WORLD LITERATURE IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION

III SEMESTER

III B.A ENGLISH LITERATURE

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Unit I Virgil – Aeneid

Aeneas was a Trojan **hero** in Greek mythology, son of the prince **Anchises** and the goddess **Aphrodite**. He is more extensively mentioned in **Roman** mythology, and is seen as an ancestor of **Remus** and **Romulus**, founders of Rome.

Aphrodite made all Greek gods fall in love with mortal women, and **Zeus**, to punish her, made her fall in love with **Anchises**, who was a herdsman near Mount Ida. **Aphrodite** appeared in front of him, and the herdsman was smitten by her beauty. After sleeping together, **Aphrodite** revealed her true identity to him, who feared for any consequences that might afflict him. **Aphrodite** reassured him that there would be no problem as long as he kept it a secret. She also told him that she would give birth to **Aeneas**.

In the Iliad, **Aeneas** was the leader of the Trojan Dardanians, and the main lieutenant of **Hector**. **Aphrodite** protected him throughout the war, and was also helped by **Apollo**, and even **Poseidon** who normally favoured the Greeks. In **Roman** literature, mainly the Aeneid written by Virgil, he was one of the few Trojans not killed during the **Trojan War**. He travelled to Italy, where he settled in the region where Rome would later be built by his descendants, **Remus** and **Romulus**.

Juno, in Roman religion, chief goddess and female counterpart of Jupiter, closely resembling the Greek Hera, with whom she was identified. With Jupiter and Minerva, she was a member of the Capitoline triad of deities traditionally introduced by the Etruscan kings. Juno was connected with all aspects of the life of women, most particularly married life. Ovid (*Fasti*, Book V) relates that Juno was jealous of Jupiter for giving birth to Minerva from his own head. After Flora gave her an herb, Juno gave birth to Mars.

Summary & Analysis

1. Virgil begins with "Wars and a man I sing…" and says that he will tell the story of **Aeneas**, who has fled from Troy and is fated to eventually reach Latium in Italy, where he will found the race that will one day build Rome. But Aeneas's journey is made difficult by the gods, and in

particular by Juno, the queen of the gods. Virgil wonders why Juno hates Aeneas, who is famous for his piety. He asks the muse, the goddess of the arts, to tell him about the source of her anger.

Analysis

Virgil's beginning echoes the beginnings of the Iliad and the Odyssey, making it clear that Virgil intends to write an epic for Rome on par with those great Greek works. But unlike Homer's first lines, Virgil says he'll sing both of a man and of arms—this is a story about a hero who faces war.

2. Virgil gives some background about Carthage, **Juno**'s favorite city, a rich and old Phoenician settlement located in North Africa (modern-day Tunisia). Juno wants Carthage to one day rule the world, but she has heard that a race of men descended from Trojans are fated to destroy it.

Analysis

Right from the start, Virgil presents Juno as Aeneas's major antagonist. Despite what she knows about fate, she can't accept it, preferring to take out her anger on a famously pious man.

3. **Juno** fears the potential Trojan destruction of Carthage. In addition, Paris, a Trojan prince, was once asked to judge who was the most beautiful goddess, and chose **Venus** over Juno and **Minerva**. Finally, Juno remembers that her husband, Jupiter, once ran off with a Trojan shepherd name Ganymede. All of this has made Juno so despise the Trojans that she's made it impossible for many years for them to reach Latium.

Analysis

Juno's anger towards Aeneas seems almost childish. It has more to do with her own personality, jealous and hot-headed, than it has to do with him. Despite her stature as the wife of the king of the gods, she cares a lot about human affairs.

4. Now the Trojans are sailing near Sicily. **Juno** angrily recalls a time when **Minerva** burned Greek ships. Juno, prideful about her power, wonders why she shouldn't do the same.

Analysis

Juno's concerns about her own strength motivate many of her actions. In a very human way, she lacks self-confidence and takes it out on others!

5. Juno goes to **Aeolus**, the wind god, who keeps the winds in his dungeon. She asks Aeolus to send winds to sink the Trojan ships, and in return promises him a beautiful nymph for a wife. Aeolus immediately agrees, since Juno is the most powerful goddess, and unleashes the East, West and South-West winds against the Trojans.y

Analysis

This passage shows that Juno's fears about her own power are unfounded. She's good at negotiating, and Aeolus respects her. This makes her persecution of Aeneas seem even more unjust.

6. The winds blast the Trojan ships, and Aeneas prays to the gods. He then wishes that he could have died at Troy, killed by Achilles just as Hector was. Aeneas thinks that the Trojans who died defending Troy were many times more blessed than he is, who survived only to have no home. Meanwhile, his men's ships (eleven are mentioned) crash in the shallows or begin to sink.

Analysis

In our first view of Aeneas, he hardly seems a great hero. He wishes he could escape his fate. Yet he also does not try to escape his fate. He prays to the gods rather than curse or rebel against them, demonstrating his piety.

7. The situation is desperate, but then **Neptune**, the god of the ocean, notices the storm and recognizes it as his sister **Juno**'s work. He angrily commands the winds to return to **Aeolus**, and

proclaims that he, Neptune, is the lord of the ocean. Neptune then calms the sea, just as a politician might calm an angry crowd, and the sun comes out.

Analysis

The metaphor of the politician references Rome. A politician's leadership is a good thing, as it can nonviolently transform a population. Neptune is like Augustus Caesar, using his power for good.

8. He exhausted Trojans land their remaining seven ships at a cove in Libya, and **Achates**, a friend of Aeneas's, starts a fire. **Aeneas** hikes up a mountain to try to see if any other of his men's ships are out on the water. Instead, he spots a herd of deer. He shoots seven of them.

Analysis

In a change from his previous despair, Aeneas shows he's a true leader. Despite his fatigue, he doesn't give up hope of finding his lost men, and provides for the survivors.

9. Returning with the deer to feed his men, **Aeneas** gives a stirring pep talk. He recalls their difficulties with Scylla and the Cyclops, but says that someday, they'll enjoy looking back on these events. "A joy it will be one day, perhaps, to remember even this," says Aeneas. He says that the Fates have determined that they will manage to reach Italy, so they should cheer up. Though Aeneas privately worries and grieves, he fakes a positive attitude to support his men. They eat and miss their drowned friends.

Analysis

Aeneas's great leadership comes out even more clearly. He suppresses his own feelings for the good of the group—a sign of his supreme piety. And he respects his fate, and encourages his men to do the same. Like a good coach, he emphasizes the positive and looks at the bigger picture.

10. **Jove** and **Venus** watch the scene from the heavens. Venus asks Jove when there will be an end to Aeneas's suffering. Jove tells her not to worry, and foretells more of Aeneas's fate. Aeneas will reach Italy and found Lavinium, but he will have to battle the Italian locals first. Aeneas will then rule for three years, and after his death his son **Ascanius** will rule for thirty years. After three hundred years, Romulus and Remus, sons of a mortal priestess and **Mars**, will be born, and Romulus will found Rome, which will endure indefinitely. Even **Juno** will change her mind and love Rome. Eventually, Julius Caesar will bring peace—he will close the **gates of war** and bind Discord with a hundred knots.

Analysis

This passage reveals the tension inherent in the concept of fate. If this is all going to happen, why should we worry about the characters? But just because something is fated to occur, doesn't mean it will occur smoothly or easily. Characters lose track of the fated future, either because they hate what will happen (like Juno) or because they're focused about the tragedies that happen along the way (like Aeneas). It's not the destination. It's the journey.

11.**Jove** then sends the god **Mercury** to make **Dido**, the queen of Carthage, and her people be friendly and hospitable to the Trojans.

Analysis

Dido's sad story begins with the gods manipulating her. This creates a question: who's really to blame for her tragedy, her or the gods?

12. **Aeneas** and **Achates** go into the woods, where they come upon a virgin warrior, who is actually **Venus** in disguise. Venus tells them about **Dido**'s past, how her greedy brother Pygmalion, king of Tyre, killed Dido's husband Sychaeus for his wealth. When she learned what had happened from the ghost of her dead husband, Dido led her friends to escape, and founded the city of Carthage: "A woman leads them all." Aeneas then recounts his difficult journey and laments his drowned men, but Venus stops him and tells him the lost ships have arrived safely at the harbor of Carthage. Venus reveals herself, and then makes Aeneas and Achates invisible by covering them in a dense mist so that they can travel safely into Carthage.

Analysis

Dido's history shows her to be a loyal and brave leader, and an equal to Aeneas. Like Aeneas, she lost her spouse and fled her homeland with her people. Like Aeneas will do in the future, she founded a city. In this passage, however, Aeneas seems like the weaker leader, as he complains about his trip to his mother and focuses so much on the past that she interrupts him.

13. As he walks through Carthage, **Aeneas** envies the productive and happy town with its workers building up the city like busy bees. On the walls of a temple to Juno, Aeneas sees a depiction of the Trojan War of a large temple of **Juno**, including images of **Priam**, Achilles, and Hector, and is amazed and comforted that the ordeals of his people are known throughout the world. "Even here, the world is a world of tears and the burdens of mortality touch the heart."

Analysis

This is one of the Aeneid's most famous passages, but its precise Latin meaning is controversial. Maybe Aeneas ponders generally how the same concerns touch all of humanity, or maybe he's moved more specifically that even here in a foreign land, people sympathize with his story. Most likely, the true meaning is a combination.

14. **Dido** then arrives at the temple, and is not only beautiful but shows herself to be a capable leader. **Aeneas** (still invisible) is astonished to see friends whom he thought had drowned standing next to Dido. He listens as one of the Trojans describes their past struggles and Aeneas's bravery, declares their peaceful intentions, and asks if they can rebuild their ships at Dido's city.

Analysis

Dido's thoughtful and just leadership contrasts greatly with what she becomes. It seems that even without further divine intervention, she and the Trojans might have become great friends.

15. **Dido** generously offers them land and help in finding **Aeneas**. Just then, the mist of invisibility breaks away, revealing them, and **Venus** uses her powers to make Aeneas look extra-

handsome. Aeneas praises Dido, and she welcomes him and calls for a grand feast. **Achates** leaves to retrieve gifts for Dido of beautiful clothing and jewels.

Analysis

In all of Book I, Aeneas has been a rather passive hero, pushed around by Juno's storms or helped and guided by his mother's actions. Dido's all-important first impression of him is not his real form, but an extra-fancy Venus-enhanced version.

16. **Venus**, still concerned about **Juno**'s wrath and mistrustful of Carthaginian hospitality, sends Cupid, disguised as Aeneas's son **Ascanius**, to make **Dido** fall in love with **Aeneas**. Cupid brings the gifts to the feast, sits in Dido's lap and enchants her, making her forget her beloved Sychaeus as she falls in love with Aeneas. The narrator describes love as poison and fire, and says that Dido is "doomed." The Trojans and their hosts drink and make merry together and listen to music. Dido asks Aeneas to tell the whole story of his seven years of wandering.

Analysis

Venus sets in motion the Aeneid's most personal and ambiguous tragedy. It's unclear if Dido is really to blame for her disastrous spiral into love. On the one hand, Venus forces Dido to feel this way. On the other hand, Venus may be more of a symbol of emotion than a character on whom we can place the blame.

Unit II – St. Augustine's Confession

BOOK ONE

In God's searching presence, Augustine undertakes to plumb the depths of his memory to trace the mysterious pilgrimage of grace which his life has been -- and to praise God for his constant and omnipotent grace. In a mood of sustained prayer, he recalls what he can of his infancy, his

learning to speak, and his childhood experiences in school. He concludes with a paean of grateful praise to God.

CHAPTER I

1. "Great art thou, O Lord, and greatly to be praised; great is thy power, and infinite is thy wisdom."[6] And man desires to praise thee, for he is a part of thy creation; he bears his mortality about with him and carries the evidence of his sin and the proof that thou dost resist the proud. Still he desires to praise thee, this man who is only a small part of thy creation. Thou hast prompted him, that he should delight to praise thee, for thou hast made us for thyself and restless is our heart until it comes to rest in thee. Grant me, O Lord, to know and understand whether first to invoke thee or to praise thee; whether first to know thee or call upon thee. But who can invoke thee, knowing thee not? For he who knows thee not may invoke thee as another than thou art. It may be that we should invoke thee in order that we may come to know thee. But "how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? Or how shall they believe without a preacher?"[7] Now, "they shall praise the Lord who seek him,"[8] for "those who seek shall find him,"[9] and, finding him, shall praise him. I will seek thee, O Lord, and call upon thee. I call upon thee, O Lord, in my faith which thou hast given me, which thou hast inspired in me through the humanity of thy Son, and through the ministry of thy preacher.[10]

CHAPTER II

2. And how shall I call upon my God -- my God and my Lord? For when I call on him I ask him to come into me. And what place is there in me into which my God can come? How could God, the God who made both heaven and earth, come into me? Is there anything in me, O Lord my God, that can contain thee? Do even the heaven and the earth, which thou hast made, and in which thou didst make me, contain thee? Is it possible that, since without thee nothing would be which does exist, thou didst make it so that whatever exists has some capacity to receive thee? Why, then, do I ask thee to come into me, since I also am and could not be if thou wert not in me? For I am not, after all, in hell -- and yet thou art there too, for "if I go down into hell, thou art there."[11] Therefore I would not exist -- I would simply not be at all -- unless I exist in thee, from whom and by whom and in whom all things are. Even so, Lord; even so. Where do I call

thee to, when I am already in thee? Or from whence wouldst thou come into me? Where, beyond heaven and earth, could I go that there my God might come to me -- he who hath said, "I fill heaven and earth"?[12]

CHAPTER III

3. Since, then, thou dost fill the heaven and earth, do they contain thee? Or, dost thou fill and overflow them, because they cannot contain thee? And where dost thou pour out what remains of thee after heaven and earth are full? Or, indeed, is there no need that thou, who dost contain all things, shouldst be contained by any, since those things which thou dost fill thou fillest by containing them? For the vessels which thou dost fill do not confine thee, since even if they were broken, thou wouldst not be poured out. And, when thou art poured out on us, thou art not thereby brought down; rather, we are uplifted. Thou art not scattered; rather, thou dost gather us together. But when thou dost fill all things, dost thou fill them with thy whole being? Or, since not even all things together could contain thee altogether, does any one thing contain a single part, and do all things contain that same part at the same time? Do singulars contain thee singly? Do greater things contain more of thee, and smaller things less? Or, is it not rather that thou art wholly present everywhere, yet in such a way that nothing contains thee wholly?

CHAPTER IV

4. What, therefore, is my God? What, I ask, but the Lord God? "For who is Lord but the Lord himself, or who is God besides our God?"[13] Most high, most excellent, most potent, most omnipotent; most merciful and most just; most secret and most truly present; most beautiful and most strong; stable, yet not supported; unchangeable, yet changing all things; never new, never old; making all things new, yet bringing old age upon the proud, and they know it not; always working, ever at rest; gathering, yet needing nothing; sustaining, pervading, and protecting; creating, nourishing, and developing; seeking, and yet possessing all things. Thou dost love, but without passion; art jealous, yet free from care; dost repent without remorse; art angry, yet remainest serene. Thou changest thy ways, leaving thy plans unchanged; thou recoverest what thou hast never really lost. Thou art never in need but still thou dost rejoice at thy gains; art never

greedy, yet demandest dividends. Men pay more than is required so that thou dost become a debtor; yet who can possess anything at all which is not already thine? Thou owest men nothing, yet payest out to them as if in debt to thy creature, and when thou dost cancel debts thou losest nothing thereby. Yet, O my God, my life, my holy Joy, what is this that I have said? What can any man say when he speaks of thee? But woe to them that keep silence -- since even those who say most are dumb.

CHAPTER V

5. Who shall bring me to rest in thee? Who will send thee into my heart so to overwhelm it that my sins shall be blotted out and I may embrace thee, my only good? What art thou to me? Have mercy that I may speak. What am I to thee that thou shouldst command me to love thee, and if I do it not, art angry and threatenest vast misery? Is it, then, a trifling sorrow not to love thee? It is not so to me. Tell me, by thy mercy, O Lord, my God, what thou art to me. "Say to my soul, I am your salvation."[14] So speak that I may hear. Behold, the ears of my heart are before thee, O Lord; open them and "say to my soul, I am your salvation." I will hasten after that voice, and I will lay hold upon thee. Hide not thy face from me. Even if I die, let me see thy face lest I die.

6. The house of my soul is too narrow for thee to come in to me; let it be enlarged by thee. It is in ruins; do thou restore it. There is much about it which must offend thy eyes; I confess and know it. But who will cleanse it? Or, to whom shall I cry but to thee? "Cleanse thou me from my secret faults," O Lord, "and keep back thy servant from strange sins."[15] "I believe, and therefore do I speak."[16] But thou, O Lord, thou knowest. Have I not confessed my transgressions unto thee, O my God; and hast thou not put away the iniquity of my heart?[17] I do not contend in judgment with thee,[18] who art truth itself; and I would not deceive myself, lest my iniquity lie even to itself. I do not, therefore, contend in judgment with thee, for "if thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?"[19]

CHAPTER VI

7. Still, dust and ashes as I am, allow me to speak before thy mercy. Allow me to speak, for, behold, it is to thy mercy that I speak and not to a man who scorns me. Yet perhaps even thou mightest scorn me; but when thou dost turn and attend to me, thou wilt have mercy upon me. For

what do I wish to say, O Lord my God, but that I know not whence I came hither into this life-in-death. Or should I call it death-in-life? I do not know. And yet the consolations of thy mercy have sustained me from the very beginning, as I have heard from my fleshly parents, from whom and in whom thou didst form me in time -- for I cannot myself remember. Thus even though they sustained me by the consolation of woman's milk, neither my mother nor my nurses filled their own breasts but thou, through them, didst give me the food of infancy according to thy ordinance and thy bounty which underlie all things. For it was thou who didst cause me not to want more than thou gavest and it was thou who gavest to those who nourished me the will to give me what thou didst give them. And they, by an instinctive affection, were willing to give me what thou hadst supplied abundantly. It was, indeed, good for them that my good should come through them, though, in truth, it was not from them but by them. For it is from thee, O God, that all good things come -- and from my God is all my health. This is what I have since learned, as thou hast made it abundantly clear by all that I have seen thee give, both to me and to those around me. For even at the very first I knew how to suck, to lie quiet when I was full, and to cry when in pain -- nothing more.

8. Afterward I began to laugh -- at first in my sleep, then when waking. For this I have been told about myself and I believe it -- though I cannot remember it -- for I see the same things in other infants. Then, little by little, I realized where I was and wished to tell my wishes to those who might satisfy them, but I could not! For my wants were inside me, and they were outside, and they could not by any power of theirs come into my soul. And so I would fling my arms and legs about and cry, making the few and feeble gestures that I could, though indeed the signs were not much like what I inwardly desired and when I was not satisfied -- either from not being understood or because what I got was not good for me -- I grew indignant that my elders were not subject to me and that those on whom I actually had no claim did not wait on me as slaves -- and I avenged myself on them by crying. That infants are like this, I have myself been able to learn by watching them; and they, though they knew me not, have shown me better what I was like than my own nurses who knew me.

9. And, behold, my infancy died long ago, but I am still living. But thou, O Lord, whose life is forever and in whom nothing dies -- since before the world was, indeed, before all that can be called "before," thou wast, and thou art the God and Lord of all thy creatures; and with thee

abide all the stable causes of all unstable things, the unchanging sources of all changeable things, and the eternal reasons of all non-rational and temporal things -- tell me, thy suppliant, O God, tell me, O merciful One, in pity tell a pitiful creature whether my infancy followed yet an earlier age of my life that had already passed away before it. Was it such another age which I spent in my mother's womb? For something of that sort has been suggested to me, and I have myself seen pregnant women. But what, O God, my Joy, preceded _that_ period of life? Was I, indeed, anywhere, or anybody? No one can explain these things to me, neither father nor mother, nor the experience of others, nor my own memory. Dost thou laugh at me for asking such things? Or dost thou command me to praise and confess unto thee only what I know?

10. I give thanks to thee, O Lord of heaven and earth, giving praise to thee for that first being and my infancy of which I have no memory. For thou hast granted to man that he should come to self-knowledge through the knowledge of others, and that he should believe many things about himself on the authority of the womenfolk. Now, clearly, I had life and being; and, as my infancy closed, I was already learning signs by which my feelings could be communicated to others.

Whence could such a creature come but from thee, O Lord? Is any man skillful enough to have fashioned himself? Or is there any other source from which being and life could flow into us, save this, that thou, O Lord, hast made us -- thou with whom being and life are one, since thou thyself art supreme being and supreme life both together. For thou art infinite and in thee there is no change, nor an end to this present day -- although there is a sense in which it ends in thee since all things are in thee and there would be no such thing as days passing away unless thou didst sustain them. And since "thy years shall have no end,"[20] thy years are an ever-present day. And how many of ours and our fathers' days have passed through this thy day and have received from it what measure and fashion of being they had? And all the days to come shall so receive and so pass away. "But thou art the same"![21] And all the things of tomorrow and the days yet to come, and all of yesterday and the days that are past, thou wilt gather into this thy day. What is it to me if someone does not understand this? Let him still rejoice and continue to ask, "What is this?" Let him also rejoice and prefer to seek thee, even if he fails to find an answer, rather than to seek an answer and not find thee!

CHAPTER VII

11. "Hear me, O God! Woe to the sins of men!" When a man cries thus, thou showest him mercy, for thou didst create the man but not the sin in him. Who brings to remembrance the sins of my infancy? For in thy sight there is none free from sin, not even the infant who has lived but a day upon this earth. Who brings this to my remembrance? Does not each little one, in whom I now observe what I no longer remember of myself? In what ways, in that time, did I sin? Was it that I cried for the breast? If I should now so cry -- not indeed for the breast, but for food suitable to my condition -- I should be most justly laughed at and rebuked. What I did then deserved rebuke but, since I could not understand those who rebuked me, neither custom nor common sense permitted me to be rebuked. As we grow we root out and cast away from us such childish habits. Yet I have not seen anyone who is wise who cast away the good when trying to purge the bad. Nor was it good, even in that time, to strive to get by crying what, if it had been given me, would have been hurtful; or to be bitterly indignant at those who, because they were older -- not slaves, either, but free -- and wiser than I, would not indulge my capricious desires. Was it a good thing for me to try, by struggling as hard as I could, to harm them for not obeying me, even when it would have done me harm to have been obeyed? Thus, the infant's innocence lies in the weakness of his body and not in the infant mind. I have myself observed a baby to be jealous, though it could not speak; it was livid as it watched another infant at the breast.

Who is ignorant of this? Mothers and nurses tell us that they cure these things by I know not what remedies. But is this innocence, when the fountain of milk is flowing fresh and abundant, that another who needs it should not be allowed to share it, even though he requires such nourishment to sustain his life? Yet we look leniently on such things, not because they are not faults, or even small faults, but because they will vanish as the years pass. For, although we allow for such things in an infant, the same things could not be tolerated patiently in an adult.

12. Therefore, O Lord my God, thou who gavest life to the infant, and a body which, as we see, thou hast furnished with senses, shaped with limbs, beautified with form, and endowed with all vital energies for its well-being and health -- thou dost command me to praise thee for these things, to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praise unto his name, O Most High.[22] For thou art God, omnipotent and good, even if thou hadst done no more than these things, which no other but thou canst do -- thou alone who madest all things fair and didst order everything according to thy law.

I am loath to dwell on this part of my life of which, O Lord, I have no remembrance, about which I must trust the word of others and what I can surmise from observing other infants, even if such guesses are trustworthy. For it lies in the deep murk of my forgetfulness and thus is like the period which I passed in my mother's womb. But if "I was conceived in iniquity, and in sin my mother nourished me in her womb,"[23] where, I pray thee, O my God, where, O Lord, or when was I, thy servant, ever innocent? But see now, I pass over that period, for what have I to do with a time from which I can recall no memories?

CHAPTER VIII

13. Did I not, then, as I grew out of infancy, come next to boyhood, or rather did it not come to me and succeed my infancy? My infancy did not go away (for where would it go?). It was simply no longer present; and I was no longer an infant who could not speak, but now a chattering boy. I remember this, and I have since observed how I learned to speak. My elders did not teach me words by rote, as they taught me my letters afterward. But I myself, when I was unable to communicate all I wished to say to whomever I wished by means of whimperings and grunts and various gestures of my limbs (which I used to reinforce my demands), I myself repeated the sounds already stored in my memory by the mind which thou, O my God, hadst given me. When they called some thing by name and pointed it out while they spoke, I saw it and realized that the thing they wished to indicate was called by the name they then uttered. And what they meant was made plain by the gestures of their bodies, by a kind of natural language, common to all nations, which expresses itself through changes of countenance, glances of the eye, gestures and intonations which indicate a disposition and attitude -- either to seek or to possess, to reject or to avoid. So it was that by frequently hearing words, in different phrases, I gradually identified the objects which the words stood for and, having formed my mouth to repeat these signs, I was thereby able to express my will. Thus I exchanged with those about me the verbal signs by which we express our wishes and advanced deeper into the stormy fellowship of human life, depending all the while upon the authority of my parents and the behest of my elders.

CHAPTER IX

14. O my God! What miseries and mockeries did I then experience when it was impressed on me that obedience to my teachers was proper to my boyhood estate if I was to flourish in this world and distinguish myself in those tricks of speech which would gain honor for me among men, and deceitful riches! To this end I was sent to school to get learning, the value of which I knew not -- wretch that I was. Yet if I was slow to learn, I was flogged. For this was deemed praiseworthy by our forefathers and many had passed before us in the same course, and thus had built up the precedent for the sorrowful road on which we too were compelled to travel, multiplying labor and sorrow upon the sons of Adam. About this time, O Lord, I observed men praying to thee, and I learned from them to conceive thee -- after my capacity for understanding as it was then -- to be some great Being, who, though not visible to our senses, was able to hear and help us. Thus as a boy I began to pray to thee, my Help and my Refuge, and, in calling on thee, broke the bands of my tongue. Small as I was, I prayed with no slight earnestness that I might not be beaten at school. And when thou didst not heed me -- for that would have been giving me over to my folly -- my elders and even my parents too, who wished me no ill, treated my stripes as a joke, though they were then a great and grievous ill to me.

15. Is there anyone, O Lord, with a spirit so great, who cleaves to thee with such steadfast affection (or is there even a kind of obtuseness that has the same effect) -- is there any man who, by cleaving devoutly to thee, is endowed with so great a courage that he can regard indifferently those racks and hooks and other torture weapons from which men throughout the world pray so fervently to be spared; and can they scorn those who so greatly fear these torments, just as my parents were amused at the torments with which our teachers punished us boys? For we were no less afraid of our pains, nor did we beseech thee less to escape them. Yet, even so, we were sinning by writing or reading or studying less than our assigned lessons.

For I did not, O Lord, lack memory or capacity, for, by thy will, I possessed enough for my age. However, my mind was absorbed only in play, and I was punished for this by those who were doing the same things themselves. But the idling of our elders is called business; the idling of boys, though quite like it, is punished by those same elders, and no one pities either the boys or the men. For will any common sense observer agree that I was rightly punished as a boy for playing ball -- just because this hindered me from learning more quickly those lessons by means of which, as a man, I could play at more shameful games? And did he by whom I was beaten do

anything different? When he was worsted in some small controversy with a fellow teacher, he was more tormented by anger and envy than I was when beaten by a playmate in the ball game.

CHAPTER X

16. And yet I sinned, O Lord my God, thou ruler and creator of all natural things -- but of sins only the ruler -- I sinned, O Lord my God, in acting against the precepts of my parents and of those teachers. For this learning which they wished me to acquire -- no matter what their motives were -- I might have put to good account afterward. I disobeyed them, not because I had chosen a better way, but from a sheer love of play. I loved the vanity of victory, and I loved to have my ears tickled with lying fables, which made them itch even more ardently, and a similar curiosity glowed more and more in my eyes for the shows and sports of my elders. Yet those who put on such shows are held in such high repute that almost all desire the same for their children. They are therefore willing to have them beaten, if their childhood games keep them from the studies by which their parents desire them to grow up to be able to give such shows. Look down on these things with mercy, O Lord, and deliver us who now call upon thee; deliver those also who do not call upon thee, that they may call upon thee, and thou mayest deliver them.

CHAPTER XI

17. Even as a boy I had heard of eternal life promised to us through the humility of the Lord our God, who came down to visit us in our pride, and I was signed with the sign of his cross, and was seasoned with his salt even from the womb of my mother, who greatly trusted in thee. Thou didst see, O Lord, how, once, while I was still a child, I was suddenly seized with stomach pains and was at the point of death -- thou didst see, O my God, for even then thou wast my keeper, with what agitation and with what faith I solicited from the piety of my mother and from thy Church (which is the mother of us all) the baptism of thy Christ, my Lord and my God. The mother of my flesh was much perplexed, for, with a heart pure in thy faith, she was always in deep travail for my eternal salvation. If I had not quickly recovered, she would have provided forthwith for my initiation and washing by thy life- giving sacraments, confessing thee, O Lord Jesus, for the forgiveness of sins. So my cleansing was deferred, as if it were inevitable that, if I should live, I

would be further polluted; and, further, because the guilt contracted by sin after baptism would be still greater and more perilous.

Thus, at that time, I "believed" along with my mother and the whole household, except my father. But he did not overcome the influence of my mother's piety in me, nor did he prevent my believing in Christ, although he had not yet believed in him. For it was her desire, O my God, that I should acknowledge thee as my Father rather than him. In this thou didst aid her to overcome her husband, to whom, though his superior, she yielded obedience. In this way she also yielded obedience to thee, who dost so command.

18. I ask thee, O my God, for I would gladly know if it be thy will, to what good end my baptism was deferred at that time? Was it indeed for my good that the reins were slackened, as it were, to encourage me in sin? Or, were they not slackened? If not, then why is it still dinned into our ears on all sides, "Let him alone, let him do as he pleases, for he is not yet baptized"? In the matter of bodily health, no one says, "Let him alone; let him be worse wounded; for he is not yet cured"! How much better, then, would it have been for me to have been cured at once -- and if thereafter, through the diligent care of friends and myself, my soul's restored health had been kept safe in thy keeping, who gave it in the first place! This would have been far better, in truth. But how many and great the waves of temptation which appeared to hang over me as I grew out of childhood! These were foreseen by my mother, and she preferred that the unformed clay should be risked to them rather than the clay molded after Christ's image.[24]

CHAPTER XII

19. But in this time of childhood -- which was far less dreaded for me than my adolescence -- I had no love of learning, and hated to be driven to it. Yet I was driven to it just the same, and good was done for me, even though I did not do it well, for I would not have learned if I had not been forced to it. For no man does well against his will, even if what he does is a good thing. Neither did they who forced me do well, but the good that was done me came from thee, my God. For they did not care about the way in which I would use what they forced me to learn, and took it for granted that it was to satisfy the inordinate desires of a rich beggary and a shameful glory. But thou, Lord, by whom the hairs of our head are numbered, didst use for my good the

error of all who pushed me on to study: but my error in not being willing to learn thou didst use for my punishment. And I -- though so small a boy yet so great a sinner -- was not punished without warrant. Thus by the instrumentality of those who did not do well, thou didst well for me; and by my own sin thou didst justly punish me. For it is even as thou hast ordained: that every inordinate affection brings on its own punishment.

CHAPTER XIII

20. But what were the causes for my strong dislike of Greek literature, which I studied from my boyhood? Even to this day I have not fully understood them. For Latin I loved exceedingly -- not just the rudiments, but what the grammarians teach. For those beginner's lessons in reading, writing, and reckoning, I considered no less a burden and pain than Greek. Yet whence came this, unless from the sin and vanity of this life? For I was "but flesh, a wind that passeth away and cometh not again."[25] Those first lessons were better, assuredly, because they were more certain, and through them I acquired, and still retain, the power of reading what I find written and of writing for myself what I will. In the other subjects, however, I was compelled to learn about the wanderings of a certain Aeneas, oblivious of my own wanderings, and to weep for Dido dead, who slew herself for love. And all this while I bore with dry eyes my own wretched self dying to thee, O God, my life, in the midst of these things.

21. For what can be more wretched than the wretch who has no pity upon himself, who sheds tears over Dido, dead for the love of Aeneas, but who sheds no tears for his own death in not loving thee, O God, light of my heart, and bread of the inner mouth of my soul, O power that links together my mind with my inmost thoughts? I did not love thee, and thus committed fornication against thee.[26] Those around me, also sinning, thus cried out: "Well done! Well done!" The friendship of this world is fornication against thee; and "Well done! Well done!" is cried until one feels ashamed not to show himself a man in this way. For my own condition I shed no tears, though I wept for Dido, who "sought death at the sword's point,"[27] while I myself was seeking the lowest rung of thy creation, having forsaken thee; earth sinking back to earth again. And, if I had been forbidden to read these poems, I would have grieved that I was not allowed to read what grieved me. This sort of madness is considered more honorable and more fruitful learning than the beginner's course in which I learned to read and write.

22. But now, O my God, cry unto my soul, and let thy truth say to me: "Not so, not so! That first learning was far better." For, obviously, I would rather forget the wanderings of Aeneas, and all such things, than forget how to write and read. Still, over the entrance of the grammar school there hangs a veil. This is not so much the sign of a covering for a mystery as a curtain for error. Let them exclaim against me -- those I no longer fear -- while I confess to thee, my God, what my soul desires, and let me find some rest, for in blaming my own evil ways I may come to love thy holy ways. Neither let those cry out against me who buy and sell the baubles of literature. For if I ask them if it is true, as the poet says, that Aeneas once came to Carthage, the unlearned will reply that they do not know and the learned will deny that it is true. But if I ask with what letters the name Aeneas is written, all who have ever learned this will answer correctly, in accordance with the conventional understanding men have agreed upon as to these signs. Again, if I should ask which would cause the greatest inconvenience in our life, if it were forgotten: reading and writing, or these poetical fictions, who does not see what everyone would answer who had not entirely lost his own memory? I erred, then, when as a boy I preferred those vain studies to these more profitable ones, or rather loved the one and hated the other. "One and one are two, two and two are four": this was then a truly hateful song to me. But the wooden horse full of its armed soldiers, and the holocaust of Troy, and the spectral image of Creusa were all a most delightful -- and vain -- show![28]

23. But why, then, did I dislike Greek learning, which was full of such tales? For Homer was skillful in inventing such poetic fictions and is most sweetly wanton; yet when I was a boy, he was most disagreeable to me. I believe that Virgil would have the same effect on Greek boys as Homer did on me if they were forced to learn him. For the tedium of learning a foreign language mingled gall into the sweetness of those Grecian myths. For I did not understand a word of the language, and yet I was driven with threats and cruel punishments to learn it. There was also a time when, as an infant, I knew no Latin; but this I acquired without any fear or tormenting, but merely by being alert to the blandishments of my nurses, the jests of those who smiled on me, and the sportiveness of those who toyed with me. I learned all this, indeed, without being urged by any pressure of punishment, for my own heart urged me to bring forth its own fashioning, which I could not do except by learning words: not from those who taught me but those who talked to me, into whose ears I could pour forth whatever I could fashion. From this it is

sufficiently clear that a free curiosity is more effective in learning than a discipline based on fear. Yet, by thy ordinance, O God, discipline is given to restrain the excesses of freedom; this ranges from the ferule of the schoolmaster to the trials of the martyr and has the effect of mingling for us a wholesome bitterness, which calls us back to thee from the poisonous pleasures that first drew us from thee.

CHAPTER XV

24. Hear my prayer, O Lord; let not my soul faint under thy discipline, nor let me faint in confessing unto thee thy mercies, whereby thou hast saved me from all my most wicked ways till thou shouldst become sweet to me beyond all the allurements that I used to follow. Let me come to love thee wholly, and grasp thy hand with my whole heart that thou mayest deliver me from every temptation, even unto the last. And thus, O Lord, my King and my God, may all things useful that I learned as a boy now be offered in thy service -- let it be that for thy service I now speak and write and reckon. For when I was learning vain things, thou didst impose thy discipline upon me: and thou hast forgiven me my sin of delighting in those vanities. In those studies I learned many a useful word, but these might have been learned in matters not so vain; and surely that is the safe way for youths to walk in.

CHAPTER XVI

25. But woe unto you, O torrent of human custom! Who shall stay your course? When will you ever run dry? How long will you carry down the sons of Eve into that vast and hideous ocean, which even those who have the Tree (for an ark)[29] can scarcely pass over? Do I not read in you the stories of Jove the thunderer -- and the adulterer?[30] How could he be both? But so it says, and the sham thunder served as a cloak for him to play at real adultery. Yet which of our gowned masters will give a tempered hearing to a man trained in their own schools who cries out and says: "These were Homer's fictions; he transfers things human to the gods. I could have wished that he would transfer divine things to us."[31] But it would have been more true if he said, "These are, indeed, his fictions, but he attributed divine attributes to sinful men, that crimes might not be accounted crimes, and that whoever committed such crimes might appear to imitate the celestial gods and not abandoned men."

26. And yet, O torrent of hell, the sons of men are still cast into you, and they pay fees for learning all these things. And much is made of it when this goes on in the forum under the auspices of laws which give a salary over and above the fees. And you beat against your rocky shore and roar: "Here words may be learned; here you can attain the eloquence which is so necessary to persuade people to your way of thinking; so helpful in unfolding your opinions." Verily, they seem to argue that we should never have understood these words, "golden shower," "bosom," "intrigue," "highest heavens," and other such words, if Terence had not introduced a good-for-nothing youth upon the stage, setting up a picture of Jove as his example of lewdness and telling the tale

"Of Jove's descending in a golden shower

Into Danae's bosom...

With a woman to intrigue."

See how he excites himself to lust, as if by a heavenly authority, when he says:

"Great Jove,

Who shakes the highest heavens with his thunder;

Shall I, poor mortal man, not do the same?

I've done it, and with all my heart, I'm glad."[32]

These words are not learned one whit more easily because of this vileness, but through them the vileness is more boldly perpetrated. I do not blame the words, for they are, as it were, choice and precious vessels, but I do deplore the wine of error which was poured out to us by teachers already drunk. And, unless we also drank we were beaten, without liberty of appeal to a sober judge. And yet, O my God, in whose presence I can now with security recall this, I learned these things willingly and with delight, and for it I was called a boy of good promise.

CHAPTER XVII

27. Bear with me, O my God, while I speak a little of those talents, thy gifts, and of the follies on which I wasted them. For a lesson was given me that sufficiently disturbed my soul, for in it there was both hope of praise and fear of shame or stripes. The assignment was that I should declaim the words of Juno, as she raged and sorrowed that she could not

"Bar off Italy

From all the approaches of the Teucrian king."[33]

I had learned that Juno had never uttered these words. Yet we were compelled to stray in the footsteps of these poetic fictions, and to turn into prose what the poet had said in verse. In the declamation, the boy won most applause who most strikingly reproduced the passions of anger and sorrow according to the "character" of the persons presented and who clothed it all in the most suitable language. What is it now to me, O my true Life, my God, that my declaiming was applauded above that of many of my classmates and fellow students? Actually, was not all that smoke and wind? Besides, was there nothing else on which I could have exercised my wit and tongue? Thy praise, O Lord, thy praises might have propped up the tendrils of my heart by thy Scriptures; and it would not have been dragged away by these empty trifles, a shameful prey to the spirits of the air. For there is more than one way in which men sacrifice to the fallen angels.

CHAPTER XVIII

28. But it was no wonder that I was thus carried toward vanity and was estranged from thee, O my God, when men were held up as models to me who, when relating a deed of theirs -- not in itself evil -- were covered with confusion if found guilty of a barbarism or a solecism; but who could tell of their own licentiousness and be applauded for it, so long as they did it in a full and ornate oration of well-chosen words. Thou seest all this, O Lord, and dost keep silence -- "long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth"[34] as thou art. Wilt thou keep silence forever? Even now thou drawest from that vast deep the soul that seeks thee and thirsts after thy delight, whose "heart said unto thee, ŒI have sought thy face; thy face, Lord, will I seek.'"[35] For I was far from thy face in the dark shadows of passion. For it is not by our feet, nor by change of place, that we either turn from thee or return to thee. That younger son did not charter horses or chariots, or ships, or fly away on visible wings, or journey by walking so that in the far country

he might prodigally waste all that thou didst give him when he set out.[36] A kind Father when thou gavest; and kinder still when he returned destitute! To be wanton, that is to say, to be darkened in heart -- this is to be far from thy face.

29. Look down, O Lord God, and see patiently, as thou art wont to do, how diligently the sons of men observe the conventional rules of letters and syllables, taught them by those who learned their letters beforehand, while they neglect the eternal rules of everlasting salvation taught by thee. They carry it so far that if he who practices or teaches the established rules of pronunciation should speak (contrary to grammatical usage) without aspirating the first syllable of "hominem" ["ominem," and thus make it "a 'uman being"], he will offend men more than if he, a human being, were to _hate_ another human being contrary to thy commandments. It is as if he should feel that there is an enemy who could be more destructive to himself than that hatred which excites him against his fellow man; or that he could destroy him whom he hates more completely than he destroys his own soul by this same hatred. Now, obviously, there is no knowledge of letters more innate than the writing of conscience -- against doing unto another what one would not have done to himself.

How mysterious thou art, who "dwellest on high"[37] in silence. O thou, the only great God, who by an unwearied law hurlest down the penalty of blindness to unlawful desire! When a man seeking the reputation of eloquence stands before a human judge, while a thronging multitude surrounds him, and inveighs against his enemy with the most fierce hatred, he takes most vigilant heed that his tongue does not slip in a grammatical error, for example, and say inter hominibus [instead of inter homines], but he takes no heed lest, in the fury of his spirit, he cut off a man from his fellow men [ex hominibus].

30. These were the customs in the midst of which I was cast, an unhappy boy. This was the wrestling arena in which I was more fearful of perpetrating a barbarism than, having done so, of envying those who had not. These things I declare and confess to thee, my God. I was applauded by those whom I then thought it my whole duty to please, for I did not perceive the gulf of infamy wherein I was cast away from thy eyes.

For in thy eyes, what was more infamous than I was already, since I displeased even my own kind and deceived, with endless lies, my tutor, my masters and parents -- all from a love of play, a craving for frivolous spectacles, a stage-struck restlessness to imitate what I saw in these shows? I pilfered from my parents' cellar and table, sometimes driven by gluttony, sometimes just to have something to give to other boys in exchange for their baubles, which they were prepared to sell even though they liked them as well as I. Moreover, in this kind of play, I often sought dishonest victories, being myself conquered by the vain desire for pre-eminence. And what was I so unwilling to endure, and what was it that I censured so violently when I caught anyone, except the very things I did to others? And, when I was myself detected and censured, I preferred to quarrel rather than to yield. Is this the innocence of childhood? It is not, O Lord, it is not. I entreat thy mercy, O my God, for these same sins as we grow older are transferred from tutors and masters; they pass from nuts and balls and sparrows, to magistrates and kings, to gold and lands and slaves, just as the rod is succeeded by more severe chastisements. It was, then, the fact of humility in childhood that thou, O our King, didst approve as a symbol of humility when thou saidst, "Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."[38]

CHAPTER XIX

31. However, O Lord, to thee most excellent and most good, thou Architect and Governor of the universe, thanks would be due thee, O our God, even if thou hadst not willed that I should survive my boyhood. For I existed even then; I lived and felt and was solicitous about my own well-being -- a trace of that most mysterious unity from whence I had my being.[39] I kept watch, by my inner sense, over the integrity of my outer senses, and even in these trifles and also in my thoughts about trifles, I learned to take pleasure in truth. I was averse to being deceived; I had a vigorous memory; I was gifted with the power of speech, was softened by friendship, shunned sorrow, meanness, ignorance. Is not such an animated creature as this wonderful and praiseworthy? But all these are gifts of my God; I did not give them to myself. Moreover, they are good, and they all together constitute myself. Good, then, is he that made me, and he is my God; and before him will I rejoice exceedingly for every good gift which, even as a boy, I had. But herein lay my sin, that it was not in him, but in his creatures -- myself and the rest -- that I sought for pleasures, honors, and truths. And I fell thereby into sorrows, troubles, and errors. Thanks be to thee, my joy, my pride, my confidence, my God -- thanks be to thee for thy gifts;

but do thou preserve them in me. For thus wilt thou preserve me; and those things which thou hast given me shall be developed and perfected, and I myself shall be with thee, for from thee is my being.

Summary

The first book of the *Confessions* is devoted primarily to an analysis of Augustine's life as a child, from his infancy (which he cannot recall and must reconstruct) up through his days as a schoolboy in Thagaste (in Eastern Algeria). Wasting no time in getting to the philosophical content of his autobiography, Augustine's account of his early years leads him to reflect on human origin, will and desire, language, and memory.

[I.1-3] Augustine begins each Book of the *Confessions* with a prayer in praise of God, but Book I has a particularly extensive invocation. The first question raised in this invocation concerns how one can seek God without yet knowing what he is. In other words, how can we look for something if we don't know exactly what we're looking for? The imperfect answer, at least for now, is simply to have faith--if we seek God at all, he will reveal himself to us.

[I.4-6] Nonetheless, Augustine launches immediately into a highly rhetorical (and relatively brief) discussion of God's attributes. Asking God to "come into me," Augustine then questions what that phrase could possibly mean when addressed to God. The heart of this dilemma, which will turn out later to be one of the final stumbling blocks to Augustine's conversion (see Books VI and VII), is that God seems both to transcend everything and to be within everything. In either case, it doesn't make precise sense to ask him to "come into" Augustine.

God cannot be contained by what he created, so he can't "come to" Augustine in any literal sense. At the same time, God is the necessary condition for the existence of anything, so he's "within" Augustine already (so again it makes no sense to ask him to "come into me"). Further, God is not "in" everything in amounts or proportions--small pieces of the world don't have any less of God than big ones.

Having hurriedly discredited the idea of God as any sort of bounded, mobile, or divisible being, Augustine sums up for now with a deeply Neoplatonic statement on the question of "where" God is: "In filling all things, you fill them all with the whole of yourself."

Augustine then rephrases his question about God's nature, asking "who are you then, my God?" This rather direct approach generates a litany of metaphors concerning God, taken partly from scripture and partly from Augustine's own considerations. Examples include: "most high...deeply hidden yet most intimately present...you are wrathful and remain tranquil...you pay off debts, though owing nothing to anyone...." This list is rhetorical rather than analytic, and develops no coherent argument about God--it just introduces the mysteries of the subject.

[I.7-8] Augustine now turns to the story of his childhood, beginning with his birth and earliest infancy. As he would continue to do throughout his life, Augustine here follows the Neoplatonists in refusing to speculate on how the soul joins the body to become an infant. "I do not know," he writes, "whence I came to be in this mortal life or...living death" (following Plato, Augustine leaves open the possibility that life is really a kind of death and that true "life" is enjoyed by the soul when it is not in this world).

With this question left up in the air, Augustine considers his infancy. He's extremely careful here, since he can't actually remember this period-- claims about it are explicitly justified with references to Augustine's later observations of infants. Infancy, it seems, turns out to be a fairly miserable state. All desires are internal, since infants have only "a small number of signs" to express their wants and also no physical power to fulfill them. Thoughtless and already sinful, the tiny Augustine made demands on everyone, thanked no one, and revenged himself on his caretakers with obnoxious weeping.

[I.9-10] There is a brief interlude here while Augustine asks again what he was before birth, and again the question goes unanswered. He only knows that at birth he had both being and life. He also points out here that God is the most extreme instantiation of both being and life, and that God is responsible for uniting these two qualities in new humans.

[I.11-12] Returning to brutish infancy, Augustine considers to what extent he was sinning at that age. He's harsh on himself for the nasty attitude mentioned above, but concludes with a dismissal of responsibility for those times, of which he "can recall not a single trace."

[I.13-16] Soon, however, the infant Augustine began to exercise his memory, particularly in the service of learning to communicate through language (in Roman North Africa, this language was Latin). As always, Augustine is ambivalent about this skill, and here he notes that with it he

"entered more deeply into the stormy society of human life." Particularly disturbing to Augustine is the way language was used and taught at school--he regrets that he was taught to speak and write for corrupted purposes, namely in the service of gaining future honor and wealth. Using a term he will return to often, he refers to the use of this flashy language of public oratory (which emphasizes form over content) as "loquacity."

In fact, Augustine continues, the whole scholastic system concentrated on "follies," punishing the students for boyish games in order to train them for equally misguided adult ones (such as business or politics).

[I.17-18] Another issue Augustine has to consider here is his early religious status. Born to a devoutly Catholic mother (Monica) and a pagan father (Patrick), Augustine's baptism is deferred until he's older. This was a common practice, meant to leave the cleansing of sin until after the hazards of youth and so to get the most out of the ritual when it was finally performed.

[I.19-29] Meanwhile, the folly of school continues. Most of the remaining sections of Book I are devoted to the errors of Augustine's early teachers, who meant well but were ignorant of the proper purposes of education. Of central concern here are the classical texts the young, unhappy Augustine was forced to read and, more broadly, the high-flown rhetorical language he was supposed to learn from them. Augustine particularly disapproves of fiction, which he sees as a misleading waste of time. It is sinful, he argues, to read of other people's sins while remaining ignorant of one's own.

Overall, Augustine gives his boyhood teachers credit only for giving him the most basic tools for *potentially* good reading and writing--his "primary education." All the rest was simply a matter of learning perverted human custom rather than truth or morality (which are, in any case, more deep-seated than the "conventions" of language).

Detailed Summary of Confession

Section 1

Augustine begins his work by doing some rhetorical gymnastics, but basically he is saying that anyone searching for God will find him and praise him because, really, how could they not?

He also says that people need to hear about God first before they can know to look for him—duh. And that's where our man Augustine comes in. Augustine to the rescue.

Section 2

Pretty much every sentence in this section is a question directed at God, asking what it means when Augustine asks God to "come into" him. We're not so sure either, Augustine.

But just when it seems like he is *never* going to answer his own heap of questions (though we can see him trying to work out an answer with each successive question), he finally quotes Scripture: "all things find in you their origin, their impulse, the centre of their being." Quoting Scripture is a pretty great way to put your questions to rest, when you're quizzing about life, the universe, and everything. (Unless you think the answer to alla that is **42**.)

Section 3

Picking up where the previous section left off, Augustine asks more questions here. Only now, his questions are about what percentage of God fills the world and where, exactly, the rest of him resides. Kind of a weird thing to fuss over, right?

But you've gotta remember, a lot of Augustine's readers back in the 300s might have had a problem with the idea of God as immaterial. So the issue of where God *literally is in the world* is one that Augustine is trying to address right away.

Section 4

Finally, some answers. The problem is that even when Augustine gives us some insider info about God, his observations are made of contradictions: "You are ever active, yet always at rest"; "You grieve for wrong, yet suffer no pain"; "You welcome all who come to you, though you never lost them."

We're pretty sure *you'd* be mad at us here at Shmoop if we gave you answers like that. To boot, this section ends with Augustine saying something about how you can at once not say enough about God, and not say *anything* about God. Which is it, Augustine? Jeez.

Section 5

Now we're getting somewhere with the "confessions" part of *Confessions*. Augustine asks God to give him the "words to explain" why God is such a big deal to him. That way, he can pass on the message to others.

Then we get into some juicy bits where Augustine says his soul "contains much that you will not be pleased to see." Uh-oh. Of course, us readers *are* a little pleased to see Augustine's sins, in a rubber-necking, schaden freude kind of way.

And hey, since he's so open about acknowledging his sins, Augustine says that God will absolve them.

Section 6

The beginning is a good place to start, right? So Augustine starts by telling us about his infancy. Which is a little strange, because he obviously doesn't actually remember anything from his infancy.

Anyway, as it turns out, he had a very cushy childhood, full of nurses who breast-fed him (though God provided the milk, of course) and lots of other things that babies like.
Baby Augustine soon realized that there were other things in the world than milk and his own hands, but, being a baby and all, he couldn't articulate any of that other stuff to the grown-ups. So he threw tantrums instead.

> You might be asking yourself: how is any of this relevant? After talking about his infancy, Augustine goes on to ask God if he had a life before his birth. Because he can't seem to answer this question by studying other babies or interrogating pregnant women about the mysteries of the universe.

He then notes how, even though he can't remember his babyhood (*there it is*), he must have been alive because he clearly *wanted* things. Does this mean that *to be alive = to want*?

But we don't get to muse on that point too long, because then things shift again, and Augustine starts talking about time as it pertains to God. Augustine's argument is: it doesn't.

Section 7

You might think it's strange to consider babies sinners. But to Augustine, this, like, totally makes sense somehow. Anyone who has ever been around a baby or is familiar with the notion of a baby knows that their understanding of the world is… limited.

Anyway, the fact that Augustine *can't* actually remember his babyhood bothers him because he knows he committed sins back then. (If everyone does, he did, too.) So, in his mind, there are sins—big sins, apparently, because the same sins babies often commit are unforgivable in people old enough to know better—that he can't confess because he doesn't remember them. Harsh. Our brains hurt a little trying to unravel this conundrum.

Section 8

The next step in Baby Augustine's life is learning to speak.

Basically, he figures out how language works: certain sounds are associated with certain objects. Impressive, right? No? Too bad. This language-learning business gets its own section. **Linguists** of the world: rejoice.

Section 9

This section begins with Augustine saying, "I now went through a period of suffering and humiliation." Now we're talking. What is this shocking suffering and humiliation going to be?

As it turns out, Augustine was beaten by his schoolmasters. Okay… that's not terribly unexpected, especially in 360 CE, but Augustine takes some serious umbrage with it.

He was terrified of beatings, he says. So what if he wanted to play games sometimes instead of study all the time? Grown-ups are essentially playing games called "business" and no one beats them for it. Good point, Augustine. Good point.

Section 10

Welcome to our confession booth, Mr. Augustine. Sections that begin with "I sinned" tend to end up pretty confessional, and this is one of those sections. Dude's latest sins are that he has

a taste for sports and the theater. Though the word "theater" makes this interest sound classier than it really is. Just think of this bit of the confession as akin to being obsessed with *the worst* reality television around.

In his defense, Augustine points out that adults are distracted by theater all the time. It's entertainment, after all. But sports and theater are "delusions" and "folly," so Augustine asks God to free people from these temptations.

Section 11

Now Young Augustine talks about his life as a *catechumen,* which is a ridiculous word for someone who is converting to Christianity but who has not yet been baptized.

Augustine once contracted a stomach illness that looked like it might kill him, and his mother was worried that he might die before receiving any of the Christian sacraments. But he didn't die, obviously. Augustine lived in a Christian household. Sort of. His father wasn't a Christian, and we think Augustine kind of resented him for this, even though the guy was okay with his kid being raised as a Christian.

We should explain that, at this time in history, people took baptism pretty literally. Getting baptized meant that you were seriously getting ready to lead a Christian life, that included *not one single sin* that would deny you access to the Christian heaven. In the 4th century, not all the kids were doing the whole baptismal thing, because it meant leading such a strict life. That's why Augustine's mom reasons that he shouldn't be baptized until he has gotten more sin out of his system.

Augustine kind of disagrees, and thinks that it would have been better for him to have been baptized sooner. But, at the same time, he acknowledges that there was a lot of sin in him.

Section 12

This section is short, but there's a lot going on in it. Essentially, Augustine, like many a pupil, didn't like to study. And he resented that his teachers made him learn things.

But then Augustine's logic gets a little tricky. He says that it was good that he was made to learn, but that the value of his learning came from *God,* not from his teachers.

His teachers (and all adults around him) only saw education as worthwhile because it gave you access to money and fame. But God was the one who foresaw that Augustine would use his learning to do good—like write a book that attempts to convert people to Christianity.

Section 13

So in case you haven't figured it out yet, people from North Africa in the 4th century didn't write in English. They wrote in Latin (this was the time of **the Roman empire**, remember that little bit o' history?). But educated men had to learn Greek too, because a lot of really important texts were in that language.

Augustine, rebellious schoolboy that he is, didn't see the point in learning Greek because all of the things he liked to read were in Latin. His favorite book was the most important thing to have ever been written in Latin, ever: the ***Aeneid***, by the Roman poet, Virgil. That's where the characters *Aeneas* and *Dido* come from (and Augustine kind of spoils the story for you by telling you that Dido kills herself. Check out ***Aeneid* Book 4** for the full scoop).

Beware: this is not the last time that the *Aeneid* is going to come up in this book.

We soon learn that Augustine is a huge *Aeneid* fan. In fact, he's such a **big fan** that that he even cries over Dido's death. Which makes Augustine wonder: How could he have cried over something *fictional* when his own soul was at stake? The fact that his immortal soul was at stake while he was bubbling over some art makes this act—you guessed it—a sin.
So many sins, we know. But in the next paragraph Augustine redeems the act of learning how to read and write, which, he says, is important to do, even if it leads young boys to daydream about the Trojan War.

Section 14

Here, Augustine talks some more about how he didn't like learning Greek. He had an easier time learning Latin because it was his native language, and it was spoken at home when he was a baby. But he had to learn Greek later in school. Okay… how is this different from anyone else in the world who learned a second language ever, and why is he bothering to talk about it?

At the end of the section, Augustine says that people learn better when they aren't terrified of being beaten by their schoolmasters. But then he flip-flops and says that, under God's law, force is actually an acceptable way of keeping us from the earthly pleasures that distract us from God. So the beatings where actually a good thing, kind of, in a weird way, we guess.

Section 15

Augustine thanks God for rescuing him from his wicked ways and bringing him a joy even sweeter than reading the *Aeneid* or going to the theater.

He also thanks God for letting him learn how to read and write, though he admits that he should have put his literacy to better use.

Section 16

Here Augustine thinks about how schoolchildren are taught about the Roman gods in order to learn language, and how those gods set some bad examples of behavior. (**Jupiter is especially naughty**.) He makes it sound like the whole curriculum was pretty raunchy back then.

But don't blame *the words*, says Augustine; blame the system that praises the kids who can commit this sexy stuff to memory.

Section 17

Once young Augustine was in a school competition where he had to recite a speech made by **Juno**. Because Augustine was a smart kid, he won the competition, and was praised for his abilities.

But Augustine says that this competition was a waste of talent, and compares it to a crop of worthless fruit fit only for birds to peck at. He likens the metaphorical rotten fruit to offerings made to fallen angels.

Section 18

Oratory was a big deal back in Augustine's day. People who spoke well were highly regarded. Yet, according to Augustine, skilled rhetoricians are praised for saying wicked things, even if they say them well.

\He cites the parable of the **Prodigal Son** to show how God is ready to rescue and love any soul that will return and seek him out.
Then Augustine keeps on complaining about how people place more importance on enunciating than they do on whether the person doing the enunciating might be committing a sin—like condemning another man to death with his words.

Section 19

Now Augustine is thinking about some of his past sins, such as envying students who were better than him, lying, stealing food from his parents, cheating, and being vain about winning.

Who says that children are innocent? Definitely not Augustine; he thinks that the sins of children are the same as the sins of adults.

Section 20

Alright, Augustine has finally made it through childhood. Someone get this boy a gold star. Oh wait, let's not praise him for his "false" accomplishments. Anyway, thanks be to God, who made sure that Augustine was endowed with the faculties that would prevent him from simply dropping dead. Yikes.

All things considered, Augustine admits that he had a nice childhood. His primary sin was that, instead of searching for the truth in God, he looked for it elsewhere on earth. Looks like we're in for a lot of sinning in Book II…

Unit – III - Play

Odepus Rex – Sophocles

Summary

"**Oedipus the King**" is a tragedy by the ancient Greek playwright Sophocles, first performed in about 429 BCE. It was the second of Sophocles' three Theban plays to be produced, but it comes first in the internal chronology (followed by *"Oedipus at Colonus"* and then *"Antigone"*).

Shortly after Oedipus' birth, his father, King Laius of Thebes, learned from an oracle that he, Laius, was doomed to perish by the hand of his own son, and so ordered his wife Jocasta to kill the infant.

However, neither she nor her servant could bring themselves to kill him and he was abandoned to elements. There he was found and brought up by a shepherd, before being taken in and raised in the court of the childless King Polybus of Corinth as if he were his own son.

Stung by rumours that he was not the biological son of the king, Oedipus consulted an oracle which foretold that he would marry his own mother and kill his own father. Desperate to avoid this foretold fate, and believing Polybus and Merope to be his true parents, Oedipus left Corinth. On the road to Thebes, he met Laius, his real father, and, unaware of each other's true identities, they quarrelled and Oedipus' pride led him to murder Laius, fulfilling part of the oracle's prophecy. Later, he solved the riddle of the Sphinx and his reward for freeing the kingdom of Thebes from the Sphinx's curse was the hand of Queen Jocasta (actually his biological mother) and the crown of the city of Thebes. The prophecy was thus fulfilled, although none of the main characters were aware of it at this point.

As the play opens, a priest and the Chorus of Theban elders are calling on King Oedipus to aid them with the plague which has been sent by Apollo to ravage the city. Oedipus has already sent Creon, his brother-in-law, to consult the oracle at Delphi on the matter, and when Creon returns at that very moment, he reports that the plague will only end when the murderer of their former king, Laius, is caught and brought to justice. Oedipus vows to find the murderer and curses him for the plague that he has caused.

Oedipus also summons the blind prophet Tiresias, who claims to know the answers to Oedipus' questions, but refuses to speak, lamenting his ability to see the truth when the truth brings nothing but pain. He advises Oedipus to abandon his search but, when the enraged Oedipus accuses Tiresias of complicity in the murder, Tiresias is provoked into telling the king the truth, that he himself is the murderer. Oedipus dismisses this as nonsense, accusing the prophet of being corrupted by the ambitious Creon in an attempt to undermine him, and Tiresias leaves, putting forth one last riddle: that the murderer of Laius will turn out to be both father and brother to his own children, and the son of his own wife.

Oedipus demands that Creon be executed, convinced that he is conspiring against him, and only the intervention of the Chorus persuades him to let Creon live. Oedipus' wife Jocasta tells him he should take no notice of prophets and oracles anyway because, many years ago, she and Laius received an oracle which never came true. This prophecy said that Laius would be killed by his

own son but, as everyone knows, Laius was actually killed by bandits at a crossroads on the way to Delphi. The mention of crossroads causes Oedipus to give pause and he suddenly becomes worried that Tiresias‘ accusations may actually have been true.

When a messenger from Corinth arrives with news of the death of King Polybus, Oedipus shocks everyone with his apparent happiness at the news, as he sees this as proof that he can never kill his father, although he still fears that he may somehow commit incest with his mother. The messenger, eager to ease Oedipus‘ mind, tells him not to worry because Queen Merope of Corinth was not in fact his real mother anyway.

The messenger turns out to be the very shepherd who had looked after an abandoned child, which he later took to Corinth and gave up to King Polybus for adoption. He is also the very same shepherd who witnessed the murder of Laius. By now, Jocasta is beginning to realize the truth, and desperately begs Oedipus to stop asking questions. But Oedipus presses the shepherd, threatening him with torture or execution, until it finally emerges that the child he gave away was Laius’ own son, and that Jocasta had given the baby to the shepherd to secretly be exposed upon the mountainside, in fear of the prophecy that Jocasta said had never come true: that the child would kill its father.

With all now finally revealed, Oedipus curses himself and his tragic destiny and stumbles off, as the Chorus laments how even a great man can be felled by fate. A servant enters and explains that Jocasta, when she had begun to suspect the truth, had ran to the palace bedroom and hanged herself there. Oedipus enters, deliriously calling for a sword so that he might kill himself and raging through the house until he comes upon Jocasta‘s body. In final despair, Oedipus takes two long gold pins from her dress, and plunges them into his own eyes.

Now blind, Oedipus begs to be exiled as soon as possible, and asks Creon to look after his two daughters, Antigone and Ismene, lamenting that they should have been born into such a cursed family. Creon counsels that Oedipus should be kept in the palace until oracles can be consulted regarding what is best to be done, and the play ends as the Chorus wails: ‘Count no man happy till he dies, free of pain at last’.

Analysis

The play follows one chapter (the most dramatic one) in the life of Oedipus, King of Thebes, who lived about a generation before the events of the Trojan War, namely his gradual realization that he has killed his own father, Laius, and committed incest with his own mother, Jocasta. It assumes a certain amount of background knowledge of his story, which Greek audiences would have known well, although much of the background is also explained as the action unfolds.
The basis of the myth is recounted to some extent in Homer's *"The Odyssey"*, and more detailed accounts would have appeared in the chronicles of Thebes known as the Theban Cycle, although these have since been lost to us.

"Oedipus the King" is structured as a prologue and five episodes, each introduced by a choral ode. Each of the incidents in the play is part of a tightly constructed cause-and-effect chain, assembled together as an investigation of the past, and the play is considered a marvel of plot structure. Part of the tremendous sense of inevitability and fate in the play stems from the fact that all the irrational things have already occurred and are therefore unalterable.

The main themes of the play are: fate and free will (the inevitability of oracular predictions is a theme that often occurs in Greek tragedies); the conflict between the individual and the state (similar to that in Sophocles' "Antigone"); people's willingness to ignore painful truths (both Oedipus and Jocasta clutch at unlikely details in order to avoiding facing up to the inceasingly apparent truth); and sight and blindness (the irony that the blind seer Tiresius can actually "see" more clearly than the supposedly clear-eyed Oedipus, who is in reality blind to the truth about his origins and his inadvertent crimes).

Sophocles makes good use of dramatic irony in *"Oedipus the King"*. For example: the people of Thebes come to Oedipus at the start of the play, asking him to rid the city of the plague, when in reality, it is he who is the cause; Oedipus curses the murderer of Laius out of a deep anger at not being able to find him, actually cursing himself in he process; he insults Tiresius' blindness when he is the one who actually lacks vision, and will soon himself be blind; and he rejoices in the news of the death of King Polybus of Corinth, when this new information is what actually brings the tragic prophecy to light.

Mother Courage and her Children

Summary

Mother Courage opens in Dalarna, spring 1624, in the midst of the Thirty Years War. A Sergeant and Recruiting Officer are seeking soldiers for the Swedish campaign in Poland. A canteen wagon appears, bearing the infamous Mother Courage, her dumb daughter, Kattrin, and her sons, Eilif and Swiss Cheese.

The Recruiting Officer attempts to seduce Eilif into the army. Courage demands that he leave her children alone. The Sergeant protests and asks why, since Courage lives off the war, it should not ask something of her in return. When Eilif admits that he would like to sign up, Courage foretells the fate of her children: Eilif will die for his bravery, Swiss Cheese for his honesty, and Kattrin for her kindness. Courage readies to leave. The Recruiting Officer presses the Sergeant to stop them. While the Sergeant feigns to buy one of Courage's belts, the Recruiting Officer takes Eilif away.

In 1626, Courage appears beside the tent of the Swedish Commander, arguing with the Cook over the sale of a capon. The Commander, a Chaplain, and Eilif enter the tent, the Commander lauding his brave soldier for raiding the local peasants. Courage remarks that trouble must be afoot. If the campaign was any good, he would not need brave soldiers. Courage reunites with her son.

Three years later, Courage and Kattrin appear folding washing on a cannon with Swiss Cheese, now a paymaster, and Yvette Pottier, the camp prostitute, look on. Yvette recounts the story of her lost beau, Peter Piper.

The Chaplain and Cook appear and they talk about politics. The Cook remarks ironically that their king is lucky to have his campaign justified by God: otherwise, he could be accused of seeking profit alone. Suddenly cannons explode; the Catholics have launched a surprise attack. The Cook departs for the Commander. Swiss arrives and hides his regiment's cash box in the wagon.

Three days later, the remaining characters sit eating anxiously. When Courage and the Chaplain go to town, Swiss departs to return the cash box unaware that an enemies are lurking about to arrest him. When Courage and the Chaplain return, two men bring in Swiss. Mother and son pretend to not know each other.

That evening, Kattrin and the Chaplain appear rinsing glasses. An excited Courage enters, declaring that they can buy Swiss' freedom. Yvette has picked up an old Colonel who will buy the canteen; Courage only plans to pawn and reclaim it after two weeks with the money from the cash box. Thanking God for corruption, Courage sends Yvette to bribe One Eye with the 200 guilders.

Yvette reports that the enemy has agreed. Swiss, however, has thrown the cash box into the river. Courage hesitates, thinking that she will not be able to reclaim the wagon. Courage proposes a new offer, 120 guilders. Yvette returns, saying that they rejected it, and Swiss' execution is imminent. Drums roll in the distance. Two men enter with a stretcher, asking Courage if she can identify Swiss Cheese's body. Courage shakes her head, consigning the body to the carrion pit.

Courage then appears outside an officer's tent, planning to file a complaint over the destruction of her merchandise. A Young Soldier enters, threatening the captain's murder. Apparently he has stolen his reward for rescuing the Colonel's horse. Courage tells him to quiet down, since his rage will not last. Defeated, the soldier leaves, and Courage follows.

Two years pass, and the wagon stands in a war-ravaged village. The Chaplain staggers in; there is another wounded family of peasants in the farmhouse. He needs linen. Courage refuses, as she will not sacrifice her officers' shirts. The Chaplain lifts her off the wagon and takes the shirts.

The canteen sits before the funeral of Commander Tilly in 1632. Mother Courage and Kattrin take inventory inside the canteen tent. Courage asks the Chaplain if the war will end—she needs to know if she should buy more supplies. The Chaplain responds that war always finds a way. Courage resolves to buy new supplies, and sends Kattrin to town. Kattrin returns with a wound across her eye and forehead, as she was attacked en route. Counting the scattered merchandise,

Courage curses the war. Immediately afterward she appears at the height of prosperity, dragging her new wares along a highway. She celebrates war as her breadwinner.

A year later, voices announce that peace has been declared. Suddenly the Cook arrives, bedraggled and penniless. Courage and Cook flirt as they recount their respective ruin. The Chaplain emerges, and the men begin to argue, fighting for the feedbag. When Courage defends the Cook, the Chaplain calls her a "hyena of the battlefield." Courage suggests they part company. Suddenly an older, fatter, and heavily powdered Yvette enters. The widow of a colonel, she has come to visit Courage. When she sees the Cook, she unmasks him as the Peter Piper that ruined her years ago. Courage calms her and takes her to town.

Both men are now convinced that they are lost. Eilif then enters in fetters. He faces execution for another of his raids and has come to see his mother for the last time. The soldiers take him away and cannons thunder. Courage appears, breathless. The war resumed three days ago and they must flee with the wagon. She invites the Cook to join her, hoping that she will see Eilif soon.

It is autumn of 1634. A hard winter has come early. Courage and the Cook appear in rags before a parsonage. Abruptly the Cook tells her that he has received a letter from Utrecht saying that his mother has died and left him the family inn. He invites her to join him there. However, they must leave Kattrin behind. Kattrin overhears their conversation.

Calling to the parsonage, the Cook then sings "The Song of the Great Souls of the Earth" for food. It recounts how the great souls meet their dark fates on account of their respective virtues—wisdom, bravery, honesty, and kindness. Courage decides she cannot leave her daughter. Kattrin climbs out of the wagon, planning to flee, but Courage stops her. They depart.

It is January 1636 and the wagon stands near a farmhouse outside Halle. Kattrin is inside; her mother has gone to town to buy supplies. Out of the woods come a Catholic Lieutenant and three soldiers, seeking a guide to the town. The Catholic regiment readies for a surprise attack. Convinced there is nothing they can do, the peasants begin to pray. Quietly Kattrin climbs on the roof and begins to beat a drum. The soldiers shoot Kattrin. Her final drumbeats mingle with the thunder of a cannon. She has saved the town.

Toward morning, Courage sits by Kattrin's body in front of the wagon. Courage sings Kattrin a lullaby. The peasants bring her to her senses and offer to bury her daughter. Courage pays them and harnesses herself to the wagon. "I must get back into business" she resolves and moves after the regiment.

Characters

Mother Courage

Mother Courage is, to borrow a phrase from Walter Benjamin, the play's "untragic heroine." A parasite of the war, she follows the armies of the Thirty Years War, supporting herself and her children with her canteen wagon. She remains opportunistically fixed on her survival, winning her name when hauling a cartful of bread through a city under bombardment. Courage works tirelessly, relentlessly haggling, dealing, and celebrating the war as her breadwinner in her times of prosperity. As Eilif's song suggests, she is the play's wise woman, delivering shrewd commentary on the war throughout the play. For example, the defeats for the great are often victories for the small, the celebration of the soldier's bravery indicates a faltering campaign, the leader pins his failings on his underlings, and the poor require courage. She understands that virtues in wartime become fatal to their possessors. Courage will ironically see her children's deaths from the outset, foretelling their fates in Scene One.

Courage's Solomon-like wisdom does not enable her to oppose the war. The price the war will exact for Courage's livelihood is her children, each of which she will lose while doing business. Though Courage would protect them fiercely—in some sense murderously insisting that her children and her children alone come through the war.

Again, her courage is her will to survive; a will that often requires her cowardice. Unlike Kattrin, Courage will sing the song of capitulation. For example, in Scene Four, she depravedly teaches a soldier to submit to unjust authority and then bitterly learns from her song herself, withdrawing a complaint she planned to lodge herself. In the scene previous, she refuses to recognize the corpse of her executed son, consigning it to the carrion pit. Kattrin's death will not incite her to revolt. Instead, she will resume her journey with the wagon, in some sensed damned to her labor for eternity. As Brecht notes programmatically in the *Courage Model Book,* Courage,

understandably bent on her survival, does not learn, failing to understand that no sacrifice is too great to stop war.

Kattrin

Courage's dumb daughter, Kattrin distinguishes herself as the character who most obviously suffers from the traumas of war. She wears these traumas on her body, since the war robs her of her voice as a child and later leaves her disfigured. Throughout most of the play, she figures as the war's helpless witness, unable to save her brother Eilif from recruitment or Swiss Cheese from the Catholic spies. Later, she will stand by Courage when she refuses to identify Swiss Cheese's body. As Courage continually notes, Kattrin suffers the virtues of kindness and pity, remaining unable to brook the loss of life around her. This kindness manifests itself in particular with regard to children, Kattrin's maternal impulses perhaps standing against Courage's relentless dealing and her resulting failure to protect her children. Ultimately Kattrin will "speak," sacrificing herself to save the children of Halle, and it is appropriate that the play implicitly compares her to the martyr Saint Martin.

The war in particular impinges on Kattrin's sexuality. As Courage notes, she is ever in danger of becoming a "whore"—that is, a victim of rape—and thus must lie low and wait for peacetime before considering marriage. Privately Kattrin will "play the whore" in a sense in her masquerade as Yvette, the camp prostitute, in a bid for sexual recognition. Notably, her disfigurement will ultimately make her marriage impossible.

The Chaplain

One of two characters dependent on Mother Courage as their "feedbag," the Chaplain initially appears as a cynical, wooden character. He remains loyal to the Swedish monarchy and the campaign as a war of religion though cannot but notice the horrors around him, for example, his reaction to Eilif's raid. This cynicism reaches its height after the surprise attack by the Catholics, which rips him from his social station and leaves him precariously dependent on Courage's wagon. Bitterly, the Chaplain will advise Courage to buy new supplies. The war can only prevail. After all, though degrading, it provides for all base human needs—eating, drinking, screwing, and sleeping. Like love, it will always find a way to go on.

The Chaplain also reveals more sympathetic qualities, particularly when he defies Courage and attempts to save the local peasants at the Battle of Magdeburg. To this point, he appears as a sort of outsider, refraining from intervening in Courage's practices for fear of jeopardizing his position. At Magdeburg, the *Model Book* shows him recalling a sense of his former importance and understanding himself as someone oppressed by the war. Indeed, as he will tell the Cook, his life as a tramp makes it impossible to return to the priesthood and all its attendant beliefs.

Eventually the Chaplain falls for Courage. Focused on survival, she denies him, refusing his demands that she drop her defenses and let her heart speak. The arrival of the Cook will spark a rivalry over both Courage's affections and bread. When both men believe that Courage has rejected them, they reminisce about the good times they shared together in the service of the Swedish Commander. Apparently, like Courage, they have learned little from their suffering during the war.

The Cook

The Chaplain's rival for Courage's affections and bread, the Cook is an aging Don Juan, a bachelor long past his days as the dashing Peter Piper who seduced girls like Yvette. Darkly ironic, he is aware of the war as a continuation of business as usual, continually unmasking the divinely inspired military campaign as another massive profit scheme. In understanding his social position, he bears no loyalty to the rulers who would exploit him. As he tells the Chaplain, he does not eat the King's bread but bakes it. He comes to Mother Courage when penniless, their courtship consisting of their accounts of their respective ruin.

Themes

War as Business

Brecht states in the *Courage Model Book* that the play conceives of war as a "continuation of business by other means." War is neither some supernatural force nor simply a rupture in civilization but one of civilization's preconditions and logical consequences. In this respect, there are many dialogues—the most explicit one appearing in Scene 3—that cast war as another profit venture by Europe's great leaders. Mother Courage is the play's primary small businesswoman, parasitically living off of the war with her canteen wagon. As the *Model Book* observes the "big profits are not made by little people." Courage's commitment to the business of war will cost her children, the war taking back for what it has provided her in flesh.

Virtue in Wartime

The *Model Book* also remarks that war "makes the human virtues fatal even to their possessors." This "lesson" appears from the outset of the play, prefiguring the fate of Mother Courage and her children. Telling each of her children's fortunes, Courage will conjure their deaths at the hand of their respective virtues: bravery, honesty, and kindness. Later, The Cook will rehearse this lesson in "The Song of the Great Souls of the Earth." As we will see, Brecht often attributes these virtues ironically. Courage, for example, is often a coward, and Eilif is more a murderer than a brave hero.

Verfremdungseffekt

The *Verfremdungseffekt,* alienation or "distanciation" effect, is the primary innovation of Brecht's epic theater. By alienating the spectator from the spectacle, its devices would reveal the social *gestus* underlying every incident on-stage and open a space for critical reflection. Often alienation also means making the workings of the spectacle possible, and decomposing the unity of the theatrical illusion. Brecht called for the spectator's alienation to oppose the mystifying tendencies of the conventional stage, tendencies that reduced its audience to passive, trance-like states. The possible techniques of alienation are endless. Slight chances in pace, alternative arrangements of the players on-stage, experiments in lighting, gesture, and tone. The success of each scene in *Mother Courage* hinges upon these devices. For example, Courage's "Song of the Great Capitulation," when played without alienation, risks seducing the spectator with the pleasures of surrender rather than exposing the depravity in the submission to an unjust authority.

Allegory and the Morality Play

As the name of its eponymous heroine suggests, *Mother Courage* poses the tradition of the morality play as its backdrop. Pedagogical in its intent, the morality play is conventionally organized around Everyman as its protagonist and various characters personifying Vices and Virtues. Action consists of their struggle, whether for the Everyman's soul or otherwise. Similarly *Mother Courage* offers Courage and her children as sense personifications the virtues that do them in during the war: wisdom, bravery, honesty, and kindness. Obviously, it is also profoundly pedagogical in its intentions.

Despite these similarities, it is clear that Brecht fundamentally departs from the morality play tradition as well. Certainly Courage—explicitly located in her particular socio-historical context

as well as the context of the performance—is no Everyman. Moreover, the epic form militates precisely against a structure of ready identification between spectator and character that the universal Everyman clearly establishes. In the morality play, we are all "Everyman." Also, Brecht's play distorts the one-to-one correspondences (e.g. Kattrin is kindness) the morality play poses, exploiting the dissonances and arbitrary relations between the terms of its allegories. In the "Song of the Great Souls of the Earth," which awkwardly uses Socrates to figure for the simpleton Swiss Cheese, the spectator becomes conscious of the structures of figurative language that make these relations possible. By playing on the dissonances between song and action, song and character, the play would again distance the spectator from the spectacle and generate his critical reflection.

Music

At times the reader of Brecht feels trapped in a Marxist Gilbert and Sullivan musical. Rather than accompany or integrate itself into the theatrical illusion, music largely assumes an independent reality in *Mother Courage,* standing apart from the action. Brecht often underscored this separation by lowering a musical emblem whenever such a song would arise. Music is neither a simple accompaniment nor exclusively the expression of a character's current state, at times functioning instead in its autonomy as allegory, or as covert political commentary. Often it assumes a pedagogical function. Note, for example, how Courage teaches the soldier surrender through her song of capitulation or Yvette attempts to harden Kattrin to love through her "Fraternization Song."

Business practices

Deemed a "damned soul" in the *Model Book,* Mother Courage works tirelessly, resting only once in the course of the play. Her haggling, careful inventory, and so on frame and punctuate the action, emphasizing its underlying the social *gestus.* Courage always protects her interests shrewdly, inquiring into the fate of the war with only her profit in mind. Her practices emerge from the social conditions that determine the characters, committing her to the war. Ultimately she will lose each of her children as a result. Moreover, as the final scene chillingly shows, so ritualized are these practices that Courage will not learn from her losses.

Capitulation

Written in the midst of the growing Nazi terror, *Mother Courage* would impel its spectators to oppose war. In this respect it features a number of moments of capitulation as object lessons: most notably, the withdrawal of Courage and the Young Soldier from the captain's tent in Scene Four and the submission of the peasants in Scene 11. *Mother Courage* emphasizes the ritual character of capitulation. Years of war have frozen the people into fixed patterns of surrender and lamentation. Standing against these surrenders is Kattrin, disfigured and silenced by war trauma to which she continually bears witness, who risks both livelihood and life to save a town under surprise attack.

Maternity

Against Mother Courage—a mother who fails to protect her children—the play places Kattrin. Her kindness involves an impulse to mother in opposition to her mother's coldhearted business sense. As the *Model Book* notes, if Courage's war spoils consist of the loot she can scavenge, Kattrin's are the children she saves. Notably, her heroic intervention—one that breaks her stony silence—is the salvation of the children of Halle.

Unit – IV- Short Story

The Lady with the Dog

Summary

A forty-year-old man named Dmitri Gurov is intrigued by a young woman walking along the sea front of Yalta with her small Pomeranian dog. Dmitri dislikes his shrewish and intelligent wife and, as a result, has numerous love affairs. Although the protagonist disparages women and calls them "the lower race," he secretly acknowledges that he is more at ease in their company than in men's. One day, "the lady with the dog" sits down next to Dmitri to eat in the public gardens. The

man pets her dog in order to strike up a conversation. He learns that she is called Anna Sergeyevna, that she is married, and that she has come to Yalta on vacation. Over the next week, Anna and Dmitri see a lot of each other and grow close. The older man is intrigued by the exuberant naïveté of his young partner, yet he also recognizes a trace of sadness in her character. In contrast to the elder women with whom he used to have affairs and who would occasionally display a "rapacious expression" on their beautiful faces, Anna excites Dmitri's desire with her fresh and unaffected nature. In particular, he is drawn by her "diffidence, the angularity of inexperienced youth" that reminds him of his daughter. Every evening the couple observes the sunset from the vantage point over Yalta at Oreanda and are impressed anew by the "beautiful and majestic" scenery. The only things that mar Anna's happiness is the thought that her husband, Von Diderits, will send for her and her fear that she has lost Dmitri's respect by sleeping with him. In the end, Von Diderits sends Anna a letter urging her return, and she leaves Dmitri with something like relief. When parting with Dmitri, Anna states, "It's a good thing I am going away … It's fate itself!"

The action switches to describe Dmitri's daily routine in Moscow: visiting his clubs, reading newspapers, and working at his bank. Dmitri believes that his memories of Anna will soon wane and that he can continue his everyday routine in peace and satisfaction. However, this does not happen, and soon the protagonist grows to despise the "useless pursuits and conversations" with which he is surrounded. Consequently, Dmitri resovles to visit Anna in her unspecified hometown. The protagonist takes the train to "S—-" and arrives only to pace in front of the Von Diderits' residence, futilely hoping that Anna will emerge and speak with him. When this does not happen, Dmitri decides to go to the theater that evening to see a production of the operetta "The Geisha," hoping his lover will also attend. Sure enough, the protagonist sees Anna in the audience watching the show with her obsequious and insincere-looking husband. When Von Diderits leaves the theater to smoke during the interval, Dmitri approaches Anna and confesses his love for her. The young woman tells Dmitri that she has missed him but also berates him for coming to see her. The lovers decide that Anna will visit Dmitri in Moscow, on the excuse that she has to see a gynecologist.

The story concludes with a description of Anna's visits to Moscow and the unbearable strain she feels living this lie. Although Dmitri is perfectly happy with the way things have worked out, he does admit to feeling disconcerted about the implications of falling in love for the first time. He criticizes himself for being an aging, graying old man who seduced women by pretending to be someone he was not. Dmitri comforts Anna as best he can, but he knows that there will be a long way to go before they can be freed from their "intolerable bonds" and live together openly.

Analysis

The Lady with the Dog is perhaps Chekhov's best known and certainly one of his best-loved stories. It exemplifies the author's subtle yet powerful style, as Chekhov is economical with language and never says more than he needs. He conveys emotional complexity in just a few words, thus preserving the intensity of his characters' feelings. For example, on first seeing Anna at the theater in her hometown, Chekhov expresses Dmitri's romantic yearning with the passage: "she, this little woman, in no way remarkable, lost in a provincial crowd, with a vulgar lornette in her hand, filled his whole life now, was his sorrow and his joy … He thought and dreamed." The author writes as though he is painting a canvas, producing a work that is grand in scope yet intimate in feel. The author uses colors to convey both the changing spirits and feelings of the characters, as they veer from the grandly impressive to the muted and prosaic. For example, the aging Dmitri's hair is described as graying, and he often wears gray suits, whereas the sea at Yalta is suffused with color as "the water was of a soft warm lilac hue, and there was a golden streak from the moon upon it." Chekhov presents Yalta as a romantic oasis for Anna and Dmitri, a place of color, freedom, and intimacy that they cannot hope to recreate elsewhere. The lovers worry about what they mean to one another—Anna frets that Dmitri thinks of her only as a "common woman," while Dmitri thinks that Anna is beguiled by a false impression of him as a "kind, exceptional, lofty" man—because both recognize that their relationship is founded on past disappointments and future hopes, as well as on present desires. Chekhov thus plays with our implicit belief that characters do not exist beyond their narrative framework: clearly, Anna and Dmitri are people defined by the past and their dreams for the future, as much as they are by the short period of their lives conveyed here. As the editor Donald Rayfield has noted, *The Lady with the Dog* talks more about beginnings than it does endings. There is no straightforward linear

progression in Chekhov's narrative: readers are called to question what has happened outside of its bounds and to wonder at the lives its characters will continue to lead.

Indeed, in order to understand this tale, we have to guess at what has happened before the events described and what will happen after them. Dmitri may be interpreted as an aging seducer entering the twilight his womanizing years, who dupes Anna just as he realizes that he has deceived himself for many years. However, the protagonist could also be understood as a man searching for conviction, as someone who is enchanted and ultimately redeemed by the innocent romanticism of his young lover. The tale itself is riddled with ambiguity: we see that Anna rekindles Dmitri's desire for life but also that Dmitri's love for her complicates as well as tarnishes his view of home. Because Dmitri remembers the vistas of Yalta as being boundless in their magnificence and beauty, so Moscow seems to him endlessly dreary, as though he were cooped up in a "madhouse or in penal servitude." Chekhov suggests that, for Dmitri, the world of love and of women is not straightforward, and, indeed, Dmitri's devotion to the female sex or "lower race" is rewarded by confusion and a faint hope in future salvation. The story ends on a typical note of ambiguity, as Dmitri recognizes that he is living two lives: "one open, seen and known by all who cared to know" and another "running its course in secret." The only way the couple can resolve their fears is to acknowledge that they are poised at the beginning of a "new and splendid life," albeit one that they will not openly enjoy for a long time to come.

The Price of Freedom – Short Story

Saadat Hasan Manto (11th May 1912 to 18th January 1955) born in the happening century, but it is very strange and awkward to see that critics never took his stories out of the critical triangle of 'Odors', 'A Women's life', 'A Believer's Version', etc. If we see there are around 250 short stories he wrote which includes the themes of social, political, sexual, and psychological, at the same time film industry (that was earlier known as Filmistan). It is strange to know that around 2 dozen short stories that he wrote directly or indirectly contain a political theme. Stories like: 'Tamasha', 'Chori', 'Khooni Thook', 'New Constitution', 'Revolutionary', 'Matmi Jalsa', 'Two communities', 'Ram Khalawan', 'Last Salute', 'Dog of Titwal', 'Three Simple Statements', 'It Happened in 1919', 'Tuba Tek Singh', 'Phoja Haram Da', 'Price of Freedom', 'Cooperation', 'The Great Divide', etc. are a few

topics to talk about. These stories are an evidence of his keen observation of Indian politics. Three stories, ‘It happened in 1919’, ‘Tamasha’, ‘Price of Freedom’, belonged, and are based on the events that happened in Amritsar directly, where Saadat Hasan Manto, had spent around 20 years of his life.

On the incident of Jallianwala Baugh massacre, Amritsar, one story 'The Price of Freedom' was written by Saadat Hasan Manto. This story have a large canvas which begins with the life of a common man, Gulam Ali, to whom Saadat Hasan Manto ironically called Shehzada, who was very active in the freedom struggle campaign, and ends on his personal life.In the story, Punjab became the hub of many different political activities, in which people participated with full enthusiasm. In the Jallianwala Baugh youngsters, old people, workers, women, students, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs all used to participate for the struggle to make India free from the hands of the cruel Raj. In the same Baugh many tents were placed and in the bigger tent used to live the 'Dictator'. Dictator will be the person who will guide all the people, in the Baugh, for their roles in the freedom struggle. This particular aspect of the story showed Manto’s wide range of knowledge which was not limited to India, but throughout the world with all its aspects. As that was the time of Hitler, the dictator of Italy, Shehzada Gulam Ali was the 41st dictator who falls in love with Nigar, who was also a freedom fighter. After this the story takes a very different turn when Gulam Ali and Nigar get married, as announced by Babaji; in the same event that they both take the pledge to live as friends even after their wedding and not as the husband and wife till India will achieve its freedom. The decision is quite illogical as for the human needs and psychology. When the spirit of the people came to a halt they, Gulam Ali and Nigar, realized their mistake and took up normal life. In this story Saadat Hasan Manto raised the question on Gandhian philosophy 'to quit' something which is needful and necessary. Was that possible for Nigar and Shehzada to live a life ignoring each other and their psychological needs to have a child, to live a normal life as a married couple? Though the character of Shehezada is somehow following the Gandhian philosophy but he was not great as him, who had the charm and was ready to quit anything that could come in his way to attain his goal.

In the story Saadat Hasan Manto somehow supported the Gandhian philosophy but at the same time showed disagreement with some of the ideologies.

The Diamond Necklace – Short Story

Summary

A young woman, Mathilde, is born to a low class family. With no money for a dowry, she is married to Monsieur Loisel, a clerk from the Board of Education. Mathilde always felt like she should have been born to the upper class and is unhappy in her married life, hating their home, their food, and her lack of fine clothing and jewelry. One evening, her husband presents her excitedly with an invitation to attend an event at the Minister of Public Instruction's home. To the surprise of M. Loisel, Mathilde–now Mme. Loisel–throws the invitation down in dismay, weeping and complaining that she has nothing to wear to such an event. Her husband offers to give her the money for something suitable, and she calculates the maximum amount she could request without him refusing her immediately. When she requests this amount, her husband pales, thinking of the hunting gun for which he has been saving that exact amount; nonetheless, he agrees.

The day of the ball approaches and Mme. Loisel's dress is made ready, but she is still dismayed. When asked why, she replies that she is embarrassed to attend the ball without any jewels. Her husband, after being chastised for suggesting she wear flowers in her hair instead, suggests that she ask to borrow some jewels from her rich friend, Mme. Forestier. Mme Loisel agrees and goes to see her friend the next day, greedily choosing one of Mme. Forestier's finest necklaces.

At the ball, Madame Loisel is a hit - elegant, joyful, and desired for waltzes. She and M. Loisel return home at nearly 4 o'clock in the morning. Once they are home, Mme. Loisel realizes that she lost the necklace. She and her husband discuss the situation frantically; Mme. Loisel that she felt it on her after leaving the ball, so it must be in the road somewhere. Her husband goes back out to look on the ground the entire way they just walked, though he must be at work in only a few hours. He returns empty-handed hours later.

The couple places a notice with the police department and, at the suggestion of her husband, Madame Loisel writes a note to her friend saying the clasp of the necklace has broken and they are having it repaired. After a week with no news, M. Loisel proclaims that they must

replace it, and the couple finds a replacement for 36,000 francs. M. Loisel had 18,000 francs from his father's will and borrows the remaining sum, making "ruinous promises"(p.36) in the process. After all this, Madame Loisel puts the new necklace in the case belonging to the original necklace; she returns it without arousing suspicion.

To pay off the debt, both Monsieur and Madame Loisel must work tirelessly. They rent rooms and Madame Loisel learns to cook, clean for many, be "clothed like a woman of the people"(p.36) and haggle at the market. Her husband works evenings and takes on side jobs bookkeeping and copying. After ten years, they are finally able to pay off all of their debts. Sitting at home, a hardened, old woman, Madame Loisel thinks back on how her life might have been, had she not lost the necklace.

One day, while taking a walk, Mme. Loisel runs into Mme. Forestier. She approaches her old friend, and Mme. Forestier almost doesn't recognize her. In a sudden burst of emotion, Madame Loisel reveals her entire story of losing the necklace, replacing it, and working off the cost of the replacement ever since. In response, Madame Forestier replies that the original necklace did not contain actual diamonds but rather fake diamonds, meaning the original necklace cost no more than 500 francs.

Analysis

As writer in 19th-century France, Maupassant writes in a style called Literary Realism. The clearest example of this style comes in the final third of the story, when he describes the poor, working lives of the Loisels. Maupassant contrasts this with the almost romantic description of the party that the Loisels attend, at which Mathilde wore the titular necklace.

As gender played an important role in 19th-century French society, so too does it in "The Necklace." Women of the middle and upper classes did not work, instead being taken care of by their husbands. Thus, many of the Loisels' problems involve money. Not only is Mme. Loisel bitter about her inability to improve her social class, but the Loisels also value different things, with those values mapping along gender lines. When invited to the party, Mme. Loisel begins to weep, asking her husband to lend her the money for a new dress, as clothing and jewelry were especially important indicators of status for women. In contrast, M. Loisel thinks to himself that

he had wanted to save that money to buy a new gun, a manly pursuit that he could have used to bond with male friends and relax from his busy work schedule.

Beauty is treated in "The Necklace" at times as objective and at times as quite subjective, dependent on social class. On one hand, Maupassant writes that beauty was the way women could advance their place in society. On the other hand, Mme. Loisel sees Mme. Forestier's necklace as beautiful largely because of its supposed worth and the social capital it provides. At the party, it is said that Mme. Loisel felt and looked quite beautiful, and that many men desired to dance with her. In this case, the reader must ask whether this is because of her natural beauty, the upper-class attire she was able to acquire for the event, or perhaps simply her confidence from her clothing.

Until the end of the story, Mme. Loisel is not presented as a particularly likeable or sympathetic character. One example of Mme. Loisel's flaws comes when the couple has just gotten home from the party: Mme. Loisel says, "I have--I have--I no longer have Mrs. Forestier's necklace."(p.35) In this moment, it seems that she is trying, even in her panicked state, not to take the blame of what has happened, refusing to admit that she *lost* the necklace.
In setting up the eventual irony in one of his classic twist endings, Maupassant is careful to write that the necklace "seemed to them exactly like the one they had lost"(p.36). This is not enough to alert the reader to the eventual irony, but it points to the couple's inability to tell the two necklaces apart precisely because they were not accustomed to lavish jewelry. This in turn raises the question of whether Mme. Forestier would have recognized the substitution; though she does not let on that she recognizes any difference upon seeing the replacement for the first time and seems genuinely surprised when she hears Mme. Loisel's tale after ten years, it is suspicious that a woman of a higher class would not be able to tell the difference.

Finally, the fact that the characters never find out what happened to the necklace points toward the randomness of life and importance of circumstance. As Maupassant writes, "How would it have been if she had not lost that necklace? Who knows? Who knows? How singular is life, and how full of changes! How small a thing will ruin or save one!"(p.37) This moral of the story may be seen as a critique of the importance of social class, since the story demonstrates that a simple accident or circumstance forced upon a person (since the necklace could have been

stolen purposefully) can doom a person to a completely different way of life. At the same time, Maupassant demonstrates that social class does not correlate to happiness, as Mme. Loisel seems more content in her life and her marriage when in the poor class than when behaving either as a middle- or upper-class woman.

God Sees the Truth but Waits

Summary

The story opens with the relatively young **Aksyonov**, a well-to-do merchant, living with his family in the town of Vladimir, Russia. Aksyonov is jovial, handsome, and talented at singing, and he owns two shops and a house; however, he has a habit of excessive drinking. As Aksyonov prepares to set off for the summer commercial Fair at Nizhny, his wife urges him to stay home, telling him that she has experienced a bad portent—a nightmare in which his **hair** turned completely gray. Aksyonov assumes that his wife is worried about his drinking and laughs off her concerns.

Halfway into his journey to Nizhny, Aksyonov meets a **merchant friend** at an inn for tea. He and his friend both spend the evening at the inn, and in the morning Aksyonov continues on his way. During a break in the journey, as Aksyonov feeds his horse and plays his guitar, a state official suddenly arrives with two soldiers and begins questioning Aksyonov, focusing on the prior evening and on Aksyonov's interactions with his merchant friend. When a bewildered Aksyonov inquires as to what is going on, the official introduces himself as the **district police inspector** and informs Aksyonov that his merchant friend was murdered at the inn. The inspector orders a search of Aksyonov's belongings and discovers a bloodstained knife. A terrified Aksyonov quakes, stammers, and swears desperately that the knife is not his, but the police inspector formally accuses Aksyonov of murdering the merchant and of stealing 20,000 rubles. Aksyonov is physically bound and escorted to jail.

In jail, Aksyonov is visited by his grief-stricken wife, who collapses upon seeing her husband in prison clothes and fetters. Aksyonov's wife informs him that his last hope of exoneration and release—a petition to the tsar—has been rejected. She reminds Aksyonov that she foresaw his troubles in a nightmare, and to Aksyonov's horror and astonishment, asks him

point-blank whether he actually committed the murder. Aksyonov is devastated by his wife's suspicion of his guilt. As a soldier separates Aksyonov from his wife and children for the last time, Aksyonov concludes that he can only expect justice and mercy from God—not from anyone on Earth, even family members. This marks a turning point after which Aksyonov begins to pray fervently and turns towards a strictly spiritual life.

After being flogged, Aksyonov is sent to a Siberian labor camp, where he remains for 26 years. In a fulfillment of his wife's prophecy, his hair turns completely gray and he becomes physically fragile, acquiring a stoop. Aksyonov becomes intensely devout and acquires the prison monikers of "Grandpa" and "Man of God," reflecting both his piety and his bodily deterioration. He spends his prison earnings on a Saint's Calendar and spends much of his time in the jail's chapel, reading the gospels and singing in the choir. Aksyonov never again hears from his wife and children, but he gains the respect of his fellow inmates, who trust him to mediate disputes and file appeals on their behalf to the state authorities.

One day, Aksyonov hears a recently-arrived inmate named **Makar Semyonov** announce that he comes from Vladimir, Aksyonov's hometown. Aksyonov asks for word of his family; Makar replies that he has heard of them as well-to-do people whose head of household is incarcerated in Siberia. Makar asks Aksyonov what he was sentenced for; Aksyonov says only that he is paying for his prior sins, but his fellow inmates tell Makar the story of the merchant who was murdered and of how Aksyonov was framed for the killing. Upon hearing this, Makar suddenly seems to recognize Aksyonov, expressing surprise that he and Aksyonov have met again after so many years; Makar's reaction leads Aksyonov to speculate that Makar might know who truly murdered the merchant at the inn. When Makar responds by claiming that the true culprit has never been caught, Aksyonov begins to suspect that it was in fact Makar who framed him for the murder.

Aksyonov's suspicion of Makar sends him spiraling into a terrible depression. Aksyonov pictures his long-lost wife and children and reflects upon his false imprisonment, the now-lost light-heartedness of his youth, and the brutality (and injustice) of his punishment. Aksyonov becomes so dejected that he contemplates suicide, a horrific Christian sin, and feels tempted to take his revenge against Makar by attacking him.

One night, Aksyonov comes across Makar digging an escape tunnel under the wall of the prison. When soldiers discover this tunnel the very next day, the **governor** arrives on the scene and begins questioning the prisoners. When the governor questions Aksyonov, he praises Aksyonov as a spiritual man who always tells the truth. Aksyonov thinks about informing on Makar as revenge for Makar's setting him up but ultimately concludes that he does not wish to see Makar flogged (the same penalty Aksyonov received), especially if his suspicion of Makar turns out to be misplaced. Aksyonov lies to the Governor, saying that he witnessed nothing and that he does not know who dug the escape tunnel.

The following night, Aksyonov finds Makar sitting at the foot of his bed. Makar, deeply affected by Aksyonov's decision to protect him, desperately begs Aksyonov for forgiveness and confesses that he is the true murderer of the merchant at the inn. In addition, Makar admits to having framed Aksyonov by placing the bloody knife in his bag. Makar promises Aksyonov that in exchange for forgiveness he will confess his crime to the authorities, presumably leading to Aksyonov's official exoneration. Aksyonov responds with anger, insisting that even if he were to be released from prison he would still be miserable, as he would have no home or family to return to. However, Makar persists in begging Aksyonov's pardon; he bursts out sobbing and shares with Aksyonov how shameful he feels knowing that a man for whom he caused such suffering took pity on him and safeguarded him from the authorities. As Makar weeps, Aksyonov begins sobbing as well and assures his fellow prisoner that God will forgive him. With this, Aksyonov affirms his ultimate trust in God to forgive, deliver real justice, and reward genuine devotion with salvation. This is the principal lesson of the story, invoked by the title: God sees the truth, but waits to balance the moral scales in the afterlife.

Aksyonov suddenly feels his heart lighten, and thoughts of his death and of the afterlife replace his painful longing for home and for relief from prison (that is, earthly concerns). Though Aksyonov urged Makar to concentrate on God as the source of forgiveness, Makar nevertheless admits to the state authorities that it was he, and not Aksyonov, who murdered the merchant, and Aksyonov is officially approved for release from prison. By the time permission for Aksyonov's release reaches Siberia, however, Aksyonov has died, passing into the afterlife, where worldly authority ends and God is the only source of justice.

Unit – V

Fiction

The Stranger – Albert Camus

Albert Camus (7 November 1913 – 4 January 1960) was a French-Algerian 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 (a French colony at the time) to French *Pieds Noirs* parents. His citizenship was French. 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 in 1940. 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 leaned towards anarcho-syndicalism. He was part of many organisations seeking European integration. During the Algerian War (1954 –1962), 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, even though he firmly rejected the term throughout his lifetime.

The Stranger

Summary

Meursault, the novel's narrator and protagonist, receives a telegram telling him that his mother has died. She had been living in an old persons' home in Marengo, outside of Algiers. Meursault asks his boss for two days' leave from work to attend the funeral. His boss grudgingly grants the request, and makes Meursault feel almost guilty for asking. Meursault catches the two o'clock bus to Marengo, and sleeps for nearly the entire trip.

When Meursault arrives, he meets with the director of the old persons' home, who assures Meursault that he should not feel bad for having sent his mother there. The director asserts that it was the best decision Meursault could have made, given his modest salary. He tells Meursault that a religious funeral has been planned for his mother, but Meursault knows that his mother

never cared about religion. After the brief conversation, the director takes Meursault to the small mortuary where his mother's coffin has been placed.

Alone, Meursault sees that the coffin has already been sealed. The caretaker rushes in and offers to open the casket, but Meursault tells him not to bother. To Meursault's annoyance, the caretaker then stays in the room, chatting idly about his life and about how funeral vigils are shorter in the countryside because bodies decompose more quickly in the heat. Meursault thinks this information is "interesting and [makes] sense."

Meursault spends the night keeping vigil over his mother's body. The caretaker offers him a cup of coffee, and, in turn, Meursault gives the caretaker a cigarette. Meursault finds the atmosphere in the mortuary pleasant and he dozes off. He is awakened by the sound of his mother's friends from the old persons' home shuffling into the mortuary. One of the women cries mournfully, annoying Meursault. Eventually he falls back asleep, as do nearly all of his mother's friends.

The next morning, the day of the funeral, Meursault again meets with the director of the old persons' home. The director asks Meursault if he wants to see his mother one last time before the coffin is sealed permanently, but Meursault declines. The director tells Meursault about Thomas Perez, the only resident of the home who will be allowed to attend the funeral. Perez and Meursault's mother had become nearly inseparable before she died. Other residents had joked that he was her fiancé.

The funeral procession slowly makes its way toward the village. When one of the undertaker's assistants asks Meursault if his mother was old, Meursault responds vaguely because he does not know her exact age. The oppressive heat weighs heavily on him during the long walk. He notices that Thomas Perez cannot keep up, and keeps falling behind the procession. A nurse tells Meursault that he will get sunstroke if he walks too slowly, but will work up a sweat and catch a chill in church if he walks too quickly. Meursault agrees, thinking, "There was no way out." He remembers little of the funeral, aside from Perez's tear-soaked face and the fact that the old man fainted from the heat. As he rides home on the bus to Algiers, Meursault is filled with joy at the prospect of a good night's sleep.

Analysis

Meursault immediately reveals himself to be indifferent toward emotion and interaction with others. Instead of grieving at the news of his mother's death, he is cold, detached, and indifferent. When he receives the telegram, his primary concern is figuring out on which day his mother died. The fact that he has no emotional reaction at all makes Meursault difficult to categorize. If he were happy that his mother died, he could be cast simply as immoral or a monster. But Meursault is neither happy nor unhappy—he is indifferent.

Though Meursault tends to ignore the emotional, social, and interpersonal content of situations, he is far from indifferent when it comes to the realm of the physical and practical. In this chapter, Meursault focuses on the practical details surrounding his mother's death. He worries about borrowing appropriate funeral clothing from a friend, and he is interested in the caretaker's anecdote about how the length of a vigil depends on how long it takes before the body begins to decompose.

Meursault takes particular interest in nature and the weather. Just before the funeral, he is able to enjoy the beautiful weather and scenery, despite the sad occasion. Similarly, during the funeral procession, Meursault feels no grief or sadness, but he finds the heat of the day nearly unbearable.

Meursault's narration varies in a way that reflects his attitudes toward the world around him. When describing social or emotional situations, his sentences are short, precise, and offer minimal detail. He tells only the essentials of what he sees or does, rarely using metaphors or other rhetorical flourishes. These meager descriptions display Meursault's indifference to society and to the people around him. Meursault's narrative expands greatly when he talks about topics, such as the weather, that directly relate to his physical condition. When describing the effects of the heat during the funeral procession, for instance, he employs metaphor, personification, and other literary devices.

Meursault's belief that the world is meaningless and purposeless becomes apparent in this chapter through Camus's use of irony. Thomas Perez, the one person who actually cares about

Madame Meursault, cannot keep up with her funeral procession because of his ailing physical condition. This sad detail is incompatible with any sentimental or humanistic interpretation of Madame Meursault's death. Perez's slowness is simply the result of his old age, and no grand or comforting meaning can be assigned to it or drawn from it. We frequently see such irony undercutting any notions of a higher, controlling order operating within *The Stranger*

Summary: Chapter 2

Meursault suddenly realizes why his boss was annoyed at his request for two days' leave from work. Because his mother's funeral was on a Friday, counting the weekend, Meursault essentially received four days off rather than two. Meursault goes swimming at a public beach, where he runs into Marie Cardona, a former co-worker of his. He helps her onto a float, and after admiring her beauty, he climbs up next to her on the float. He rests his head on her body, and they lie together for a while, looking at the sky. They swim happily together and flirt over the course of the afternoon, and Marie accepts Meursault's invitation to see a movie. She is somewhat surprised to learn that Meursault's mother was buried just a day earlier, but she quickly forgets it. After the movie, Marie spends the night with Meursault.

Marie is gone when Meursault awakes. He decides against having his usual lunch at Celeste's because he wants to avoid the inevitable questions about his mother. He stays in bed until noon, then spends the entire afternoon on his balcony, smoking, eating, and observing the assorted people on the street as they come and go. The weather is beautiful. As evening approaches, Meursault buys some food and cooks dinner. After his meal he muses that yet another Sunday is over. His mother is buried, and he must return to work in the morning. He concludes that nothing has changed after all.

Summary: Chapter 3

The next day, Meursault goes to work. His boss is friendly and asks Meursault about his mother. Meursault and his co-worker, Emmanuel, go to Celeste's for lunch. Celeste asks Meursault if everything is alright, but Meursault changes the subject after only a brief response. He takes a nap and then returns to work for the rest of the afternoon. After work, Meursault runs into his neighbor, Salamano, who is on the stairs with his dog. The dog suffers from mange, so its skin

has the same scabby appearance as its elderly master's. Salamano walks the dog twice a day, beating it and swearing at it all the while.

Raymond Sintes, another neighbor, invites Meursault to dinner. Raymond is widely believed to be a pimp, but when anyone asks about his occupation he replies that he is a "warehouse guard." Over dinner, Raymond requests Meursault's advice about something, and then asks Meursault whether he would like to be "pals." Meursault offers no objection, so Raymond launches into his story.

Raymond tells Meursault that when he suspected that his mistress was cheating on him, he beat her, and she left him. This altercation led Raymond into a fight with his mistress's brother, an Arab. Raymond is still attracted to his mistress, but wants to punish her for her infidelity. His idea is to write a letter to incite her guilt and make her return to him. He plans to sleep with her, and "right at the last minute," spit in her face. Raymond then asks Meursault to write the letter, and Meursault responds that he would not mind doing it. Raymond is pleased with Meursault's effort, so he tells Meursault that they are now "pals." In his narrative, Meursault reflects that he "didn't mind" being pals with Raymond. As Meursault returns to his room, he hears Salamano's dog crying softly.

Analysis: Chapters 2–3

Meursault appears heartless for failing to express grief or even to care about his mother's death. Yet to condemn and dismiss him risks missing much of the meaning of the novel. *The Stranger*, though it explores Camus's philosophy of the absurd, is not meant to be read as a tale containing a lesson for our moral improvement. Camus's philosophy of the absurd characterizes the world and human existence as having no rational purpose or meaning. According to Camus's philosophy, the universe is indifferent to human struggles, and Meursault's indifferent personality embodies this philosophy. He does not attempt to assign a rational order to the events around him, and he is largely indifferent to human activity. Because Meursault does not see his mother's death as part of a larger structure of human existence, he can easily make a date, go to a comedy, and have sex the day after his mother's funeral. Meursault is Camus's example of someone who does not need a rational world view to functionMeursault's interactions with Marie on the beach show the importance he places on the physical aspects of existence. He

reports to us almost nothing about Marie's personality, but he carefully describes their physical interactions. The prose in his description of lying on the float with Marie and looking up at the sky is unusually warm and heartfelt. In this passage, it even seems that Meursault is happy. When he describes watching people from his balcony the following day, he again seems content.

While watching from his balcony, Meursault does not express any sort of judgment about the people he sees—he simply notices their primary characteristics. While the people he watches obviously attach great importance to their own activities, Meursault sees them as just part of another Sunday, like any other. Throughout the novel, Meursault plays this role of the detached observer. Just as he does not pass judgment on those he sees from far above on his balcony, so too does he refrain from judging the more significant characters with whom he interacts throughout the novel. Meursault will not commit to either condemning or defending Salamano's treatment of his dog. Likewise, while he does not expressly condone Raymond's treatment of his mistress, neither does Meursault refuse to participate in Raymond's scheme.

Meursault and Raymond seem to display similarly indifferent responses to the world around them, but Raymond in fact serves as a foil for Meursault. In contrast with Meursault, who is amoral, meaning he does not make moral distinctions, Raymond is clearly immoral: he beats up his mistress and he fights with her brother. Moreover, Raymond's manner of convincing Meursault to assist him in his scheme to take further revenge on his mistress seems somewhat manipulative. Raymond's plan for revenge crystallizes the distinction between Meursault and Raymond. Raymond plans to make love to his mistress and then spit in her face. He uses the physical act of sex as a tool for humiliation and revenge. Meursault, conversely, sees his sexual affair with Marie as a source of delight, in much the same way that he responds positively to other physical aspects of life.

Summary: Chapter 4

The following Saturday, Meursault goes swimming again with Marie. He is intensely aroused from the first moment he sees her. After the swim, they hurry back to Meursault's apartment to have sex. Marie spends the night and stays for lunch the following day. Meursault tells her the story of Salamano and his dog, and she laughs. Then Marie asks Meursault if he loves her. He

replies that, though “it [doesn’t] mean anything, he [doesn’t] think so.” Meursault’s response makes Marie look sad.

Marie and Meursault can hear an argument in Raymond’s apartment. The tenants of the building gather on the landing and listen outside the door to the sounds of Raymond beating his mistress. A police officer arrives. Raymond’s mistress informs the officer that Raymond beat her and the cop slaps Raymond in the face. He then orders Raymond to wait in his apartment until he is summoned to the police station. Later that afternoon, Raymond visits Meursault in his apartment. He asks Meursault to go to the police station to testify that his mistress had cheated on him. Meursault agrees. After an evening out, the two men return to their apartment building to find Salamano desperately searching for his dog, who ran away from him at the Parade Ground. Meursault says that if the dog is at the pound, he can pay a fee to have it returned. Salamano curses the dog when he hears this, but later that night, Meursault hears Salamano crying in his room.

Summary: Chapter 5

Raymond’s friend Masson invites Meursault and Marie to spend the following Sunday at his beach house with him, his wife, and Raymond. Meursault’s boss offers him a position in a new office he plans to open in Paris. Meursault replies that it is all the same to him, and his boss becomes angry at his lack of ambition. Meursault muses that he used to have ambition as a student, but then realized that none of it really mattered.

Marie asks Meursault if he wants to marry her. Meursault replies that it makes no difference to him. When she asks Meursault if he loves her, he again replies that though it does not mean anything, he probably does not love her. Marie thinks he is peculiar, but decides that she wants to marry him nonetheless. She tells Meursault that she cannot have dinner with him that night, and when he does not ask why she laughs. Meursault eats dinner alone at Celeste’s, where he notices a strange woman obsessively checking off radio programs listed in a magazine. He follows her briefly when she leaves.

Meursault returns home and finds Salamano waiting outside his door. Salamano says that he bought his dog in an effort to overcome the loneliness he felt after his wife died, and that he does

not want to get a new dog because he is used to the old one. Salamano then expresses his condolences for the death of Madame Meursault. He mentions that some people in the neighborhood thought badly of Meursault for sending her to the home, but he himself knew that Meursault must have loved her very much. He returns to his own loss, saying that he does not know what he will do without his dog. Its loss has changed his life dramatically.

Analysis: Chapters 4–5

On the surface, Meursault appears to be an ordinary, lower middle-class French colonial in Algeria, living a typical day-to-day routine. He eats lunch in small cafés, attends films, and swims during his free time. He is diligent but not exceptional at his perfectly ordinary job. As of yet, he challenges nothing this society hands him, and it challenges nothing in him. Meursault lives his life almost unconsciously, nearly sleepwalking through a ready-made structure that his society provides him.

By attempting to assign meaning to the meaningless events of Meursault's life, the people in Meursault's social circle succumb to the same temptation that confronts us as we read *The Stranger*. Salamano, for example, states that he is sure that Meursault loved his mother deeply, despite the fact that Meursault offers no evidence to support such an assertion. Salamano is himself supplying the rational order that he desires to find in the world. His statement about Meursault's love for his mother seems intended to comfort himself more than to comfort Meursault. Further, the way Salamano turns to the subject of Meursault's love for his mother in the midst of his own discussion of his missing dog suggests that Salamano uses his discussion of Meursault and Madame Meursault to displace his own guilt. Salamano assumes that Meursault really loved his mother despite sending her to a nursing home, just as he loved his dog even though he beat it.

Raymond's encounter with the policeman implies a lack of rational order in human life. Society deems Raymond's slapping of his mistress for a perceived injustice an immoral act. But when the cop slaps Raymond, society in effect condones the action of slapping. Physically, both slaps are nearly identical, yet one is considered wrong, and the other, just and good. Through the policeman's actions, Camus implicitly challenges the truth of society's accepted moral order.

Salamano's description of life with his dog highlights the inevitability of physical decay. Salamano says that he initially had human companionship in his wife, but she died and he had to settle for the animal companionship of his dog. As time has passed, Salamano's dog has become increasingly ugly and sick, until the point where it, too, has left him. Physical decay represents a marker and reminder of Camus's philosophy of the absurd, which asserts that humans are thrust into a life that inevitably ends in death.

Meursault narrates the events of his life as they occur without interpreting them as a coherent narrative. He does not relate the events of earlier chapters to the events that take place in these chapters. It becomes clear that Meursault concentrates largely on the moment in which he finds himself, with little reference to past occurrences or future consequences. This outlook perhaps explains his ambivalent attitude toward marriage with Marie. Because he does not think about what married life would be like, Meursault does not particularly care whether or not he and Marie marry. Characteristically, the emotional and sentimental aspects of marriage never enter into his mind.

Summary

The following Sunday, Meursault has difficulty waking up. Marie has to shake him and shout at him. He finally awakens and the two go downstairs. On the way down they call Raymond out of his room, and the three of them prepare to take a bus to Masson's beach house. As they head for the bus, they notice a group of Arabs, including Raymond's mistress's brother—whom Meursault refers to as "the Arab"—staring at them. Raymond is relieved when the Arabs do not board the bus. As the bus leaves, Meursault looks back and sees that the Arabs are still staring blankly at the same spot.

Masson's beach house is a small wooden bungalow. Meursault meets Masson's wife, and for the first time thinks about what marrying Marie will be like. Masson, Meursault, and Marie swim until lunchtime. Marie and Meursault swim in tandem, enjoying themselves greatly. After lunch, Masson, Raymond, and Meursault take a walk while the two women clean the dishes. The heat on the beach is nearly unbearable for Meursault. The three men notice two Arabs, one of whom is the brother of Raymond's mistress, following them. A fight quickly breaks out. Raymond and Masson have the advantage until Raymond's adversary produces a knife. Meursault tries to warn

Raymond, but it is too late. The Arab slashes Raymond's arm and mouth before retreating with his friend. Masson and Meursault help the wounded Raymond back to the bungalow. Marie looks very frightened, and Madame Masson cries when she sees Raymond's injuries. Masson takes Raymond to a nearby doctor. Meursault does not feel like explaining what happened, so he smokes cigarettes and watches the sea.

Raymond returns to the bungalow later that afternoon, wrapped in bandages. He descends to the beach, and, against Raymond's wishes, Meursault follows along. Raymond finds the two Arabs lying down beside a spring. Raymond has a gun in his pocket, which he fingers nervously as the two Arabs stare at him. Meursault tries to convince Raymond not to shoot, and eventually talks him into handing over the gun. The Arabs then sneak away behind a rock, so Meursault and Raymond leave.

Meursault accompanies Raymond back to the beach house. The intense heat has worn Meursault out, so the prospect of walking up the stairs to face the women seems just as tiring as continuing to walk on the hot beach. Meursault chooses to stay on the beach. The heat is oppressive and Meursault has a headache, so he walks back to the spring to cool off. When Meursault reaches the spring, he sees that the brother of Raymond's mistress has returned as well. Meursault puts his hand on the gun. When Meursault steps toward the cool water of the spring, the Arab draws his knife. The sunlight reflects off the blade and directly into Meursault's eyes, which are already stinging with sweat and heat. Meursault fires the gun once. He pauses and then fires four more times into the Arab's motionless body. Meursault has killed the Arab.

Analysis: Chapter 6

At the beginning of the novel, the indifference Meursault feels is located exclusively within himself, in his own heart and mind. By this point, however, Meursault has come to realize how similar the universe—or at least Camus's conception of it—is to his own personality. He begins to understand that not only does he not care what happens, but that the world does not care either. Reflecting on the moment when Raymond gave him the gun, Meursault says, "It was then that I realized you could either shoot or not shoot." His comment implies that no difference exists between the two alternatives.

This chapter represents the climax of the first part of the book. Since his return from his mother's funeral, everything that Meursault has done in the narrative up to this point—meeting Marie, meeting Raymond, and becoming involved in the affair with Raymond's mistress—has led him to the beach house. Yet Meursault's murder of the Arab comes as a complete surprise—nothing in *The Stranger* has prepared us for it. The feeling of abruptness that accompanies this shift in the plot is intentional on Camus's part. He wants the murder to happen unexpectedly and to strike us as bizarre.

Inevitably, the first question that the killing provokes is, "Why?" But nothing in Meursault's narrative answers this question. Camus's philosophy of absurdism emphasizes the futility of man's inevitable attempts to find order and meaning in life. The "absurd" refers to the feeling man experiences when he tries to find or fabricate order in an irrational universe. Cleverly, Camus coaxes us into just such an attempt—he lures us into trying to determine the reason for Meursault's killing of the Arab, when in fact Meursault has no reason. Camus forces us to confront the fact that any rational explanation we try to offer would be based on a consciousness that we create for Meursault, an order that we impose onto his mind.

In this chapter, we once again see the profound effect nature has on Meursault. Early in the chapter, Meursault notes nature's benefits. The sun soothes his headache, and the cool water provides an opportunity for him and Marie to swim and play happily together. Later in the chapter, however, nature becomes a negative force on Meursault. As at his mother's funeral, the heat oppresses him. Camus's language intensifies to describe the sun's harshness, particularly in the passages just before Meursault commits the murder. His prose becomes increasingly ornate, featuring such rhetorical devices as personification and metaphor, and contrasting strongly with the spare, simple descriptions that Meursault usually offers.

Summary: Part – 2 (Chapter 1)

Meursault has been arrested and thrown into jail for murdering the Arab. Meursault's young, court-appointed lawyer visits him in his cell and informs him that investigators have checked into Meursault's private life and learned that he "show[ed] insensitivity" on the day of Madame Meursault's funeral. The lawyer asks if Meursault was sad at his mother's burial, and Meursault responds that he does not usually analyze himself. He says that though he probably did love his

mother, “that didn’t mean anything.” The lawyer departs, disgusted by Meursault’s indifference to his mother’s death. Meursault says, “I felt the urge to reassure [the lawyer] that I was . . . just like everybody else.”

That afternoon, Meursault is taken to meet with the examining magistrate. The magistrate asks Meursault whether he loved his mother, and Meursault replies that he loved her as much as anyone. The magistrate asks why Meursault paused between the first shot at the Arab and other four shots. Nothing about the crime bothers the magistrate aside from this detail. When Meursault does not answer, the magistrate waves a crucifix at him and asks if he believes in God. Meursault says no. The magistrate states that his own life would be meaningless if he doubted the existence of God, and concludes that Meursault has an irrevocably hardened soul. During the course of the eleven-month investigation that ensues, the magistrate takes to calling Meursault “Monsieur Antichrist,” with an almost cordial air.

Summary: Chapter 2

Meursault describes his first few days in prison. The authorities initially put him in a cell with a number of other people, including several Arabs. Eventually, Meursault is taken to a private cell. One day, Marie comes to visit him. The visiting room is noisy and crowded with prisoners and their visitors. Marie wears a forced smile, and tells Meursault that he needs to have hope. She says she believes that he will be acquitted, and that they will get married and go swimming. Meursault, however, seems more interested in the mournful prisoner sitting beside him, whose mother is visiting. Marie leaves, and later sends a letter stating that the authorities will not allow her to visit Meursault anymore because she is not his wife.

Meursault’s desires to go swimming, to smoke cigarettes, and to have sex torment him in jail. He becomes accustomed to his confinement, however, so it ceases to be a terrible punishment. Only the early evenings seem to trouble him. He sleeps as many hours as possible, and kills time by recalling the tiniest details of his apartment and thinking about a story on an old scrap of newspaper he has found in his cell. The story involves a Czechoslovakian man who left his village at a young age. After making his fortune, he returned to his village in disguise to see his mother and sister, who were running a hotel. He planned to surprise them by revealing his identity after showing off his wealth. Unfortunately, his mother and sister killed him and robbed

him before he could reveal himself. When they discovered their mistake, the two women both committed suicide.

Analysis: Chapters 1–2

The magistrate, when he waves a crucifix at Meursault, introduces the notion that Meursault and his attitudes represent a threat to society. Meursault's atheism and indifference to his mother's death implicitly challenge the magistrate's belief in a rational universe controlled by God—the belief that gives his life meaning. By associating Meursault with the devil and calling him "Monsieur Antichrist," the magistrate attempts to categorize Meursault in terms of Christianity, the magistrate's own belief system. The magistrate incorporates Meursault into his ordered world view and then dismisses him as evil, thereby preventing Meursault from undermining his rational structure of belief.

For the most part, Meursault reacts to his confinement in prison with characteristic indifference. Most important, his imprisonment does not incite any guilt or regret over what he has done. As at his mother's funeral, Meursault focuses on the practical details of his life in prison rather than on its emotional elements. For instance, he thinks the fact that the court will appoint an attorney for him is "very convenient." He also enjoys the examining magistrate's friendly demeanor in their subsequent meetings, and does not treat him as an adversary. Not surprisingly, the physical aspects of confinement weigh most heavily on Meursault's mind. His unsatisfied longings for nature, the ocean, cigarettes, and sex constitute, in his mind, his punishment. He notes that though he thinks about women, he does not think about Marie in particular. This statement underscores the physical, nonemotional character of their relationship.

At the end of Part Two, Chapter 2, Meursault, staring at his reflection in the window, notes the seriousness of his face and suddenly realizes that he has been talking to himself. Meursault's actions signal his emerging self-awareness and self-consciousness. In prison, he is growing to understand himself and his beliefs more and more. He decides that he could get used to any living situation, even living in a tree trunk, for example.

Most important, Meursault begins to gain insight into the irrational universe around him. In his mind echo the words of the nurse who speaks to him in Part One, Chapter 1, during the funeral procession. She told Meursault that he would get sunstroke if he walked too slowly, but would

work up a sweat and catch a chill in church if he walked too quickly. At the time, Meursault agreed that "there was no way out," but now he understands for the first time the full implications of these words: there is no way out of prison, and there is no way out of a life that inevitably and purposelessly ends in death. When Marie comes to visit Meursault, her hope that Meursault's trial will end happily contrasts strongly with Meursault's growing affirmation of an irrational universe.

The news article that Meursault studies about the Czechoslovakian man serves to comment and expand upon the themes of absurdism that Camus illustrates in *The Stranger*. Camus's absurdist philosophy asserts that the events of the world have no rational order or discernible meaning. The story of the returning son murdered by his mother and sister fits perfectly into such a belief system. There is no reason for the son to have died. His terrible, ironic fate is not compatible with any logical or ordered system governing human existence. Like Meursault's killing of the Arab, the son's death is a purposeless, meaningless tragedy that defies rationalization or justification.

Summary: Chapter 3

The following summer, Meursault's trial begins. Meursault is surprised to find the courtroom packed with people. Even the woman he saw checking off radio programs at Celeste's is there. The press has given his case a great deal of publicity because the summer is a slow season for news.

The judge asks Meursault why he put his mother in a home. Meursault replies that he did not have enough money to care for her. When the judge asks Meursault if the decision tormented him, Meursault explains that both he and his mother became used to their new situations because they did not expect anything from one another.

The director of the home confirms that Madame Meursault complained about Meursault's decision to put her in the home. The director says that he was surprised by Meursault's "calm" during his mother's funeral. He remembers that Meursault declined to see his mother's body and did not cry once. One of the undertaker's assistants reported that Meursault did not even know how old his mother was. Meursault realizes that the people in the courtroom hate him.

The caretaker testifies that Meursault smoked a cigarette and drank coffee during his vigil. Meursault's lawyer insists the jury take note that the caretaker had likewise smoked during the vigil, accepting Meursault's offer of a cigarette. After the caretaker admits to offering Meursault coffee in the first place, the prosecutor derides Meursault as a disloyal son for not refusing the coffee. Thomas Perez takes the stand and recalls being too overcome with sadness during the funeral to notice whether or not Meursault cried. Celeste, claiming Meursault as his friend, attributes Meursault's killing of the Arab to bad luck. Marie's testimony reveals Meursault's plan to marry her. The prosecutor stresses that Marie and Meursault's sexual relationship began the weekend after the funeral and that they went to see a comedy at the movie theater that day. Favorable accounts—of Meursault's honesty and decency from Masson, and of Meursault's kindness to Salamano's dog from Salamano—counter the prosecutor's accusations. Raymond testifies that it was just by chance that Meursault became involved in his dispute with his mistress's brother. The prosecutor retorts by asking if it was just chance that Meursault wrote the letter to Raymond's mistress, testified on Raymond's behalf at the police station, and went to the beach the day of the crime.

Summary: Chapter 4

In his closing argument, the prosecutor cites Meursault's obvious intelligence and lack of remorse as evidence of premeditated murder. Reminding the jury that the next trial on the court's schedule involves parricide (the murder of a close relative), the prosecutor alleges that Meursault's lack of grief over his mother's death threatens the moral basis of society. In a moral sense, the prosecutor argues, Meursault is just as guilty as the man who killed his own father. Calling for the death penalty, the prosecutor elaborates that Meursault's actions have paved the way for the man who killed his father, so Meursault must be considered guilty of the other man's crime as well.

Meursault denies having returned to the beach with the intention of killing the Arab. When the judge asks him to clarify his motivation for the crime, Meursault blurts out that he did it "because of the sun." Meursault's lawyer claims that Meursault did a noble thing by sending his mother to a home because he could not afford to care for her. Making Meursault feel further excluded from his own case, Meursault's lawyer offers an interpretation of the events that led up

to the crime, speaking in the first person, as though he were Meursault. Meursault's mind drifts again during his lawyer's interminable argument. Meursault is found guilty of premeditated murder and sentenced to death by guillotine.

Analysis: Chapters 3–4

In *The Stranger,* Camus seeks to undermine the sense of reassurance that courtroom dramas typically provide. Such narratives reassure us not only that truth will always prevail, but that truth actually exists. They uphold our judicial system as just, despite its flaws. Ultimately, these narratives reassure us that we live in a world governed by reason and order. Camus sees such reassurance as a silly and false illusion. Because there is no rational explanation for Meursault's murder of the Arab, the authorities seek to construct an explanation of their own, which they base on false assumptions. By imposing a rational order on logically unrelated events, the authorities make Meursault appear to be a worse character than he is.

Camus portrays the process of accusation and judgment as hopeless, false, and irrational. Society demands that a rational interpretation be imposed on the facts and events of Meursault's life, whether or not such an interpretation is possible. Meursault's lawyer and the prosecutor both offer false explanations, leaving the jury with a choice between two lies. The prosecutor manufactures a meaningful, rational connection between Meursault's trial and the upcoming parricide trial, even though no actual link exists between the two cases. However, the prosecutor has no trouble imposing enough meaning to convince the jury that a link does in fact exist, and that Meursault deserves a death sentence.

During his trial, Meursault comes to understand that his failure to interpret or find meaning in his own life has left him vulnerable to others, who will impose such meaning for him. Until this point, Meursault has unthinkingly drifted from moment to moment, lacking the motivation or ability to examine his life as a narrative with a past, present, and future. Even during the early part of trial he watches as if everything were happening to someone else. Only well into the trial does Meursault suddenly realize that the prosecutor has successfully manufactured an interpretation of Meursault's life, and that, in the jury's eyes, he likely appears guilty. Meursault's own lawyer not only imposes yet another manufactured interpretation of

Meursault's life, but even goes so far as to deliver this interpretation in the first person, effectively stealing Meursault's own point of view when making the argument.

The trial forces Meursault to confront his existence consciously because he is suddenly being held accountable for it. As he hears positive, negative, and neutral interpretations of his character, he recognizes that part of his being evades his control, because it exists only in the minds of others. All the witnesses discuss the same man, Meursault, but they offer differing interpretations of his character. In each testimony, meaning is constructed exclusively by the witness—Meursault has nothing to do with it.

Summary

After his trial, Meursault only cares about escaping the "machinery of justice" that has condemned him to death. The newspapers characterize the situation of a condemned man in terms of a "debt owed to society," but Meursault believes the only thing that matters is the possibility of an escape to freedom. He remembers his mother telling him how his father once forced himself to watch an execution. Afterward, Meursault's father vomited several times. Now, Meursault thinks an execution is really the only thing of interest for a man. He only wishes he could be a spectator instead of the victim. He fantasizes about a combination of chemicals that would kill the condemned only nine times out of ten, because then at least he would have a chance of surviving.

Meursault also dislikes the fact that the guillotine forces the condemned to hope that the execution works on the first try. If the first attempt fails, the execution will be painful. Hence, the prisoner is forced into "moral collaboration" with the execution process, by hoping for its success. He further objects to the fact that the guillotine is mounted on the ground, not on a scaffold. The condemned is killed "with a little shame and with great precision." Meursault counts himself lucky every time dawn passes without the sound of footsteps approaching his cell, because he knows that such footsteps would signal the arrival of the men who will take him to his execution. When he considers the option of filing a legal appeal, Meursault initially assumes the worst, believing any appeal would be denied. Only after considering the fact that everyone dies eventually does he allow himself to consider the possibility of a pardon and freedom. Whenever he thinks of this possibility, he feels delirious joy.

Against Meursault's wishes, the chaplain visits and asks why Meursault has refused to see him. Meursault reasserts his denial of God's existence. When the chaplain states that Meursault's attitude results from "extreme despair," Meursault says he is afraid, not desperate. The chaplain insists that all the condemned men he has known have eventually turned to God for comfort. Meursault becomes irritated by the chaplain's insistence that he spend the rest of his life thinking about God. He feels he has no time to waste with God. The chaplain tells Meursault that his "heart is blind."

Meursault suddenly becomes enraged. He shouts that nothing matters, and that nothing in the chaplain's beliefs is as certain as the chaplain thinks. The only certainty Meursault perceives in the whole of human existence is death. In the course of his outburst, Meursault grabs the chaplain. After the guards separate them, Meursault realizes why his mother started her little romance with Thomas Perez. She lived in the midst of fading lives, so she chose to play at living life over again. He believes crying over her would simply be an insult to her. Meursault has finally shed any glimmer of hope, so he opens himself to the "gentle indifference of the world." His only hope is that there will be a crowd of angry spectators at his execution who will greet him "with cries of hate."

Analysis

While awaiting his execution, Meursault takes the final step in the development of his consciousness. Whereas during his trial Meursault passively observed the judgments leveled against him, in prison he begins to ponder the fact of his inevitable death. He begins to see his life as having a past, present, and future, and concludes that there is no difference between dying soon by execution and dying decades later of natural causes. This capacity for self-analysis is a new development for Meursault, and it contrasts greatly with his level of self-awareness earlier in the novel.

Once Meursault dismisses his perceived difference between execution and natural death, he must deal with the concept of hope. Hope only tortures him, because it creates the false illusion that he can change the fact of his death. The leap of hope he feels at the idea of having another twenty years of life prevents him from making the most of his final days or hours. Hope disturbs his calm and understanding, and prevents him from fully coming to grips with his situation.

After speaking with the chaplain, Meursault no longer views his impending execution with hope or despair. He accepts death as an inevitable fact and looks forward to it with peace. This realization of death's inevitability constitutes Meursault's triumph over society. Expressing remorse over his crime would implicitly acknowledge the murder as wrong, and Meursault's punishment as justified. However, Meursault's lack of concern about his death sentence implies that his trial and conviction were pointless exercises. Moreover, Meursault accepts that his views make him an enemy and stranger to society. Meursault anticipates that his position in relation to society will be affirmed when crowds cheer hatefully at him as he is beheaded. Meursault's eager anticipation of this moment shows he is content being an outsider.

In his heightened state of consciousness prior to his execution, Meursault says that he comes to recognize the "gentle indifference of the world." Meursault decides that, like him, the world does not pass judgment, nor does it rationally order or control the events of human existence. Yet Meursault does not despair at this fact. Instead, he draws from it a kind of freedom. Without the need for false hope or illusions of order and meaning, Meursault feels free to live a simpler, less burdened life.

Character List

Meursault

The protagonist and narrator of *The Stranger*, to whom the novel's title refers. Meursault is a detached figure who views and describes much of what occurs around him from a removed position. He is emotionally indifferent to others, even to his mother and his lover, Marie. He also refuses to adhere to the accepted moral order of society. After Meursault kills a man, "the Arab," for no apparent reason, he is put on trial. However, the focus of Meursault's murder trial quickly shifts away from the murder itself to Meursault's attitudes and beliefs. Meursault's atheism and his lack of outward grief at his mother's funeral represent a serious challenge to the morals of the society in which he lives. Consequently, society brands him an outsider.

Meursault is psychologically detached from the world around him. Events that would be very significant for most people, such as a marriage proposal or a parent's death, do not matter to him, at least not on a sentimental level. He simply does not care that his mother is dead, or that Marie loves him.

Meursault is also honest, which means that he does not think of hiding his lack of feeling by shedding false tears over his mother's death. In displaying his indifference, Meursault implicitly challenges society's accepted moral standards, which dictate that one should grieve over death. Because Meursault does not grieve, society sees him as an outsider, a threat, even a monster. At his trial, the fact that he had no reaction to his mother's death damages his reputation far more than his taking of another person's life.

Meursault is neither moral nor immoral. Rather, he is amoral—he simply does not make the distinction between good and bad in his own mind. When Raymond asks him to write a letter that will help Raymond torment his mistress, Meursault indifferently agrees because he "didn't have any reason not to." He does not place any value judgment on his act, and writes the letter mainly because he has the time and the ability to do so.

At the novel's outset, Meursault's indifference seems to apply solely to his understanding of himself. Aside from his atheism, Meursault makes few assumptions about the nature of the world around him. However, his thinking begins to broaden once he is sentenced to death. After his encounter with the chaplain, Meursault concludes that the universe is, like him, totally indifferent to human life. He decides that people's lives have no grand meaning or importance, and that their actions, their comings and goings, have no effect on the world. This realization is the culmination of all the events of the novel. When Meursault accepts "the gentle indifference of the world," he finds peace with himself and with the society around him, and his development as a character is complete.

Raymond Sintes

Raymond acts as a catalyst to *The Stranger*'s plot. After Raymond beats and abuses his mistress, he comes into conflict with her brother, an Arab. Raymond draws Meursault into conflict with "the Arab," and eventually Meursault kills the Arab in cold blood. By drawing Meursault into the conflict that eventually results in Meursault's death sentence, Raymond, in a sense, causes Meursault's downfall. This responsibility on Raymond's part is symbolized by the fact that he gives Meursault the gun that Meursault later uses to kill the Arab. However, because the murder and subsequent trial bring about Meursault's realization of the indifference of the universe, Raymond can also be seen as a catalyst of Meursault's "enlightenment."

Because Raymond's character traits contrast greatly with Meursault's, he also functions as a foil for Meursault. Whereas Meursault is simply amoral, Raymond is clearly immoral. Raymond's treatment of his mistress is violent and cruel, and he nearly kills the Arab himself before Meursault talks him out of it. Additionally, whereas Meursault passively reacts to the events around him, Raymond initiates action. He invites Meursault to dinner and to the beach, and he seeks out the Arabs after his first fight with them.

A good deal of ambiguity exists in Raymond's relationship with Meursault. On the one hand, Raymond uses Meursault. He easily convinces Meursault to help him in his schemes to punish his mistress, and to testify on his behalf at the police station. On the other hand, Raymond seems to feel some loyalty toward Meursault. He asserts Meursault's innocence at the murder trial, attributing the events leading up to the killing to "chance." It is possible that Raymond begins his relationship with Meursault intending only to use him, and then, like Marie, becomes drawn to Meursault's peculiarities.

Marie Cardona

Like Meursault, Marie delights in physical contact. She kisses Meursault frequently in public and enjoys the act of sex. However, unlike Meursault's physical affection for Marie, Marie's physical affection for Meursault signals a deeper sentimental and emotional attachment. Though Marie is disappointed when Meursault expresses his indifference toward love and marriage, she does not end the relationship or rethink her desire to marry him. In fact, Meursault's strange behavior seems part of his appeal for her. She says that she probably loves him because he is so peculiar. There also may be an element of pragmatism in Marie's decision to marry Meursault. She enjoys a good deal of freedom within the relationship because he does not take any interest in her life when they are not together.

Whatever her motivations for entering into the relationship, Marie remains loyal to Meursault when he is arrested and put on trial. In the context of Camus's absurdist philosophy, Marie's loyalty represents a mixed blessing, because her feelings of faith and hope prevent her from reaching the understanding that Meursault attains at the end of the novel. Marie never grasps the indifference of the universe, and she never comes to understand the redemptive value of

abandoning hope. Camus implies that Marie, lacking the deeper understanding of the universe that Meursault has attained, is less "enlightened" than Meursault.

Themes

Themes are the fundamental and often universal ideas explored in a literary work.

The Irrationality of the Universe

Though *The Stranger* is a work of fiction, it contains a strong resonance of Camus's philosophical notion of absurdity. In his essays, Camus asserts that individual lives and human existence in general have no rational meaning or order. However, because people have difficulty accepting this notion, they constantly attempt to identify or create rational structure and meaning in their lives. The term "absurdity" describes humanity's futile attempt to find rational order where none exists.

Though Camus does not explicitly refer to the notion of absurdity in *The Stranger*, the tenets of absurdity operate within the novel. Neither the external world in which Meursault lives nor the internal world of his thoughts and attitudes possesses any rational order. Meursault has no discernable reason for his actions, such as his decision to marry Marie and his decision to kill the Arab.

Society nonetheless attempts to fabricate or impose rational explanations for Meursault's irrational actions. The idea that things sometimes happen for no reason, and that events sometimes have no meaning is disruptive and threatening to society. The trial sequence in Part Two of the novel represents society's attempt to manufacture rational order. The prosecutor and Meursault's lawyer both offer explanations for Meursault's crime that are based on logic, reason, and the concept of cause and effect. Yet these explanations have no basis in fact and serve only as attempts to defuse the frightening idea that the universe is irrational. The entire trial is therefore an example of absurdity—an instance of humankind's futile attempt to impose rationality on an irrational universe.

The Meaninglessness of Human Life

A second major component of Camus's absurdist philosophy is the idea that human life has no redeeming meaning or purpose. Camus argues that the only certain thing in life is the inevitability of death, and, because all humans will eventually meet death, all lives are all equally

meaningless. Meursault gradually moves toward this realization throughout the novel, but he does not fully grasp it until after his argument with the chaplain in the final chapter. Meursault realizes that, just as he is indifferent to much of the universe, so is the universe indifferent to him. Like all people, Meursault has been born, will die, and will have no further importance.

Paradoxically, only after Meursault reaches this seemingly dismal realization is he able to attain happiness. When he fully comes to terms with the inevitability of death, he understands that it does not matter whether he dies by execution or lives to die a natural death at an old age. This understanding enables Meursault to put aside his fantasies of escaping execution by filing a successful legal appeal. He realizes that these illusory hopes, which had previously preoccupied his mind, would do little more than create in him a false sense that death is avoidable. Meursault sees that his hope for sustained life has been a burden. His liberation from this false hope means he is free to live life for what it is, and to make the most of his remaining days.

The Importance of the Physical World

The Stranger shows Meursault to be interested far more in the physical aspects of the world around him than in its social or emotional aspects. This focus on the sensate world results from the novel's assertion that there exists no higher meaning or order to human life. Throughout *The Stranger*, Meursault's attention centers on his own body, on his physical relationship with Marie, on the weather, and on other physical elements of his surroundings. For example, the heat during the funeral procession causes Meursault far more pain than the thought of burying his mother. The sun on the beach torments Meursault, and during his trial Meursault even identifies his suffering under the sun as the reason he killed the Arab. The style of Meursault's narration also reflects his interest in the physical. Though he offers terse, plain descriptions when glossing over emotional or social situations, his descriptions become vivid and ornate when he discusses topics such as nature and the weather.

2. My Name is Red – Orhan Pamuk

OrhanPamuk grew up in an affluent, Westernized district of Istanbul called Nisantasi. When he was young, he dreamed of becoming a professional artist. He studied at the American Robert College and Istanbul Technical University, but dropped out of his architecture program there in order to enroll in the journalism program at Istanbul University. At 23, he decided to become a novelist, and moved in with his parents in order to focus on his writing. His first book, *CevdetBey and His Sons*, was published seven years later in 1982, and received critical acclaim. Since then, he has published 19 books in total, most of which have been translated into English (as well as many other languages). Pamuk's novels often explore the meeting of Eastern and Western cultures epitomized in the city of Istanbul. He is a vocal critic of the Turkish government, speaking out against restrictions on freedom of expression and against the state's treatment of Kurds. In 2006 he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature. He currently holds the position of Robert Yik-Fong Tam Professor of the Humanities at Columbia University.

Historical Context of *My Name is Red*

The book is set during the heyday of the Ottoman Empire, a Sunni Muslim empire that existed from 1300-1922 and extended through Southeastern Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa. Between 1370-1526, the Timurid Dynasty ruled Persia and Central Asia and fostered a vibrant revival of intellectual and creative activity, including miniature painting. At the time *My Name is Red* takes place in 1591, the leader of the Ottoman Empire was Sultan Murat III, who is a character in the novel. Murat was a particularly enthusiastic patron of miniature painting, and he commissioned several books to be painted by painters employed by the Ottoman court. When Murat died in 1595, he was succeeded by his son, Mehmed III.

Other Books Related to *My Name is Red*

Pamuk's work (*My Name is Red* in particular) is often compared to the work of the Italian author Umberto Eco. Eco's novels *The Name of the Rose* and *Foucault's Pendulum* similarly weave complex historical and philosophical themes into fictional narratives. Pamuk's use of intertextuality (inserting references and snippets of other texts into the novel) is reminiscent of postmodern writers such as Jorge Luis Borges. Pamuk's imaginative use of different narrative voices seems to take direct inspiration from James Joyce's *Ulysses*, and the sinister, philosophically resonant plot evokes the work of Franz Kafka. Pamuk himself has admitted that *My Name is Red* was influenced by the historical fiction of Italo Calvino, Thomas Mann,

and—most of all—Marguerite Yourcenar, whose novel *The Memoirs of Hadrian* is widely considered to be one of the finest examples of historical fiction written in the 20th century.

Key Facts about *My Name is Red*

Full Title: *My Name is Red* (Turkish: *BenimAdımKırmızı*)

When Written: 1990-92, 1994-98

Where Written: Istanbul, Turkey

When Published: 1998 (English translation 2001)

Literary Period: Contemporary Turkish fiction

Genre: Historical thriller

Setting: Istanbul, Ottoman Empire, 1591

Climax: When Black forces the needle into Olive's eyes and Olive confesses that he is the murderer.

Antagonist: The murderer / Hasan / The Hoja of Erzurum

Point of View: 12 different first-person

My Name is Red

Elegant has been murdered, and his corpse lies undiscovered at the bottom of a well. Speaking from the afterlife, he hopes that his body is found soon and that the murderer is captured. Meanwhile, Black has returned to Istanbul after 12 years away. Before he left, Black fell in love with his cousin, Shekure, and he has now been summoned home by Shekure's father (and Black's uncle) Enishte. Enishte wants Black to work on a secret book commissioned by the Sultan and illustrated by the three master miniaturists, Butterfly, Stork, and Olive.

The murderer reflects on his difficulty coming to terms with the fact that he has taken someone's life. He has started frequenting a coffeehouse where a storyteller entertains the audience by impersonating different characters; the murderer laughs at the storyteller's impression of a dog, and he admits that he killed Elegant because Elegant was threatening to tell everyone about the secret book.

Enishte originally sent Black away after learning that he had fallen in love with Shekure, but he is now pleased with the way that Black has matured during his time in exile. He tells Black about a trip he took to Venice, during which he was astonished (and frightened) by the new realist style of European painting. Enishte introduces Black to Shekure's six-year-old son Orhan, who then overhears Enishte telling Black about the death of Elegant, whom people suspect was murdered. As Black leaves Enishte's house, Esther, a Jewish clothier, gives him a letter from Shekure. Riding away on his horse, Black catches a glimpse of Shekure at her window. Shekure admires Black's handsomeness, but feels conflicted, as she is still technically married to a soldier who never returned from war. Shekure previously lived with her husband's father and his brother, Hasan, but left when Hasan tried to rape her.

The next chapter is narrated by an illustration of a tree, who declares that it is lonely because it fell out of the book of which it was supposed to be a part. Meanwhile, Black goes to see Master Osman, the Head Illuminator, and he is given a tour of the Royal Workshop. Osman is suspicious of Black, as Enishte is Osman's archrival. Black then makes individual visits to Butterfly, Stork, and Olive, who each tell Black three different parables about style and signature.

Black gives Esther a letter for Shekure, but before bringing it to Shekure, Esther shows it to Hasan, who writes his own letter. After receiving both letters, Shekure confesses that she is confused about whom to marry. Enishte goes to Elegant's funeral, where Butterfly tells him that he believes Olive and Stork are behind Elegant's death. The murderer admits that he put on a big show of grief at the funeral and that he does feel a genuine sense of torment about killing Elegant.

The storyteller's next narrative is told from the perspective of a gold counterfeit coin, who argues that the people of Istanbul are all obsessed with money. Enishte explains to Black that the final illustration in the secret book will be a portrait of the Sultan, although Enishte is having trouble

finishing it. The murderer sees Black leaving Enishte's house and realizes that Black intends to marry Shekure, which fills the murderer with furious jealousy.

After Esther shows Hasan more letters between Black and Shekure, Hasan writes his own letter to Shekure, threatening to force her to return to his father's house. Shekure and Black meet at a house that formerly belonged to a Jewish man who was hanged. They kiss and begin to have sex, but Shekure insists that they stop and she makes Black agree to a list of demands in preparation for their marriage.

While Shekure and Black are out, the murderer goes to Enishte's house and they have a long conversation about art, religion, sin, and the secret book. Eventually, the murderer tells Enishte that it was he who murdered Elegant. They continue their discussion, but it becomes clear to both of them that the murderer intends to kill Enishte. The murderer smashes a Mongolian inkpot over Enishte's head, and Enishte cries out in agony before dying. His soul is carried to the heavens in the palm of the Angel Azrael.

Shekure walks home in the snow, discovers Enishte's dead body, and hides the body while pretending to her two sons that Enishte is merely sick. At the coffeehouse, the storyteller speaks from the perspective of the color red, reflecting on the impossibility of explaining color to someone who has never seen it.

In the morning, Shekure meets Black and makes a plan to legally authorize her widowhood so that they can marry. Black bribes an imam to issue the certificate of widowhood and arranges for the imam to officiate their marriage. The wedding takes place around Enishte's body, with Shekure and Black managing to convince the imam and guests that Enishte is alive and providing his consent from his deathbed. That night, Hasan comes to Enishte's house and threatens to force Shekure to come back to his father's house. In the morning, Shekure tells the children that Enishte has just died; her eldest son, Shevket, doesn't believe her, claiming that he knows Enishte died the previous night.

Black goes to the palace to bring news of Enishte's death to the Sultan, who is deeply saddened. Black explains that the murderer stole the final illustration for the book, adding that Enishte believed that Elegant was murdered by one of the three master miniaturists and that Enishte's and Elegant's murderer is likely the same person.

Enishte is pleased by his funeral, which he witnesses from the afterlife. He explains that after dying he experienced a dazzling array of vivid colors, a collapse of time and space into a single plane, and a conversation in which Allah reassured him about his use of the European style, stating: “East and West belong to me.” After Enishte’s funeral, Esther visits Elegant’s widow, Kabilye, who shows her a drawing of horses that was found on Elegant’s dead body. Kabilye insists that Elegant did not create the drawing himself.

Black is summoned to the palace, where his head is put in a vice. However, just as the torture begins Master Osman interrupts and explains that the Sultan has given them three days in which to figure out who killed Enishte. Black and Osman discuss the particular characteristics of each of the miniaturists, and Osman states that he believes Stork is the murderer. One of the palace officials shows them the horse illustration found on Elegant’s dead body, and they resolve to hold a pretend horse-drawing competition in order to figure out which miniaturist drew the horses, and thus which one is the murderer.

Olive, Butterfly, and Stork each draw horses for the competition, and the murderer asks the reader if they were able to identify him through his drawing. He then describes going to the coffeehouse, where he tells two stories. As he is about to tell a third, he is cut off by the storyteller, who impersonates Satan and claims that evil and free will are important parts of the world and that Allah does not care about minor sins.

Having reached a dead end with the competition, Black goes to the palace, where Master Osman obtains the Sultan’s permission to look through the Royal Treasury for clues that will lead to the murderer. Black and Osman spend hours searching through the books in the treasury and having occasional conversations about the history and future of the miniaturist tradition. Eventually, Black falls asleep, and Master Osman happens upon the needle that Bihzad used both to paint and, eventually, to blind himself. Osman pierces his own eyes with the same needle, and his vision begins to slip away.

When Black is awake again, he and Osman discuss the identity of the murderer; Osman insists that it is Stork. Black goes home in a joyful mood, but he finds that Shekure and the boys are not there. He learns that they are at Hasan’s house and he brings a gang of men from the neighborhood to help him take Shekure back. After some confusion, Hasan’s father permits

Shekure and the children to leave. At this moment, the Erzurumis descend on the coffeehouse; Black sends Shekure home and promises to join her soon.

At the coffeehouse, the storyteller tells of his desire to be a woman and he sings a poem about conflicted identity. When the Erzurumis raid the coffeehouse, they kill the storyteller, and Black and Butterfly go to Butterfly's house. Black interrogates Butterfly and Butterfly pins him to the ground in an aggressive, erotic gesture. Butterfly says he believes Stork is the murderer, and he and Black set off for Stork's house.

Once there, Stork tells them that Olive drew the horse illustration found on Enishte's dead body. He adds that Olive will be at the abandoned dervish lodge, which is indeed where they find him. Olive denies drawing the horses. Stork and Black search for the book's final illustration but find nothing. Olive begins to cry, and it is now clear to everyone present that he is the murderer. He suggests that the miniaturists must now kill Master Osman, and Black puts a knife to Olive's throat, demanding to know the location of the final illustration. There is a scuffle during which the murderer is blinded. He confesses to both murders and tells the others that there is only once chance to escape the death of the miniaturist tradition—move to India, where the Sultan of Hindustan is gathering the best miniaturists for his royal workshop.

Olive attempts to kill Black but he misses, and then he runs away through the streets of Istanbul and encounters Hasan, who—mistaking Olive for one of Black's allies—cuts off his head.

In the final chapter, Shekure tells of the fates of the characters after the main narrative ends. She explains that she told the story to Orhan and showed him the letters she exchanged with Hasan and Black, warning the reader that Orhan may not tell the exact truth but that this is in service of creating "a delightful and convincing story."

Themes

Story Telling, Identity and Perspective

My Name is Red explores how identity and perspective are created through storytelling, and it conveys the idea that any one story is best understood through a multiplicity of narrative perspectives. This corresponds to the Islamic teaching that painting from a single (human) perspective is sinful, and that virtuous representation must seek to imitate the all-seeing and all-knowing gaze of Allah. The novel is divided into 59 short chapters narrated by 12 different narrators, including the unnamed storyteller who takes on different personas. Each narrator has their own distinctive style and brings different elements of the story into focus. For example, while Enishte, Master Oman, and the three miniaturists devote much time to discussions of art, Shekure and Esther—the only female narrators—are more concerned with interpersonal relationships and the drama of domestic life. The diversity of narrative perspectives gives the novel a scope and complexity that would be impossible from a single perspective.

Some of the narrators consciously inhabit several different voices or identities, highlighting the theme of the desire to be two things at once. The murderer, for example, admits that he has decided to develop a "second voice" in order to live with the fact that he, an otherwise ordinary and innocent person, has committed such a terrible crime. This decision increases suspense, as the reader does not discover the murderer's true identity until the very end of the book. On a similar note, the storyteller explains that when he was a child, he felt a desire to become a woman—although he only experimented with dressing as a woman in his youth, the title of the chapter is "I Am a Woman." This is only one of a multitude of identities the storyteller inhabits, yet it emphasizes the desire to unite seemingly opposite identities, whether that be sinner/innocent, hero/villain, or man/woman.

Perspective is a high-stakes issue within the book, due to the Islamic teaching that representational perspective can be sinful and dangerous. At the time the novel is set, European artists are experimenting with new realistic painting techniques, including the use of perspective to make paintings appear closer to what is observed by the human eye. Although this is seen as an impressive breakthrough in the West, many in the Islamic world find realist painting to be sinful and the use of perspective to be an insult to God. As visual storytellers, the miniaturists are supposed to depict the world in a way that demonstrates the glory of God, rather than as humans perceive it. The idea that first-person storytelling is an insult to God is emphasized when the murderer argues: "It was Satan who first said 'I'!". At the same time, the use of different

narrative perspectives in the novel is a reminder that everything we perceive will inevitably be from a human perspective, rather than a direct illumination of God's creation.

Storytelling is also a way of creating religious and cultural identity. Throughout the book, the characters refer to stories from Islamic culture, such as accounts of the lives of Persian rulers or of the myth of Shirin and Hüsrev. These stories form a counterpoint to the main action occurring in the novel, setting an example against which the characters make their own decisions. The stories also help to create a sense of belonging and cultural coherence. In the chapter narrated by the picture of a tree, the tree admits: "The essential reason for my loneliness is that I don't even know where I belong. I was supposed to be part of a story but I fell from there like a leaf in autumn." The implication is that people also suffer when they are cut off from a broader story, whether that story is provided by religion, culture, family, or—in the case of the miniaturists—craft. Although each person has their own unique perspective and identity, people find meaning in the broader web of stories created by community and culture. At the same time, the book makes it clear that different identities and perspectives can come into conflict with each other, which leaves some characters (such as the murderer) feeling alienated from the world around them and even from themselves.

Creation vs. Representation

The novel is built around a point of tension within the Islamic artistic tradition: the question of how to faithfully represent God's creation. During a conversation with Black, Nuri voices the presiding religious view that "it is indeed important that a painting, through its beauty, summon us toward life's abundance, toward compassion, toward respect for the colors of the realm which God created, and toward reflection and faith." Yet there is a precariously fine line between being summoned to appreciate God's creation through looking at a painting and being summoned to admire the creation of the painter. The miniaturists must constantly navigate the dilemma between excelling at their craft and remaining humble enough that their painting does not constitute a challenge to the glory of God.

Under some interpretations of Islam, all representation is forbidden, and the only visual art permitted is calligraphy of passages from the Koran. The tradition of miniature painting evolved as a way of illustrating this calligraphy, and thus of creating images that didn't violate religious law. Some leaders, such as Sultan Murat III (who is in power at the time the book is set), were

supporters of miniature painting, and the Sultan even commissions Enishte to create a book illustrated with the new European painting style, which is an even more obvious violation of Islamic custom than miniature painting. This shows that even the Sultan, who has the authority of a religious leader, is not able to resolve the tension between religiously sanctioned representation and the appeal of more daring forms of artistic creation.

This tension is no light matter; in fact, the murders of both Elegant and Enishte are inspired by the conflict over artistic representation. The murders are thus a testament to art's dangerous power. Pamuk also shows artistic creation to have mystical or supernatural properties; for example, in the story of Shirin and Hüsrev, which is referenced many times in the novel, the main characters fall in love after seeing pictures of one another. The impact of art on reality is shown, too, when Master Oman states: "By furtively and gradually re-creating the same pictures for hundreds and hundreds of years, thousands of artists had cunningly depicted the gradual transformation of their world into another." According to this line of thinking, art does not only represent the world; it can transform the world and, in this sense, create new worlds. From a religious perspective, this automatically makes art and artists the subject of suspicion, and it is the reason that the miniaturists are warned against the sin of "competing with Allah."

However, the very concept of idolatry also highlights the limitations of art's power. The murderer references a passage of the Koran, which states that "on Judgment Day, the idol makers will be asked to bring the images they've created to life." When the idol makers fail to do so, their sin will be proven; they will be humbled before God, and they will be sent to hell. From one perspective, this belief seems to confirm the dangerous power of idolatry. On the other hand, it is also a reminder of the limitations of representation in comparison to the power of God. God created the world, and "idol makers" like painters only create representations of God's creation. Can art thus really be a threat to God and Islam? Once again, the answer is ambiguous. The characters live in a perpetual state of doubt over whether artistic representation should be permitted or banned, revered or feared.

Life, Death, and Consciousness

In a typical murder mystery, the dead don't speak. However, in this novel, both Elegant and Enishte narrate from the afterlife. This inherently challenges the idea that life and death are disconnected in any absolute sense—Pamuk suggests instead that the

consciousness of the soul unites life and death. Perhaps one of the most striking features of *My Name is Red*'s exploration of life and death is its literal interpretation of Muslim teachings about the afterlife. In the opening chapter, Elegant's corpse is aware that people will find it miraculous that he is narrating from the afterlife: "There is indeed another world, thank God, and the proof is that I'm speaking to you from here. I've died, but as you can plainly tell, I haven't ceased to be."

Yet Elegant's relief about the existence of the afterlife is tempered by his unhappiness at the fact that his murdered corpse remains rotting at the bottom of a well. These mixed feelings underscore that the boundary between life and death is porous, and that even though the afterlife is hierarchized as the more important state within religious teaching, there is something remarkable and special about life that the soul misses once the body dies. Watching his own funeral, Enishte reflects: "However blissful it is being a soul without a body in the realm of the dead, so too is being a body without a soul among the living; what a pity nobody realizes this before dying." This idea corresponds to the related tension between the power and beauty of the human world versus the glory of God and the heavens.

The idea of a transitional phase between life and death reflects Islamic doctrine, which—as the dead Enishte explains—stipulates that the soul occupies four different states of being: "1. the womb; 2. the terrestrial world; 3. Berzah, or divine limbo, where I now await Judgment Day; and 4. Heaven or Hell, where I will arrive after the Judgment." The fact that dead souls contribute to the narration of the novel suggests that there isn't an absolute divide between the living and the dead, and that the dead play an active role in human reality. The story of Shekure's divorce also highlights the idea that life and death aren't always absolute states of being. After her husband has been missing for four years, Shekure must convince a judge that he is dead in order to remarry. Whether or not her husband is truly dead is somewhat irrelevant; he is dead to Shekure and their sons, having disappeared from their life.

The novel also collapses the binary between humans and animals and between living beings and inanimate objects, exploring the idea that animals and inanimate objects might have their own kind of consciousness. The narrators include a dog, a tree, a horse, a coin, and the color red. Although it is actually the storyteller who narrates through these voices, this again speaks to the notion that art can animate things we normally assume not to have a spirit or sense of awareness. It also invites the reader to question what seemingly inanimate things would say about the human

life going on around them. Some characters possess a real belief in the sentience of inanimate things, such as Jemzi Agha, who tells Black, “At night the spirits of these objects whisper to each other.” Whether or not this is literally true is less important than the fact that the objects have a powerfully important role in the world of the novel, and thus they do possess a kind of active consciousness. Indeed, the novel’s unusual and slightly surreal portrayal of life, death, and consciousness emerges from an acknowledgment of the limits of human knowledge about these phenomena.

Virtue vs. Sin

The culture depicted in the novel is devoutly Muslim, and the characters are all concerned with questions of virtue and sin. Most of the characters believe in an absolute sense of morality, meaning that there are universal rules which dictate what is virtuous and what is sinful. In other words, it’s black and white: on Judgment Day, “the guilty [will be] separated from the innocent.”

Despite this common preoccupation with virtue and sin, though, there is little agreement within the world of the novel about what is sinful and what isn’t. Strict clerics condemn popular features of Istanbul’s culture, such as dervish lodges, coffee, dogs, and manuscript illumination, while other characters find all of these things to be culturally and spiritually acceptable. The followers of the fundamentalist Hoja of Erzurum, nicknamed Erzurumis, are particularly zealous about chasing after these supposedly-sinful phenomena, and they murder patrons of a coffeehouse—including the storyteller—as a result. This raises questions about the relative offensiveness of different sins. Even if it is a sin to drink coffee, is it not worse to murder someone? In his own chapter, Satan clarifies that some believers are overzealous in their condemnation of sin, arguing: “Even the Almighty couldn't find anything evil in passing wind or jacking off.” However, it is perhaps unwise to trust the word of the devil in this matter, particularly given that he also admits: “I work very hard so you might commit grave sins.”

Satan is insightful, though, in his argument that humans are too quick to blame him for their sinful behavior. He clarifies that most people commit sins on account of their own free will, not because they have been led astray by him. This statement hints at the fact that many people are less virtuous then they would like to believe, an idea further emphasized by the murderer. Shortly after killing Elegant, the murderer watches strangers in the street and thinks: “Many of

them believe they're innocent because they haven't yet had the opportunity to snuff out a life… Only imbeciles are innocent." The words of Satan and the murderer suggest that everyone is capable—and perhaps guilty—of committing sin, due to the fact that they have free will. This in turn raises one of the major conundrums in the history of religious ethics: if God gives people free will, is it sinful to use this faculty to question and push against religious teaching?

A similar question arises in the context of artistic representation. At one point, Stork asks the question of whether the blind and the seeing could be equal, and Olive thinks to himself: "Was he implying that even though what we saw was obscene, the pleasure of sight that Allah had bestowed upon us was glorious?" Like the problem of free will, this question grapples with how a talent given by Allah (such as artistic skill) could be automatically sinful when put into practice. Indeed, the miniaturists at times make fun of the denunciation of their work as sinful, such as when Stork signs his name as "the Sinning Painter Mustafa Chelebi." Ultimately, this moral ambiguity means that each character decides for themselves what is virtuous and what is sinful, aware that they will not be able to know for certain until the Day of Judgment.

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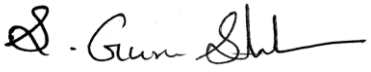

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