

Albert Camus and The Quest for Happiness

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## INTRODUCTION

The intent of this thesis is suggested by its title. It is the discovery of the means which Camus advocates in mankind's search for happiness. It is necessary to begin at the beginning of Camus' career and progress with him to an understanding of happiness. Early in his career, Camus was preoccupied with the absurd as is shown in the main work of this period: L'Étranger. Following a biographical sketch dealing with the more important events of his life and some aspects of his character which are relevant to the understanding of his works, the second chapter will attempt to arrive at an understanding of the absurd and will study its expression in L'Étranger.

Camus refused to accept the pessimism and nihilism of the absurd and searched for the meaning of life. The fruits of his search gradually took shape as his "philosophy of revolt." The third chapter then consists of a definition of revolt and its expression in his novel of revolt, La Peste. The fourth chapter concerns itself with happiness as it is expressed across Camus' four plays: Caligula, Le Malentendu, L'État de siège and Les Justes.

It seems best to state that no effort will be made here to defend or disprove Camus' conclusions or methodology. This thesis is simply a presentation of his emotional and reasoned conclusions. Many of his conclusions, regardless of logical validity, are worthy of serious consideration simply on the grounds of their ultimate message, fraternal love.

No further introduction is necessary, it seems, in view of the gradual development and self-explanation of this thesis.

## CHAPTER I

### A BIOGRAPHY

Albert Camus was born in the small island village of Mondovi, near Constantine in Algeria, in the year 1913, the seventh day of November. In many ways, Camus' childhood was typically Algerian. His father was a French day laborer of Alsation descent. He had little schooling but had taught himself to read when he was past twenty. Mobilized in 1914, he was killed at the age of thirty-four at the battle of the Marne, leaving a widow and two sons. Albert was one year old at the time and the youngest of the two children. Camus' mother, of Spanish origin, could not read or write. Moreover, a childhood illness, with a lack of medical attention, had left her deaf.

Camus' widowed mother and her two children moved to a two-room apartment in a crowded section of Algiers, where she earned a living for her family as a cleaning woman. The children grew up under the supervision of a domineering grandmother, who educated them with a whip. The unfortunate woman was slowly dying from cancer of the liver. An uncle, who was partially paralyzed, also shared the apartment with them. There Camus knew from hard experience the unadorned brutality of working-class lives and the mute suffering and dignity of the poor. Everything in his childhood environment would seem to have cut him off from the world of art.

In 1918, Camus entered the école communale of Belcourt where he met Louis Germain, who was one of his teachers. Germain took an interest in the boy, supervising his work outside class hours and pre-

paring him for a scholarship which would allow him to continue his schooling in the lycée of Algiers. Camus won the scholarship and in 1923, at the age of ten, entered the lycée and followed the regular course of studies that took him step by step to the University of Algiers, where he studied philosophy from 1932 to 1936.

Camus, the adolescent was already moving away from the world of poverty to which he nonetheless always felt he belonged; the world of thought and literature was beginning to open to him. But in his early adolescence, Camus seems to have taken little interest in his school-work at the lycée. He was passionately attached to the physical world, to the development of a perfect body. At fifteen and for the next two or three years, football was the center of his life.

Like all the boys around him, he gave free reign to an ardent physical life: football, swimming, canoeing, boxing - he was for a time the local light-weight boxing champion - dancing, all satisfied the healthy young animal he was. To the end of his life, Camus shared the enthusiasm of the working class for football, and boxing matches, for motor-bike races, etc. An understanding of the great Greek classics changed the adolescent's passion for the physical plenitude to an appreciation of its limitations, an appreciation which illness was to make more dramatically acute.<sup>1</sup>

In 1930, at the age of seventeen, he suffered his first and virulent attack of pulmonary tuberculosis which was to plague him for the rest of his life. This year marks a turning point in his life. This first encounter with death seemed to awaken him to a consciousness of what it really meant to be a living human being. The next ten years were to be perhaps the most active of his life. He left home, where he could not take adequate of himself, and after a short stay with an uncle, started to live independently, supporting himself as

best he could. His intellectual life seems to have begun then to develop at an unusual tempo. At the University of Algiers he found a master, the philosopher and writer, Jean Grenier, formerly his professor of philosophy at the lycée of Algiers, for whom his affection and gratitude never wavered.

Camus and Grenier had much in common. They spoke often of the Mediterranean and its significance, the values of life, and the personal approach to happiness.

To Camus, he transmitted his love of Greek literature, of the great tragic poets as well as the philosophers.... Camus' line of thought...can be traced through St. Augustine, Pascal, Kierkegaard, and Chestov, with Plato and the Neoplatonists as a constant check and reference.

For Jean Grenier, philosophy does not consist merely in the analysis and criticism of the main systematic philosophies. The very titles of his books show a mind itself involved in scrupulous philosophical meditation.... The essay is Grenier's chosen medium. His meditations, based on personal observations of both inner and outer experience, on historical facts and anecdotes, draw on a vast store of knowledge. His method...is the very opposite of the rigorous logical demonstration. He has no great respect for abstractions and seems concerned mainly with a scrupulous examination of the concrete data of experience. <sup>2</sup>

In the years following his first attack of tuberculosis, Camus' activities reveal something of his desperate reaction to the threat that hung over him. Much of the time he was a sick man, though no one would have guessed it, and his career was directly affected. Since his professors had warned him that he could not hope to pass the medical examination required of candidates to the Agrégation - the final step before the Doctorat d'État which opens up a university career - he had to abandon any thought of teaching as a profession and with it, the security it would bring. His personal life had its difficulties:

a brief and unhappy marriage at the age of twenty to Simone Hie, daughter of an Algerian doctor; an impressive array of occupations to keep himself alive: clerk in an import-export firm, salesman of automobile accessories, meteorologist, and private tutor. It was not until 1938 that he finally decided in favor of journalism.

In 1934, Camus joined the Communist party. However, politics, except in a very general way, seem at the time to have interested him very little.

His attitudes were fairly typical of the student 'left' in the 1930s. Opposed to fascism and yet pacifistic, keenly conscious of the dangers of the Hitlerian adventure across the border and yet suspicious of any show of nationalistic reaction at home, the liberal 'leftist' student opinion was anti-Mussolini, anti-Hitler, anti-Franco, rather vague on facts and enthusiastically in favor of social reform in France. The myth of the peaceful, benevolent Russia slowly realizing a paradise on this earth was one of the generous illusions that it quite uncritically accepted. <sup>3</sup>

Camus' particular task as a party member was to serve as a propaganda agent among the Arabs to whose cause he was dedicated. When a few months later, for tactical reasons, the party line with regard to the Arab population changed, he was deeply shocked. The Kremlin in its concern over Hitler's Germany had signed an agreement with Pierre Laval, an action which Camus, naively distressed by so blatant an example of opportunism, disagreed with violently. He and a group of his friends left the party and the party in turn, excluded them. Though the party line had changed, Camus' interest in the lot of the underprivileged Algerian Arabs, whom he considered his fellow countrymen, did not.

Camus was still attending the University (he completed his licence de philosophie in June of 1935) and was a member of a touring



drama company sponsored by Radio-Algiers. Although he found groups of intellectuals unbearable, he could work happily with other people on the stage or in a stadium. Camus helped to form a little theater group in Algiers to bring drama to the working classes. He was at the heart of all this effort: actor, adaptor, director, involved in all phases of the endeavor as the troupe played in the small towns and villages around Algiers. An important phase of his career had begun, for his interest in the theater never lessened.

In June of 1935, he began research on Plotinus as a thesis topic for his diplôme d'études supérieures. The following May, 1936, he successfully presented his thesis on Néo-Platonisme et Pensée Chrétienne.

In 1937, he declined a position at the college of Sidi-Bel-Abbes. This decision was painfully difficult. He was torn between the need to earn a living and the more pressing need to avoid a situation in which his whole being might be numbed by monotonous routine. By 1938, Camus was able to earn a living as a journalist. He wrote literary and political articles as a reporter for the leftist Alger-Républicain, and became for a brief period, editor of the evening edition of the paper.

Camus' most important work for the paper was a series of articles on the pitiable life of the Arabs in the Kabylia region. These articles form a carefully documented study of the injustice of the French administration towards the Arab population. They were written in 1939, but they are still useful for understanding the Algerian tragedy. Camus' basic position on the Algerian problem never changed.

He felt that Algeria was a peculiarly mixed country, in which both French and Moslem populations needed full rights as citizens, and that a viable economy could only be achieved by continued association with France. Camus' insistence on preserving French ties was coupled with a demand for economic and social equality for the Moslem population.

The Kabyle report showed how powerful his sensitivity could become when allied with two other basic qualities: a scrupulous attention to the accuracy of his facts and a deadly irony relying for its effect on a cold form of studied understatement. <sup>4</sup>

Camus was uncompromising with his treatment of truth. He observed life and wrote what he saw. His works show an emotional sensitivity to reality which make his writings come alive before the reader and enable him to experience what the author is trying to say.

From the very start, it was clear that Camus was concerned with the truth. He wrote as he spoke, a living language. He stripped language to its bare essentials so that it might adhere as closely as possible to what he wanted to express, and that was the paradox of his own life. He had been given no system of ethics, no religious beliefs to direct him. He was endowed with a vibrant sensuality. <sup>5</sup>

1939 was moving toward the fateful month of September. Despite the Spanish War, the annexation of Austria and then of Czechoslovakia, Camus' world was still the world of his youth. He was preparing to satisfy a long-time wish to go to Greece; he was not preparing for war. He had given little real thought either to war or to the affairs of his country and did not think of himself as a patriot. At twenty-six, his life was full to overflowing. He had had two short works published and several others were taking shape in various notebooks and files.

Camus felt that war brought out in the human being a capacity for hatred and violence, favored a flow of cowardice, the mockery of

courage, the cheap imitation of greatness, the degradation of honor. He was not however, a conscientious objector. In fact, he volunteered for service in the armed forces but was turned down because of his health. The dreary routine of the war that followed seems almost completely to have driven the fact of war from Camus' consciousness. Finding himself persona non grata in Algiers after his articles on the Kabyles, he moved first to Oran and then to Paris, where he worked as a journalist on the staff of Paris-Soir. Though not an enthusiast for Paris, in a certain Parisian solitude he was able to concentrate on his writing, finishing L'Etranger in May, 1940, just before the German invasion. In the subsequent mass exodus from Paris, he followed the staff of Paris-Soir to Clermont-Ferrand in the center of France, and then, abandoning the paper, moved to Lyons. In 1940, he married his second wife, Francine Faure, a young woman who, though born and brought up in Oran, was of French origin. Camus hated the darkness of Lyons and the coldness of its climate, and in January, 1941, he returned to Oran and Algiers after having finished Le Mythe de Sisyphe.

In the next three years Camus' only concern apparently was his own private life and the development of his work. He read voraciously, meditated on drama and planned future works. Algiers was a long way from Paris and it was not until a workman, an active participant in the rising communist opposition to the Nazis, was executed in France by the Nazis, that Camus' inner preoccupations came sharply to the fore. By 1943, he was a member of the underground resistance movement called "Combat". The clandestine printing and diffusion of Combat, the news sheet with the same name as the network, was of primary importance to

the network, though by no means its only form of activity. The news sheet served as a link between the various branches; it was an organ of recruitment and a source of information. It spoke constantly of hope and the great future of a victorious and free France.

On August 21, 1944, the first day of the battle of Paris, Combat finally appeared in the full light of day with the name of Albert Camus as its director. Camus, who in the clandestine sheet had been one of the three men who wrote the anonymous editorials, now took charge of the editorial column. Combat was to be a major force in building a new France. Its first editorials reflect Camus' idealistic fervour and his hope that the experiences of the war had brought a new desire for liberty and justice to the French people. Camus became increasingly disillusioned as he found that the hoped-for revolution was thwarted by the return of the old politicians and of the old economic order. He was as well, impatient of the normal workings of politics. Unwilling to devote his energies to a daily consideration of minor issues, he gave up the editorship of Combat late in 1945. In after years he wrote only about a few clear-cut moral issues on which he placed great importance. He spoke out against aid to Franco, capital punishment, Russian suppression of the Hungarian revolt, and the terrorism and violence on both sides of the Algerian conflict. During the occupation of France and his position with Combat, he worked at the Gallimard publishing house as a publisher's reader and held a permanent position on the administrative staff. In order to avoid ever feeling that he had to publish books in order to earn his living, Camus kept this job till the end of his life. 1945 was also the year of the first performance

of Caligula.

Camus came out of World War II physically exhausted, full of hope for the future, yet deeply marked by the violence and horror he had witnessed, and in which he had participated.

By the nature of his work he was close to the inferno of murder and torture that was the lot of those who chose to fight with the underground. His revulsion was so deep that it left indelible marks. In these years he seems to have lost his spontaneous confidence in an essential goodness of life, despite the suffering, death and injustice it encompasses; and, more particularly, he lost that easy abandon and optimistic view of human relations which gave his first works their distinctive grace. <sup>6</sup>

These are the years when, at the very outset of his career as a writer, Camus knew success that placed him in the first rank of contemporary French writers. L'Étranger and Le Mythe de Sisyphe made him famous. But the reality in which he was plunged at the time overshadowed these triumphs. In contrast to the years that preceded, his private life almost disappeared. Camus was established as a major figure in post-war France. He became, to a degree that he found irritating, a moral mentor for the younger generation in France. His opinion was sought on many political issues; his name was wanted for various political manifestoes. His books were greeted less as artistic works to be judged for themselves than as indications of the direction in which the author's thought was moving. The role into which he felt himself thrust was a constant source of uneasiness to him.

During the following years Camus kept himself busy: reading for Gallimard; lecturing on official tours in the winter of 1946-47 in the United States and in 1949 in South America. Still more important was the development of his own writing: in quick succession four plays,

Le Malentendu (1944), Caligula (1945), L'État de siège (1948), and Les Justes (1949); and publication of a novel, La Peste (1947) and L'Homme révolté (1951).

The publication of L'Homme révolté produced a violent reaction in the literary and political press. The longest and most celebrated of the controversies was that between Camus and Sartre. Camus had earlier quarrelled with Sartre over the issue of slave labour in Russian camps and as the gap between their political views widened, an open break was perhaps inevitable. The controversial articles appeared in Sartre's Temps Modernes in April and August of 1952; a review of L'Homme révolté by Francis Jeanson, a reply by Camus, and rebuttles by both Sartre and Jeanson. The quarrel, one of the major events of the French literary world since the War, was more important for the principles involved than for the quality of the arguments. There were also controversies with André Breton and others on literary and political aspects of L'Homme révolté. In 1954, Simone de Beauvoir published a novel, Les Mandarins, based on the Sartre-Camus quarrel, and she presented Camus as an attractive but undisciplined figure who was willing to sacrifice principles for his personal pleasure. By 1952, therefore, Camus had achieved a splendid political isolation. The violent attacks launched against L'Homme révolté from all political directions affected him, in spite of many favorable reactions, quite deeply.

A new and long attack of tuberculosis in 1949, lasting almost two years, and a crisis in his personal life deepened and accentuated his feeling of solitude and his need for privacy. After the publication of L'Homme révolté in 1951, Camus turned away from politics and,

though it was not apparent on the surface, turned inward and toward the planning of his future work. Between 1951 and 1956 he published no major work.

It was perhaps a sign of this inner evolution that , in 1953, he returned to the theater. Since the end of the War, the summer festivals in the French provinces had become one of the features of the theatrical world. For a few days, sometimes for several weeks, outdoor performances were given in such spectacular settings as the Avignon Palace of the Popes. In 1953, the director of this festival, Marcel Herrand, presented two adaptations by Camus: Calderón's La Devoción de la cruz and a sixteenth-century comedy, Les Esprits. In the course of the rehearsals Herrand became ill and Camus took his place as director. Not only did he remain partly in charge of the annual festival but, in 1956, he directed the Paris production of his adaptation of Faulkner's Requiem for a Nun. It was then that Paris discovered in Camus the first-rate theatrical director to whom Algiers had been introduced twenty years before, and for Camus the theater was once again to move into the center of his life.

In the 1950s, Camus produced one volume after another at an accelerated tempo. For the theater he produced a series of successful adaptations: Un Caso clinico by Dino Buzzati, Un Cas intéressant; Requiem pour une Nonne, which was one of the outstanding successes of the 1956-57 theatrical season; Le Chevalier d'Olmédo; an adaptation of Dostoevsky's novel, Les Possédés. In 1956 came the much discussed novel, La Chute, and in 1957, L'Exil et le royaume, a book of short stories. And he freely admitted that there was more to come: a novel entitled

Le Premier homme; a play, Don Juan.

In 1957, for the light he had shed on the problems posed in our day by the conscience of man, Camus won the Nobel Prize for Literature and was the youngest man next to Kipling ever to be so honored. Camus was deeply moved by the honor but was troubled by the notoriety it brought him. He felt the weight of his responsibility and questioned his own future potentialities. He realized, however, as he himself said, that he must accept his fate in its entirety. For the first time in his life, he found himself free from financial burdens. Turning his back, at least partially, on Paris, he could now return to the Mediterranean world in which he felt at home. With the money, he and his wife bought a Provençal farmhouse and moved there with their fourteen-year-old twins.

On January 5, 1960, Camus' friend, Michel Gallimard, the nephew of his publisher, stopped with his wife and daughter on his way from Cannes to Paris and asked him if he wanted a ride to Paris. Camus accepted. About eighty miles south-east of Paris, the car lurched out of control, hurtled against one tree and smashed into another. When the police arrived, they found Gallimard fatally injured, his wife and daughter unconscious. In the back of the car, whose speedometer had stuck at ninety-five miles an hour, was the lifeless body of Albert Camus.

At week's end, under the cypress trees of the Lourmarin cemetery, in prayerless silence, the coffin of Albert Camus was lowered into the grave. 7



## CHAPTER II

### LA SENSIBILITÉ ABSURDE

At an early stage in his career, Camus to be regarded as a "philosopher of the absurd". But in a short introductory note to Le Mythe de Sisyphe, the author says,

Les pages qui suivent traitent d'une sensibilité absurde qu'on peut trouver éparse dans le siècle - et non d'une philosophie absurde que notre temps, à proprement parler, n'a pas connue. <sup>1</sup>

Taking the author at his word, it would probably be best to concern ourselves with the "quid sit" of this "sensibilité absurde".

The absurd is defined as "la confrontation de son caractère irrationnel [the world's] et de ce désir éperdu de clarté dont l'appel résonne au plus profond de l'homme." <sup>2</sup> The absurd becomes the conclusion left to those who have attempted to find the explanation of existence through reason, but instead have discovered an unbridgeable gulf between experience and rationality. The absurd expresses the divorce between thought and experience, between emotional demands and mental achievement. "L'Absurde dépend autant de l'homme que du monde." <sup>3</sup>

The absurd does not exist as a thing-in-itself. The absurd is a relationship. It results from the confrontation of an individual mind with reality.

The "l'homme absurde" is a common contemporary figure. He is ...one who instinctively wishes to be happy, who wants his life to continue indefinitely, who seeks close contact with other human beings and with the natural world, but who finds these desires frustrated by the nature of existence. It is Camus' contention that such desires cannot be satisfied by human life as it is. <sup>4</sup>

It is the frustration of these desires which brings man eventually

to question the reason of existence.

Lever, tramway, quatre heures du bureau ou d'usine, repas, tramway, quatre heures de travail, repas, sommeil et lundi mardi mercredi jeudi vendredi et samedi sur le même rythme, cette route se suit aisément la plupart du temps. Un jour seulement, le "pourquoi" s'élève et tout commence dans cette lassitude teintée d'étonnement. 5

These experiences of anxiety, disappointment, estrangement and horror of death bring man to <sup>an</sup> awareness of the absurd. The absurd need not be a highly intellectual notion, it can also be a widespread emotional experience. It is felt by those people who do not develop it to an intellectual stage after it is first experienced as a feeling.

The experience of the absurd leaves man two choices: revolt or negation. Negation of the absurd presents two traditional methods: physical suicide or philosophical suicide. Since the absurd is a relationship, all that is needed is to destroy one of the terms of its existence: man. But suicide is ultimately an avoidance of the problem and not a solution.

It clearly destroys the individual's vision of the absurd when it destroys the individual who is a necessary term in the relationship by which the absurd is manifested. But this does nothing to alter the absurd as an actual or potential experience for everyone else. At best it can only be a private answer devoid of general validity. If it is accepted as a method of negating the absurd it is certainly not a means of refuting it.... Suicide implies consent to the absurd, acceptance of the absurd, but this attitude is inconsistent with that scandalized resistance and objection that produced awareness of the absurd in the first instance. This means that suicide can only be an instance of collusion with the absurd and not a solution of it. It may even be argued that suicide, far from negating the absurd, actually confirms and intensifies it. Death as we have already seen, is one of the features of the absurd. Now suicide means a voluntary moving forward and anticipation of death in time. On the other hand the impulse to revolt which the absurd arouses in the individual

is partly revolt against the fact of death. It is not consistent with this revolt that one should deliberately connive at death by suicide. The natural impulse of the man condemned to death is to desire life all the more intensely. And it is not logical that a man, metaphysically condemned for an unknown crime, should contribute himself to his own disaster. <sup>6</sup>

Recognition of the absurd can also lead to the destruction of the intellect by a kind of mental suicide or what Camus calls "philosophical suicide". By discarding reason, one might devalue the world by putting one's faith in an after-life and divine intelligibility. The rejection or deification of reason are betrayals of man's situation in the world and only serve to promote harmful delirium. Camus accepts reason with its limitations and holds on to reason as man's only link, though a tenuous one, with reality.

Juger que la vie vaut ou ne vaut pas la peine d'être vécue, c'est répondre à la question fondamentale de la philosophie.... Je n'ai jamais vu personne mourir pour l'argument ontologique.... En revanche, je vois que beaucoup de gens meurent parce qu'ils estiment que la vie ne vaut pas la peine d'être vécue. <sup>7</sup>

Camus' concern then focuses on finding a way of living which accepts the absurd instead of veiling it behind either rationalism or irrationalism and to give life value and meaning in the face of the absurd.

He attempts to show that the only coherent position is to preserve the paradox, to live the tensions and conflicts which it involves and to refuse alleged solutions that turn out to be nothing more than evasions. We must learn not to make unrealistic demands of life but to accept it as our minds experience it. The lucid contemplation of the absurd may even prove, in itself, a partial release. It will at any rate require a certain kind of lucidity and imply a certain kind of innocence that may make life more liveable without necessarily making it more rational. <sup>8</sup>

In order to maintain awareness of the absurd, we must continually walk the line by refusing all the suggested ways of escape. This

refusal Camus calls revolt. It solves no intellectual problems; it simply rejects suicide and keeps faith with reality:

Le corps, la tendresse, la création, l'action, la noblesse humaine, reprendront alors leur place dans ce monde insensé. L'homme y retrouvera enfin le vin de l'absurde et le pain de l'indifférence dont il nourrit sa grandeur. 9

### L'ÉTRANGER

Camus defines the "absurd" man as one who is always conscious of tragedy and death, free from any illusions either of eternal life or of the saving power of some goal within life, and passionately interested in accumulating sensual experiences.

L'amant, le comédien ou l'aventurier jouent l'absurde. Mais aussi bien s'ils le veulent, le chaste, le fonctionnaire ou le président de la république. Il suffit de savoir et de ne rien masquer. 10

Camus thus establishes the possibility of a clerk, Meursault, as an absurd hero.

The choice of any style of life is possible, as long as man realizes the mad character of the role he is playing. If he were to take his role as meaningful, he would pretend that life was rational, and would evade part of the absurd dilemma. Camus admires the great nobility of those who maintain their rebellion:

La conquête ou le jeu, l'amour innombrable, la révolte absurde, ce sont des hommages que l'homme rend à sa dignité dans une campagne où il est d'avance vaincu. 11

This short sketch of the "absurd man" now brings us to Meursault, the absurd hero of L'Étranger.

L'Étranger, Camus' first novel, is a narrative told by Meursault, a young French Algerian. The novel begins with the death of his mother in an old folks home where she had been living. Meursault goes to the home for the funeral. At no time does he manifest any grief or register any feeling other than fatigue. He returns to Algiers, goes to a comic movie, and begins a love affair with Marie, an acquaintance. Meursault returns to work on Monday and his life returns to a state of normalcy. He turns down his employer's offer of a position in Paris. Although he doesn't love Marie, he agrees to marry her.

Meursault's calm routine is disturbed by his friendship with Raymond, a neighbor. Raymond suspects his Arab mistress is deceiving him and wants to punish her. After Raymond beats her and her screams bring the police, Meursault makes a false deposition for Raymond. Without any personal motives he becomes involved in the struggle between Raymond and his mistress's brother and friends. At a Sunday outing at the beach, a fight breaks out and Raymond is wounded. Later the same afternoon, Meursault goes for a walk along the beach and, seeking shade from the hot sun, comes upon one of the Arabs. The Arab has a knife and Meursault is armed with a revolver which Raymond had given him.

À cause de cette brûlure que je ne pouvais plus supporter, j'ai fait un mouvement en avant. Je savais que c'était stupide, que je ne me débarrasserais pas du soleil en me déplaçant d'un pas. Mais j'ai fait un pas, un seul en avant. Et cette fois, sans se soulever, l'Arab a tiré se couteau qu'il m'a présenté dans le soleil. La lumière a giclé sur l'acier et c'était comme une longue lame étincelante au front.... C'est alors que tout a vacillé. La mer a charrié un souffle épais et ardent. Il m'a semblé que le ciel s'ouvrait sur toute son étendue pour laisser pleuvoir du feu. Tout mon être s'est tendu et

j'ai crispé ma main sur le revolver. La gâchette a cédé, j'ai touché le ventre poli de la crosse et c'est là, dans le bruit à la fois sec et assourdissant, que tout a commencé.<sup>12</sup>

Here ends part one of L'Étranger.

The second part of Meursault's narrative describes the eleven months he spends in prison.

Meursault is...sentenced to be hanged for murder. The jury's decision is based not on the nature of the crime itself ( the murder of an Arab by a Frenchman would not normally have been a capital offense in Algeria ), but on its appraisal of Meursault's character. Before the trial, Meursault refuses to give the examining magistrate any motive for the crime except that he shot 'because of the sun.' He refuses to repent, admits that he has no belief in God, and gives an honest account of his activities during and after his mother's funeral: activities that, in the eyes of the bourgeois society judging him, do not show appropriate filial grief. The prosecuting attorney convinces the jury that Meursault is a "moral monster" who has neither normal emotions, nor any sense of guilt or sin. Imprisoned and awaiting execution, Meursault accepts his role as a social monster. When the prison chaplain tells him to repent and to prepare his soul for immortality, Meursault becomes angry; he defends the life that he has led, a life with no transcendent value, absurd in itself, but which is the only value to which he can cling. <sup>13</sup>

Meursault admits only one life, his life as he knew it: the swims, the beaches, the evenings, Marie's light dresses; an intense glorious life that needs no redemption. He has found his kingdom: the irreplaceable life of an ordinary human being who by an uncomprehensible decree of fate, is condemned to death. Once the chaplain has left, Meursault becomes defiant and lucid, determined to go to his death happy.

Comme si cette grande colère m'avait purgé du mal, vidé d'espoir, devant cette nuit chargée de signes et d'étoiles, je m'ouvrais pour la première fois à la tendre indifférence du monde. De l'éprouver si pareil à moi, si fraternel en fin, j'ai senti que j'avis été heureux,

et que je l'étais encore. 14

The central question for an understanding of L'Etranger is whether Meursault is an unconscious hero or the absurd hero of Le Mythe de Sisyphe. Meursault is not a clear illustration of the idea of revolt. This lack of definition

was partly for aesthetic reasons - a work of imagination [L'Etranger] must not be too close an illustration of a work of reasoning [Le Mythe de Sisyphe] - partly because Meursault already existed as an autonomous character in his mind, and essentially because of a certain taste for irony and mystification, that Camus made his outsiders not a conqueror, an actor, or a Don Juan, but a clerk in an office.... The clue to the real relationship between The Myth of Sisyphus and The Outsider is to be found in the phrase in the essay where Camus says that 'a temporary employee at the Post Office is the equal of a conqueror if he has the same consciousness of his fate. 15

Thody, author of the above quotation, goes on to show that Meursault's lack of consciousness is only superficial. Meursault has recognized the absurdity of life and experienced the absurd before the narrative begins. Meursault is an outsider in society, but is not indifferent to the world.

His domain is the physical life. To swim, to run, to make love, to feel the sun on his face, to walk through Algiers in the cool of the evening - it is these experiences which have given him happiness and which make him wish to live the same life again. His indifference is not towards life itself but only towards those emotions to which society, living on the dead belief that the world is reasonable and significant, attributes an arbitrary importance. 16

Meursault is the personification of a type whom Camus regards as being a product of the North African climate and coast - a man, strong and simple, living solely in the present. Meursault is often criticized for his lack of feeling, but in fact he is a man of strong

feelings - only, he is honest with himself and them, and will not enter into any pretense of feeling to satisfy the conventional ideas and wishes of society. It is largely for his apparent indifference to his mother's death that he is condemned to die and yet, in his own way, he is an affectionate son. "Sans doute, j'aimais bien maman, mais cela ne voulait rien dire.... Ce que je pouvais dire à coup sûr, c'est que j'aurais préféré que maman ne mourût pas." 17 His seeming indifference is misunderstood because to him death is not a matter of great importance. Since the consciousness of death is inextricably bound up with the process of life, the final moment and manner of its coming matters little. Meursault is not callous, he accepts the course of life.

Meursault, after turning down an offer of a job in Paris, introduces us to a little of his background and an explanation of his lack of ambition:

... je ne voyais pas de raison pour changer ma vie.  
En y réfléchissant bien, je n'étais pas malheureux.  
Quand j'étais étudiant, j'avais beaucoup d'ambitions  
de ce genre. Mais quand j'ai dû abandonner mes études,  
j'ai très vite compris que tout cela était sans importance réelle. 18

Because he realizes that he cannot impose a meaningful pattern on life, he rejects economic and social ambitions. He refuses the usual abstractions that men put between themselves and reality.

What Meursault values is present sensation, concrete experience. He is only indifferent to such conventional aims as promotion and marriage. He is by no means indifferent to sources of pleasure or displeasure in the external world. Truth is what he feels and he will not commit himself beyond it. He knows no other explanation for the



murder except because of the sun. When his defense counsel begs him to say that he is grieved by his mother's death, he refuses to compromise; to him grief is a meaningless abstraction.

Meursault is not a moral monster, nor is he devoid of human emotions. His explanations are misunderstood since, because of his desire to speak only of what he can describe clearly, he limits them to exact feelings of a particular moment. He will not assume the stereotyped role of the loving son, ambitious employee, repentent criminal, etc. Meursault, obviously, is condemned, not for any criminal action, but for his failure to conform to society and its conventions. In his preface to a later edition of L'Étranger, Camus states this very plainly, saying:

J'ai résumé L'Étranger, il y a longtemps, par une phrase dont je reconnais qu'elle est très paradoxale: "Dans notre société tout homme qui ne pleure pas à l'enterrement de sa mère risque d'être condamné à mort." Je voulais dire seulement que le héros du livre est condamné parce qu'il ne joue pas le jeu. En ce sens, il est étranger à la société où il vit.... 19

Meursault regards the murder as an error, not a sin. He feels at fault only because he has disturbed the relationship between himself and the world; "j'avais détruit l'équilibre du jour." 20 He accepts his legal status as a criminal, but only slowly begins to realize why society has condemned him. He accepts his social role by defending his life as the one value he has and by taking a defiant attitude towards the society that has condemned him.

L'Étranger records man's struggle with the external world as well as his conflict with society. The novel is a concrete image of what Camus terms the absurd confrontation between man's desires and the indifference of the universe. Meursault shares the fundamental

traits attributed to man in Le Mythe de Sisyphe: a desire for life and a desire for truth, 21.

Although he becomes an enemy of human society, Meursault attains a harmony with the world that has condemned him. He accepts life as a value in itself and thus, accepts death. Meursault is the absurd hero in opposition to society. "A view of the world and of human nature is implied beneath the surface of the story, but no clear didactic message emerges. Meursault...is a comic savior, created to mock the universe." 22.

### CHAPTER III

#### LA RÉVOLTE

Camus' preoccupation with the absurd was only a stage in the development of his philosophy of life. The absurd was nothing new in the French intellectual circles. It had been themes in the works of philosophers such as Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, Soren Kierkegaard, Karl Jaspers, Franz Kafka, and Jean-Paul Sartre, only to name the more important. It was the next development of Camus' thinking which made him a major figure in French intellectual circles. The problem was to find new values for a generation that rejected the old sources of morality and truth. Striving to rise above the pessimism and nihilism of the century, he developed his philosophy of revolt.

In the face of the absurd Camus says, "L'une des seules positions philosophiques cohérentes, c'est ainsi la révolte." <sup>1</sup> And what is this revolt?

Elle est un affrontement perpétuel de l'homme et de sa propre obscurité. Elle est exigence d'une impossible transparence. Elle remet le monde en question à chacune de ses seconds. De même que le danger fournit à l'homme l'irremplaçable occasion de la saisir, de même la révolte métaphysique étend la conscience tout le long de l'expérience. Elle est cette présence constante de l'homme à lui-même. Elle n'est pas aspiration, elle est sans espoir. Cette révolte n'est que l'assurance d'un destin écrasant, moins la résignation qui devrait l'accompagner. <sup>2</sup>

Through revolt, man gains a greater intensity of life in the refusal to submit to the fact of inevitable death. He not only refuses death, but also refuses to accept solutions which will destroy the absurd. The absurd dies only when one looks away and must be maintained by the tension of revolt, which can only add intensity to the

sensation of being alive.

Revolt is first of all in the heart. Blind, instinctive, unreasoned and emotional, it originates in a feeling of human solidarity and of human dignity. Revolt provides the means of overcoming the absurd world with its frustrations and loneliness.

The important difference between the attitude of the absurd and that of revolt lies in their fertility and in the realms of their application. The absurd is essentially an individual sensation. It is experienced by the individual conscience and its rules are applicable only to individual cases. Revolt, on the other hand, although at the very beginning an individualistic movement, can only really come to life by passing beyond the individual, and will inevitably be concerned with politics and political action. <sup>3</sup>

The protest of revolt is an attempt to obtain certain minimal rights such as justice and freedom. It becomes man's weapon in the face of those who refuse to accept the dignity of the human person and therefore refuse him his rights.

The "l'homme révolté" recognizes an inviolable frontier which he will maintain for all men. Through this revolt, he affirms his own integrity as a basic value and anyone who threatens to transgress this frontier must be resisted by him if he is to retain his dignity. <sup>4</sup>

There are two dangers which threaten revolt and destroy human solidarity. The first is what Camus calls "une prétension à l'éternel", the acceptance of a superhuman value which would cause men to be silent or to be nothing but "the spokesman or echo of the divine voice", and the second, the danger of political realism.... Political realism justifies lying, which is a denial of the complicity created by revolt, and also justifies cruelty and killing off of opponents. This complicity is not lost..., but it is denied.... <sup>5</sup>

Camus makes a distinction between revolt and revolution which springs from revolt. "Revolution was an intellectual idea, the passage

from the instinctive movement of revolt to the realization of its ideals in history." <sup>6</sup> Camus is primarily concerned with revolution in so far as it involves the individual.

When revolt begins to act it can never aspire to the creation of an absolute in history in a revolution which is final and definite. The real value discovered in revolt is that of companionship and unity of interests among the slaves. His complicity can be maintained only by a faithfulness to the limited nature of human experience.... The attempt to attain the absolute is to sacrifice the individual to a false ambition. In all revolutions there comes a moment when justice and liberty enter into conflict and when the desire for absolute justice comes into conflict with the liberty of the individual. It is here that the limit established by the first movement of revolt must be respected, and where the rebel must accept the fact that, in human experience, no absolute can be achieved without denying this first principle of the inviolability of the human personality. Revolt provides both a discipline and an inspiration. It is both a call to action and an indication of how that action would be carried on. It provides a value which revolution must try to realize and which cannot, in any circumstances, be sacrificed to expediency.... Revolution cannot use all and any means to achieve its ends. It originates in a revolt which was the affirmation of the integrity of the individual and of the existence of limits. Revolution can not, without betraying revolt, cease to respect this integrity or deny these limits. <sup>7</sup>

In revolt it is with the lives of others that he is essentially concerned. What action can we take towards transforming the world in which our fellow men suffer and die, which will not at the same time increase death and suffering? Let us now look at revolt as it is expressed in La Peste.

LA PESTE

La Peste, published in 1947, is a novel dealing with an epidemic that supposedly struck Oran in the nineteen-forties. In it, Camus displays a more positive attitude to human destiny, an attitude of modest hope and determined endeavor. The story is told in the third person by Dr. Rieux, but he does not identify himself as narrator until the final pages.

Rieux begins his narrative with a description of Oran before the plague struck. He sees his fellow citizens caught in routine, incapable of moving beyond their quest for money. The physical appearance of Oran contributes to the citizens' complacency. Its buildings are singularly ugly and dusty. Oran is a town without trees, without glamour, and without a soul. In such an atmosphere it is easy to become numb and to forget the rebellious desires that place men in opposition to the world.

Rieux's first hint of something out of the ordinary is his discovery of a dead rat on his doorstep. Like others in the community, Rieux at first ignores this strange phenomenon. He is preoccupied with his wife, who is ill and about to leave the city for a rest cure in the mountains. Rieux feels guilty; because of his medical duties, he has neglected his wife. Concerned only with personal problems, he is at first incapable of understanding that the rats foretell a threat to his security.

The rats begin to die in increasing numbers; then men begin to die. City officials are slow to admit that there is a plague for them to deal with, but when the death-rate has risen sufficiently, they are

forced to declare a state of contagion and seal the city off from the outside world. The plague takes a vast toll of lives, in spite of the efforts of doctors and volunteer workers to fight it. After nine months the plague's force weakens and the city is released from its terror; the community returns to normal life. Those who fought the plague do not know whether they have won a victory or merely benefited from chance. Meditating on what he has learned from his experience, Rieux decides that the struggle for life is worth-while. He knows, however, that the plague may return, that it can never be defeated.

La Peste reproduces a feeling of the monotony and routine of life in Oran. There is no plot structure beyond a cycle of normal life - plague - return to normal. It recounts a struggle between the epidemic and the community. Those individuals who stand out in the community are treated episodically, dominated by a destructive force and a suffering body of men. They are reduced by the plague to a less than human state in which even suffering and despair have become routine.

The people of Oran and the plague are the principle characters of the novel. There is a small group of men with whom Rieux is in contact, and whose various reactions to the plague are studied. They are presented to us in an extreme situation and it is with their behaviour in the face of this situation that Camus is concerned. But private solutions of personal dilemmas are secondary; Camus wants most of all to portray a collective reaction to a collective problem. <sup>8</sup>

In La Peste, Oran's collective problem becomes the plague. But more is suggested than a physical outbreak of plague. Camus uses the image of the plague to symbolize Germany's occupation of France.

When The Plague was first published in 1947, the majority of French critiques greeted it as an allegorical presentation...of the particular experience of the German occupation. The novel had been begun under the Occupation and part of it...had first appeared in 1943. The segregation of Oran from the rest of the world...symbolized the separation of France from the civilized world between 1940 and 1944. A modern city would not have been so unprepared medically for an outbreak of plague as Oran, and would certainly have hesitated less in taking the necessary measures against it. The Europe of the thirties, however, was in exactly the same state of blindness and unreadiness as Oran and the inhabitants of Britain and France.... The impossibility for the citizens of Oran to protect themselves against arbitrary death which it pleased the plague to send them, differed little from the helplessness of the average French citizen in face of the imprisonment as a hostage or the deportation for forced labour which characterized the German occupation. 9

La Peste carries many more allusions to the Occupation such as the isolation camps and the crematories which are used to dispose of plague victims. The struggle of the doctors and volunteers against the plague recalls the struggle of the French resistance.

Camus enlarges the significance of the plague, and life in the plague-ridden town conveys a notion of existence in general. The experiences of the inhabitants of Oran express aspects of all human experience. The closed world of Oran is the absurd world in which man is condemned to live. This significance of the plague is explicitly expressed in the words of an old Spaniard to Rieux: "Mais qu'est-ce que ça veut dire, la peste? C'est la vie, et voilà tout." 10

The besieged town would seem to express the world of human experience as Camus sees it. It brings man face to face with the reality of suffering and death and suggests that there is no escape. Man must then learn to live without hope but not in a state of despair or



resignation.

The plague is a useful symbol for Camus...because it also has some of the same results as the absurd. Both plague and absurd cause the same evil of separation.... Camus' insistence upon the sufferings of separation is one of the most surprising and original features of The Plague. 11

Camus deals at length with the experience of people who find themselves separated from those to whom they are deeply attached. Even people who are not cut off from loved ones are aware of the separation because the town is cut off from the outside world, and because they can make no plans for the future. At the same time the plague makes them afraid because it brings a constant threat of suffering and death. The plague then begins to suggest the sense of ultimate individual solitude that overtakes man when he becomes aware of the absurd.

In La Peste, Camus not only shows us the essential features of the world but also shows us men adopting different attitudes towards it. The plague not only evokes the absurd but also brings men to a recognition of the true character of their predicament. In considering the principal characters of the novel, the one thing that distinguishes them is the degree of their awareness of what is actually going on around them. Most of the inhabitants of Oran get through the dreary months as best they can, in general, by simply killing time. In the principal characters, Camus shows a variety of attitudes toward the plague. Some, such as Rieux and Grand, are acutely aware of the significance of the plague, while for others, such as Paneloux, this awareness develops as the novel progresses.

Of all the characters in this novel, Dr. Rieux is the least complicated. Rieux begins his account with an ironic portrait of the

normal life of Oran. He is aloof from his fellow men; while telling his story he detaches himself from the community. His attitude alternates between sympathy towards others and an ironic judgment of them. Rieux is torn between his desire to speak for everyone, to see himself as part of the community, and his natural feelings of condescension and aloofness. Suffering and man's need of each other become the common denominators which spur Rieux on to speak for everyone.

Quand il se trouvait tenté de mêler directement sa confiance aux mille voix des pestiférés, il était arrêté par la pensée qu'il n'y avait pas une de ses souffrances qui ne fût en même temps celle des autres et que dans un monde où la douleur est si souvent solitaire, cela était un avantage. Décidément, il devait parler pour tous. 12

Through fighting the plague he learns that, in spite of their foolishness and their ignorance, men are more to be admired than despised. Watching the celebrations after the opening of the city gates, Rieux looks down from a balcony on the joyful crowd and sympathises with them. "Et Rieux...pensait qu'il était juste que, de temps en temps au moins la joie vînt récompenser ceux qui se suffisaient de l'homme et de son pauvre et terrible amour." 13

Besides greater respect for his fellow men, Rieux gains a clearer understanding of the permanent and meaningless evil in the world. As he fights the plague and sees that his medical efforts are of little use, he loses his few illusions about his ability as a doctor and about the permanence of love and friendship. His wife dies in the sanatorium and Tarrou, his closest friend, is taken by the plague. Rieux is left with a lucid but hopeless knowledge of the world.

Mais lui, Rieux, qu'avait-il gagné? Il avait seulement gagné d'avoir connu la peste et de s'en souvenir, d'avoir

connu l'amitié et de s'en souvenir, de connaître la tendresse et de devoir un jour s'en souvenir. Tout ce que l'homme pouvait gagner au jeu de la peste et de la vie, c'était la connaissance et la mémoire. <sup>14</sup>

Rieux denies that his work is heroic; it is rather a common-sense choice to follow his profession and to meet an obvious need. Rieux proposes, as the real hero of his narrative, Joseph Grand. Grand is a small, insignificant man who works as an underpaid clerk in a government office. His wife left him many years before, and he suffers from loneliness and unrequited love. Grand acts on good feelings; he works with Rieux during the plague, not from any intellectual convictions, but simply because he feels that people must help each other. When the "formations sanitaires volontaires" are organized to combat the plague, Grand is asked to do the tedious book-keeping for the organization and he accepts the responsibility.

De ce point de vue, et plus que Rieux ou Tarrou, le narrateur estime que Grand était le représentant réel de cette vertu tranquille qui animait les formations sanitaires. Il avait dit oui sans hésitations, avec la bonne volonté qui était la sienne. Il avait seulement demandé à se rendre utile dans de petits travaux. Il était trop vieux pour le reste. De dix-huit heures à vingt heures, il pouvait donner son temps. Et comme Rieux le remerciait avec chaleur, il s'en étonnait: "Ce n'est pas le plus difficile. Il y a la peste, il faut se défendre, c'est clair." <sup>15</sup>

Grand is a hero because he manages to keep his personal life intact throughout the long epidemic. He fights the plague, but he is not dominated by its dehumanizing power.

Through the plague, the Jesuit priest, Paneloux, learns a measure of human solidarity. In our first contact with him, we hear him say, "Mes frères, vous êtes dans le malheur, mes frères, vous l'avez mérité." <sup>16</sup> According to Paneloux, the plague is the city's

punishment for its sins; the people are not innocent victims, they are guilty sinners before the judgment of God.

Si, aujourd'hui, la peste vous regarde, c'est que le moment de réfléchir est venu. Les justes ne peuvent craindre cela, mais les méchants ont raison de trembler. Dans l'immense grange de l'univers, le fléau implacable battre le blé humain jusqu'à ce que la paille soit séparée du grain. Il y aura plus de paille que de grain, plus d'appelés que d'élus, et ce malheur n'a pas été voulu par Dieu.... Dieu qui, pendant si longtemps, a penché sur les hommes de cette ville son visage de pitié, lassé d'attendre, déçu dans son éternel espoir, vient de détourner son regard. Privés de la lumière de Dieu, nous voici pour longtemps dans les ténèbres de la peste! 17

When Paneloux joins the team of voluntary workers, it is because he considers it his duty to help those who suffer. In his eyes the plague is willed by God and justified by man's guilt. The plague poses no new problem for him until he is present at the bedside of a little boy who dies of the plague. After the boy's death, Rieux says,

Ah! celui-là, au moins, était innocent, vous le savez bien!

PANELOUX

...Cela est révoltant parce que cela passe notre mesure. Mais peut-être devons-nous aimer ce que nous ne pouvons pas comprendre.

RIEUX

Non, mon père, dit-il. Je me fais une autre idée de l'amour. Et je refuserai jusqu'à la mort d'aimer cette création où des enfants sont torturés. 18

After this experience, he can no longer justify the plague. He withdraws and a short while later, he preaches his second sermon. This sermon is quite different from his first.

Ce dernier [Paneloux] parla d'un ton plus doux et plus réfléchi que la première fois et, à plusieurs reprises, les assistants remarquèrent un certaine

hésitation dans son débit. Chose curieuse encore, il ne disait plus "vous", mais "nous". 19

Paneloux still believes, though, that all trials work together for good to the Christian. The problem of suffering and evil brings him to the crossroads of faith or disbelief. He says, "Mes frères, l'instant est venu. Il faut tout croire ou tout nier. Et qui donc, parmi vous, oserait tout nier?" 20 Unable to deny God, he accepts what he believes to be God's will in its totality. Shortly after the second sermon, Paneloux catches the plague and dies, refusing the attentions of the doctor.

The fight of Rieux and his associates in the "formations sanitaires volontaires" against the plague symbolizes the French Resistance. But the struggle of the group is also collective revolt. Rieux admits that his struggle is doomed to defeat. He has no means of knowing that he and his associates will succeed in stopping the plague; in any case, success is provisional since death always has the last word. But Rieux continues to fight the plague in an effort to alleviate suffering wherever he can. Such activity is a way of fulfillment and source of satisfaction that can be enjoyed without adding to the unhappiness of others.

La Peste shows a tension between faithfully describing the world and protesting against it across the form of the novel.

Nowhere has Camus more starkly depicted his reaction to the total unintelligibility of man's condition, nor his protestation against the amount of suffering inflicted on human bodies and human feelings. No religion, no ideology, he tells us, can justify the spectacle of the collective suffering inflicted on man....

In this context La Peste marks a change in emphasis; leaving the universe to itself, Camus turns to men. And here the testimony begins. Against all the intellectual evidence in the world stands man with his indomitable needs, his love of life, his will to live. Camus observes him with confidence and this in spite of man's indifference to what he represents, in spite of his depreciation of what he most values, in spite of the facility with which he enters into complicity with the plague. It would have been difficult for Camus to express directly what he felt so deeply within him: the compassion for human beings, the respect for man's fragile joys. Neither sentimental nor blind, his humanism would have been meaningless had he attempted to abstract it from the experience that nourished it. This is why La Peste is, within its limits, a great novel, the most disturbing, most moving novel yet to have come out of the chaos of the mid-century. <sup>21</sup>

## CHAPTER IV

### LE BONHEUR

Camus produced four plays within five years (1944-1949), but none ever enjoyed immediate box-office success. In terms of his total work, his plays are of secondary importance. However, they still merit serious consideration, largely for the insight they offer into his philosophical development.

One of the most striking features of Camus' drama is its concern with the human condition, with man's place and purpose in the universe. Camus knows that man is made for happiness and seeks to show him the possible ways to it. Herein is the purpose of this section: a discovery and an understanding of the way to happiness 'chez' Camus.

It seems best to begin with a short summary of the plots of the four plays to be discussed and to summarize them in the order in which he wrote them.

Caligula, Camus' first play, was written in 1938, but not published or performed until 1945. Caligula tells of a young emperor who reacts violently to a first awareness of absurdity. He discovers that "les hommes meurent et ils ne sont pas heureux." <sup>1</sup> This simple truth is not obvious to the Roman patricians, who have ignored the absurd. Caligula decides to undertake an educational mission; he will force the patricians to recognize absurdity by acting in a manner as absurd as that of the universe. The play is a series of episodes illustrating how Caligula destroys the moral values of the patricians, their personal integrity, and their belief in reason. Caligula forces the families of his victims to laugh; he drags a wife from her husband and rapes her; he whimsically

kills men; he arbitrarily closes the country's granaries and declares a famine.

He hopes that by acting freely and amorally he can overcome the power of the hostile universe. Just before he is killed by a patrician uprising, he realizes that he has failed to reach his goal: "Je n'ai pas pris la voie qu'il fallait, je n'aboutis à rien. Ma liberté n'est pas la bonne." 2

Le Malentendu, written in 1945, is the story of Jan, a man who returns home after twenty years of a rich and happy life abroad. His mother and sister keep an inn in a depressing central European village. In order to escape to a warmer country, they murder and rob rich travellers. Unable to find the right words to identify himself, Jan decides to spend one night in the inn posing as a stranger. His mother and sister murder him. When she discovers whom she has murdered, his mother commits suicide. His sister, Martha, who feels that she has been rejected in favor of Jan, also kills herself. Jan's wife is left alone, with her faith in the meaning and beauty of the universe destroyed.

Le Malentendu presents a depressing image of a universe without love or hope, but it does not express any way of rebelling fruitfully against such a universe.

Camus' later plays represent a more constructive ethic of revolt. L'État de siège (1948) is a story of an epidemic and of a community's reaction to it. Its central theme is the power of revolt over the absurd, especially over its political and social forms. The play deals with the eventual powerlessness of dictatorship and bureaucratic frenzy before an attitude of courageous rebellion.



The Plague, pictured as a sinister human dictator, comes to the Spanish town of Cadiz. The Plague is accompanied by a female secretary (death) who keeps a list of the town's inhabitants in a notebook. She can infect individuals with the epidemic or kill them outright by striking their names from the list. The Plague institutes a reign of terror which he reinforces with a series of administrative measures. These involve all the worst features of bureaucracy and are largely carried out by a nihilist named Nada. A young man, Diego, is in love with Victoria and gradually emerges as the hero. In the end, he accepts death and renounces life with Victoria, but by his action of courage and sacrifice, he frees the town from the Plague.

Camus' last play, Les Justes (1949), is considered to be his best. It is the story of Russian revolutionaries of 1905. The hero of Les Justes, Ivan Kaliayev, is a romantic and idealistic revolutionary. His hatred of oppression has not destroyed his belief that men must conduct themselves with honor even when opposing tyranny. Ordered to bomb the Grand Duke's carriage, Kaliayev wants to be executed. He rejects an offer of pardon because he feels that his death will restore a moral balance; it will make the assassination an act of justice and not a crime.

In order to attain happiness, man must give up his impossible compulsion to change the earth and escape death. Meursault realizes this shortly before his execution. He attains a harmony with the universe and accepts his life as a value in itself; in accepting this value he accepts his death.

Je crois que j'ai dormi parce que je me suis réveillé

avec des étoiles sur le visage. Des bruits de campagne montaient jusqu'à moi. Des odeurs de nuit, de terre et de sel rafraîchissaient mes tempes. La merveilleuse paix de cet été endormi entraînait en moi comme une marée.... Et moi aussi, je me puis senti prêt à tout revivre. Comme si cette grande colère m'avait purgé du mal, vidé d'espoir, devant cette nuit chargée de signes et d'étoiles, je m'ouvrais pour la première fois à la tendre indifférence du monde. De l'éprouver si pareil à moi, si fraternel enfin, j'ai senti que j'avais été heureux, et que je l'étais encore. <sup>3</sup>

Meursault accepts the natural world as the source of all happiness.

He rebels, but he reaches a final consent. This is not a betrayal of his desires but an affirmation of his greatness in no longer attempting to be a god.

It is the nature of man to turn to the world and be in harmony with it.

In the solar world of Camus, the muscular indolence and eurythmy of bodies reigns without contest. Animality is fully accepted. Camus is far from thinking in terms of a hedonistic retreat within. ('To take pleasure in oneself is impossible.' L'Envers et l'endroit, preface) The body is the privileged place of joy, because it is the locus of harmony, and union is in fact unison. Physical love places human beings against the background of Being, and participation in the act of love is the symbol of a deeper participation. <sup>4</sup>

Participation is the important idea in this passage. To lose one's sense of participation in the grandeur of the universe is to move into the desert of exile. The world, its beauty and pleasure, must be enjoyed in order to be happy.

Algeria and the Mediterranean area are for Camus the garden spot of the world. When Camus wished to express the jealous desire for life and happiness, he created Martha, living in cold Czechoslovakia, who dreamed of the sea, sunshine, long and burning beaches, golden bodies.

As opposed to the lands of cold and ice, the Mediterranean is the incarnation of the love of life, natural beauty, and happiness. Martha is unhappy in her home town and wants to escape. In the beginning of the play she states this quite clearly:

Ah! Mère! Quand nous aurons amassé beaucoup d'argent  
et que nous pourrons quitter ces terres sans horizon,  
quand nous laisserons derrière nous cette auberge et  
cette ville pluvieuse, et que nous oublierons ce pays  
d'ombre, le jour où nous serons enfin devant la mer  
dont j'ai tant rêvé, ce jour-là, vous me verrez sourire. 5

In order to reach this land of happiness, Martha will stop at nothing, not even murder. As the play opens, Martha and her mother are discussing the possibility of murdering an unknown traveler who appears to be rich. The mother is hesitant to go through with the murder and says:

...Faut-il donc s'entêter quand les choses se présentent  
mal et passer par-dessus tout pour un peu plus d'argent?

MARTHA

Non, pas pour l'argent, mais pour l'oubli de ce pays  
et pour une maison devant la mer. Si vous êtes fatiguée  
de votre vie, moi, je suis lasse à mourir de cet horizon  
fermé, et je sens que je ne pourrai pas y vivre un mois  
de plus.... Et il faut bien que vous m'y aidiez, vous  
qui m'avez mise au monde dans un pays de nuages et non  
sur une terre de soleil. 6

Martha murders, not for the sake of this criminal act, but "...to lead to freedom beyond the inn on the shores of a sunlit sea, to an Eden of sensuous innocence and delight."<sup>7</sup> Martha desperately desires to escape from her prison into a land of happiness, "une terre de soleil".

The pursuit of happiness is the inalienable right of every individual; there is nothing wrong in being happy. "It is only being happy alone that can not be justified. This sense of solidarity, based

upon sacrifice and personal responsibility for the world, is the price of happiness." 8

Revolt is the key to Camus' notion of happiness and is manifested in human solidarity. Through their attitude of protest and revolt against a condition that Camus sees as the lot of man, the characters of the four plays discover the common humanity that binds them together. This common bond is recognized in human solidarity and together, men seek their happiness.

Camus was not really prepared to press the logic of the pursuit of individual satisfaction and happiness in a meaningless universe to the total disregard for the welfare of others.... To become aware of the 'absurd' character of man's predicament is to experience with a fresh urgency the human craving for happiness. But the War emphasized in a vivid and terrifying manner how dependent the happiness of each is upon the attitudes and the conduct of others.

Camus then posits two possible attitudes towards the absurd:

One may, he says, adopt an attitude of acquiescence, and this is what the Nazis have done. Or one may adopt an attitude of protest and 'revolt'. And to revolt against the injustice of the universe means to refuse to add to the misery of mankind and to oppose those who do so; it means trying to promote the happiness of others as well as one's own. 9

Caligula discovers human solidarity too late to save his life. He becomes aware of the absurd with the death of Drusilla, his sister and mistress. After his experience of the absurd, he is obsessed with the impossible. He is poisoned with scorn and horror and attempts to exercise his freedom to its fullest extent.

He sees that death negates life, love, friendship, justice, human beings, human values; that death delivers up the human being to an arbitrary, impersonal, mechanical fate. From this powerfully simple, negative, intellectual vision, Caligula draws extreme consequences: everyday living,

individual habits and social institutions, are shams, contemptible forms of mockery with which human beings delude themselves. From his detached vantage point he looks down on life and sees around him only hypocrisy, dissembling, cowardice, a worthless and miserable 'play'.

Since he is emperor and since he is in possession of an incontrovertible truth he is doubly free; he is free to impose the truth upon his subjects, he is free to tear away the mask of their false security as he pleases. In the name of truth he undertakes a peculiar form of ruthless and disinterested mental warfare upon his subjects. Caligula is now a man with a purpose - an educator, not a tyrant - the would-be savior of humanity. 10

Caligula carries the absurd to its logical conclusion and refuses to respect the dignity of the human person. Because of his crimes against humanity, the Patricians of Rome, with Cherea leading them, decide that Caligula must be destroyed. In a meeting with Caligula, Cherea makes his position quite clear. In their discussion, both have admitted the fact of the absurd and Caligula says:

Tu es intelligent et l'intelligence se paye cher ou se nie. Moi, je paye. Mais toi, pourquoi ne pas la nier et ne pas vouloir payer?

#### CHEREA

Parce que j'ai envie de vivre et d'être heureux. Je crois qu'on ne peut être ni l'un ni l'autre en poussant l'absurde dans toutes ses conséquences. Je suis comme tout le monde. Pour m'en sentir libéré, je souhaite parfois la mort de ceux que j'aime, je convoite des femmes que les lois de la famille ou de l'amitié m'interdisent de convoiter. Pour être logique, je devrais alors tuer ou posséder. Mais je juge que ces idées vagues n'ont pas d'importance. Si tout le monde se mêlait de les réaliser, nous ne pourrions ni vivre ni être heureux. Encore une fois, c'est cela qui m'importe.

#### CALIGULA

Il faut donc que tu croies à quelque idée supérieure.

CHEREA

Je crois qu'il y a des actions qui sont plus belles que d'autres.

CALIGULA

Je crois que toutes sont équivalentes.

CHEREA

Je le sais, Caius, et c'est pourquoi je ne te hais pas.  
Je te comprends et je t'approuve. Mais tu es gênant  
et il faut que tu disparaisses. 11

Camus does not show any moral attitude that can be drawn from Caligula's discovery of the absurd. Caligula realizes that he has chosen the wrong path but he is not sure why. In his search for an absolute in which to rest secure, he destroys the security of order that other men enjoyed. For this, he was assassinated.

The theme of solidarity develops progressively across the action of his other plays. Early in Le Malentendu, Maria makes her plea for truth to have its way in Jan's return to his mother's inn. Jan is disappointed in not having been recognized by his mother and sister after twenty years absence; he says,

Quand j'ai appris la mort de mon père, j'ai compris que j'avais des responsabilités envers elles deux et, l'ayant compris, je fais ce qu'il faut. Mais je suppose que ce n'est pas si facile qu'on le dit de rentrer chez soi et qu'il faut un peu de temps pour faire un fils d'un étranger....

MARIA

Et ce n'était pas bien difficile de dire: "je suis votre fils, voici ma femme. J'ai vécu avec elle dans un pays que nous aimions, devant la mer et le soleil. Mais je n'étais pas assez heureux et aujourd'hui j'ai besoin de vous.

JAN

Ne sois pas injuste, Maria. Je n'ai pas besoin d'elles  
mais j'ai compris qu'elles devaient avoir besoin de moi  
et qu'un homme n'était jamais seul. 12

This passage brings out two points: solidarity and a new one, truth.  
Jan fails to tell the truth, and because of it, fails to make the gift  
of love and happiness which he brings and thus destroys the happiness  
that he shared with Maria.

He returns to the lives of his mother and sister as a  
stranger. His overriding desire is to be spontaneously  
recognized, to be given his true identity, to be accepted  
as a member of his family. His fundamental mistake is to  
indulge his phantasy, to act irresponsibly in the desperate  
and serious situation that is life overshadowed by the  
absurd. A whim prevents him from speaking the one vital  
sentence and the result is death - death for himself, his  
mother and his sister, and suffering for his wife, Maria....  
If Jan had revealed his identity the tragedy could have  
been avoided. In one sense this is true, and Jan's ob-  
stinate refusal to take the obvious course may be regarded  
as a weakness in the play's structure. But Camus makes the  
point in order to salvage the optimistic interpretation  
which says, in effect, that a man can save himself and  
others, even in an absurd world, by exercising sincerity  
and speaking with simple directness to those with whom he  
comes into contact. 13

Through his silence and determination to go through with his  
plans, Jan shuts himself off from the happiness that he shares with  
his wife. In a land of sorrow, he voluntarily accepts the solitude of  
his hotel room and refuses the joy of companionship with his wife.

Le ciel se couvre. Et voici maintenant ma vieille  
angoisse, là, au creux de mon corps, comme une  
mauvaise blessure que chaque mouvement irrite.  
Je connais son nom. Elle est peur de la solitude  
éternelle, crainte qu'il n'y ait pas de réponse. 14

Le Malentendu is very much a play of human separation and exile. The  
theme of loneliness is expressed in several ways but is most obvious

in the characters of Martha and Jan. He leaves Maria and finds himself alone in the method he chooses to extend his happiness to his family.

Martha meets solitude in destroying human life:

J'imaginai que le crime était notre foyer et qu'il nous avait unies, ma mère et moi, pour toujours. Vers qui donc, dans le monde, aurais-je pu me tourner, sinon vers celle qui avait tué en même temps que moi? Mais je me trompais. Le crime aussi est une solitude, même si on se met à mille pour l'accomplir. 15

The hero of L'État de siège, Diego, realizes that the plague ( symbolic of dictatorship and similar forms of oppression ) will only be defeated by revolt. Diego calls for a united front from the citizens of Cadiz and is forced to bargain with the Plague, who holds Diego's fiancée as a hostage for the freedom of the city.

LA PESTE

J'ai là ce corps, mon otage. Et l'otage est mon dernier atout. Regarde-le. Si une femme a le visage de la vie, c'est celle-ci. Elle mérite de vivre et tu veux la faire vivre. Moi, je suis contraint de te la rendre. Mais ce peut être ou contre ta propre vie ou contre la liberté de cette ville. Choisis.

DIEGO

C'est dur de mourir.

LA PESTE

C'est dur.

DIEGO

Mais c'est dur pour tout le monde.

LA PESTE

Imbécile! Dix ans de l'amour de cette femme valent autrement qu'un siècle de la liberté de ces hommes.



DIEGO

L'amour de cette femme, c'est mon royaume à moi. Je puis en faire ce que je veux. Mais la liberté de ces hommes leur appartient. Je ne puis en disposer.

LA PESTE

On ne peut pas être heureux sans faire de mal aux autres. C'est la justice de cette terre.

DIEGO

Je ne suis pas né pour consentir à cette justice-là.

LA PESTE

Qui te demande de consentir? L'ordre de monde ne changera pas au gré de tes desirs! Si tu veux le changer, laisse tes rêves et tiens compte de ce qui est.

DIEGO

Non. Je connais la recette. Il faut tuer pour supprimer le meurtre, violenter pour guérir l'injustice. Il y a des siècles que cela dure! Il y a des siècles que des seigneurs de ta race pourrissent la plaie du monde sous prétexte de la guérir, ils continuent cependant de vanter leur recette, puisque personne ne leur rit au nez. 16

Diego chooses to remain true to mankind and refuses to abandon his fellow citizens to the caprices of the Plague. As a rebel, he realizes that he could not be happy if he did desert them. Diego sacrifices his life to save the people of Cadiz and dies a martyr for mankind.

Camus' last play, Les Justes, is fundamentally concerned with the limits of revolt. It is an effort to determine whether or not a man can deliberately kill another in view of the future good of all humanity. In the author's preface, Camus posits the view which he will elaborate in the play:

J'ai seulement voulu montrer que l'action elle-même avait des limites. Il n'est de bonne et de juste action que celle

qui reconnaît ces limites et qui, s'il lui faut les franchir, accepte au moins la mort. Notre monde nous montre aujourd'hui une face répugnante, justement parce qu'il est fabriqué par des hommes qui s'accordent le droit de franchir ces limites, et d'abord de tuer les autres, sans mourir eux-mêmes. C'est ainsi que la justice aujourd'hui sert d'alibi, partout dans le monde, aux assassins de toute justice. 17

Dora and Kaliayev are the heroes of the play and carry the burden of Camus' thinking on revolutionary justice. They are opposed by Stepan, a young revolutionary who has recently escaped from prison and can only feel hate. Kaliayev is caught up in the beauty and goodness of man and the world; this is his justification for killing.

La vie continue de me paraître merveilleuse.  
J'aime la beauté, le bonheur! C'est pour cela  
que je hais le despotisme. Comment leur  
expliquer? La révolution, bien sûr! Mais la  
révolution pour la vie, pour donner une chance  
à la vie, tu comprends? 18

Stepan shares none of Kaliayev's idealism. The intended murder of the Grand Duke is, for him, revenge flowing from his hate.

Je suis venu pour tuer un homme, non pour l'aimer....

#### KALIAYEV

Tu ne le tueras pas seul ni au nom de rien. Tu le tueras  
avec nous et au nom du peuple russe. Voilà ta justification....  
Et puis, nous tuons pour bâtir un monde où plus jamais  
personne ne tuera! Nous acceptons d'être criminels pour  
que la terre se couvre enfin d'innocents. 19

Stepan finds no happiness in his insatiable hatred. Kaliayev once felt hatred but has realized the void of unfulfillment which it leaves.

...je sais maintenant qu'il n'y a pas de bonheur dans  
la haine. Tout ce mal, tout ce mal, en moi et chez  
les autres. Le meurtre, la lâcheté, l'injustice....  
Oh il faut, il faut que je le tue.... Mais j'irai  
jusqu'au bout! Plus loin que la haine!

DORA

Plus loin? Il n'y a rien.

KALIAYEV

Il y a l'amour. 20

Kaliayev was in love with life and all that it had to offer, and thought in terms of total sacrifice for the revolutionary cause. He was animated by a spirit of fraternal love for all men.

For Kaliayev and Dora, though the execution of the Grand Duke is necessary, to kill is evil, thus he who kills enters into a pact with injustice. "Kaliayev's solution to the problem of revolt [the evil of killing], and the one which Camus recognizes as the only valid one, is that the assassin should pay with his own life for the life he has taken." 21 The killer is guilty, so he must die, but he is his own judge. The double human sacrifice makes him society's executioner and not a murderer; he thus saves his act from the stigma of human irresponsibility.

Death becomes for Dora and Kaliayev their only salvation in this extreme form of terrorism, i.e., taking another human life. This is clearly brought out in the following discussion. Kaliayev says:

Comprends-tu pourquoi j'ai demandé à lancer la bombe?  
Mourir pour l'idée, c'est la seule façon d'être à la  
hauteur de l'idée. C'est la justification.

DORA

Moi aussi, je désire cette mort-là.

KALIAYEV

Oui, c'est un bonheur qu'on peut envier. La nuit, je me retourne parfois sur ma paillasse de colporteur.

Une pensée me tourmente: ils ont fait de nous des assassins. Mais je pense en même temps que je vais mourir, et alors mon coeur s'apaise. Je souris, vois-tu, et je me rendors comme un enfant.

DORA

C'est bien ainsi, Yanek. Tuer et mourir. Mais, à mon avis, il est un bonheur encore plus grand. L'échafaud.

KALIAYEV

J'y ai pensé. Mourir au moment de l'attentat laisse quelque chose d'inachevé. Entre l'attentat et l'échafaud, au contraire, il y a toute une éternité, la seule peut-être, pour l'homme.

DORA

C'est la pensée qui doit t'aider. Nous payons plus que nous ne devons.

KALIAYEV

Que veux-tu dire?

DORA

Nous sommes obligés de tuer, n'est-ce pas? Nous sacrifions délibérément une vie et une seule?

KALIAYEV

Oui.

DORA

Mais aller vers l'attentat et puis vers l'échafaud, c'est donner deux fois sa vie. Nous payons plus que nous ne devons.

KALIAYEV

Oui, c'est mourir deux fois. Merci, Dora. Personne ne peut rien nous reprocher. Maintenant, je suis sûr de moi. 22

In his cell, after he has been condemned, the Grand Duchess visits him and tries to get him to repent. Kaliayev refuses; his

action was necessary and his own death will be his justification. His death will not only be a positive statement of the responsibility of his deed, but also an affirmation of the love that he bears toward mankind and his revolutionary brothers.

En mourant, je serai exact au rendez-vous que j'ai pris avec ceux que j'aime, mes frères qui pensent à moi en ce moment.... Je vais être heureux. J'ai une longue lutte à soutenir et je la soutiendrai. Mais quand le verdict sera prononcé, et l'exécution prête, alors, au pied de l'échafaud, je me détournerai de vous et de ce monde hideux et je me laisserai aller à l'amour qui m'emplit.<sup>23</sup>

In his plays, Camus shows several perversions which destroy human solidarity and ignore the dignity of the human person. As Germaine Brée states it:

The greatest tragedy for any man in Camus's theatrical world, whether Caligula, Martha, or even Kaliayev, is to make of this earth "a desert", that is, to destroy that part of life which is joy and love or, in the case of a social tyranny like that of the plague, to make their enjoyment nearly impossible. A second tragic error is to abandon that which gives man his dignity: his sense of responsibility. In each play just such a destruction lies at the source of the action; when the sense of responsibility is perverted it becomes a sense of guilt which in its wake brings the judge and with him collective humiliation and collective irresponsibility. Tragically dangerous also are the forms which revolt can take, in this state of separateness and irresponsibility, as the result of the aspiration of a human being for happiness and coherence, for example such perverted forms as "logical delirium" of Caligula or Martha's murderous dream of a future Eden. Such revolt ends in the destruction of others and the annihilation of self.<sup>24</sup>

Sisyphus discovered other men and, taking part in their revolt, he found happiness. "Les justes" have also made this discovery.

Kaliayev asks, "Peut-on parler de l'action terroriste sans y prendre part?"<sup>25</sup> The answer echoes strongly throughout the entire play. The rebel finds his happiness in action, in concrete expressions of solidar-

ity with mankind. As Voinov, a minor revolutionary character, puts it:

"J'ai compris qu'il ne suffisait pas de dénoncer l'injustice. Il fallait donner sa vie pour la combattre. Maintenant, je suis heureux."<sup>26</sup>

### CONCLUSION

I, on the contrary, chose justice in order to remain faithful to the world. I continue to believe that this world has no meaning. But I know that something in it has meaning and that is man, and our task is to provide its justifications against fate itself. And it has no justification but man; hence he must be saved if we want to save the idea we have of life. With your scornful smile you will ask me: what do you mean by saving man? And with all my being I shout to you that I mean not mutilating him and yet giving a chance to the justice that man alone can conceive. <sup>1</sup>

Men grew tired of fighting the absurd and succumbed to the temptation of nihilism and pessimism. These men were a danger to humanity. They considered man a slave without any personal dignity and therefore had no rights and did not deserve any more consideration than did animals. Camus rejected the nihilism that was dominating the intellectual climate of Paris for a positive approach to life. He never abandoned man and his works show his deep concern to understand man's nature and his place in the world. Absurdity became his bridge to a positive philosophy of man, a philosophy which gave man dignity and meaning.

Thus the absurdity which led the existentialists to reject life is the same one that led Camus to reject suicide. He was an existentialist who accepted life without any support, transcendental or otherwise. As a result he discovered not perpetual life but perpetual youth. He refused to accept the evil nature of things as they are and became a personal idealist, but one who made the effort to bring together the abstract and the concrete, to live his philosophy and to extract philosophy from life (rather than life from philosophy, which is impossible), to endow his fiction with depth and thereby render it more intense and effective, or at least to show others how this could be done. Life is meaningless but precious, all existence is absurd but worthwhile. <sup>2</sup>

Despite the intense despair surrounding him, Camus found reasons for living with dignity and this is the basis of his strong moral influence

on his generation. He came as close as was possible to expressing the difficult experiences of an age that saw its moral values shattered and that needed to rebuild a faith in man's dignity.

His works reveal the compassion that he had for humanity, they portray noble attitudes of courage, endurance, and cooperation in the face of the absurd. They emphasize the links that bind men together and the extent to which men need each other. These attitudes, along with the courage with which he refused to compromise the dignity of man, are the elements of his uniqueness, and what stirs sentiments of admiration in those who read him. Camus' generation adopted him as their spokesman in their search for values and ideals, and this is his claim to literary immortality.



FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER I

1. Germaine Brée, "Preface," Albert Camus - De L'Envers et l'endroit à L'Exil et le royaume, p. 13.
2. Germaine Brée, Camus, pp. 24-25.
3. \_\_\_\_\_, idem, p. 27.
4. \_\_\_\_\_, idem, p. 29.
5. Germaine Brée, "Preface", op. cit., p. 14.
6. \_\_\_\_\_, idem, p. 43.
7. Lourmarin is the Commune de Vaucluse and in the District of Apt near the Durance river; it has a population of about 665.

CHAPTER II

1. Albert Camus, Le Mythe de Sisyphe, p. 11.
2. \_\_\_\_\_, Idem, p. 37.
3. \_\_\_\_\_, Idem, p. 37.
4. John Cruickshank, Albert Camus and the Literature of Revolt, pp. 43-44.
5. Albert Camus, op. cit., p. 27.
6. John Cruickshank, op. cit., p. 60.
7. Albert Camus, op. cit., pp. 15-16.
8. John Cruickshank, op. cit., p. 44.
9. Albert Camus, op. cit., p. 75.
10. \_\_\_\_\_, idem, p. 123.
11. \_\_\_\_\_, idem, p. 127.
12. \_\_\_\_\_, L'Étranger, p. 1166.
13. Adele King, Albert Camus, p. 47.
14. Albert Camus, op. cit., p. 1209.

15. Philip Thody, Albert Camus - A Study of His Work, p. 7.  
Here L'Etranger has been translated as The Outsider.

16. \_\_\_\_\_, idem, pp. 7-8.

17. Albert Camus, op. cit., p. 1170.

18. \_\_\_\_\_, idem, p. 1154.

19. \_\_\_\_\_, "Avant-propos", L'Etranger, p. vii. Taken  
from Albert Camus' L'Etranger edited by Germaine Brée and Carlos  
Lynes, Jr. New York: Appelton - Century - Crofts, Inc., 1955.

20. \_\_\_\_\_, L'Etranger, p. 1166.

21. Adele King, op. cit., p. 54.

22. \_\_\_\_\_, idem, p. 63.

### CHAPTER III

1. Albert Camus, Le Mythe de Sisyphe, p. 76.

2. \_\_\_\_\_, idem, pp. 76-77.

3. Philip Thody, Albert Camus - A Study of His Work, p. 26.

4. \_\_\_\_\_, idem, p. 23.

5. \_\_\_\_\_, idem, p. 25. Complicity does not have its  
usual pejorative sense here. By complicity, Camus means solidarity.

6. \_\_\_\_\_, idem, pp. 22-23.

7. \_\_\_\_\_, idem, pp. 24-25.

8. John Cruickshank, Albert Camus and the Literature of Revolt,  
p. 174.

9. Philip Thody, op. cit., p. 34.

10. Albert Camus, La Peste, p. 1470.

11. Philip Thody, op. cit., pp. 32-33.

12. Albert Camus, op. cit., p. 1467.

13. \_\_\_\_\_, idem, p. 1465.

14. \_\_\_\_\_, idem, p. 1457.

15. \_\_\_\_\_, idem, p. 1326.
16. \_\_\_\_\_, idem, p. 1294.
17. \_\_\_\_\_, idem, pp. 1294-1295.
18. \_\_\_\_\_, idem, pp. 1394-1395.
19. \_\_\_\_\_, idem, p. 1399.
20. \_\_\_\_\_, idem, p. 1400.
21. Germaine Brée, Camus, pp. 129-130.

#### CHAPTER IV

1. Albert Camus, "Caligula," Théâtre, Récits, Nouvelles, p. 16.
2. \_\_\_\_\_, idem, p. 108.
3. \_\_\_\_\_, "L'Étranger," op. cit., p. 1209.
4. Serge Doubrovsky, "The Ethics of Albert Camus," Camus, edited by Germaine Brée, p. 74.
5. Albert Camus, Le Malentendu, op. cit., p. 117.
6. \_\_\_\_\_, idem, pp. 142-143.
7. Germaine Brée, Camus, p. 155.
8. Bernard C. Murchland, C.S.C., "The Dark Night Before the Coming of Grace?", Camus, edited by Germaine Brée, p. 62.
9. Donald Haggis, La Peste: Camus, p. 16.
10. Germaine Brée, op. cit., pp. 168-169.
11. Albert Camus, Caligula, op. cit., pp. 78-79. [Caligula - Notes et Variantes, idem, p. 1765.]
12. \_\_\_\_\_, Le Malentendu, op. cit., pp. 123-124.
13. John Cruickshank, Albert Camus and the Literature of Revolt, p. 204.
14. Albert Camus, Le Malentendu, op. cit., p. 152.
15. \_\_\_\_\_, idem, p. 177.
16. \_\_\_\_\_, L'État du siège, op. cit., pp. 289-290.

17. \_\_\_\_\_, "Préface à l'Édition Américaine," op. cit., p. 1731.
18. \_\_\_\_\_, Les Justes, op cit., p. 322.
19. \_\_\_\_\_, idem, pp. 320-322.
20. \_\_\_\_\_, idem, p. 350.
21. Philip Thody, Albert Camus - A Study of His Work, p. 46.
22. Albert Camus, Les Justes, op. cit., pp. 323-324. Yanek was the nickname for Kaliayev.
23. \_\_\_\_\_, idem, pp. 374-375.
24. Germaine Brée, op. cit., p. 188.
25. Albert Camus, Les Justes, op. cit., p. 323.
26. \_\_\_\_\_, idem, p. 314.

#### CONCLUSION

1. Albert Camus, Letters to a German Friend, from Resistance, Rebellion, and Death. (Selected pieces giving the basic elements of the author's thought; chosen by Cmaus. ) Translated by Justin O'Brien, pp. 28-29.

2. James K, Feibleman, "Camus and the Passion of Humanism," Kenyon Review, p. 290.

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