. At the time the book was purported to be by the mysterious Dorothy Lane (now known to be Elisabeth Hauptmann, Brecht's secretary and close collaborator). Brecht only claimed authorship of the song texts. Brecht would later use elements of Happy End as the germ for his Saint Joan of the Stockyards, a play that would never see the stage in Brecht's lifetime. Happy End's score by Weill produced many Brecht/Weill hits like "Der Bilbao-Song" and "Surabaya-Jonny".

The masterpiece of the Brecht/Weill collaborations, Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny (Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny), caused an uproar when it premiered in 1930 in Leipzig, with Nazis in the audience protesting. The Mahagonny opera would premier later in Berlin in 1931 as a triumphant sensation.

Brecht spent the last years of the Weimar-era (1930–1933) in Berlin working with his "collective" on the Lehrstücke. These were a group of plays driven by morals, music and Brecht's budding epic theatre. The Lehrstücke often aimed at educating workers on Socialist issues. The Measures Taken (Die Massnahme) was scored by Hanns Eisler. In addition, Brecht worked on a script for a semi-documentary feature film about the human impact of mass unemployment, Kuhle Wampe (1932), which was directed by Slatan Dudow. This striking film is notable for its subversive humour, outstanding cinematography by Günther Krampf, and Hanns Eisler's dynamic musical contribution. It still provides a vivid insight into Berlin during the last years of the Weimar Republic.

Nazi Germany and World War II (1933–1945)

Fearing persecution, Brecht left Nazi Germany in February 1933, just after Hitler took power. After brief spells in Prague, Zurich and Paris he and Weigel accepted an invitation from journalist and author Karin Michaëlis to move to Denmark. The family first stayed with Karin Michaëlis at her house on the small island of Thurø close to the island of Funen. They later bought their own house in Svendborg on Funen. This house located at Skovsbo Strand 8 in Svendborg became the residence of the Brecht family for the next six years, where they often received guests including Walter Benjamin, Hanns Eisler and Ruth Berlau. During this period Brecht also travelled frequently to Copenhagen, Paris, Moscow, New York and London for various projects and collaborations.

When war seemed imminent in April 1939, he moved to Stockholm, Sweden, where he remained for a year. After Hitler invaded Norway and Denmark, Brecht left Sweden for Helsinki, Finland, where he lived and waited for his visa for the United States until 3 May 1941. During this time he wrote the play Mr Puntila and his Man Matti (Herr Puntila und sein Knecht Matti) with Hella Wuolijoki, with whom he lived in Marlebäck [de].

During the war years, Brecht became a prominent writer of the Exilliteratur. He expressed his opposition to the National Socialist and Fascist movements in his most famous plays: Life of Galileo, Mother Courage and Her Children, The Good Person of Szechwan, The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui, The Caucasian Chalk Circle, Fear and Misery of the Third Reich, and many others.

Brecht co-wrote the screenplay for the Fritz Lang-directed film Hangmen Also Die! which was loosely based on the 1942 assassination of Reinhard Heydrich, the Nazi Deputy Reich Protector of the German-occupied Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, Heinrich Himmler's right-hand man in the SS, and a chief architect of the Holocaust, who was known as "The Hangman of Prague." Hanns Eisler was nominated for an Academy Award for his musical score. The collaboration of three prominent

refugees from Nazi Germany – Lang, Brecht and Eisler – is an example of the influence this generation of German exiles had on American culture.

Hangmen Also Die! was Brecht's only script for a Hollywood film. The money he earned from writing the film enabled him to write The Visions of Simone Machard, Schweik in the Second World War and an adaptation of Webster's The Duchess of Malfi.

In 1942 Brecht's reluctance to help Carola Neher, who died in a gulag prison in the USSR after being arrested during the 1936 purges, caused much controversy among Russian emigrants in the West.

Cold War and final years in East Germany (1945–1956)

In the years of the Cold War and "Red Scare", Brecht was blacklisted by movie studio bosses and interrogated by the House Un-American Activities Committee. Along with about 41 other Hollywood writers, directors, actors and producers, he was subpoenaed to appear before the HUAC in September 1947. Although he was one of 19 witnesses who declared that they would refuse to appear, Brecht eventually decided to testify. He later explained that he had followed the advice of attorneys and had not wanted to delay a planned trip to Europe. On 30 October 1947 Brecht testified that he had never been a member of the Communist Party. He made wry jokes throughout the proceedings, punctuating his inability to speak English well with continuous references to the translators present, who transformed his German statements into English ones unintelligible to himself. HUAC vice-chairman Karl Mundt thanked Brecht for his co-operation. The remaining witnesses, the so-called Hollywood Ten, refused to testify and were cited for contempt. Brecht's decision to appear before the committee led to criticism, including accusations of betrayal. The day after his testimony, on 31 October, Brecht returned to Europe.

He lived in Zurich in Switzerland for a year. In February 1948 in Chur, Brecht staged an adaptation of Sophocles' Antigone, based on a

translation by Hölderlin. It was published under the title Antigonemodell 1948, accompanied by an essay on the importance of creating a "non-Aristotelian" form of theatre.

In 1949 he moved to East Berlin and established his theatre company there, the Berliner Ensemble. He retained his Austrian nationality (granted in 1950) and overseas bank accounts from which he received valuable hard currency remittances. The copyrights on his writings were held by a Swiss company. At the time he drove a pre-war DKW car—a rare luxury in the austere divided capital.

Though he was never a member of the Communist Party, Brecht had been schooled in Marxism by the dissident communist Karl Korsch. Korsch's version of the Marxist dialectic influenced Brecht greatly, both his aesthetic theory and theatrical practice. Brecht received the Stalin Peace Prize in 1954.

Brecht wrote very few plays in his final years in East Berlin, none of them as famous as his previous works. He dedicated himself to directing plays and developing the talents of the next generation of young directors and dramaturgs, such as Manfred Wekwerth, Benno Besson and Carl Weber. At this time he wrote some of his most famous poems, including the "Buckow Elegies".

At first Brecht apparently supported the measures taken by the East German government against the uprising of 1953 in East Germany, which included the use of Soviet military force. In a letter from the day of the uprising to SED First Secretary Walter Ulbricht, Brecht wrote that: "History will pay its respects to the revolutionary impatience of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany. The great discussion [exchange] with the masses about the speed of socialist construction will lead to a viewing and safeguarding of the socialist achievements. At this moment I must assure you of my allegiance to the Socialist Unity Party of Germany."

Brecht's subsequent commentary on those events, however, offered a very different assessment—in one of the poems in the Elegies, "Die Lösung" (The Solution), a disillusioned Brecht writes a few months later:

After the uprising of the 17th of June
The Secretary of the Writers Union
Had leaflets distributed in the Stalinallee
Stating that the people
Had forfeited the confidence of the government
And could win it back only
By redoubled efforts.

Would it not be easier
In that case for the government
To dissolve the people
And elect another?

Death

Brecht died on 14 August 1956 of a heart attack at the age of 58. He is buried in the Dorotheenstädtischer cemetery on Chausseestraße in the Mitte neighbourhood of Berlin, overlooked by the residence he shared with Helene Weigel.

According to Stephen Parker, who reviewed Brecht's writings and unpublished medical records, Brecht contracted rheumatic fever as a child, which led to an enlarged heart, followed by lifelong chronic heart failure and Sydenham's chorea. A report of a radiograph taken of Brecht in 1951 describes a badly diseased heart, enlarged to the left with a protruding aortic knob and with seriously impaired pumping. Brecht's colleagues described him as being very nervous, and sometimes shaking his head or moving his hands erratically. This can be reasonably attributed to Sydenham's chorea, which is also associated with emotional lability, personality changes, obsessive-compulsive behavior, and hyperactivity, which matched Brecht's behavior. "What is remarkable," wrote Parker, "is his capacity to turn abject physical weakness into peerless artistic strength, arrhythmia into the rhythms of poetry, chorea into the choreography of drama."

8.3 THEORY AND PRACTICE OF THEATRE

Brecht developed the combined theory and practice of his "Epic theatre" by synthesizing and extending the experiments of Erwin Piscator and Vsevolod Meyerhold to explore the theatre as a forum for political ideas and the creation of a critical aesthetics of dialectical materialism.

Epic Theatre proposed that a play should not cause the spectator to identify emotionally with the characters or action before him or her but should instead provoke rational self-reflection and a critical view of the action on the stage. Brecht thought that the experience of a climactic catharsis of emotion left an audience complacent. Instead, he wanted his audiences to adopt a critical perspective in order to recognise social injustice and exploitation and to be moved to go forth from the theatre and effect change in the world outside. For this purpose, Brecht employed the use of techniques that remind the spectator that the play is a representation of reality and not reality itself. By highlighting the constructed nature of the theatrical event, Brecht hoped to communicate that the audience's reality was equally constructed and, as such, was changeable.

Brecht's modernist concern with drama-as-a-medium led to his refinement of the "epic form" of the drama. This dramatic form is related to similar modernist innovations in other arts, including the strategy of divergent chapters in James Joyce's novel Ulysses, Sergei Eisenstein's evolution of a constructivist "montage" in the cinema, and Picasso's introduction of cubist "collage" in the visual arts.

One of Brecht's most important principles was what he called the Verfremdungseffekt (translated as "defamiliarization effect", "distancing effect", or "estrangement effect", and often mistranslated as "alienation effect"). This involved, Brecht wrote, "stripping the event of its self-evident, familiar, obvious quality and creating a sense of astonishment

and curiosity about them". To this end, Brecht employed techniques such as the actor's direct address to the audience, harsh and bright stage lighting, the use of songs to interrupt the action, explanatory placards, the transposition of text to the third person or past tense in rehearsals, and speaking the stage directions out loud.

In contrast to many other avant-garde approaches, however, Brecht had no desire to destroy art as an institution; rather, he hoped to "re-function" the theatre to a new social use. In this regard he was a vital participant in the aesthetic debates of his era—particularly over the "high art/popular culture" dichotomy—vying with the likes of Theodor W. Adorno, György Lukács, Ernst Bloch, and developing a close friendship with Walter Benjamin. Brechtian theatre articulated popular themes and forms with avant-garde formal experimentation to create a modernist realism that stood in sharp contrast both to its psychological and socialist varieties. "Brecht's work is the most important and original in European drama since Ibsen and Strindberg," Raymond Williams argues, while Peter Bürger dubs him "the most important materialist writer of our time."

Brecht was also influenced by Chinese theatre and used its aesthetic as an argument for Verfremdungseffekt. Brecht believed, "Traditional Chinese acting also knows the alienation [sic] effect and applies it most subtly.... The [Chinese] performer portrays incidents of utmost passion, but without his delivery becoming heated." Brecht attended a Chinese opera performance and was introduced to the famous Chinese opera performer Mei Lanfang in 1935. However, Brecht was sure to distinguish between Epic and Chinese theatre. He recognized that the Chinese style was not a "transportable piece of technique," and that Epic theatre sought to historicize and address social and political issues.

Brecht used his poetry to criticize European culture, including Nazis, and the German bourgeoisie. Brecht's poetry is marked by the effects of the First and Second World Wars.

Throughout his theatrics production, poems are incorporated into this play with music. In 1951, Brecht issued a recantation of his apparent suppression of poetry in his plays with a note titled On Poetry and Virtuosity. He writes:

We shall not need to speak of a play's poetry ... something that seemed relatively unimportant in the immediate past. It seemed not only unimportant, but misleading, and the reason was not that the poetic element had been sufficiently developed and observed, but that reality had been tampered with in its name ... we had to speak of a truth as distinct from poetry ... we have given up examining works of art from their poetic or artistic aspect, and got satisfaction from theatrical works that have no sort of poetic appeal ... Such works and performances may have some effect, but it can hardly be a profound one, not even politically. For it is a peculiarity of the theatrical medium that it communicates awareness's and impulses in the form of pleasure: the depth of the pleasure and the impulse will correspond to the depth of the pleasure.

Brecht's most influential poetry is featured in his Manual of Piety (Devotions), establishing him as a noted poet.

Check your progress -1

Who was Eugen Brecht?

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Where was Eugen Brecht born?

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. When was Eugen Brecht born?

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When and where did Eugen Brecht go into exile?

8.4 LET US SUM UP

Bertolt Brecht, original name Eugen Berthold Friedrich Brecht, (born February 10, 1898, Augsburg, Germany—died August 14, 1956, East Berlin), German poet, playwright, and theatrical reformer whose epic theatre departed from the conventions of theatrical illusion and developed the drama as a social and ideological forum for leftist causes.

Until 1924 Brecht lived in Bavaria, where he was born, studied medicine (Munich, 1917–21), and served in an army hospital (1918). From this period date his first play, Baal (produced 1923); his first success, Trommeln in der Nacht (Kleist Preis, 1922; Drums in the Night); the poems and songs collected as Die Hauspostille (1927; A Manual of Piety, 1966), his first professional production (Edward II, 1924); and his admiration for Wedekind, Rimbaud, Villon, and Kipling.

During this period, he also developed a violently antibourgeois attitude that reflected his generation's deep disappointment in the civilization that had come crashing down at the end of World War I. Among Brecht's friends were members of the Dadaist group, who aimed at destroying what they condemned as the false standards of bourgeois art through derision and iconoclastic satire. The man who taught him the elements of Marxism in the late 1920s was Karl Korsch, an eminent Marxist

theoretician who had been a Communist member of the Reichstag but had been expelled from the German Communist Party in 1926.

In Berlin (1924–33) he worked briefly for the directors Max Reinhardt and Erwin Piscator, but mainly with his own group of associates. With the composer Kurt Weill he wrote the satirical, successful ballad opera Die Dreigroschenoper (1928; The Threepenny Opera) and the opera Aufstieg und Fall der Stadt Mahagonny (1930; Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny). He also wrote what he called "Lehr-stücke" ("exemplary plays")—baldly didactic works for performance outside the orthodox theatre—to music by Weill, Hindemith, and Hanns Eisler. In these years he developed his theory of "epic theatre" and an austere form of irregular verse. He also became a Marxist.

In 1933 he went into exile—in Scandinavia (1933–41), mainly in Denmark, and then in the United States (1941–47), where he did some film work in Hollywood. In Germany his books were burned and his citizenship was withdrawn. He was cut off from the German theatre; but between 1937 and 1941 he wrote most of his great plays, his major theoretical essays and dialogues, and many of the poems collected as Svendborger Gedichte (1939). Between 1937 and 1939, he wrote, but did not complete, the novel Die Geschäfte des Herrn Julius Caesar (1957; The Business Affairs of Mr. Julius Caesar). It concerns a scholar researching a biography of Caesar several decades after his assassination.

The plays of Brecht's exile years became famous in the author's own and other productions: notable among them are Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder (1941; Mother Courage and Her Children), a chronicle play of the Thirty Years' War; Leben des Galilei (1943; The Life of Galileo); Der gute Mensch von Sezuan (1943; The Good Woman of Setzuan), a parable play set in prewar China; Der Aufhaltsame Aufstieg des Arturo Ui (1957; The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui), a parable play of Hitler's rise to power set in prewar Chicago; Herr Puntila und sein Knecht Matti (1948; Herr Puntila and His Man Matti), a Volksstück (popular play) about a Finnish farmer who oscillates between churlish sobriety and drunken good

humour; and The Caucasian Chalk Circle (first produced in English, 1948; Der kaukasische Kreidekreis, 1949), the story of a struggle for possession of a child between its highborn mother, who deserts it, and the servant girl who looks after it.

Brecht left the United States in 1947 after having had to give evidence before the House Un-American Activities Committee. He spent a year in Zürich, working mainly on Antigone-Modell 1948 (adapted from Hölderlin's translation of Sophocles; produced 1948) and on his most important theoretical work, the Kleines Organon für das Theater (1949; "A Little Organum for the Theatre"). The essence of his theory of drama, as revealed in this work, is the idea that a truly Marxist drama must avoid the Aristotelian premise that the audience should be made to believe that what they are witnessing is happening here and now. For he saw that if the audience really felt that the emotions of heroes of the past—Oedipus, or Lear, or Hamlet—could equally have been their own reactions, then the Marxist idea that human nature is not constant but a result of changing historical conditions would automatically be invalidated. Brecht therefore argued that the theatre should not seek to make its audience believe in the presence of the characters on the stage—should not make it identify with them, but should rather follow the method of the epic poet's art, which is to make the audience realize that what it sees on the stage is merely an account of past events that it should watch with critical detachment. Hence, the "epic" (narrative, nondramatic) theatre is based on detachment, on the Verfremdungseffekt (alienation effect), achieved through a number of devices that remind the spectator that he is being presented with a demonstration of human behaviour in scientific spirit rather than with an illusion of reality, in short, that the theatre is only a theatre and not the world itself.

In 1949 Brecht went to Berlin to help stage Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder (with his wife, Helene Weigel, in the title part) at Reinhardt's old Deutsches Theater in the Soviet sector. This led to formation of the Brechts' own company, the Berliner Ensemble, and to permanent return to Berlin. Henceforward the Ensemble and the staging of his own plays had first claim on Brecht's time. Often suspect in eastern Europe because

of his unorthodox aesthetic theories and denigrated or boycotted in the West for his Communist opinions, he yet had a great triumph at the Paris Théâtre des Nations in 1955, and in the same year in Moscow he received a Stalin Peace Prize. He died of a heart attack in East Berlin the following year.

Brecht was, first, a superior poet, with a command of many styles and moods. As a playwright he was an intensive worker, a restless piece-together of ideas not always his own (The Threepenny Opera is based on John Gay's Beggar's Opera, and Edward II on Marlowe), a sardonic humorist, and a man of rare musical and visual awareness; but he was often bad at creating living characters or at giving his plays tension and shape. As a producer he liked lightness, clarity, and firmly knotted narrative sequence; a perfectionist, he forced the German theatre, against its nature, to underplay. As a theoretician he made principles out of his preferences—and even out of his faults.

8.5 KEYWORDS

- **Alienation**: Epic Theatre insisted that its spectators were to engage critically with the action more than engaging with it emotionally. "Alienation" was the term used for this critical "detachment." The point was not merely to be alienated from one's emotions. In German, Verfremdung ("alienation") means "to make strange," and from this root one can see how making events seem strange or "alien" might provoke thinking, the critical detachment that Brecht so advocated.
- **Capitalism**: An economic system whereby profit is a primary motive for trade; that is, investors employ capital (money) in order to make more money. The term is also used to refer to a political ideology that supports economic capitalism, whereby state control of industry is considered anti-individual and free exchange is promoted even at the expense of common social interests.
- **Capitulation**: Giving in or succumbing. It often is a military term describing when soldiers surrender. Mother Courage's use of the term

in Scene 4 points out how everyone in the play eventually gives in to the larger capitalist system of the war.

- **Capon**: A male chicken whose reproductive organs were removed at an early age, in order that it could be fattened for eating

8.6 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

- Describe the Eugen Brecht's life.
- Describe the Eugen Brecht's Career.
- Write a note on Eugen Brecht's theory and practice of theatre.

8.7 SUGGESTED READINGS

1. Willett (1998, 104–105).
2. ^ Willett (1978, 76).
3. ^ The two first met in March 1927, after Weill had written a critical introduction to the broadcast on Berlin Radio of an adaptation of Brecht's Man Equals Man. When they met, Brecht was 29 years old and Weill was 27. Brecht had experience of writing songs and had performed his own with tunes he had composed; at the time he was also married to an opera singer (Zoff). Weill had collaborated with Georg Kaiser, one of the few Expressionist play wrights that Brecht admired; he was married to the actress Lotte Lenya. Willett and Manheim (1979, xv).
4. ^ Willet and Manheim (1979, xv–xviii). In Munich in 1924 Brecht had begun referring to some of the stranger aspects of life in post-putsch Bavaria under the codename "Mahagonny". The Amerikanismus imagery appears in his first three "Mahagonny Songs", with their Wild West references. With that, however, the project stalled for two and a half years. With Hauptmann, who wrote the two English-language "Mahagonny Songs", Brecht had begun work on an opera to be called Sodom and Gomorrah or The Man from Manhattan and a radio play called The Flood or 'The Collapse of Miami, the Paradise City', both of which came to underlie the new scheme with Weill. See Willett and Manheim (1979, xv–xvi). The influence of Amerikanismus is most clearly discernible in Brecht's In the Jungle of Cities.

5. ^ In this respect, the creative process for Mahogany was quite different from The Three penny Opera, with the former being durchkomponiert or set to music right through, whereas on the latter Weill was brought at a late stage to set the songs. See Willett and Manheim (1979, xv).
6. ^ Willett and Manheim (1979, xvii) and Brecht 1964, pp. 37–38.

8.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Eugen Brecht was a German theatre practitioner, playwright, and poet. **(answer for check your progress- 1 Q.1)**
2. Eugen Brecht was born in Augsburg, Germany. **(answer for check your progress- 1 Q.2)**
3. Eugen Brecht was born on February 10, 1898. **(answer for check your progress- 1 Q.3)**

4. Eugen Brecht went to exile in 1933 in Scandinavia. (**answer for check your progress- 1 Q.4)**

UNIT 9. BRECHT – MOTHER COURAGE AND HER CHILDREN -2

STRUCTURE

9.0 OBJECTIVES

After the completion of this unit you should be able to learn about:

- context and summary of Mother Courage and Her Children by Eugen Berthold Friedrich Brecht.

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Mother Courage and Her Children (German: Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder) is a play written in 1939 by the German dramatist and poet Bertolt Brecht (1898–1956), with significant contributions from Margarete Steffin. Four theatrical productions were produced in Switzerland and Germany from 1941 to 1952, the last three supervised and/or directed by Brecht, who had returned to East Germany from the United States.

Several years after Brecht's death in 1959/1960, the play was adapted as a German film starring Helene Weigel, Brecht's widow and a leading actress.

Mother Courage is considered by some to be the greatest play of the 20th century, and perhaps also the greatest anti-war play of all time.

9.2 CONTEXT

Mother Courage is one of nine plays that Brecht wrote in resistance to the rise of Fascism and Nazism. In response to the invasion of Poland by the German armies of Adolf Hitler in 1939, Brecht wrote Mother Courage in what writers call a "white heat"—in a little over a month. As the preface to the Ralph Manheim/John Willett Collected Plays puts it:

Mother Courage, with its theme of the devastating effects of a European war and the blindness of anyone hoping to profit by it, is said to have been written in a month; judging by the almost complete absence of drafts or any other evidence of preliminary studies, it must have been an exceptionally direct piece of inspiration.

Following Brecht's own principles for political drama, the play is not set in modern times but during the Thirty Years' War of 1618–1648, which involved all the European states. It follows the fortunes of Anna Fierling, nicknamed Mother Courage, a wily canteen woman with the Swedish Army, who is determined to make her living from the war. Over the course of the play, she loses all three of her children, Schweizerkas, Eilif, and Kattrin, to the very war from which she tried to profit.

Check your progress – 1

1. Who wrote Mother Courage and Her Children?

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_____

2. How many theatrical productions took place of Mother Courage and Her Children?

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3. Where and when did the theatrical productions take place of Mother Courage and Her Children?

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9.3 SUMMARY

Scene 1

Spring 1624. The Swedish commander-in-chief count Oxenstierna is raising troops in dalecarlia for the polish campaign. The canteen woman anna fierling, known under the name of mother courage, loses one son.

A country road in the Swedish province Dalecarlia. A sergeant and a recruiter are talking out in the cold. Even though it's spring it's still cold because, well, it's Sweden.

They talk about recruiting soldiers for the Swedish army.

The recruiter says he's supposed to recruit four companies by his deadline, but he's fed up with the shenanigans of the local population.

No kidding, the sergeant says. These people have known peace for so long that they've forgotten what order and respect all are about. Seriously, what gives? These people need some war in their lives to spice things up.

Enter Mother Courage (MC) with her covered wagon, pulled by her two boys. She and Kattrin are sitting on top. We hear the sound of a jew's harp.

They're stopped by the sergeant, who asks for their IDs.

We said this is a musical, right? MC answers with a song about her canteen business.

The song is basically about how MC's business helps keep soldiers happy when they're heading off to get themselves killed in war.

Here's a little snippet:

The new year's come. The watchmen shout.
The thaw sets in. The dead remain
Wherever life has not died out
It staggers to its feet again.

The sergeant asks MC's older son (Eilif) which regiment he belongs to, and Eilif tells him he's part of the Second Finnish Regiment

The sergeant still wants to see his papers.

Eilif can't believe the sergeant hasn't heard of his mom, MC.

Then the sergeant asks where she got her name.

So, MC tells the story. It was during the bombardment of Riga, a city in Latvia. The city was blocked off by the advancing army. MC was nearly broke, so she took some moulding bread and broke through the blockade to sell it to the entrapped city-dwellers. I guess you'd call that courage, right? Anything for a buck.

The sergeant is still after Eilif's license with the regiment.

MC pulls a bunch of random papers out of a box and gets off the wagon. She has all sorts of papers, but no license.

When the sergeant accuses her of lying, she gets mad and admits she has no papers other than her "honest face."

The sergeant wants to know her real name, and she tells him: Anna Fierling. Her children don't share her last name.

Eilif Nojocki is her the oldest son. She isn't sure what his father's last name was, but at least it sounded like Nojocki. Eilif remembers someone he thinks is his father, but that was just some French guy.

The sergeant asks about the other son. "S'pose he's a Chinaman?"

Her second son is named Fejos, but she calls him Swiss Cheese. His father was a Swiss engineer and a drunkard. But the name Fejos comes from a Hungarian guy she was with when Swiss Cheese was born.

Her daughter's name is Kattrin Haupt. MC says Kattrin is half German.

Sergeant writes this all down. He asks MC what she's doing in Sweden, since she's from Bamberg, a city in Germany.

She says she wanted to get to the war first instead of waiting until it came to her.

The recruiter mocks Eilif and Swiss Cheese for having to pull around the wagon, calling them Jacob Ox and Esau Ox, after the biblical twins Jacob and Esau.

Eilif is ready to fight this point, but MC tells him to calm down.

She tries to change the subject by offering the officers some wares from her wagon.

But the sergeant is interested in only one thing: her boys. They look strong and healthy, like perfect recruits for the Swedish army.

The recruiter continues to give Eilif a hard time, asking to feel his muscles to see whether he's strong or whether he's a "chicken."

He's a chicken, MC says. She tells them to leave Eilif alone.

Since Eilif threatened to beat him up, the recruiter wants to settle it "man to man."

According to MC, Eilif has a knife in his boot. The recruiter should watch himself, or else…

The recruiter will "draw it out like a milk tooth." (That's another term for "baby tooth," for those of us in the US of A.)

But MC's daughter, Kattrin, is dating the lieutenant. She'll tell the colonel.

What's her beef with the military? Eilif's father died a soldier, right?

MC ignores the sergeant. Eilif is still a child and she won't let him be taken off to the "slaughterhouse."

Eilif would at least get some new clothes, says the recruiter.

MC thinks Eilif will get himself killed. She sends Swiss Cheese off to tell everyone that his brother's being kidnapped. MC herself takes out a knife and threatens the officers. She says they're peaceful businesspeople and don't want to get mixed up in the war.

She doesn't look all that peaceful now, the sergeant remarks. She can't have it both ways; she can't make a living off the war if the war doesn't have new soldiers.

MC doesn't disagree with that; she just doesn't want it to be her children.

The sergeant says she's just scared of the war, despite her name. But her children don't seem scared.

Eilif pipes up, "Take more than a war to scare me."

The sergeant joined the army at seventeen and is doing just fine.

But he still has yet to make it to seventy, MC retorts.

An exchange follows in which MC claims she can see the mark of death on people and know that they are going to die. Swiss Cheese backs her up. Spooky.

The recruiter asks her to tell the sergeant's fortune, then. The sergeant thinks it's all a joke.

First MC asks for the soldier's helmet. Then she takes out a piece of paper and tears it up. She tells her children that their family will be torn up just like her piece of paper, if they happen to get involved in the war. Then she turns back to the sergeant. She marks a black cross on one of the pieces, puts them all back in the helmet, and shakes them. If the sergeant picks the one with a cross, then that's a sign he's going to die.

In the meantime, the recruiter is talking to Eilif, telling him that he doesn't just pick anyone, that Eilif is special. Uh huh, sure he's special.

The sergeant pulls out the piece of paper with the black cross. He seems bothered by this.

MC tries to head off again. The sergeant insists on taking Eilif.

Now Eilif says his brother also wants to be a soldier.

MC decides to make her children draw from the helmet. She goes to the back of the wagon to make more slips.

The recruiter talks to Eilif again. It isn't all "holy-holy" in the Swedish camp. They have fun there, too.

MC returns with the slips, telling the sergeant that she's scared her children won't make it through the war. She hands the helmet to Eilif. He draws the cross. MC flips out, asking him if he's going to be sensible.

Eilif says sure, he'll be sensible.

The sensible thing to do is to stay with his mother and ignore the officer that called him a chicken, says MC.

The recruiter says he'll have to take Swiss Cheese if Eilif is too scared.

MC gives the helmet to Swiss Cheese and makes him draw, too. He draws the black cross. Maybe it's because Swiss Cheese isn't exactly the sharpest tool in the shed. She reminds him to be honest; otherwise his stupidity will get him into trouble.

The sergeant is still bothered by his black cross. He doesn't get it. He always tries to stay out of danger during battle.

MC gives the helmet to Kattrin, but she takes the slip out for her. Another black cross. MC supposes it isn't so bad, since Kattrin can't talk.

MC tries to leave again.

The recruiter pretends the sergeant is interested in one of the belt buckles MC is selling. That gets her attention.

Supposedly to get a better look at the buckle, the sergeant heads behind the wagon with MC.

The recruiter tells Eilif he'll give him money for enlisting.

Meanwhile, the sergeant isn't sure he can stomach dinner after the news about his impending death. MC gives him some brandy and tells him to relax.

Eilif is led away by the recruiter, with promises of money and women.

Kattrin makes some noises to warn her mother.

The sergeant buys the belt buckle. MC bites the coin to make sure it's real. She calls herself a "burnt child," saying she has no faith in money. Then she finally notices that Eilif is gone.

Swiss Cheese tells her what happened.

MC calls Swiss Cheese a "simpleton." She tells Kattrin she did nothing wrong, since she can't speak.

Maybe she should drink some of her own brandy and calm down, the sergeant suggests. She can't expect to live off the war if she doesn't give something up.

Ignoring the sergeant, MC tells Kattrin to help her brother pull the wagon. The three take off.

The sergeant looks after them and says: "Like the war to nourish you? / Have to feed it something too."

Scene 2

In the years 1625 and 1626 mother courage crosses Poland in the train of the Swedish armies. Before the fortress of Wallhof she meets her son again. Successful sale of a capon and heyday of her dashing son.

MC has been following the Swedish army through Poland, cart, children and all. (Like this, only…more miserable.)

We see a general's tent, and beside it, the kitchen. A cannon goes off.

MC and the general's cook are arguing about the price of a capon (a rooster fattened up for eating). MC wants to sell it to him for sixty hellers.

The cook says he can get a dozen birds for cheaper just down the road.

MC says he should take hers, since the army is under siege and there's no food. Now the bird costs fifty.

The cook says that it's the Swedish army that's doing the siege, not the other way around. Sheesh, get your story straight, MC.

Well, the people in the town they're sieging have more than the army. MC claims the peasants outside the town have nothing left.

She can't fool the cook. He knows the peasants have a lot; they're just hiding it.

She's sure that the peasants are starving. Now the bird's forty.

The cook says he'll take it for thirty.

But it was a talented bird! It could count and march to military music.

The cook takes out a piece of beef and sticks his knife in it. He's going to roast it instead if she doesn't lower the price.

MC says the beef's old.

It's from last night, he replies. He starts to cut up the beef.

MC tells him to use a lot of pepper so the general doesn't taste the funk.

Just then, the general, chaplain, and Eilif enter the tent.

The general is congratulating Eilif on a "deed of heroism." He promises him a gold bracelet for what he did "for God." He insults the chaplain, calling him an "old bigot," and asks Eilif what he wants for dinner.

Eilif wants meat.

The general orders the cook to make meat.

The cook starts to complain about having to make food for so many people. MC shushes him, having seen Eilif in the tent with the general.

MC tells the cook about her son, how it's been two years since the Swedish army recruited him. She offers the capon to him again, this time for a florin (a gold coin, even more than before).

The general yells for his food.

The cook tries to offer fifty hellers, but MC tells him that, when it comes to her son, "no expense is too great for me."

The cook hands over the money and sets her to plucking the bird.

The general is busy boozing with Eilif, happy that there is still "true faith" in his army. He doesn't offer anything to the chaplain, because "all he does is preach," and has no idea what war is really like. He asks Eilif to tell the story of how he captured twenty of the peasants' oxen.

Eilif found the oxen the peasants had hidden in the forest, tricked the peasants into thinking he wanted to buy the oxen, and as they thought it over, killed them all and took the animals.

The general ask the chaplain for his opinion.

Well, the chaplain says, things are different today than in the Bible. Oh, really? When Jesus told his followers to "love thy neighbour," they weren't at war and there was enough food to go around, especially after Jesus miraculously turned five loaves of bread into five hundred. (See our section on "Allusions" for more on this.)

The general laughs and gives the chaplain a drink. Then he turns back to Eilif and compares his feat to Jesus's saying in the Bible "Whatsoever thou doest for the least of my brethren, thou doest for me." (See "Allusions.")

Eilif remembers how he took his sword and went at those peasants.

He really ought to meet the king, the general tells him.

Eilif has already seen him, from a distance. The king is his role model. Have it your way, Eilif.

The general appreciates men of courage, like Eilif, and he plans to treat him like his own son. Meanwhile, MC has been listening in. She doesn't care much for the general. She tells the cook that he must be "rotten" to need courageous men. Only a bad general needs man who possess "a load of special virtues." She thinks fearlessness, strength, cleverness, and loyalty are only necessary among the little guys when their leaders lack these qualities. In "decent countries," the populace can be full of cowards. Quite an interesting theory, but we'll roll with it.

The general guesses Eilif's father was a soldier.

Turns out he's right. MC warned him about being a soldier. Eilif even knows a song about it.

Eilif sings The Song of the Girl and the Soldier. The song is a conversation between a young girl and a group of soldiers, about the unfortunate fate of a certain special member of their troop. Eilif dances, too.

Halfway through the song, MC joins in.

Hearing MC singing in the kitchen, the general wonders what's going on.

Eilif goes to the kitchen and embraces his mother. He asks where the rest of his family is.

She tells him they're fine. Swiss Cheese has been made paymaster of the Second Finnish Regiment. (A paymaster carries around the regiment's cash in a moneybox.)

Eilif asks how she's feeling, etc.

He thinks it's funny that she happened to be in the kitchen just when the general was praising him.

MC isn't so amused, and she slaps him. The slap is for not surrendering to the peasants when they threatened to kill him.

The general and the chaplain stand in the doorway, laughing, because domestic abuse is always a hoot? These guys need to get in touch their moral compasses, if you ask us.

Scene 3

Three years later mother courage is taken prisoner along with elements of a Finnish regiment. She manages to save her daughter, likewise her covered cart, but her honest son is killed.

The scene opens on a military camp in the afternoon. MC's cart is packed full of stuff now—she seems to be doing good business—and her laundry is hanging from a line strung between her wagon and a cannon.

MC is bargaining with an armorer (someone in charge of weaponry) over a bag of ammunition. Swiss Cheese now has a paymaster's uniform on.

Yvette is also on stage. She's drinking some brandy and has taken off her red high-heeled boots. She's busy sewing a flashy hat for herself.

The armorer is trying to sell the ammunition to make enough money to buy more booze for the colonel.

Notes

MC is afraid of getting in trouble for buying up the troop's supplies.

The armorer says she could easily resell the ammunition to another armorer for more. He won't do it because he doesn't trust the guy—he's his friend.

MC buys the ammunition but pays the armorer less than he wants.

She tosses Swiss Cheese a pair of new woollen socks, telling him not to forget that the army made him paymaster because he's honest, not brave like his brother, and because he's stupid. That's why they trust him not to run off with the money. Gee, thanks mom.

Swiss Cheese and the armorer exit together.

Yvette waves as Armorer leaves, even though he doesn't.

MC doesn't like seeing the two of them together. Then she mentions that the war is going well, that it will be a few more years before all countries are involved, and that she hopes her business will thrive. She asks Yvette why she's drinking in the afternoon when she's sick.

Yvette claims all this about her being sick is just a rumour.

Yvette is mad that everyone keeps avoiding her. They all think she's got something wrong with her. Tossing her hat aside, she says the real reason she's drinking is that no one wants her anymore. The whole army knows her. She should have just stayed at home when her first boyfriend ditched her. People like her and MC, she says, don't have any business being proud.

MC tries to keep her from bringing up the story of her first boyfriend, Pieter. She doesn't want Kattrin getting any romantic ideas.

Yvette thinks the story will "put her off love," i.e., convince her that romance isn't worth her while.

There's no use in trying that, MC says.

Then Yvette sings The Song of Fraternization, about how she used to party with the army boys back in Flanders (a Dutch-speaking region in Belgium, not the neighbour from the Simpsons). The song tells how she met Pieter, a cook with the army. Then, one day the army left, and she never saw him again. Yvette decided to follow the army. That was five years ago.

Yvette is drunk now. After singing her song, she teeters behind the cart, leaving her hat out front.

MC tells Kattrin to take note of Yvette's story and stay out of any love business. She tells her to thank her lucky stars that she's mute; that way she never has to regret telling the truth to someone or saying how she really feels about them. Talk about a depressing outlook on life.

The cook and the chaplain enter.

The chaplain has a message from Eilif, and that the cook came along because he wanted to see MC.

The cook says he just wanted some fresh air.

MC says she has no money for Eilif.

The message is actually for Swiss Cheese, the chaplain tells her.

MC doesn't want him trying to lure Swiss Cheese into the war and tries to hand over some money for Eilif.

The cook suggests that she give him some more money, since the regiment will be heading off soon and he might run into trouble. "You women are tough," he tells her.

Arguing with the cook, the chaplain says it's a blessing to die in a war "fought for the faith."

Sure, the cook says, in some ways this war is like all the others, with murder, rape, and looting, but at least it's a war of faith, right? But hey, all this talk has made him thirsty for some booze.

The chaplain tells MC the cook's taken a fancy to her.

All the cook wants is some brandy from "a fair hand." Can anyone blame him? Plus, he says, the chaplain has been telling dirty jokes the whole way over.

MC gives them drinks before they start making her "immoral suggestions."

The chaplain sees Kattrin and asks who "this entrancing person" is.

She's a "decent" person, MC replies, not an entrancing one. MC, the cook, and the chaplain head behind the cart.

Meanwhile, Kattrin leaves her housework behind, picks up Yvette's hat and pulls the red boots toward her. Uh-oh, we can see where this is heading.

We can still hear MC talking with the cook and the chaplain in the background.

MC thinks the Poles had it coming, since they tried to resist when the Swedish king invaded their country. They should have just submitted.

And, the chaplain adds, the king only wanted to free them anyway. Before the king came along, the Poles were slaves to the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. (See our section on "Setting" for more about the HRE.)

Now, the cook: it's a good thing the king had "God's word" on his side, because otherwise people might get the idea that he started the whole war just "to make a bit on the side." While trying to "bring freedom" to Germany and Poland, the king has been raising taxes back in Sweden, making quite a profit off the whole thing.

MC says she can tell he's not a Swede by the way he's badmouthing the "Hero King."

And it's the king who gives the cook his bread, after all, replies the chaplain.

Well, the cook says, I'm the one who bakes it.

MC, speaking a little more "seriously," says that the people in charge of war say it's all for God, but really, just like "little people like me," they're in it for themselves, i.e., for profit.

The cook couldn't agree more.

The chaplain tells the cook he should think twice about what he says, being a Dutchman and not a Swede. He points to the Protestant regiment's flag flying above MC's wagon.

MC toasts to them all being "good Lutherans." (The translator uses "Lutheran" to mean "Protestant" here.)

In the meantime, we see Kattrin with Yvette's hat on, strutting around the front of the wagon.

A cannon goes off and MC, the chaplain and the cook rush back out. The armorer is back with another soldier, and they're trying to take the cannon attached to MC's clothesline.

It turns out the Catholics have broken through their defences.

The cook heads off to find the general. MC sees that he forgot his pipe; he tells her to keep it.

MC can't believe the enemy would attack just when she's starting to make some money.

The chaplain also decides to head off. He wishes he had a cloak to cover his religious outfit.

MC at first won't give him one, but when he makes it clear that looking like a Protestant chaplain might get him into trouble with the enemy, she finds him one.

Then the chaplain decides it might be better if he stuck around after all.

MC tells the soldier, who's still trying to get the cannon ready, to take off. She asks him, "Who's going to pay you for that?"

The solder splits.

Then MC finally sees Kattrin dressed in Yvette's hat and boots. She yells at her to take them off. She asks whether she wants the enemy to come along and "make a prostitute" of her. She tries to pull the boots off herself.

Yvette comes back, powdering her face. She asks where her hat is. She wants to look good for the Catholics.

Kattrin hides the boots under her skirt when Yvette comes overlooking for them.

Swiss Cheese runs in with the moneybox, just as MC comes back with her hands full of ashes.

She asks him what he's got and he tells her it's the regiment's moneybox.

He has to get rid of it, MC insists.

He says he's responsible for it and heads behind the wagon.

MC tells the chaplain to change out of his religious outfit, since it's still visible under the cloak. Then she goes over to Kattrin and rubs the ashes all over her face. She explains that it's to make her look dirty so she'll be protected from the Catholic soldiers, who will go after "anything in skirts." Even a bed.

She asks Swiss Cheese what he did with the moneybox and he tells her that he thought he'd hide it in the wagon.

But the Regiment will find the cash and think she stole it.

Swiss Cheese says he'll move it. MC says it's too late and that he should just stay put and hold onto it.

MC takes down the regimental flag, after the chaplain makes a fuss.

The sound of cannons grows stronger.

Scene change: It's morning three days later. The cannon is gone. MC, Kattrin, the chaplain, and Swiss Cheese are gloomily sharing a meal.

Swiss Cheese worries out loud about the sergeant coming to ask him where the moneybox is.

MC tells him to consider himself lucky that they aren't out trying to find him.

The chaplain is bummed because he can't hold religious services; otherwise the enemy might find out he's Protestant.

MC says she doesn't know what's more dangerous—Swiss Cheese with his moneybox, or the chaplain with his Protestant faith.

Well, they're all in God's hands, says the chaplain.

MC says she doesn't think it's all that bad yet. She knows how to pretend to be Catholic, by telling the enemy she doesn't believe in the Swedish "Antichrist" and by asking for church candles. (You only use church candles in Catholic churches.) In any case, she says, they'll turn a blind eye to her because they don't have a canteen lady to sell them booze. So, even if they're prisoners, they're like "fleas on a dog," feeding off their host.

The chaplain says that's good news, but they'll still have to watch out and not expect to have as much food as before. They've been defeated, he says.

MC doesn't think they've been defeated. For the little people down below, she says, defeat can sometimes be a good thing.

She remembers a time when their general was defeated in Livonia and she got a horse to pull her wagon. In general, she says, both victory and defeat are expensive for the little people. The best thing, according to her, is political gridlock, when neither side is winning or losing.

Swiss Cheese is too worried to eat his dinner. He's still thinking about what the sergeant will do when it's time to pay his soldiers.

MC reminds him that they don't pay soldiers after a defeat.

But it's still their right, Swiss Cheese says. Soldiers should be paid for having to retreat.

MC says he needs to learn to stop with all his honesty. She's getting worried for him. She tells him that she and the chaplain are heading off to find a Catholic flag and some meat. She's glad the Catholics are letting her keep up her business. Soldiers aren't interested in her faith; they care more about her prices. And a pair of pants bought from a Protestant is just as good as any other.

The chaplain compares that to the response of a mendicant friar (a monk who makes his living by begging) when he heard that the Protestants were invading: "They'll always need beggars." MC goes into the wagon and the chaplain asks Swiss Cheese how long he thinks it will be before the Catholics figure out the two of them aren't just members of MC's crew, and discover the moneybox.

Swiss Cheese says he can get rid of the moneybox.

The chaplain warns him that that's even more dangerous, because the Catholics have spies. Some little guy with an eye patch caught the chaplain relieving himself the other day, and he almost let out a prayer before he stopped himself.

MC clambers out of the wagon with the red boots in hand, saying Kattrin stole them from Yvette. She says it's all because the chaplain got it into her head that she's an "enchanting person." She reminds Kattrin that she's not to get dressed up until it's peacetime and the soldiers are gone.

MC says it would be best if Kattrin didn't stand out at all, like a stone in Dalecarlia (where there are a whole lot of stones). That way she'd be safe. Then she tells Swiss Cheese to keep hold of his money box, and to watch out for Kattrin.

She heads out with the chaplain.

Swiss Cheese talks to Kattrin. She gestures to ask whether he wants a drink. He takes a drink and starts to say that he thinks it would be best to get rid of the moneybox. He decides to stick it in a hole down by the river, just to hide it for a while. Then he can get it later and bring it back to his regiment.

As Kattrin comes out with the drink in hand, she runs into two men. One is a sergeant and the other has an eye patch. The spy!

The one-eyed spy asks her if she's seen anyone around there from the Second Finnish Regiment.

She runs off, spilling the drink.

The two men hide when they see Swiss Cheese sitting there.

Swiss Cheese gets up and announces that he's going to hide the moneybox.

Kattrin tries to let him know about the men, but he ignores her. He thinks she's trying to apologize for spilling his drink.

She tries to hold him back, but he pulls himself away and exits. Kattrin paces back and forth, making little noises.

The chaplain returns with MC and Kattrin runs to her mother.

So, Kattrin might be mute, but MC can still interpret what Kattrin is trying to say. She figures out that Swiss Cheese went off with the box and that a one-eyed man came along.

The spy!

MC raises the Catholic flag she bought. Just then, the two men bring in Swiss Cheese.

The sergeant accuses MC of knowing Swiss Cheese.

They all try to pretend that Swiss Cheese was just a customer at MC's canteen. The chaplain is just her dishwasher.

She offers them some booze, but they turn it down.

The soldiers are on a single track to make Swiss Cheese confess.

When they ask what he hid by the river, he claims it was someone else.

Everybody knows her, MC says, and she's a good judge of people. She can tell Swiss Cheese has an honest face.

But the soldiers been tracking the regiment for days and they know that Swiss Chees is their man.

Swiss Cheese still denies it.

When they demand the moneybox, MC chimes in, trying to convince Swiss Cheese to turn it over if he still has it. She agrees with the soldiers, saying that if he had the box he would definitely give it to them rather than get executed. (Wink, wink.)

Swiss Cheese says he doesn't have the box.

The soldiers lead him off.

MC runs after them, saying that he'll tell them where the box is, all right, as long as they don't hurt him.

Scene change: Now it's evening on the same day. The chaplain and Kattrin are doing dishes.

The whole thing with Swiss Cheese reminds the chaplain of Jesus. Okay, we're not following you on that one, Chap, but here goes.

He sings The Song of the Hours. The song is about the events leading up to and including Jesus' crucifixion. (More on this in our "Symbolism, Allegory, Imagery" section.)

MC rushes back in. She says the general can still be bought out. As long as they don't admit that they know Swiss Cheese, which would get them all in trouble, they can save his life. They just need money. She asks if Yvette is around. Since she's dating a colonel now, she might be able to buy the canteen business from MC.

What'll she live on if she sells the wagon, the chaplain asks.

MC doesn't know.

Yvette comes in with her "extremely ancient" colonel. She hugs MC and whispers that the colonel is "not unwilling" to buy her business. Out loud again, she introduces the colonel as her friend, who is there to advise her in business matters. Yvette says she heard that MC is selling her wagon, and that she's thinking it over.

MC says she's not selling it, just pledging it. (Okay, that means she gets the money first, then hands over the wagon later only if she can't pay the money back.)

Yvette isn't sure she's interested in a pledge. She asks the colonel what he thinks, and he tells her to do whatever she pleases. (He calls her his "pet." Grossness.)

MC insists that she's only pledging the wagon, otherwise she'd be out of luck.

The colonel seems to agree that Yvette should buy the wagon outright, rather than accept MC's pledge.

MC tells her to look through her stuff, then, to see if there's anything else she wants to buy.

Yvette asks how long she'll have to wait to get the money back.

MC expects about one or two weeks.

Yvette takes the colonel aside. She knows MC has to sell, and Yvette's pretty sure she can get the money for the wagon from an ensign who's "crazy" about her.

The colonel tells her to keep away from the ensign and let him buy it for her. (This time he calls her "pussykins." Double grossness.)

Yvette hesitates, but accepts. She decides to take MC's pledge and pay her 200 florins for the wagon.

As Yvette goes looking for boots in the wagon, MC asks her whether she can still put a good word in with the sergeant for Swiss Cheese. He's supposed to be court-martialed in an hour.

MC pulls her from the wagon and tells her to get going, and to remember not to mention who's paying the money.

Yvette says she's planning to meet the guy with the eye patch out in the forest.

The chaplain suggests that 150 florins might be a better deal.

MC tells him to butt out. She pushes Yvette off.

The chaplain asks MC what she expects to live on, what with a mute daughter and all.

MC is counting on the moneybox, hoping that the regiment will allow Swiss Cheese to keep the cash for his service.

Chap isn't sure Yvette will be able to get the job done.

MC says she'll get the job done because she wants the 200 florins.

MC wastes no time setting Kattrin and the chaplain back to work. She tells the chaplain to stop standing around like "Jesus on Mount of Olives" and quit complaining about having to run around more than he used to do in church.

Thank God people are still corruptible, she tells them. Corruption is like God's compassion: as long as it's there, even an innocent man can stand a chance of being set free.

Yvette comes rushing in, saying they'll let him go for 200, but it has to be quick. Swiss Cheese has admitted to having the box, after they used thumbscrews to torture him. (Ouch.)

As it turns out, Swiss Cheese never hid the moneybox, but tossed it and all the cash into the river once he realized the men had seen him with it. Darn.

How is MC supposed to pay back Yvette?

MC needs some time to think. She tells Yvette she'll pay 120 instead of 200.

Yvette says they'll never go for it.

But MC can't lose her cart, especially with her poor daughter.

Yvette rushes off to tell the sergeant.

MC helps Kattrin polish knives. She tells her she'll pay the 200 if it comes to it, that Swiss Cheese will be back soon.

"The Lord will provide," the chaplain adds.

Kattrin runs off sobbing.

Yvette comes back, saying they won't agree to 120 florins. The one-eyed man is waiting for a drum-roll that will signal when Swiss Cheese has been sentenced to death. Yvette says she even offered him 150, but still no luck.

MC says to tell the man she'll pay 200. MC is afraid she's bargained too long at this point.

We hear a drumroll in the distance. The chaplain gets up and goes to the rear. It grows dark. When the drumming stops, it becomes light again.

Yvette returns, looking pretty shook up. They shot Swiss Cheese eleven times. Apparently they didn't believe that he threw the box in the river and are on their way to find out whether it's with MC in the wagon. The plan is to bring his body to MC to see how she reacts.

Yvette offers to take Kattrin away, but MC shakes her head.

Yvette brings Kattrin to her mother and the two stand holding hands.

Two soldiers and the sergeant come in with a stretcher bearing Swiss Cheese's body.

He asks them if they know his name, removing the sheet from the body.

MC shakes her head. Ouch.

The sergeant tells the two soldiers to throw his body in the pit, since no one can identify him.

Scene 4

Mother courage sings the song of the grand capitulation.

MC is waiting outside a Catholic officer's tent.

A clerk looks out of the tent. He recognizes her as the host of the "Lutheran paymaster." He tells her she'd best stay out of the way.

MC has a complaint to make. The officers slashed everything in her wagon to pieces and then she had to pay a fine.

The clerk advises her to keep quiet. The army is short on canteens, so she'll get off easy if she just pays a fine now and then.

MC doesn't budge.

The clerk tells her to wait, and goes back inside.

A young officer enters, shouting, "Bouque la Madonne!" (That's a French curse, meaning something like "Steal a kiss from the Madonna!") He wants to see the captain who took his reward money.

An older officer is right behind him, telling him to can it, or else the people in the tent will lock him up.

The young officer continues to shout at the captain to get out of the tent so he can teach him a lesson.

MC asks the older officer what the deal is.

He explains that the guy rescued the colonel's horse from the river and didn't receive a reward.

MC says he should leave him alone. Demanding a reward is "good sound sense."

The young officer continues to bellow.

MC tells him not to shout so much, or he'll wear out his voice before the captain comes. People who shout too much are worn out after only half an hour.

The officer says he's not tired, but hungry. The bread they're giving them is made of seeds, and the captain is in there spending his reward money on wine and women.

MC remembers when the general ordered his soldiers last year to trample all the enemy's wheat (the translation has "corn," which is British for wheat) in the local fields. She could have made a fortune on boots then, she says, if anyone had had money. But now they're back in the same place and have nothing to make bread with.

The officer tells her it isn't fair.

He's right to be mad, MC tells him. But how long is he willing to stand up for himself? Once he's stuck in jail, he might not mind the unfairness as much as he thought.

The officer still yells for the captain. He doesn't want to listen to MC.

MC says he's listening to her, all right, because he knows what she says is true.

The soldier asks if she thinks he's in the wrong.

She thinks he's right. But she doesn't think he's really angry enough to kill the captain. She doesn't want them all to get into trouble.

The older soldier agrees.

The young soldier draws his sword and says he's ready.

Looking out of the tent again, the clerk says the captain will be there soon. He tells the soldier to sit down and the soldier obeys.

MC sees her point proven: they tell him to sit, and he sits. Now that he's followed their orders, his rebellion is over. Womp-womp.

Then again, MC says, she's no better. She could fight back, but it would be bad for her business.

She sings The Song of the Grand Capitulation. The song tells of her youth, when she thought she was "a very special person," and how she grew up to realize that, in the end, there's no use in resisting those who are in charge. You'll eventually have to capitulate. It's like I Dreamed a Dream from Les Miserables, only a bit more tongue-in-cheek.

MC turns back to the soldier, and tells him that if he's angry enough to kill the colonel, then he should stay, but if not, then he should swallow his pride and get out.

The young soldier staggers off, deflated.

The clerk reappears, saying the captain is ready to hear MC's complaint.

But MC has changed her mind and walks off.

Scene 5

Two years have gone by. The war is spreading to new areas. Ceaselessly on the move, courage's little cart crosses poland, moravia, bavaria, italy, then bavaria again. 1631. Tilly's victory at leipzig costs mother courage four officers' shirts.

MC and Kattrin are serving two soldiers at the bar. The wagon is stopped in a war-torn village. Military music from a victory parade can be heard in the distance.

One of the soldiers can't pay for his drink. MC complains that there's money for victory parades, but none to give to the soldiers. What gives?

The general didn't even allow the soldiers to loot the village, the soldier adds. No looting? Seriously, what is this? A holy war or something?

The chaplain comes in, saying he needs linen to bandage up some wounded peasants.

The other soldier heads off with the chaplain to help. Kattrin makes a fuss, trying to get her mother to hand over some linen.

MC won't sacrifice any more of her shirts for bandages.

The chaplain brings in a peasant woman, who was injured when she refused to leave her farm.

MC still says she won't "foot the bill." Tough luck.

The soldiers can't figure out if peasants are Protestants or Catholics. They decide it's too hard to tell them apart during battle.

The chaplain brings in another peasant. This one has lost an arm.

Kattrin tries to hit MC with a plank, to convince her to give over some linen. How's that for blunt?

The chaplain takes the shirts from her wagon.

Kattrin runs into the peasant home and brings back a baby that was trapped there.

MC tells Kattrin the hand the baby over to its mother. Last time she found a baby, MC says, Kattrin tried to keep it.

MC catches a soldier trying to make off with a bottle of booze. She takes his fur coat as payment.

The chaplain says there's still someone trapped in the peasant house.

Scene 6

Outside the Bavarian town of Ingolstadt courage participates in the funeral of the late imperial commander tilly. Discussions are held about war heroes and the war's duration. The chaplain complains that his talents are lying fallow and dumb Kattrin gets the red boots. The year is 1632.

Mother Courage is inside a canteen tent, with a bar at the rear. Drums and funeral music are heard in the background. The chaplain and the regimental clerk are playing a board game.

They're talking about Commander Tilly's funeral. (He was a real person. Head to our section on "Allusions.")

MC thinks it's funny that the clerk is playing hooky on the day of the funeral.

Turns out most of the officers are out drinking, according to the clerk, because they got paid before the funeral. Plus, it's raining.

MC mentions that there won't be any funeral bells for the funeral, since the commander ordered his troops to destroy all the churches.

And she also heard that the Second Regiment never got paid, because the commander said, "it was a war of faith and they should do it for free." Yeah, that's definitely fair. Not.

MC feels sorry "for all those generals and emperors." They think they're something special, and make all sorts of grand plans, but it all fails because "ordinary folk" don't share their higher aspirations.

MC and the chaplain discuss whether the war will ever end. The chaplain thinks the death of one commander won't make much difference. The war might stop for a little bit, but the people in charge will start it up again in no time. And soldiers are always willing to fight.

MC wonders whether she should stock up on wares while prices are low. If the war keeps going, she'll stay in business.

Meanwhile, a soldier at the bar has started singing.

The clerk wants to know if he'll ever get to go home.

The chaplain gives a little speech about peace. His point is that wartime is really no different from peacetime; fighting in the war is not much different than fighting to make a living by, say, plowing the fields.

MC decides to stock up while the prices are low, because now she's convinced the war will keep on trucking for a while. Yay?

Kattrin isn't happy about that—according to what MC says, Kattrin has been waiting for peace to get married.

Kattrin leaves with the clerk to buy up new things in town.

The chaplain says he admires MC and sees why people call her Courage.

Well, MC responds, poor people have to have courage just to get up in the morning and go to work. They have to have courage because there's no hope for them, in peace or in war. Cheerful, right?

MC is smoking a pipe and the chaplain asks her where she got it. She got it from the cook.

Stay clear of the cook, he tells her. That guy's out to seduce her. He says you can tell he's an angry man by the way he chewed on his pipe.

Then the chaplain complains that his preaching abilities are being wasted, working for MC. He studied to be a pastor, after all.

MC has no use for his talents.

The chaplain is certain MC's hard exterior actually masks a warm heart. Would she consider getting together with him? Bow-chicka-bow-wow.

MC says she can't think about that sort of stuff when her business is still up in the air.

Kattrin enters with a wound above her eye. A soldier attacked her on the way back to the wagon.

MC gives Kattrin the red high-heeled boots to comfort her, but Kattrin doesn't take them.

MC reminds Kattrin that it's the pretty ones who don't make it through the war. She should consider herself lucky.

After Kattrin leaves, MC wonders what goes on in her head. She can remember only one time that the girl spent all night away from the wagon. She never found out what happened.

They hear cannon fire, signaling the commander's burial.

MC mentions that Kattrin was made mute by a soldier who "stuffed something in her mouth" when she was a little girl. Now, with the scar from her wound, she'll never find a husband.

Swiss Cheese is dead; she doesn't know where Eilif is.

"War be damned."

Scene 7

Mother courage at the peak of business career.

MC, Kattrin and the chaplain are pulling the wagon, loaded with wares. Cha-ching.

MC is happy about her financial success, and she won't let anyone tell her different.

She sings, "But what is war but private trading / That deals in blood instead of boots?"

Scene 8

The same year sees the death of the Swedish king Gustavus Adolphus at the battle of Lützen. Peace threatens to ruin mother courage's business. Courage's dashing son performs one heroic deed too many and comes to a sticky end.

"Camp."

An old woman and a young man are trying to sell MC some bedding very early in the morning.

Bells ring, signalling the death of the Swedish king. The war is over.

Someone else says it's been three weeks since the king died; the news just hadn't reached them yet.

MC tells Kattrin to get ready for church, it's the "least we can do for Swiss Cheese."

The old woman collapses from shock.

MC is glad for peace; even if it means the end of her business, she will at least get to see Eilif again.

The cook shows up again, looking a little scuffed up. He reports that Eilif is also on his way.

The chaplain decides to put his religious outfit back on.

Kattrin feels self-conscious about the scar above her eye, and doesn't want to come up to see the cook.

MC tells the cook how she took the chaplain's advice, stocked up on supplies during wartime, and now has more than she can sell. She's ruined.

She should've never trusted him, says the cook. He has an "unhealthy view of women."

The cook and MC continue their conversation. It turns out the cook is broke, since the regiment never paid him. He says he's tired of cooking; he wants to get into the trade business.

The chaplain comes back and the cook confronts him about giving MC bad advice.

When MC sides with the cook, the chaplain calls her "a hyaena of the battlefield."

He accuses her of wanting war instead of peace, because all she really cares about is profit.

He tells her, "Whosoever sups with the devil needs a long spoon." In other words, if you're going to bet on war, then you need to accept the consequences.

MC and the chaplain argue. She points out that he's been pretty happy living off her business, too.

The cook tells MC she'd better try to sell her stuff while she still can.

MC goes into the wagon, while the cook and the chaplain bicker some more. The chaplain threatens to murder the cook if he doesn't can it. The cook calls him a "godless shit." How does he expect to preach if he's threatening people with murder?

The cook says he's become a better person during the war, so he'll have to give up preaching anyway. Talk about ironic.

Yvette steps in, dressed for full mourning. She has a servant with her and calls herself Countess Starhemberg.

Yvette recognizes the cook as her ex-boyfriend from Flanders, Pieter.

MC emerges from the cart. From what Yvette says, it turns out she ended up marrying that old colonel's older brother. Now she's his widow and heiress.

Yvette warns MC against the cook.

MC goes off with Yvette to try selling some goods at the market.

The cook is worried Yvette will gossip about him with MC. He decides he'd better clear out rather than face the consequences.

The cook has had it with peace. He wants to go back to the old days, when he used to cook for the general.

The cook and the chaplain reminisce about food.

Eilif comes in, escorted by soldiers. He's in chains. What now?

Eilif is only allowed to see his mother one last time. He's been charged with breaking into a peasant's place, stealing their cattle, and killing the wife.

Sound familiar? He complains that it was the same thing he did before, when he was called a hero. But now, during peace, it's a crime.

The soldiers say his time's up and lead him off.

The chaplain follows Eilif to his execution. He tells the cook not to tell MC about it.

The cook tries to find Kattrin to give her something to eat.

A gunshot is heard. Eilif is dead.

MC returns. It turns out the war is back on, they just hadn't heard the news yet. Now she's back in business.

But she can tell that something's off, by the way the cook is acting. But the cook won't say what gives.

All he tells her is that Eilif came and went.

She asks a few questions about Eilif, but the cook doesn't really answer them

MC starts to pack up and head off, telling the cook to join her.

MC plans to join the Protestants this time.

She sings as they get ready, "The war's still hungry. So enlist!"

Scene 9

It is the seventeenth year of the great war of faith. Germany has lost more than half her inhabitants. Those who survive the bloodbath are killed off by terrible epidemics. Once-fertile areas are ravaged by famine, wolves roam the burnt-out towns. In autumn 1634 we find courage in the Fichtelgebirge, off the main axis of the Swedish armies. The winter this year is early and harsh. Business is bad, so that there is nothing to do but beg. The cook gets a letter from Utrecht and is sent packing.

MC and the cook are begging outside a crumbling church house. It's morning in early winter, and things are looking bad for our friends.

They're waiting for them to wake up and ring some bells—then MC and the cook will hopefully be able to ask for food. But they're not even sure if anyone's home.

Guess what? Singing probably wouldn't hurt.

But then, the cook interrupts her. He tells her he has a letter from Utrecht telling him that he's inherited an inn from his mother. He wants to move there with MC and start up a business.

MC is tired of traveling around all the time. She has nothing to sell, and nobody has money to buy.

So, she's interested, but first she wants to talk it over with Kattrin.

She calls Kattrin out from the wagon and tells her about the cook's plan.

Then Kattrin goes back inside so the cook can talk privately with MC.

She can't bring Kattrin, the cook tells her, since there's only room for two in the inn. They'll never make a profit with three mouths to feed.

Kattrin pokes her head out and listens to the cook.

MC doesn't like the idea. She doesn't know how Kattrin could make it on her own. "She's got a soft heart."

They see a light on in the church house, so they finally decide to sing.

They sing a song comparing their own misfortune to the misfortunes of other virtuous people (Solomon, Caesar, Socrates, Saint Martin).

The song is interspersed with spoken parts, in which they make it clear that they'd all have been better off without all those virtues.

A voice from the church house invites them up.

MC has lost her appetite thinking about Kattrin. Both still go into the house for some hot soup.

Kattrin gets out of the wagon. She starts packing up her things and gets ready to run away. She lays out clothes belonging to the cook and MC, making sure they'll see the clothes when they return.

MC returns with some soup for Kattrin, just in time to see what she's up to.

She decides to ditch the cook and keep going with Kattrin. They harness themselves to the wagon and pull it off.

The cook returns and sees all his stuff lying on the ground.

Scene 10

During the whole of 1635 mother courage and her daughter Kattrin travel over the high roads of Central Germany, in the wake of the increasingly bedraggled armies.

MC and Kattrin are pulling the cart.

A voice is heard singing inside a peasant's house.

They stop to listen to the song. The song's about how nice it is to have a house in the winter and a garden in the summer. Way to rub it in, dude.

MC and Kattrin listen, then trek on.

Scene 11

January 1636. The emperor's troops are threatening the protestant town of Halle. The stone begins to speak. Mother courage loses her daughter and trudges on alone. The war is a long way from being over.

The wagon is standing next to a peasant's house. Let's just say that it's seen better days at this point. Seriously, that thing must have racked up hundreds of thousands of miles at this point.

An ensign and three soldiers step out of the forest and start up a conversation. They're trying to figure out how to get one of the peasants to be their forest guide.

They knock on the door and the peasant's wife opens up.

The soldiers push their way through and drag out the husband and son. They also pull Kattrin out of the wagon.

The soldiers ask if that's all of them. The peasants say MC is off buying stuff in town.

They order the peasant's son to be their guide through the forest.

When the peasant's son says he won't help Catholics, they threaten to kill him. But he only gives in when they threaten to kill the cattle. Without that, his whole family will starve.

They take the peasant's son and head off.

The husband climbs on top of the house to see where the soldiers are headed. The soldiers are off to attack the unsuspecting village.

They try to think of ways to warn the village but decide it's hopeless. They'll just get themselves killed.

The peasant's wife starts to pray for their relatives in the village.

While she prays, Kattrin slips away and takes something from the cart. Hiding it under her apron, she climbs up on the roof of the stable.

Still praying, the peasants don't see what she's up to. Kattrin takes a drum out from underneath her apron and starts to beat it.

The peasants try to get her down, but she kicks the ladder over. The husband threatens to stone her.

The ensign returns with the soldiers and the peasants' son, threatening to kill Kattrin if she keeps drumming like that.

The peasants say they'll help the soldiers get her down.

They'll make sure her mother gets out of the village safe and sound, if only she'll stop drumming.

Then they try covering up her drumming with another noise. The peasant starts to chop wood.

She continues to drum wildly.

And then Kattrin starts to laugh.

They decide to set up a gun to shoot her off the roof. Lovely.

The peasant wife tells the soldiers to smash up the wagon, and the young peasant makes a feeble attempt to bust up MC's wagon.

Stopping and turning toward Kattrin, the young peasant shouts at her to keep drumming, otherwise the whole village will be killed.

A soldier starts to beat on him.

Kattrin cries but keeps drumming.

The soldiers shoot Kattrin. She drums a few more times, then collapses.

The village hears the drumming and starts its defense. It worked!

Scene 12

Before first light. Sound of the fifes and drums of troops marching off into the distance.

MC is back at the farm, squatting down next to Kattrin.

While the peasants stand there and tell her she'd better head off, MC sings Kattrin a lullaby song as Kattrin slowly dies.

It would have been better if they'd kept quiet about their relatives in town, MC tells them. Then Kattrin wouldn't have gotten so excited.

If she hadn't left to make money in the village, the peasant responded, none of this would have happened.

Kattrin passes away in the meantime.

MC covers Kattrin with a tarp and starts to get her things together to head off.

The peasant wife asks if she has any children left.

MC says she has one, Eilif. Little does she know…

After giving the peasants money for a proper burial, MC harnesses herself to the cart and starts to head off. "Got to get back in business again," she tells them.

She sings as she heads off. "The new year's come. The watchmen shout. / The thaw sets in. The dead remain / Wherever life has not died out / It staggers to its feet again."

(Sound familiar? It's a repeat of the first song MC sings in the play.)

The End. Whew.

9.4 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we went through the summary of “Mother Courage and Her Children”.

9.5 KEYWORDS

- **Chaplain:** A member of the clergy who does not serve an organized congregation or church, often found in universities, in hospitals, and (as here) in armies.
- **Christ's Passion:** The theological term for the suffering of Jesus during the hours prior to and during his crucifixion.
- **Couragemodell (the "model"):** Brecht invented a new method of direction, though it never particularly caught on. He proposed that playwrights would record all of their decisions as they prepared for the original performances of their work, from actors' intonations to the lighting and stage blocking. Thus, future directors could study this "model" production in order to understand the author's and the play's aims and intended interpretations--before forming their own versions for performance. Theatrically, Brecht's model has served to set his play in stone rather than release it as a Platonic ideal with secular instantiations from one director to the next. Thus, from a literary point of view, it is fascinating to get a fine-grained picture of the play as Brecht intended it and had it performed.
- **Dramatic Theater:** The opposite of what Brecht called epic theater, that is, a derogatory term used by Brecht as well as a theater tradition. Brecht thought that the "dramatic theater" had its primary goal to move or excite its audience, which to him was not a "noble" enough aim for the theater.
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9.6 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

- Write the context of Mother Courage and Her Children by Eugen Brecht.
- Write the summary of Mother Courage and Her Children by Eugen Brecht.

9.7 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

1. Brecht Chronik, Werner Hecht, editor. (Suhrkamp Verlag, 1998), p. 566.
2. ^ Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder. (DEFA-Film 1959/60), after the production by Bertolt Brecht and Erich Engel at the Berliner Ensemble, with Helene Weigel, Angelika Hurwicz, Ekkehard Schall, Heinz Schubert, Ernst Busch; directed by Peter Palitzsch and Manfred Wekwerth; with music by Paul Dessau.
3. ^ Oskar Eustis, "Program Note" for the New York Shakespeare Festival production of Mother Courage and Her Children, starring Meryl Streep, August 2006. See also Brett D. Johnson, "Review of Mother Courage and Her Children," Theatre Journal, Volume 59, Number 2, May 2007, pp. 281–282. Quote: "Although numerous theatrical artists and scholars may share artistic director Oskar Eustis's opinion that Brecht's masterpiece is the greatest play of the twentieth century, productions of Mother Courage remain a rarity in contemporary American theatre."
4. ^ Klaus Volker. Brecht Chronicle. (Seabury Press, 1975). P. 92.
5. ^ "Introduction", Bertolt Brecht: Collected Plays, vol. 5. (Vintage Books, 1972), p. xi

^ Hans Jakob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen. "Die Lebensbeschreibung der Erzbetrügerin und Landstörzerin Courasche". gutenberg.spiegel.de.

9.8 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Mother Courage and Her Children was written by Eugen Brecht. (**answer to check your progress- 1 Q1**)
2. Four theatrical productions took place of Mother Courage and Her Children. (**answer to check your progress- 1 Q2**)
3. Theatrical productions of Mother Courage and Her Children took place in Switzerland and Germany from 1941 to 1952. (**answer to check your progress- 1 Q3**)

UNIT-10. BRECHT – MOTHER COURAGE AND HER CHILDREN -3

STRUCTURE

10.0 OBJECTIVES

After the completion of this unit you should be able to learn about:

- analysis of “Mother Courage and Her Children” by Eugen Brecht.

10.1 INTRODUCTION

First produced in Zurich, Switzerland, in 1939, Bertolt Brecht' s Mother Courage and Her Children is considered by many to be among the playwright's best work and one of the most powerful anti-war dramas in history. The play is based on two works by Hans Jacob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen: his 1669 novel, Simplicissimus and his 1670 play, Courage: An Adventuress. Many critics believe Mother Courage to be the masterwork of Brecht's concept of Epic Theater. This dramatic subgenre pioneered by Brecht sought to present theatre that could be viewed with complete detachment. Through such techniques as short, self-contained scenes that prevent cathartic climax, songs and card slogans that interrupts and explains forthcoming action, and detached acting that wards off audience identification—techniques that came to be known as "alienation effects"—the playwright sought to present a cerebral theatrical experience unmarred by emotional judgement. Brecht wanted audiences to think

critically and objectively about the play's message, to assess the effects of war on an empirical level.

Much to Brecht's chagrin, however, audiences identified with the play on a deeply emotional level, drawing immediate parallels between the Thirty Years' War that the characters face and the horrors of World War II. Mother Courage was written in 1938-39, just as World War II was breaking out in Europe. Brecht completed the play while living in exile, having fled his native country in the face of a rising fascist government. It would not be until 1949 that Mother Courage would debut in Brecht's homeland, with a production in East Berlin, East Germany. Brecht set the play during the monumental Thirty Years' War, which occurred three centuries earlier, instead of the contemporary conflict. Brecht hoped that, because the events depicted were removed in time, audiences would be more objective when they viewed the play. But many of the European viewers and critics had first-hand experience with the horrors of war. They easily found personal meaning in the play's setting and story. Brecht rewrote the play for the 1949 East German production, hoping to minimize an emotional response from the audience, but Mother Courage still proved a powerful experience. In the decades since its debut, the play has grown to be regarded as one of the twentieth century's landmark dramas and a potent condemnation of war.

Check your progress – 1

1. When was Mother Courage and Her Children first produced?

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

2. Mother Courage and Her Children is based on which two novels?

   _____
   _____
   _____

3. For whom did Eugen Brecht rewrote the play?

_____

_____

_____

10.2 ANALYSIS

SYMBOLISM, IMAGERY, ALLEGORY

Execution

Although no executions actually occur on stage, they're still an important part of the imagery in Mother Courage. In particular, Swiss Cheese's execution becomes an allegory for Jesus's crucifixion. Let's examine the clues.

First, as the drums roll to signal his execution, the stage directions indicate that it momentarily "grows dark" (III, 701). The gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke all report that when Jesus enters the sixth hour of his execution, it suddenly grows dark for the next three hours, during which time Jesus dies: "**And when the sixth hour** was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour" (Mark 15:33).

Second, Mother Courage denies that she knows who Swiss Cheese is, both when the soldiers question her and when they later bring her his body for identification. This is reminiscent of Peter, one of Jesus's disciples who denies knowing him in order to escape persecution.

And finally, in case these details aren't convincing enough, there is the chaplain's song, The Song of the Hours, which he sings after Swiss Cheese is arrested. The song tells of the events leading up to and including Jesus's crucifixion.

So, what does it all mean? Take a look at Swiss Cheese's "Character Analysis" for a few insights.

Drums

Sound is an important part of the landscape in Mother Courage. The characters sing songs, but we also hear cannons, a funeral march, and

most importantly, we hear a lot of drumming. And all this drumming proves to be pretty significant.

Kattrin's drumming is what signals a town of the approaching Catholic army, saving the townspeople but costing Kattrin her life. Though Kattrin can't speak, we could say that the drum gives her back the voice that was taken from her as a child, when she was attacked and raped by a soldier. Check out this exchange, in Scene XI:

The Ensign: We'll have to set the farm on fire. Smoke her out, that's it.

The Peasant: It wouldn't help, captain. If the townspeople see a fire here they'll know what's up.

Kattrin has again been listening as she drums. At this point she laughs.

The Ensign: Look at her laughing at us. I'm not having that. I'll shoot her down, and damn the consequences. Fetch the harquebus.Three soldiers hurry off. Kattrin goes on drumming. (XI, 162-171)

As the soldiers fail to find a way to stop her drumming and inadvertently aid her effort to alert the townspeople, there seems to be a moment of realization for Kattrin. Now she's the one in power. The drum might not allow her to speak words, but it does allow her to laugh in the face of military violence.

If we think back to Scene VI, when Kattrin is attacked while buying wares for her mother's wagon, we notice that the drum is among the things she brings back with her (VI, 234). So, the drum is not just symbolic of Kattrin's voice in Scene XI, but first enters here as a symbol of resistance against attack.

And if we remember Swiss Cheese's execution, we'll note that it's also the sound of drumming that signals his death off stage. Watch this:

Yvetee comes running in: They won't do it. I told you so. The one-eyed man wanted to leave right away, said there was no point. He says he's just waiting for the drum-roll; that means sentence has ben pronounced. […]

Mother Courage: Tell him I'll pay the two hundred. Hurry! Yvette runs off. They sit in silence. The chaplain has stopped polishing the glasses. I

reckoned I bargained too long. In the distance drumming is heard. […] (III, 691-703)

Mother Courage appears completely helpless, as we all hear the drumroll announcing Swiss Cheese's death sentence. But she's not the only one who's helpless to stop the violence. Earlier, when the two men first arrive to arrest Swiss Cheese, Kattrin is unable to warn him because she can't communicate, though as the stage directions indicate, "She does everything possible to make him realise the danger" (III, 424-425). When Kattrin drums to save the town from attack, she is also breaking free from a position of helplessness. She turns the drum from a signal of murder into a symbol of hope and defiance.

The Wagon

Mother Courage's covered wagon is on the stage in nearly every scene. As the different characters—Eilif, Swiss Cheese, the chaplain, the cook, Kattrin, and last but not least, Mother Courage herself—haul the wagon around Europe, it becomes both a literal and a symbolic burden they all have to bear.

What this burden represents is open to question. We can, for example, think of it as the burden of survival itself. Consider the final scene, when Mother Courage hitches herself to her wagon and heads back to business:

Mother Courage harnessing herself to the cart: Hope I can pull the cart all right by meself. Be all right, nowt much inside it. Got to get back in business again.

Another regiment with its fifes and drums marches past in the background.

Mother Courage tugging the cart: Take me along! […] (XII, 42-49)

When Mother Courage has to start hauling her wagon all alone, it's hard not to think that this burden will be too much for her. She expresses some doubts about it herself. Here, we might say that the difficulty with which she drags her wagon stands for the difficulty she will have carrying on after the death of her children. If making it like this is an example of her "courage," then it is of the kind that Mother Courage earlier attributes to

"poor folk," who have to have courage just to keep going, "'cause there's no hope for them" (VI, 148).

Yvette's Red Boots

Yvette's red high-heeled boots are pretty flashy, especially for Central Europe in the seventeenth century. The boots are part of what Yvette wears as a prostitute. They are also of immense interest for Kattrin.

Based on what Mother Courage says about her daughter (VI, 124-126; V, 52-54), we figure out that Kattrin can't wait for peacetime, when she imagines she will get married and maybe have a family of her own. But when she plays with Yvette's boots and tries to wear them, later receiving them as a gift from her mother, this suggests that her dream of love is the fantasy of a child who's only ever known war.

Mother Courage gives Kattrin the red boots after Kattrin is attacked by soldiers and given a gash above her eye. The boots, which Kattrin used to covet, are now of no interest to her:

Mother Courage: […] There you are, all bandaged up. You'll get something, love, keep calm. Something I put aside for you, wait till you see. She delves into a sack and brings out Yvette's red high-heeled boots. Made you open your eyes, eh? Something you always wanted. Put 'em on quick, before I change me mind. Won't leave no mark, and what if it does? Ones I'm really sorry for's the ones they fancy. Drag them around till they're worn out, they do. Those they don't care for they leaves alive […] So it's a stroke of luck for you really. […]

Kattrin leaves the boots where they are and crawls into the cart. (VI, 246-263)

Courage tries to comfort Kattrin, but we can imagine that this only makes things worse for her. In effect, her mother tells her she's lucky the soldiers didn't kill her, in addition to attacking and (possibly) raping her. Kattrin should be lucky she won't be one of the pretty ones now, because they fare a lot worse.

So, are we surprised when Kattrin turns down the boots? What else could they symbolize to her now, other than a life of being abused, unwanted,

and unloved by men? A life in which getting attention from men means violence or prostitution? Here, the red boots become a powerful symbol for the incompatibility of love and war.

SETTING

Where It All Goes Down

Seventeenth-Century Europe (The Thirty Years' War)

What is the Thirty Years' War, anyway?

Well, for starters, it was a very, very long war, lasting from 1618 to 1648. Can you imagine if World War II, or the Vietnam War, or any other war in recent memory, had lasted for thirty years? Imagine being born, raised, going to high school, and heading off to college, then getting your first job, meeting Mr. or Ms. Right, settling down—all while a war raged in the background. Of course, the Thirty Years' War was one of the bloodiest wars in European history, so you probably wouldn't have lasted that long yourself.

The Thirty Years' War began as a war between Catholics and Protestants, two major Christian denominations. After Martin Luther kicked off the Protestant Reformation in 1517, the resulting split in the Christian church created some serious leadership problems for the Holy Roman Empire, which included much of Central Europe and all of modern-day Germany. The Protestants didn't think they should obey the Pope anymore, which meant they were a direct threat to the political structure of the Holy Roman Empire, which relied on the Pope to crown its emperors.

Eventually, the leaders of various European countries started taking sides against one another and vied for continental dominance. Though the war still had a lot to do with religious faith, political and economic power were just as important to these guys. The ensuing mayhem spread illness and famine, drastically reducing the population in much of Europe.

Mother Courage starts out in Dalecarlia, a province in Sweden. It's 1624, six years since the start of the war. The Swedish Empire, a Protestant superpower at the time, is recruiting soldiers to enter the war down south.

Mother Courage ends up following the Swedish army through Poland, before the Catholics capture the regiment and Courage switches sides.

She follows the Catholic army, lead by General Tilly, and later the Protestants again, through a number of regions in the historic Holy Roman Empire: Moravia (part of Czech Republic), Bavaria (a region of Germany), and other parts of modern-day Germany. The play concludes in 1636, still twelve years before the war ends.

Now fast-forward to 1939: Brecht is writing Mother Courage while exiled in Sweden. The Holy Roman Empire is long gone. The National Socialist Party, also known as the Nazis, has come to power in Germany, Brecht's home country. Brecht has opted to leave Germany, rather than face Nazi censorship, or something even worse.

No one knows when or if the war will end, nor can anyone predict the atrocities that will be committed by the Nazis during the Holocaust. At the time, Brecht is probably not the only one to think that his war might last just as long, involve as many countries, and be just as bloody as the Thirty Years' War. He has no idea how bad it has yet to become.

GENRE

Modernism, Drama, War Drama, Family Drama

It's hard to be specific when it comes to the genre of Mother Courage. Sure, it's a play about war. That means it's a war drama. But it's pretty obvious that this is not your typical, Mel Gibson-style war drama. Mother Courage goes around singing songs, not emitting thunderous battle cries. There's not even a hero who comes along and saves the day. Everybody seems to lose.

Similarly, Mother Courage has a lot to do with family, but it's more like a family drama at war with itself. But before we say Brecht created his own genre with Mother Courage, it should be said that the play's lack of traditional plot resolution and its experimentation with dramatic form also places it firmly in the genre of modernism.

Yes, we know. One of those -ism's. But trust us, "modernism" isn't just a fancy way of saying Mother Courage is "modern." Modernism refers to a

genre of art and literature, mostly in the twentieth century, which tries to replace traditions that have become old-fashioned and too idealized with new forms to suit the reality of modern societies. (Okay, so that's where the "modern" part comes in.) And a big part of that modern reality is war, on a much more massive scale than in previous centuries.

Where does Mother Courage fit in that picture? Well, if you check out our section on "Writing Style," you can read more about Brecht's plan to revolutionize drama with his so-called epic theater. That revolutionary spirit is what modernism is all about.

TONE

Take a story's temperature by studying its tone. Is it hopeful? Cynical? Snarky? Playful?

Polemical, Anti-Establishment, Ironic, Cynical but Hopeful

Polemical, Anti-Establishment

For Brecht, it makes sense to say his tone is "anti-establishment." After all, he writes in protest against World War II and the rise of Nazism in Germany. And Brecht's polemical take on the traditional virtues of war and religion—valor, self-sacrifice, loyalty, etc.—is loud and clear in Mother Courage. Let's take a look at a few lines from the play:

Mother Courage: They'll never beat him, and why, his men got faith in him. Seriously: To go by what the big shots say, they're waging war for almighty God and in the name of everything that's good and lovely. But look closer, they ain't so silly, they're waging it for what they can get. Else little folk like me wouldn't be in it at all. (III, 212-217)

When Mother Courage starts to talk "seriously," we know she's about to say something important. And what she's saying is something that comes up again and again in this play, both in what the characters say and in the actions portrayed.

Courage is talking about the discrepancy between what leaders say about war, and the reality of why war is fought. It's "little folk" like her, who join the war because they think they'll profit from it, that really understand

their leaders' motivations. Why? Because "the big shots" start wars for the same reason the "little folk" join them: to make money.

Lines like this one, which juxtapose the hypocrisy of the war-waging establishment to the candor of the lower classes, can be found throughout the play. But just because Mother Courage says it, doesn't mean she's right, or that we're just supposed to agree with her. What this line does is establish a polemical tone. Its purpose is to get us to think about controversial topics, like the idea that wars are really all about money and profit.

IRONIC, CYNICAL

To say that a cynical tone prevails in Mother Courage is an understatement. It's practically a treatise on cynicism.

When we talk about a cynical tone, what we mean is a general pessimism and lack of reverence toward things traditionally thought to be good and virtuous. Now, this can also be polemical and anti-establishment, as in the previous example. But polemical moments in Mother Courage tend to be more "serious," whereas Brecht's cynicism often comes across through the use of humor and irony, even when the take-home point is the same. Take the cook's speech about the Swedish king, in Scene III:

THE COOK: Just what I say, your brandy's first rate, I weren't mistaken in your face, but talk of the king, it cost the king dear trying to give freedom to Germany, what with giving Sweden the salt tax, what cost the poor folk a bit, so I've heard, on top of which he had to have the Germans locked up and drawn and quartered 'cause they wanted to carry on slaving for the emperor. Course the king took a serious view when anybody didn't want to be free. He set out by just trying to project Poland against the bad people, particularly the emperor, then it started to become a habit till he ended up protecting the whole of Germany. They didn't half kick. So the poor old king's had nowt but trouble for all his kindness and expenses, and that's something he had to make up for by taxes of course, which caused bad blood, not that he's let a little matter like that depress him. One thing he had on his side, God's word, that was a help. Because otherwise folk would of been saying he done it all for himself and to make a bit on

the side. So he's always had a good conscience, which was the main point. (III, 189-207)

As we'll see, the underlying issue in the cook's speech is nearly identical to what Mother Courage says when she starts to talk "seriously" about war, money, and religion. In other words, the idea is that our dear leaders wage wars in the name of highfalutin' concepts like God and freedom, only to cover up the fact that they're really in it for their own good.

The difference here is that the cook doesn't say this outright; in fact, what he says implies just the opposite. This is what we mean by ironic. He seems to be taking pity on "the poor old king," who only wanted to free all those Catholics from their "slavery." He seems to be justifying the king's actions: those darn Catholics just don't want to be free, so of course the king had no choice but to keep raising taxes on his own people to fund the war. Finally, the cook says it's lucky the king was on God's side, because otherwise it might look like he only went to war to raise taxes.

Of course, we don't think this is what the cook really believes. Right? Well, if we're not sure, Mother Courage is there to clarify things in the next line. She gets that the cook's actually taking a jab at the king when he seems to be defending him:

MOTHER COURAGE: Anyone can see you're no Swede or you wouldn't be talking that way about the Hero King. (III, 208-209)

And later, he agrees with Mother Courage when she starts talking "seriously" about war-wagers being in it for the money (III, 218). We see that the cook really does mean to say that the king only went to war to raise taxes. He doesn't think the king gives a hoot about "God's word." He's being ironic, expressing his opinion using terms directly opposed to what we would expect. And while irony is not the same as cynicism, moments like this one definitely add to an overall cynical tone in Mother Courage, by implying that even the truth can't always be stated plainly, and has to be masked using irony.

...But Hopeful

We're not letting Brecht off so easy. Mother Courage would bore most of us if it didn't occasionally exchange its polemical, ironic, cynical tone for

a little bit of hope. And that's where Kattrin comes in, Mother Courage's mute daughter.

If anyone is reliably earnest in this play, then it's Kattrin. For one, it's hard to make ironic or polemical statements when you can't speak. But Kattrin's actions can and do communicate her genuine sympathy with the suffering of others, her desire to love and be loved, and ultimately, her remarkable spirit of self-sacrifice.

Even when everyone around her has grown cynical about freedom, faith, or love, and even as a victim of war violence herself, Kattrin doesn't seem to have lost her innocence. We also sense this in the words Mother Courage uses to describe her, when she refuses to abandon her daughter in order to start a business with the cook:

MOTHER COURAGE: Cooky, how's she to pull the cart on her own? War scares her. She'll never stand it. The dreams she must have…I hear her nights groaning. Mostly after a battle. What's she seeing in those dreams, I'd like to know. She's got a soft heart. Lately I found she'd got another hedgehog tucked away what we'd run over. (IX, 74-79)

Now, words like these portray Kattrin as innocent. She's scared of war. She's compassionate. She likes hedgehogs. But in the broader context of the play, they also serve to alter its tone. Hearing Mother Courage say this makes us think that people in her world might not be so bad after all. When everything else is about profit and power, at least Kattrin's character suggests that hope, innocence, and true self-sacrifice can still exist, despite it all.

WRITING STYLE

Epic Theater

Get Ready, Because This is Important

Brecht is known for creating a very particular style of theater. He calls it epic theater. Here, "epic" is in contrast to "dramatic," including the traditional genres of tragedy and comedy. Brecht wants to get away from dramas that absorb audiences in fictional worlds, and create a new kind of

theater that puts an emotional distance between the audience and what's on stage.

In German, Brecht refers to this distancing as the Verfremdungseffekt, often translated as the "alienation effect," or the effect of "making strange." We'll say more about this soon, and how it relates to Mother Courage. But first, let's break it down.

Forget the Greeks

As Aristotle describes it in his Poetics, a tragedy should ideally focus on an individual who has disobeyed the norms of society and divine order. The tragedy invariably ends with the lone hero's tragic downfall. (Check out Oedipus the King for a classic example of Greek tragedy.) But Brecht isn't interested in divine orders or social norms. He wants to write plays that will get people to reconsider all those ingrained rules. He wants to be revolutionary, you see.

Marx it Up

Brecht is a committed Marxist at the time he writes Mother Courage. As a Marxist, he believes the only way to create a just society is to reverse the capitalist order, giving workers direct ownership of the means of production. He believes that the drive to make a profit is the source of all bad things in society, including war and class conflict.

As a playwright, he believes that theater shouldn't just entertain audiences with predictable plotlines, but that it should call attention to contradictions in the capitalist set-up, and ultimately, spur the audience on to revolutionize society. By alienating his audiences with "strange" plays, he hopes to prevent them from getting swept up in the drama, making them more receptive to his revolutionary messages.

Feel the Verfremdung

So, how does Brecht go about making Mother Courage "strange"? For starters, his characters speak a weird, made-up dialect. Most translators try to approximate this one way or another. Second, he places his characters in a historical time period not many of us are familiar with, in order to comment indirectly on events occurring in the present. And let's

not forget: there is no plot resolution. Mother Courage leaves the stage seemingly unchanged, not mourning her tragic fate.

Mother Courage also uses a number of strategies to break up the flow of the story. In papers published separately, Brecht instructs that parts of the scene titles are to be printed and appear above the stage before each scene begins, as supertitles. This purposefully interrupts the theatrical performance with elements of the written text. And let's not forget all those songs. Musicals always require some suspension of disbelief, but they just seem especially out of place here. On purpose. Like the scene titles, the songs disrupt the illusion that what's appearing on stage could be a "real" situation.

All of these techniques are there to make us feel an emotional distance from the otherwise tragic events that occur in Mother Courage. That's why Brecht calls it epic theater; we become so alienated from the actions on stage that they seem to happen in an epic past, a kind of timelessness usually associated with legends and epic poetry.

At the same time, though, Mother Courage is very specific about its time and place. This contradiction between historical specificity and timeless distance is fundamental to epic theater. Ultimately, it's also there to provoke us, to encourage us to step back and take a critical look at contradictions in our own historical moment.

WHAT'S UP WITH THE TITLE?

Brecht gets inspiration for the title and idea of Mother Courage from a seventeenth-century text by the German author Hans Jakob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen. Written in 1669, the text is a novel called Trutz Simplex, oder Die Ertzbetrügerin und Landstörtzerin Courasche ("Trutz Simplex, or Courage, The Notorious Crook and Vagabond").

Grimmelshausen is better known as the author of Simplicius Simplicissimus (1668), a satirical novel written about the Thirty Years' War. Trutz Simplex also takes place during the war, recording the adventures of a woman named "Courasche" (Courage) who leaves her village in Bohemia and, like Mother Courage, makes a living following armies around Europe.

While there are some superficial similarities between Mother Courage and Trutz Simplex, they definitely stop there. Probably the most important reason why the title refers to a seventeenth-century novel is that, well, the play also takes place in the seventeenth century.

Okay, that one sounds a like a cop out. But really, as we explain in our "Writing Style" section, Brecht knows what he's doing when he sets his play in an unfamiliar historical period. He wants to puzzle and disorient us on purpose, so that we focus on the issues, not the drama. And alluding to an arcane author like Grimmelshausen can only further our disorientation.

Also, by adding "and Her Children" to the title, Brecht solidifies the important—yet secondary—role the three children play in the story. Mother Courage's three children each represent different virtues (Swiss Cheese is honesty, Iliaf is boldness, and Kattrin is sacrifice). Think along the lines of "Snow White and the Seven Dwarves"—each dwarf represents a different virtue. Much like our favorite Disney Princess, Mother Courage must grapple with the three virtues her children represent over the course of the play, ultimately rejecting each one. She lies when she is asked to identify Swiss Cheese's body, she shies away from making a complaint when she is unfairly fined, and she chooses profits over sacrifice again and again

WHAT'S UP WITH THE ENDING?

When the Catholics plan a secret attack on a Protestant village, Kattrin beats a drum to alert the townspeople, saving her mother and countless other people from murder. The Catholic soldiers shoot and kill her. After paying for her burial, Mother Courage hitches herself to her wagon and is on her way again, following another regiment off to war. We hear her singing her first song from Scene I as she exits the stage:

The new year's come. The watchmen shout.

The thaw sets in. The dead remain.

Wherever life has not dies out

It staggers to its feet again. (XII, 58-61)

The lyrics describe the coming of spring after winter, when everything that isn't dead "staggers to its feet again." Just as spring returns every year, the song itself is repeated at the end of the play, suggesting a new start for Mother Courage. And yet, somehow this isn't what we expect.

What we expect is to share in her tragedy, to see and feel her pain in a tragic final scene. Instead, she gets up and walks off, saying, "Got to get back in business again" (XII, 45). What's up with that?

Remember that Brecht is not out to make a hero of Mother Courage. He doesn't want to make it easy for us to identify with her, or pity her, or even say that we understand her. This is part of what makes his play "strange," forcing us to deal with the reality of warfare. (See our section on "Writing Style" for more.)

What we see is the senselessness of Mother Courage's desire to capitalize on war. It's clear Courage loves her children and wants to keep them out of harm's way. But it's like the sergeant says, at the end of Scene I:

Like the war to nourish you?

Have to feed it something too. (I, 344-345)

Mother Courage's love for her family is clearly in contradiction with her allegiance to war and profit.

TOUGH-O-METER

5 (Tree Line)

Mother Courage might be a little quirky, confusing, or even unsettling, but ultimately it's not hard to grasp the issues and problems presented in this play. Brecht purposely uses an invented dialect to make his language seem a little weird and foreign, which most translations try to imitate in one way or another. While this might make comprehension a little hard at first, it's usually smooth sailing after the first scene or two. But hey, let's keep in mind that Brecht wanted Mother Courage to be an instructional play. That doesn't mean he dumbed things down, but he also wasn't out to leave his audience totally bewildered.

PLOT ANALYSIS

Most good stories start with a fundamental list of ingredients: the initial situation, conflict, complication, climax, suspense, denouement, and conclusion. Great writers sometimes shake up the recipe and add some spice.

Exposition (Initial Situation)

Rollin' With My Family

First things first. We meet Mother Courage on the road, with her family completely intact. In the first scene, when she is stopped by a soldier and a recruiter for the Swedish army, we find out who she is, who her children are, and what's she up to with that wagon. We figure out she's running a canteen business to make money off the war, while keeping her children safe from brutality.

Rising Action (Conflict, Complication)

Betting the House (or Not)

The first complication is there already in the first scene. The recruiter manages to recruit Eilif, despite all Courage's efforts to keep him out of the war. But arguably the more serious conflict arises when Swiss Cheese is executed by the invading Catholics. At that point, the you-know-what really hits the fan. And what's worse, it seems like Courage's unwillingness to sell her business indirectly costs Swiss Cheese his life. The very thing she hoped to use to keep her family safe during the war proves to be its downfall.

Climax (Crisis, Turning Point)

Drumming Like You Just Don't Care

We can't really talk about a "turning point" in the plot of Mother Courage, since Courage herself never really seems to change. But the death and heroism of Kattrin definitely seems like a high point in the tragic dissolution of Courage's family unit. After this, Courage is alone and penniless.

Falling Action

Riding Off Into the Sunset (of Hopeless Solitude and Endless Remorse?)

The last we see of Mother Courage is her cradling her dying daughter, who has just sacrificed herself to save her mother and an entire town. Then Courage hitches herself to her wagon and continues on her way. We're left to wonder what will await her, and what she'll do all on her own. Something tells us it won't exactly be living happily ever after.

Resolution (Denouement)

Well, Not Really

Brecht goes out of his way to give his audience no real resolution. The last we hear of Mother Courage is her singing the refrain from the very first song she sings, way back in Scene I. We might get the sense that she's right back where she was at the beginning. Has she learned anything? Probably not.

THREE-ACT PLOT ANALYSIS

For a three-act plot analysis, put on your screenwriter's hat. Moviemakers know the formula well: at the end of Act One, the main character is drawn in completely to a conflict. During Act Two, she is farthest away from her goals. At the end of Act Three, the story is resolved.

Act I

Scene I: Mother Courage introduces her children to the soldier and recruiter. Eilif is recruited by the Swedish army. Courage continues to follow the Swedes through Europe.

Act II

Scene III: Swiss Cheese is executed by the invading Catholics. Mother Courage delays too long when trying to sell her wagon to pay for his release**.**

Act III

Scenes IX-XII: Mother Courage turns down the cook's offer to leave Kattrin behind and run an inn with him. Kattrin is killed while drumming to alert a local town about the approaching Catholics. Mother Courage holds her daughter as she dies, then she gets back on the road.

TRIVIA

Brain Snacks: Tasty Tidbits of Knowledge

After the first performances of Mother Courage in Switzerland in 1941, during World War II, Brecht decided the title character was just too darn likeable. You know, people aren't supposed to like Mother Courage. She's not a hero. So, BB went and rewrote a few parts (e.g., Scene V) in order to toughen her up a bit. That produced the current edition of Mother Courage we use here. (From John Willett and Ralph Manheim's introduction to the Penguin Classics edition, xxxv.)

Wondering why Kattrin really doesn't speak? Word has it that Brecht first wrote the role for his wife, famous German actress Helene Weigel. They were living in exile in Sweden, and if the play had been performed there, she wouldn't have been able to speak the language. So, he made Kattrin mute. (From John Willett and Ralph Manheim's introduction to the Penguin Classics edition, xxx.)

One of Brecht's claims is that traditional Chinese theater makes extensive use of the alienation effect.

From (Bertolt Brecht, Trans./Ed. John Willett, Brecht on Theater: The Development of an Aesthetic, Hill and Wang (2001), 91.)

Always a bit touchy when it came to other people interpreting his plays, Brecht wrote extensive notes about how Mother Courage was to be staged and performed. You can find these in the Penguin Classics edition of Mother Courage (2007).

STEAMINESS RATING

Exactly how steamy is this story?

PG

Sex is definitely a reality in Mother Courage, but it's not something we hear about or see directly. Kattrin longs for intimacy, according to her mother, but then she goes and gets herself shot. Yvette is a prostitute, eventually becoming the heiress of a rich, elderly general. At different times, both the cook and the chaplain try to shack up with Mother Courage, but nothing comes of it. What can we say, there doesn't seem to be much opportunity for romance during the Thirty Years' War.

ALLUSIONS

When authors refer to other great works, people, and events, it’s usually not accidental. Put on your super-sleuth hat and figure out why.

Literary and Philosophical References

The Bible

Check out these Biblical references in Mother Courage:

II, 127-128. This passage refers to one of Jesus' miracles, known as feeding the multitude. Jesus transforms five loaves of bread and two fish into enough food to feed 5,000 men, plus women and children. The miracle is present in all the New Testament gospels Matthew 14:13-21, Mark 6:31-44, Luke 9:10-17, and John 6:5-15.

II, 128-129. This line refers to the Christian idea that you should care about the welfare of others as much as you care about your own. The phrase "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" can be found in the Bible, Galatians 5:14.

II, 134-135. The general quotes a part from the Bible in which the Lord tells his followers he likes it best when they're nice to the weakest among them. The real deal can be found in Matthew 25:40.

III, 319-320. The chaplain again quotes from the Bible. This part has to do with needing to preach God's word all the time because you love the guy so much. Check out Luke 6:45 and Mark 12:34.

III, 509-548. The chaplain's song, The Song of the Hours, tells the story of the Passion, the events leading up to and including Jesus' crucifixion.

III, 641. Mother Courage calls the chaplain "Jesus on Mount of Olives." Mount Olive is the name of the mountain where Jesus gives his speech about the apocalypse. Interesting that she says this about the chaplain, right? He's the one who tells her the war will go on forever.

Historical References

King Gustavus Adolphus. This guy's death is what leads people to proclaim peace in Scene VIII of Mother Courage. He is king of the Swedish Empire during the Thirty Years' War. When Mother Courage,

the cook, and the chaplain talk about a "king" in Scene III (lines 179-218), this is the guy they mean.

General Tilly. Johann Tserclaes, Count of Tilly, is a famous general of the Holy Roman Empire during the Thirty Years' War. His funeral occurs in Scene VI.

Other References

Mother Courage and the cook sing together in Scene IX. Their song makes reference to religious, philosophical, and historical figures. Here's the list:

Solomon. This guy's straight from the Old Testament. King Solomon is credited with building the first Temple of Jerusalem. He's also famous for his wisdom.

Caesar. They're singing about Julius Caesar here, a Roman general who boldly took charge of his government and tried to make himself the dictator of Rome. He was assassinated by a group of Roman senators, among them his friend Brutus.

Socrates. This famous Ancient Greek philosopher was executed for corrupting the youth of Athens. He willingly carried out his own execution by drinking a poisonous beverage.

St. Martin. Here, Mother Courage and the cook are talking about Martin of Tours, a French saint. When Martin was a soldier in the Roman army, he once cut his cloak to give part of it to a freezing beggar. That night, he had a vision of Jesus wearing his cloak. St. Martin did not actually freeze to death after sharing his cloak, despite what they sing in Mother Courage.

10.3 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we went through the analysis of “Mother Courage and Her Children”.

10.4 KEYWORDS

- **Epic Theater**: A theater movement created by Brecht and having the primary goal of educating the audience, that is, leading them to analyze critically what they watch rather than simply being emotionally involved in it.
- **General Tilly (1559-1632**): A field marshal who commanded the armies of the Imperial and Holy Roman Empire during the Thirty Years' War.
- **Harquebus**: A primitive firearm used in the 15th to 17th centuries.

10.5 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

- Critically analyze Mother Courage and Her Children by Eugen Brecht.

10.6 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

1. Hans Jakob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen. "Die Lebensbeschreibung der Erzbetrügerin und Landstörzerin Courasche". gutenberg.spiegel.de.
2. ^ Oscar Eustis (Artistic Director of the New York Shakespeare Festival), Program Note for N.Y.S.F. production of Mother Courage and Her Children with Meryl Streep, August 2006.
3. ^ Bertolt Brecht. Brecht on Theatre, Edited by John Willett. p. 121.
4. ^ For information in English on the revisions to the play, see John Willet and Ralph Manheim, eds. Brecht, Collected Plays: Five (Life of Galileo, Mother Courage and Her Children), Metheuen, 1980: 271, 324–5.
5. ^ Jump up to:a b "Shout it from the Rooftops", Stratford-upon-Avon Herald, April 1961.

6. ^ [1], The Cleveland Memory Project at Cleveland State University "Shown here the Cleveland Play House production of Bertolt Brecht's 'Mother Courage' are (from the left) Barbara Busby as Catherine the Mute, Harriet Brazier in the title role and Kirk Willis as the preacher. Benno Frank was guest director for this American premiere and Paul Rodgers designed the set."

10.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. Mother Courage and Her Children was first produced in 1939. (**answers to check your progress – 1 Q1**)
2. Mother Courage and Her Children is based on two works by Hans Jacob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen: his 1669 novel, Simplicissimus and his 1670 play, Courage: An Adventuress. (**answers to check your progress – 1 Q2**)
3. Brecht rewrote the play for the 1949 East German production, (**answers to check your progress – 1 Q3**)

UNIT 11. BRECHT – MOTHER COURAGE AND HER CHILDREN -4

STRUCTURE

11.0 OBJECTIVES

After the completion of this unit you should be able to learn about:

- Characters, themes, performances, Brecht's reaction, popular culture and English versions of "Mother Courage and Her Children" by Eugen Brecht.

11.1 INTRODUCTION

Brecht wrote the play "Mother Courage and Her Children" in 1939 when the armies of Adolf Hitler invaded Poland. The play is Brecht's direct critique of the fascist ideology of the Nazi Germany and is nowadays considered as one of the greatest anti-war plays ever written.

The play is set in the 17th century, and the narrative follows a woman named Mother Courage and her three children who are pulling a cart and

selling provisions to soldiers in the wake of the Thirty Years' War. Mother Courage intends to profit from the war, so she forces her children to sell their merchandise in various unfavorable circumstances. The children are exposed to the hardships of war, and they die one after another, but Mother Courage refuses to move her business elsewhere.

At the end, when her only remaining child dies, she sings a lullaby, arranges a burial and continues with her business.

t is hard to misunderstand the symbolism of "Mother Courage and Her Children." Brecht intended to show that Mother Courage selfishly endangered her children by forcing them to participate in her wartime business efforts and that she was a personification of the atrocities of war and desire for power.

11.2 CHARACTERS

The Chaplain

The Chaplain is the Protestant minister for the Swedish troops. He does not condone Eilif's murder of the peasants in Scene Two, but when Eilif goes to his execution in Scene Eight, the Chaplain offers to go with him as a minister. The Chaplain takes refuge with Mother Courage behind Catholic lines, taking off his religious habit to disguise himself as her barman. He is conventionally religious, praising the war as a necessary religious conflict. He tells her the war will go on forever, and encourages her to buy goods and keep selling. He claims he is an orator who can motivate the troops to throw away their lives for a cause. As he travels and works as a barman in the canteen, he decides he would like to be Mother Courage's boyfriend, but she refuses him for the cook.

Swiss CheeseFeyos

Swiss Cheese is Mother Courage's lovable, stupid but honest middle child. She taught him to be honest because she thought it would protect him. Instead, it is his downfall, for he is made paymaster in charge of the regimental cash box, a responsibility he takes seriously. He makes stupid moves with the box, however, when the Catholics attack, trying to hide the money, thereby implicating himself as a thief. He is framed by One

Eye and court martialled. Swiss Cheese nobly protects his mother by refusing to recognize her, but she fumbles in trying to save him from execution because she is afraid of losing her canteen wagon. He is the sacrificial victim in Scene Three.

Anna Fierling, "Mother Courage"

Anna Fierling, the main character of the play, tells how she got her name "Mother Courage" by driving her cart through a siege at Riga to sell her loaves of bread. An intrepid canteen woman during the Thirty Years' War, she is fiercely independent, a survivor, able to serve clients on both sides of the war by adapting to circumstances. She calls adapting the "great capitulation" in her cynical song, telling how early in life she learned to let go of ideals in favor of getting along in the world. Mother Courage has three grown children traveling with her at the beginning of the play. It is a family business. Mother Courage openly relates how her children had different fathers from her promiscuous love affairs. She does not remember if Eilif's father's name was Noyocki, Koyocki, or Moyocki. She is not shy to sleep with the Cook later on. Anna Fierling is selfish, witty, wise, and her commentary on the war and life in general is hilarious, priceless, and jaded. We are not told her birthplace. She is a wanderer, and seems to be Protestant, though she declares she has no soul.

The critic Eric Bentley points out she is a difficult character to play on the stage. The tendency is to make her sympathetic and a tragic figure for losing her three children in the war. She repeatedly states her goal of getting her children through the war safely, though she is unable to do so. When Brecht saw her being played as sympathetic, he changed the script to make her into a harder woman. She has many traits that are not admirable. She tends to put business before her children, for she is always haggling while their lives are at stake. She will not give aid to wounded peasants. She seems to undervalue her daughter as a weight around her neck. On the other hand, she understands her daughter's yearnings and does not desert her to go with the Cook. Bentley points out that Brecht has made her realistic; she has two sides to her, as most people do. An actress has to be subtle enough to include all of her contradictions, as Brecht's wife, Helene Weigel, was able to do.

Mother Courage's children symbolize parts of her. Eilif is the immoral opportunist in her; Swiss Cheese is her honesty; Kattrin is the tender woman in herself that she has suppressed. What is memorable is her indomitable spirit, making her a symbol of humanity's ability to survive under the worst circumstances. She stands out in the company of such celebrated opportunist females as Moll Flanders, the English criminal, Scarlett O'Hara in Gone With The Wind, who does not mind doing business with Yankees if it will make her rich, and Geoffrey Chaucer's Wife of Bath.

Kattrin Haupt

Kattrin Haupt is Mother Courage's youngest child, half German. She is dumb from some trauma in childhood. Mother Courage acts as if she is a burden, because she is not really marriageable, but Kattrin works hard in her mother's business. Her mother is always trying to keep Kattrin out of sight of the soldiers and tries to make her unattractive. Kattrin has excessive pity and compassion for others. She risks her life to save a baby in a ruined building and wants to keep it. She desperately wants to marry and have children. Her mother is both angry and glad when Kattrin is disfigured by a saber cut in the face. She feels Kattrin's sorrow, but she tells her the men will leave her alone. Kattrin dies saving a village by beating a drum when the enemy army comes.

Peter Lamb, the Cook

Peter Lamb is the cook for the Swedish Commander. He haggles with Mother Courage when purchasing meat in Scene Two. His views are even more cynical than hers. She meets him again after King GustavusAdolphus dies in Scene Eight. He hitches up with her, working for her and becoming her lover, even after the prostitute Yvette identifies him as "Peter Piper" the Dutch soldier who ruined her. She calls him that because he always has a pipe in his mouth. He has a reputation as a Don Juan. He offers Mother Courage a chance to escape the war and be his partner at an inn he inherits from his mother in Utrecht. When he disallows Kattrin to come, she refuses to abandon her daughter.

EilifNoyocki

EilifNoyocki is Mother Courage's eldest child. She brags that he is the clever one of her children. He takes after her and is an ambitious without moral restraint. He becomes a hero rewarded by the Swedish Commander for butchering peasants to steal their cattle so the regiment can eat. He is executed as a criminal when he does the same act during peacetime as a hungry unpaid veteran. Mother Courage never finds out about his death but believes she will be reunited with him to the end.

One Eye

One Eye is the man with a patch on his eye, the informer in Scene Three who steals the regimental cash box and throws it in the river, framing Swiss Cheese who is shot for this.

Yvette Pottier

Yvette Pottier is the regimental prostitute in Scene Three. She tells her story of being seduced by "Peter Piper," an enemy soldier, to Mother Courage who uses it to warn Kattrin to stay away from men. Kattrin instead tries to imitate Yvette's sexy walk and steals her red boots. Yvette becomes the negotiator for the life of Swiss Cheese in Scene Three by finding a colonel with money who will buy Mother Courage's canteen so she can bribe the soldiers to let Swiss Cheese go. The deal is set, but Mother Courage ruins it by haggling over the price. Later, in Scene Eight Yvette returns as the rich widow, Madame Colonel Starhemberg, fat and dressed in black. She is the only character who does well in the war.

Swedish Recruiting Officer

The Swedish recruiting officer in Scene One recruits soldiers for King Gustavus Adolphus's campaign in Poland and literally buys Eilif out from under his mother's nose with money and promises.

Swedish Sergeant

The Swedish sergeant in Scene One makes many positive comments on how necessary war is. He distracts Mother Courage while the recruiting officer takes Eilif. She was unsuccessful in stopping him with her fortune telling prediction that he would die in the war. He points out the paradox that she is against war but makes her live from it.

11.3 THEMES

Society and Class

Mother Courage is famous as an anti-war play, but we think there's a whole lot more to it than that. Saying war is no fun is one thing, but this play is really about the violent intersection of war and class. Mother Courage gladly sees herself as part of the "little folk," the lower classes of seventeenth-century Europe who fight and make their living off the Thirty Years' War. We hear a lot from the play's characters about the relationship between these "little folk" and the leaders who are waging the war. One of the Big Questions posed by Mother Courage is whether these "little folk" will ever realize the power they have to stop the war, or whether their leaders will continue to profit on the war forever.

Wealth

Money makes the world go round. Or was that love? Anyway, wealth and its acquisition are definitely important themes in Mother Courage. The play's protagonist remains obsessed with making her living off the war, even as she loses her family to its brutality. She and her friends are certain that profit is driving their leaders to wage the war, rather than the principles they use to sell the war to taxpayers. But in their world, it seems no less true that the allure of wealth trumps any other kind of value. So, what gives?

Warfare

There's no getting around the fact that Mother Courage is a play about war. It begins during a war. It ends during the same war. War is basically inescapable. So, what is it good for? Well, let's remember that Brecht wrote Mother Courage in 1939, during World War II, after witnessing the Nazi's ascent to power in Germany. Of course, at that time, Brecht could not have known about the atrocities committed by the Nazis during the Holocaust. Instead of dealing with that legacy, Mother Courage protests against a war that seems to have no end in sight and to be bringing benefit to no one but those in power.

Religion

Mother Courage might be a play about war and social class, but our picture is definitely not complete until we talk about religion. For heaven's sake, the chaplain sings a whole song about Jesus (III, 509-548). For real, though, it's hard to miss the cynicism with which Mother Courage treats traditional Christian values, such as faith, compassion, virtue, and self-sacrifice, and the way it suggests these values only help people in power stay in power. Still, it's not that Brecht's play rejects Christianity outright. What is critiqued in Mother Courage is the abuse of Christian values in convincing the masses to die for the sake of their leaders' profit.

Innocence

When it comes to justice, you're supposed to be presumed innocent until proven guilty. Well, let's just say that's not exactly the case in the world of Mother Courage. In times of war, Brecht's play suggests, justice isn't a big concern. But don't get us wrong. Buried deep in the dark cynicism of Mother Courage, there is still the earnest hope that innocence can triumph over brutality, however briefly. In other words, there's our girl Kattrin. Her sacrificial death symbolizes the power of love and hope and all those good things—but also the destruction of innocence by war. In a play that portrays religion as the handmaiden of violence, Kattrin's heroism provides the outlet for any need to seek a higher good in Mother Courage. But ultimately, it warns that someone like Kattrin might just be too innocent for this world.

Rules and Order

Think about it. Now, where would the military be without uniforms? The military is known for being a highly disciplined and hierarchical institution, and that reality is nearly always present in the world of Mother Courage. After all, playing by wartime rules is the essence of Mother Courage's business plan. The social order established by the ever-present war is what makes life possible for Mother Courage as well as for her friends. Disobedience is not an option. If we don't understand that backstory, then we can't really grasp the significance of Kattrin's final act of sacrifice. She might not stop the war forever, but she is the only one

who believes in taking a stand against this world of order and rules created by the war.

Power

Power to the people? Not so much. From the first scene to the last, military power is one of the main forces driving forward the chain of events in Mother Courage. We're not just talking about firepower, here. We also mean the power of prestige, influence, and rank, all of which the military seems to offer people in this world. And then there is the power (or lack of power) that leaders have to wage wars and draw them out indefinitely. On the other hand, military power is not alone. There is also the power of religion, which is intimately connected to the powerful influence war and the military exercises on the populace throughout Mother Courage. And finally, Kattrin's character suggests there is a final form of power: the power of a single voice to fight back.

Principles

Let's get real: Brecht doesn't exactly have glowing things to say about the human being's innate sense of right and wrong. On that topic, Brecht writes, "First comes eating and then comes morality." His point? Well, for Brecht, people care a whole lot more about their basic, everyday needs than they do about things like morality. Try taking away someone's creature comforts, and you might just end up with a whole new person. That idea is definitely reflected in Mother Courage. The characters in this play all strike us as pretty cynical about values, virtues, and principles; it seems they're just trying to make it through the war in one piece. Now, Brecht isn't saying moral principles are unimportant, or that they don't exist. But in Mother Courage, acting on principles might just get you killed.

(For the Brecht quote, see the introduction to the Penguin Classics edition, xi).

11.4 PERFORMANCES

The play was originally produced at the Schauspielhaus Zürich, produced by Leopold Lindtberg in 1941. Most of the score consisted of original

compositions by the Swiss composer Paul Burkhard; the rest had been arranged by him. The musicians were placed in view of the audience so that they could be seen, one of Brecht's many techniques in Epic Theatre. Therese Giehse, a well-known actress at the time, took the title role.

The second production of Mother Courage took place in then East Berlin in 1949, with Brecht's (second) wife Helene Weigel, his main actress and later also director, as Mother Courage. Paul Dessau supplied a new score, composed in close collaboration with Brecht himself. This production would highly influence the formation of Brecht's company, the Berliner Ensemble, which would provide him a venue to direct many of his plays. Brecht died directing Galileo for the Ensemble. Brecht revised the play for this production in reaction to the reviews of the Zürich production, which empathized with the "heart-rending vitality of all maternal creatures". Even so, he wrote that the Berlin audience failed to see Mother Courage's crimes and participation in the war and focused on her suffering instead.

The next production (and second production in Germany) was directed by Brecht at the Munich Kammerspiele in 1950, with the original Mother Courage, Therese Giehse, with a set designed by Theo Otto (see photo, above.)

In Spanish, it was premiered in 1954 in Buenos Aires with Alejandra Boero and in 1958 in Montevideo with China Zorrilla from the Uruguayan National Comedy Company. In other languages, it was played by famous actresses as Simone Signoret, Lotte Lenya, Dorothea Neff (Vienna, 1963), Germaine Montero, Angela Winkler, Hanna Schygulla, Katina Paxinou (Athens, 1971), Maria Bill (Viena), María Casares (París, 1969), Pupella Maggio, Liv Ullmann (Oslo), Maddalena Crippa (Milán), etc

In 1955, Joan Littlewood's Theatre Workshop gave the play its London première, with Littlewood performing the title role.

In June 1959 the BBC broadcast a television version adapted by Eric Crozier from Eric Bentley's English translation of the play. Produced by Rudolph Cartier; it starred Flora Robson in the title role.

The play remained unperformed in Britain after the 1955 Littlewood production until 1961 when the Stratford-upon-Avon Amateur Players undertook to introduce the play to the English Midlands. Directed by American Keith Fowler and presented on the floor of the Stratford Hippodrome, the play drew high acclaim.The title role was played by Elizabeth ("Libby") Cutts, with Pat Elliott as Katrin, Digby Day as Swiss Cheese, and James Orr as Eiliff.

The play received its American premiere at Cleveland Play House in 1958, starring Harriet Brazier as Mother Courage. The play was directed by Benno Frank and the set was designed by Paul Rodgers.

The first Broadway production of Mother Courage opened at the Martin Beck Theatre on 28 March 1963. It was directed by Jerome Robbins, starred Anne Bancroft, and featured Barbara Harris and Gene Wilder. It ran for 52 performances and was nominated for 5 Tonys. During this production Wilder first met Bancroft's then-boyfriend, Mel Brooks.

In 1971 Joachim Tenschert directed a staging of Brecht's original Berliner Ensemble production for the Melbourne Theatre Company at the Princess Theatre.[14] Gloria Dawn played Mother Courage; Wendy Hughes, John Wood and Tony Llewellyn-Jones her children; Frank Thring the Chaplain; Frederick Parslow the cook; Jennifer Hagan played Yvette; and Peter Curtin.

In 1980 Wilford Leach directed a new adaptation by Ntozake Shange at The Public Theater. This version was set in the American South during Reconstruction.Gloria Foster played Mother Courage in a cast that also included Morgan Freeman, Samuel L. Jackson, Hattie Winston, Raynor Scheine, and Anna Deavere Smith.

Angelique Rockas as Yvette and Renu Setna as the Chaplain in 1982 Internationalist Theatre

In May 1982 Internationalist Theatre gave the first UK multi-racial and multi-national performance of Mother Courage at London's Theatre Space, a basement theatre in the old Charing Cross hospital. Peter Hepple of The Stage wrote that "director Peter Stevenson has achieved a significant piece of epic theatre with his multi-national cast". Richard

Ingham (Where To Go) observed that the cast "is made from experienced actors from all over the world, and perhaps their very cosmopolitanism helps to bring out new textures from a familiar dish" with Margaret Robertosn as Mother Courage, Renu Setna the Chaplain, Milos Kirek the Cook, Josephine Welcome Kattrin and Angelique Rockas Yvette.

In 1995–96, Diana Rigg was awarded an Evening Standard Theatre Award for her performance in the title role, directed by Jonathan Kent, at the National Theatre. David Hare provided the translation.

From August to September 2006, Mother Courage and Her Children was produced by The Public Theater in New York City with a new translation by playwright Tony Kushner. This production included new music by composer Jeanine Tesori and was directed by George C. Wolfe. Meryl Streep played Mother Courage with a supporting cast that included Kevin Kline and Austin Pendleton. This production was free to the public and played to full houses at the Public Theater's Delacorte Theater in Central Park. It ran for four weeks.

This same Tony Kushner translation was performed in a new production at London's Royal National Theatre between September and December 2009, with Fiona Shaw in the title role, directed by Deborah Warner and with new songs performed live by Duke Special.

In 2013, Wesley Enoch directed a new translation by Paula Nazarski for an all-indigenous Australian cast at the Queensland Performing Arts Centre's Playhouse Theatre.

In Sri Lanka, Mother Courage has been translated into Sinhalese and produced several times. In 1972, Henry Jayasena directed it as Diriya Mawa Ha Ege Daruwo and under the same name Anoja Weerasinghe directed it in 2006. In 2014, Ranjith Wijenayake translated into Sinhalese the translation of John Willet as Dhairya Maatha and produced it as a stage drama.

11.5 BRECHT'S REACTION

After the 1941 performances in Switzerland, Brecht believed critics had misunderstood the play. While many sympathized with Courage, Brecht's

goal was to show that Mother Courage was wrong for not understanding the circumstances she and her children were in. According to Hans Mayer, Brecht changed the play for the 1949 performances in East Berlin to make Courage less sympathetic to the audience. However, according to Mayer, these alterations did not significantly change the audience's sympathy for Courage. Katie Baker, in a retrospective article about Mother Courage on its 75th anniversary, notes that "[Brecht's audiences] were missing the point of his Verfremdungseffekt, that breaking of the fourth wall which was supposed to make the masses think, not feel, in order to nudge them in a revolutionary direction." She also quotes Brecht as lamenting: "The (East Berliner) audiences of 1949 did not see Mother Courage's crimes, her participation, her desire to share in the profits of the war business; they saw only her failure, her sufferings."

11.6 POPULAR CULTURE

The German feminist newspaper Courage, published from 1976 to 1984, was named after Mother Courage, whom the editors saw as a "self-directed woman ... not a starry-eyed idealist but neither is she satisfied with the status quo".

The character of Penelope Pennywise in the Tony Award-winning musical Urinetown has been called "a cartoonish descendant of Brecht's Mother Courage".

The rock band My Chemical Romance created the character Mother War for their third album The Black Parade. Mother War's song, "Mama", is influenced by themes from Mother Courage and Her Children, including the effect of war on personal morals.

Mother Courage has been compared to the popular musical, Fiddler on the Roof. As Matthew Gurewitsch wrote in The New York Sun, "Deep down, Mother Courage has a lot in common with Tevye the Milkman in Fiddler on the Roof. Like him, she's a mother hen helpless to protect the brood."

Mother Courage was the inspiration for Lynn Nottage's Pulitzer winning play Ruined, written after Nottage spent time with Congolese women in Ugandan refugee camps.

11.7 ENGLISH VERSIONS

- 1941 – Hoffman Reynolds Hays (1904–1980), translation for New Directions Publishing
- 1955 – Eric Bentley, translation for Doubleday/Garden City
- 1965 – Eric Bentley, translation, and W. H. Auden, songs translation, for the National Theatre, London
- 1972 – Ralph Manheim, translation for Random House/Pantheon Books
- 1980 – John Willett, translation for Methuen Publishing
- 1980 – Ntozake Shange, adaptation for New York Shakespeare Festival New York
- 1984 – Hanif Kureishi, adaptation, and Sue Davies, songs translation, for the Barbican Centre, London (Samuel French Ltd.)
- 1995 – David Hare, adaptation for the Royal National Theatre, London (A & C Black, 1996)
- 2000 – Lee Hall, adaptation, and Jan-Willem van den Bosch, translation, for Yvonne Arnaud Theatre, England (Methuen Drama, 2003)
- 2006 – Michael Hofmann, adaptation, and John Willett, songs translation, for the English Touring Theatre (A & C Black, 2006)
- 2006 – Tony Kushner, adaptation for The Public Theater, New York City, published in the form used in the 2009 Royal National Theatre production
- 2014 – David Hare, adaptation presented by the Arena Stage, Washington DC with Kathleen Turner as Mother Courage and featuring 13 new songs.[32]
- 2014 – Wesley Enoch, adaptation, Queensland Theatre Company
- 2014 – David Edgar, translation for Stratford Festival, directed by Martha Henry
- 2015 – Ed Thomas for National Theatre Wales, site specific production with an all-female cast held at the Merthyr Tydfil Labour Club
- 2015 – Eamon Flack, adaptation, Belvoir St Theatre, Sydney.

- 2017 – Danielle Tarento direction of the Tony Kushner adaptation, Southwark Playhouse, London.
- 2019 – Adaptation by Anna Jordan for the Royal Exchange theatre, Manchester UK. Starring Julie Hesmondhalgh as Mother Courage.

Check your progress -1

1. Who was the Chaplain?

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

2. Who was the Swiss CheeseFeyos?

   _____
   _____
   _____

3. Who was the Yvette Pottier?

   _____
   _____
   _____

4. Who was the Kattrin Haupt?

   _____
   _____
   _____

11.8 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we went through the themes, characters and performances of "Mother Courage and Her Children".

11.9 KEYWORDS

- **Kriegen**: The German verb to "wage war" (Krieg kriegen), with the secondary meaning to "get" or "get hold of." This is a telling double meaning for the interpretation of this play. The verb recurs throughout the play.
- **Looting:** Stealing goods. In this play, it involves robbing from the townspeople after a town has been besieged.
- **Shot:** Ammunition or bullets, usually (though not exclusively) for a musket.
- **Thirty Years' War (1618-1648):** A major European conflict, fought mostly in what is now Germany, which began as a civil war with religious roots and quickly became (as Brecht emphasizes) an international war of religion between Catholic and Protestant powers. It ended with a new world order determined by the major powers on hand in Europe at the Peace of Westphalia.

11.10 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Mention the characters of Mother Courage and Her Children by Eugen Brecht.
2. Write the themes of Mother Courage and Her Children by Eugen Brecht.
3. Mention the English versions of “Mother Courage and Her Children” by Eugen Brecht.

11.11 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

1. Mother Courage by Bertolt Brecht". City Limits retrieved from Rocks backpages Library. 6 May 1982 – via archive.org.
2. ^ Wolf, Matt (27 November 1995). "Review: 'Mother Courage

and Her Children"'. Variety. Retrieved 23 November 2016.

3. ^ "Evening Standard theatre awards 1955-2002". Evening Standard. 12 November 2002.
4. ^ "Aboriginal viewpoint gives two classic plays an intense colour" by Bridget Cormack, The Australian, 18 May 2013
5. Mother Courage & Her Children, production details, Playhouse, QPAC, May/June 2013
6. ^ Diriya Mawa Ha Ege Daruwo of Henry Jayasena, 23 April 1972, The Sunday Times, 12 March 2006
7. ^ "Mother Courage and Her Children", Daily Mirror Sri Lanka, 30 October 2015
8. ^ Jump up to:a b Coe, Tony; Bessel, Richard; Willett, Amanda (1989). Brecht on stage (Television documentary). BBC Two and Open University.
9. ^ Baker, Katie (10 September 2014). "Brecht's Mercenary Mother Courage Turns 75" – via www.thedailybeast.com.

11.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. The Chaplain is the Protestant minister for the Swedish troops. (**answer to check your progress – 1 Q1**)
2. Swiss Cheese is Mother Courage's lovable, stupid but honest middle child. (**answer to check your progress – 1 Q2**)
3. Yvette Pottier is the regimental prostitute in Scene Three. (**answer to check your progress – 1 Q3**)
4. Kattrin Haupt is Mother Courage's youngest child, half German. (**answer to check your progress – 1 Q4**)

12. CAMUS – THE OUTSIDER – 1

STRUCTURE

12.0 OBJECTIVES

After the completion of this unit you should be able to learn about:

- life, literary career, political stance, Algeria, philosophy, legacy and works of "The Outsider" by Albert Camus.

12.1 INTRODUCTION

Albert Camus was a French philosopher, author, and journalist. He won the Nobel Prize in Literature at the age of 44 in 1957, the second youngest recipient in history.

Camus was born in Algeria to French parents. He spent his childhood in a poor neighbourhood and later studied philosophy at the University of Algiers. He was in Paris when the Germans invaded France during World War II. Camus tried to flee but finally joined the French Resistance where

he served as editor-in-chief at Combat, an outlawed newspaper. After the war, he was a celebrity figure and gave many lectures around the world. He married twice but had many extramarital affairs. Camus was politically active. He was part of the Left that opposed the Soviet Union because of its totalitarianism. Camus was a moralist and was leaning towards anarcho-syndicalism. He was part of many organisations seeking European integration. During the Algerian War, he kept a neutral stance advocating for a multicultural and pluralistic Algeria, a position that caused controversy and was rejected by most parties.

Philosophically, Camus's views contributed to the rise of the philosophy known as absurdism. He is also considered to be an existentialist, despite his having firmly rejected the term throughout his lifetime.

Check your progress -1

1. Who was Albert Camus ?

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. When did Albert Camus win Nobel Prize in Literature?

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. Where was Albert Camus born?

   _____

   _____

   _____

12.2 LIFE

Early years and education

Albert Camus was born on 7 November 1913 in a working-class neighbourhood in Mondovi (present-day Dréan), in French Algeria. His

mother, Catherine Hélène Sintès Camus, was of Spanish-(Balearic) descent. She could only hear with her left ear. His father, Lucien Camus, a poor French-Algerian agricultural worker, died in the Battle of the Marne in 1914 during World War I—Camus never knew him. Camus, his mother and other relatives lived without many basic material possessions during his childhood in the Belcourt section of Algiers. He was a second-generation French immigrant to Algeria. His paternal grandfather, along with many others of his generation, had moved to Africa for a better life during the first decades of the 19th century. Hence, he was called pied-noir, 'black foot'—a slang term for French who were born in Algeria—and his binational identity and his poor background had a substantial effect on his later life. Nevertheless, Camus was a French citizen, in contrast to the Arab or Berberic inhabitants of Algeria who were denied the associated privileges this brought. During his childhood, Camus developed a love for soccer and swimming.

Under the influence of his teacher Louis Germain, Camus gained a scholarship in 1924 to continue his studies at a prestigious lyceum (secondary school) near Algiers. In 1930, he was diagnosed with tuberculosis.Because it is a transmitted disease, he moved out of his home and stayed with his uncle Gustave Acault, a butcher, who influenced the young Camus. It was at that time that Camus turned to philosophy, with the mentoring of his philosophy teacher Jean Grenier. He was impressed by ancient Greek philosophers and Friedrich Nietzsche. During that time, he was only able to study part-time. To earn money, he took odd jobs: as a private tutor, car parts clerk, and assistant at the Meteorological Institute.

In 1933, Camus enrolled at the University of Algiers and completed his license de philosophie (BA) in 1936; after presenting his thesis on Plotinus. Camus developed an interest in early Christian philosophers, but Nietzsche and Arthur Schopenhauer had paved the way towards pessimism and atheism. Camus also studied novelist-philosophers such as Stendhal, Herman Melville, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, and Franz Kafka. In 1933, also met Simone Hié, who would become his first wife.

Camus played goalkeeper for the Racing Universitaire d'Alger junior team from 1928 to 1930. The sense of team spirit, fraternity, and common

purpose appealed to Camus enormously. In match reports, he was often praised for playing with passion and courage. Any football ambitions disappeared when he contracted tuberculosis at the age of 17. Camus drew parallels among football, human existence, morality, and personal identity. For him, the simplistic morality of football contradicted the complicated morality imposed by authorities such as the state and Church.

Young Camus

In 1934, aged 20, Camus was in a relationship with a beautiful drug addict named Simone Hié. She was addicted to morphine, a drug she used to ease her menstrual pains. His uncle Gustave did not approve of the relationship, but Camus married Hié to help her fight her addiction. He later discovered she was in a relationship with her doctor at the same time and the couple later divorced. Camus, a handsome man, was a womanizer throughout his life.

Camus joined the French Communist Party (PCF) in early 1935. He saw it as a way to "fight inequalities between Europeans and 'natives' in Algeria," even though he was not a Marxist and had not read Das Kapital (Capital). He explained: "We might see communism as a springboard and asceticism that prepares the ground for more spiritual activities." Camus left the PCF a year later. In 1936, the independence-minded Algerian Communist Party (PCA) was founded, and Camus joined it after his mentor Grenier advised him to do so. Camus's main role within the PCA was to organise the Théâtre du Travail (Workers' Theatre). Camus was also close to the Parti du Peuple Algérien (Algerian People's Party/PPA), which was a moderate anti-colonialist/nationalist party. As tensions in the interwar period escalated, the Stalinist PCA and PPA broke ties. Camus was expelled from the PCA for refusing to follow the party line. This series of events sharpened his belief in human dignity. Camus's mistrust of bureaucracies that aimed for efficiency instead of justice grew. He continued his involvement with theatre and renamed his group Théâtre de l'Equipe (Team's Theatre). Some of his scripts were the basis for his later novels.

In 1938, Camus began working for the leftist newspaper Alger Républicain (founded by Pascal Pia) as he had strong anti-fascist feelings,

and the rise of fascist regimes in Europe was worrying him. By then, Camus had developed strong feelings against authoritative colonialism as he witnessed the harsh treatment of the Arabs and Berbers by French authorities. Alger Républicain was banned in 1940 and Camus flew to Paris to take a new job at Paris-Soir as editor-in-chief. In Paris, he almost completed his "first cycle" of works dealing with the absurd and the meaningless—the novel L'Étranger (The Outsider (UK), or The Stranger (US), the philosophical essay Le Mythe de Sisyphe (The Myth of Sisyphus) and the play Caligula. Each cycle consisted of a novel, an essay and a theatrical play.

World War II, Resistance and Combat

Soon after Camus moved to Paris, the outbreak of World War II reached France. Camus volunteered to join the army but was not accepted having suffered from tuberculosis. As the Germans were marching towards Paris, Camus fled. He was laid-off from Paris Soir and ended up in Lyon where he married pianist and mathematician Francine Faure on 3 December 1940. Camus and Faure moved back to Algeria (Oran) where he taught in primary schools. Because of his tuberculosis, he was forced to move to the French Alps. There he began writing his second cycle of works, this time dealing with revolt—a novel La Peste (The Plague) and a play Le Malentendu (The Misunderstanding). By 1943 he was known because of his earlier work. He returned to Paris where he met and became friends with Jean-Paul Sartre. He also became part of a circle of intellectuals including Simone de Beauvoir, André Breton and others. Among them was the actress Maria Casarès who would later have an affair with Camus.

Camus took an active role in the underground resistance movement against the Germans during the French Occupation. Upon his arrival in Paris, he started working as a journalist and editor of the banned newspaper Combat. He continued writing for the paper after the liberation of France. Camus used a pseudonym for his Combat articles and used false ID cards to avoid being captured. During that period he composed four Lettres à un ami allemand (Letters to a German Friend), explaining why resistance was necessary.

Post-World War II

After the War, Camus lived in Paris with Faure, who gave birth to twins—Catherine and Jean—in 1945. Camus was now a celebrated writer known for his role in the resistance. He gave lectures at various universities in the United States and Latin America on two separate trips. He also visited Algeria once more, only to leave disappointed by the continuation of oppressive colonial policies, which he had warned about so many times. During this period he completed the second cycle of his work, with the novel L'Homme révolté (The Rebel). Camus attacked totalitarian communism while advocating for libertarian socialism and anarcho-syndicalism. Upsetting many of his colleagues and contemporaries in France with his rejection of communism, the book brought about the final split with Sartre. His relations with the Marxist Left deteriorated further during the Algerian War.

Camus was a strong supporter of European integration and participated in various marginal organisations working towards that end. In 1944, he founded the Comité Français pour la Féderation Européenne – CFFE (French Committee for the European Federation) declaring that Europe "can only evolve along the path of economic progress, democracy, and peace if the nation states become a federation." In 1947–48, he founded the Groupes de liaison internationale – GLI (Revolutionary Union Movement) a trade union movement in the context of revolutionary syndicalism (syndicalisme révolutionnaire). According to Olivier Todd, in his biography Albert Camus, une vie, (Albert Camus: A Life) it was a group opposed to some tendencies of the Surrealist movement of André Breton. His colleagues were Nicolas Lazarévitch, Louis Mercier, Roger Lapeyre, Paul Chauvet, Auguste Largentier, and Jean de Boë. His main aim was to express the positive side of surrealism and existentialism, rejecting the negativity and the nihilism of André Breton. Camus also raised his voice against the Soviet intervention in Hungary and the totalitarian tendencies of Franco's regime in Spain.

Camus had numerous affairs, particularly an irregular and eventually public affair with the Spanish-born actress María Casares, with whom he had an extensive correspondence. Faure did not take this affair lightly. She had a mental breakdown and needed hospitalisation in the early

1950s. Camus, who felt guilty, withdrew from public life and was slightly depressed for some time.

In 1957, Camus received the news that he was to be awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature. This came as a shock to him. He was anticipating André Malraux would win the prestigious award. At age 44, he was the second-youngest recipient of the prize, after Rudyard Kipling who was 42. After this he began working on his autobiography Le Premier Homme (The First Man) in an attempt to examine "moral learning". He also turned to the theatre once more. Financed by the money he received with his Nobel Prize, he adapted and directed for the stage Dostoyesvsky's novel Demons. The play opened in January 1959 at the Antoine Theatre in Paris and was a critical success.

Death

Camus died on 4 January 1960 at the age of 46, in a car accident near Sens, in Le Grand Fossard in the small town of Villeblevin. He was leaving Paris for a vacation with his publisher, Michel Gallimard, who was driving with his family. Gallimard died a few days later. 144 pages of a handwritten manuscript entitled Le premier homme (The First Man) were found in the wreckage. Camus had predicted this unfinished novel based on his childhood in Algeria would be his finest work. Camus was buried in the Lourmarin Cemetery, Lourmarin, Vaucluse, France, where he had lived. His friend Sartre read a eulogy, paying tribute to Camus's heroic "stubborn humanism".

12.3 LITERARY CAREER

Camus's first publication was a play Revolte dans les Asturies (Revolt in the Asturias) written with three friends in May 1936. The subject was the 1934 revolt by Spanish miners that was brutally suppressed by the Spanish government resulting in 1,500 to 2,000 deaths. In May 1937 he wrote his first book, L'Envers et l'Endroit (Betwixt and Between also translated as The Wrong Side and the Right Side). Both were published by Edmond Charlot's small publishing house.

Camus separated his work into three cycles. Each cycle consisted of a novel, an essay, and a play. The first was the cycle of the absurd consisting of L'Étranger, Le Mythe de Sysiphe and Caligula. The second was the cycle of the revolt which included La Peste (The Plague), L'Homme révolté (The Rebel) and Les Justes (The Just Assassins). The third, the cycle of the love, consisted of Nemesis. Each cycle was an examination of a theme with the use of a pagan myth and including biblical motifs.

The books in the first cycle were published between 1942 and 1944, but the theme was conceived earlier, at least as far back as 1936. With this cycle, Camus aims to pose a question on the human condition, discuss the world as an absurd place, and warn humanity of the consequences of totalitarianism.

Camus began his work on the second cycle while he was in Algeria, in the last months of 1942, just as the Germans were reaching North Africa. In the second cycle, Camus used Prometheus, who is depicted as a revolutionary humanist, to highlight the nuances between revolution and rebellion. He analyses various aspects of rebellion, its metaphysics, its connection to politics, and examines it under the lens of modernity, of historicity and the absence of a God.

After receiving the Nobel Prize award, Camus gathered, clarified, and published his pacifist leaning views at Actuelles III: Chronique algérienne 1939–1958 (Algerian Chronicles). He then decided to distance himself from the Algerian War as he found the mental burden too heavy. He turned to theatre and the third cycle which was about love and the goddess Nemesis.

Two of Camus's works were published posthumously. The first entitled La mort heureuse (A Happy Death) (1970), features a character named Patrice Mersault, comparable to The Stranger's Meursault. There is scholarly debate about the relationship between the two books. The second was an unfinished novel, Le Premier homme (The First Man) (1995), which Camus was writing before he died. It was an autobiographical work about his childhood in Algeria.

The publication of this book in 1994 has sparked a widespread reconsideration of Camus's allegedly unrepentant colonialism.

12.4 POLITICAL STANCE

Camus was a moralist; he claimed morality should guide politics. While he did not deny that morals change over time, he rejected classical Marxist doctrine that history defines morality.

Camus was also strongly critical of authoritarian communism, especially in the case of Soviet Marxism, which he considered totalitarianism. Camus rebuked Soviet apologists and their "decision to call total servitude freedom". As a proponent of libertarian socialism, he claimed the USSR was not socialist, and the United States was not liberal. His fierce critique of the USSR caused him to clash with others on the political Left, most notably with his friend, Jean-Paul Sartre.

Active in the French Resistance to the German occupation of France during World War II, Camus wrote for and edited the famous Resistance journal Combat. Of the French collaboration with the German occupiers, he wrote: "Now the only moral value is courage, which is useful here for judging the puppets and chatterboxes who pretend to speak in the name of the people." After France's liberation, Camus remarked, "This country does not need a Talleyrand, but a Saint-Just." The reality of the bloody postwar tribunals soon changed his mind: Camus publicly reversed himself and became a lifelong opponent of capital punishment.

Camus leaned towards anarchism, a tendency that intensified in the 1950s, when he came to believe that the Soviet model was morally bankrupt. Camus had been firm against any kind of exploitation, authority and property, bosses, the State and centralization Philosophy professor at the University of Montana David Sherman considers Camus an anarcho-syndicalist.

For Camus, this claim is ultimately grounded in human nature itself, which, among other things, is characterized by a strong impulse toward both spontaneity and creativity, and his commitment to a radically democratic ("bottom up") form of political organization, as manifested in

revolutionary trade-unionism or the Paris Commune of 1871, is, arguably, most in keeping with this fundamental condition of human flourishing. Politically, therefore, whether in 1944 or 1954, Camus is best understood as a libertarian socialist or, more exactly, an anarcho-syndicalist—anarcho-syndicalism being the theory that politics should begin with voluntary associations of cooperative, labor-based groups rather than the state.

Graeme Nicholson, considers Camus an existentialist anarchist.

The anarchist André Prudhommeaux first introduced him at a meeting of the Cercle des Étudiants Anarchistes (Anarchist Student Circle) in 1948 as a sympathiser familiar with anarchist thought. Camus wrote for anarchist publications such as Le Libertaire, La Révolution prolétarienne, and Solidaridad Obrera (Workers' Solidarity), the organ of the anarcho-syndicalist Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (CNT) (National Confederation of Labor).

Camus kept a neutral stance during the Algerian Revolution.(1954–62) While he was against the violence of the National Liberation Front (FLN) he acknowledged the injustice and brutalities imposed by colonialist France. He was supportive of Pierre Mendès' Unified Socialist Party (PSU) and its approach to the crisis;· Mendes advocated reconciliation. Camus also supported a like-minded Algerian militant, Aziz Kessous. Camus travelled to Algeria to negotiate a truce between both belligerents but was met with distrust by all parties. His confrontation with an Algerian nationalist during his acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize caused a sensation. When confronted with the dilemma of choosing between his mother and justice, his response was: "I have always condemned terrorism, and I must condemn a terrorism that works blindly in the streets of Algiers and one day might strike at my mother and family. I believe in justice, but I will defend my mother before justice." Camus's critics claimed it reactionary and a result of a colonialist attitude. According to David Sherman, though, Camus was aiming to highlight the false dichotomy of the two choices as the use of terrorism and indiscriminate violence could not bring justice under any circumstances.

He was sharply critical of the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In the 1950s, Camus devoted his efforts to human rights. In 1952, he resigned from his work for UNESCO when the UN accepted Spain, under the leadership of General Franco, as a member. Camus maintained his pacifism and resisted capital punishment anywhere in the world. He wrote an essay against capital punishment in collaboration with Arthur Koestler, the writer, intellectual, and founder of the League Against Capital Punishment entitled Reflexions sur la peine Capitale, published by Calmann-Levy in 1957.

12.5 ALGERIA

Born in Algeria to French parents, Camus was familiar with the institutional racism of France against Arabs, but he was not part of a rich elite. He lived in very poor conditions as a child but was a citizen of France and as such was entitled to citizens' rights; the Arab and Berber majority of the country were not.

Camus was a vocal advocate of the "new Mediterranean Culture". This was a term he used to describe his vision of embracing the multi-ethnicity of the Algerian people, in opposition to "Latiny", a popular pro-fascist and antisemitic ideology among other Pieds-Noirs—or French or Europeans born in Algeria . For Camus, this vision encapsulated the Hellenic humanism which survived among ordinary people around the Mediterranean Sea. His 1938 address on "The New Mediterranean Culture" represents Camus's most systematic statement of his views at this time. Camus also supported the Blum-Viollette proposal to grant Algerians full French citizenship in a manifesto with arguments defending this assimilative proposal on radical egalitarian grounds. In 1939, Camus wrote a stinging series of articles for Alger Republicain on the atrocious living conditions of the inhabitants of the Kabylie highlands. He advocated for economic, educational and political reforms as a matter of emergency.

In 1945, following the Sétif and Guelma massacre after Arab revolts against French mistreatment, Camus was one of only a few mainland journalists to visit the colony. He wrote a series of articles reporting on

conditions, and advocating for French reforms and concessions to the demands of the Algerian people.

When the Algerian War began in 1954, Camus was confronted with a moral dilemma. He identified with the Pieds-Noirs such as his own parents and defended the French government's actions against the revolt. He argued the Algerian uprising was an integral part of the "new Arab imperialism" led by Egypt, and an "anti-Western" offensive orchestrated by Russia to "encircle Europe" and "isolate the United States". Although favouring greater Algerian autonomy or even federation, though not full-scale independence, he believed the Pieds-Noirs and Arabs could co-exist. During the war, he advocated a civil truce that would spare the civilians. It was rejected by both sides who regarded it as foolish. Behind the scenes, he began working for imprisoned Algerians who faced the death penalty. His position drew much criticism from the left who considered colonialism unacceptable. In their eyes, Camus was no longer the defender of the oppressed.

Camus once confided that the troubles in Algeria "affected him as others feel pain in their lungs."

12.6 PHILOSOPHY

Existentialism

Even though Camus is mostly connected to Absurdism, he is routinely categorized as an Existentialist, a term he rejected on several occasions.

Camus himself cited his philosophical origins (ancient Greek philosophy, Nietzsche, 17th-century moralists) whereas existentialism arises from 19th and early 20th century philosophy (such as Kierkegaard, Karl Jaspers and Heidegger). He also cited his work, The Myth of Sisyphus, which he claimed was a criticism of various aspects of existentialism. Camus was rejecting existentialism as a philosophy, but his critique was mostly focusing on Sartrean existentialism, and to a lesser extent on religious existentialism. He thought that the importance of history held by Marx and Sartre was incompatible with his belief in human freedom. David Sherman and others also suggest the rivalry between Sartre and Camus

also played a part in his rejection of existentialism. David Simpson argues further that his humanism and belief in human nature set him apart from the existentialist doctrine that existence precedes essence.

On the other hand, Camus focused most of his philosophy around existential questions. The absurdity of life, the inevitable ending (death) is highlighted in his acts. His belief that the absurd—life being void of meaning, or man's inability to know that meaning if it were to exist—was something that man should embrace. His anti-Christianity, his commitment to individual moral freedom and responsibility are only a few of the similarities with other existential writers.More importantly, Camus addressed one of the fundamental questions of existentialism: the problem of suicide. He wrote: "There is only one really serious philosophical question, and that is suicide." Camus viewed the question of suicide as arising naturally as a solution to the absurdity of life.

Absurdism

Many existentialist writers have addressed the Absurd, each with their own interpretation of what it is and what makes it important. Kierkegaard explains that the absurdity of religious truths prevents us from reaching God rationally.Sartre recognizes the absurdity of individual experience. Camus's thoughts on the Absurd begins with his first cycle of books and the literary essay Le Mythe de Sisyphe, his major work on the subject. In 1942 he published the story of a man living an absurd life in L'Étranger. He also wrote a play about Caligula, a Roman Emperor, pursuing an absurd logic, which was not performed until 1945. His early thoughts appeared in his first collection of essays, L'Envers et l'endroit (Betwixt and Between) in 1937. Absurd themes were expressed with more sophistication in his second collection of essays, Noces (Nuptials), in 1938 and The Wrong Side and the Right Side. In these essays, Camus reflects on the experience of the Absurd. Aspects of the notion of the Absurd can be found in The Plague.

Camus follows Sartre's definition of the Absurd: "That which is meaningless. Thus man's existence is absurd because his contingency finds no external justification". The Absurd is created because man, who is placed in an unintelligent universe, realises that human values are not

founded on a solid external component; or as Camus himself explains, the Absurd is the result of the "confrontation between human need and the unreasonable silence of the world." Even though absurdity is inescapable, Camus does not drift towards nihilism. But the realization of absurdity leads to the question: Why should someone continue to live? Suicide is an option that Camus firmly dismisses as the renunciation of human values and freedom. Rather, he proposes we accept that absurdity is a part of our lives and live with it.

The turning point in Camus's attitude to the Absurd occurs in a collection of four letters to an anonymous German friend, written between July 1943 and July 1944. The first was published in the Revue Libre in 1943, the second in the Cahiers de Libération in 1944, and the third in the newspaper Libertés, in 1945. The four letters were published as Lettres à un ami allemand (Letters to a German Friend) in 1945, and were included in the collection Resistance, Rebellion, and Death.

Camus regretted the continued reference to himself as a "philosopher of the absurd". He showed less interest in the Absurd shortly after publishing Le Mythe de Sisyphe. To distinguish his ideas, scholars sometimes refer to the Paradox of the Absurd, when referring to "Camus's Absurd".

Revolt

Camus is known for articulating the case for revolting against any kind of oppression, injustice, or whatever disrespects the human condition. He is cautious enough, however, to set the limits on the rebellion. L'Homme révolté (The Rebel) explains in detail his thoughts on the issue. There, he builds upon the absurd (described in The Myth of Sisyphus) but goes further. In the introduction, where he examines the metaphysics of rebellion, he concludes with the phrase "I revolt, therefore we exist" implying the recognition of a common human condition. Camus also delineates the difference between revolution and rebellion and notices that history has shown that the rebel's revolution might easily end up to be an oppressive regime. So he places importance on the morals accompanying the revolution. Camus poses a crucial question: Is it possible for humans to act in an ethical and meaningful manner, in a silent universe? According to him the answer is yes, as the experience and awareness of

the Absurd creates the moral values and also sets the limits of our actions. Camus separates the modern form of rebellion into two modes. First, there is the metaphysical rebellion, which is "the movement by which man protests against his condition and against the whole of creation." The other mode, historical rebellion, is the attempt to materialize the abstract spirit of metaphysical rebellion and change the world. In this attempt, the rebel must balance between the evil of the world and the intrinsic evil which every revolt carries, and not cause any unjustifiable suffering.

12.7 LEGACY

Camus's novels and philosophical essays are still influential. After his death, interest in Camus followed the rise (and diminution) of the New Left. Following the collapse of Soviet Union, interest in his alternative road to communism resurfaced. He is remembered for his skeptical humanism and his support for political tolerance, dialogue, and civil rights.

Although Camus has been linked to anti-Soviet communism, reaching as far as anarcho-syndicalism, some neo-liberals have tried to associate him with their policies, e.g. when the French President Nicolas Sarkozy suggested that his remains to be moved to the Panthéon, an idea that angered many on the Left.

12.8 WORKS

Novels

- The Stranger (L'Étranger, often translated as The Outsider) (1942)
- The Plague (La Peste) (1947)
- The Fall (La Chute) (1956)
- A Happy Death (La Mort heureuse) (written 1936–38, published posthumously 1971)
- The First Man (Le premier homme) (incomplete, published posthumously 1995)

Short stories

- Exile and the Kingdom (L'exil et le royaume) (collection, 1957), containing the following short stories:
- "The Adulterous Woman" (La Femme adultère)
- "The Renegade or a Confused Spirit" (Le Renégat ou un esprit confus)
- "The Silent Men" (Les Muets)
- "The Guest" (L'Hôte)
- "Jonas or the Artist at Work" (Jonas ou l'artiste au travail)
- "The Growing Stone" (La Pierre qui pousse)

Non-fiction books

- Christian Metaphysics and Neoplatonism (1935)
- Betwixt and Between (L'envers et l'endroit, also translated as The Wrong Side and the Right Side) (collection, 1937)
- Nuptials (Noces) (1938)
- The Myth of Sisyphus (Le Mythe de Sisyphe) (1942)
- The Rebel (L'Homme révolté) (1951)
- Notebooks 1935–1942 (Carnets, mai 1935 —fevrier 1942) (1962)
- Notebooks 1942–1951 (1965)
- American Journals (1978)
- Notebooks 1951–1959 (2008). Published as Carnets Tome III : Mars 1951 – December 1959 (1989)
- Algerian Chronicles (2013) (originally published in 1958 as Chroniques algériennes)
- Correspondance (1944-1959) The correspondance of Albert Camus and Maria Casarès. Preface by his daughter, Catherine Camus (2017)

Plays

- Caligula (performed 1945, written 1938)
- The Misunderstanding (Le Malentendu) (1944)
- The State of Siege (L'État de Siège) (1948)
- The Just Assassins (Les Justes) (1949)

- Requiem for a Nun (Requiem pour une nonne, adapted from William Faulkner's novel by the same name) (1956)
- The Possessed (Les Possédés, adapted from Fyodor Dostoyevsky's novel Demons) (1959)

Essays

- The Crisis of Man (Lecture at Columbia University) (28 March 1946)
- Neither Victims Nor Executioners (Series of essays in Combat) (1946)
- Why Spain? (Essay for the theatrical play L' Etat de Siège) (1948)
- Summer (L'Été) (1954)
- The Ancient Greek Tragedy (Parnassos lecture in Greece) (1956)
- Reflections on the Guillotine (Réflexions sur la guillotine) (Extended essay, 1957)
- Create Dangerously (Essay on Realism and Artistic Creation, lecture at the University of Uppsala in Sweden) (1957)

Collected essays

- Resistance, Rebellion, and Death (1961) – a collection of essays selected by the author, including the 1945 Lettres à un ami allemand (Letters to a German Friend) and A Defense of Intelligence, a 1945 speech given at a meeting organized by Amitié Française. ; also includes Why Spain?, Reflections on the Guillotine, and Create Dangerously
- Lyrical and Critical Essays (1970) – essays which include L'envers et l'endroit, Noces, and L'Eté

Youthful Writings (1976)

- Between Hell and Reason: Essays from the Resistance Newspaper "Combat", 1944–1947 (1991)
- Camus at "Combat": Writing 1944–1947 (2005)
- Albert Camus Contre la Peine de Mort (2011)

12.9 LET US SUM UP

Albert Camus was a French novelist, essayist, and playwright, best known for such novels as L'Étranger (1942; The Stranger), La Peste (1947; The Plague), and La Chute (1956; The Fall) and for his work in leftist causes. He received the 1957 Nobel Prize for Literature.

Early Years

Less than a year after Camus was born, his father, an impoverished worker, was killed in World War I during the First Battle of the Marne. His mother, of Spanish descent, did housework to support her family. Camus and his elder brother Lucien moved with their mother to a working-class district of Algiers, where all three lived, together with the maternal grandmother and a paralyzed uncle, in a two-room apartment. Camus's first published collection of essays, L'Envers et l'endroit (1937; "The Wrong Side and the Right Side"), describes the physical setting of these early years and includes portraits of his mother, grandmother, and uncle. A second collection of essays, Noces (1938; "Nuptials"), contains intensely lyrical meditations on the Algerian countryside and presents natural beauty as a form of wealth that even the very poor can enjoy. Both collections contrast the fragile mortality of human beings with the enduring nature of the physical world.

In 1918 Camus entered primary school and was fortunate enough to be taught by an outstanding teacher, Louis Germain, who helped him to win a scholarship to the Algiers lycée (high school) in 1923. (It was typical of Camus's sense of loyalty that 34 years later his speech accepting the Nobel Prize for Literature was dedicated to Germain.) A period of intellectual awakening followed, accompanied by great enthusiasm for sport, especially football (soccer), swimming, and boxing. In 1930, however, the first of several severe attacks of tuberculosis put an end to his sporting career and interrupted his studies. Camus had to leave the unhealthy apartment that had been his home for 15 years, and, after a short period spent with an uncle, Camus decided to live on his own, supporting himself by a variety of jobs while registered as a philosophy student at the University of Algiers.

At the university, Camus was particularly influenced by one of his teachers, Jean Grenier, who helped him to develop his literary and

philosophical ideas and shared his enthusiasm for football. He obtained a diplôme d'études supérieures in 1936 for a thesis on the relationship between Greek and Christian thought in the philosophical writings of Plotinus and St. Augustine. His candidature for the agrégation (a qualification that would have enabled him to take up a university career) was cut short by another attack of tuberculosis. To regain his health he went to a resort in the French Alps—his first visit to Europe—and eventually returned to Algiers via Florence, Pisa, and Genoa.

Camus's Literary Career

Throughout the 1930s, Camus broadened his interests. He read the French classics as well as the writers of the day—among them André Gide, Henry de Montherlant, André Malraux—and was a prominent figure among the young left-wing intellectuals of Algiers. For a short period in 1934–35 he was also a member of the Algerian Communist Party. In addition, he wrote, produced, adapted, and acted for the Théâtre du Travail (Workers' Theatre, later named the Théâtre de l'Équipe), which aimed to bring outstanding plays to working-class audiences. He maintained a deep love of the theatre until his death. Ironically, his plays are the least-admired part of his literary output, although Le Malentendu (Cross Purpose) and Caligula, first produced in 1944 and 1945, respectively, remain landmarks in the Theatre of the Absurd. Two of his most enduring contributions to the theatre may well be his stage adaptations of William Faulkner's Requiem for a Nun (Requiem pour une nonne; 1956) and Fyodor Dostoyevsky's The Possessed (Les Possédés; 1959).

In the two years before the outbreak of World War II, Camus served his apprenticeship as a journalist with Alger-Républicain in many capacities, including those of leader- (editorial-) writer, subeditor, political reporter, and book reviewer. He reviewed some of Jean-Paul Sartre's early literary works and wrote an important series of articles analyzing social conditions among the Muslims of the Kabylie region. These articles, reprinted in abridged form in Actuelles III (1958), drew attention (15 years in advance) to many of the injustices that led to the outbreak of the Algerian War in 1954. Camus took his stand on humanitarian rather than

ideological grounds and continued to see a future role for France in Algeria while not ignoring colonialist injustices.

He enjoyed the most influence as a journalist during the final years of the occupation of France and the immediate post-Liberation period. As editor of the Parisian daily Combat, the successor of a Resistance newssheet run largely by Camus, he held an independent left-wing position based on the ideals of justice and truth and the belief that all political action must have a solid moral basis. Later, the old-style expediency of both Left and Right brought increasing disillusion, and in 1947 he severed his connection with Combat.

By now Camus had become a leading literary figure. L'Étranger (U.S. title, The Stranger; British title, The Outsider), a brilliant first novel begun before the war and published in 1942, is a study of 20th-century alienation with a portrait of an "outsider" condemned to death less for shooting an Arab than for the fact that he never says more than he genuinely feels and refuses to conform to society's demands. The same year saw the publication of an influential philosophical essay, Le Mythe de Sisyphe (The Myth of Sisyphus), in which Camus, with considerable sympathy, analyzed contemporary nihilism and a sense of the "absurd." He was already seeking a way of overcoming nihilism, and his second novel, La Peste (1947; The Plague), is a symbolical account of the fight against an epidemic in Oran by characters whose importance lies less in the (doubtful) success with which they oppose the epidemic than in their determined assertion of human dignity and fraternity. Camus had now moved from his first main concept of the absurd to his other major idea of moral and metaphysical "rebellion." He contrasted this latter ideal with politico-historical revolution in a second long essay, L'Homme révolté (1951; The Rebel), which provoked bitter antagonism among Marxist critics and such near-Marxist theoreticians as Jean-Paul Sartre. His other major literary works are the technically brilliant novel La Chute (1956) and a collection of short stories, L'Exil et le royaume (1957; Exile and the Kingdom). La Chute reveals a preoccupation with Christian symbolism and contains an ironical and witty exposure of the more complacent forms of secular humanist morality.

In 1957, at the early age of 44, Camus received the Nobel Prize for Literature. With characteristic modesty he declared that had he been a member of the awarding committee his vote would certainly have gone to André Malraux. Less than three years later he was killed in an automobile accident.

Legacy

As novelist and playwright, moralist and political theorist, Albert Camus after World War II became the spokesman of his own generation and the mentor of the next, not only in France but also in Europe and eventually the world. His writings, which addressed themselves mainly to the isolation of man in an alien universe, the estrangement of the individual from himself, the problem of evil, and the pressing finality of death, accurately reflected the alienation and disillusionment of the postwar intellectual. He is remembered, with Sartre, as a leading practitioner of the existential novel. Though he understood the nihilism of many of his contemporaries, Camus also argued the necessity of defending such values as truth, moderation, and justice. In his last works he sketched the outlines of a liberal humanism that rejected the dogmatic aspects of both Christianity and Marxism.

12.10 KEYWORDS

- **Infirmity** - illness
- **Retching -** vomiting
- **Gaunt -** haggard
- **Plaintive** – melancholy

12.11 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Write about the life of Albert Camus.
2. Write in detail about Albert Camus' literary career.
3. Write about the legacy of Albert Camus.

4. Mention the works of Albert Camus.

12.12 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

1. Lattal 1995.
2. ^ Cohn 1986, p. 30; Hayden 2016.
3. ^ Sherman 2009; Hayden 2016, p. 13.
4. ^ Todd 2000, pp. 249–250; Sherman 2009, p. 12.
5. ^ Hayden 2016, pp. 10–11.
6. ^ Hayden 2016, p. 12; Sherman 2009, pp. 12–13.
7. ^ Hayden 2016, pp. 13–14.
8. ^ Sherman 2009, p. 13.^ Beasley, Rebecca. "On Not Knowing Russian: The

12.13 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

- Albert Camus was a French philosopher, author, and journalist. . (**answer to check your progress – 1 Q1)**
- Albert Camus won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1957. (**answer to check your progress – 1 Q2)**
- Albert Camus was born in Algeria. (**answer to check your progress – 1 Q3)**

UNIT 13. CAMUS – THE OUTSIDER – 2

STRUCTURE

13.0 OBJECTIVES

After the completion of this unit you should be able to learn about:

- summary of "The Outsider" by Albert Camus.

13.1 INTRODUCTION

L'Étranger is a 1942 novel by French author Albert Camus. Its theme and outlook are often cited as examples of Camus's philosophy of the absurd and existentialism, though Camus personally rejected the latter label.

The title character is Meursault, an indifferent French Algerian described as "a citizen of France domiciled in North Africa, a man of the Mediterranean, an homme du midi yet one who hardly partakes of the traditional Mediterranean culture". He attends his mother's funeral. A few days later, he kills an Arab man in French Algiers, who was involved in a conflict with a friend. Meursault is tried and sentenced to death. The story is divided into two parts, presenting Meursault's first-person narrative view before and after the murder, respectively.

In January 1955, Camus wrote:

I summarized The Stranger a long time ago, with a remark I admit was highly paradoxical: "In our society any man who does not weep at his mother's funeral runs the risk of being sentenced to death." I only meant that the hero of my book is condemned because he does not play the game.

The Stranger's first edition consisted of 4,400 copies and was not an immediate best-seller. But the novel was well received, partly because of Jean-Paul Sartre's article "Explication de L'Etranger", on the eve of publication of the novel, and a mistake from the Propaganda-Staffel.

Translated four times into English, and also into numerous other languages, the novel has long been considered a classic of 20th-century literature. Le Monde ranks it as number one on its 100 Books of the Century.

The novel was twice adapted as films: Lo Straniero (1967) (Italian) by Luchino Visconti and Yazgı (2001, Fate) by Zeki Demirkubuz (Turkish).

13.2 SUMMARY

THE STRANGER PART 1, CHAPTER 1 SUMMARY

"Maman died today. Or yesterday maybe, I don't know." This is how the book starts. Seriously. No, we're not kidding. So, right off the bat we know that this guy's mom died today. Or maybe yesterday. But the point is that he (our nameless narrator, for the moment) doesn't know, which makes him seem callous and (our new favorite word) detached.

Anyway, the reason we know this happened is that he got a telegram from his mother's "Home" (like a nursing home for the elderly) in Marengo telling him as much.

The narrator, who is fifty miles from Marengo, in Algiers, arranges time off from his employer to attend the funeral. His employer is annoyed, but his response is all, "Dude, my mom died, and it's not my fault."

The narrator thinks the reason he feels so stoic and cold is that the reality of his mother's death hasn't yet sunk in. But really it's because (as we know) he's a stoic and cold kind of guy.

He eats at Celeste's restaurant, his regular joint, where everyone is nice and sympathetic, unlike his jerkosaur employer.

He borrows a black tie and arm band from his friend Emmanuel, whose uncle died a few months back.

Finally, he runs to catch the bus to take him to the funeral fifty miles away.

It is summer, and very hot. Check it out: within two pages of the start we've already got mention of weather. Keep an eye out for more of these; it'll be important.

The ride is bumpy; it smells like gasoline; it is really bright out. He dozes off. Someone tries to make conversation, but our narrator, of course, is not interested in other warm-blooded creatures.

He walks the 1.2 miles to the home from the bus stop.

At the home, the caretaker shows him to the director, who goes through "Madame Meursault's" three-year-old file.

Ah-ha. We can now call our narrator "Meursault."

The director tells Meursault to not feel guilty about leaving his mother at the home, because she was happier there anyway; she had friends her own age, dinner at four p.m., and shuffleboard. Meursault agrees, but seems appears unconcerned and, quite possibly, detached.

Meursault reminisces about the boredom and contempt his mother displayed back when she did stay with him. He reveals that she got used to staying at the home, and then he got to the point where only visited her a few times a year.

The director shows Meursault to his mother's casket in the little mortuary across the courtyard and then leaves him.

The caretaker comes by and offers to unscrew the casket so Meursault can see his mother.

Meursault declines, though unable to articulate his reasons. The caretaker says he understands.

The mortuary is filled with "beautiful late-afternoon sunlight," which of course means Meursault is ready for another nap.

The caretaker and Meursault chat, with the former telling the latter about his life and role at the home.

Meursault details for us how they're going to have to bury his mother quickly, since the heat is bad (weather watch!) and dead bodies can start to smell. Once again, it's a little odd (read: callous) that he's telling us this.

The caretaker (an elderly man himself) says he entered the home as a resident, but since he was relatively healthy compared to everyone else, he ended up working instead. Weird.

It's dinner time, but Meursault isn't hungry. He opts for coffee instead, and hesitates to smoke in the presence of his dead mother.

Yet he manages to put his doubts aside and light up. Meursault and the caretaker smoke next to the casket. After all, she's dead—she won't care. And neither should oddly insensitive Meursault.

The light is bright in the little mortuary, where the vigil is to be held. The caretaker sets up chairs and brings a coffee pot in anticipation of Madame Meursault's friends.

Meursault dozes off, but is awakened when his mother's friends start to fill into the room. He notes that it's "hard for [him] to believe they really exist."

They all sit across from Meursault, which makes him feel as though he's being judged.

There's a lot of crying and sobbing and the like, except from Meursault, who finds the whole situation rather annoying.

Thankfully for him, coffee and sleeping follow.

Meursault awakens at dawn. The caretaker ushers all the others out, and one by one they shake Meursault's hand.

Meursault has more coffee (he's good at that) and goes to sign papers at the director's office. He is offered one last chance to look at his mother's body, but declines.

The director informs him that Thomas Perez, Madame Meursault's boyfriend at the home, will also be attending the funeral. Meursault thinks, "My mom had a boyfriend?" (We think, "Get it, Lady Meursault.")

The sun shines down hot as the fifty-minute funeral procession toward the village commences. Everyone except Perez (the boyfriend) fans themselves. The undertaker makes small talk with Meursault, who realizes he doesn't even know how old his own mother was.

The sun's heat gets oppressive (weather watch!). Perez is lagging behind, presumably because he's elderly and can't move too fast, and he has to take shortcuts to catch up.

The procession finally arrives at the burial site in the village. Everything is so hot and happens so fast that Meursault loses interest (!). All he remembers is the sun, Perez fainting, the earth spilling over the casket, and his joy when he greets the bus that is to take him home to bed in Algiers.

THE STRANGER PART 1, CHAPTER 2 SUMMARY

Upon waking up, Meursault muses over his boss's annoyance when he asked for time off. Counting the weekend, it amounts to four days off, and he very sympathetically understands his boss's point of view.

Meursault goes for a swim at the public beach down at the harbor.

He bumps, or rather, swims into Marie Cardona, a former co-worker that he liked but didn't have time for. Now Meursault tries to make a move on her as he helps her onto a float.

The two-fall asleep together, with Meursault lying on Marie's stomach.

Having this broken the ice, Meursault asks her out to a movie. Marie agrees to see a Fernandel comedy.

They get dressed for the movies and Meursault picks her up wearing a black tie. Marie seems shocked that Meursault's mother died only

yesterday, as he's all, "Hey, baby, let's go out" when he really ought to be all, "Hey I'm sad, my mom just died." But then she forgets about it.

The two mess around in the theatre… then take it to the bedroom at Meursault's place.

The next morning ("The next morning" is a clever euphemism for "After they had sex"), Marie has already left when Meursault wakes up. He dozes a bit more, smokes a few cigarettes, and finally fixes himself some eggs.

He then reads the paper and wastes away the rest of the beautiful afternoon on his balcony, people-watching and smoking and (probably) reflecting on the sexy times the night before.

By nightfall, the streetlamps turn on and tire Meursault's eyes. (What is it with this guy and lights? He seems strangely affected by them.)

He goes downstairs to buy bread and spaghetti, and eats his meal standing up.

A breeze chills him, so Meursault shuts the windows. He goes to bed thinking about his mother's burial and tomorrow's impending work, and realizes that, really, nothing has changed.

THE STRANGER PART 1, CHAPTER 3 SUMMARY

Meursault works hard at the office today. His boss is nice to him, presumably because Meursault is in mourning, though hardly anything would give that away.

Meursault washes his hands at lunchtime—not because he needs to, but just because he enjoys drying them on a fresh towel, since the one towel everyone shares has to last an entire day. This is odd.

He and Emmanuel, his coworker and friend, jump into the back of a large truck for a lift to Celeste's diner for lunch.

After lunch, Meursault goes back to his apartment for a nap. Then he goes back to work.

That evening as Meursault walks back home, he feels good because the sky is green.

(Once again, this guy and weather. Something is up.)

He bumps into his neighbor, Salamano—and his disease-ridden old dog—on the stairway. Meursault observes that dog and master have been inseparable for eight years, and after living together for so long, they now look like each other. What is more, the two have a love-hate relationship, much like an old married couple.

Meursault chats briefly with Salamano until Raymond Sintes, his other neighbor, comes in. Raymond is rumored to be a shady character with very few friends, though Meursault reasons that he doesn't have any justification for not talking to this guy. Raymond invites him for a light dinner, so Meursault agrees.

While enjoying blood sausages (probably not as gross as they sound) and wine—lots of it—the two chat about a fight Raymond was in earlier. Raymond asks Meursault if he wants to be pals, and Meursault agrees.

Raymond then confides in Meursault about his wanting to teach his cheating ex-girlfriend, or mistress, a lesson.

He tells Meursault that, in the past, any time he discovered her indiscretions he would just smack her around a little (actually, he hit her pretty hard, to the point of bleeding), and then have some make-up sex and everything would be fine... domestic violence aside. But now he's decided that he wants to "punish" her (more so, apparently). Mostly, he reveals, he hates that he still has sexual feelings for her.

The two devise a plan. First, Meursault writes a nasty letter (to the girlfriend, on behalf of Raymond) which they expect will compel the "Moorish" ex-girlfriend to come crawling back asking for forgiveness. Then, once she does comes crawling back, Raymond can have sex with her and "right at the last minute" spit in her face, and throw her out.

Raymond, pleased with the letter, seals it for mailing. The men shake hands, having cemented their friendship in this evil-spirited way. After finishing off the liter of wine, the two smoke, and Meursault stumbles drunkenly back across the landing to his apartment, the two of them asserting that it's not so bad Meursault's mother died, since it was bound to happen sooner or later anyway.

THE STRANGER PART 1, CHAPTER 4 SUMMARY

Meursault works hard all week. Raymond tells him the letter is sent, so the plan is in action. Meursault goes to the movies twice with Emmanuel, who has trouble following the plot.

On Saturday, he frolics (yes, that's right, "frolics") with Marie on a beach a few miles outside Algiers. After all afternoon in the sun, the two hurriedly catch a bus home to go at it ("go at it" being yet another useful euphemism for sex).

That morning, Marie asks Meursault if he loves her. He responds: 1) that's an irrelevant question, and 2) no, he doesn't.

Marie is sad, but not enough to gather her dignity and head for the door.

As the two fix their lunch, a fight breaks out in Raymond's room; they hear a woman's loud shriek. The duo gathers, along with others on the landing, to witness Raymond hitting a woman repeatedly.

Was that even part of the plan?

Luckily, a cop shows up, so the woman runs to him for protection.

The cop questions Raymond, who disrespectfully smokes a cigarette. The policeman responds by smacking Raymond across the face.

The cop sends the woman home and essentially tells Raymond he had better have a good lawyer.

With the commotion over, everyone leaves. Meursault and Marie go back to their non-love-infused lunch until Marie takes off and Meursault has… a nap. Again.

At three p.m., Raymond knocks on Meursault's door to tell his story. He executed the plan with his mistress, but then, having been spit at in the face, she slapped him, and he retaliated.

The two go for a walk. Raymond asks Meursault to be a character witness for him; Meursault agrees, since all he has to do is state that the woman had cheated on Raymond.

After a brandy or two, the men shoot a game of pool. Raymond then suggests visiting a whorehouse, but Meursault declines, because he "[doesn't] like that."

So the two leisurely stroll back to their apartments; Meursault thinks they shared a nice moment, showing that he thinks of scheming against women as a brotherly sport.

A ways from the apartment, the pair encounters Salamano standing at the entrance steps, flustered and missing his dog.

Salamano reveals that his dog disappeared when they were at the Parade Ground, and most likely ran off from there.

Raymond points out that the dog might have gotten lost and will probably find his way back. Either way, Salamano is distraught, since anyone who finds the dog will shoot him down because of his disgusting scabs. No person would want such a creature.

On that cheerful note, everyone parts ways. A minute later, Salamano knocks on Meursault's door, looking for comfort. Meursault tells him about the pound, and suggests that he go there to find the dog.

Disappointed and still distraught, old Salamano goes back to his apartment.

As Meursault prepares for bed, he overhears Salamano crying. This reminds him of his mother, but he brushes the thought aside before he comes to the obvious conclusion that he is a callous jerk who can't even cry for his mother, which of course we're all thinking too.

THE STRANGER PART 1, CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY

Raymond calls Meursault at the office to invite him and Marie to spend the coming Sunday at his friend's beach house near Algiers. He says he's been followed all day by a group of Arabs, one of whom is the brother of his ex-girlfriend/mistress.

Meursault's boss sends for him after the call. The boss tells him of plans to open an office in Paris and wonders whether Meursault would be interested in going there. Meursault says sure, but that really it is all the

same for him—that is, one life is just as good as another, and he's content with this one.

The boss, disappointed, criticizes Meursault for never being forthright and for having no ambition.

That evening, Marie comes by and, despite having been informed that Meursault doesn't love her, asks him if he wants to get married. Meursault, of course, says it doesn't make any difference to him but that if she wants to, sure.

Marie asks him if he loves her yet, and he answers in the same absurd manner. Marie is fed up, but proposes marriage anyway.

The two go for a stroll through the main streets on the other side of town, both acknowledging the various beautiful women about town. When they part, Meursault goes for dinner at Celeste's.

It's all the same old, same old until a strange little woman sits down at Meursault's table. She doesn't talk to him, but she does partake in some oddly compulsive activities with a checklist of radio programs.

Meursault watches. Her peculiarity and meticulousness arouses his curiosity, so he follows her out of the diner for a while. She loses him shortly after.

Meursault returns home to find old Salamano waiting outside his door. He says the people at the pound suggested his dog had been run over. Meursault essentially says, "Whatever, get another dog," but Salamano declines because he "was used to this one."

He also loved it, he says, explaining that he got the pet after his wife died. Though he was never particularly happy with either the wife or the dog, he had gotten used to each.

He adds that old age is a total curse, a curse without a cure.

Meursault yawns and Salamano gets up to leave. He thanks Meursault for his time and informs him that Maman (Meursault's mother) was fond of his dog. He says he knew Meursault loved his mother very much, even though everyone else in the neighborhood thought he was a bad guy for

sending her away to a nursing home. Of course, knowing what we know about Meursault, this was probably like Christmas.

THE STRANGER PART 1, CHAPTER 6 SUMMARY

Waking up on Sunday proves hard for Meursault; Marie has to shake him. The bright sun feels like a "slap in the face," which at this point doesn't surprise us at all.

The pair goes over to Raymond's. Meursault reflects that on Saturday, he and Raymond had gone to the police station so Meursault could testify about the woman having cheated on him. Because of this testimony, Raymond had got off with only a warning.

As they head toward the bus stop, Raymond points to a group of Arabs in front of the tobacconist's shop. The second one from the left is supposedly the brother of Raymond's ex-girlfriend.

We know this brother has been tailing Raymond, but no one follows as they get onto the bus.

Meursault, Raymond, and Marie arrive at Raymond's friend's wooden bungalow. Masson, Raymond's friend, has a plump wife with a Parisian accent who bonds with Marie. Seeing the two women laugh, for the first time Meursault really thinks about the fact that he is getting married.

Masson, Meursault, and Marie go for a swim down at the beach. Privately, Masson tells Meursault that Marie is both stunning and charming.

Why does everyone's name start with "M"?

The three swim for a while, Meursault (expectedly) dozes off, and they all have lunch together at Masson's.

They have fish, meat, wine, and fried potatoes; Meursault drinks and smokes a lot. So does Marie.

Afterwards, as the two ladies take care of the dishes, the three men take a stroll down the beach. The sun is beating down hard, which is never good news.

At this point, Raymond points to two Arabs in blue overalls walking towards them from the far end of the beach. These are the same men who have been following Raymond around all week. This, too, is never good news.

The three men plan an attack, in case any trouble arises.

The blazing sand looks red to Meursault by the time the Arabs confront them. Red like blood. Foreshadowing alert!

Raymond steps up to one of the Arab men, his ex-girlfriend's brother, and strikes the first blow. Masson hits the other man twice; he falls face down in the water. Raymond apparently strikes another hit, as the other Arab's face starts to bleed.

The Arab cuts Raymond's arm and slashes his mouth with a knife. Masson lunges forward, but the Arabs start backing off slowly and eventually run away.

Masson takes Raymond to a doctor who spends his Sundays up on the plateau. Meursault isn't happy about having to explain the blood and whatnot to the women folk—who are pretty upset—so he just shuts up and smokes, like any good detached fellow would do.

At 1:30 p.m. (Meursault, in his narration, keeps telling us what time it is), Raymond comes back all bandaged up. He looks rather grim, though 'tis only a flesh wound. When Raymond goes to get some air at the beach, Meursault follows him.

The sun is overpowering with its heated rays. Uh oh.

The pair once again stumbles upon the two Arabs, this time lying down in their greasy overalls near the little spring at the end of the beach. They seem calm.

Raymond debates whether or not to shoot the Arab who attacked him, but Meursault says it would be lousy to do so if the Arab doesn't draw his knife first.

Finally, at Meursault's suggestion, Raymond hands him his gun, so he can take the Arab on without a weapon, "man to man." If the other Arab moves in or draws his knife, Meursault promises to let him have it.

Most interesting line ever: Meursault says that this is the moment when he realized one could either shoot or not shoot. Go ahead and compare this to his earlier conversation with his boss.

The sun glares down as everyone stares at one another. The Arabs back away behind a giant rock, and Raymond and Meursault turn back to the beach house.

The sun's heat is intense from by now. As soon as Raymond disappears up the stairs to the bungalow, Meursault turns back around toward the beach.

His head swells under the sun as he walks. This heat, Meursault thinks, is better than tolerating the women's tears back at the beach house. He wants to find shade and isolation.

As Meursault approaches the spring, he sees one of the Arabs again—Raymond's girlfriend's brother— lying there alone on his back.

The Arab sees Meursault and reaches in his pocket for a knife. Meursault grips the gun inside his jacket as a reflex.

Meursault realizes that all he has to do is turn around towards the beach house. But the sweltering beach and the scorching sun compel him to take a few steps toward the cool spring.

He notes that the sun's heat is similar to the day he buried his mother. Hmm!

The Arab doesn't move at first, but as Meursault gets closer, he draws his knife and holds it up to Meursault.

The light bounces off the steel and cuts like a blade at Meursault's forehead. A drip of sweat temporarily blinds him.

The flash of the blade slashes at his eyelashes and stabs at his stinging eyes. Everything begins to reel.

The specific language here is important, by the way, so you really should read your book. But just in case you lost your text (did the dog eat it?) we'll do our best to help you out.

Meursault squeezes his hand around the revolver. But does he shoot?

Meursault records that "the trigger gave." Afterwards, he knows he has "shattered the harmony of the day." So to top it off, he fires four more times. And "It was like knocking four quick times on the door of unhappiness."

THE STRANGER PART 2, CHAPTER 1 SUMMARY

Meursault has been arrested and questioned, first at the police station, then by the examining magistrate. Since he has read about these interrogations in books, he can't help but wonder whether it is all a game. It's not until he leaves that he even remembers that he killed a man.

Eventually, an attorney is appointed for him. Meursault thinks his case is a simple one, but his lawyer believes it to be "tricky," though one they could win if Meursault trusts him.

Apparently, the investigators are perturbed by Meursault's "insensitivity" towards his mother's death. Meursault does not understand this, but cooperates as much as he can by answering all the questions.

The attorney asks whether Meursault felt sadness on the day of his mother's funeral. Meursault answers that he has lost the habit of self-analysis, and that though he probably did love Maman, it didn't mean anything… nothing means anything.

The attorney is annoyed and dissatisfied, but continues to pry into Meursault's head.

After another question or two, he gives Meursault the look of disgust, and says that "things could get very nasty" for him. The attorney leaves.

Meursault realizes that his attorney doesn't understand him, and that this inability frustrates the lawyer.

At two p.m., the examining magistrate interviews Meursault; his attorney didn't make it.

The room is hot and bright.

The conversation gets around to Raymond, the beach, the swim, the quarrel, then back to the beach, the little spring, the sun, and the five shots from the revolver.

After a short silence, the magistrate says that he wants to help Meursault, that Meursault interests him, and that, with God's help, he can do something for him.

But first, a few more questions. He asks whether Meursault loves his mother.

Meursault answers, yes, the same as anyone, and the clerk typing up his responses makes some sort of error recording this.

Next, the magistrate asks about the five shots. Meursault explains that at first it was one, and a few seconds later, the other four.

But why the pause, he wants to know.

All Meursault can remember is the red sand and the burning sun on his forehead—he doesn't answer.

The magistrate gets worked up. Why would anyone shoot at a dead body four more times?

Meursault is annoyed and doesn't know what to say. The magistrate is beginning to scare him, the room is hot, and giant flies in this office keep landing on his face.

The magistrate pulls out a silver crucifix and starts in about his belief in God as every criminal's savior.

Meursault responds that he does not believe in God.

The magistrate now screams at him irrationally, demanding that he ask God for forgiveness.

As it gets hotter and hotter, Meursault finally surrenders. He pretends to comply just to get rid of the magistrate.

The magistrate is appeased, but says Meursault is the most hardened criminal he has encountered.

After that, Meursault sees a lot of the magistrate, who keeps bugging him to clarify his statements and so forth—the conversation always goes through Meursault's attorney. For all purposes, the magistrate seems to have lost interest in saving Meursault or his soul.

Time passes in this manner for eleven solid months. Meursault says he has never enjoyed anything so much as the moment when he gets to leave the magistrate's office. When he is walked to the door, slapped on the shoulder, and told, "That's all for today, Monsieur Antichrist."

THE STRANGER PART 2, CHAPTER 2 SUMMARY

Meursault is in prison awaiting trial. He dispassionately dislikes it, and decides that, should he get out, this is one phase of his life he probably wouldn't enjoy talking about. ("Hey baby, I just got out of prison" isn't a great pick-up line.)

Marie visits him, full of smiles, in a room without privacy; everyone has to shout to be heard. There is a certain kind of dizziness to the visitation room. Meursault wants to tell her she looks beautiful, but he "doesn't know how."

Marie shouts to Meursault that he has to have hope. Meursault says yes, but only because at this moment he wants to squeeze Marie's shoulders and feel the thin material of her dress. He watches the obvious emotion in the connections formed around him, between other prisoners and visitors; it seems totally alien to him.

Marie shouts again that they'll get married one he's released. Meursault doubts this, but responds with a useless "You think so?"

Meursault has to force a smile at the end of the visit, as he is led away.

After that, Meursault receives a letter from Marie stating that she is not allowed to visit him further, as she is not his wife.

Meursault's biggest problem in the first few months of prison is that he had the thoughts of a free man. Often he'd suddenly experience the urge to walk on the beach and swim in the water. Or he would think of women. Never Marie specifically, but just any and all women.

Meursault makes friends with a guard who tells him that's the chief complaint among prisoners. But, he wisely states, that prison wouldn't be that terrible if you got to date. It's a punishment, after all.

After that, Meursault's thoughts became those of a prisoner. He gets used to life as an inmate. He isn't too unhappy, but is a bit annoyed. Besides, Meursault reasons, a person could get used to anything after a while.

One game Meursault plays to pass the time is to focus on an object, like a newspaper story, and try to recall every excruciating detail about it. He realizes from this that a man who has lived only one day could easily live for a hundred years in prison—he would have enough memories to keep him occupied. Sex, not so much, but memories, sure.

Meursault also sleeps a lot, kind of like his non-prison days, because it helps passing (and losing all sense of) time. His days end up flowing into one another.

Meursault realizes that he has grown serious… morbid… joyless. Which is totally different from before? Maybe.

THE STRANGER PART 2, CHAPTER 3 SUMMARY

By the beginning of summer (it has been a full year since the shooting), trial has been set for June, in the Court of Assizes.

Meursault's attorney tells him that it wouldn't last more than two or three days because a more interesting parricide (the murder of a family member) case is coming up after his trial.

Trial opens with the sun glaring outside (surprise) and the air stifling inside. The room is filled with people—the panel of judges, the deputies, the bailiff, the jury, the prosecutors and lawyers, the potential witnesses, and the press. Shortly before court is in session, one of the journalists tell Meursault that since summer is the slow season for news, the press has gotten all worked up about Meursault's case; it and the parricide are the only things worth writing about.

The presiding judge reins in the courtroom, questioning the prosecution, defense, and finally instructing the jury. He then proceeds to call witnesses for examination and cross-examination.

The room gets hotter, and to demonstrate as much, everyone fans themselves with papers.

Meursault's examination begins right away by the presiding judge. First he asks Meursault's name, age, date and place of birth, and occupation. Then it proceeds to Maman and the question of why Meursault put her in the home.

Meursault says it is because he doesn't have the money to hire private help. When asked whether the decision was hard on him, Meursault responds that no, it wasn't, since Maman didn't expect anything from him anymore.

The prosecution continues the line of questioning, but on the issue of intent. When asked whether Meursault intended to kill the Arab, Meursault answers no. Well, then, why did he return—armed—to precisely the same spot? Meursault answers that it just happened that way.

With that, the hearing is adjourned until the afternoon, at which time the witnesses will be called.

Meursault is taken back to the prison for lunch and promptly back to the courthouse thereafter.

By now, the courtroom has gotten even hotter.

The director of the home is called to the stand first. He testifies that Maman did complain of Meursault often, though that is customary. Even so, she did resent being put in the home.

He adds that Meursault seemed "calm" the day of the funeral, "calm" meaning he didn't want to see Maman, didn't cry once, and left without paying respects at her grave. Moreover, he says, Meursault did not even know Maman's age.

By now the prosecutor is positively gleeful; he passes his turn to question.

Meursault feels the sudden "stupid urge to cry," as he realizes how much all the people in the courtroom hate him.

The caretaker is then called to the stand, and answers more or less the same questions. He testifies that Meursault hadn't wanted to see Maman, that he had smoked and slept at the vigil, and that he had some coffee as well. The prosecutor is now exultant, noting to the jury that a good son would have refused coffee and cigarettes.

Thomas Perez is the next witness. He testifies that he had never met Meursault before the funeral, and that his own "sadness" prevented him from being able to see the young man anyway.

The prosecutor asks Perez if he saw Meursault cry, and he says no, he didn't.

In a burst of clever lawyery-ness, Meursault's own lawyer asks Perez if he saw Meursault not cry, to which Perez also must also answer "no." In other words, just because Perez didn't see Meursault cry, it doesn't mean he never did.

The defense lawyer, exulting in his cleverness, announces with finality: "Here we have a perfect reflection of this entire trial: everything is true and nothing is true." An absurd proclamation. Shmoopers, take note.

A five minute recess is had by all, during which the defense attorney, still quite pleased with himself, tells Meursault that everything is working out fine.

Afterwards, Celeste is called by the defense. The prosecutor questions him, and Celeste testifies that Meursault is a customer and a friend of his, and though he may come off as withdrawn sometimes, he is "a man."

You know there's something wrong when this is the best defense of your character you've heard so far.

With respect to the crime committed, Celeste says that it's pure bad luck, that everyone has bad luck, and that it leaves you "defenseless" when it happens. Celeste's further attempts to support Meursault are cut short by the presiding judge. Helpless, Celeste looks at a grateful Meursault and trembles.

Marie is called next. The prosecutor gets nasty with her, calling her Meursault's mistress and their relationship an affair. He has her go detail their first date together, which, in case you forgot, was the day after Maman's death.

Marie resists, but has to testify. She goes over the swim, the movies, and the hanky-panky at Meursault's apartment. The courtroom is completely silent when the prosecutor notes that the movie was a comedy by

Fernandel. Marie begins to cry—it's not as bad as it sounds! She insists Meursault didn't do anything wrong. The bailiff ushers the sobbing Marie out at the signal of the judge.

Well that just about does it. Masson's and Salamano's subsequent testimonies are basically useless in trying to establish any good character on Meursault's part. No one seems to understand.

Raymond is the last witness. He blurts out that Meursault is innocent. The judge reprimands him, as he's supposed to be calmly relating facts, not blabbing on about his opinion. The prosecutor gets nasty with Raymond as well, painting a picture of him as a girlfriend-beater, a pimp, and an accomplice of Meursault's. He makes it pretty clear that Raymond was out to kill the Arab in order to settle this business with his ex-girlfriend/mistress.

Meursault's attorney objects, asking whether Meursault is on trial for burying his mother or for killing a man.

It's a good point, but the prosecutor refutes it; he claims there is a "profound, fundamental, and tragic relationship between the two."

The courtroom seems to side with the prosecutor as he closes trial with the statement that Meursault had "buried his mother with crime in his heart."

Questioning is adjourned.

Meursault reflects on the town he once loved and the moments when he was once happy. But then he uses a different word, "content," to describe his former life. He notes that he used to sleep easily, dreamlessly, and that it seems a given life path can lead to prison just as easily as it can lead to anything else.

THE STRANGER PART 2, CHAPTER 4 SUMMARY

At first, Meursault finds the pleading stage and closing remarks amusing. Both lawyers plead guilty, but his attorney does it with an explanation, whereas the prosecutor does so without one.

Meursault feels that all through trial, more is said about him than about the crime he committed. Every now and then he feels the urge to intervene, but is shut down by his attorney.

Meursault gathers that the prosecutor wants the jury to see the murder as premeditated (meaning Meursault planned it ahead of time), having painted him as a cold, insensitive, remorseless killer.

The way he (Meursault) sees it, why should he feel remorse? It's not as though he's ever been able to feel it before.

Meursault realizes that he has been judged to be intelligent by the prosecutor, which somehow makes him worse for having committed the murder; he doesn't really understand this logic.

The prosecutor now speaks of Meursault's soul; he says he peered into it and found nothing. He concludes Meursault's crime is worse than parricide (murdering of one's family member), which is the other hot trial of the summer. The prosecutor pushes for the death penalty, on the grounds that Meursault has no place in a society whose fundamental rules he ignores.

Meursault's head spins; the heat of the afternoon is getting to him.

The judge asks him for final words. He stands up to tell the jury that he never intended to kill the Arab… that he only did so because of the sun. Everyone laughs, in that "Ha-ha, we're going to kill you legally" kind of way.

Meursault's attorney requests that trial be reconvened in the afternoon.

When trial resumes, Meursault's attorney gives a closing that never seems to end. Meursault is irritated that his attorney speaks in the first-person, as if he were Meursault himself. Meursault notes that the defense (his lawyer) is less artful than the prosecutor (the lawyer fighting against him).

Finally, as the sun sets outside and it begins to cool, the jury leave to decide a verdict.

Meursault's attorney assures him that he'll get off with a few years in prison or at hard labor, but that there is no chance of overturning an unfavorable (i.e., guilty) verdict.

After forty five minutes pass, the foreman of the jury files back in to announce their verdict. Meursault hears a muffled voice somewhere, and then the presiding judge tells him that he is to have his head cut off, in a public square, in the name of the French people.

Meursault of course has nothing to say when asked, so he is promptly taken away.

THE STRANGER PART 2, CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY

Meursault has refused to see the chaplain three times; he has nothing to say to the holy man. Meanwhile, he's been moved to another cell and can see the night sky.

Meursault occupies his days with thoughts of escaping "the machinery of justice"; it is this hope for escapes that counts, he thinks. Perhaps the guillotine will break before it reaches his neck. This is all great and Shawshank Redemption-y, but then he realizes that even if he escapes temporarily, he will not ultimately.

Yet he still cannot accept the certainty of his own death. He claims there's something "out of proportion" between the verdict being read and the events that had passed since then. Every detail of the circumstance—the men who read the verdict, the fact that he is in French territory, the time of day the verdict was read—seems to detract from the seriousness of the matter. It's all just so ridiculous.

Meursault reminisces about a story Maman once told him concerning his father, whom he never met. Once, his father watched a public execution and threw up.

Meursault now resolves that if he ever gets out of prison, he'll go and watch every possible execution. Why? Because it is the only thing that could ever possibly interest man.

Meursault also fancies reforming the penal code, realizing now that the most important thing is to give the condemned man a chance. Even one in a thousand—a kind of lottery—would be good enough for hope. The cruelest thing about the guillotine is that you have absolutely no chance for escape at all. It is so certain.

Two other issues occupy Meursault: the dawn (because that's when the executors always come) and his appeal.

Meursault now spends his nights waiting for that dawn. After all, he has never liked being surprised.

He thinks about the appeal as a glimmer of hope. Yet even then, he assumes the worst—that he's going to die. Everybody, he says, knows life isn't worth living; it doesn't much matter whether you die at thirty or seventy. You die all the same.

When Meursault thinks about being pardoned, his "hot blood […] surge[s]" through his body with delirious joy—but no, he has to remain calm.

Meursault thinks about Marie, but nothing substantial. Without the union of their bodies, there isn't anything to keep them together. Besides, once he's dead, she won't matter to him anymore.

The chaplain comes to visit. Meursault shudders, which is not the friendliest of greetings.

The chaplain is gentle at first, as Meursault declines every offer of salvation. Meursault is adamant about not believing in God and not wanting anyone's help.

At one point, the chaplain throws his hands up in annoyance, unnerved by Meursault's bullheaded behavior. Meursault's only response is that when you die, you die, and nothing remains. There is no afterlife, no salvation, and nothing "God" could offer him anyway.

The chaplain says he pities him. Even if the appeal is granted, Meursault has to cleanse his soul from the "burden of sin." The point is, even if escapes the human justice system, he still has divine justice to deal with.

Not surprisingly, Meursault finds all this talk rather annoying. So does the chaplain.

The chaplain does the mature, adult thing and has a temper tantrum. He declares that he refuses to believe Meursault's bleak outlook; surely, at one time, Meursault must have wished for another life?

Sure, Meursault answers, of course, but his wishing was no different than a wish to be rich, or to be a better swimmer… it is all the same. Meursault finally declares he has had enough; he has only so much time left, and he's not going to waste it on God.

The chaplain starts calling Meursault "son" and prays for him.

Something in Meursault snaps, and he, too, follows the Chaplin into temper tantrum territory. Yelling, he insults the chaplain, tells him not to waste his prayers, grabs him by his collar, and screams on and on.

Among such screaming are a few important details: 1) The chaplain can't be certain of anything, especially his own being alive, since he's living like a dead man. 2) All he (Meursault) has is his own death, but he has as much a hold on it as it has on him. 3) His whole life he has had "a dark wind" approaching, a wind that made other people useless to him, since everyone, everyone is made equal by it.

Finally, at the threat of the guards, Meursault lets go of the chaplain who, eyes full of tears, disappears off down the hall.

With the chaplain gone, Meursault calms himself down and falls asleep.

Just before dawn, he awakes to the wonderful smells of the earth and the peace of summer.

Meursault thinks about his mother. He thinks he understands why she had a boyfriend (that Perez guy) at the end of her life; so close to death, she was ready to live life again.

Meursault now feels the same way—ready to live. He opens himself to "the gentle indifference of the world" and finds that the world is very much like himself—it's his brother, in fact.

Finally, Meursault declares that all that remains, for him to feel less alone, is to wish for a large crowd of hateful spectators to be present at his execution.

Check your Progress -1

1. Who wrote "The Stranger"?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. Who is the title character of "The Stranger"?

_____

_____

____

13.3 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we went through the summary of "The Stranger" by Albert Camus.

13.4 KEYWORDS

- **Voraciously** - ravenously
- **Imperceptible** - subtle
- **Taciturn** - silent
- **Vexation** - annoyance

13.5 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

- Write the summary of Chapter 4 of Part 2 of "The Stranger" by Albert Camus.
- Summarize Chapter 5 of Part 1 of "The Stranger" by Albert Camus.

  Give the summary of Chapter 2 of Part 2 of "The Stranger" by Albert Camus.

13.6 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

1. From Cyril Connolly's introduction to the first English translation, by Stuart Gilbert (1946)
2. ^ Carroll, David. Albert Camus the Algerian: Colonialism, Terrorism, Justice. Columbia University Press. p. 27.
3. ^ McCarthy, Patrick (2004). The Stranger (Albert Camus). New York: Cambridge University Press. p. 12. ISBN 0-521-8321-01.
4. ^ The book's famous opening sentences—"Today, Maman died. Or maybe yesterday, I don't know."—give the reader an immediate appreciation of Meursault's emotional disjointedness. [1]
5. ^ Camus, Albert. The Stranger, trans. Matthew Ward, 1988.
6. ^ Viggiani, Carl A (December 1956). "Camus' L'Etranger". PMLA. 71 (5): 865–887. JSTOR 746766

13.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. "The Stranger" was written by Albert Camus. **(answer to check your progress – 1 Q1**)

he title character of "The Stranger" is Meursault. **(answer to check your progress – 1 Q2**)

UNIT 14 CAMUS – THE OUTSIDER – 3

STRUCTURE

14.0 OBJECTIVES

After the completion of this unit you should be able to learn about:

- themes, characters, critical analysis, publication history and English translations and adaptations and allusions of "The Outsider" by Albert Camus.

14.1 INTRODUCTION

The Stranger, by Albert Camus, is a novel about Meursault and how he is a "stranger" to society. The public has come to know of him as a murderer, which, in the event, he did murder an Arab. But what the public fails to understand about him is his lack of emotions toward killing a man, and even though it shouldn't be part of the case, Meursault's failure of mourning over his dead mother's casket. Society does not understand his existentialistic beliefs. His existentialistic beliefs lead him to believed his life has no meaning. Meursault's common sense is that everyone dies eventually, and their lives do not matter in the end. Meursault is a

"stranger" and an absurdity to society because he does not show any emotions, he has no meaning for life, and his only certainty and guarantee is death.

14.2 THEMES

PHILOSOPHICAL VIEWPOINTS: THE ABSURD

The Stranger reflects Camus' philosophical stance as an absurdist. Is there a logical meaning to life? Is there some higher order or law governing it? Some rational explanation to the chaos and nonsense? Can we make sense of life at all? The answer from The Stranger to these questions is a categorical "No." There is no truth, no certainty, nor any unwavering, non-relative laws in life—and there is no sense in pursuing such impossibilities.

MORTALITY

The Stranger opens with an announcement of death; Salamano's old dog is in a state of (super-gross) decay; the protagonist murders a guy and is then sentenced to execution.

Death is everywhere in this book—maybe this is Camus's way of forcing us to confront the approximately one bajillion varying attitudes on this universal (yet distinctly absurdist) theme. In The Stranger death is inevitable and does not lead to an afterlife. The novel concludes with the revelation that death is what makes all men—scratch that: all living creatures—equal. Everyone has to die, therefore no one man is privileged over any other man (or even, say, scabby dog).

ISOLATION

The Stranger's Meursault is an insanely isolated guy. He's isolated from society, from friends, from his lover, from human emotion, and eventually from normal logic.

But don't start feeling sorry for him. His isolation is self-prescribed; Meursault isn't exiled by any means—he separates himself. Of course, at first he doesn't view this as a choice at all; isolation is simply the path of least resistance, the series of activities that requires the least activity and

effort. By the end of the novel, the narrator realizes that he has the ability to choose; that if he wants, he can wish for a large crowd of people: he can desire to be less alone. Or he can stay as he is. But at least he's conscious of his own ability to decide.

SADNESS

At funerals, we expect sadness. At a murderer's trial, we want to see some remorse. Have you ever asked why our expectation and desire converge? Should a son be sad at his mother's funeral? Should a murderer be remorseful? What if the rebels don't want to abide by these rules society has imposed? Should they die for their lack of sadness or remorse? This main character sure does. And Camus explores why that is in The Stranger.

MAN AND THE NATURAL WORLD

These days, society doesn't the new age-y wisdom, "Seek to be one with nature." But society in The Stranger finds that wisdom kind of objectionable... and even punishable by death. Meursault is almost a force/element of nature, and his actions are often dictated by the slightest changes in weather.

But because he blames the scorching sun as the reason for murdering a dude, he gets a trip to the guillotine. One of the many, many questions The Stranger asks is the extent to which man is affected by nature (or can be said to be one with nature).

RELIGION

According to Absurdism, religion is constructed by man in an attempt to create meaning to a senseless existence. Acceptance of religion (and of the possibility of an afterlife) would mean that man effectively escapes death. Absurdists think this is a super-destructive belief, because only the realization and acceptance of impending death allows man to live to his fullest.

The Stranger's "hero" directly accuses a chaplain of "living like a dead man." Yowch. He challenges the social construct of religion even before his own death, refusing to "waste any last minutes on God."

WOMEN AND FEMININITY

The hero of The Stranger displays a detachment not only from the nebulous idea of society, but also from women. He doesn't cry at his mother's funeral. He doesn't sympathize with Raymond's ex-girlfriend when she is brutally beaten. He doesn't love his own girlfriend, even though he admittedly enjoys her (sexy) company. This highlight both his robot-like detachment and the fact that he gets the majority of his pleasure from, well, pleasure.

SOCIETY AND CLASS

Detachment from society is one thing, but nonconformity—or refusal to play by its rules—is another. A detached guy is deemed cold and pathetic, but a blatant nonconformist is deemed amoral. Are conformity and morality one and the same? Are society's rules necessarily in the right? For The Stranger's hero, his freeing revelation is based on the notion that, in a senseless and meaningless world, society, its rules, and its morality are... senseless and meaningless.

FRIENDSHIP

You wouldn't think that The Stranger would be big on friendship and companionship. And it's not... really. The novel's apathetic hero approaches what other characters think of as "friendship" with a detached and indifferent air. He falls into friendships if being friends is easier than being strangers but would rather remain strangers if that takes less effort than having a conversation. Friendship ends up being something that happens to the main character, rather than something he creates. Of course, one could always argue that this means it isn't friendship—or even companionship—at all.

PASSIVITY

The Stranger (or at least Meursault) conveys the message that passivity is an acceptable way of experiencing life and treating others. For the most part, our main man is an observer—a spectator—of life and its events. He feels detached and alienated from his dead mother. He doesn't love the woman who wishes to marry him. And, though he participates in life, he observes twice as much. The Stranger explores the thin line between

indifference and acceptance; the novel features this character's transformation from the former to the latter—a positive transition, in Camus's world.

14.3 CHARACTERS

MEURSAULT

Character Analysis

Who Is This Guy?

The short answer: He's a sociopathic half-man, half-robot (not really; he just acts like it) who likes smoking cigarettes and, um, shooting people.

But we're not really in the short answer game, at least not when it comes to characters as (in)famous as our Meursault.

The protagonist-narrator of his absurdist adventures, Meursault is a detached and deathly honest guy who refuses to lie about himself to save his life; a simple man, whose moods are painfully dictated by the powers of Nature; and an independent man, one who will not accept God, or any of society's formulas for happiness.

He's also a jerk.

Can we easily identify with Meursault? Um, well: yes and no. He's young and a bit ambitionless (we're all been there, right?), he is employed by a shipping company in Algiers (okay, sure—we've all had jobs we felt pretty "meh" about), and he isn't interested in exploring opportunities for growth.

But there's a distinct dark side to Meursault even before he pulls the trigger. He's nonchalant and not particularly dutiful—he sends his mother to an old folks' home away in the country without the semblance of guilt. He's kind of a sex fiend and he's emotionally detached—he is fine marrying or not marrying, and he doesn't see a difference between being in love and being in lust.

But even if such a jaded, uninterested nihilist is hard to identify with, you'd better think again before you label him as a loser.

Because Meursault, for all his many faults, is also simply misunderstood. Far from insensitive, he is attentive to the smallest details. Far from nonchalant, he adamantly refuses to believe in life after death, to seek God out to escape execution, to mask his calmness about or acceptance of death.

But Meursault didn't start out that way in the text. He had to do some pretty serious developing to get that way.

Meursault's Evolution

If you look on the surface, it's hard to see any change within Meursault. He starts off uninterested in life, and he ends up…uninterested in life. Actually, there are some enormously important, changes going on underneath Meursault's calm exterior.

We're going to break down Meursault's grand evolution into four pieces. Think of this as the Meursault pie.

The first slice of dubiously delicious Mersault pie: Meursault makes no decisions at the beginning of the book. If he's happy, it's because he is passively so. If he's "annoyed," he is passively annoyed. Meursault can't even commit actions on his own. Marriage, no marriage, who cares? As he has told us time and time again, it's all the same, either way.

After all, he doesn't even shoot the Arab, right? According to his narration, "the trigger gave." Now, there is an interesting (and incredibly important) line, before the murder, when Meursault says,

It was then that I realized that you could either shoot or not shoot. (1.6.18)

He comprehends the existence of a choice—but only for a brief moment. After that, he's back to Mr. Indecision.

Slice #2: notice how dispassionate Meursault is in anything—at least at first. He simply doesn't care. "Annoyed" is the closest he ever gets to being angry, a simple "happy" (which comes across as meaning "content") the nearest he comes to joy. This guy is one cold fish.

Slice #3: check out Meursault's lack of introspection and self-knowledge at the beginning of the novel: he's clueless. He doesn't know himself. The caretaker asks why he doesn't want to see his mother's body, and his response is, "I don't know." He's not aware of his surroundings and, more importantly, he's not aware of his own motivations (and therefore seems to think there aren't any).

Slice #4: look at how Meursault views people at the beginning of his narration. He either wants nothing to do with them (remember how he tries to avoid conversation with the man on the bus?), or he falls casually into supposed "friendships" (like with Raymond).

Either way, he's more interested in the path of least resistance than any sort of connection. But more importantly is the way that Meursault can't understand people. He observes them carefully, he says, "not one detail of their faces or clothes escape" him, but it is still "hard for [him] to believe they really exist." He does follow that strange woman from Celeste's diner, but only because "[he doesn't] have anything to do." He also "[forgets] about her a few minutes later."

So there are your four pieces of the Meursault pie: when things start out, Meursault is passive, dispassionate, ignorant of himself, and unable to connect with or even acknowledge other people. But all of these change throughout the ordeal that Meursault suffers. And that process of suffering is key—Meursault doesn't have a grand "Ah ha! I'm a jerk!" moment.

Although his "revelation" comes at dawn while he's alone in his cell, it is clear that the process was a gradual one and that, in order to get to this epiphany, he had to suffer. A bunch.

A Whole New Meursault.

So what exactly is this "epiphany?" To begin, Meursault stops being passive; through his actions and words, he makes a choice to yell at the chaplain, then to sleep, then to wake, then to go forward into his death. His actions might not be revolutionary in themselves, but he is aware of them now, conscious, "ready to live it [his life] all again."

When he wakes up, calmer, the next morning, we see that he has moved from a state of indifference to one of acceptance—a fine distinction, but an important one in The Stranger.

And when he wakes up, Meursault is passion personified. When he screams at the chaplain, he does so with both "cries of anger and cries of joy." This guy is awake and roaring—this is something the Meursault of Chapter One could never have done.

He is also certain of everything. In fact, he's "sure about [himself], about everything, surer than [the chaplain] could ever be, sure of [his] life and sure of the death [he has] waiting for [him]."

Most interesting is the switch in the way that Meursault views people. No longer sentencing himself to social isolation, he speaks of "a large crowd of spectators" attending his execution, a crowd that may "greet [him] with cries of hate," such that he feel "less alone."

Where did that come from!? Just a page or two earlier, actually, during his ranting and raving at the chaplain. Meursault says that "we're all elected by the same fate," that with this common fate (death), no one is privileged above any other person—therefore everyone is privileged. (It's interesting that he could have gone in the other direction and said that therefore no one was privileged, but maybe Camus was feeling optimistic.)

If everyone is made common by death, then he can comprehend these other, living creatures as being just like him. Stars: They're Just Like Us! (in that they die.) This counters his earlier statement, when he said it was hard to believe that the residents of the nursing home existed. They must exist—because they are going to die.

Cheery? Nope. True? Sadly, yeah.

Now one last "but": look carefully at the language of this last sentence. Meursault says:

For everything to be consummated, for me to feel less alone; I had only to wish that there be a large crowd of spectators the day of my execution and that they greet me with cries of hate. (2.5.26)

He doesn't actually say he wants to feel less alone. He hasn't yet put into action his revelation. He hasn't yet wished for the large crowd of spectators. He knows he could—he knows this is the next step, but he doesn't do it yet.

One of the major points of The Stranger isn't Meursault suddenly wanting people around—the point is his newfound knowledge, his awareness, and his consciousness.

As long as he knows that he could wish for people (people that hate him at that, which is another can of worms altogether), that's good enough. Stick a fork in this absurdist: he's done.

Meursault Timeline and Summary

It all starts with a telegram Meursault receives informing him of his mother's death. He doesn't know (and doesn't care) on which day she died.

Meursault borrows a black tie and arm band from his friend Emmanuel, and hurries to take the bus to the funeral in rural Marengo.

At the home, Meursault meets his mother's caretaker, the director, the nurse, and a handful of his mother's friends.

Meursault declines seeing his mother for one last time, but shares a smoke with the caretaker alongside his mother's casket.

Meursault stays for the vigil, but eventually falls asleep. He is mostly annoyed by the ordeal of a vigil.

Morning comes, and the funeral procession commences. Meursault is surprised to meet Thomas Perez, his mother's boyfriend, at the home.

During the funeral procession, Meursault realizes that he did not know how old his mother was.

When it is all over, Meursault is happy to be rid of the sweltering weather of Marengo, and joyously takes the bus back to Algiers to go to bed.

At waking up, Meursault goes for a swim at the public beach down at the harbor.

He bumps, or rather, swims into Marie Cardona, a former co-worker he liked but didn't have time for. Now Meursault makes a move on her.

Meursault asks her out to a movie; they decide on a comedy.

He picks her up wearing a black tie. Marie seems shocked that Meursault's mother died only yesterday, but soon afterward, she forgets it.

The two mess around in the theatre… then take it to bed at Meursault's place.

Meursault lazes around for the rest of the weekend.

Come Monday, Meursault works hard at the office. His boss is nice to him, presumably because Meursault is in mourning.

He and Emmanuel, coworker and friend, jump a large truck for a lift to Celeste's diner for lunch.

After lunch, Meursault goes back to his apartment for a nap. Then he goes back to work.

That evening as Meursault walks back home, he bumps into his neighbor, Salamano – with his disease-ridden old dog – in the stairway.

Meursault chats briefly with Salamano until Raymond Sintes, his other neighbor, comes in. Raymond invites him for a light dinner, and Meursault agrees.

Over dinner and wine, the two chat about a fight Raymond was in earlier.

Raymond then confides in Meursault about his wanting to teach his ex-girlfriend – his cheating mistress – a lesson.

The two devise a plan. First, Meursault writes an emotional letter for Raymond which they expect will compel the ex-girlfriend to come back. Once she does, Raymond can have sex with her, but "right at the last minute" spit in her face and throw her out.

Raymond, pleased with the letter and the plan, seals it off for mailing. Meursault stumbles drunkenly back across the landing to his apartment.

Meursault works hard all week. Raymond informs him that the letter is sent, and Meursault goes to the movies twice with Emmanuel.

On Saturday, he frolics with Marie on a beach a few miles outside Algiers. After all afternoon in the sun, the two hurriedly catch a bus home for some sex.

The next morning, Marie asks Meursault if he loves her. He tells her he doesn't think so, and she is saddened.

As the two fix their lunch, a fight breaks out in Raymond's room as he hits his ex-girlfriend repeatedly. A cop shows up and breaks the fight. Once the commotion is over, everyone leaves. Meursault and Marie go back to their lunch, and then Marie leaves at 1pm and Meursault sleeps a while.

At three p.m., Raymond knocks on Meursault's door. The two go for a walk. Raymond asks Meursault to be a character witness for him, and Meursault agrees.

After a brandy or two, the men shoot a game of pool. Raymond then suggests visiting the brothel, but Meursault declines. So the two leisurely stroll back to their apartments.

A ways from the apartment, Meursault realizes that Salamano is standing at the entrance steps looking flustered and missing his dog.

Salamano reveals that… his dog has disappeared. Meursault consoles him.

As Meursault prepares for bed, he overhears Salamano crying.

The next morning, Raymond calls Meursault at the office to invite him and Marie to spend the coming Sunday at his friend's beach house near Algiers.

Meursault's boss sends for him after the call. The boss wonders whether Meursault would be open to working at the company's new office in Paris; Meursault is incredibly vague in his answer.

That evening, Marie comes by and asks Meursault if he wants to get married. Meursault says it doesn't make any difference to him.

The two go for a stroll through the main streets on the other side of town.

Then, Meursault goes for dinner at Celeste's.

Meursault goes home to find old Salamano waiting outside his door. The two chat.

Meursault has a hard time waking up on Sunday; Marie helps him out.

Meursault lets us know about the past Saturday: he and Raymond went to the police station so Meursault could testify about Raymond's mistress having cheated on him. Thus, Raymond got off with a warning.

Meursault and Marie meet up with Raymond that morning and the three catch a bus.

They arrive at Raymond's friend's (Masson) wooden bungalow.

Masson, Meursault, and Marie go for a swim down at the beach.

They all have lunch. Afterwards, as the ladies take care of the dishes, the men take a stroll down the beach.

The three men are confronted by two Arabs that have been following them since the bus stop, one of whom was Raymond's ex-girlfriend's brother.

A fight breaks out among the men. One Arab cuts Raymond's arm and slashes his mouth with a knife.

Masson takes Raymond to the doctor, while Meursault stays behind to explain what happened to the women.

After Raymond comes back all bandaged up, he and Meursault take a walk for some air at the beach. They come upon the Arabs again.

Raymond wants to shoot the Arab who attacked him, but Meursault talks him out of it. Finally, Raymond hands Meursault his gun for safekeeping.

The Arabs back away behind the giant rock. Raymond and Meursault turn and go back to the beach house.

The heat is intense from the sun by now. Meursault turns around back toward the beach to cool off.

Meursault's head swells under the sun. He walks for a long time, looking for shade and quietude.

As he approaches the spring, Meursault encounters the Arab yet again.

The Arab doesn't move at first. As Meursault moves closer, the man draws his knife and holds it up.

The light bounces off the steel and cuts like a blade at Meursault's forehead. A drip of sweat temporarily blinds him.

Meursault squeezes the trigger, pointing at the Arab. He then shoots four more times at the motionless body.

Fast forward a few months. Meursault has been arrested and questioned, first at the police station, then by the examining magistrate.

Meursault thinks his case is a simple one. His attorney disagrees.

After hours of questioning, trying to understand Meursault's psyche, the attorney is still disappointed. Meursault realizes that his attorney doesn't understand him and is frustrated because of it.

Later, the examining magistrate interviews Meursault about the pertinent details of that fateful day. Meursault answers all the questions matter-of-factly.

The magistrate then pulls out a silver crucifix, and talks about his belief in God as every criminal's savior. Meursault responds that he does not believe in God.

The magistrate now screams irrationally at Meursault, demanding that he ask God for forgiveness. It is getting hotter and hotter, and Meursault finally acquiesces.

The magistrate is appeased, but says Meursault is the most hardened criminal he has encountered.

The investigations had gone on for eleven months at this point. During these months, Meursault has awaited trial in prison. He dislikes his life there, as might have been expected.

Marie visits him briefly. It isn't an interesting encounter.

After that, Meursault receives a letter from Marie stating that she is not allowed to visit him anymore as she is not his wife.

Meursault realizes that his biggest problem in the first few months of prison is that he had the thoughts of a free man.

Afterwards, his thoughts became that of a prisoner. He's gotten used to life on the inside, so now he's more annoyed than unhappy.

Meursault realizes that he has grown serious… morbid…joyless.

By the beginning of summer (it has been a full year since the shooting), the trial has been set for June, in the Court of Assizes.

Meursault's attorney tells him that it won't last more than two or three days because a more interesting parricide is slated just after his trial.

Trial opens, and everything seems chaotic and wrong. Meursault's examination begins right away by the presiding judge.

The prosecution continues the line of questioning.

Meursault's answers make himself nervous.

After that, the hearing is adjourned until the afternoon.

Meursault is taken back to the prison for lunch and promptly back to the courthouse thereafter.

The court then calls all of Meursault's friends and acquaintances to the stand. Meursault senses something is terribly wrong.

Meursault is irritated. His attorney assures him that he will get off with a few years in prison or at hard labor.

The foreman of the jury files back in to read the verdict. Meursault is found guilty and sentenced to death by guillotine.

When asked whether he has anything to add, Meursault says no and is promptly taken away.

Back in prison, Meursault refuses three times to see the chaplain.

Other than reminiscing about his childhood, two other issues occupy Meursault: the dawn and his appeal.

Meursault tries to stay calm; he is not without hope that his appeal will be granted.

Sometimes Meursault thinks about Marie – but nothing substantial.

One day, the chaplain comes to visit suddenly. Meursault shudders.

The chaplain is gentle at first. Meursault declines every offer of salvation he makes.

After a few more rounds of this, something in Meursault snaps. He starts to yell at the top of his lungs. He insults the chaplain, grabs him by the neck, and screams for what seems like an hour.

Finally, Meursault lets go of the chaplain, threatened by the guards. The chaplain's eyes are full of tears, and he turns and disappears.

With the chaplain gone, Meursault is able to calm down. He drifts off to sleep.

Just before dawn, he awakes to the wonderful smells of the earth and the peace of summer.

Then, for the first in a long time, he thinks about his mother. He says he finally understands why at the end of her life she begins a love affair, playing at beginning again as if she were young once more. So close to death, Maman must have felt free, ready to live it all over.

Meursault draws the analogy to himself. Just as his mother rebelled against dying, he must, too. At last, he is emptied of all hope – he is free from worry, and able to acknowledge the "gentle indifference" of the world.

Meursault declares that all that is left, in order for him to be less alone, is to wish for a large crowd of hating spectators at his own execution.

MARIE CARDONA

Character Analysis

What do Stella Kowalski, Jane Eyre and Marie Cardona have in common? They're all weirdly attracted to psychopaths.

Marie Cardona is a simple, undemanding, and guileless girl. She is employed as a typist. She enjoys swimming and watching comedies. She is young, fun-loving, and sexual. Her desires are uncomplicated— love, marriage, and delightful social outings, preferably at the beach.

She dreams of someday being in Paris, though she doesn't put much stock in such dreams. A romantic and dreamer, she is happiest when Meursault tells her he loves her. You could say she's shallow, never bothering with any of the real philosophical questions that plague Meursault. Easy, soft, and womanly, she provides great contrast to the novel's main character.

Marie is somewhat of a mystery. She is momentarily perturbed that Meursault is hitting on her the day after his mother died, but then she forgets about it and is all gung-ho to see the comedy. Emotionally, she gets nothing from Meursault, but seems satisfied with a relationship that is more sex than words. She even asks Meursault to marry her—after he says he doesn't love her.

Ugh. Get this girl some self-esteem guidance.

One solution to this question "What is Marie's deal?" is that we only know her character through Meursault's eyes. It is decidedly possible that he oversimplifies her, since she doesn't provide much difficulty for him and he has no reason to think of her at length.

After Meursault's arrest and imprisonment, Marie fades away from the tale and soon enough disappears from Meursault's thoughts altogether. We no longer hear about the easy and simple girl, as Meursault's hard, dark, and ferocious introspective inquiries take center stage.

Marie Cardona Timeline and Summary

Marie likes to swim. One day, while swimming at the public beach down at the Algiers harbor, she bumps, or rather, swims into Meursault, a

former co-worker of hers at the shipping company. Meursault makes a move on her.

The two fall asleep together, with Meursault lying on Marie's stomach.

Meursault asks her out to a movie; she agrees to see a Fernandel comedy.

When he picks her up wearing a black tie, Marie is shocked that Meursault's mother died only yesterday, but soon after, she forgets it.

The two mess around in the theatre… then take it to bed at Meursault's place.

The next morning, Marie leaves before Meursault wakes up.

That next weekend, on Saturday, Marie goes to the beach a few miles outside Algiers with Meursault. After all afternoon in the sun, the two hurriedly catch a bus home to have some sex.

The next morning, Marie asks Meursault if he loves her. She is saddened when he tells her saying that you love someone doesn't mean anything, and he doesn't think that he does.

As the two fix their lunch, a fight breaks out on the landing of the apartment complex. Marie gets flustered and asks Meursault to call the police.

When the commotion is over, everyone leaves. Meursault and Marie go back to their lunch, and then she leaves soon thereafter.

A few days later, Meursault informs Marie that they've been invited to a friend's beach house for the weekend. That same evening, Marie off-handedly asks if he wants to get married. Meursault, of course, says it doesn't make any difference to him but that if she wants to, sure.

Marie then asks again if he loves her yet, and Meursault answers in the same absurd way as before. Marie is fed up, but proposes marriage to Meursault anyway. Sigh.

The two go for a stroll through the main streets on the other side of town (apparently to celebrate their engagement). Then, Meursault goes for dinner at Celeste's and Marie leaves.

On Sunday, Marie comes by Meursault's apartment and wakes him up. They knock on Raymond's door, and the three catch a bus to the beach.

They arrive at Raymond's friend's (Masson) wooden bungalow. Marie bonds with Masson's plump, Parisian wife.

Marie goes with the boys (Masson and Meursault) for a swim down at the beach.

When Meursault dozes off, Marie wakes him for lunch.

Everyone eats fish, meat, wine, and fried potatoes for lunch. Marie drinks and smokes with the rest of them.

Afterwards, the ladies take care of the dishes, while the men go for a walk.

Only Meursault comes back from the beach, explaining to Marie and Masson's wife that Raymond got into a fight and is on his way to a doctor.

Marie cries.

Meursault has been sent to jail. Marie visits him, full of smiles, in a room without privacy.

She shouts to Meursault that he has to have hope.

Marie shouts again that they'll get married after he gets out; she has to force herself to act convincing.

When the visit comes to an end, Marie blows a kiss at Meursault with a forced smile as he is led away.

Shortly after, Marie sends a letter to Meursault stating that she is not allowed to visit him further, as she is not his wife.

Marie attends Meursault's trial in June, a year later, in the Court of Assizes.

She tries to catch Meursault's gaze all through the trial, but to little avail.

Marie is called to the witness stand after Celeste. The prosecutor gets nasty with her, calling her Meursault's mistress and their relationship an affair. He has her go through their first date together, which, by the way, occurred the day after Maman's death.

Marie resists, but has to testify. She narrates the swim, the movies, and going back to Meursault's apartment. The courtroom is completely silent when the prosecutor notes that the movie was a comedy by Fernandel. Marie begins to sob, saying that it's not as bad as it sounds, and that Meursault didn't do anything wrong. The bailiff ushers the crying Marie out at the signal of the judge.

Marie never sees Meursault again after the verdict is announced.

RAYMOND SINTES

Character Analysis

Raymond is a sketchy sleazeball: think of the worst fedora'd pick up artist you've met, add a dash of alcoholism, a nasty wife-beating streak, and a hefty portion of racism. Then triple whatever monster you've imagined: that's our Raymond. Nobody loves this Raymond.

Chauvinistic, with greasy hair and flashy clothing, Raymond comes and goes in the life of a pimp (or so the rumors "allege"). Does a guy like him cover his bedroom with pictures of pin-up girls? You bet. Can we reasonably expect him to be a violent pig as well? Only the scars on his ex-girlfriends will tell. Totally macho, Raymond tries to compensate for his insecurities (which he doesn't hide very well, at least not from Meursault) by being tough and violent.

When his mistress betrays him with another man, he seeks to get her back by spitting in her face during sex. When questioned by the cop as to why he hit a woman, he postures to appear nonchalant. When his mouth is slashed by the Arab at the beach, he feels more humiliated than anything else.

Raymond is a dirty rat. Although he is possibly the second or third most important character in the book, he is not a close friend of Meursault's. He associates with Meursault only because of proximity, and because Meursault's intelligence is of benefit.

The one twinkle of goodness we eventually find in Raymond is when he blurts out that Meursault is innocent on the witness stand. But this is too little too late for our protagonist. Perhaps, if Raymond really cared, he

shouldn't have handed that gun to Meursault. Or had a gun at all. Or hit his girlfriend.

Raymond Sintes Timeline and Summary

Meursault is visiting with Salamano when Raymond catchs them on the arrival to their common high rise. Raymond welcomes Meursault for a light supper, and Meursault concurs.

While appreciating blood wieners and wine – bunches of it – Raymond inquires as to whether he needs to be buddies. Meursault concurs.

Raymond then trusts in Meursault about his needing to show his ex, his deceiving escort, an extreme exercise.

He discloses to Meursault that when he found her undermining him, he smacked her around. In any case, this time, he needs to make her compensation by mortifying her. He disdains that, in spite of her cheating, despite everything he has sexual desires towards her.

The two devise an arrangement. Meursault composes a passionate letter for Raymond which they expected will propel his ex (who we discover is Moorish) to return. At that point, when she does, Raymond can have intercourse with her and "right ultimately" spit in her face and toss her out.

Raymond, satisfied with the letter, seals it off for mailing. The men shake each other's hand to seal their new companionship. In the wake of polishing off the liter of wine, the two smoke, and Meursault leaves.

Raymond sends off the letter.

Saturday morning, a battle breaks out in Raymond's room; a lady's sharp voice is heard. Raymond hits the lady more than once, and the entirety of his neighbors turn out to the arrival to watch.

A cop appears and questions Raymond, who rudely smokes a cigarette. The cop smacks Raymond over the face; the cigarette flies out of his month, and Raymond shakes in dread.

The cop sends the lady home and advises Raymond that he will be later gathered to the police headquarters for addressing.

With the disturbance now finished, everybody leaves.

At three p.m., Raymond thumps on Meursault's entryway. He questions Meursault that he completed the arrangement as they stated, however when he spit in the lady's face, she slapped him. Obviously, he says, he needed to fight back.

The two take a walk. Raymond asks Meursault to be a character observer for him, and Meursault concurs.

After a cognac or two, the men shoot a round of pool. Raymond then proposes visiting the house of ill-repute, yet Meursault decays. The pair relaxed walks around to their condos.

The following week, Raymond calls Meursault at the workplace to welcome him and Marie to spend the coming Sunday at his companion's sea shore house close to Algiers. Raymond likewise reveals to Meursault that he's been pursued throughout the day by a gathering of Arabs, one of whom is the sibling of his ex.

On Sunday, Meursault and Marie thump on Raymond's entryway so the three can ride the transport together to Raymond's companion's sea shore house.

Meursault uncovers that, just yesterday, he and Raymond went to the police headquarters so Meursault could affirm about the lady having undermined Raymond. Subsequently, Raymond got off with a notice.

As the three head toward the bus station, Raymond focuses to a gathering of Arabs before the tobacconist's shop. The second one from the left is as far as anyone knows the sibling of Raymond's ex.

As the three catch the transport, the Arabs don't pursue.

They land at Raymond's companion's (Masson) wooden cabin, eat, and afterward Raymond, Meursault, and Masson take a stroll on the sea shore.

While by the water, Raymond focuses to two Arabs in blue overalls strolling towards them from the furthest finish of the sea shore. These are similar Arabs who had been following Raymond all week.

The three men plan an assault, in a difficult situation emerges.

Raymond ventures up to the Arab sibling of his ex, and strikes the main blow.

The Arab cuts Raymond's arm and cuts his mouth with a blade.

Masson takes Raymond to the specialist who spends his Sundays up on the level.

At 1:30 p.m., Raymond returns all gauzed up. He looks quite bleak. Raymond goes to get some air at the seashore, and Meursault tails him.

The two again unearth the two Arabs, this time resting in their overalls close to the small spring toward the finish of the seashore. They appear to be quiet.

Raymond needs to shoot the Arab who assaulted him, however Meursault works him out of it. At long last, Raymond hands Meursault his weapon, so he himself can take the Arab on "man to man."

The sun glares, and everybody gazes at one another. The Arabs step back behind the mammoth stone. Raymond and Meursault turn and return to the sea shore house.

Raymond vanishes up the stairs to the lodge for a rest while Meursault moves back in the direction of the sea shore.

In Court, Raymond is called last to the testimony box. He exclaims that Meursault was honest, and the judge condemns him about not expressing his sentiment. The examiner gets frightful with Raymond too, portraying him as a sweetheart blender, a pimp, and an accessory of Meursault's. He says Raymond needed to execute the Arab to settle the show with his ex.

After the decision and condemning is declared, Raymond never observes Meursault again.

OLD SALAMANO

Character Analysis

You realize you're perusing a distressing book when the most affable (male) character is a man who mishandles his canine.

Salamano is a curmudgeonly elderly person who lived with his old, sickness pervaded hound in Meursault's high rise. He is the main character in the book who has a complex yet effectively justifiable and real relationship… with his pooch. A surly, maybe bearish person, Salamano curses, yanks at, and spits at his canine continually. Actually, he never shows his actual affections for the pooch until it vanishes from his life.

Gee! This odd relationship works in an assortment of ways. To start with, it raises the significant idea that man can "become accustomed to anything," a thought later strengthened once Meursault changes with jail life. This is a little however significant piece of the absurdist reasoning. Meursault builds up that to want for any one life over another is trivial; if any life—even an existence with an old canine or one in the slammer—is sufficient to make an individual substance, at that point without a doubt there is no reason to making progress toward much else.

Also, Salamano and his canine help us to remember mature age and passing—what is sitting tight for all of us toward the stopping point (sign the tragic trombone). Meursault knows this, however he doesn't acknowledge it until the finish of the novel, when he has his disclosure. Look at the depictions of the canine's scabby coat—it's frightful which is as it should be.

Maybe the most intriguing capacity of this relationship is the way that Meursault's huge, last disclosure—that man and all animals are made equivalent by death—is directly before his face, and for sure our own, from the earliest starting point of the novel.

Salamano himself says that his pooch replaced his significant other, proposing that creatures can work on an equivalent level with people. Meursault himself takes note of the elderly person resembles the pooch since they are both old and kicking the bucket. Salamano and his pet are equivalent in their mortality—he very disclosure we jump on the last page.

Old Salamano Timeline and Summary

We first observe Salamano with his malady ridden old pooch on the stairway to the high rise he imparts to Meursault.

Meursault sees that pooch and ace have been indistinguishable for a long time, and in the wake of living respectively for such a long time, the two have begun to resemble one another. In addition, the pair has an affection abhor relationship, much like an old wedded couple.

Meursault visits quickly with Salamano until Raymond Sintes enters the scene.

Salamano then loses his canine. He stands one night at the passage of the high rise looking bothered; Meursault and Raymond attempt to reassure him.

Salamano uncovers that his pooch vanished when they were at the Parade Ground. He speculates his pet took off.

Raymond calls attention to that the canine may have gotten lost and will most likely discover his way back. Salamano is having none of it. He stresses that, regardless of whether the pooch is discovered, it will be shot down in view of his sickening scabs. No individual would need an animal like that.

Everybody goes separate ways on the arrival. A moment later, Salamano thumps on Meursault's entryway, asking what Meursault thinks will happen to his pet. Meursault educates him regarding the pound, and recommends that he look there. Baffled and still very upset, old Salamano returns to his loft.

As Meursault gets ready for bed, he catches Salamano crying. He comments that Salamano has lost his sole buddy: the pooch that filled in as a substitution for his significant other, youngsters, and companions.

A couple of days after the fact, Meursault shows up home to discover old Salamano holding up outside his entryway. Salamano reports that the individuals at the pound think his pooch has been run over. Meursault proposes that he get another pooch, however Salamano decreases since he "was utilized to this one."

Salamano trusts in Meursault his affection for the canine, expressing that he had gotten it after his significant other passed on. Despite the fact that he hasn't been content with either the spouse or the canine, he had become accustomed to each. He currently accepts that mature age is an all out revile, a revile without a fix.

Meursault yawns and Salamano gets up to leave. He expresses gratitude toward Meursault for his time, and discloses to him that Maman (Meursault's mom) was attached to his pooch. He additionally reveals to Meursault that he realizes he cherished his mom definitely, regardless of the regular conclusion that he was a miscreant for sending his mom to a home.

At preliminary, Salamano affirms as to Meursault's great character after Marie and Masson. In any case, the declaration fails to receive any notice, as the preliminary was shaded from the earliest starting point by a wise examiner and maybe a one-sided judge.

After the verdict and sentencing are announced, Salamano never sees Meursault again.

14.4 CRITICAL ANALYSIS

In his 1956 analysis of the novel, Carl Viggiani wrote:

On the surface, L'Etranger gives the appearance of being an extremely simple though carefully planned and written book. In reality, it is a dense and rich creation, full of undiscovered meanings and formal qualities. It would take a book at least the length of the novel to make a complete analysis of meaning and form and the correspondences of meaning and form, in L'Etranger.

Victor Brombert has analysed L'Etranger and Sartre's "Explication de L'Etranger" in the philosophical context of the Absurd. Louis Hudon has dismissed characterisation of L'Etranger as an existentialist novel in his 1960 analysis. The 1963 study by Ignace Feuerlicht begins with an examination of the themes of alienation, in the sense of Meursault being a 'stranger' in his society. In his 1970 analysis, Leo Bersani commented that L'Etranger is "mediocre" in its attempt to be a "'profound' novel", but

describes the novel as an "impressive if flawed exercise in a kind of writing promoted by the New Novelists of the 1950s". Paul P. Somers Jr has compared Camus' L'Etranger and Sartre's Nausea, in light of Sartre's essay on Camus' novel.Sergei Hackel has explored parallels between L'Etranger and Dostoyevsky's Crime and Punishment.

Terry Otten has studied in detail the relationship between Meursault and his mother. Gerald Morreale examines Meursault's killing of the Arab and the question of whether Meursault's action is an act of murder. Ernest Simon has examined the nature of Meursault's trial in L'Etranger, with respect to earlier analysis by Richard Weisberg and Richard A. Posner. René Girard has critiqued the relative nature of 'indifference' in the character of Meursault in relation to his surrounding society.

Kamel Daoud has written a novel The Meursault Investigation (2013/2014), first published in Algeria in 2013, and then republished in France to critical acclaim. This postcolonialist response to The Stranger counters Camus' version, elements from the perspective of the brother of the unnamed Arab victim (naming him and presenting him as a real person who was mourned) and other protagonists. Daoud explores their subsequent lives following the withdrawal of French authorities and most pied noirs from Algeria after the conclusion of the Algerian War of Independence in 1962.

14.5 PUBLICATION HISTORY AND ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

On 27 May 1941, Camus was educated about the progressions proposed by André Malraux after he had perused the composition and brought his comments into account. For example, Malraux thought the moderate syntactic structure was excessively redundant. A few scenes and sections (the homicide, the discussion with the minister) ought to likewise be changed. The original copy was then perused by editors Jean Paulhan and Raymond Queneau. Gerhard Heller, a German editorial manager, interpreter and lieutenant in the Wehrmacht working for the Censorship Bureau offered to help. The book was in the long run distributed in June.

- 1942 – 4,400 duplicates of it were printed.
- 1942, L'étranger (French), Paris: Gallimard
- 1946, The Outsider (deciphered by Stuart Gilbert), London: Hamish Hamilton
- 1946, The Stranger (deciphered by Stuart Gilbert), New York: Alfred A. Knopf
- 1982, The Outsider (deciphered by Joseph Laredo), London: Hamish Hamilton, ISBN 978-0-141-18250-6
- 1989, The Stranger (deciphered by Matthew Ward), New York: Vintage, ISBN 978-0-679-72020-1
- 2012, The Outsider (deciphered by Sandra Smith), London: Penguin, ISBN 978-0-141-38958-5

Éditions Gallimard first distributed the first French-language novel in 1942. A British creator, Stuart Gilbert, first made an interpretation of L'étranger into English in 1946; for over thirty years his adaptation was the standard English interpretation. Gilbert's decision of title, The Stranger, was changed by Hamish Hamilton to The Outsider, since they thought of it as "all the more striking and suitable" and on the grounds that Maria Kuncewiczowa's Polish epic Cudzoziemka had as of late been distributed in London as The Stranger.In the United States, Knopf had just typeset the composition utilizing Gilbert's unique title when educated regarding the name change thus dismissed it; the British-American contrast in titles has endured in consequent editions.

In 1982, the British distributer Hamish Hamilton, which had given Gilbert's interpretation, distributed an interpretation by Joseph Laredo, likewise as The Outsider. Penguin Books purchased this rendition in 1983 for a soft cover release.

In 1988, Vintage distributed a rendition in the United States with an interpretation by American Matthew Ward under the standard American title of The Stranger. Camus was affected by American scholarly style, and Ward's interpretation communicates American usage.

Another interpretation of The Outsider by Sandra Smith was distributed by Penguin in 2012.

A basic distinction among these interpretations is the declaration of feeling in the sentence towards the end of the novel: "I exposed my heart to the considerate lack of interest of the universe" in Gilbert's interpretation, versus Laredo's "I exposed my heart to the delicate aloofness of the universe" (unique French: la tendre indifference du monde; actually, "the delicate impassion of the world"). The Penguin Classics 2000 republish of Laredo's interpretation has "delicate" changed to "considerate".

The closure lines vary also: Gilbert interprets "upon the arrival of my execution there ought to be an enormous horde of onlookers and that they ought to welcome me with yells of repulsion", which appears differently in relation to Laredo's interpretation of "welcome me with cries of scorn." This entry depicts a scene that would fill in as a foil to the earlier "aloofness of the world". In French, the expression is "cris de haine". Ward deciphers this as "with cries of abhor". Gilbert compares "revilement" with "execution".

"Aujourd'hui, Maman est morte" is the opening sentence of the novel. English interpretations have rendered the main sentence as 'Mother kicked the bucket today', 'Maman passed on today', or a variation thereof. In 2012 Ryan Bloom contended that it ought to be deciphered as 'Today, Maman kicked the bucket.' He accepts this better communicates the character of Meursault, as created in the novel, as somebody who 'lives for the occasion', 'doesn't deliberately choose not to move on', and 'doesn't stress over the future'.

14.6 ADAPTATIONS AND ALLUSIONS

Film adaptations / allusions

Direct adaptations

- 1967 Lo Straniero by Luchino Visconti (Italian)
- 2001 Yazgı (Fate) by Zeki Demirkubuz's (Turkish)

Allusions

- 2001 The Man Who Wasn't There (2001 film) by Coen brothers

Literature

- The Meursault Investigation (2015) by Kamel Daoud is a novel created counter to Camus's version, from the perspective of a Arab man described as the brother of the murdered man. Referred to only as "The Arab" by Camus, in this novel he is said to have been named Musa, and was an actual man who existed and was mourned by his brother and mother. It was a New York Times Notable Book of 2015.

In song

- "Killing an Arab", the 1979 debut single by the Cure, was described by Robert Smith as "a short poetic attempt at condensing my impression of the key moments in 'l'entranger' [sic] (The Outsider) by Albert Camus".
- "Noch koroche dnya", from the 1995 album of the same name by the Russian heavy metal band Aria, is based on Meursault's encounter with the chaplain in the final scene of the novel.[citation needed] It is narrated from Meursault's first-person perspective and includes (in Russian) the line, "The cries of hate will be my reward / Upon my death, I will not be alone".
- At the end of "Asa Phelps Is Dead", from the album Ghost Stories by The Lawrence Arms, the passage in which Meursault accepts his impending execution is read by Chris McCaughan. It parallels certain themes in the song's lyrics.
- Folk singer-songwriter Eric Andersen features a song called "The Stranger (Song of Revenge)" as one of four songs based on Camus' works on his 2014 EP The Shadow and Light of Albert Camus.

Check your Progress -1

1. What is "The Stranger" by Albert Camus all about?

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   _____

   _____

   _____

2. When and where was The Meursault Investigation first published?

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   _____

   _____

3. Who changed “The Stranger” to “The Outsider”?

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   _____

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14.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we went through themes, characters, critical analysis, publication history and English translations and adaptations and allusions of The Outsider by Albert Camus.

14.8 KEYWORDS

- **Aversion** - detestation
- **Elicit** - evoke
- **Odious** - offensive
- **Ingenuousness** - innocence
- **Dubious** - questionable
- **Inexorable** - unrelenting
- **Execration** – loathing

14.9 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

1. Write the themes of “The Outsider” by Albert Camus.
2. Write the characters of “The Outsider” by Albert Camus.
3. Critically analyze “The Outsider” by Albert Camus.
4. Mention the adaptations and allusions of “The Outsider” by Albert Camus.
5. Mention the publication history and English translations of “The Outsider” by Albert Camus.

14.10 SUGGESTED READINGS AND REFERENCES

1. Veitch, Douglas W. (1978). Lawrence, Greene and Lowry: The Fictional Landscape of Mexico. Ontario, Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press. pp. 4, 67.
2. ^ "The Uneasy Catholicism of Graham Greene". New York Times. 3 April 1983. Retrieved 5 January 2014.
3. ^ Details given in the Who's Who 2007 article about Denis Cannan
4. ^ IMDB entry for Play of the Week episode "The Power and the Glory"
5. ^ Sochurek, Howard (Sept 1961), "Power and Glory of Sir Laurence", Life, issue 29
6. ^ The Power and the Glory 1961 television movie at IMDB
7. ^ Graham Greene. Paul VI, in 1953, a decade before becoming pope, had defended The Power and the Glory against other churchmen who wanted to censor it. Peter Godman. "Graham Greene's Vatican Dossier", The Atlantic, July/August 2001.

14.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

1. The Stranger by Albert Camus is about Meursault and how he is a "stranger" to society. (**answers to check your progress – 1 Q-1**)
2. The Meursault Investigation was first published in Algeria in 2013 (**answers to check your progress – 1 Q-2**)
3. The Stranger was changed by Hamish Hamilton to The Outsider. (**answers to check your progress – 1 Q-3**)