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978-0-521-54978-3 - The Cambridge Companion to Camus  
Edited by Edward J. Hughes  
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THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO CAMUS

Albert Camus is one of the iconic figures of twentieth-century French literature, one of France's most widely read modern literary authors and one of the youngest winners of the Nobel Prize for Literature. As the author of *L'Étranger* and the architect of the notion of 'the Absurd' in the 1940s, he shot to prominence in France and beyond. His work nevertheless attracted hostility as well as acclaim and he was increasingly drawn into bitter political controversies, especially the issue of France's place and role in the country of his birth, Algeria. Most recently, postcolonial studies has identified in his writings a set of preoccupations ripe for revisitation. Situating Camus in his cultural and historical context, this Companion explores his best-selling novels, his ambiguous engagement with philosophy, his theatre, his increasingly high-profile work as a journalist and his reflection on ethical and political questions that continue to concern readers today.

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EDITED BY  
EDWARD J. HUGHES  
*Queen Mary, University of London*



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*Understanding Albert Camus* (1990); *Of Words and the World: Referential Anxiety in Contemporary French Fiction* (1993); and *Ethics and Aesthetics in European Modernist Literature: From the Sublime to the Uncanny* (2001).

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EDWARD J. HUGHES is Professor of French Studies at Queen Mary, University of London. He is the author of *Marcel Proust: a Study in the Quality of Awareness* (1983); *Albert Camus: 'La Peste'/'Le Premier Homme'* (1995); and

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*Writing Marginality in Modern French Literature: from Loti to Genet* (2001). He is co-editor, with Peter Dunwoodie, of *Constructing Memories: Camus, Algeria and 'Le Premier Homme'* (1998).

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DANIELLE MARX-SCOURAS is Professor of French at Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio. She is co-editor of the review *Research in African Literatures* and edited that review's special number on 'Dissident Algeria' (1999). She is the author of *The Cultural Politics of 'Tel Quel': Literature and the Left in the Wake of Engagement* (1996); *La France de Zebda: 1981-2004* (2005); and of numerous articles on French, Francophone and Italian literature.

IEME VAN DER POEL is Professor of French Literature at the University of Amsterdam. Her books include: *Traveling Theory: France and the US* (1999, with Sophie Bertho), and *Congo-Océan: un chemin de fer colonial controversé* (2006). She was appointed 'Chevalier dans les Arts et les Lettres' by the French government in 2004 for her work in the field of Francophone literature, and has published widely on Francophone Maghreb literature, French Modernist writing and colonialism. She is currently directing a research project, funded by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), on the new Moroccan literatures in French, Spanish and Dutch.



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## CHRONOLOGY

- 7 November 1913 Birth of Albert Camus. His working-class parents, Catherine Hélène Sintès and Lucien Auguste Camus, are living in the village of Mondovi near Constantine, in Algeria. A French colony between 1831 and 1962, Algeria had been declared French national territory by the French government in the mid nineteenth century and was administered as three departments of the French nation.
- August 1914 Camus's family move to Algiers, living in the working-class district of Belcourt.
- 11 October 1914 Death of Camus's father as a result of wounds received at the Battle of the Marne. He is buried in a French war cemetery in Saint-Brieuc in Brittany.
- May 1920 Camus and his brother Lucien acquire the official status of 'pupilles de la nation' or war orphans.
- October 1924 Camus begins his secondary education at the Grand Lycée in Algiers and thus enters a culturally very different world from that of his 'petit colon' (working-class colonial) background.
- 1930-1 French celebrations to mark the centenary of the colonial occupation of Algeria.
- December 1930 Camus, diagnosed as having tuberculosis, is forced to interrupt his studies at the Grand Lycée. His life will be blighted by intermittent ill-health.
- 1931-4 Key period in Camus's intellectual development. His teacher and mentor, the writer Jean Grenier, opens up the world of philosophical ideas for him.

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## CHRONOLOGY

- 16 June  
1934 Camus marries Simone Hié. The marriage will end two years later.
- 1935 Camus joins the Algerian Communist Party.
- 1936 Outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. Camus will prove an outspoken supporter of the Spanish Republican cause over the years. Publication of *Révolte dans les Asturies*. Camus involved in amateur theatre in Algeria with the Théâtre du Travail. He will go on to found the Théâtre de l'Equipe in 1937.
- Summer  
1936 Camus travels to central Europe and Italy.
- 1937 Camus delivers the opening address at the launch of the new *Maison de la Culture* in Algiers (8 February). His first book, *L'Envers et l'Endroit*, dedicated to Jean Grenier, is published in Algiers by Editions Charlot. Camus is expelled from the Algerian Communist Party for opposing the Party's ending of its campaign for indigenous civil rights. In November, he begins work at the Institute of Meteorology in Algiers and will work there until September 1938.
- September  
1938 The writer Pascal Pia, editor-in-chief of a new newspaper, *Alger républicain*, hires Camus as an editorial secretary. The paper runs from 6 October 1938 to 28 October 1939.
- 20 October  
1938 Camus's review of Sartre's *La Nausée* (*Nausea*) appears in *Alger républicain*.
- 23 May  
1939 Publication of collection of lyrical essays, *Noces*.
- 5–15 June  
1939 Camus publishes a series of ground-breaking newspaper articles, 'Misère de la Kabylie'. Although his work is not anti-colonialist, it lays bare the catastrophic economic impact of colonialism on the Kabylia region of Algeria. His critique comes at a time when metropolitan France shows no interest in the state of affairs in Algeria.
- September  
1939 Pascal Pia and Camus found a second newspaper, *Le Soir républicain*.
- 10 January  
1940 Following conflict with the censors, *Le Soir républicain* is suspended by the French authorities.

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- March 1940 Camus arrives in Paris to work for *Paris-Soir* as a ‘*secdac*’, or editorial secretary. Although he does not publish in this paper, he finds out how a big popular newspaper works. He will spend the war years partly in France, partly in Algeria.
- December 1940 Camus remarries. His second wife is Francine Faure.
- 1940–2 Camus working on texts that will establish his reputation as one of the most important writers of his generation: the novel *L’Etranger* (published May 1942), the essay *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* (December 1942). The play *Caligula*, written substantially in the late 1930s, is published in 1944.
- 1942 Camus suffers a relapse of tuberculosis.
- 1943 Sartre’s very positive review of *L’Etranger* appears in the Resistance periodical *Les Cahiers du Sud*. Camus is actively engaged with the *Combat* group of the Resistance movement. He becomes editor-in-chief of the clandestine newspaper *Combat*. Publication of the first of the *Lettres à un ami allemand*. Camus begins working for the Gallimard publishing house.
- 1944 The play *Le Malentendu* receives an indifferent reception.
- 1944 to 1947 Writing for *Combat*, Camus plays an influential role in public debate in France. He is now a prominent figure in Parisian intellectual circles. He writes of the journalist as a historian of the day-to-day (*Combat*, 1 September 1944).
- May 1945 Thousands of indigenous Algerians are killed by the French army in Sétif in retaliation for the killing of Europeans. Coincidentally a trip Camus made as a reporter to Algeria ended immediately prior to the massacres.
- 8 August 1945 Camus writes an outspoken condemnation of the bombing of Hiroshima in *Combat*. He is one of the few journalists in France to do so.
- September 1945 First performance of *Caligula*. The play is a success.
- March–June 1946 Camus travels to the United States and Canada.

## CHRONOLOGY

- November 1946 Camus publishes eight articles, reflecting on revolt, revolution and violence, under the heading *Ni victimes ni bourreaux*. Camus's position will contrast markedly with the views expressed by the philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty in *Humanisme et terreur* (*Humanism and Terror*), published in 1947.
- 10 June 1947 *La Peste*, written mainly during the last years of the war, is published. 22,000 copies are sold in just two weeks.
- October 1948 First performance of *L'Etat de siège*. The play closes after only seventeen performances.
- Summer 1949 Camus travels to South America.
- December 1949 First performance of *Les Justes*. The play is a success.
- 1950 A carefully chosen selection of Camus's editorials appear in a volume entitled *Actuelles I*.
- 18 October 1951 Publication of *L'Homme révolté*.
- 1952 Francis Jeanson's hostile review of *L'Homme révolté* appears in *Les Temps modernes*. The ensuing acrimonious exchanges involving Sartre and Camus acquire the status of a national dispute. In the wake of the *Les Temps modernes* quarrel and given Camus's anti-communism, he becomes an increasingly isolated figure in French intellectual milieux of the 1950s.
- December 1952 Camus visits Laghouat in the Algerian hinterland. The landscape will provide the setting for 'La Femme adultère'.
- 1953 Publication of *Actuelles II*.
- 1954 Publication of *L'Eté*. In October, Camus makes a brief trip to The Hague and Amsterdam.
- 1 November 1954 Outbreak of what was to become the Algerian War of Independence.
- 1955 Camus becomes a columnist at *L'Express*.
- January 1956 Camus visits Algeria and calls for a civil truce there. The move fails and his position becomes further marginalised.

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- February 1956 He leaves *L'Express*.
- May 1956 Publication of *La Chute*.
- September 1956 Camus's adaptation of Faulkner's *Requiem for a Nun* (*Requiem pour une nonne*) is performed.
- November 1956 Soviet invasion of Hungary to suppress Hungarian uprising. Camus will cite this example of totalitarian repression in his dispute with Marxist-leaning intellectuals in France.
- 15 March 1957 Speaking at the Salle Wagram in Paris, Camus expresses solidarity with Hungarian intellectuals and workers. He dismisses Stalinist culture as repressive and propagandising.
- 1957 Publication of *L'Exil et le Royaume*.
- December 1957 Camus receives the Nobel Prize for literature in Stockholm. He dedicates his acceptance address to his primary-school teacher, Louis Germain. At a press conference, when pressed about French Army violence in the Algerian War, he makes the controversial statement that he will defend his mother before justice.
- 1958 Camus draws together his journalistic writings on Algeria in *Actuelles III: Chroniques Algériennes (1939–1958)*. He publishes 'Algérie 1958', justifying his position on the situation there. He opposes colonial oppression but at the same time underscores the rights of Algeria's 1.1 million Europeans.
- 1959 Camus is working on what will remain his unfinished novel, *Le Premier Homme*.
- 4 January 1960 Camus and his publisher friend Michel Gallimard die in a car crash south of Paris in Villeblevin.
- July 1962 Algeria becomes independent.
- 1970 Conor Cruise O'Brien's reading of Camus as a colonial author takes Camus studies in a new direction. Subsequent, postcolonial readings of his work will extend this critique.
- 1990s Camus's reputation is in some measure restored in the wake of the decline of communism. In France, Bernard-Henri Lévy endorses his work. A bloody civil war is waged in Algeria between the military government and Islamic fundamentalists

## CHRONOLOGY

(the F.I.S.). The gruesome violence indirectly prompts a favourable reappraisal of Camus's work by a number of Algerian Francophone women writers, among them Assia Djebar. Djebar links Camus to the victims of assassinations carried out by Algerian fundamentalists (*Le Blanc de l'Algérie* (*The White of Algeria*), 1995).

- 1994 Publication of Camus's unfinished novel, *Le Premier Homme*. The work is an international publishing success.

## PRELIMINARY NOTES AND ABBREVIATIONS

Two French terms regularly used in the pages of this book derive from the context of colonial French culture that Camus knew well. The first of these, *petit colon*, literally ‘small colonial’, means a member of the colonial European working class. The second term, the *pieds-noirs* (literally ‘black feet’), historically designated the stokers on a coal-powered boat who would have worked barefoot – many of the stokers on French boats in the Mediterranean in the early twentieth century were in fact indigenous Algerians. But from the mid 1950s on, *pieds-noirs* came to mean the French Algerians and particularly those who steadfastly considered Algeria as their homeland (for some observers, the term indeed carried connotations of complicity with colonial militarism). It was not a designation that Camus himself chose to use. With Algerian independence in 1962, *les pieds-noirs* came to signify the French Algerians repatriated to France.

### Titles and translations

Quotations from Camus’s published works are given both in the French original and in English translation, with page references to both sources indicated. Where published translations have been modified, this is signalled in the text. Occasionally, contributors have provided their own translations; where translations are not attributed, this is always the case.

Readers will find full bibliographical details of Camus’s published work in the ‘Guide to Further Reading’ at the end of this volume, but they may find it helpful to have a summary list here of those main works by Camus that are cited in the volume, together with the English translations. The list is set out in alphabetical order, the exception being that the titles of individual texts within a larger text (for example individual section titles within a collection such as *L’Exil et le Royaume*) are located together as a sub-category at that point in the list). The original date of publication of the French texts is indicated in parenthesis.



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## PRELIMINARY NOTES AND ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Actuelles I</i> (1950)	<i>Current Chronicles I</i>
<i>Actuelles II</i> (1953)	<i>Current Chronicles II</i>
<i>Actuelles III (Chroniques algériennes)</i> (1958)	<i>Current Chronicles III (Algeria)</i>
(The three volumes of <i>Actuelles</i> are partly translated in <i>Resistance, Rebellion, and Death</i> )	
‘Algérie 1958’ (1958)	‘Algeria 1958’
‘Appel pour une trêve civile’ (1956)	‘Appeal for a Civil Truce’
<i>Caligula</i> (1944)	<i>Caligula</i>
<i>Camus à ‘Combat’</i> (2002)	<i>Camus at ‘Combat’</i>
<i>Carnets I: mai 1935-février 1942</i> (1962)	<i>Notebooks I</i>
<i>Carnets II: janvier 1942-mars 1951</i> (1964)	<i>Notebooks II</i>
<i>La Chute</i> (1956)	<i>The Fall</i>
‘Crise en Algérie’ (1945)	‘Crisis in Algeria’
<i>L’Envers et l’Endroit</i> (1937)	<i>Betwixt and Between</i>
‘L’Ironie’	‘Irony’
‘Entre oui et non’	‘Between Yes and No’
‘La Mort dans l’âme’	‘Death in the Soul’
‘Amour de vivre’	‘Love of Life’
‘L’Envers et l’Endroit’	‘Betwixt and Between’
<i>L’Etat de siège</i> (1948)	<i>State of Siege</i>
<i>L’Été</i> (1954)	<i>Summer</i>
<i>including</i>	
‘Le Minotaure ou la halte d’Oran’	‘The Minotaur or the Halt at Oran’
‘L’Exil d’Hélène’	‘Helen’s Exile’
‘Retour à Tipasa’	‘Return to Tipasa’
<i>L’Etranger</i> (1942)	<i>The Outsider</i> (also translated as <i>The Stranger</i> )
<i>L’Exil et le Royaume</i> (1957)	<i>Exile and the Kingdom</i>
‘La Femme adultère’	‘The Adulterous Woman’
‘Le Renégat’	‘The Renegade’
‘Les Muets’	‘The Silent Men’
‘L’Hôte’	‘The Guest’
‘Jonas ou l’Artiste au travail’	‘The Artist at Work’
‘La Pierre qui pousse’	‘The Growing Stone’
<i>Fragments d’un combat, 1938–1940</i> (1978)	<i>Fragments of a Combat, 1938–1940</i>

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## PRELIMINARY NOTES AND ABBREVIATIONS

<i>L'Homme révolté</i> (1951)	<i>The Rebel</i>
<i>Les Justes</i> (1949)	<i>The Just</i> (also translated as <i>The Just Assassins</i> )
<i>Lettres à un ami allemand</i> (1945)	<i>Letters to a German Friend</i>
<i>Le Malentendu</i> (1944)	<i>Cross Purpose</i>
'Misère de la Kabylie' (1939)	'Poverty in Kabylia'
<i>La Mort heureuse</i> (1971)	<i>A Happy Death</i>
<i>Le Mythe de Sisyphe</i> (1942)	<i>The Myth of Sisyphus</i>
<i>Ni victimes ni bourreaux</i> (1946)	<i>Neither Victims nor Executioners</i>
<i>Noces</i> (1939)	<i>Nuptials</i>
'Noces à Tipasa'	'Nuptials at Tipasa'
'Le Vent à Djémila'	'The Wind at Djemila'
'L'Été à Alger'	'Summer in Algiers'
'Le Désert'	'The Desert'
<i>La Peste</i> (1947)	<i>The Plague</i>
<i>Le Premier Camus</i> (1973)	<i>Youthful Writings</i>
<i>Le Premier Homme</i> (1994)	<i>The First Man</i>
'Réflexions sur la guillotine' (1957)	'Reflections on the guillotine'

## French editions used

For the original French texts by Camus, the two-volume Pléiade edition of his work has been used: vol. I: *Théâtre, Récits, Nouvelles*, Paris, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1962; vol. II: *Essais*, Paris, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1965. This edition contains the bulk of his fictional works and political and philosophical essays (the first two volumes of a new, substantially extended Pléiade edition of Camus's complete works appeared in 2006).

For works not contained in the Pléiade edition, the *Companion* makes use of the available Gallimard editions.

## Abbreviations

The following abbreviations of French and English editions of Camus's works are used throughout the volume, with accompanying page references. Full bibliographical details of these editions can be found in the 'Guide to Further Reading' at the end of the volume.

BB            *Betwixt and Between* (contained in *Albert Camus: Lyrical and Critical*)

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## PRELIMINARY NOTES AND ABBREVIATIONS

BHR	<i>Between Hell and Reason</i>
CAC	Cahiers Albert Camus
CC	<i>Camus à 'Combat'</i>
CI, CII, CIII	<i>Carnets, vols. I, II and III</i>
COP	<i>Caligula and Other Plays: Caligula, Cross Purpose, The Just, The Possessed</i>
Corr	<i>Correspondance Albert Camus/Jean Grenier</i>
EK	<i>Exile and the Kingdom</i>
Ess	<i>Essais</i>
F	<i>The Fall</i>
FC	<i>Fragments d'un combat, 1938–1940</i>
FM	<i>The First Man</i>
HD	<i>A Happy Death</i>
MH	<i>La Mort heureuse</i>
NI, NII	<i>Notebooks, vols. I and II</i>
MS	<i>The Myth of Sisyphus</i>
O	<i>The Outsider</i>
P	<i>The Plague</i>
PH	<i>Le Premier Homme</i>
R	<i>The Rebel</i>
RRD	<i>Resistance, Rebellion, and Death</i>
SEN	<i>Selected Essays and Notebooks</i>
TRN	<i>Théâtre, Récits, Nouvelles</i>
YW	<i>Youthful Writings</i>