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the theatre of the absurd french théâtre de l'absurde teat̥ ə də lapsy̥d is a post world war ii designation for particular plays of absurdist fiction written by a number of primarily european playwrights in the late 1950s it is also a term for the style of theatre the plays represent theatre of the absurd dramatic work of certain european and american dramatists of the 1950s and early 60s who agreed with the existentialist philosopher albert camus's assessment in his essay the myth of sisyphus that the human situation is essentially absurd devoid of purpose absurdism is the philosophical theory that the universe is irrational and meaningless it states that trying to find meaning leads people into a conflict with the world this paradoxical situation then between our impulse to ask ultimate questions and the impossibility of achieving any adequate answer is what camus calls the absurd camus's philosophy of the absurd explores the consequences arising from this basic paradox the absurd can be defined as a metaphysical tension or opposition that results from the presence of human consciousness with its ever pressing demand for order and meaning in life in an essentially meaningless and indifferent universe martin esslin who coined the phrase theatre of the absurd notes that absurdist theater hinges on disillusionment as well as on an uncertainty about the purposefulness of life both characteristics were experienced by many europeans after the war what would be the point of living if you thought that life was absurd that it could never have meaning this is precisely the question that camus asks in his famous work the myth of sisyphus he says there is only one really serious philosophical problem and that is suicide camus defined the absurd as the futility of a search for meaning in an incomprehensible universe devoid of god or meaning absurdism arises out of the tension between our desire for order meaning and happiness and on the other hand the indifferent natural universe's refusal to provide that the absurd is born of this confrontation between the human need and the unreasonable silence of the world ms 31 2 e 117 18 the myth of sisyphus written in 1940 amidst the french and european disaster this book declares that even within the limits of nihilism it is possible to proceed beyond nihilism taking a creative approach to understanding absurd drama this book reflects upon the order and the disorder found in many absurd plays by examining them through the lens of chaos theory in the hard sciences michael y bennett's accessible introduction explains the complex multidimensional nature of the works and writers associated with the absurd a label placed upon a number of writers who revolted against traditional theatre and literature in both similar and widely different ways the term was coined by critic martin esslin in his 1960 book theatre of the absurd to describe a new wave of plays that emerged in europe in the 1940s and 50s these works were influenced by the play is about the absurd and to what lengths people will go to avoid facing it it is a confrontation between caligula who is aware of the absurd and his subjects who would rather ignore it by approaching life with full consciousness with vitality and intensity by becoming the masters of our absurd fate this is how we answer the question of suicide how we defy futility and establish what it means to live the meaning of absurd is ridiculously unreasonable unsound or incongruous extremely silly or ridiculous how to use absurd in a sentence surd and absurd theatre of the absurd 6 absurdist plays written by masterclass last updated sep 28 2021 3 min read theatre of the absurd is a theatrical genre that explores existentialism and the human condition the absurd and the feeling of the absurd the concept of the absurd is born from what camus sees as a fundamental contradiction in the human condition on the one hand we live with an inborn desire to find some sort of unity or reason in the universe the theatre of the absurd is a term

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