

CAMUS AND RACISM

A Thesis /

Presented to

the Department of Foreign Languages

of the

Kansas State Teachers College

Emporia, Kansas

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

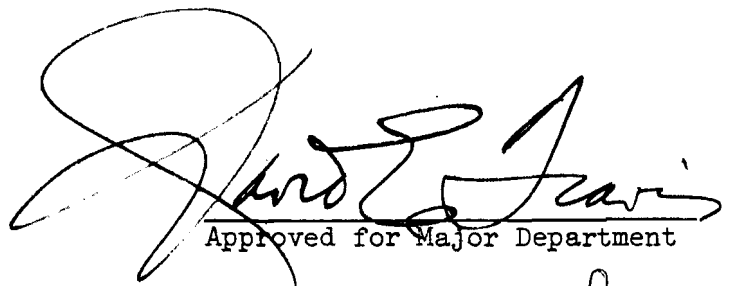
Master of Science

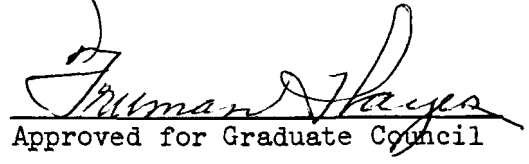
by

Ralph Flowers

August 1969

Th...


Approved for Major Department


Approved for Graduate Council

294840⁴

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The writer wishes to express his sincere appreciation to Dr. Vernon French for his inspiration, to Dr. Minnie Miller for her encouragement, and to Dr. David Travis for his advice and assistance in the preparation of this thesis.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. THE LIFE OF CAMUS	3
III. CAMUS AND RACISM	20
1. Sympathetic Concern	21
2. Economic Concern	25
3. Political Concern.	31
4. Social Concern	37
5. Personal Concern	43
6. Artistic Concern	49
IV. CONCLUSIONS	56
BIBLIOGRAPHY	59

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Buried in the works of Albert Camus are a collection of newspaper commentaries on the situation of the Arabs in Algeria. These are the Chroniques Algériennes.¹ This is a facet of Camus seldom studied--the involvement in the race problem. Sometimes there is the feeling that Camus was not involved in one of the most basic problems of the world today.

This problem lies astride the Jordan river, creates a ghetto of every American city, rents assunder the axis of one of the most monolithic political philosophies of history--the axis between China and Russia. This problem, too, tore into the very fabric of Camus' life. He was born; his formative years were spent in a festering sorespot of this problem, Algeria. Algeria! the land of the invincible summer,² the one place where this problem should not be. This is where, not the white man meets the black, nor the European confronts the African, but the Gaul tries to assimilate the Moor--and with the same result. Because it is the French who are not supposed to have this problem, the problem that has newly been termed racism. The French intermarry, black and white, with scarcely a ripple of social mores.

¹Albert Camus, Actuelles III Chroniques Algériennes, 1939-1958 (Paris, Gallimard, 1958).

²Albert Maquet, Albert Camus, the Invincible Summer (New York, George Braziller, 1958).

The French have long considered themselves the race of diplomacy. The language itself, French, is the language of logic, clear-thinking. Out of the conciseness of this language, they created an Algeria which was not Algeria; it was France, just as Lorraine and Normandy and Burgundy are France. But Algeria is not France, neither by geography, nor by language, nor by race.

It was in the midst of this people who were and were not, that Camus came into fruition. This paradoxical struggle entered into the warp and woof of Camus' work, just as did the other great historical event of his time, the second World War. However, it may be that the Algerian struggle is the more basic for there, indeed, was the native soil; there took place the formative years as Catholic teaching would insist.

Now why is the obvious so recondite in the best known works of Camus? Why in the fictional works: l'Etranger, la Peste, la Chute, does Camus either treat the Arab cursorily or else delete him completely? Camus has been considered one of the most humane and sympathetic of modern writers. Has Camus reacted with dispassionate unconcern for a problem that should have been of intimate familiarity to him and actually is a problem of universal importance and consequence?

CHAPTER II

THE LIFE OF CAMUS

Albert Camus is Algeria's illustrious son, yet son of a race which that country has not rejected. He was born November 7, 1913 in the little town of Mondovi in the department of Constantine not far from the Tunisian border. His parents were poor-- "ma famille qui, de surcroit, étant pauvres."³ His father, Lucien Camus, was a farm-laborer of Alsatian extraction. "Les grands-parents, par exemple ont opté pour la France en 1871 et quitté leur terre d'Alsace pour l'Algerie."⁴ Lucien married a servant-girl of Spanish extraction. The Alsatians had been driven to Africa by war; the Spaniards by hunger. Out of this union were born two sons, a "race bâtarde".⁵ Scarcely was Albert, the younger, born, when his father returned to the land of his forbears and died there in the first World War.

The war widow, with her meager pension, moved her small family to the city of Algiers, to the poor quarter called Belcourt. Here it was that the young Camus first tasted the life of his beloved Algeria. "Ce qu'on peut aimer à Alger, c'est ce dont tout le monde vit: la mer au tournant de chaque rue, un certain poids de soleil, la beauté de la race."⁶

³Albert Camus, op. cit. p. 22.

⁴Ibid., p. 22.

⁵Albert Camus, l'Eté, Essais (Paris: Gallimard, 1965) p. 848.

⁶Albert Camus, "L'Eté à Alger," Noces. Essais (Paris: Gallimard, 1965) p. 67.

Belcourt was a poor quarter of Algiers near the factory and port sections. It was not, however, a community of mixed races-- unless we term the melting pot of Europeans a mixture. In reality, Belcourt was a European ghetto in a predominately Arab-Berber nation. The ratio was about ten North Africans to one European.⁷ This ratio compares inversely to that of the whites to blacks in the United States. But, too, the problem in the United States is the opposite, for the white Caucasian majority is the dominating element, whereas in Algeria, the darker Moslem majority was the dominated faction. In this situation Belcourt was a kind of white Harlem in Algeria's largest city.

In Belcourt, the people were more than Algerian, they were the "Algérois".⁸ As a Brooklyn native might believe: everything west of the Hudson river is "Cowboys and Indians"; so the citizens of Belcourt looked down on the "sauvages"⁹ in the rest of their country, and for that matter the rest of the world. Camus recalls:

... moquer Oran quand on est à Alger (accepter sans reserves que les Oranais "ne savent pas vivre", et en toutes occasions reconnaître humblement la superiorité de l'Algerie sur la France metropolitaine. (L'Eté, Essais, p. 849.)

They spoke their own patois; they lived their own straitened life:

⁷David Gordon, The Passing of French Algeria (London: Oxford University Press, 1966) p. 4 et seq.

⁸Morvan Lebesque, Camus par lui-même (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1963) p. 13.

Ce quartier, cette maison! ... Les soirs d'été, les ouvriers se mettent au balcon. Chez lui, il n'y avait qu'une toute petite fenêtre. On descendait alors des chaises sur le devant de la maison et l'on goutait le soir. Il y avait la rue, les marchands de glaces à coté, les cafés en face, et des bruits d'enfants courant de porte en porte. Mais surtout, entre les grands ficus, il y avait le ciel. Il y a une solitude dans la pauvreté. (L'Envers et l'endroit, p. 24.)

The ambiguity of Camus' outlook abides in these descriptions. The deprivations of penury is coexistent with the zest and abundance of life:

C'est une précipitation à vivre qui touche au gaspillage. A Belcourt, comme à Bab-el-Oued, on se marie jeune. On travaille très tôt et on épuise en dix ans l'expérience d'une vie d'homme. Un ouvrier de trente ans a déjà joué toutes ses cartes. Il attend la fin entre sa femme et ses enfants. Ses bonheurs ont été brusques et sans merci. De même sa vie. Et l'on comprend alors qu'il soit né de ce pays où tout est donné pour être retiré. Dans cette abondance et cette profusion, la vie prend la courbe des grands passions, soudaines, exigeants, généreuses. Elle n'est pas à construire mais à brûler. ("L'Eté à Alger," Noces. p. 72)

In 1919 young Albert entered the elementary school of Belcourt. He remained in this school for six years. At this stage in the French educational system the students were divided according to social rank or, in a more egalitarian way, according to personal ability. Camus would probably, because of his circumstances, have gone on to a trade school and thus have entered the proletarian world. However, his elementary instructor, M. Louis Germain, particularly impressed with his aptitude, convinced Mme. Camus to submit Albert for the scholarship examinations to the secondary school. It would be thought that the family would leap at this opportunity. But among the lower class of Algerians, who were direct descendents of pioneers, there was a

strong antipathy toward higher education. In fact, the family must have had to be quite secretive about the whole affair, for there was a great uncle, a sort of patriarch in the clan, who threatened to give a good shotgun blast to anyone who would put Latin in the head of the younger generation of his family.¹⁰

The lycees, the French secondary schools of the twenties, were even more exclusive than those of the present day. The affluent tended to consider them as their own prerogative. The scholarship student was almost considered a pauper. He was supposed to work harder; his way was being paid. On the other hand, these irritations are minor when it is realized that only one Moslem child out of ten went to school at all, and that nearly all the colon children did.¹¹

Yet there was another side to the coin. While the Arabs were, so to speak, an orphan race, Camus was an orphan child. He lived in two worlds, poles apart. He would return home from the school of the rich, of philosophy, of the goal-keeper on the football team. He would return to a mother who was hardly one--she was deaf, almost mute, and illiterate:

Si l'enfant entre à ce moment, il distingue la maigre silhouette aux épaules osseuses et s'arrête: il a peur. Il commence à sentir beaucoup de choses. A peine s'est-il aperçu de sa propre existence. Mais il a mal à pleurer devant ce silence animal. Il a pitié de sa mère, est-ce l'aimer? Elle ne l'a jamais caressé puisqu'elle ne saurait pas. Il rest~~e~~ alors

¹⁰Lebesque, op. cit., p. 15.

¹¹Gordon, op. cit., p. 51.

de longues minutes à la regarder. A se sentir étranger, il prend conscience de sa peine. Elle ne l'entend pas, car elle est sourde.¹²

In that other world of the school, he grew like a young animal, a typical teenager, passionately interested in sports. He tells how he impatiently waited "from Sunday to Thursday, the day he practised, and from Thursday to Sunday, the day he played."¹³

It was after one of these bitterly fought Sunday games that Camus, returning home full of perspiration, took cold, went to bed, ended up with a lacerated lung,--and tuberculosis. This was a turning point in the life of Camus. Perhaps it was this misfortune which gave the world a writer:

Quand une grave maladie m'ôta provisoirement la force de vie qui, en moi, transfigurait tout, malgré les infirmités invisibles et les nouvelles faiblesses que j'y trouvais, je pus connaître la peur et le découragement, jamais l'amertume. Cette maladie sans doute ajoutait d'autres entraves, et les plus dures, à celles qui étaient déjà les miennes. Elle favorisait finalement cette liberté du coeur, cette légère distance à l'égard des intérêts humains qui m'a toujours préservé du ressentiment. (Preface, L'Envers et l'endroit, p. 8)¹³

Certainly his convalescence changed his outlook on life, turned aside a possible star of the athletic world into a star of the artistic world. With the imminence of death, his philosophy crystalized. More

¹²Albert Camus, "Entre oui et non," L'Envers et l'endroit (Paris, Gallimard, 1945), p. 25.

¹³Germaine Bree, Camus (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1959), p. 17, citing from R.U.A. (Racing Universitaire d'Alger) April 15, 1953.

specifically, the white plague,¹⁴ from which he was suffering, probably inspired and furnished many details for his novel, la Peste.¹⁵

Due to his infirmity, Camus' promises of a career were definitively broken. To become a professor in the hierarchy of French education it is necessary to pass a medical examination. Now, instead of being buried in the routine and security of a university professorate, he had to remain in Algeria, and undertake a profession paradoxically far more dangerous for his health than that of teaching, but much more enriching: journalism.

He attended the university of Algiers in spite of his illness. There, "certains professeurs de la Faculté des Lettres s'aperçurent qu'il leur était venu un étudiant de qualité très rare."¹⁶ "Certain professors" means particularly Jean Grenier. What Camus owes to Grenier he proclaimed many times. His affection and gratitude for his teacher ended only with Camus' death.

In his treatise for the university degree, he reaffirmed his roots in North Africa with a study of two ancient scholastic doctors of that region: Plotinus and Saint Augustine. Under Grenier he explored the thinking of Epictetus, Kierkegaard, Malraux, Gide, Proust, Dostoevsky. He was rewarded with a job as a clerk in the Prefecture.

¹⁴See Lulu M. Harontunian, M.D., Albert Camus and the White Plague (Modern Language Notes, Vol. 79, no. 3, 1964)

¹⁵Albert Camus, la Peste (Paris, Gallimard, 1947)

¹⁶Lebesque, op. cit., p. 19.

At the age of twenty, Camus, in the passion of youth, entered into two quickly dissolved unions. One, a brief unhappy marriage to Simone Hil, lasted less than a year; the other, a liaison with the Communist Party, lasted less than two years. His commiseration for the poor led him to expect high idealism in communism. When the Party's tactical line toward the Arabs changed because of political chess playing in Paris and Moscow, Camus was deeply shocked.

Seemingly now, he indulged himself in an ultimate luxury. He shed himself of all fetters and resigned the mediocre job in the Prefecture--the job which the government had doled out to probably one of its most brilliant graduates. Camus joined the great fraternity of misery: the unemployed.

So it was that from nothing and with nothing to compromise his sense of values, Camus started out on his meteoric rise to fame in the world of letters.

Where might a well-educated young man, gifted but with a slight pink cast to his thinking, find a job? The time and the place were opportune. So were the personalities. The somewhat oriental featured Pascal Pia was proposing to establish a leftish newspaper, the Alger-Républicain. He accepted Camus as part of the staff. To both men it was the opening of an undreamed future. The paper was a quarter-century ahead of its time.¹⁷ It believed that Algeria was condemned, that a people, the Arabs, could not be held eternally in

¹⁷Lebesque, op. cit., p. 20.

bondage in their own land. The editorials of Camus were the conscience of this paper; Pascal Pia buttressed that conscience.

During these thirties, Camus was also edifying his own artistic aspirations. Even during his school days, his athletic mania shared a place with the theatre. In his Communist Party days, he became part of a theatrical group, Le Théâtre du Travail. The Party stressed an interrelation between the workers and the intelligentsia. This socio-aesthetic combination was wholly in accord with the crusading spirit of young Camus. He became the heart of the affair. The theatrical company thus formed was called L'Equipe (The Workmen's ~~Gang~~) and it outlasted his Party membership card. To proclaim its purpose, the group issued a manifesto suspiciously Camus-like in tone:

A Worker's Theatre is being organized in Algiers, thanks to a collective and disinterested initiative. This Theatre is conscious of the artistic value inherent in mass literature, wishes to prove that art can sometimes profit by moving out of its ivory tower, and believes that a sense of beauty is inseparable from a sense of humanity. These are not very new ideas. And the Worker's Theatre is well aware of it. But it is not concerned with originality. Its aim is to reinstate certain human values, it is not to bring new themes of thought. The means of production had to be adapted to the theoretical aims. Hence certain innovations in the application of ideas that are still new in Algiers. Desirous above all to avoid all the "commonplaces" of propaganda, the organizers, for their first experiment, have adapted André Malraux' novel Le Temps du mépris. Their future effort will consist in creating, producing, and interpreting by their own means.¹⁸

The eclectic program of the theatre: Rojas' la Celestine,

¹⁸Quoted in Bree, op. cit., p. 30.

Vildrac's le Paquebot Tenacity, Gide's le Retour de l'enfant prodigue, and Dostoevsky's les Frères Karamazov also included a landmark--Révolte aux Asturies. This was the first published work of Camus.¹⁹ It is not listed among his published works, because it was a communistic venture--that is a joint composition--but the stamp of Camus is there. As its name suggests, Révolte aux Asturies is a violently revolutionary production describing the insurrection and savage repression of the Spanish miners in the Asturias.

His literary career embarked, Camus had again a fortunate break; the publisher, Charlot, another avant-garde figure in Algiers, was willing to take a chance on the embryonic works of his compatriots. The young literary artists gathered at his place to discuss and ruminate the evolving thoughts of the time. Inevitably Camus was drawn there. And Charlot published those bittersweet tone-poems of prose, the descriptive essays of life and landscape of the native land: l'Envers et l'endroit and Noces.

But Camus' nuptials with his beloved homeland were soon to be broken. Tremendous faultline forces were building up within a disparate race in North Africa. Yet this must wait. The earthquake that shook the world--rent Europe asunder! Those racial stresses in Algeria were felt in the brash editorials of Camus in Alger-Républicain. However, the plight of the Kabyls must be forgotten, when France itself has been engulfed in an absurd eruption of the dominance of man. Camus,

¹⁹Lebesque, op. cit., p. 23.

when it was a choice between his country and Maecenus,²⁰ chose his country--he tried to enlist. His infirmity intervened; he was rejected. And those touchy inquiries into the administration of the natives were striking too near home base. The authorities were beginning to feel that he was a persona non grata in Algeria. Two military censors were installed in the newspaper office and Camus was advised to leave Algeria.

He went to France and on the recommendation of his former employer, Pascal Pia, he became editing secretary on the staff of Paris-Soir. This was the spring of 1940, the time of the "phony war". Some French were still believing there would be a war without bloodshed. In May, the "lightning war" struck, and in June, Hitler marched on the Champs-Élysée. The newspaper, Paris-Soir, retreated to Clermont-Ferrand in Vichy, France. Camus, in his meager baggage, carried a manuscript, that of L'Etranger, finished only thirty-six hours before the battle.²¹

Camus soon resigned from the exiled Paris-Soir and moved to Lyons. In Lyons, he married his second wife, Francine Faure, but he hated the cold, dark manufacturing city. Perhaps, in such a place, it is appropriate that he should have completed his first philosophical work, le Mythe de Sisyphe:

²⁰Maecenus, patron of literature and art.

²¹Lebesque, op. cit., p. 41.

Lever, tramway, quatre heures de 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.... La lassitude est à la fin des actes d'une vie machinale.²²

Sisyphus is the working man of the industrial revolution, doomed forever to roll a stone to the top of a mountain of routine.

In January, 1941, Camus returned to North Africa, not to Algiers but to Oran, where his wife's family lived. Oran, for Camus, was a minotaure that devoured artistic expression and was a suitable setting for his novel, La Peste:

J'ai souvent entendu des Oranais se plaindre de leur ville: "Il n'y a pas de milieu intéressant." ... Tout le mauvais goût de l'Europe et de l'Orient s'y est donné rendez-vous. ("Le Minotaure", L'Eté, Essais, p. 814.)

In the dramatic years of the war, Camus, at first, seemed strangely cloistered. Appearances may be misleading, for the works, la Peste and le Malentendu, were brewing in his mind and these reflect his intense concern for the catastrophe in Europe. But after his first abortive attempt to enlist, he was not jolted into action until the Nazi execution of Gabriel Péri, a workingman from Lyons. Why this single incident shook him, his notes do not explain; perhaps it was his usual sympathy for the common man. By 1943, he was in France with the underground organization, Combat. The first headquarters of Combat had been in Lyons and that was where he probably had had first

²² Albert Camus, le Mythe de Sisyphe, Essais (Paris, Gallimard, 1965), p. 106.

contact with the movement. In the meantime, he was cut off from his family by the Allied debarkation in North Africa.

Soon Combat was far more actively and dangerously engaged in the Résistance in Paris. Camus' old friend and patron of Algiers, Pascal Pia, was there, publishing the clandestine journal of the movement; both journal and movement were called Combat. Pia made Camus, his former reporter, editor-in-chief of the underground paper. Camus delved body and soul into the work. In the collective solidarity of kindred minds working in an extremely perilous situation, the articles in the paper were unsigned. Obviously, many of them betray the spirit of Camus. His fellow-workers, after Camus had retired, would often in the early hours of the morning, pull a first copy of the sheet from the press, then peruse and discuss fervently what Camus had last written.

This is not surprising, for, after the publication of L'Etranger in 1942, there was a small furor over the novel--even in the midst of the war. Camus was already becoming well known in the world of letters. His Lettres à un ami allemand, printed first as editorials in the underground press, pitted Camus as a Frenchman, devoted to justice, against a German ensnared in History and the role he hoped his country would play therein:

Vous le voyez, d'un même principe nous avons tiré des morales différentes. ...vous avez choisi l'injustice, vous vous êtes mis avec les dieux. Votre logique n'était qu'apparente. J'ai choisi la justice au contraire pour rester fidèle à la terre. Je continue à croire que ce monde n'a pas de sens supérieur. Mais

je sais que quelque chose en lui a du sens et c'est l'homme, parce qu'il est le seul être à exiger d'en avoir.... Ce monde a du moins la vérité de l'homme et notre tâche est de lui donner ses raisons contre le destin lui-même. Et il n'a pas d'autres raisons que l'homme et c'est celui-ci, qu'il faut sauver si l'on veut sauver l'idée qu'on se fait de la vie. Votre sourire et votre dédain me diront: qu'est-ce sauver l'homme? Mais je vous le crie de tout moi-même, c'est ne pas le mutiler et c'est donner ses chances à la justice qu'il est le seul à concevoir.²³

With the end of hostilities, Camus became a sort of popular hero. Combat came out of hiding with the liberation of Paris. It was the official newspaper. It had remained loyal to free France.

The glory was short-lived. The people no longer under intense struggle for self-preservation, preferred the legerity of a less intellectual press. Although continuing to contribute to Combat with high ideals till 1947, when the paper changed hands and took a tangent of its conviction, Camus resigned. There also was another rival in the world of thought, the Sartre-Beauvoir axis of existentialism had caught the imagination of the café philosophers. At first, Sartre and Camus, though with different viewpoints on philosophy, were on amicable terms. When Sartre began to compromise his political beliefs with relation to communism and Russia, Camus saw a danger to the free world. From an impersonal political disagreement, the controversy flared into bitter personal attacks.

Camus was feeling the reverse side of fame. His life no longer was his own. The rather humorous little story of Jonas illustrates

²³Albert Camus, Lettres à un ami allemand (Paris, Gallimard, 1965), p. 240.

his feeling. Jonas, a Parisian painter, like the Arab crowded out of his tent by his own camel, is slowly driven from his art by the well-meaning public:

Ainsi coulait le temps de Jonas, qui peignait au milieu d'amis et d'élèves, installés sur des chaises maintenant disposés en rangs concentriques autour du chevalet. Souvent, aussi bien, des voisins apparaissaient discutait, échangeait des vues, examinait les toiles qui lui étaient soumises, souriait aux passages de Louise, consolait les enfants et répondait chaleureusement aux appels téléphoniques, sans jamais lâcher ses pinceaux avec lesquels, de temps en temps, il ajoutait une touche au tableau commencé.²⁴

Jonas ends up questioning in typical Camus fashion: solidarity or solitude?

Fame also took Camus out of his French language milieu. He made a lecture trip to New York in 1947, where the students received him very warmly. This was followed by another to South America in 1949.

More important are the works he was completing. Camus was always highly motivated by the theatre and even during the war he was writing plays and having them produced. Le Malentendu, a tale of man's mutual misunderstanding and lack of communication, was staged during the war with mediocre acceptance. But Caligula, the demented Roman Emperor's rule of the absolute carried to the absurd, was a resounding triumph. Contributing to this success was the fact that the talented actor, Gérard Philipe, playing the frenzied lead role, was making his own spectacular stage début. It was a liaison of two geniuses. The

²⁴Albert Camus, "Jonas", L'Exil et le royaume (Paris, Gallimard, 1957), p. 148.

resulting friendship lasted until both prematurely died within a year of each other, some fifteen years later.

Camus' next dramatic work was not so successful. He over-extended the artistic character of L'Etat de Siege. This play is la Peste dramatized--but also metamorphized into pure allegory. The characters are no longer flesh and blood but Miltonesque creatures: Plague, Death, Nada (nothing). This Pilgrim's Progress of the Absurd was too much for the audiences. In les Justes, Camus more sanely returned to historicity, an abortive revolution in Russia in the early 1900's.

The communal theatre of the worker was long past but Camus' passion for drama took him beyond only writing it. He took part in every aspect of the production. An opportunity in this field fell to him when a kind of post war theatrical mania spread through France. In 1953, Angers, a city of the Loire valley, keeping abreast of the times, offered its impressive twelfth century castle as a setting for the productions. Two of Camus' adaptations, Calderon's La Devoción de la cruz and a sixteenth century comedy, les Esprits, were being rehearsed when the director of the festival became ill and Camus had to take his place. He went on to adapt and produce Faulkner's Requiem for a Nun. According to testimony, these productions were marvels of theatrical art.²⁵ In 1957, still in Algiers, he staged Caligula

²⁵Morvan Lebesque, "La Passion pour la Scène", Camus Collection Génies et Realités (Paris, Hachette, 1964) p. 179.

again, and he realized an ambition of his life by adapting Dostoevsky's novel, The Possessed, for the theatre. In fact, it was while on tour presenting les Possédés that the unfortunate automobile accident occurred, that took Camus' life.

It was in 1954 that the fissure between the races split open in Algeria. Camus, for examining that problem too honestly, had been exiled. Now, he had to stand helplessly by, while his native land literally tore itself in two. He was accused of not being committed in this struggle. Certainly he was committed--far too deeply--to both sides. And he was equally adamant in condemning the atrocities of both. His testament to the struggle was the collection of current writings, Actuelles III or Chroniques Algeriennes, which he published in 1958. He asserted in publishing these, that he had said his last word on the conflict. However, it is known that later he maintained behind-the-scenes contacts with the leaders on both sides. Whether, if he had lived longer, the courses of history had been changed can only be speculation.

He had had, in 1949, another two year bout with tuberculosis. He had vowed then to refrain from "joining up",²⁶ that is, political participation; this also explains his seeming lack of commitment in the Algerian crisis. Neither was there any major work published from 1951 to 1956. In 1956 came la Chute, the confessions of a judge-

²⁶Bree, op. cit., p. 57.

penitent, a man condemning himself for his own hypocrisy. L'Exil et le royaume, a book of short stories, came out in 1957.

Camus' work was finished; he thought it was not begun. In his plans were a novel, le Premier homme, and a play, Don Juan. The culmination of his life was the Nobel Prize, awarded to him, October 17, 1957. He accepted the honor with modesty, feeling that it should have gone to another. The Prize was awarded to an Algerian for his dispassionate sympathy and fair attitude in the bitter race conflict of his own peoples. His last work, published in his lifetime, was the Algerian chronicles.

Camus died in the harness, January 4, 1960. His theatrical passion had him on the road, when the fatal automobile accident occurred. He was forty-six years old. The news media cried: "Absurde!"²⁷ but Jean-Paul Sartre, high priest of the absurd, forgot his religion and called it, "shameful!"²⁸

²⁷Harold Kruger, Camus, Voix des petites gens (Unpublished Master's Thesis, Kansas State Teacher's College of Emporia, 1966), p. 23.

²⁸Jean-Paul Sartre, Situations (New York, George Braziller, 1965) p. 111.

CHAPTER III

CAMUS AND RACISM

On the north littoral of Africa is a tortured land of mountains, bathed and insulated on the one hand by the sea, on the other by the desert. Wave after wave of humanity has swept over this isolated corner of the second continent, from the sea, and from the desert. Those who came by sea were the Phoenecians, the Romans, the Goths and Vandals, and the French. Those who came by the desert were the sons of the desert (and the Prophet), the Arabs. And submerged by them all, the perdurable Berbers, with roots in an unknown pre-history, have submitted and have survived every inundation.

This was the land that history had forgotten. So thought the French, and they were going to bring it into the stream of history--their history. And now they in turn are being forgotten. The French came in the eighteen-thirties; they left in the nineteen-sixties. And when they left, it was from a cauldron of racial hatred that has not been matched in the annals of man. The French had attempted a racial and cultural transplant on a peculiarly proud and obdurate body of mankind. The Spanish, four hundred years earlier had succeeded with such a transplant, on the Aztec and the Inca, by means of, as we deem it today, cruelty. The Anglo-Americans were successful on the North American continent over the Indians--through sterilization. But the French, the race of the enlightenment, of Voltaire, and the rights of man, were rejected. In the setback of this French cultural transplant,

Albert Camus was a sort of Dr. Rieux, struggling with the plague, the inner forces that were inevitably destroying the patient. What was Camus' Hippocratic oath? It was justice. His adversary? Intolerance. His scalpel was the pen, and his treatment was concern.

1. Sympathetic Concern

It seems that it is in poverty that sympathy is born, whether in a manger at Bethlehem, in a Kentucky log cabin, or in a tenement of Belcourt. Perhaps the sceptic, Albert Camus, should not be admitted into the company of God-man sacrifice or the martyr president, but there is about Camus an ingratiating warmth radiating through an innate reserve, to which few great writers can aspire. Maquet in The Invincible Summer comments:

A noble but restrained sympathy blows like a fresh breeze through the entire body of Camus' work. You expect at any moment to have it break forth in an effusion of warmth, but the author's sense of proprieties permits him only to use accents of sober virility, as if he sought to avoid all prodigality.²⁹

Brisville also reacts:

Quand on est devant lui, [il] nous restitue, intacte, la sympathie dont ses livres sont si bon conducteurs.³⁰

And Jules Roy, fellow-Algerian, aviator, and also an important author of the North African school adds his fealty?

Le mérite exceptionnel de Camus et son génie, c'est d'avoir

²⁹op. cit., p. 97.

³⁰Jean-Claude Brisville, Camus (Paris, Gallimard, 1939) p. 9.

incarné à nos yeux l'humanité la plus haute, et de n'être pas seulement un des écrivains les plus importants, mais encore un des plus sensibles et des plus généreux de son temps. Il peut penser que l'école d'Afrique du Nord n'existe pas, mais l'Afrique du Nord a, en sa personne, donné naissance à un maître à qui toute une longue suite d'écrivains d'origines chrétienne et musulmane, doivent leur faim de justice, leur amour des hommes et une exigence sans limite à l'égard de soi-même.³¹

How did this "noble sympathy" interact with man's inhumanity to himself? Camus reacted with magnanimity:

En ce qui me concerne j'ai aimé avec passion cette terre où je suis né, j'y ai puisé tout ce que je suis, et je n'ai jamais séparé dans mon amitié aucun des hommes qui y vivent de quelques races qu'ils soient (Actuelles III, p. 182).

Camus makes no distinction between individuals or races. It is the magnificent land where he was born which is both the source and stream of his feelings. "This North African who came among us in quest of a solution to the tragedy of the century has never really left his native shore, rather they have never let him go."³²

We can not approach the sympathy of Camus without dealing with the land. This is the ambiguity of his work: life and death, beauty and misery. The sun, which should symbolize life, to him symbolizes death:

Singulier pays qui donne à l'homme qu'il nourrit à la fois sa splendeur et sa misère! La richesse sensuelle dont un homme sensible de ce pays est pourvu, il n'est pas étonnant

³¹Jules Roy in les Nouvelles littéraires, 24 oct. 57, cited in Brisville, op. cit., p. 269.

³²Maquet, op. cit., p. 143.

qu'elle coïncide avec le dénuement le plus extrême. Il n'est pas une vérité qui ne porte avec elle son amertume. Comment s'étonner alors si le visage de ce pays, je ne l'aime jamais plus qu'au milieu de ses hommes les plus pauvres (Noces, p. 67).

As with the sun and death, it is beauty which evokes sympathy; as Camus wrote in an editorial; "Il n'est pas de spectacle plus désespérant que cette misère au plus beau pays du monde."³³ In such a wonderful country the downtrodden race takes on an aspect of grandeur and edification for the other race:

Devant cet immense paysage ... je comprenais quel lien pouvait unir ces hommes (les Arabes) entre eux et quel accord les liait à leur terre. Et comment alors n'aurais-je pas compris ce désir d'administrer leur vie et cet appétit de devenir enfin ce qu'ils sont profondément: des hommes courageux et conscients chez qui nous pouvons sans fausse honte prendre des leçons de grandeur et de justice? (Actuelles III, p. 72-73)

When Camus made his inquiry into the deplorable conditions of the Kabyls, the story is all the more poignant because the landscape calls to mind the country of Greece--source of beauty for the Western World:

La Grèce évoque irrésistiblement une certaine gloire de corps et de ses prestiges. Et dans aucun pays que je connais le corps ne m'a paru plus humilié que dans la Kabylie. Il faut l'écrire sans tarder: la misère de ce pays est effroyable ... Je sentais bien qu'il n'y avait rien pour ces hommes, ni univers, ni guerre mondiale, ni aucun des soucis de l'heure, en face de l'affreuse misère qui met des plaques sur tant de visages kabyles.³⁴

Profound shock and compassion infiltrate the restrained prose

³³Camus cited by André Parinaud, "La Vie d'un écrivain engagé", Camus Collection Génies et Réalités, p. 12.

³⁴Emmett Parker, The Artist in the Arena, (Madison, Wisconsin, University of Wisconsin Press, 1965), p. 176, citing a Camus editorial Alger-Républicain, 5-6-39, p. 8. The appendix of Parker's book has a large collection of these citations. Hereafter, these will be annotated: Alger-Républicain, date, Parker, page number.

of Camus. He had first entitled the Kabyl inquiry articles, "La Grèce en haillons" (Greece in Rags), but his sense of factual reporting caused him to change the title to simply "Le Dénouement" (Destitution).³⁵ But the horrors of the facts themselves--overcrowded huts smelling of excrement, old women walking ten miles for an inadequate dole and dying, entire villages subsisting on vine and thistle stems, children dead from eating poison roots--can tolerate no restraint of language.

Camus as a newsman felt a personal sense of commitment. He did not take on the assignment for political ends; he took it on for people, the suffering Kabyls. "Ce n'est pas pour un parti que ceci est écrit, mais pour des hommes."³⁶ He also felt that he was taking the side of the underdog; his was the voice of a race that had no voice:

La grande masse d'entre eux, exposée à tout les coups, souffre d'une douleur que personne n'exprime pour elle. Des milliers d'hommes, affolés de misère et de peur, se terrent pour qui ni le Caire ni Alger ne parlent jamais. J'ai essayé depuis longtemps, de faire connaître au moins leur misère et l'on me reprochera sans doute mes sombres descriptions. J'ai écrit pourtant ces plaidoyers pour la misère arabe (Actuelles III, p. 20).

Camus is completely candid about his own sainthood and his original sin. This may be that which makes his sympathy so sincere:

Même mes révoltes furent presque toujours, je crois pouvoir le dire sans tricher, des révoltes pour tous et pour que la vie soit élevée dans la lumière. Il n'est pas sûr que mon coeur fût

³⁵Camus, Essais, p. 1852.

³⁶Camus, Actuelles, p. 88.

naturellement disposé à cette sorte d'amour (L'Envers et l'endroit, p. 14).

Sympathy must enter the heart; Camus was not quite sure that his was ready for that kind of love. Sympathy puts one in another's place; Camus revolted for others. He saw Greece in rags: "la beauté, les humiliés." He could not be sensitive to one and ignore the other. He summed it up philosophically:

Refuser une part de ce qui est, c'est se refuser soi-même à être. C'est accepter de vivre par procuration.³⁷

To sympathize is to live by proxy.

2. Economic Concern

A man, or his wife, or his children, do not live by noble sympathy, Camus well knew. At the age of twenty-six, he made the scandalous inquiry into the conditions of the Kabyles. This was not a 'reportage' of high flown rhetoric designed to "make the jury weep,"³⁸ (of which, Sartre later so unjustly accused him) but of raw and bare facts of a not very pretty situation; a testimony which was likely to compromise, and did, the career of the young reporter. "Il est évident qu'un pareil témoignage bourré de faits et de chiffres résonait douloureusement dans les hautes sphères de l'Administration habituées au paresseux ronron de la presse officielle."³⁹ Lazy purring was not

³⁷Lebesque, op. cit., p. 37, quoting Camus.

³⁸Sartre, op. cit., p. 74.

³⁹Lebesque, op. cit., p. 40.

the style of the young crusader, Camus.

Kabylia, the subject of so much concern, is a province to the east of the city of Algiers. It is a mountainous land of remarkable beauty, which is in sharp contrast to the unspeakable misery of its inhabitants. These, the Kabyls, are not Arab, but Berber tribes who speak a Berber dialect. The Berber race comprises about one-third of the native population of Algeria. Camus did not like this use of the term, native, for he felt that the French, having lived there for over a hundred years, also had a justifiable claim to the term.

The Kabyls population, at the time of Camus' inquiry, 1939, was in a state of famine due, no doubt, to a complex number of causes, among them the world economic depression of the thirties. But the direct cause--and this in spite of the tender sensibilities of some of the white race--was the racism of the French Europeans, both in Algeria and in France. In his reports, Camus was extremely circumspect with reference to any personal feelings, but the facts alone were condemnation enough. Even as "poverty stricken as Camus' own childhood had been, the Moslem poor lived in far worse conditions."⁴⁰

Camus started his account with a succinct statement of the economic reason for the famine: "La Kabylie est un pays surpeuplé et elle consomme plus qu'elle ne produit."⁴¹ So, as in the entire world

⁴⁰Parker, op. cit., p. 38.

⁴¹Camus, Actuelles III, p. 33.

today, but particularly in those places that can afford it least, there was a population explosion:

Aujourd'hui la pauvreté des paysans algériens risque de s'accroître démesurément au rythme d'une démographie foudroyante (Actuelles III, p. 21).

No country of Europe has the population density of some of the Kabylia communes⁴²: 247 inhabitants to the square kilometer, compared to an average of 71 in France.⁴³

As to food, the Kabylia consumes mostly grain products, but Kabylia is a mountainous country chiefly unsuited to cereal raising and it produces scarcely one-eighth of its consumption. Lacking industry, the chief resource is arboriculture: fig and olive trees. Camus stated that, while the government had placed price supports on wheat, it had done nothing for the fig and olive. Then he momentarily forgot himself and waxed a bit poetic in his prosaic account:

Et le Kabyle, consommateur de blé, paye à sa terre magnifique et ingrate le tribut de la faim (Actuelles III, p. 34).

The distressed Kabylia, to escape the plague of hunger, resorted to emigration. It is estimated that 50,000 of them were in metropolitan France at the time, and these returned the enormous sum of forty million francs to their families in North Africa.⁴⁴ However, the world economic crisis was being felt in France, too, and the first

⁴²Communes are French political land divisions roughly comparable to American counties.

⁴³Actuelles III, p. 33.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 34.

measures taken--to protect, of course, the white worker--were those restricting Algerian immigration. Thus, Camus noted, "the Kabyle worker once again sees for himself that a French subject is not necessarily treated as a French citizen."⁴⁵

An official report estimated that the average income of 40% of the families was less than 1,000 francs⁴⁶ a year.⁴⁷ And the average size family had five or six members. How did these people live? The government gave a dole: the distribution of grains. It was not enough:

Je savais en effet que la tige de chardon constituait une des bases de l'alimentation kabyle. Mais ce que je ne savais pas c'est que l'an passé, cinq petits Kabyles sont morts à la suite d'absorption de racines vénéneuses; et que cet hiver quatre vieilles femmes venues d'un douar éloigné jusqu'à Michelot pour recevoir de l'orge sont mortes dans la neige sur le chemin du retour (Actuelles III, p. 43).

Farm laborers would bring to work a quarter of a pancake and a tiny flask of oil for an entire day's sustenance as for the dole, Camus became indignant:

Distribuer 12 litres de grains tous les deux ou trois mois à des familles de 4 ou 5 enfants, c'est très exactement cracher dans l'eau pour faire des ronds (Actuelles III, p. 44).

Camus plies us with figures: workers wages average six to ten

⁴⁵Parker, op. cit., p. 31, Quoted from Alger-Républicain (4-4-39, p.2).

⁴⁶At the present exchange, this would be around \$200.

⁴⁷Camus, Actuelles III, p.36.

francs⁴⁸ for a twelve hour day; 4,000 unemployed in one commune; in one school, 35 out of 110 pupils eat but one meal a day; in the district of Beni-Sliem the unbelievable proportion of 96% of the population is rated indigent!⁴⁹

Some people questioned the value of so many figures; this means nothing. Camus agreed--figures mean nothing--but when in a certain family, two children out of ten are surviving; that is a glaring and revealing truth. And there is something decidedly wrong, when in a school, one child out of sixty-five brings a pancake for lunch--the rest subsist on an onion or a couple of figs.⁵⁰

Adding insult to misery, the race problem was involved. Not only was the sole relief, the grain distribution, inadequate, but it was unfairly administered. The Moslem poor received approximately one-fifth of that given to the indigent whites.⁵¹ The grain itself was often spoiled and unpalatable; it was the stale surplus from military supplies, and Camus recalled that:

Certains Kabyles m'ont confié sans rire qu'il leur arrivait d'envier les chevaux de la gendarmerie puisque, du moins, un vétérinaire était chargé de vérifier leur nourriture (Actuelles III, p. 46).

The cavalry horses ate better!

⁴⁸Around \$1.20 to \$2.00 per day.

⁴⁹Actuelles III, p. 44.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 39.

⁵¹Parker, op. cit., p. 33.

In the matter of wages, Camus found an intolerable exploitation of misery. Wages were kept low so as not to make the Kabylean discontented with his lot. But the crowning insult was the withholding of back taxes from the starvation pay of the suffering worker who was fortunate (?) enough to have a job. He described the situation in this manner:

Il n'y a pas de mot assez dur pour qualifier pareille cruauté. Si les chantiers de charité sont faits pour aider à vivre des gens qui meurent de faim, ils trouvent une justification, dérisoire sans doute, mais réelle. Mais s'ils ont pour effet de faire travailler en continuant à les laisser crever de faim des gens qui jusque-là crevaient de faim sans travailler, ils constituent une exploitation intolérable du malheur (Actuelles III, p. 47).

If one were going to die of starvation anyway, it were better to do so without working; the torture would be prolonged that way.

The word "race" seldom comes under the pen of Camus. It was a concept still vaguely organized even as late as the time of his report on Kabylia in 1939. However, where Camus puts the blame is abundantly clear. The word he uses is "nous", "we"-- of the white race:

La vérité, c'est que nous côtoyons tous les jours un peuple qui vit avec trois siècles de retard, et nous sommes les seuls à être insensibles à ce prodigieux décalage ... Il est méprisable de dire que ce peuple n'a pas les mêmes besoins que nous. (Actuelles III, p. 49).

"We" relegate "this people" to a world apart. They are not like us. We rub shoulders with them every day and we do not know they exist.

These problems of race and hunger are not limited to Algeria; they are world wide:

L'homme d'aujourd'hui est en effet celui qui souffre par masses

prodigeuses sur l'étroit surface de cette terre, l'homme privé de feu et de nourriture pour qui la liberté n'est qu'un luxe qui peut attendre.⁵²

However, Camus did not merely advocate the assuaging of physical hunger. He fearlessly, too, attacked the practical aspects of liberty, the political slavery of these same hungry masses.

3. Political Concern

It is only through the practical political aspect that it is possible to implement a philosophy of sympathy. Loudly regretting suffering is quite hollow unless there is an awareness of injustice. While there is a great area of suffering that is the result of fate, of Providence or else the absurd of Camus, racial suffering is almost exclusively man-motivated. To say, then, that the problem of hunger comes before the problem of liberty is a restatement of the conundrum of the chicken and the egg. Camus realized this:

Si nous en avons parlé d'abord, c'est que la faim prime tout. Mais à la vérité, le malaise politique est antérieur à la famine. Et lorsque nous aurons fait ce qu'il faut pour alimenter la population algérienne, il nous restera encore tout à faire. C'est une façon de dire qu'il nous restera à imaginer enfin une politique (Actuelles III, p. 108).

Placing Camus' thought in reverse image: it is possible that had there been a political solution to the race problem, there would have been no famine or else a greatly attenuated one.

⁵²Albert Camus, "Prométhée aux enfers," L'Eté, Essais (Paris, Gallimard, 1965), p. 841.

Camus was in the forefront in demanding political justice for the conquered race. Jules Roy, fellow-Algerian and his adulator, puts Camus first in the revolt against the local 'powers that be'.⁵³

Je m'effaçai devant Camus, révolté contre la façon dont les Français d'Algérie traitaient les Arabes, révolté contre les gouvernements qui cédaient toujours devant les puissances locales, il avait, le premier, dénoncé l'injustice et dit son fait à la sottise nationale.

Notwithstanding Roy's sincere commendation, Camus was not the first, nor the sole protester against injustices in North Africa; but the group was extremely rare, and Camus' later renown has given him the voice of history.

In the Western democratic philosophies, there has to be a delicate adjustment between liberty and justice. Camus was more concerned with practical application of the principles than in defining them. However, in the resistance journal, Combat, he has given a brief definition:

Nous appellerons justice un état social où chaque individu reçoit toutes ses chances au départ, et où la majorité d'un pays n'est pas maintenue dans une condition indigne par une minorité de privilégiés. Et nous appellerons liberté un climat politique où la personne humaine est respectée dans ce qu'elle est comme dans ce qu'elle exprime.⁵⁴

These words written during the war were probably directed against

⁵³Jules Roy, "La Tragédie Algérienne," Camus Collection Genies et Réalités (Paris: Hachette, 1964), p. 20.

⁵⁴Parker, op. cit., p. 182, citing Albert Camus, in Combat, 1-10-44, p. 1.

German totalitarianism but they fit the racial situation controlled by democratic France in Algeria. In Algeria, before and after the war, there was a huge majority of Moslem natives being kept in an abject condition by the Europeans, whom they outnumbered nine to one. Every individual should have an inalienable right to an equal opportunity at the start of life--not hindered by an accident of birth. This was a reason for the French Revolution against the ancien regime; it would be reason for the Algerian Revolution against the Fourth Republic.

Metropolitan France was not innocent of the race crime. Camus accused and warned France of her two-faced policies:

Nous ne trouverons d'appui réel dans nos colonies qu'à partir du moment où nous les aurons convaincues que leurs intérêts sont les nôtres et que nous n'avons pas deux politiques: l'une qui donnerait la justice au peuple de France et l'autre que consacrerait l'injustice à l'égard de l'Empire (Combat, 13-10-44, p. 2, in Parker, p. 182).

And he questions the survival of a society with lack of racial justice:

Mais peut-on survivre comme peuple sans rendre justice, dans une mesure raisonnable, à d'autres peuples? (Actuelles III, p. 20)

This question has been given a strong negative answer by the Algerian people after independence.

What was it that brought about the racial rebellion in Algeria? As Parker terms it, it was a system of "flagrant inequalities" between the two races.⁵⁵ We have seen the economic inequalities in food dis-

⁵⁵Parker, op. cit., p. 24.

tribution and wages.⁵⁶ In the political area there were also inequalities of citizenship, of office-holding, and of civil rights.

Camus bitterly attacked abuses of every nature. But he was careful not to attack personalities; he did not want to become embroiled in political demagoguery:

La politique des grands travaux, je le sais, fait partie de tous les programmes démagogiques. Mais le caractère essentiel de la démagogie, c'est que ses programmes sont fait pour n'être point appliqués (Actuelles III, p. 76).

This desire to stay clear of political involvement may have weakened Camus' position, for his warnings, though strong enough, tended to be ignored. He was quite sincere in his approach; he wanted to bypass the political intrigues and deal directly with the problems themselves. He even refused to accuse those responsible, "Je ne trouve pas de goût au métier d'accusateur."⁵⁷ He preferred to rectify the wrong and as a result there would no guilty party to accuse.

His news report on Kabylia was not all a negative picture of suffering. He dared to describe a Kabylia village, which, given permission to govern itself and as Lebesque exclaims, "sacrilège!"-- had succeeded where the "Gouvernement Général" had failed.⁵⁸ Of course Camus wanted to see this experiment extended. "Si l'expérience des Oumalous a réussi, il n'y a aucune raison pour ne pas l'étendre."⁵⁹

⁵⁶Supra, pp. 30-36.

⁵⁷Actuelles III, p. 87.

⁵⁸Lebesque, op. cit., p. 40.

Such a proposal would not find a very sympathetic ear from Algerian colons, who in 1936 had declared to Charles-André Julien, Secretary-General for Mediterranean affairs, "Nous ne tolérons jamais que, dans la plus petite commune, il y ait un Arabe pour maire."⁶⁰

There was little need to worry about an Arab mayor in the smallest commune as long as the Moslem population was disenfranchised. France was in the anomolous position of maintaining that Algeria was an integral part of the nation while some ninety per cent of the Algerian population were not French citizens. Still in 1957, at the height of the Algerian Revolution, the President of France, René Coty, posed a question:

French statesmen that dare to accuse France of colonialism, is there less imperialism, less racism, less enslavement than in ours? ... Do not count on us to sacrifice the other side of the Mediterranean as if it were a new Alsace-Lorraine.⁶¹

There was an ethnic problem in Alsace too, but were the German Alsations denied the right to vote?

Be it to the credit of the French government that it tried to broach the problem. "Depuis une cinquantaine d'années, le but avoué de la France en Afrique du Nord était d'ouvrir progressivement la citoyenneté française à tout les Arabes."⁶² Clemenceau, Premier of France in the first World War, made citizens of all the Arab soldiers

⁶⁰Parinaud, op. cit., p. 10.

⁶¹Geoffrey Bocca, The Secret Army (Englewood, New Jersey, Prentice Hall, Inc., 1968) p. 149.

⁶²Camus, Actuelles III, p. 109

who fought loyally for France during that conflict. This gesture was negated in practice by the gros colons. In 1936, the Blum-Violette bill would have given citizenship to about 30,000 Moslems⁶³ out of a total population of around nine million. Camus strongly supported this bill.⁶⁴ As he said, it was nothing revolutionary, a relatively modest beginning. And it raised high hopes among the Moslem masses. But the grands colons lobbied so effectively that it was never even presented for a vote in the Chamber of Deputies. Later measures in the forties and fifties were supported by neither the colons nor the Arabs. Camus realized that after so much rejection, the Moslems would only react with mistrust:

Tout cela fait qu'un projet qui aurait été accueilli avec enthousiasme en 1936, et qui aurait arrangé bien des choses, ne rencontre plus aujourd'hui que méfiance. Nous sommes encore en retard (Actuelles III, p. 112).

Now it was too late. Camus gives an excellent summary of the political aspirations of the Arab people:

Les peuples n'aspirent généralement au droit politique que pour commencer et achever leurs conquêtes sociales. Si le peuple arabe voulait voter, c'est qu'il savait qu'il pourrait obtenir ainsi, par le libre exercice de la démocratie la disparition de l'inégalité des salaires et des pensions, des allocations militaires et, d'une façon générale, de tout ce qui le maintient dans une situation inférieure. Mais ce peuple semble avoir perdu sa foi dans la démocratie dont on lui a présenté une caricature. Il espère atteindre autrement un but qui n'a jamais changé et qui est le relèvement de sa condition (Actuelles III, p. 113).

⁶³David C. Gordon, The Passing of French Algeria (London, Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 37.

⁶⁴Camus, Actuelles III, p. 111.

True assimilation of another race can never take place so long as there are inequalities in whatever sphere: economic, political, or social. The native Arab must have his condition as a whole raised to the level not of the superior race, but of the fellow race, if the two races are to live together.

4. Social Concern

After one hundred years of French rule the social status of the Moslem population had not appreciably changed. The privileged colons were still unconcerned "bourgeois pansus, tubes digestifs"-- bay-windowed bourgeois digestive tubes, as President Sarraut labeled them.⁶⁵ Probably the majority of Algerian Europeans were merely indifferent to the abject status of the native race; this was the real crime of Meursault in L'Etranger.⁶⁶ But indifference led to contempt. One witnesses the attitude of Susini, leader in the counter-revolutionary secret army (the O.A.S.):

... one of the few pieds noirs who disdained the myth about "our Moslem brothers", supposed by the pieds noirs to constitute the overwhelming mass of the population. Susini considered the sons of the Prophet an unwashed, uncivilized, illiterate mob without art and with the most sterile religion ever conceived. Nor did he ever bother to hide his feelings.⁶⁷

⁶⁵Lebesque, op. cit., p. 10.

⁶⁶Albert Camus, L'Etranger (New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1955).

⁶⁷Bocca, op. cit., p. 45.

This sort of attitude had more sympathy among the pieds noirs than many outsiders suspected.⁶⁸

A primary psychological assumption of a dominant race is that the subordinate race is inferior. Camus vehemently opposed this:

Ce peuple n'est pas inférieur, sinon par la condition de vie où il se trouve, et nous avons des leçons à apprendre chez lui, dans la mesure même où il peut en prendre chez nous. Je veux dire par là qu'il n'est pas cette foule anonyme et misérable, où l'Occidental ne voit rien à respecter ni à défendre. Il s'agit au contraire d'un peuple de grands traditions et dont les vertus pour peu qu'on veuille l'approcher sans préjugés sont parmi les premières (Actuelles III, p. 95).

Camus realized that race integration must be a two way street. In other words, the white race should realize that black is beautiful, too.

And Camus had little patience with those who rationalized that the alleged backwardness of the race was reason for keeping it in subjugation. He found it contemptible to maintain a people in a vicious circle of bondage; it was the Europeans' responsibility to break that circle. If the Arabs did not have the same needs as the French, it were high time that such needs were created:

Il est méprisabile de dire que ce peuple s'adapte à tout ... Si ce peuple n'a pas les mêmes besoins que nous, il y a beau temps que nous les aurions créés (Actuelles III, p. 49).

The scorn under which the natives lived is reflected in the language of Camus. He speaks of a "régime d'esclavage", of wages

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 4. Pied noir is the slang term for the poor colonists. Bocca refers to Camus as the most distinguished of all the pieds noirs.

not merely insufficient but insulting, of "humiliations" which the Arabs underwent "sur leur propre terre", and of recalling to them that they were "vaincus".

In his short story, "les Muets," Camus describes the lowly work of an Arab, Said, in a small barrel-making factory.⁶⁹ The other factory workers are all of the lower white class. They are all in a rather discouraging situation, for they have just returned to work after an unsuccessful strike. There is no scorn shown Said; he is accepted as a member of the gang. It is in Said's job that his inferior social status is apparent--he does all the menial tasks for the others. He is the most lowly of the lowly.

Camus is contemptible of the contempt of his race; he keeps repeating, "il est méprisable de dire--". He also rejects their so-called good works. Lebesque calls it, "le palliatif de la charité" (the cover-up of charity): a few quarts of grain distributed to an entire village by a "bonne dame".⁷⁰ Maurois describes it more strongly as "tartuferie", a word coined from Molière's famous character, Tartuffe, a base hypocrite.⁷¹ Camus attended one of these charity distributions on New Year's Day in 1939. The daughter of the Governor-

⁶⁹Albert Camus, "Les Muets", l'Exil et le royaume.

⁷⁰Lebesque, op. cit., p. 40.

⁷¹André Maurois, De Proust à Camus (Paris, Librairie académique Perrin, 1964), p. 336.

General presided at the ceremony which took place in front of the Mosque and the apartments of the Imam.⁷² The actual distribution took place at the cemeteries in the Casbah and Belcourt. Camus described the bright blue day, the cemeteries filled with blossoming flowers contrasting with the masses of ragged, half-starved people greedily eating the dole handed out to them:

300 kilos de couscous, 10 moutons, 300 kilos de figes et 40 kilos de beurre auront servi à calmer la faim de centaines de miséreux pour un jour seulement ... beaucoup trop d'enfants s'y voyaient. J'ai vu de petites mauresques cacher sous leur voiles les morceaux de viande qui leur revenaient. Cela en dit long sur la prospérité de leur foyer (Alger-Républicain, 14-1-39, p. 4, in Parker, p. 176).

Camus graciously praised the charm of the officiating lady but he also warned the men that they too had a role to play in not merely alleviating poverty but in eliminating it and thus making such charity unnecessary.⁷³ He added:

Je sais bien que ce n'est pas facile et je ne pense pas qu'on supprime la pauvreté en un jour. Mais je dois dire aussi que je n'ai jamais vu une population européenne aussi misérable que cette population arabe--et cela doit bien tenir à quelque chose. C'est à supprimer cette disproportion et cet excès de pauvreté qu'il faut s'attacher (Alger-Républicain, 14-1-39, p. 4, in Parker, p. 176).

He had never seen a European population so miserable as that Arab one--and that must be due to something! Could it have been the race problem?

⁷²Imam, a Mohammedan priest.

⁷³Parker, op. cit., p. 29.

He also criticized the hypocritical twisted reasoning the Europeans used to perpetuate a deplorable situation, "le paysan kabyle si fataliste et pittoresque":⁷⁴

Il est curieux de voir comment les qualités d'un peuple peuvent servir à justifier l'abaissement où on le tient et comment la sobriété proverbiale du paysan kabyle peut légitimer la faim qui le ronge (Actuelles III, p. 49).

The good quality of patience was an excuse to keep the Kabyle peasant in a state of starvation.

There is one thing that will raise the social status of a people more quickly than anything else. That is education. It is almost pitiful, the hunger for learning that display the peoples of the tiers monde: India, Africa, the Indies.⁷⁵ Even real hunger gnawing the vitals can not seem to quench this spiritual hunger. The starving Kabyles were no exception to this verity. Often villages would offer land and labor for the building of a school--not merely for boys, but for girls--in a Moslem world! And the short-sighted French left the opportunities slip by--for economic reasons, probably, but also because of the old race jaundice. And now, like Meursault, they are paying for their guilt.

The story of the school situation that Camus told was as heart-rending as that of the famine. In the midst of the desert, large

⁷⁴Lebesque, op. cit., p. 40.

⁷⁵Tiers monde, the third world: the underdeveloped peoples outside the peoples of the Communist and the Western Democratic worlds.

buildings (which Camus felt had been better dispersed in a number of smaller facilities) were receiving 600 pupils and turning away as many more. In another instance, 200 candidates came to the school seeking admission; fifteen could be accepted. Classes numbered 60 to 80 students. At Beni-Douala it was possible to admire a class of 86 pupils encased somewhat everywhere--between the benches, on the platform, and some standing. The estimate was that 80% of the number of children were deprived of an education. Camus commented, "Je traduirai en disant que près de 10,000 enfants dans cette seule région sont livrés à la boue des égouts."⁷⁶

He was particularly bitter about the impractical schools built like palaces with beautiful mosaics and pergolas to impress the tourists. As one astute Kabyle remarked to him, "Il s'agit, voyez-vous, faire le moins de classes possible avec le plus de capitaux."⁷⁷ The idea seemed to be to spend as large a sum of money as possible for as few students as possible.

There was another far more general reform which Camus felt was strongly needed. He was one of the pioneers to propose integration:

Les Kabyles auront plus d'écoles le jour où on aura supprimé la barrière artificielle qui sépare l'enseignement européen de l'enseignement indigène, le jour enfin où, sur les bancs d'une même école, deux peuples faits pour se comprendre commenceront à se connaître (Actuelles III, p. 64).

Some quarter of a century before Martin Luther King exhorted white and

⁷⁶Actuelles III, pp. 57-63.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 62.

black to play in the same schoolyard, hand in hand, Camus had preached an identical gospel in Algeria. He expanded the thought:

Si l'on veut vraiment d'une assimilation et que ce peuple si digne soit français, il ne faut pas commencer pas le séparer des Français. Il suffit pourtant, je viens d'en faire l'expérience, d'une main sincèrement tendue. Mais c'est à nous de faire tomber les murs qui nous séparent (Actuelles III, p. 64).

There can never be a true brotherhood of races until the most insidious barriers of all are breached--the walls of hate, of scorn, of non-acceptance.

5. Personal Concern

There is in Noces a bit of mellifluous poesy: "une profusion de roses thé épaisses comme de la crème."⁷⁸ Tea roses like whipped cream--Camus could approach nature with an intimate sensibility that few poets can match. Yet in dealing with his fellow man, Camus, while peculiarly overflowing with compassion, remained inhibited in personal feelings. Emmanuel Robles, another Algerian patriot, remarked on this ambiguity:

Sans jamais jouer "les durs" comme nous y inclinaients souvent notre tempérament et notre goût des attitudes il savait dissimuler cette sensibilité sous des airs volontiers flegmatiques ... Je fus éme, tout particulièrement, de découvrir cette confiance dans Noces (lui qui se confiait si peu!), lorsque parut le recueil chez notre ami Edmond Charlot.⁷⁹

⁷⁸Noces, Essais, p. 55.

⁷⁹Emmanuel Robles, "Soleil et misère," Camus Collection Génies et Réalités, p. 61.

No doubt Camus cultivated this style in emulation of French classic literature of the seventeenth century which he considered the greatest in the world.⁸⁰

While Camus' work is restrained, it is not really noble in a Cornelian way. A personal sensitivity breaks through occasionally. The specifics that he treated with personal feeling, however, tend to be limited. There was a poignancy in his relationship with his mother. With nature, he expanded and let his entire being open up in a kind of "cosmic adultery".⁸¹ With old age there was a kind of intimate revulsion. But strangely enough, two of the warmest human relationships, women and children, Camus slighted. His treatment of the Arabs was quite impersonal, too.

Camus' commiseration for the plight of the Arabs has been amply proven. But he rarely recorded a personal close-up of the race. In "les Muets" he distinguished the social condition of Said, the Arab, by calling attention to his bare feet.⁸² In l'Etranger, the hinge-figures of the story are the Arabs. Yet the only personal attribute of these otherwise completely anonymous characters is the rather scornful awareness by Meursault that the toes of his victim

⁸⁰Bree, op. cit., p. 68.

⁸¹Carl A. Viggiani, "Camus, and the Fall from Innocence, "Yale French Studies, Vol. XXV, Spring 1960, p. 99.

⁸²"Les Muets," p. 83.

are spaced too far apart.⁸³

Pierre de Boisdeffre, the critic, claims that Camus was not a true novelist, that he lacked "imagination et sensualité".⁸⁴ He says that Camus neglected the most expressive part of a personal description, the eyes. There is little that can be described about the veiled Moslem women except possible their eyes. Camus dryly depicted them, "et derrière un rempart de voiles, on ne voyait que leurs yeux."⁸⁵ Camus can hardly be censured for ignoring Moslem women. The effacement of women is a fact of Moslem culture, and Camus was too astute to become involved in that problem. In describing the Algerian girls he made the remark, "Et d'abord la jeunesse est belle. Les Arabes, naturellement, et puis les autres."⁸⁶ In spite of the fact the Arabs are mentioned first, there is a paradoxical feeling here that it is not the others, but the Arabs who are added as an afterthought.

The omission of children in an author's works is not unusual in world literature. Camus did not have a "Petit Prince", but then neither did Shakespeare nor a host of other writers. However, in the Kabylia report, children are almost the only personal figures. He reported the children in rags fighting with the dogs over the con-

⁸³L'Etranger, p. 76.

⁸⁴La Peste, introduction by W.J. Strachan, p. xvi.

⁸⁵"Les Muets", p. 18.

⁸⁶L'Eté, Essais, p. 848.

tents of a garbage can.⁸⁷ Or he recounted his personal dialogue with a Kabylia boy who was picking up his family's ration of the dole:

--Combien de jours, on t'a donné ça?
 --Quinze jours.
 --Vous êtes combien dans la famille?
 --Cinq.
 --C'est tout ce que vous allez manger?
 --Oui.
 --Vous n'avez pas de figues?
 --Non.
 --Vous mettez de l'huile dans la galette?
 --Non. On met de l'eau.

Et il est parti avec un regard méfiant (Actuelles III, p. 40).

And there was the touching note of the little Moorish girls hiding their charity ration under their veils.⁸⁸ He also shared the irrepressible exuberance of joy of little Arabs meeting the bus in a remote village:

Des enfants en burnous, tournant sur eux-mêmes comme des toupies, sautant, frappant des mains, couraient autour de l'autocar ("La Femme adultère," p. 20).

Children have not yet learned to be oppressed by the worries of social status. Another time a continent away, in a different country and with another race, Camus reflected on a bit of Americana:

Je pense à d'autres soirs enfin, doux et rapides à vous serrer le coeur, qui empourprent les vastes pelouses de Central Park, à hauteur de Harlem. Des nuées de négrillons s'y renvoient une batte de bois, au milieu de cris joyeux ("Pluies de New York," Essais, p. 1830).

⁸⁷Actuelles III, p. 38.

⁸⁸Supra, p. 48.

Not Arabs, but swarms of little negroes in the inhospitable concrete jungle of New York, sending off a ball with a wooden "batte" amidst cries of glee-- that was enough to warm one's heart. It seems that the darker races were the seduction for Camus' rare glimpses into the child's world.

An incident in the life of Camus illustrates pointedly his very real personal concern for his fellow man. Emmanuel Robles has related what happened.⁸⁸ Robles and Camus had spent the evening in the Casbah, the old Arab quarter of Algiers. As they were passing along under the arcades of the Rue Bab Azoun, they encountered a gathering of people. In the center of the circle an old Arab beggar-woman in rags was cowering. She was trembling with fever, and she regarded with fright the policeman tormenting her, trying to get her to move on. Camus promptly and angrily intervened. He felt that she needed to go to the hospital. Two automobilists agreed, but the policeman did not, and a hot argument ensued. Finally, one of the drivers loaded her into his car and took her to the hospital. As Robles commented, perhaps this was just a trivial incident, but it illustrates the real character of Camus:

Dans cette émotion et cette colère s'enracine une réflexion qui lui conduira au parti communiste et fera de lui un journaliste de combat, soucieux de dénoncer, au mépris des menaces le scandale de l'administration indigène et l'égoïsme des grands possédants de la colonie.

⁸⁸ Robles, op. cit., p. 73.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 73.

It was an emotional concern which led Camus into the Communist Party and his crusade for justice against the power entrenched colons.

A second personal experience, which Camus underwent and which affected him deeply, was a visit to a convict ship in late 1938.⁹⁰ The ship, Martinière, was docked in Algiers on a stage in its journey to a penal colony. The antiseptic cleanliness of the ship, the dismal silence of its officers and men, the human cargo locked in the hold all combined to fill Camus with horror. The spectacle that shocked him most was the sight of several Arab prisoners clinging by their fingertips to the portholes high above the deck to catch a last glimpse of Algeria. These men, to Camus, were being erased from the list of humanity:

Il ne s'agit pas ici de pitié, mais de toute autre chose. Il n'y a pas de spectacle plus abject que de voir des hommes ramenés au-dessous de la condition de l'homme. C'est de ce sentiment qu'il s'agit ici ... Ces hommes, nous n'avons pas à les juger, d'autres l'ont fait. Ni à les plaindre, ce serait puéril. Mais il s'agissait seulement ici de décrire ce destin singulier et définitif par lequel des hommes sont rayés de l'humanité. Et peut-être est-ce le fait que ce destin soit sans appel qui crée toute son horreur (Alger-Républicaine, 1-12-38, p. 2, in Parker, p. 174).

Camus does not appeal the judgement but his sensitive nature can not quite reconcile itself to an irreversible verdict. This is another restatement of the adjustment between liberty and justice. It is the balance that must be sought between the emotions and the rational.

⁹⁰Parker, op. cit., p. 15.

This is why Camus cried out in exasperation to the young Arab criticizing his stand on the Algerian conflict, "Je crois à la justice, mais je défendrais ma mère avant la justice."⁹¹ It must be remembered that even in the universe of the absurd it is only human personal feeling that is aware of and struggles against human suffering.

6. Artistic Concern

Camus felt that the artist should take part in the struggle for a better world. He did not exactly say with Voltaire, "Il faut cultiver notre jardin", but rather, "Il faut aider les humiliés à cultiver leur jardin."⁹² Both Voltaire and Camus marshaled their artistic talent to make the world aware of wrongs that should be corrected. Camus claims the role of precursor for the great writers in history:

Tous les grands réformateurs essaient de bâtir dans l'histoire ce que Shakespeare, Cervantes, Molière, Tolstoi ont su créer: un monde toujours prêt à assouvir la faim de liberté et de dignité qui est au coeur de chaque homme.

How does Camus deal with the hunger for freedom and dignity in his artistic work? Algeria is well represented. Of his three novels, two are set in Algeria; four out of the six short stories in

⁹¹Roy, op. cit., p. 211.

⁹²Maurois, op. cit., p. 340.

⁹³Albert Camus, L'Homme révolté, Essais (Paris, Gallimard, 1965), p. 679.

the collection *L'Exil et le royaume* take place in North Africa. An initial impression of these works is that the Moslem race is treated in a perfunctory manner. In the first place, Camus writes as a member of the white race. He never tried to assume the role of an Arab. As he said of his character, Meursault, to a metropolitan Frenchman, "Naturally you can understand Meursault, but an Algerian will enter more easily and more deeply into an understanding of him."⁹⁴ Neither does he treat the race problem in an "Uncle Tom" manner. His narration has such verisimilitude that it belies the "idées incarnées" aspect of his work.⁹⁵ Camus himself warns about heaping too much symbolism on his work. When asked what he felt the critics had neglected most in his work, he replied:

La part obscure, ce qu'il y a d'aveugle et d'instinctif en moi. La critique française s'intéresse d'abord aux idées. Mais toutes proportions gardées, pourrait-on étudier Faulkner sans faire la part du Sud dans son œuvre? (Essais, p. 1925)

The "Deep South" of France was Algeria in almost every sense of the expression. Then, when Camus related an encounter between Arab and European, there may be a symbolical meaning, but there definitely is a blind, instinctive "flesh and blood" situation, which is physical and psychological, rather than philosophical.

L'Etranger, with this interpretation, deals directly with the

⁹⁴Parker, op. cit., p. 43 citing Gaeton Picon, "Entretien avec Albert Camus," Le Figaro littéraire, No. 21 (18 August 1946) p. 2.

⁹⁵Maurois, op. cit., p. 332.

race problem. In simplest terms, the story is: a European Algerian, Meursault, murdered an Arab and was tried, convicted and executed for the crime. The climax of the story is the murder of the Arab; the dénouement is the harsh cutting of the Gordian knot: the death sentence of Meursault.

Considering the story solely from the facet of the race problem, Meursault was guilty of a race crime. It was not a premeditated crime nor was it one of passion--race hatred. It was the crime of indifference. This was the crime of most of the European Algerians. The Arabs in the story are completely anonymous. Algeria was no exception to the race ghetto rule; Europeans were not acquainted with native Algerians. Meursault was not exploiting the other race, but his shady "pal" was, and Meursault neglected to condemn that exploitation. It was the sin of omission. Meursault also let himself be involved in a race gang war. He reaped the retribution. The hypocrisy of the trial, the impression that the court was trying Meursault for his behaviour at the funeral of his mother rather than for the real crime, was indicative of the attitude of the French wrapped up in their own petty lives, while the real crime of racism was being ignored. As Meursault commented, "Je peux dire qu'on a beaucoup parlé de moi et peut-être plus de moi que de mon crime."⁹⁶ The incident of the crucifix may have had racial significance too. In

⁹⁶L'Etranger, p. 116.

exasperation at Meursault's indifference, the judge showed him a crucifix and asked him if that did not have a meaning for him.⁹⁷ The fact is that the capital punishment of Christ, buried in its plethora of symbolisms and hypocrisies, was basically a racial crime. Then too, in Algeria, the racial problem was coexistent with a religious one, the problem of the cross versus the crescent.

The race problem in la Peste, if it is there, is quite obscure. Mouloud Feraoun, one of the best Moslem Algerian writers in the French language and a personal friend of Camus, had criticized Camus in la Peste for describing Oran devoid of Arabs.⁹⁸ Camus does not make one direct reference to the Arabs in the book, a sort of cross-reference to his own inquiries of the Kabylisians.⁹⁹ The character, Raymond Rambert a young Paris reporter, first meets Dr. Rieux in the process of making an investigation for a big Paris newspaper "sur les conditions de vie des Arabes." Camus again condemns the attitude of the French administration in the words of his book's chief character. Dr. Rieux asks the young reporter if he is able to make a verified and total condemnation. Camus was recalling his own censorship.

Other than this brief allusion to the Arabs, perhaps Camus

⁹⁷L'Etranger, p. 88.

⁹⁸Gordon, op. cit., p. 171.

⁹⁹La Peste, p. 40.

wished to leave a feeling that the Arabs had been left completely outside the pale of society and that they had very little to do with conquering the plague. In reality, how many Arab doctors could there have been? On another plane, as Castex avers, la Peste is far more allegorical than l'Etranger: "Mais dans la Peste, l'allégorie dessèche parfois le récit, l'Etranger demeure plus proche de la vie réelle."¹⁰⁰ Thus it may be that the rats and the plague could be identified with the race problem. If the story were too realistic this symbolism would be destroyed.

Camus' most intimate portrait of an individual Arab is in the poignant short story of "l'Hôte".¹⁰¹ The story represents the dilemma of a French country schoolteacher in the wilds of Algeria. The teacher is caught between the intransigence of a gendarme, who expects him to hand over an Arab prisoner to justice, and his own sympathy for the prisoner. Obviously the teacher is a portrayal of Camus himself, the gendarme is the colonial administration, while the prisoner being led by a rope is the Arab race. After the teacher gives the prisoner the choice of freedom or justice (the prisoner resolutely chooses the road to prison), the teacher returns to his schoolhouse to find written on the blackboard in an awkward hand-

¹⁰⁰Pierre-George Castex, Albert Camus et l'Etranger, (Paris, Librairie José Corti, 1965) p. 25.

¹⁰¹Albert Camus, "L'Hôte," L'Exil et le royaume (Paris, Gallimard, 1958).

writing, "Tu as livré notre frère. Tu paieras."¹⁰² This is the irony of the arbitrator caught between both races.

In "la Femme adultère," there is a perceptive description of the reversed relationship in the confrontation of the two races:

De l'autre extrémité de la place venait un grand Arabe, maigre, vigoureux, couvert d'un burnous bleu ciel, chaussé de souples bottes jaunes, les mains gantées, et qui portait haut un visage aquilin et bronzé. Seul le chèche qu'il portait en turben permettait de le distinguer de ces officiers français d'Affaires indigènes que Janine avait parfois admirés. Il avançait régulièrement dans leur direction, mais semblait regarder au-delà de leur groupe, en dégantant avec lenteur l'une de ses mains. "Eh bien, dit Marcel en haussant les épaules, en voilà un qui se croit général." Oui, ils avaient tous ici cet air d'orgueil, mais celui-là, vraiment, exagérait. Alors que l'espace vide de la place les entourait, il avançait droit sur la malle, sans la voir, sans les voir. Puis la distance qui les séparait diminua rapidement et l'Arabe arrivait sur eux, lorsque Marcel saisit, tout d'un coup, la poignée de la cantine, et la tira en arrière. L'autre passa, sans paraître rien remarquer, et se dirigea du même pas vers les remparts. Janine regarda son mari, il avait son air déconfit. "Ils se croient tout permis, maintenant," dit-il. Janine ne répondit rien. Elle détestait la stupide arrogance de cet Arabe et se sentait tout d'un coup malheureuse ("La Femme adultère," L'Exil de le royaume, p. 27).

This is a picture where the tables were turned. In the chagrin of the French, there is the impression that Camus took an impish delight in the discomfiture of the petty bourgeois of his own race.

Though Camus treated the Arab race with psychological insight in his fiction, it remained a race apart--a race without names, anonymous. There is one exception, Saïd, the Arab worker in the cooper factory in "les Muets". Saïd has another singularity: he is the only

¹⁰² Ibid.

Arab represented as integrated in the slightest way into European society. Two disparate races were the plight of Camus' Algeria: it was a combination of water and oil--a mixture that would not mix.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

Albert Camus grew up in an absurd situation. He was native to a land that was one of the last relics of another era, of colonialism. He was a witness to the dying throes of that era. He knew the agony; he empathized. There was the historical situation of a race in bondage and a race in control. There was, in man's thinking, a growing awareness of the incongruities of this situation. And Camus was a product of this world.

Camus observed the situation and he was not blind to what he saw. He saw and felt the injustices to an entire race. He realized the inconsistency of one race keeping another in abject poverty and ignorance. He felt an apprehension for an entire people kept in political slavery.

He saw the indifference and the unconcern. He saw the smoldering hatred. He saw a proud race; he saw a snobbish race. He saw condescension, he saw servility.

Camus assumed a burden of a people; he testified to the value of each individual. He saw the charm of children dancing for joy and the pathos of others without enough to eat. He reacted to the beauty of women and to the vainglory of young men. He respected the glory of the race and humanized its individuals.

He saw and condemned the short-sightedness of administrations and governments. He proposed economic reforms for equal wages, social

security and even 'escape' for a beset population. He devised a more equitable form of government.

Camus saw and he acted. He joined the Communist Party and he quit the Communist Party--both for the same reason, sympathy for the downtrodden. He wrote for the Alger-Républicain and reported things as he saw them. He was thrown out of Algeria for his trouble. He later wrote in Combat on the same Algerian problem and he received the scorn of his fellow intellectuals. During the height of the Algerian Revolution he visited his homeland at great personal peril to make a plea for justice and moderation. His own race, the French Algerians, shouted him down with the words, "Camus to the gallows."

Camus imagined a world of unity and diversity. His philosophy was one of solidarity, in spite of individual or collective differences, whether they be of skin, or of tongue, or of thought.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. BOOKS

- Albèrés, Rene-Marill, et al. Camus, Collection Génies et Réalités. Paris: Hachette, 1964. 289 pp.
Nine authors in a memorial edition write on different aspects of Camus' life.
- Bocca, Geoffrey. The Secret Army. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc., 1968. 270 pp.
A readable work on the Algerian Revolution.
- Boisdeffre, Pierre de. Une Histoire vivante de la Littérature d' Aujourd'hui, 1939-1960. Paris: Le Livre Contemporain, 1959. 780 pp.
A definitive work on all the authors of mid-century French literature.
- Bree, Germaine. Camus. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1959. 275 pp.
A biography and critique of Camus and his works.
- Bree, Germaine (ed.). Camus, a Collection of Critical Essays. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1962. 182 pp.
Essays on the life and works of Camus in English, by twenty writers.
- Brisville, Jean-Claude. Camus. Paris: Gallimard, 1959. 287 pp.
A potpourri on Camus, with a sketch of his life, selections from his work, and critical comments of other authors.
- Camus, Albert. Actuelles III, Chroniques algériennes, 1939-1958. Paris: Gallimard, 1958. 213 pp.
A collection of newspaper editorials written on the Algerian problem.
- _____. Essais. Paris: Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1965. 1975 pp.
The complete non-fictional works of Camus, with introduction and extensive notes by Roger Quilliot and L. Faucon.
- _____. L'Etranger. Text edition with introduction and notes by Germaine Bree and Carlos Lyles, Jr. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1955. 182 pp.
The story of a young man, indifferent to and therefore a stranger to society, who dies because he refuses to dissemble his indifference.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. Situations. New York: George Braziller, 1965.
371 pp.

A collection of Sartre's essays including the polemics with Camus, and the tribute after Camus' death.

B. PERIODICALS

Haroutunian, Lulu M., M.D. "Albert Camus and the White Plague,"
Modern Language Notes, LXXIX no. 3, 1964. p. 311.

Morreale, Gerlad. "Meursault's Absurd Act," The French Review, XL
(February, 1967), pp. 458-463.

Obuchowskie, Chester W. "Algeria, the Tortured Conscience", The French Review, XLII (October, 1968), pp. 90-103.

Rollo, Charles. "Albert Camus, a Good Man," The Atlantic. CCI
(May, 1958). pp. 27-32.