



TO STUDY THE THEMATIC CONCERNS IN THE WORK OF ALBERT CAMUS

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ABSTRACT

The various Camus topics are highlighted in this research article. His writings explore subjects such as the absurdity of the cosmos, the meaninglessness of human existence, the value of the physical world, suicide, decay, and death, as well as the nature of human revolt, exile, and redemption. As a writer, Camus created a body of work that reflected the breadth and depth of his concerns, particularly with regard to moral and political issues, using a range of genres and themes. He adheres to both the energetic and reflective sides of life. It is true that *The Stranger* is the only book for which Camus is most known. The novel's protagonist, Meursault, has a morality and perception of the universe that distinguish him from the majority of people in human civilization. The first collection by Camus, *betwixt and between*, came out in 1937, and *Nuptials* followed two years later. The articles in both editions, which use sensual descriptions of the country's people and geography, essentially reflect Camus's love of Algeria. Numerous themes and symbols in Camus' writing can be seen to be influenced by the geography and climate of Algeria. Themes in Camus's writing include exile, redemption, separation, revolt, absurdity, and so on.

KEY WORDS: Albert Camus, *Stranger*, *Fall*, *Literature*, Human Life, Exile and Separation.

INTRODUCTION One of the finest absurdity authors is Albert Camus. This comment was reinforced by his works, which also demonstrated his enormous personality for ludicrous labor. His characters are well-developed with ridiculousness and show little interest in life's realities. He embellishes their thoughts with the ridiculous phobia. Nearly all readers believe that the characters are a copy or representation of their own lives. If we had been aware of his early years or history, we agree with this statement's autobiographical interpretation as well. He was born on November 7, 1913, in a tiny whitewashed bungalow in the Algerian village of St. Paul, just to the north of the sleepy town of Mandovi, and was not a member of the



landowner's family. He was the son of Lucian Camus, an agricultural laborer who lost his life in the Battle of the Marne in 1914 while serving with the Zouave infantry regiment. Lucian Camus was merely a simple farm laborer. His mother was partially deaf and of Spanish descent. When Albert's father passed away, he was a year old. His mother struggled to provide for their daily needs. His life consequently turned unpleasant and dismal. For him as a kid, his mother is like a dull friend. In summary, he was raised in squalor in the Belcourt of Algiers during his formative years. In 1923, he was admitted to the Lycee and then the University of Algiers. The history of Albert Camus' life reveals that he was a disadvantaged youngster who experienced helplessness and felt like a puppet in the hands of fate. His entire life was marked by that impression. These earlier events in his life have had an impact on his works as well. In his writings and its characters, he felt that the phobia and negative aspect of human behavior were depicted. He put a lot of effort into living life to the fullest, but in the end he realized how fleeting happiness and life's purpose were and became dejected. His lifetime was made ludicrous by this sadistic process.

THE STRANGER

The Irrationality of the World

Despite being a work of fiction, *The Stranger* strongly echoes Camus's philosophical understanding of absurdity. In his works, Camus argues that human existence in general and individual lives have no logical purpose or structure. People struggle to accept this idea, thus they make ongoing attempts to find or develop reasonable structure and significance in their life. Humanity's vain struggle to create rational order where none already exists is referred to as absurdity. The principles of absurdity are present throughout *The Stranger* even if Camus does not mention them clearly. Both the outside world in which Meursault lives and his inner world of thoughts and attitudes lack any sense of logic. Meursault makes decisions like choosing to marry Marie and choosing to kill the Arab without any apparent justification. Despite this, society makes an effort to create or impose rational justifications for Meursault's irrational behavior. The notion that events occasionally have no purpose or cause for occurring is upsetting and dangerous for society. In Part two of the book, the trial sequence symbolizes society's endeavor to create logical order. Meursault's attorney and that prosecution both provide justifications for his client's crime that are based on logic, reason, and the idea of cause and consequence. These theories, however, are completely without foundation and exist primarily to allay the unsettling notion that the universe is irrational. The entire trial is a prime example of absurdity since it represents humanity's fruitless attempt to impose reason on a nonsensical universe.



As if this great outburst of anger had purged all my ills, killed all my hopes, I looked up at the mass of sighs and stars in the night sky and laid myself open for the first time to the Benin indifference of the world. And finding it so much like myself, in fact so fraternal, I realized that I'd been happy, and that I was still happy. For the final consummation and for me to feel less lonely, my last wish was that there should be a crowd of spectators at my execution and that they should greet me with cries of hatred.¹

THE MEANINGLESSNESS OF HUMAN LIFE

The notion that life has no redeeming value or goal is a key part of Camus' absurdist worldview. According to Camus, the only thing that is definite in life is death, and since everyone will die at some point, all lives are equally pointless. Throughout the course of the book, Meursault gradually comes to this conclusion, but it is not until his confrontation with the chaplain in the final chapter that he truly understands it. Meursault understands that the cosmos is equally indifferent to him as he is to most of it. Like all persons, Meursault has existed, will pass away, and is no longer significant. Paradoxically, Meursault's ability to find happiness depends on whether or not he comes to this seemingly depressing realization. He will realize that it doesn't matter whether he is put to death by lethal injection or if he survives to an advanced age and passes away naturally. Meursault can put aside his delusions of avoiding execution by winning a court appeal thanks to this understanding. He understands that these phantom hopes, which had previously consumed his thoughts, would only serve to give him the mistaken impression that death is preventable. Meursault realizes that his desire for a long life has proven to be a burden. His release from this erroneous hope allows him to enjoy life as it is and make the most of the time he has left.

The Chaplin knew the game well too, I could tell right away: his gaze never faltered. And his voice didn't falter, either, when he said, 'Have you no hope at all? And do you really live with the thought that when you die, you die, and nothing remains?' Yes, I said.²



THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PHYSICAL WORLD

Meursault's focus in the physical rather than the social or emotional components of the world around him is evident in *The Stranger*. The novel's thesis—that there is no higher meaning or order to human life—leads to this emphasis on the sensate realm. Meursault concentrates on his own body, his physical interaction with Marie, the weather, and other physical aspects of his environment throughout *The Stranger*. For instance, Meursault feels much more pain from the heat of the funeral parade than from the idea of burying his mother. Meursault is tormented by the sun on the beach, and during his trial, he even admits that his suffering from the sun is what motivated him to kill the Arab. Meursault's concern in the physical is also evident in the way he writes. When he glosses over emotional or social issues, he provides concise, straightforward explanations, but when he talks about things like nature and the weather, his descriptions become vivid and elaborate.

THE PLAGUE

Exile and separation



Rieux and Rambert, two characters who are exiled from the ladies they love, represent the themes of exile and separation. The motif is also evident in the countless other nameless residents who are cut off from family members who live in neighboring places or who were unlucky enough to be away when the gates of Oran were shut. The community also has a sense of exile because of its total isolation from the outside world. For everyone, exile meant "that sensation of a hole within which never left us, that inexplicable urge to harken back to the past or else to quicken the march of time, and those acute shafts of remembrance that stung like fire," according to Rieux, the narrator. Some people, like Rambert, are exiles in more ways than one since they cannot live in their own houses and are also cut off from the people they wish to be with. Numerous changes in attitudes and behaviors are brought on by exile-related feelings. People initially fantasize about the missing person's return, but as time goes on, they begin to feel trapped, drifting through life with nothing left but the past because they have no idea how long their experience will last. And the past just exudes sorrow and things that were left undone. They discover that because of their sense of abandonment, they are unable to express their personal sorrow to their neighbors, and their interactions with them are typically superficial. After the pandemic is gone and the depth of the exile and privation is evident from the immense delight with which long-distance lovers and family members rejoin one another, Rieux returns to the theme. Exile was a sense that was more elusive for some citizens. They only wanted to be reunited with something that was so difficult to describe but which, in their eyes, was the most desirable thing on Earth. Some people referred to it as peace. Rieux includes Tarrou in this group, albeit he only discovered it after Tarrou's passing. This interpretation of exile points to the term's deeper, metaphysical meanings. It has to do with losing faith in the idea that people exist in a world of reason, where they may achieve their goals and aspirations, discover purpose, and feel at home. Camus stated as follows in *The Myth of Sisyphus*:

A world that can be explained by reasoning, however faulty, is a familiar world. But in a universe that is suddenly deprived of illusions and of light, man feels a stranger. His is an irremediable exile. Because he is deprived of memories of a lost homeland as much as he lacks the hope of a promised land to come. This divorce between man and his setting truly constitute the filling of Absurdity.⁴



SOLIDARITY, COMMUNITY, AND RESISTANCE

The plague's devastation in Oran powerfully illustrates the absurdist view that there is no transcendent God and that humanity exist in an indifferent, unfathomable universe. The pandemic can hit anyone at any time and without warning. Humans are left in a situation of anxiety and uncertainty, which only has the outcome of death, and it is arbitrary and capricious. What must people react to in the face of this metaphysical reality? Should they give up, accept it as inevitable, and seek whatever solace they can on their own, or should they band together and fight back even though they must understand that they will never succeed? The latter is unmistakably Camus's response, as represented by the personalities of Rieux, Rambert, and Tarrou. In a conversation with Tarrou in part II, Rieux makes his views apparent. According to Rieux, it would take a crazy person to willingly surrender to the pandemic. He holds the view that one must struggle against illness and death rather than accepting their presence as part of the natural order of things. He does not only think about himself; he is conscious of the requirements of the society. Rieux acknowledges that he is embroiled in a "never-ending defeat" when Tarrou points out that "[his] successes will never be lasting," but he continues to fight. Rieux is also conscious that he must make sacrifices in order to serve the greater cause; he cannot expect to be happy in his own life. Rambert picks up a lesson from this. He first maintains that he does not belong in Oran and that all of his thoughts are focused on getting back to the woman he loves in Paris. He primarily considers his own happiness and the injustice of his circumstances, but over time he begins to understand that he is a part of a broader human community that has obligations to him that he cannot ignore. In the end, he comes to the conclusion that he cannot confront his girlfriend while acting cowardly. Tarrou follows an ethical code that requires him to act in a way that helps the entire community, even though doing so in this instance puts his life in danger. When Tarrou recounts his life to Rieux later in the book, he gives the word "Plague" a new meaning. He doesn't merely see it as a particular illness or as the existence of a faceless evil that exists outside of humankind. According to Tarrou, the plague is every person's innate desire and ability to cause harm and it is everyone's responsibility to guard against this propensity in order to prevent the spread of the disease to others. In his words to Rieux, the microorganism is what is natural. All other aspects of health, integrity, and purity are the



result of human will and unwavering attentiveness. The person with the fewest attentional slip-ups is the decent man, the person who spreads disease to few people.

RELIGION

In the book, Camus explores how people frequently resort to religion in times of adversity. The sermons of the strict Jesuit priest Father Paneloux present the religious viewpoint in contrast to the humanist viewpoints of Rieux, Rambert, and Tarrou. Paneloux disagrees with the other key characters in that he thinks there is a plausible reason for the plague breakout. Paneloux refers to the pandemic as the "flail of God" through which God separates the good from the evil in his first sermon, which was delivered in the first month of the plague. The tragedy was not God's doing, as Paneloux painstakingly argues: "He looked on the evil-doing in the town with compassion; only when there was no other remedy did He turn His face away, to force people to face the truth about their lives." Even the horrific suffering brought on by the pandemic, in Paneloux's opinion, ultimately leads to good. Even in the most tragic circumstances, the divine light can still be seen, and everyone is given Christian hope. Many residents of the town, including the magistrate Othon, regard Paneloux's reasoning as indisputable because it is founded on St. Augustine's theology, a field in which he is an authority. Rieux, though, is unsatisfied. Camus craftily rewrites the story to raise the issue of innocent suffering. How does Paneloux explain how the death of a child fits with his claim that the plague is a punishment for sin? Jacques Othon is the youngster in question, and Paneloux, Rieux, and Tarrou all witness his horrifying demise. In his second sermon, Paneloux addresses the issue of innocent suffering after feeling compassion for the young kid. He contends that a child's agony is so terrible and difficult to comprehend that it puts people through a fundamental test of faith: either we must believe everything or we must deny everything and who, asks Paneloux, and could stand to do the latter? He asserts that we must submit to divine will and cannot pick and choose what to accept or limit ourselves to what we can comprehend. But we must continue to work to do what good we can (as Paneloux himself does as one of the volunteers who fight the plague). However, it appears from Paneloux's second sermon that his faith has been tested. Paneloux gets sick and avoids medical care because he finds it difficult to reconcile his views with the loss of the child. Because of the mysterious nature of his illness and the fact that it does not match the plague's symptoms, Rieux labels him a "doubtful case." He surrenders to God's will, and as he passes



away, he holds on to his cross and the last of his convictions. It is implied that Paneloux's decline in faith is what ultimately causes his demise. In contrast to Tarrou, who bravely battles death when his time comes, Paneloux passes away. Tarrou's struggle against death serves as a metaphor for the struggle against the plague and the absurdity of the cosmos. Paneloux is criticized for having lost faith in people, unlike Tarrou. In contrast to Tarrou, he opts to hold on to a hollow ideal in which he no longer believes, and unlike Tarrou, he does not find comfort in death. It is obvious that Camus supports Rieux and Tarrou in this philosophical conflict.

THE GUEST



MORALITY

When Daru is told to turn in the Arab, he is put in a difficult moral position. Morality is handled in the same ambiguous manner as the other story elements. Daru's line of action gets him into moral problems since he is torn between punishing the Arab and letting him go, and he lets his doubts get the better of him. He makes no decision at all, leaving the Arab free to select between freedom or a trial. It is important to consider Camus' philosophy in order to comprehend Daru's subsequent moral despondency. Camus felt that once a decision was made, it should be followed through on, and that having the ability to select one's own course of action gives life purpose. Daru undoubtedly feels that handing the Arab over was wrong, yet he refuses to just free the prisoner. He doesn't decide, and as a result, he is left in total moral isolation.

SOLITUDE

In *The Guest*, there are two different types of loneliness. Daru experiences physical isolation on the isolated, unchanging island throughout the narrative. The fact that Daru is physically alone is not a bad thing; he has accepted his living situation and feels comfortable there. Even if the surroundings are cold and merciless, Daru finds peace there. Daru, however, is left in a position of moral seclusion at the end. He has lost touch with himself because he did nothing to change the fate of the Arab. He only sees his lack of decision-making when he stares at the harsh environment that was once his home. The enigmatic writing on the chalkboard serves as the best visual representation of this moral isolation. If he composed it himself, it expresses his hopelessness and detachment from himself because he allowed the Arab to choose his own punishment, going against his own values. If it was written by someone else, it clearly poses a threat. Daru will now be evaluated by people who do not comprehend him because he lacked judgment. He is therefore in a position of great separation from human comprehension.

FREEDOM



The fundamental idea of *The Guest* is freedom, which is inextricably linked to the ability of every person to make decisions. Camus felt that freedom gives life significance and that one discovers value in life through taking independent action. This theory is illustrated in the story. Daru's decision to reside in the plateau region was influenced by what Camus would refer to as an understanding of the "absurd." Any human needs to have a sense of belonging, and despite its desolate temperature, the terrible plateau region serves as a kind of home for him. Just so, according to Camus, each of us must create a home for ourselves in a largely heartless universe. We construct this house according to our personal preferences. The ability to choose, ironically, also imposes obligations. We become victims of the universe's inherent ambiguity and brutality when we choose not to make a decision. In fact, in order to maintain our freedom, we must make a decision. Daru makes an effort to transfer the Arab's duty to make a decision to him. Daru, however, pays the price for the Arab's decision to give him. Daru need to have chosen a course of action and stayed with it. Instead, he discovers himself in a desperate moral limbo.

LIMITS OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE

Everyone in *The Guest* has just a cursory understanding of the events that go place. Balducci simply gets his orders and carries them out without questioning why the Arab killed his cousin or why Daru needs to take the Arab to the police. Daru continuously seeks information regarding the Arab's motivations for committing murder, assuming that the Arab did, but he is unsure of whether the Arab should be released or punished. The Arab, meantime, exhibits uncertainty in response to Daru's probing queries and when the latter clarifies his decision to either flee to the south or surrender to the authorities. The reader also has a constrained field of view. We are never told whether the Arab ought to be punished or set free. The author of the note on the chalkboard at the conclusion of the story is never revealed. Camus withholds essential information from us, placing us in a comparable situation to Daru or to anybody else who must make decisions despite having a limited viewpoint. And if we rarely do it in the dramatic way Camus does in *The Guest*, we all must do it every day. If we allow this fact to bother us, as Daru does, we leave ourselves vulnerable to moral despondency. We may prevent such sorrow, though, if we make decisions nonetheless and take responsibility for them. Daru fails to chose to open the door to despair because he becomes absorbed with the limits of his understanding.



THE ABSURD

According to Camus, the cosmos is silent and uncaring. People must thrive despite this disregard. They persist in seeking certainty and creating significance despite the impossibility of these goals. The result of this confluence of a godless, heartless world and human ambition is a state Camus refers to as "the ridiculous." The conflict between human need and the irrational quiet of the world, he writes, "gives rise to the ludicrous." Living in an unavoidable state of "the absurd" may sound very sad, but Camus believes that it is the only way for humans to survive. Despite the fact that the cosmos does not care if we live or die, one must continue to strive for, pursue, and exercise their freedom. Although Daru's capacity for solace and adaptation to the harsh plateau climate portends well for his capacity to endure life in ludicrous circumstances, his failure to react to the moral conundrum posed by the Arab ultimately leads to his demise. One must behave with an excessive level of confidence when faced with ambiguity and uncertainty. In any case, one must decide. Daru slips into despair as a result of his failure to do so.

THE FALL

JUSTICE AND JUDGMENT

The fear of being evaluated by others and the propensity for judgment of others and oneself are major themes in *The Fall*. The narrator of this made-up confession asserts that we despise the act of judging itself. Our main character, Jean-Baptiste, gains power from condemning others and defends this behavior by also judging himself. The novel also places a strong emphasis on justice. *The Fall* makes the argument that in a society where everyone is culpable and hypocritical, true "justice" is elusive, if it ever exists at all.

GUILT AND BLAME



The fall is based on the idea that everyone is at fault. Although this is a well-known Camus argument, the narrator of this book goes so far as to say that all men are murderers, even if only accidentally or negligently. This is a particularly striking argument because the book was published in the years following World War II. Any attempt at judging under this kind of "universal guilt" is completely hypocritical. It is ludicrous for a guilty guy to accuse another man of wrongdoing.

RELIGION

God has passed away in the The Fall universe. The narrator makes the case that we need to choose a new "master" to take God's place now that he no longer commands us. Because we are fully capable of dominating and condemning one another, men have essentially replaced God. Who needs God if we can take care of everything on our own? The narrator dismisses religion as absurd and hypocritical, contending that we distort, manipulate, and travesty Jesus' real intentions.

FREEDOM AND CONFINEMENT

A man who lives in isolation is shown in The Fall, in part because he believes that all connections are limiting. The issue is one of accountability: if you connect with others, you're constrained not only by what they expect of you but also by the public image you establish. And yet, this exact same man advocates a slave-owning worldview. He advises giving up independence since it is too difficult. The difficulty comes from having to repeatedly demonstrate your innocence in order to keep your freedom. The narrator is determined to avoid being judged at all costs because doing so would require them to make that case. His answer is to admit guilt, give up freedom, and accept a life of enslavement.

INNOCENCE



The Fall doesn't truly have innocence. Everyone, including Jesus Christ, is guilty in the world described in this book. According to the narrator's viewpoint, confessing your own guilt in order to avoid being judged and damning yourself to an eternity in prison. According to him, being incarcerated indicates guilt while being free indicates innocence. The traditional cause and effect relationship has been reversed; rather than being placed in shackles because we are criminals, we are regarded to be such because we are.

POWER

According to The Fall, dominance and submission are essential in this world. In an uncertain environment, only authority can definitively decide the truth. In the case of the novel's narrator, power is obtained by passing judgment on others and acting in a position of authority similar to that of God. Power is related to place and shows up at geographical peaks. Living on a mountain, for instance, places one above others and gives one dominance over them. Finally, just as condemning others results in power, forgiving them also does.

THEME OF PHILOSOPHICAL VIEWPOINTS: THE ABSURD

The Fall explores Camus's absurdist philosophy. The idea that all men are guilty of something is most prominently demonstrated. We are guilty not just of what we do, but also of what we don't do. Both the crimes we commit and the ones we fail to prevent are our fault. The book also examines a number of existential concepts, such as Kierkegaard's "dread" and Sartre's "poor faith." Not only are doubt and a sense of universal uncertainty present in the novel's topics, but also in its style and narration.



TRANSFORMATION

The Fall examines how many changes from blissful ignorance and self-serving hypocrisy to inner turmoil and self-awareness. This transition has more to do with being able or willing to face what is already understood than it does with learning new information. In the fresh context of self-examination, truth, innocence, and freedom are reexamined. It's interesting that this alteration just affects one's mentality rather than their behavior, which makes us doubt the validity of the change.

TRUTH

The idea that there is no absolute truth is reflected in The Fall. What we believe to be true is actually a set of beliefs. In fact, the narrator's shattering of those assumptions is what ultimately causes the novel's fundamental conflict. Then, almost jokingly, the narrator draws the conclusion that truth is overvalued. It's boring, for starters. It's not that helpful, either. The narrator claims that the "truth" as we typically understand it isn't necessarily as enlightening as lies.

MORTALITY

The Fall's battle is largely driven by the desire for immortality. It is clear that the narrator loves himself, and the idea of his own demise comforts him.

He is having trouble coping with a number of paradoxical things, such as the fact that guys won't take you seriously until you're dead, but that once you are, you can't stay around to enjoy it. The narrator claims that while dying is a powerful method to convey your point, men are prone to misread the motivations behind your sacrifice, leading them to believe that you died in vain. The narrator searches for immortality in a number of different methods (i.e., sex and alcohol). He asserts that while you are having a good time, you are the most liberated from your own mortality.

CONCLUSION



Now that we are looking at Albert Camus's key writings, we may learn about the various ways that people behave and how their moods are affected by their surroundings. One's life and surroundings are both impacted by their environment. *The Stranger*, *The Plague*, and *The Fall*, three novels that were published during Camus' lifetime, as well as his two most influential philosophical articles, are largely responsible for his renown (*The Myth of Sisyphus* and *The Rebel*). *Exile and the Kingdom*), an autobiographical novel *The First Man*, several dramatic works (most notably *Caligula*, *The Misunderstanding*, and *The Just Assassins*), a number of translations and adaptations (including new versions of works by Calderon, Lope de Vega, Dostoyevsky, and Faulkner), as well as a substantial number of essays, prose pieces, critical reviews, transcribed speeches and interviews, articles, a play, and a In order to set the stage for a more thorough study of Camus' philosophy and worldview, including his core beliefs and recurrent philosophical issues, the most significant of his writings are briefly summarized and described here.

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