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DEATH AND CRIME IN THE NOVELS OF ALBERT CAMUS

by

Mirene Paule Hazebrouck

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the
DEPARTMENT OF ROMANCE LANGUAGES
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
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1977

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ABSTRACT

The theme of death and crime is consistently predominant in the works of Albert Camus from the beginning of his literary career. In each of his novels, not only is a crime committed, but it also appears as the central act of the work. Camus' originality as regards his concern for the problem of man's mortality and criminality, however, does not reside in a consciousness of death which subsequently leads him to a set of guidelines for human conduct. Rather, he observes that there exists a relation between death and crime and that this relation constitutes a fundamental characteristic of man's nature and of the human condition.

The purpose of this thematic study is (1) to trace, through structural analysis, the theme of death and crime in the novels of Camus and to examine the relation that exists between man's consciousness of the fact of death and his criminality, (2) to determine whether or not there is evolution of his ideas on death and crime as revealed in these works as well as in some of his essays and plays, (3) to determine the nature of that thematic evolution, and (4) to explore crime as a human act on both a literal and a symbolic level.
My tracing of the theme follows the chronological order of Camus' works, and the divisions of this study correspond to the three periods which constitute Camus' literary career. The first is that of La Mort heureuse and L'Étranger and the works written between 1935 and 1942. During this period, Camus was conscious of crime as an act committed by men searching for happiness. The thematic structure death-crime-happiness dominates these works. Yet the theme of death is subordinate to that of crime. Man passes from a state of primitive innocence and animality to a state of criminality and humanity. As a result of this process, he has become conscious of his criminality and mortality and, at the same time, he feels innocent of his crime.

The second period of La Peste and L'Homme révolté, covering 1943 to 1951, is that of crime as violence, criminal acts which man commits against his fellow man in the name of man's future happiness. The criminals in these works have a strong sense of their culpability and are unwillingly guilty. They carry within them the microbes of the plague, a potential for violence and the assassination of their fellow men. They cannot rid themselves of that potential, but can only diagnose it and strive to remain innocent criminals. Once again, as in the first Camusian literary period, the theme of death is subordinate to and exists apart from that of crime.
Further evolution takes place in the death-crime theme during Camus' third literary period of *La Chute* and *L'Exil et le royaume* which spans the 1950's. Clamence is a guilty criminal who has failed to act and who has done nothing to prevent the death of his fellow man. He has committed no crime as such, but he has let death take place. During this period, the thematic structure, death-crime-happiness, undergoes vast change. Death has become a crime in man's own eyes. It is a crime committed not against a god, but against himself. Once again, in becoming aware of himself as criminal, he passes or falls from a state of primitive innocence and animality to a state of consciousness of culpability and becomes human.

In Clamence, we see man imprisoned in his criminality. Through his portrayal of the judge-penitent, Camus has depicted the myth of original sin and of man's fall.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

On December 10, 1957, Albert Camus, recipient of the Nobel Prize for literature, expressed his views on literary creation and its relation to mankind in the following terms: "L'art n'est pas à mes yeux une réjouissance solitaire. Il est un moyen d'émouvoir le plus grand nombre d'hommes en leur offrant une image privilégiée des souffrances et des joies communes."  
Camus' work is precisely that—a reflection of the sufferings and joys that constitute the human condition and that are experienced by all of mankind. As literary creator, the artist is part of that community of men and he is one with them.

In that Nobel Prize acceptance speech, Camus expressed his belief in the joys and the light which man can experience (DS, p. 1074). He also expressed his concern for the pain and suffering that are common to all men and which destroy the bonds of solidarity, joy, and

1. Albert Camus, "Discours de Suède," in Essais (Paris: Editions Gallimard et Calmann-Lévy, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1965), p. 1071. Subsequent references to Discours de Suède will be denoted in the body of this study by the abbreviation DS and the page number of this edition.
warmth that unite them. He observed that his generation was facing the difficult tasks of living in a world where hatred, oppression, and destruction struggled to reign, and of combating those negative and destructive forces.

In Camus' opinion, an immense challenge was presenting itself to twentieth-century man: that of combat against the forces of death and crime which criminal men continually strive to erect and maintain.

The theme of man's mortality and criminality is one which predominates in Camus' works from the very beginning of his literary career. It is also a major concern of French existentialism and of the literature of France of the first half of the twentieth century.

It was this author's original intention to explore the theme of death, that is, the various types of death present in the novels of Albert Camus. My method of research was that of structural analysis. As this analysis of the death theme progressed, more and more aspects of Camus' concern for man's mortality became apparent.

Numerous considerations related to the theme of man's
mortality were present in his work. There was, for example, death by suicide, the happy death, natural death, death resulting from old age or disease, the death of children, death of loved ones, death by execution imposed as punishment, death as crime, as an act committed by man against man. The theme was vast and my scope was subsequently narrowed as my attention became more focused on death and crime. It was evident that death and crime consistently predominated Camus' work and that in every novel, not only was a crime committed, but it also appeared as the central act of the work. It was also evident that Camus' originality as regards his concern for the problem of death and crime did not reside in a consciousness of death which subsequently led him to moral conclusions and guidelines for human conduct. Rather, he observed that there existed a relation between death and crime and that that relation constituted a fundamental characteristic of man's nature and of the human condition.

The purpose of this thematic study, then, is (1) to trace, through structural analysis, the theme of death and crime in the novels of Camus and to examine the relation that exists between man's consciousness of the fact of death and his criminality; (2) to determine whether or not there is evolution in his ideas on death and crime as revealed in these works without neglecting to devote attention to this theme as it presents itself in his
essays and theatre; (3) if so, to observe the nature of that thematic evolution; and (4) to explore crime as human action on both a literal and a symbolic level. As we observe the problem of man's mortality and the nature of his criminality, a number of questions arise: Is man a conscious or unconscious criminal? Are his crimes premeditated or not? Is he an innocent or guilty criminal?

My tracing of the theme will be chronological by work and the divisions of this study will correspond to the three periods which constitute Camus' literary career. The first is that of *La Mort heureuse* and *L'Etranger* and the works written between 1935 and 1942. It is the period of Camus as young, growing literary artist. The second is that of *La Peste* and of the major essay *L'Homme révolté*, covering the years 1943 to 1951. It is the period of the mature Camus, the artist who has moved beyond the literary attempts and achievements of the first period. The third is the period of *La Chute* and the short stories of *L'Exil et le royaume*. It spans the 1950's and is a period of crisis, turmoil, and of Camus' polemic with Jean-Paul Sartre. It is also a period of transition in Camus' work, one which would have led to another phase in his literary career. Camus envisioned this phase as one of further literary accomplishment which would have included the creation of a novel, *Le Premier homme*, a play, *Don Juan*, and an essay, *Le Mythe de Némésis*. Consequently, my
conclusions are based on a study of a portion of Camus' work which, because of his death on January 4, 1960, remains incomplete.
CHAPTER II

LA MORT HEUREUSE

Albert Camus' concern for the problem of death and crime is evidenced as early as the period extending from 1936 to 1938 when he was writing La Mort heureuse, the first of his novels. Although this work was not published until 1971, it is contemporary to Noces, his collection of essays and to the short stories of L'Envers et l'endroit. A number of allusions to this novel and a plan for it are found in the Carnets of January, 1936.1

It would be erroneous to consider La Mort heureuse a rough draft or first edition of L'Etranger. Although certain elements are common to both novels, their plots are distinct and the differences that exist between them outweigh the similarities. La Mort heureuse is Camus' first attempt at presenting a solution to the problem of life and death via the romanesque genre, and his search for a moral solution is paralleled by a search for a literary medium of expression. This novel is an experiment in literary creation. But since it is an attempt and an experiment, it is not considered to be a traditional novel.

La Mort heureuse is doomed to falling in the realm of essay, since it lacks one of the most important elements characteristic of the traditional novel: an explanatory conclusion or solution.

The themes of death and crime constitute an important aspect of Camus' thought and it is significant that they also preoccupy a number of major thinkers of the first half of the twentieth century. Death and crime are themes found in certain works of Gide (Les Caves du Vatican, 1914), Malraux (La Condition humaine, 1933), Montherlant (La Reine morte, 1942), Georges Bataille (Le Coupable, 1943), and Sartre (Les Mouches, 1943; Les Mains sales, 1948), among others. However, the basic concern for the problem of death and crime which is present during this period of the century is not a phenomenon heretofore unexplored. It has its roots in the nineteenth century, in the novels of Fyodor Dostoyevsky.

In the case of La Mort heureuse, the criminal is the central character, Patrice Mersault, an office clerk whose existence calls to mind the type of life later described by Camus in Le Mythe de Sisyphe: "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." The office in which Mersault works is a reflection of the life he leads. It is an extremely enclosed and lifeless world and Mersault is imprisoned in it. In short, he leads a life which is dead.

Il travaillait dans une grande pièce dont les quatre murs étaient couverts de 414 niches où s'empilaient des dossiers. La pièce n'était ni sale ni sordide, mais elle évoquait à toute heure du jour un columbarium où des heures mortes auraient pourri.

Mersault, however, is not only imprisoned in a meaningless routine. When the Saturday six o'clock bell announces the end of the week and freedom to leave the columbarium, his life undergoes no sudden transformation. He has not left his lifeless world behind him when he finds himself outside of his Monday through Saturday routine. In fact, Sunday is even more meaningless than the rest of the week by the very absence of a normal routine.

Mersault's existence has a Pascalian quality about it. Living his life as he does, experiencing its

1. Camus, "Le Mythe de Sisyphe," in Essais, pp. 106, 107. All references to Le Mythe de Sisyphe are from this edition of Camus' essays. Subsequent references to it will be denoted in the body of this study by the abbreviation MS and the page number of this edition.

2. Albert Camus, La Mort heureuse (Paris: Gallimard (NRF), Cahiers Albert Camus I, 1971), p. 42. All references to this work are from this edition of La Mort heureuse. Subsequent references to it will be denoted in the body of this study by the abbreviation MH and the page number of this edition.
meaninglessness, experiencing separation from life itself, Mersault is undergoing the experience of what Pascal called "le divertissement." Mersault is a man in a state of Pascalian unrest, floating between the points of life and death. He, like Pascalian man, could conceivably remain in this state forever. However, the problem which Camus confronts in this work is much the same as Pascal's concern: it is the transformation of man's state of happiness, essentially, into a state of rest. We shall discuss this transformation later in this study and shall observe the contrast between the balcony scene and the life which Mersault will lead in Chenoua.

Outside of his routine, Mersault appears to be exiled from life. He is seated on a balcony as one would be seated before a stage; and while the world goes by, he is no more than a spectator.

L'après-midi était belle. Cependant le pavé était gras, les gens rares et pressés encore. Lui, suivait chaque homme du regard avec attention et le lâchait une fois hors de vue pour revenir à un nouveau passant. C'était d'abord des familles allant en promenade, deux petits garçons en costume marin, la culotte au-dessous du genou, emprêtés dans leurs vêtements raides, et une petite fille à gros noeud rose, aux souliers noirs vernis. Derrière eux une mère en robe de soie marron, bête monstrueuse entourée d'un boa, un père plus distingué, une canne à la main. Un peu plus tard passèrent les jeunes gens du quartier ... (MH, p. 44).

Mersault's solitude and his exclusion from the world of the living are, in this case, emphasized by the contrast
between his role as spectator and the intense activity which he observes in the street. However, the contrast does not end here: as the activity dwindles, Mersault's solitude is still emphasized. The street has become deserted, the only living presence (besides that of a few shopkeepers) being that of a few cats, creatures whose presence intensifies the atmosphere of solitude and lifelessness. Even Mersault's actions, which appear extremely mechanical, reveal that he lacks a love of life.

After them the street slowly became deserted. The spectacles everywhere were started. Now the district was given over to the shopkeepers and cats. The sky, though pure, was without a spark above the ficus which bordered the street. In front of Mersault, the tobacco merchant put out a chair in front of his door and mounted it, resting on both arms on the back. The trams which a moment ago were full were almost empty. At the small café Chez Pierrot, the waiter was sweeping dust in the deserted hall. Mersault turned his chair, placed it like the tobacco merchant and smoked two cigarettes in succession; he went into the room, broke a piece of chocolate and returned to eat it at the window (MH, p. 45).

For the most part, Mersault's lifeless life is also devoid of any human warmth, since he does no more than observe the human beings who come and go around him. Even when the team players wave to Mersault and one cries out that the team has won, there is almost no reaction from Mersault. "Oui, dit seulement Mersault, en secouant la tête" (MH, p. 45). The three pages dedicated to the balcony scene leave one with a certain impression of the life which
Mersault leads: (1) it is a life of solitude, (2) there is an element of indifference in his attitude toward life, and (3) this dead life is devoid of human warmth. Since life involves the passing of time, neither of these is savored by Mersault, as is indicated by his remark which terminates the second chapter of the section entitled "Mort naturelle." "'Encore un dimanche de tiré,' dit Mersault" (MH, p. 47). In other words, it is not only the office which is a columbarium; Mersault's whole life and the world in which he lives consist of time rotting away.

In spite of this, there is a consciousness on his part of the dead life he is leading, accompanied by a desire to live and be happy. This is revealed in his conversations with Zagreus whom he cannot help but admire for the intense sensation of living which burns in him. Mersault makes it clear to Zagreus that, exiled from life, he wishes to enter the kingdom of the living. "J'ai ma vie à gagner. Mon travail, ces huit heures que d'autres supportent, m'en empêchent" (MH, p. 73). Life itself, however, is in no way the culprit. Outside of Mersault's world is a life which awaits him. It cannot be said that life imprisons him, but only that his world does so. After

1. The following quote is indicated as a variant: "supportent, ont tué ma volonté de bonheur" (MH, p. 217, note 17). Mersault accuses his work of killing or smothering his desire for happiness.
the death of his mother, Mersault opens the window to his room and the odor of an orange tree permeates it.

Parfois, les nuits d'été, il laissait la chambre dans l'obscurité et il ouvrait la fenêtre sur la terrasse et les jardins obscurs. De la nuit vers la nuit, l'odeur de l'oranger montait très forte et l'entourait de ses écharpes légères. Toute la nuit d'été, sa chambre et lui-même étaient alors dans ce parfum à la fois subtil et dense et c'était comme si, mort pendant de longs jours, il ouvrait pour la première fois sa fenêtre sur la vie (MH, p. 42).

Mersault's world overlooks the world of the living which is symbolized by physical nature (in this case, the presence of the sweet odor of the orange trees); he can experience an awareness of life and of living through the senses and detect its pleasant odor, if he is only willing to be open to it, to permit it to come to him. Mersault states quite clearly that were it not for his eight-hour day, he could live and be happy. "'Ne me faites pas rire,' dit Mersault. 'Avec huit heures de bureau. Ah! si j'étais libre!'" (MH, p. 70). But experiencing life and happiness is not so simple, for Mersault will undergo an extensive initiation into life, and the novel can be succinctly described as the depiction of that initiation. The plot is very limited, making the extent of the romanesque dimensions ambiguous. Mersault shoots Zagreus, a cripple who offers him the opportunity to obtain the means (in the form of money) of living a happy life and who permits Mersault to kill him. Zagreus has already written a suicide note and
provides Mersault with a pistol. After the crime, Mersault travels to Prague and Genoa, spends some time in Algiers with friends, and finally decides to make his home in Chenoua where he dies of a pulmonary disease.

Having discussed the main character as he was before the crime was committed, we may better understand the victim, Zagreus, and the criminal act itself. The name Zagreus calls to mind the supreme god, Zeus. But according to Greek mythology, Zagreus was the son of Persephone and Zeus. He was favored by Zeus, but due to Hera's jealousy, he was killed by the Titans. However, his heart was rescued and through the will of Zeus, he was reborn.¹

Camus' Zagreus definitely suggests a being superior to man, a god. The problem which presents itself is the following: why did Camus choose this god to be one of the central characters in his novel? The myth of Zagreus indicates that a relation exists between death and rebirth and that there is present an element of fecundity which is

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¹ The following is an account of the god Zagreus' death and rebirth. Because of the jealousy of Hera, who loved Zeus, the supreme god confided Apollo and the Curetes with Zagreus. Hera, aware of the situation, commanded the Titans to capture Zagreus. The young god tried to escape this fate by metamorphosizing himself into a bull. The Titans devoured him, but Pallas succeeded in saving his heart, which was still palpitating. Zeus willed that his son should be reborn, and so he was. Pierre Grimal, *Dictionnaire de la mythologie grecque et romaine* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1951), p. 477.
also observed in Mersault's crime. Mersault kills the god who is a source of life for him and whom he cannot help but observe in awe and admiration. Despite the fact that he is crippled, confined to a wheelchair and must undergo the humiliation of depending on others to take care of his basic needs, an extraordinary sense of being alive emanates from him. This energy for living coupled with his infirmity make of his physical condition a paradoxical situation, and the paradoxical nature of this condition is intensified by the fact that Mersault's healthy body is admired by Zagreus almost to the point of envy. Yet it is Mersault who does not really live. We have already observed, however, that Mersault is conscious of the fact that his life is devoid of vitality. Zagreus, by his very presence, intensifies his latent desire to live. Mersault is impressed with the cripple's youthful laugh, his ability to reflect, and the life which animates this human being. Zagreus' extraordinary lucidity is also striking. He has no illusion as to his state of infirmity and he states firmly: "Moi, je ne vois pas comment je pourrais justifier à mes yeux mes jambes mutilées" (MH, pp. 69, 70). Refusing to bridge the gap which exists between himself and his

1. "Mais par la suite, ce rire jeune qui chez Zagreus d'abord l'avait exaspéré retint son attention. ... Ce qui le frappait chez l'infirmé, c'est qu'il réfléchissait avant de parler. Pour le reste, la passion contenue, la vie ardente qui animait ce tronc ridicule suffisait à retenir Mersault ..." (MH, pp. 63, 64).
physical condition, he accepts the relation which exists between man and the world. This absence of justification is what constitutes the absurd.\footnote{1} Zagreus can no more justify his physical condition than can nature which, in the Camusian sense, consists of the earth, sea, sky, and elements. Nature offers no justification to man and Zagreus' infirmity is symbolic of the imperfection that exists in nature.

Mersault is equally aware of the unjustifiableness of the cripple's condition and thus, of the absurd. But consciousness of the absurd is insufficient; he must also reject all that pretends to justify nature, all that seeks to bridge the distance between man and the world. The refusal of all illusion implies the rejection of all established systems and their values, be they religious, political, or philosophical. One must remember that according to Greek mythology, Zagreus was a god reborn after his death at the hands of the Titans. Like nature, he could not be eliminated by man. Rather, fecundity is associated with the Titans' crime. It is also associated with Mersault's criminal act. In Mersault, we observe man reborn through his crime. He has killed nature and in doing so, has taken on his human nature. Reincarnation of man in nature and of nature in man has taken place. This

\footnote{1. "L'absurde est essentiellement un divorce" (MS, p. 120).}
reincarnation will reach its ultimate point (which we will call "reconciliation" between man and nature) when man says yes to life.

A third aspect of Zagreus is that he acts as a father to Mersault. There is an exchange of genuine human warmth between the two. This is evidenced by Mersault's admiration for the man (which has been discussed above) and by Zagreus' attitude toward Patrice. "Je vous aime beaucoup, Mersault. A cause de votre corps d'ailleurs. ... Aujourd'hui il me semble que je peux vous parler à cœur ouvert" (MH, p. 74). A sense of "chaleur" permeates the entire room. The human warmth is accompanied by the presence of the fire suggesting that warmth and life are felt. As a result, "chaleur humaine" as abstraction becomes very concrete in this scene.

But Zagreus does more than confide in Mersault; he counsels and advises him on the means of attaining true life and happiness, since this is what Mersault is searching for. Being of the opinion that money is the road to happiness because it enables one to buy time (MH, p. 76), so to speak, he offers Mersault the fortune which he has amassed unscrupulously. There is an indication here that the acquisition of wealth is not always

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1. There is further evidence of Mersault's liking for Zagreus when Camus, in speaking about Mersault, states that: "Une confiance lui venait de pouvoir enfin faire confiance" (MH, p. 70).
morally justified. In Mersault's case, he obtains Zagreus' money through means of an arbitrary act, but the attainment of happiness (which will be his true wealth) will not have its source in the acquisition of the money, but in the crime itself. (It must be noted that the money is never mentioned again through the entire novel.)

Money, however, is valued by the very ones who establish the systems by which man may transcend this life. Acting as a father toward Mersault, Zagreus becomes representative of any authoritarian system. Though a feeling of mutual confidence exists between Mersault and the cripple, the latter is a master, presenting Mersault with values of an established system.

Je suis certain, commença-t-il, qu'on ne peut être heureux sans argent. ... Eh bien, j'ai remarqué que chez certains êtres d'élite il y a une sorte de snobisme spirituel à croire que l'argent n'est pas nécessaire au bonheur. C'est bête, c'est faux, et dans une certaine mesure, c'est lâche (MH, p. 75).

Consequently, the destruction of Zagreus, central act of the novel, is morally necessary. The crime is necessary if man is to become man and if he, as animal, is to take on his human nature. The crime is the central act of the novel because it constitutes Mersault's point of departure. Mersault, conscious of the lifeless life he has experienced up to now, and conscious of the absurd, is free. The sense of freedom and deliverance which he
experiences in Prague is described by Camus as follows:

A se sentir si loin de tout et même de sa fièvre, à éprouver si clairement ce qu'il y a d'absurde et de misérable au fond des vies les mieux préparées, dans cette chambre, se levait devant lui le visage honteux et secret d'une sorte de liberté qui naît du douteux et de l'interlope (MH, p. 97).1

The fact that the crime has been a breaking away is reinforced in this quote and also in the contrast which exists between the death of Zagreus and the beginning of life for Mersault. Mersault, like Zagreus, has been re-born, not into an immortal life, as was the god, but into the present life through crime. There is irony in the contrast that exists between man and nature, irony in the sense that it consists of Camusian humor.2

After killing Zagreus, Mersault steps out of the man's villa and is born into a world where all suggests life.

Mersault prit sa valise, ouvrit la porte dont le loquet luisait sous un rayon de soleil et sortit la tête battante et la langue sèche. Il franchit la porte d'entrée et partit d'un grand pas. ... un groupe d'enfants. ... Il prit soudain conscience

1. On his way to Algiers, Mersault has the same feeling of freedom: "Il se sentait libre à l'égard de son passé" (MH, p. 124).

2. I am using the word "irony" with the meaning conferred upon it by the German Romantics and Kierkegaard. The ironic situation is synonymous with Camusian humor (i.e., a benevolence toward man). It does not imply, as its original meaning indicates, a malicious or ridiculing attitude toward man.
du froid. ... Un peu vacillant, il s'arrêta cependant et respira fortement. Du ciel bleu descendaient des millions de petits sourires blancs. Ils jouaient sur les feuilles encore pleines de pluie, sur le tuf humide des allées, volaient vers les maisons aux tuiles de sang frais et remontaient à tire d'aile vers les lacs d'air et de soleil d'où ils débordaient tout à l'heure. ... Dans cet épanouissement de l'air et cette fertilité du ciel, il semblait que la seule tâche des hommes fût de vivre et d'être heureux (MH, p. 29).

In this lengthy passage the signs of life are numerous. Camus' choice of words reveals a world where sunlight, blue sky, and crisp air abound. Life and the world are synonymous with nature. And nature welcomes the man who has been born into her. Smiles ("de petits sourires blancs") flow from the sky. Nature is life and at the same time, a source of life ("fertilité du ciel"). Human life is also present in this scene; Mersault sees a group of children, young human beings who themselves have a life ahead of them. He breathes in deeply, the most basic act of living man: "Un peu vacillant, il s'arrêta cependant et respira fortement" (MH, p. 29). The world which Mersault has just entered gives him the feeling that man is in it to live and to be happy. It invites man to life and happiness. The situation is paradoxical, for Mersault has been conscious of the absurd, he has refused all that may explain man's relation to the world; but at the same time, he has accepted the world as it is, and the world is not hostile to him.
Mersault's entrance into life and the world of the living is suggested by his name which has several possible linguistic interpretations. These, of course, are purely of an aleatory and speculatory nature. The name may indicate a leap into the sea (mer - sault, "saulter" being a fourteenth-century Old French form of the modern French "sauter"). The sea is a symbol of life by its constant and regular movement and its respiratory qualities. The main character's name also brings to mind the words "mer" and "soleil," both symbols of life, the sea being a source of refreshing coolness as opposed to the heat of the sun. As we shall observe, heat and coolness ("chaleur et fraîcheur") combined constitute an invitation to Mersault to live. Moreover, the Camusian character experiences happiness when he enters the sea which tempers the heat of a blazing sun; so that the combination Mer-Soleil-saut is also called to mind. Another possible linguistic speculation is that of "mère" and "soleil," in which case the sea is considered as mother, a source of life and fecundity.

The man who enters life has killed, but he is not plagued by feelings of guilt when he thinks of Zagreus, although he does maintain an awareness of his act as crime. In the scene following the crime, amidst all which indicates life and light, the "tuiles de sang frais" call the crime to mind (MH, p. 29). Ironically enough, although
the crime was premeditated, to all appearances, the murderer is innocent.¹ It is a perfect crime, the victim having permitted Mersault to kill him. As far as possible investigation of the man's death is concerned, that is taken care of by Zagreus' suicide note. Mersault, the apparently innocent murderer, approaches Algiers, thinking about Zagreus in these terms:

Mersault s'aperçut que pas une seule fois depuis Vienne il n'avait songé à Zagreus comme à l'homme qu'il avait tué de ses mains. Il reconnut en lui cette faculté d'oubli qui n'appartient qu'à l'enfant, au génie et à l'innocent. Innocent bouleversé par la joie, il comprit enfin qu'il était fait pour le bonheur (MH, p. 125).

As Zagreus had told him, to live and attain happiness should be his prime concerns. "Et vous, Mersault, avec votre corps, votre seul devoir est de vivre et d'être heureux" (MH, p. 70). Obviously, the body is very important if one is to live and be happy. Life and happiness are experienced only through the senses and on a physical level, as we shall later observe. Probably the biggest point emphasized by Zagreus in his advice to Mersault is that the attainment of happiness is not only man's primary activity, but moreover, his duty. Once the crime has been committed, Mersault will spend the rest of his life undergoing an initiation into life (his entrance

¹. Later in this study, we shall examine Mersault's thoughts of Zagreus as he dies in Chenoua.
into life on the day of the crime being merely a first step in that initiation) and searching for happiness. It is this initiation coupled with his search which constitute the second and more extensive portion of the novel.

The initiation takes place over a period of time spent traveling. As Mersault proceeds into life, a geographical opposition between the northern countries and sunny Mediterranean lands takes shape, and various degrees of living are attained by Mersault as he progresses in a southerly direction.1 Mersault first goes to Prague and, as he sits in his hotel room, experiences a feeling of liberation, which Camus reiterates. Now that Mersault is freed from the dead life he was living before the crime, time takes on new dimensions for him—it is now valued and it has become something out of which he can form a way of life. "Autour de lui des heures flasques et molles et le temps tout entier clapotait comme de la vase" (MH, p. 97).

But the atmosphere present in Prague is one of lifelessness. Geographically, it is an area which lacks the sun's natural warmth, and the little light that does shine is dim. "Le lendemain, il [Mersault] fut éveillé par les crieurs de journaux. Le temps était lourd encore,

1. This same opposition between the Germanic and Mediterranean countries will be forcefully brought to the forefront in L'Homme révolté.
mais on devinait le soleil derrière les nuages" (MH, p. 104). By the end of the day, all seems damp and humid.

Il se mit à la recherche d'un restaurant à bon marché. Il s'enfonça dans des rues plus noires et moins peuplées. Sans qu'il ait plu dans la journée le sol était détrempé, et Mersault devait éviter les flaques noires entre les pavés rares. Puis une petite pluie fine se mit à tomber (MH, p. 100).

In addition to the absence of sunshine and natural warmth, there is a complete absence of human warmth of any kind. Almost immediately upon his arrival at the hotel, Mersault encounters the old gruff and irritated porter who brings him his luggage. Later, in the restaurant scene, Mersault feels extremely uncomfortable and as a stranger to what is happening around him. There is no reaction from the man at whose table he sits (MH, p. 102). He knows no one, he is completely alone, and he can not even communicate with anyone because of his lack of knowledge of the language.

Mersault ... sentit que la fêlure qu'il portait en lui craquait et l'ouvrait plus grand à l'angoisse et à la fièvre. Il se leva brusquement, appela le garçon, ne comprit rien à ses explications, et paya trop largement en apercevant à nouveau le regard du musicien toujours ouvert et fixé sur lui (MH, p. 103).

But Mersault returns to the restaurant; it is at least a familiar place for him to go and diminishes to some extent his feelings of complete exile and alienation.

Even Mersault's hotel room, lacking warmth and life, reveals nothing but dirt, filth, and dead flies (MH,
pp. 96, 97). Outside the restaurant and outside the room, life is not much different. Mersault visits the churches and museums of the city (where the past, and not the present, is valued), and they, too, reek of lifelessness, of incense, and of cellars where light never enters (MH, pp. 100, 105). The churches of Prague are permeated with a cold and dismal atmosphere, an atmosphere totally lacking in the warmth and vitality which abound and overflow and which one would encounter in the rich personality of Hugo's Notre Dame, for example. In reference to these churches, Camus contrasts the cold, dead qualities of organized religion with the warmth and benevolence of nature. In Prague, men adore a god who is feared and who rules tyrannically over men. "Le dieu qu'on adorait ici était celui qu'on craint et qu'on honore, non celui qui rit avec l'homme devant les yeux chaleureux de la mer et du soleil" (MH, p. 105). However, tyranny does not exist in the world of the man who savors the warmth of the sun. The geographical contrast between the sunny lands of the Mediterranean and the northern countries corresponds to the contrast between warmth and cold, between true life and dead life, between tyranny and the absence of tyranny, between religion and nature, between past and present. The
contrast between "la pensée de minuit" and "la pensée de midi" is indeed taking shape.

Other factors emphasize the lifelessness of the city. There is the Jewish cemetery which Mersault passes after leaving the restaurant (MH, p. 103). Furthermore, there is the acrid odor of cucumbers which almost constantly pursues Mersault and which provokes anguish in him each time he smells them. Odors appear as a constant in the works of Camus, and through the olfactory sense, the Camusian man actively participates in one of the most significant experiences in truly living life. Herein lies the reason for the contrast between the bitter and the sweet, since they, together, constitute an experience in life itself. Although occasional references to sweet-smelling odors exist in this chapter on Prague, they are not numerous enough to counterbalance the bitter odor which prevails.

Une étrange odeur venait à lui du fond de la nuit. Piquante, aigrelette, elle réveillait en lui toutes ses puissances d'angoisse. Il la sentait sur sa langue, au fond de son nez et sur ses yeux. Elle était loin, puis au coin de la rue, et entre le ciel maintenant obscurci et les pavés gras et gluants, elle était là, comme le sortilège mauvais des nuits de Prague. Il avança vers elle qui, au fur et à mesure, devenait plus réelle, l'envahissait tout entier, piquait ses yeux de larmes et le laissait sans défense. Au coin d'une rue, il comprit: une vieille femme

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1. This contrast will constitute the dominant theme of L'Homme révolté.
Mersault's stay in Prague is an experience in anguish and in exile from the life he wishes so desperately to live and which he does not find here. References to his solitude and exile are numerous: "Il avait perdu cette merveilleuse assurance" (p. 100); "Mersault se retrouvait sans patrie" (p. 105); "une solitude sans ferveur où l'amour n'avait plus de part" (p. 106); "ses pas résonnaient dans le silence" (p. 107). As a result, Mersault yearns to find a kingdom where warmth reigns. "Il eût suffi d'un ami, ou de bras ouverts. Mais les larmes s'arrêtaient à la frontière du monde sans tendresse où il était plongé" (MH, p. 106).

Of this fifteen-page chapter, Camus dedicates thirteen pages to the description of the lifelessness of Prague. All of the elements of "froideur" present in these pages and which we have discussed above—the absence of sunshine, the gruffness of the porter, the shabbiness of the hotel room, the visits to the churches, the episode in the restaurant, the Jewish cemetery and the odor of cucumbers—create an atmosphere which paves the way for the finale of the chapter, the presence of a man's body on

1. Other references to the odor of cucumbers are found on pages 102, 104, 105, 107. References to sweet-smelling odors are on p. 103 (the marmelade and the willow tree).
the sidewalk (MH, p. 108). It is this episode which brings Mersault face to face with the fact of death and which makes him actively conscious of this fundamental aspect of the absurd. The episode is particularly important because any previous contact which Mersault had with the fact of death did not instill active consciousness of that fact in him. We have stated that even before the crime, Mersault was conscious of leading a lifeless life; he was aware that a certain relation existed between the world and himself. He had already experienced the absurd, but to a limited extent and in only certain of its aspects. Besides recognizing the fact that he was leading a lifeless life, he experienced anguish at the spectacle of degrading human suffering, as was revealed in the scene where the cooper, Cardona, grieves over the death of his mother. "Comme chaque fois qu'il se trouvait devant une manifestation brutale de la vie, Mersault était sans force et plein de respect devant cette douleur de bête" (MH, p. 87). In addition, Mersault also experiences solitude and sadness at the death of his own mother. However, he has never come to a conscious realization of the fact of death (1) as a limit to man's

1. MH, p. 41. The theme of sorrow as a reaction to the death of the mother, although not extensively developed in this novel, will acquire tremendous importance in L'Etranger wherein the validity of such a reaction as a conventional social norm will be questioned.
existence and (2) as life's most fundamental natural
phenomenon, a phenomenon which provokes anguish in the
man who gazes upon a world that offers no justification
for death. Up until this episode, Mersault's acceptance
of death has been purely passive. In Prague, death
reveals itself to him by means of an unexpected experience.

... la mort se révélait doucereuse et insistantet
c'est son appel même et son souffle humide
que sentit Mersault au moment où il partait à
degrands pas sans se retourner. Soudain, l'odeur
vint le frapper, qu'il avait oubliée ... (MH,

This more than passive consciousness of death reinforces
and brings to the fore his consciousness of life and his
desire to live, which are expressed once again by his
longing for sunshine, and, in addition, the gestures of
women.

Quelque chose en lui clamait après des gestes
de femmes, des bras qui s'ouvrent et des
lèvres tièdes. ... il s'assit sur son lit.
Le tiroir de la table de nuit était ouvert et
tapissé d'un journal anglais dont il lut tout
un article. Puis il se rejeta sur son lit.
La tête de l'homme était tournée sur la plaie
et dans cette plaie on eût pu mettre des
doigts. Il regarda ses mains et ses doigts,
et des désirs d'enfant se levaient dans son
cœur. Une ferveur ardente et secrète se
gonflait en lui avec des larmes et c'étais
une nostalgie de villes pleines de soleil et
de femmes, avec des soirs verts qui ferment
les blessures (MH, p. 109).

In addition to his search for happiness, Mersault, in the
true epicurean tradition, wishes to see all wounds healed
and suffering eliminated.
After having left Prague, Mersault continues his journey northward for a time before deciding to return south to Vienna. If it was in Prague that he experienced a vivid consciousness of death, his trip to Vienna by train constitutes a period of meditation and reflection on life. This trip is symbolic of a transition from one way of life to another. Mersault has left a city where life is dead and heads toward a land where he hopes to find warmth, sunshine, and women.

Ce wagon qui le menait à travers la moitié de l'Europe le gardait entre deux mondes. Il venait de le prendre et l'allait quitter. Il le tirait hors d'une vie dont il voulait effacer jusqu'au souvenir pour le mener au seuil d'un monde nouveau où le désir serait roi (MH, p. 114).

Mersault has come to look upon his life and to realize that to live is to be conscious of life. Like a work of art, life is created by man. It consists of more than passive existence.

Il fermait les yeux. Il faut du temps pour vivre. Comme toute œuvre d'art, la vie exige qu'on y pense. Mersault pensait à sa vie et promenait sa conscience éperdue et sa volonté de bonheur dans un compartiment ... (MH, p. 115).

It is at this point, during the train trip to Breslau, that Mersault accepts life in its totality, encompassing suffering, death, and the absurd. The barren plains of Silesia, the heavy gray sky, and the presence of the black birds in that sky suggest the burdensome aspects of a
human condition that weighs upon man (MH, p. 116). Yet the truly conscious man accepts the world and, in addition, desires to plunge himself into it, as it is. Once consciousness is accompanied by acceptance, Mersault's fever breaks, and this scene can be considered the climax of the novel.

De la terre désolée au ciel sans couleur se levait pour lui l'image d'un monde ingrat ou pour la première fois, il revenait enfin à lui-même. Sur cette terre, ramenée au désespoir de l'innocence, voyageur perdu dans un monde primitif, il retrouvait ses attaches et, le poing serré contre sa poitrine, le visage écrasé contre la vitre, il figurait son élan vers lui-même et vers la certitude des grandeurs qui dormaient en lui. Il eût voulu s'écraser dans cette boue, rentrer dans la terre par ce bain de glaise, et dressé sur la plaine sans limite, couvert de boue et les bras ouverts devant le ciel d'éponge et de suie, comme en face du symbole désespérant et splendide de la vie, affirmer sa solidarité avec le monde dans ce qu'il avait de plus repoussant et se déclarer complice de la vie jusque dans son ingratitude et son ordure. L'immense élan qui le soulevait creva enfin pour la première fois depuis son départ. Mersault écrasa ses larmes et ses lèvres contre le verre froid (MH, pp. 116, 117).

It is on his way to Breslau that Mersault's fever drops and that he begins to participate in life. He then decides to return south to Vienna. His activities in this city are quite different from those engaged in during his stay in Prague. He no longer visits the cathedrals and museums, but prefers to spend time in the cafes, dancing halls, and gardens, where human life abounds and where he can observe women of the city and admire flowers, both
symbolic of life. In spite of the fact that Vienna lacks a warm, bright sunshine, Mersault does find human warmth there. Particularly moved by Helen's sincere act of affection, he is no longer the exile he was in Prague.

Later, in answer to an invitation from friends in Algiers, he continues his journey southward. And for the first time, the world and nature itself, glowing with life, call him to happiness.

Dans le train qui le menait à Gênes à travers l'Italie du Nord, il écoutait les mille voix qui en lui chantaient vers le bonheur. ... Bientôt, à mesure que le soleil avançait dans la journée et qu'approchait la mer, sous le grand ciel rutilant et bondissant d'où coulaient sur les oliviers frémissants des fleuves d'air et de lumière, l'exaltation qui remuait le monde rejoignit l'enthousiasme de son coeur. Le bruit du train, le jacassement puéril qui l'entourait dans le compartiment bondé, tout ce qui riait et chantait autour de lui rythmait et accompagnait une sorte de danse intérieure qui le projeta, pendant des heures, immobile, aux quatre coins du monde (MH, p. 121).

In this passage, nature and the world are more than benevolent; they are life and movement and joy, as the words themselves indicate: "chantaient," "rutilant," "bondissant," "coulaient," "frémissants," "l'exaltation," "riaît," "chantait," "danse," "projeta." And nature's enthusiasm increases progressively as the train moves southward. Once at Genoa, Mersault's desire to live is

1. In his letter to Rose, Claire, and Catherine, Mersault remarks: "Il ne manque qu'un vrai soleil" (MH, p. 119).
intense and the Camusian language reveals that happiness, life, and sensual pleasure become synonymous: "Il avait soif, faim d'aimer, de jouir, d'embrasser. Les dieux qui le brûlaient le jetèrent dans la mer" (MH, p. 121).

Mersault's leap into the sea is a leap into life in its aspects both bitter and sweet, the bitterness being experienced by the taste of tar and salt present in the sea,\(^1\) as if it were there to keep man continually conscious of his relation with the world, to remind him of the distance that exists between him and the world in which he is immersed. The bitter quality of the sea is every bit as present as the boulder which Sisyphe carries and Mersault undergoes another fundamental sensual experience in truly living life. The happiness he experiences through the "nage" is not lessened by the bitterness that accompanies the sweetness in the sea. Life in its totality has again been experienced through the senses; Mersault tastes it. Life is also his to live, and to live is a creative art.

Comme un pain chaud qu'on presse et qu'on fatigue il voulait seulement tenir sa vie entre ses mains. ... Lécher sa vie comme un sucre d'orge, la former, l'aiguiser, l'aimer enfin (MH, p. 124).

The man who creates his life is not only a lover of life, but life's lover as well, as is evidenced in his union with

\(^1\) "... il goûta le goudron et le sel mélangés" (MH, p. 121).
the sea. Such is the passion for life which Mersault experiences on his way to Algiers. The man who loves "cette vie au visage de larmes et de soleil, cette vie dans le sel et la pierre chaude" is both poor and wealthy (MH, p. 125). Poor in material wealth, Mersault recognizes that life is that indispensable possession which makes a man rich.

It is during his sojourn at La Maison devant le Monde in Algiers that Mersault begins to savor the wealth which he possesses and holds before him. Here he has the opportunity to consciously experience life and to truly live it; and, in this way, he constructs his happiness.

Geographically, Algiers is situated on the Mediterranean where warmth and sunlight abound but do not crush man, as the heat is tempered by the coolness of the sea. It is a land where geographically, extremes and absolutes are non-existent. In juxtaposition to the warmth of physical nature, an atmosphere of "chaleur humaine" reigns among those who inhabit this world, and Mersault no longer feels exiled as he did in Prague and prior to his arrival in Algiers.

The invitation to Algiers is an invitation to life, which is sensually experienced, for one feels the warmth of the sun. As Mersault tells Catherine, "Sens le soleil"

(MH, p. 129), he stands before physical nature and before a world bathed in sunlight, a world that is not hostile to him, but benevolent, where all is light, color and joy: "sourires de la mer" (MH, p. 131). In fact, there is evidence that suggests that nature is celebrating life itself: "le ciel éclatant au-dessus de la danse colorée du monde" (MH, p. 130), "cette foire des couleurs et des lumières" (MH, p. 131). In addition, those who have accepted nature are nourished by her, she, providing them with honey, fruit, vegetables, and juice made from grapes (MH, p. 129). The tactile sense is important in man's experience of true life. The moisture and fuzziness of the peach, for example, are touched by the tongue: "Ils [Patrice et Catherine] ... lèchent des gouttes de sueur au duvet des peaux veloutées" (MH, p. 129). Moreover, vegetative life abounds and emits sweet odors which are pleasing to man and which contrast with the bitter odor of cucumbers that continually pursued Mersault in Prague. All of this and the warmth and brightness of the world invite Mersault to life and happiness and Mersault experiences life when he comes into contact with nature. But he also discovers the miracle of life through a woman named Lucienne and again, the experience is sensual. The woman, as does the world, calls man to life. "Tout ceci jusqu'au soir d'hier où Mersault avait retrouvé un miracle familier et bouleversant sur les lèvres de Lucienne" (MH, p. 144).
As he holds her, a moment of happiness is felt, resulting from the sensation of holding the world in his hands and of experiencing union with it. But such a moment is fleeting, for the woman is in danger of being separated from him. The following quote evidences the relation which exists between the sea, the woman, and sexual experience.

Il mordit dans ses lèvres et durant des secondes, bouche contre bouche, aspira cette tièdeur qui le transportait comme s'il serrait le monde dans ses bras. Elle cependant s'accrochait à lui, comme noyée, surgissait par élans de ce grand trou profond où elle était jetée, repoussait alors ses lèvres qu'elle attirait ensuite, retombant alors dans les eaux glaçées et noires qui la brûlaient comme un peuple de dieux (MH, p. 145).

Although this point is hardly emphasized and only briefly mentioned, it appears that man is faced with the responsibility of keeping the miracle of life alive (in this case, by loving the woman) and that his experience of a life truly lived and of its resulting happiness is one which must be continually renewed if his state of happiness is to be maintained. In other words, the search for happiness involves a continual struggle and Mersault, like Sisyphe, must never cease to push his boulder up the mountain.

The house at Algiers is called "une maison où l'on est heureux" (MH, p. 134), a world that invites man to life and happiness. "Comme tous les jours, c'est l'appel viril et fraternel d'une vie à goût de force, dont tout le monde ici sent la tentation ou l'appel direct" (MH, pp. 141, 142).
Mersault is, for the first time, totally immersed in life. This is especially emphasized by the use of the indicative present tense which dominates the chapter (Part Two, Chapter III), as opposed to the various forms of the past tenses used in the preceding chapters. Life is the present: rather than looking back on the past or hoping for a future life, the man who truly lives is consciously immersed in the present. This implies, on his part, an acceptance of the world as it is, so that ultimately, happiness may be defined as the result of such an acceptance. "Patrice, Catherine, Rose et Claire prennent alors conscience du bonheur qui naît de leur abandon au monde" (MH, p. 147). A symbol of man's immersion in life is the "nage" and when Mersault has entered the sea, he experiences a moment of happiness and a sensation of union with the world just as he had done so when he was holding Lucienne. This experience, however, is ambivalent, for it leaves Mersault with feelings of energy and at the same time, of weakness. Again the experience of happiness is of a dual nature and as such, constitutes a theme which has its source in the hellenic belief in the relativity of man's sensual experiences and of his consciousness of those sensual experiences. The dual nature of the experience of happiness is described in the following terms.

Ces bains d'ailleurs le fatiguaient. Mais dans le même temps, par la faiblesse et l'énergie qu'ils lui laissaient à la fois, ils donnaient
à toute sa journée un goût d'abandon et de lassitude heureuse (MH, p. 168).

Later, the sea is referred to in the following terms: "Elle était chaude comme un corps, fuyait le long de son bras, et se collait à ses jambes d'une étreinte insaisissable et toujours présente" (MH, pp. 192, 193).

La Maison devant le Monde constitutes an earthly paradise where happiness reigns. It is here that Mersault also experiences a state of innocence and comes to realize that not once has he thought of Zagreus as the man he has killed. Consciousness of guilt has been non-existent since the journey southward has been resumed. An implicit contrast between northern Europe and the Mediterranean countries is presented here and announces the central themes which will appear in L'Homme révolté.

Alors, Mersault s'aperçut que pas une seule fois depuis Vienne il n'avait songé à Zagreus comme à l'homme qu'il avait tué de ses propres mains. Il reconnut en lui cet faculté d'oubli qui n'appartient qu'à l'enfant, au génie et à l'innocent. Innocent, bouleversé par la joie, il comprit enfin qu'il était fait pour le bonheur (MH, p. 125).

We have stated that, to all appearances, La Maison devant le Monde constitutes an earthly paradise, and insistence must be placed on the word "earthly." For its inhabitants, Rose, Claire, Catherine, and Mersault, do not live an eternal life of happiness. Nor do they believe that their happiness is eternal. La Maison devant le Monde has
taught them a dual lesson, one in life and death. The Camusian state of happiness implies a consciousness of death as well as an acceptance of life and this point will be further emphasized to a great extent at the end of the novel, as we shall observe. However, it is necessary to indicate that Mersault has attained a certain level of development during his stay in Algiers, that he has undergone a lesson in life and death, and that at this point Camus makes reference to the title of his novel. "Et leur [Patrice, Catherine, Rose et Claire] coeur de douleur et de joie sait entendre cette double leçon qui mène vers la mort heureuse" (MH, p. 147).

The experience at Algiers has been another step, but merely a step, in Mersault's quest for happiness and true life, and he decides that the solitude and inactivity of Chenoua, located on the Algerian coast not far from the ruins of Tipasa, will permit him to better savor life, life as duration, as time that passes. As he occasionally contemplates the minute hand on his watch, he is consciously looking at his life which he has come to consider as an eternal progression of the present, the concepts of past and future being unimportant to him. The eternal, then, is a concept associated with his consciousness of the present moment. Being synonymous with life and with the present, it does not exist outside of this life.
Maintenant du moins, à ses heures de lucidité, il sentait que le temps était à lui et que dans ce court instant qui va de la mer rouge à la mer verte, quelque chose d'éternel se figurait pour lui en chaque seconde. Pas plus que le bonheur surhumain, il n'entrevoyait d'éternité hors de la courbe des journées. Le bonheur était humain et l'éternité quotidienne. Le tout était de savoir s'humilier, d'ordonner son cœur au rythme des journées au lieu de plier le leur à la courbe de notre espoir (MH, p. 169).

In the same way, happiness is not a state of being exterior to this life; it can be experienced now.

Mersault's life of solitude and inactivity at Chenoua permits him to live life in what he considers to be its purest form and as such, is a paradise.

Jour après jour, Mersault se laissait aller dans sa vie comme il se laissait glisser dans l'eau. Et comme on avance grâce à la complicité des bras et de l'eau qui porte et transporte, il lui suffisait de quelques gestes essentiels, une main sur un tronc d'arbre, une course sur la plage, pour se maintenir intact et conscient. Il rejoignait ainsi une vie à l'état pur, il retrouvait un paradis qui n'est donné qu'aux animaux les plus privés ou les plus doués d'intelligence (MH, p. 171).

The "vie à l'état pur" is a life of contact with nature; it involves fundamental sensual experience which is at the root of the happiness attained. Once again, Mersault's entrance into the sea becomes a source of sensual pleasure and of a feeling of being one with the world. In the following particular episode, another aspect of the sea is revealed, which has not arisen prior to this. The sea is warm, but its cold, icy currents surprise Mersault, almost
as a reminder that he must maintain consciousness of cold
as well as warmth as regards life.

Il se dévêtit, descendit quelques rochers et entra dans la mer. Elle était chaude comme un corps. ... A chaque fois qu'il levait un bras, il lançait sur la mer immense des gouttes d'argent en volées, figurant, devant le ciel muet et vivant, les semaines splendides d'une moisson de bonheur. ... A sentir sa cadence et sa vigueur, une exaltation le prenait, il avançait plus vite et bientôt il se trouva loin des côtes, seul au cœur de la nuit et du monde. ... A ce moment il entra soudain dans un courant glacial et fut obligé de s'arrêter, claquant des dents et les gestes désaccordés. Cette surprise de la mer le laissait émerveillé ... (MH, pp. 192, 193).

Mersault's life at Chenoua cannot be considered frenetic as is Bernard's. While the doctor desperately needs constant activity, he does recognize, paradoxically, that Mersault's love of life, in spite of the absence of activity, is greater and deeper than his own (MH, pp. 182, 183). Truly living, then, does not necessitate intense and frenetic activity. During a walk up the mountain of Chenoua, Mersault admits to his friends from Algiers that he is happy living as he does. "Oui, je suis humainement heureux" (MH, p. 178). At this point in the novel, it is observed that Mersault's very struggle for happiness has become a source of happiness, just as Sisyphe's happiness will have its source in the continual attempt to push his boulder to the top of the mountain. In reality, Mersault's ascent to the top of the mountain constitutes and is symbolic of his whole life.
The final step in Mersault's initiation into life is his encounter with death, this time, his own. This encounter is accompanied by a consciousness of his criminal act specifically as crime, which heretofore, as we have stated, he has neither reflected upon nor felt the need to do so. But as he is dying, Mersault repeatedly thinks of Zagreus and the cripple's face constantly comes to his mind (MH, pp. 196, 199). The situation as Camus describes it is ambiguous, so that the line which divides innocence and guilt becomes invisible. On the one hand, the crime is referred to as an innocent act. "Dans l'innocence de son coeur, il acceptait ce ciel vert et cette terre mouillée d'amour avec le même tremblement de passion et de désir que lorsqu'il avait tué Zagreus dans l'innocence de son coeur" (MH, p. 186). On the other, Mersault is now conscious of the fact that he who imposes death on another also dies. However, there is no indication that one is necessarily the cause of the other. "Il laissait venir seulement le visage de Zagreus dans sa fraternité sanglante. Celui qui avait donné la mort allait mourir. Et comme alors pour Zagreus, le regard lucide qu'il tenait sur sa vie était celui d'un homme" (MH, p. 199). A certain
cause-effect situation is suggested here, so that Mersault's death becomes a payment for the life that he took.¹

Mersault has also come to consider his crime as an act of consummation and acceptance which created a bond between the murderer and victim. Though the crime symbolized a refusal to accept all that would bridge the distance between man and nature, all that would justify existence, it also involved an affirmative acceptance of life exactly as it was and is. Zagreus, representative of the unjustifiable world, was accepted as such, and it is perhaps in this sense that the consummation took place. The word "noces" qualifies Mersault's crime as an act of union which established a certain relationship between himself and Zagreus.

... il [Mersault] comprenait qu'à le [Zagreus] tuer il avait consommé avec lui des noces qui les liaient à tout jamais. Ce lourd cheminement de larmes qui était en lui comme un goût mêlé de la vie et de la mort, il comprenait qu'il leur était commun. Et dans l'immobilité même de Zagreus en face de la mort, il retrouvait l'image ... de sa propre vie (MH, p. 201).

Mersault has also come to the realization that Zagreus has been, for him, a source of life; and even in the face of his own death, the murderer desires not only to maintain his love of life, but also to meet death lucidly and fully conscious of it. As he faces death, the lesson in

¹. The idea of death as payment will reappear under different forms in Les Justes as well as in L'Etranger.
life and death of which he had been conscious in Algiers is amplified by the realization that a love of life inevitably implies the acceptance of one's own death.

Mais avant de s'endormir il eut le temps ... d'entendre, avec l'aube et le réveil du monde, comme un immense appel de tendresse et d'espoir qui fondait sans doute sa terreur de la mort, mais qui, dans le même temps l'assurait qu'il trouverait une raison de mourir dans ce qui avait été toute sa raison de vivre (MH, p. 197).

In accepting the fact of his own death, Mersault has succeeded in holding life in his hands; in this way, he has been master of his life and destiny. Since death, the most fundamental event of the absurd,\(^1\) is also man's destiny, man can become master of his own death by his very acceptance of it, just as he became master of his life by his very acceptance of life. Moreover, death is another episode in the life of man, it is the limit of his life and in Camusian terms, man's love of life implies not only jealousy of life,\(^2\) but also acceptance of death.

"Cette mort qu'il avait regardée avec l'affolement d'une bête, il comprenait qu'en avoir peur signifiait avoir peur de la vie. La peur de mourir justifiait un attachement sans bornes à ce qui est vivant dans l'homme" (MH, p. 200). When Mersault accepted life on the way to Vienna, he

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1. "... la mort (prise ici comme l'absurdité la plus évidente) ..." (MS, p. 142).

implicitly accepted the fatality of his own death. Just as the icy currents of the Mediterranean caused him to be even more amazed by this body of water, so the iciness he feels in his extremities stimulates the consciousness of life that exists in him, even while he is dying. The cold reveals a presence of warmth, just as the consciousness of death is accompanied by a consciousness of life. In the following quote, reference is made once again to the Hellenic belief in the relativity of sensual experience.

... il éprouvait de façon plus sensible le bout glacé de ses doigts et de ses pieds. Cela même révélait une vie, et dans ce voyage du froid au chaud, il retrouvait l'exaltation qui avait saisi Zagreus, remerciant "la vie pour lui permettre de brûler encore" (MH, p. 201).

On the day of his death, Mersault looks upon a warm and benevolent world, the same world that had invited him to life. Destiny, the world, nature do not crush him: again the heat of the sun is tempered by a coolness in the air. Yet, at the same time, life appears as a force which cannot be restrained and which explodes, releasing the "jus doré [et] tiède" that covers the earth and the sea. As is evidenced in the following passage, all is warmth, coolness, light, and life:

Le matin qui pointa fut plein d'oiseaux et de fraîcheur. Le soleil se leva. ... La terre se couvrit d'or et de chaleur. ... le ciel et la mer s'éclaboussaient de lumières bleues et jaunes. ... Un vent léger ... un air à goût de sel venait refraîchir les mains de Mersault. ... la journée éclata comme un fruit mûr ... elle coula en jus tiède. ... dans un concert
soudain de cigales. La mer se couvrit de jus doré ... un souffle chaud ... parfums d'absinthe, de romarin et de pierre chaude (MH, p. 203).

The smile of the sea and the earth is returned by Mersault and the "accord" he experienced between himself and the world when he was with Lucienne is experienced again as he dies (MH, p. 145). Fully conscious of the absurd and of life and death, all of which he has chosen to accept as is, Mersault dies a happy death. "Il regarda les lèvres gonflées de Lucienne et, derrière elle, le sourire de la terre. Il les regardait du même regard et avec le même désir" (MH, p. 204).

Mersault's conscious death in Chenoua is indicative of a life that has been truly lived, a life that contrasts immensely with the type of life lived as he sat on his balcony on a certain Sunday afternoon. Mersault's life has undergone drastic transformation. Before the crime, he merely existed, dying a slow death by living a dead life. With the event of the crime itself occurred the beginning of a change and a firm resolution to live and be happy. The two stages of the novel which Camus entitled "Mort naturelle" and "La Mort consciente" correspond to the two stages of Mersault's life which we have examined in this study, the crime marking the end of a dead life and the beginning of a conscious one which terminates in a conscious death. The crime as point of departure for Mersault has entailed a rejection of all that prevents man
from truly living and attaining happiness, all that may transcend this life. What has followed the crime has been a long and arduous lesson in the acceptance of the world and of the distance which exists between it and man. Such an acceptance is of vital importance in the case of the man who is dying a conscious death. It implies an acceptance of death as it is in itself, without the disguises imposed on it by Christian morality and religion. In Camusian terms, Mersault's initiation into life involved more than a "no" to that which may transcend the absurd. We have observed that it also involved a "yes" to the world, to life, and to death. Mersault, like Zagreus, son of Zeus, has undergone the experience of rebirth. Ultimately, the initiation into life has, in reality, been a long initiation to the fact of one's own death, an initiation during which there has been a movement from the consciousness of death (of Mersault's own dead life and of death as the most unjustifiable event of man's existence), to a consciousness of life (which accompanies the consciousness of death as is seen in the episode at Prague, and which is accompanied by an intense desire to live and to be happy), and back to a consciousness of death (as was observed in Mersault's death at Chenoua). The leap into life, the rebirth into it, embody the conscious acceptance of one's own death. The search for happiness goes hand in hand with the desire to truly live, but not with the hope for
immortality. To live happily is not to rid oneself of the fact of one's mortality. The happiness that results from complete immersion in the life which man possesses encompasses an acceptance of that life and of the death which is a part of that life. The man who looks toward a life beyond this one and who thereby accepts death, not as it is, but rather, vested in Christian hope, is not immersed in the present, does not accept the life that he has, and does not truly live that life. Man, by ridding himself of the fact of his mortality, is placing hope in future happiness and in a future life, thus denying himself the pleasure of living the life that he has. On the other hand, what once was an obstacle to man's happiness (the incomprehension of the fact of death) can become a source of happiness by the very refusal to despair of the human condition or to place hope in a better life.

Mersault's consciousness and subsequent acceptance and love of life have enabled him to live happily and in addition, to die happily, since death forms part of that life which he loves. Various notes for La Mort heureuse which are present in the Carnets reveal that a relation exists between death and the sun,¹ a relation which will

¹. The following notes are found in Camus, Carnets (mai 1935-février 1942): "Goût de la mort et du soleil" (1936, p. 25); "Soleil et mort" (1936, p. 36); "Dernier chapitre: Descente vers le soleil et mort (suicide-mort naturelle)" (1937, p. 64).
repeatedly appear in L'Etranger. It is observed that, in La Mort heureuse, the sun, providing warmth and light as it shines benevolently upon the earth, is a source of life. Yet, it is also a celestial body which exists at a distance and separate from man. Mersault dies in its presence and though death is final, the sun continues to shine and the world continues to exist, as if the universe were indifferently observing the coming and going of the beings who pass through life. This is not cruelty and unmercifulness on nature's part; rather, it is the natural order of things. The fact of death provides evidence of the distance which separates man and the sun, or man and the entire universe. Mersault dies happily precisely because he has savored the sun and the warmth of life while accepting the distance that separates him from this celestial body. In a word, he has kept before him a consciousness of death as it is and of the sun as it is.

The search for happiness raises a problem which is left unsolved in La Mort heureuse. We must remember that Mersault kills Zagreus so that he may be happy. If the crime is defined as the murder of Zagreus, Mersault's state of innocence, which seemed uncontested throughout 198 pages of the novel, becomes greatly obscured in the last six pages of the work. It is in these last pages that images of Zagreus constantly appear before Mersault at his death and that the narrator states that he who has
imposed death also dies. What is suggested here is that Mersault's death is a payment for the happiness he has attained, and the crime takes on added dimensions. Mersault, the apparently innocent criminal, may be guilty of more than murder: his search for happiness may possibly be his criminal act. The novel, though seemingly presenting a solution to the problem of death and the search for happiness, raises questions which are merely suggested and remain to be solved as regards the problem of crime, that morally necessary human act that enabled Mersault to be reborn, to live, to be happy, and to die a happy death.

It is interesting that Camus abandoned his novel and did not have it published. If one observes Mersault's crime and compares it with other outstanding criminal acts depicted in literature during the last hundred and fifty years or so, it appears that Camus has surpassed some of the most renowned authors in his treatment of crime as literary theme in *La Mort heureuse*. Perhaps two of the greatest crimes in literature have been committed by a Dostoyevskian character named Raskolnikov and by the Gidian character, Lafcadio. In both *Crime and Punishment* and *Les Caves du Vatican*, the criminals, whose crimes are premeditated, consider themselves superior human beings who scornfully look down on their victims. Yet both criminals must observe the consequences of their acts and must endure suffering and punishment for what they have
done. Raskolnikov is horrified by his criminal act and loathes it to such a degree that he is obsessed by a need to be purified through confession, the only means whereby he can obtain freedom and life. Even the seemingly care-free Lafcadio who chooses to commit a purely gratuitous criminal act is amazed as he observes the horrifying consequences of his crime. Both men have been imprisoned by their criminal acts—they are nervous, anxious, and afraid—and both are faced with the ultimate decision of giving themselves up. In both cases, crime is depicted as an evil act violating the right to live of another human being and demanding punishment of the criminal.

How does Camus, in La Mort heureuse, surpass the boundaries of the Dostoyevskian and Gidian criminal acts? First of all, Mersault is not the traditional criminal who considers himself superior to his victim. On the contrary, we have observed that Mersault progressively admires Zagreus and shares human warmth with him. Second, though his act is premeditated, it is a perfect crime and not an aggressive act. Therefore, Mersault undergoes no anguish, fear, or anxiety as a result of his act. He is not plagued by a need for confession and purification. Furthermore, he is not faced with the decision of giving himself up.

What all of this amounts to is that while Raskolnikov and Lafcadio suffer from a sense of guilt,
realizing that they have committed evil deeds and have caused harm to others, Mersault is not imprisoned in a sense of guilt and remorse. In making of his act a perfect crime, Camus seems to have eliminated the problem of guilt. The crime, rather than imprisoning him, frees him and permits him to live and find happiness. It is in this sense that Camus has surpassed the boundaries of the Dostoyevskian and Gidian criminal acts. For Camus, the a priori principle of crime as evil (i.e., as having harmful consequences) is non-existent.

Yet, at the same time, it is indicated that Mersault pays for his crime through his own death, revealing that Camus has been unable to totally avoid the problem of guilt and punishment, the very elements which seemed to have been eliminated because of the perfect crime. Camus' novel suggests that natural death is in some way linked to crime, a possibility unexplored by Dostoyevsky and Gide. The traditional criminal, like Raskolnikov and Lafcadio, is in a class of his own, apart from the class of non-criminals. But Mersault's situation raises a number of agonizing questions, questions which perhaps constituted an impasse encountered by Camus.

It must be remembered that if Mersault's death is a payment for crime, it is also a natural phenomenon. The next question which arises is the following: Is the natural phenomenon of death which all men must experience
a payment for crime in all cases? Are all men, then, criminals? Is the fatality of death accompanied by a natural propensity for crime? Is man, then, predisposed to crime or has he, through his own free will, chosen to commit his crime? Moreover, has man brought death upon himself? In the final analysis, Camus' Mersault makes us wonder, as it probably made Camus wonder, whether a criminal tendency forms part of man's nature, in which case the classification of criminals and non-criminals would be obliterated. If Camus was faced with the above questions and problems, as the end of the novel leads us to believe, and if the validity of the very crime which was supposed to be a point of departure for Mersault is shattered, then Zagreus as a symbolic character could be considered a literary failure.

Having considered the above problems, it is not surprising that Camus' novel resembles the essay. The traditional novel is a work which presents a conclusion, or, in other words, solutions and answers. However, by the end of *La Mort heureuse*, it is evident that the questions far outweigh the solutions and that this work has been an essay in the full sense of the word, a quest and an attempt.

Nevertheless, it is undeniable that as one observes Mersault, many facts, however paradoxical, are brought to light: (1) to love life does not imply belief
in an eternal life either in this life or in a next life; (2) to love life is to accept the fact of death; (3) the happiness that man experiences as he consciously lives and fearlessly faces death is something that can be experienced throughout a lifetime since to truly live is to be happy; (4) the initiation to life and happiness supposes an initiation to a happy death which takes place over an entire lifetime; (5) that very search for happiness (and Mersault has demonstrated that a state of happiness can be attained) may be in itself a criminal act, so that man's innocence is questionable. Through his criminal act, man has perhaps ostracized himself from an innocent state of being and, has, in this way, created his truly human nature.

We have seen that upon completion of La Mort heureuse, Camus' position as regards the problem of death and crime is far from clearly defined and that a basic uncertainty on both a moral and artistic level is revealed. For the time being, there is evidence that a thematic structure exists, that it is composed of the three main themes we have examined: death, crime, and happiness, and that a state of happiness, although it demands continual effort to be maintained (just as the consciousness of life and death also demands a continual struggle on the part of man), can be experienced by man. Although death and happiness have been Mersault's main concerns throughout his
Initiation to life, that which was for him a point of departure and the means to an end, lends itself to being, along with the problem of death and happiness, another major concern for Camus, a problem that will be more extensively explored in the novels following *La Mort heureuse*. 
CHAPTER III

L'ETRANGER

L'Étranger, which was completed in 1940 and published two years later, is not a revision of La Mort heureuse. Rather, it is a literary achievement, with its own plot and set of characters, that followed the first literary sketch which was La Mort heureuse. In this case, as in the former work, a crime is the central act of the novel. However, the nature of Meursault's criminal act and the circumstances under which it is committed are quite different from those of the crime in question in La Mort heureuse. We also observe that a significant phonetic and orthographic change has taken place in the name of the criminal involved, so that the stranger is called "Meursault" and not "Mersault." We can hypothesize that the change indicates a passing from the theme of "mer-soleil" (as the name "Mersault" suggests) to that of "mort-soleil" ("Meur-sault"). The change can also be observed as an integration of the two themes, "mer" and "mort," forming "mer" and "mort"-"soleil."

Meursault, first-person narrator, is an office clerk who tells us little about his life at work. He attends the funeral ceremonies which are held for his
mother, has a mistress, kills an Arab on a deserted beach, and is subsequently tried and condemned to death. The actual plot of the novel, like that of La Mort heureuse, is meager.

The Meursault we observe before the crime takes place is a man who appears to live fairly happily and who is quite content with his life as it is. He is "un indifférent" for whom everything in life has equal, if any, importance. How often things and events constitute for him nothing more than insignificant details. Meursault exists, events occur, he has various experiences, but nothing is significantly important to him. In his opinion, life can be lived one way or another and one way of life is not necessarily better or worse than the next. The indifference which Camus depicts is that of the skeptics and consists of a state of neutrality regarding logical and moral values. It is a natural state which Camus refers to as the "point zéro" of values. The episode which perhaps best reveals Meursault's attitude toward his life is that of his boss's offer to transfer him to Paris.

Cela me permettrait de vivre à Paris et aussi de voyager une partie de l'année. "Vous êtes jeune, et il me semble que c'est une vie qui doit vous plaire." J'ai dit que oui mais que dans le fond cela m'était égal. Il m'a demandé.

alors si je n'étais pas intéressé par un changement de vie. J'ai répondu qu'on ne changeait jamais de vie, qu'en tout cas toutes se valaient et que la mienne ici ne me déplaisait pas du tout. ... 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.1

If Meursault affirms that his life is not unpleasant and that he is not unhappy, for the time being he does not affirm that he is happy. He is satisfied with his way of life and sees no reason to change it. Furthermore, he considers that were he living under different circumstances, his life would not be any too different from the one he is living. In other words, Meursault is not disgusted with his life, nor does he love it. His indifference is such that life neither discords him nor enthuses him. There is evidence that his state of ataraxia is accompanied by an attitude of indifference as regards not only his life but also life in general. He is not the distressed Mersault who observes that his office is nothing more than a "columbarium où des heures mortes auraient pourri" (MH, p. 42) and who is aware of the dead life he is living. Nevertheless, like Mersault, Meursault appears as a

1. Albert Camus, "L'Etranger," in Théâtre, Récits, Nouvelles (Paris: Editions Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1962), pp. 1155-1156. All references to L'Etranger are from this edition of Camus' works. Subsequent references to it will be denoted in the body of this study by the abbreviation E and the page number of this edition.
spectator of life and not as one who participates in it. The Sunday afternoon spent on the balcony overlooking the street is a scene common to both La Mort heureuse and L'Étranger. In fact, whole passages depicting this scene in L'Étranger are identical to those found in the same episode described in Camus' first novel. Meursault, like Mersault, observes the people both young and old in the street, some taking a leisurely Sunday afternoon walk, others going to the cinemas or returning from a sporting event. As in La Mort heureuse, the activity which Meursault observes contrasts with his own inactivity and solitude, making this inactivity very striking. And as the same street slowly becomes deserted, Meursault acknowledges the presence of an atmosphere of solitude which is characteristic of a Sunday afternoon.

... la rue peu à peu est devenue déserte. Les spectacles étaient partout commencés, je crois. Il n'y avait plus dans la rue que les boutiquiers et les chats. Le ciel était pur mais sans éclat au-dessus des ficus qui bordent la rue. Sur le trottoir d'en face, le marchand de tabac a sorti une chaise, l'a installée devant sa porte et l'a enfourchée en s'appuyant des deux bras sur le dossier. Dans le petit café "Chez Pierrot," à côté du marchand de tabac, le garçon balayait de la sciure dans la salle désertée. C'était vraiment dimanche (E, p. 1140).

Meursault is an observer who does not participate in the activity which takes place below him. That he is a man who exists apart from life is also evidenced by the absence of human contact during that afternoon. When one of the
victorious players returning from a game cries out the news of his team's victory to Meursault, the latter's reaction consists of an indifferent and unenthusiastic "oui" (E, p. 1141).

Indifference on Meursault's part is also revealed in his relationship with Marie. Although he enjoys seeing her and being with her, these experiences are but temporary and situated purely in the present. Meursault enjoys them but does not value them. He enjoys an afternoon spent at the beach with Marie for the immediate pleasure that it brings. But a long-term, durable relationship is unimportant to him, just as a love for her is unimportant to him, and he tells her so. "... elle m'a demandé si je l'aimais. Je lui ai répondu que cela ne voulait rien dire, mais qu'il me semblait que non" (E, p. 1151). Time for Meursault is unimportant; he does not reflect on the past any more than he looks to the future. By living in the present and for the present he already shares something in common with the absurd man. Perhaps this lack of concern for time is best depicted in the opening sentences of his narrative:


The death of Mme Meursault is an event like any other which occurs in the life of Meursault, another event
on which the jury will base its decision to condemn Meursault to death, and we will later analyze this situation. It must be noted that throughout most of his narrative, Meursault reveals no concern for the fact of death, neither for his own nor another's. (It is not until the last chapter of the novel that a change of attitude occurs.) His mother's death in no way precipitates him to reflect on the value of life. Death is merely an event among many human events which occur and to which he remains indifferent.

Meursault goes through life undergoing various experiences, submitting to them and living unconsciously; in reality, he lives a life which is dead. But unlike Mersault of *La Mort heureuse*—and this difference is striking—Meursault is not conscious of the dead life he is leading. Even when he spends an afternoon at the beach with Marie and enjoys the warmth of the sun and the cool, refreshing water, there is no evidence of a deep joy of living which emanates from him. He enjoys these experiences for what they are, but not for the experience of actually living which they constitute. The pleasures of life which Meursault enjoys are experienced on a superficial level since no love of life is associated with them. According to Meursault, life is as it is and it is not altered by any events which occur. At the end of the Sunday afternoon spent on his balcony, he states: "J'ai
pensé que c'était toujours un dimanche de tiré, que maman était maintenant enterrée, que j'allais reprendre mon travail et que, somme toute, il n'y avait rien de changé" (E, p. 1142). However, the crime is doubly important: it will have a profound effect on Meursault's life and it will be important to the society that will judge it.

The crime which takes place in the desert on a scorchingly hot afternoon is an event which happens to Meursault as do all other episodes in his life. But it will have both immediate and long-term effects on his life so that "somme toute," something will be changed. The circumstances surrounding the murder indicate that the crime is totally unpremeditated, unlike the premeditated crime committed by Mersault of La Mort heureuse. The total absence of premeditation is further brought to light by the presence of the sun, not only at the time the crime is committed, but throughout the entire novel. It must be remembered that the sun of La Mort heureuse was warm and benevolent, but never oppressive. It was a source of a joy of living for Mersault who yearned for it and who strived to fulfill this desire by travelling south. On the other hand, in L'Etranger, the sun is for the most part an oppressive force, although there are certain incidents where it is warmth and the source of a feeling of well-being. For example, as Meursault leaves the home for the aged after having spent the night in vigil over his mother,
he steps out into a world of light and salt-filled sea
air. And he regrets that, due to his mother's death, he
cannot enjoy nature and relax in the country.

Quand je suis sorti, le jour était complètement
levé. Au-dessus des collines qui séparent
Marengo de la mer, le ciel était plein de
rougeurs. Et le vent qui passait au-dessus
d'elles apportait ici une odeur de sel. C'était
une belle journée qui se préparait. Il y avait
longtemps que j'étais allé à la campagne et je
sentais quel plaisir j'aurais pris à me promener
s'il n'y avait pas eu maman (E, p. 1133).

On a Saturday afternoon, Meursault and Marie go to the
beach and swim in the sea, a source of sensual pleasure.
Here again, the warmth of the sun is temperate. "Le
soleil de quatre heures n'était pas trop chaud, mais
l'eau était tiède, avec de petites vagues longues et
paresseuses. ... Nous nous sommes roulés dans les vagues
pendant un moment" (E, p. 1150). Even when Meursault,
Marie, and Sintès are at Masson's cabana on the beach,
the intense heat of the sun and the sand is tempered by
the coolness of the sea, as the following passage indi-
cates.

... j'étais occupé à éprouver que le soleil me
faisait du bien. Le sable commençait à chauffer
sous les pieds. J'ai retardé encore l'envie que
j'avais de l'eau, mais j'ai fini par dire à
Masson: "On y va?" J'ai plongé. ... L'eau
était froide et j'étais content de nager. Avec
Marie, nous nous sommes éloignés et nous nous
sentions d'accord dans nos gestes et dans notre
contentement (E, p. 1162).
In this situation, the "nage" is symbolic of Meursault's general accord with the world and with physical nature which do not burden him in any way.

The incidents in which the sun acts as an oppressive force far outnumber the few episodes cited above in which the intense heat is tempered by refreshing coolness. For the most part, the sun's role is that of an oppressive force which dominates man. The victim of this oppressiveness experiences several sensations. He is exposed to glaring light and intense heat which affect his physical being. He perspires and feels the pounding of his blood against his temples. The oppressiveness is also manifested in the effect on his state of consciousness: his vision and thoughts are upset. "Tout cela ... me troublait le regard et les idées," states Meursault (E, p. 1136). On the day of Madame Meursault's funeral, the sun beats so unmercifully on the procession as they proceed to the burial place that the tar-covered road has been softened into a viscous substance which makes the journey all the more difficult for the human beings participating in this funerary ceremony. In this scene, Camus speaks of the sun as a force which weighs on man. The journey undertaken by these human beings who are showing their respects to the dead becomes symbolic of their whole lives which consist basically of a burdensome and weary walk to the tomb. The oppressiveness of the solar force in this particular scene
is repeatedly emphasized and reemphasized by the very vocabulary used. Meursault states: "Le ciel était déjà plein de soleil. Il commençait à peser sur la terre et la chaleur augmentait rapidement. ... Aujourd'hui, le soleil débordant qui faisait tressaillir le paysage le rendait inhumain et déprimant" (E, p. 1135). In addition, Meursault is surprised how quickly the sun rises in the sky. As he expresses this reaction, all suggests intense, overpowering heat and the resulting discomfort experienced by those who must endure it.

J'étais surpris de la rapidité avec laquelle le soleil montait dans le ciel. Je me suis aperçu qu'il y avait déjà longtemps que la campagne bourdonnait du chant des insectes et de crépitements d'herbe. La sueur coulait sur mes joues (E, pp. 1135-1136).

Numerous other sentences which portray the oppression of the sun are scattered throughout this portion of the narrative: "L'éclat du ciel était insoutenable"; "Le soleil avait fait éclater le goudron"; "Je sentais le sang qui me battait aux tempes" (p. 1136).

The very morning that Meursault, Marie, and Sintès are ready to go to the beach, Meursault states that "le jour, déjà tout plein de soleil, m'a frappé comme une gifle" (E, p. 1160). From this point on, the solar "démesure" is progressively intensified, as is evidenced by the increased frequency of certain terms used and also by the forceful quality of the adjectives used to describe
the oppressive aspects of the sun. These two factors are present, in particular, in the narrative passages on the encounter between the Arabs and Meursault, Sintès, and Masson on the beach. Fragments such as the following are found in the three pages which depict this scene: "Le soleil tombait presque d'aplomb ..."; "son éclat ... insoutenable"; "la chaleur de pierre qui montait du sol"; "j'étais a moitié endormi par ce soleil sur ma tête nue"; "le sable surchauffé"; "nous restions cloués sous le soleil"; "soleil ... écrasant"; "Quand Raymond m'a donné son revolver, le soleil a glissé dessus"; "la tête retentissante de soleil"; "la pluie aveuglante qui tombait du ciel" (E, pp. 1163-1166). In this scene, the sun is more than a producer of intense, unbearable heat. It is a dizzying and blinding force which prevents man from acting lucidly. Crucified as he is to the earth, he no longer appears to be the master of his own acts.

As the solar intensity increases to unusual proportions, as the adjectives used become more forceful and as they increase in number, the narrative movement acquires more and more momentum, culminating in a terrifying explosion, as if this excess solar energy had nowhere to escape. The increasingly rapid momentum is illustrated by the fact that in less than two pages, Camus has described Meursault's return to the beach alone, his encounter with the Arab, and the criminal act itself. Within these two
pages, the allusions to the sun and its oppressive quality are numerous: "le même éclatement rouge"; "je sentais mon front gonfler sous le soleil"; "cette chaleur s'appuyait sur moi"; "son grand souffle chaud sur mon visage"; "chaque épée de lumière"; "son bleu de chauffe [de l'Arabe] fumait dans la chaleur"; "l'air enflammé"; "un océan de métal bouillant"; "une plage vibrante de soleil"; "la brûlure du soleil"; "la sueur amassée dans mes sourcils"; "la lumière a giclé sur l'acier"; "les cymbales du soleil sur mon front" (E, pp. 1167-1168). It is evident that the solar force is something far greater than Meursault can withstand and by the time the shooting occurs, he does not impress us as being a free and independent agent of his act.

He is, however, quite conscious of the power of the solar force on him and attempts to meet it on equal terms and to fight it. This is revealed in various physical reactions: a general stiffening of the body, the clenching of the fists, and the tensing of the jaws.

Je marchais lentement vers les rochers et je sentais mon front se gonfler sous le soleil. Toute cette chaleur s'appuyait sur moi et s'opposait à mon avance. Et chaque fois que je sentais son grand souffle chaud sur mon visage, je serrais les dents, je fermais les poings dans les poches de mon pantalon, je me tendais tout entier pour triompher du soleil et de cette ivresse opaque qu'il me déversait. A chaque épée de lumière jaillie du sable, d'un coquillage blanchi ou d'un débris de verre, mes mâchoires se crispaienat. J'ai marché longtemps (E, p. 1167).
Meursault, victim of the oppressive heat and light of the sun, suffers as a result of that oppressiveness. And because the intense heat is not tempered by coolness, nature is not the source of sensual pleasure that it was when he and Marie were together on the beach. There is a need in Meursault to flee suffering and that which is burdensome. But though he struggles with the sun and tries to dominate it, his efforts are unsuccessful and he admits that he is unable to vanquish it.

A 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 (E, p. 1168).

All available evidence indicates, then, that Meursault is unable to dominate this force which is greater than he and which acts as would a god. For the sun, the center of the universe, was, in Greek mythology, considered "the eye of Zeus."¹ Meursault, wishing desperately to be rid of such oppression, seeks the refreshment which would be provided by shade and coolness. Herein lies the source of his conflict and the direct cause of the crime. The sun provokes his obsessive desire for the refreshing coolness of the spring which is found near the Arab. And for Camus, water is always associated with life. The criminal

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situation, then, consists of a relation between the sun and the water.

Je voyais de loin la petite masse sombre du rocher entourée d'un halo aveuglant par la lumière et la poussière de mer. Je pensais à la source fraîche derrière le rocher. J'avais envie de retrouver le murmure de son eau, envie de fuir le soleil, l'effort et les pleurs de femme, envie de retrouver l'ombre et le repos. Mais quand j'étais plus près, j'ai vu que le type de Raymond était revenu (E, p. 1167).

He then considers the possibility of turning his back on the spring and changing his direction, but the force overpowers him and pushes him onward. "J'ai pensé que je n'avais qu'un demi-tour à faire et ce serait fini. Mais toute une plage vibrante de soleil se pressait derrière moi" (E, pp. 1167-1168). Essentially, what has happened is that nature has caused Meursault's relatively unoppressive and happy life to be upset. A victim of the oppressive heat, Meursault longs for the same comfort he experienced when on the beach with Marie. This longing is essentially a search for happiness, a search symbolized by the walk toward the spring. If he succeeds in reaching the source of refreshing coolness, he will experience the happiness which stems from the sensual pleasure of tasting and feeling the cool water.

But Meursault, blinded by the sun, does not see clearly: "... son image [de l'Arabe] dansait devant mes yeux" (E, p. 1167). He is the victim of a force which dominates him cruelly, a force representative of fate and
destiny, against which he is powerless. The throbbing in
his head caused by the circulation of his blood is the
throbbing of the life which is in him, but of a life which
is oppressive.

The presence of the Arab constitutes an obstacle
to the happiness Meursault wishes to attain, and he is
destroyed. When the crime is committed, all of nature
reacts and Meursault has the impression that the sky is
regurgitating a rain, not of water (which would refresh
him), but of fire. "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" (E, p. 1168). A scholar of Greek
mythology observes that rain is the form of punishment
inflicted upon the successors of two seekers of knowledge
who defied beings superior to themselves: Prometheus and
Adam. He states that "le même châtiment purificateur ...
atteint toutes les créatures de Prométhée et tous les
descendants d'Adam: l'esprit envoie le châtiment aux
mortels pervertis sous forme de pluie ... ."¹ Meursault's
search for solace has been an act which has displeased the
gods or that solar force which the Greeks considered to be
the eye of Zeus.

¹. Paul Diel, Le Symbolisme dans la mythologie
grecque, Étude psychanalytique (Paris: Payot, 1966),
pp. 248-249.
When Meursault shoots the Arab, there is a realization on his part that, by his act, he has upset the order of things and that in so doing, he has jeopardized his own happiness.

... c'est là, dans le bruit à la fois sec et assourdissant, que tout a commencé. J'ai secoué la sueur et le soleil. J'ai compris que j'avais détruit l'équilibre du jour, le silence exceptionnel d'une plage où j'avais été heureux (E, p. 1168).

It is the first time that Meursault takes a look at his life and is conscious of it. As Germaine Brée states in a study of L'Etranger, "the revolver shot jolts Meursault out of his purely negative state." This observation has its limitations, however. Meursault's indifference to life as a whole as well as to his own life does not constitute, in my opinion, a negative state per se. I would rather call it a state where there is absence of guilt, a certain state of primitive (or original) innocence which resembles that described by Rousseau. The crime, rather than being a passage from a negative to a positive state, is a passage from a previous state of innocence and animality to the state of humanity. Through his crime, Meursault becomes man and is no longer an animal and because he has attained this humanity, to kill someone becomes a criminal act.

Having fired the first shot which kills the Arab,

Meursault realizes that he has upset a certain order of things. The solar force has been defied. However, this realization does not encompass feelings of guilt or even of responsibility on Meursault's part regarding his act. Four more shots are then fired into the body which lies before him and he states in his narrative that it was as if he were inviting himself into a world of unhappiness. "Alors, j'ai tiré encore quatre fois sur un corps inerte où les balles s'enfonçaient sans qu'il y parût. Et c'était comme quatre coups brefs que je frappais sur la porte du malheur" (E, p. 1168). Champigny examines the scene of the last four shots fired by Meursault and establishes a hypothesis based on an interpretation of the verb "frapper" used by Meursault. Champigny wonders if the murderer wanted to fire the additional shots.

A-t-il voulu ajouter cela [les quatre coups]? Nous n'avons pour appui que la fin de la phrase: "C'était comme quatre coups brefs que je frappais sur la porte du malheur." Pouvons-nous donner au verbe "frappais" toute sa force active? Meursault appellerait le malheur, il voudrait entrer dans le malheur, appesantir les conséquences de son erreur. Tout se passerait comme si Meursault voulait perversément se punir d'avoir "détruit l'équilibre du jour," comme s'il voulait écarter l'impie de la plage, du lieu dont il a souillé la splendeur, enlever cette tache humaine de la plage et la livrer à ses semblables, les hommes, comme s'il voulait prendre sur lui la laideur qu'il vient de provoquer.¹

Champigny realizes the dangers of such a psychoanalytic interpretation of Meursault's acts and that he risks falling into "démesure," as he states, by attempting to push his observation beyond the realm of hypothesis.

The four shots, like the first, constitute an event which happens to Meursault and he harbors no feelings of guilt or responsibility for his acts. Therefore the possibility of a subconscious desire for self-punishment is nil, if punishment is to be defined as retribution for wrongdoings. At the time the crime takes place, as well as afterwards, Meursault has no feelings of having committed an act for which he deserves punishment, be it self-inflicted or imposed by others.

The circumstances under which Meursault, the criminal, acted and which we have examined above, indicate that he is a victim of fate and destiny. Meursault is the innocent criminal; but whereas the crime committed by Patrice of *La Mort heureuse* was the perfect crime, though premeditated, Meursault's act will be judged and he will be declared the guiltiest and most vile of criminals. The name "Meursault" calls to mind the words "mort" and "soleil," two elements which are clearly related in this work. Meursault has imposed death on a human being because of the solar force of nature which has acted upon him. And as a result of this, he will be condemned to die. With
society's intervention, the problem of the duality of happiness and tragedy presents itself.

The problem of trial, judgment, and condemnation which arises involves the apparition of a character not present in *La Mort heureuse*. That character is society, that system of values and rules which, by its very nature, bears the qualities of a being superior to the evil-doer. It has not only taken upon itself the right to judge the acts of men but has also invested itself with the authority to condemn men to death and to force them to repent of their supposedly evil acts. It must be noted that prior to the criminal act, Meursault was a stranger neither in relation to his friends and acquaintances, nor to society, a fact which Robert Champigny brings out in his study of *L'Etranger*. Champigny states that he does appear, however, as a stranger to the reader.¹ After the crime, a transmutation of attitude takes place and in the eyes of society, Meursault develops into a monster of grotesque proportions, while on the other hand, the terrain is prepared for the bridging of the gap between narrator and reader which will occur at the end of the novel.

We have stated that Meursault experiences no feelings of responsibility for his act. He is simply aware that he has disturbed and upset a certain order of things.

which exists in the world. But if the question of guilt does not present itself as a concern of his, neither does he affirm his innocence. When asked why he returned to the place where the Arab was, he tells us: "J'ai dit que c'était le hasard" (E, p. 1188). Moreover, when he is asked to explain the motives of his criminal act, he relates the fact as he sees it and without accusing himself or another, and states that it happened because of the sun. "J'ai dit rapidement, en mêlant un peu mes mots et en me rendant compte de mon ridicule, que c'était à cause du soleil. Il y a eu des rires dans la salle" (E, p. 1198). Meursault places the blame on nothing and no one. The criminal act, as far as he is concerned, is an event which occurred, an experience which he underwent.

The problem of the ethics of guilt and responsibility is introduced by a society which labels him as a criminal and consequently as a stranger as regards his relation to that society. It is society, inventor of morality and of religion as resolutions to the problem of crime and man's criminality, which imposes upon him the notion of guilt and the feeling of "étrangété." But as the trial proceeds, the question of the definition of his crime and the extent of his guilt becomes quite complex. The actual murder of the Arab is but one small factor under consideration in the minds of the judges, a fact which will be examined later in this chapter. There
exists a rapport between the problem of the ethics of guilt in this novel and the problem of guilt in relation to crime which Sartre presents in his play entitled "Les Mouches." Oreste's crime is not only a free act (as opposed to Meursault's), but also the initial act which makes liberty possible. And in both cases, crime as passage from animality to humanity appears as a dominant theme. The animal, then, cannot be a criminal.

From the time of his very first encounter with society as judge and at various times during the trial, Meursault is impressed by its theatrical quality. He makes the following observations on his first session with the "juge d'instruction":

Il m'a reçu dans une pièce tendue de rideaux, il avait sur son bureau une seule lampe qui éclairait le fauteuil où il m'a fait asseoir pendant que lui-même restait dans l'ombre. J'avais déjà lu une description semblable dans des livres et tout cela m'a paru un jeu (E, p. 1171).

And a game it is, as Robert Champigny also asserts. For those who do not play the role that society wishes them to play in the name of universal justice, severe consequences ensue. A conflict of attitudes arises between Meursault and the judges of his crime. Meursault is sincere and honest and does not play a role. He is therefore condemned to death for two crimes. The first is not so much the murder of the Arab as the absence of a demonstration of repentance for his criminal act, either on a social or a
religious level. During his final speech, the "procureur" exclaims to the court: "A-t-il seulement exprimé des regrets? Jamais, messieurs. Pas une seule fois au cours de l'instruction cet homme n'a paru ému de son abominable forfait" (E, p. 1196). But in reality, and as Meursault himself asserts, he is not able to regret what he has done. And he openly explains his position to the reader. We have already observed that for Meursault, only the present and at most, the immediate future, are important; and to regret an act is to focus one's attention on the past. Meursault's honesty goes as far as to frankly admit that the judge's statement regarding his lack of repentance is valid.

Sans doute, je ne pouvais pas m'empêcher de reconnaître qu'il avait raison. Je ne regrettais pas beaucoup mon acte. Mais tant d'acharnement m'étonnait. J'aurais voulu essayer de lui expliquer cordialement, presque avec affection, que je n'avais jamais pu regretter vraiment quelque chose. J'étais toujours pris par ce qui allait arriver, par aujourd'hui ou par demain (E, pp. 1196-1197).

Meursault, then, is absolutely not one who would like to situate himself as a hero in history, since the past is of no importance to him.

His lack of repentance exists on a religious level as well, as is indicated in the scene of the discussion with the judge before Meursault is brought to trial. In this case, Meursault is presented with the possibility of repenting before God and of obtaining forgiveness. By not taking advantage of this opportunity, he presents himself
as a threat to the judge who professes belief in God so that his life may have a meaning. The source of that meaning exists outside of life—it is "au-delà." Again, since Meursault is anchored in the present and in this life, he cannot accept what the judge offers him, since such an acceptance would involve not only a regret of the past, but also a hope of salvation and of a life beyond this one.

In the eyes of society, Meursault is also guilty of a second crime: moral matricide, actually the only crime according to society. Again the accusation stems from his sincerity and honesty which are at the basis of the absence of feigned emotion. The crime in question is not the taking of another's life, but Meursault's refusal to accept an established standard of ethics which masks the fact of the existence of crime and death.

In reference to this, it must be remembered that filial love, according to the rules of a theatrical society, must be overtly expressed, whether sincerely or not. During the trial, it is not the murder of the Arab but Madame Meursault's death that becomes the central event upon which justice focuses its attention. Society, in lieu of judging the criminal act, judges Meursault's actions on the day of his mother's wake and funeral, actions which that society considers to be hardly demonstrative of the sorrow and concern expected upon the
the death of one's mother. According to the judges, the testimony presented by the various witnesses questioned by the offense (the director of the home for the aged, the concierge and Marie) substantiate Meursault's guilt.

A une autre question, il [le directeur de l'asile] a répondu qu'il avait été surpris de mon calme le jour de l'enterrement. On lui a demandé ce qu'il entendait par calme. Le directeur a regardé alors le bout de ses souliers et il a dit que je n'avais pas voulu voir maman, je n'avais pas pleuré une seule fois et j'étais parti aussitôt après l'enterrement sans me recueillir sur sa tombe. Une chose encore l'avait surpris: un employé des pompes funèbres lui avait dit que je ne savais pas l'âge de maman (E, p. 1189).

The testimony of the "concierge" is viewed by the jury and judges in the same light as were the director's statements. Again the narrator is conscious of the theatrical aspects of the entire judicial procedure and he refers to it as a ceremony: "Pour lui [le concierge] comme pour tous les autres, le même cérémonial s'est répété" (E, p. 1189). As the "concierge" answers the questions put to him, his testimony moves the judges and jury to such a degree that Meursault, for the first time, understands that in their eyes, he is culpable of his acts.

Il a dit que je n'avais pas voulu voir maman, que j'avais fumé, que j'avais dormi et que j'avais pris du café au lait. J'ai senti alors quelque chose qui soulevait la salle et, pour la première fois, j'ai compris que j'étais coupable. On a fait répéter au concierge l'histoire du café au lait et celle de la cigarette (E, p. 1189).
The concierge is also asked if he smoked with Meursault during the all-night vigil for Madame Meursault. "Le vieux a dit d'un air embarrassé: 'Je sais bien que j'ai eu tort. Mais je n'ai pas osé refuser la cigarette que Monsieur m'a offerte'" (E, p. 1189). At this point, the ludicrousness of the court's horrified reaction to the fact that one would dare to smoke before a cadaver reaches such proportions that the entire situation oozes of black humor. Moreover, the court makes it precisely clear—and this intensifies the black humor in question—that in its estimation, Meursault should not have performed the simple, banal acts that he did during the all-night vigil for his dead mother. The "procureur" states the following: "Oui, MM. les jurés apprécieront. Et ils concluront qu'un étranger pouvait proposer du café, mais qu'un fils devait le refuser devant le corps de celle qui lui avait donné le jour" (E, p. 1190). Following Marie's testimony, he adds that Meursault's conduct the day after the death of his mother was hardly becoming of a son: "Messieurs les jurés, le lendemain de la mort de sa mère, cet homme prenait des bains, commençait une liaison irrégulière, et allait rire devant un film comique" (E, p. 1192).

Objectively speaking, the testimony offered is neither positive nor negative. It does not consist of facts which evidence Meursault's hatred or dislike for his mother any more than it evidences love for her. It is
purely on the basis of his lack of emotion that society makes its judgment. In the following scene, black humor reaches its paroxysm.

Mais mon avocat, à bout de patience, s'est écrit en levant les bras, de sorte que ses manches en retombant ont découvert les plis d'une chemise amidonnée: "Enfin est-il accusé d'avoir enterré sa mère ou d'avoir tué un homme?" Le public a ri. Mais le procureur s'est redressé encore, s'est drapé dans sa robe et a déclaré qu'il fallait avoir l'ingénuité de l'honorable défenseur pour ne pas sentir qu'il y avait entre ces deux ordres de faits une relation profonde, pathétique, essentielle. "Oui, s'est-il écrit avec force, j'accuse cet homme d'avoir enterré une mère avec un coeur de criminel" (E, pp. 1193-1194).

The black humor is enhanced by the laughs of the public who behave as if they were spectators of a show. On the first day of the trial, before it begins, Meursault is amazed at the casualness and friendliness of the jury, judges and journalists and he states: "J'ai remarqué à ce moment que tout le monde se rencontrait, s'interpellait et conversait, comme dans un club où l'on est heureux de se retrouver entre gens du même monde" (E, p. 1185). In this case, the affair appears to be a social event, an occasion for the public to be entertained. Bur ironically enough, there is another spectator present, the criminal himself. Meursault realizes that he is not entirely the central figure on the judicial theatrical stage, but rather a figure alienated from the public, a spectator who finds himself in the wings. He is amazed by the fact that the trial is conducted as if he were not involved in it at all. "Tout se
déroulait sans mon intervention. Mon sort se réglait sans qu'on prenne mon avis" (E, p. 1195). His astonishment is also aroused when his lawyer presents his defense, not in the third person, but in the first as if he himself were the criminal. Meursault comments on this situation which he considers to be extremely peculiar. "Moi, j'ai pensé que c'était m'écarter encore de l'affaire, me réduire à zéro et, en un certain sens, se substituer à moi. Mais je crois que j'étais déjà très loin de cette salle d'audience" (E, pp. 1198-1199).

It is evident that the judicial procedure has progressed in such a fashion that Meursault feels as a stranger to those who are judging him and since, by his sincerity, he does not participate in the ceremonial activity which takes place, he not only excludes himself from it, but at the same time, is excluded by his judges, thereby becoming a spectator of his condemnation. The court contends that he is guilty of more than the murder of the Arab, as we have observed. Also, in the court's estimation, his crime entails more than the series of acts performed over a period of time extending from the day that he placed his mother in a home to the events which took place after her death. In fact, society and justice amplify Meursault's crime to such a degree that he is defined as an evil being who, as such, has deep criminal tendencies. This is evidenced in society's reference to
Meursault's "coeur de criminel" (E, p. 1194). It is re-emphasized in the statement made by the "avocat-général."

Meursault explains:

Toujours selon lui, un homme qui tuait moralement sa mère se retranchait de la société des hommes au même titre que celui qui portait une main meurtrière sur l'auteur de ses jours. Dans tous les cas, le premier préparait les actes du second, il les annonçait en quelque sorte et il les légitimait. "J'en suis persuadé, messieurs, a-t-il ajouté en élevant la voix, vous ne trouverez pas ma pensée trop audacieuse, si je dis que l'homme qui est assis sur ce banc est coupable aussi du meurtre que cette cour devra juger demain [le patricide]. Il doit être puni en conséquence (E, pp. 1197-1198).

Patricide is the murder of the father, figure of authority, and head of the family structure. Society and justice also consider themselves invested with authority and as such, demand respect. Like the father, they may reward or punish, as circumstances seem fit. Meursault, however, in relation to the patriarchal authority, does not appear as a submissive child, ready and willing to act in accordance with the paternal wishes of society. (We have observed that he does not play the role of the repentant criminal.) Thus, Meursault's sincerity constitutes a threat to a society which has vested itself with the authority to condemn and which plays the role of the judge. For Meursault and justice to get along, Meursault would have to play the role of the repentant sinner and criminal. He would thus uphold justice's claim to the universal and absolute quality of its judicial principles. But since he
does not repent, that universality and absoluteness are thwarted, and the "sens" of the life of the judicial structure is threatened, just as the meaning of the judge's life was threatened. The accusation of patricide serves as a counter-attack by a judicial system which has been forced to ask itself the same exclamatory question which the "juge d'instruction" asked Meursault: "Voulez-vous ... que ma vie n'ait pas de sens?" (E, p. 1175). This reference to the meaning of one's life demonstrates clearly that Camus presents the problem of man's philosophy of living in its relation to the values which he must seek in order for him to give meaning to his life. Once this question is raised by any authority which considers itself absolute and therefore unquestionable, the mask of absoluteness and universality begins to deteriorate. It is in this sense that Meursault is guilty of patricide in the eyes of society. Society judges that anyone who is found guilty of patricide, of presenting himself as a threat to authority, is inherently evil and must be punished so that so-called justice may triumph, good may reign, and evil may be destroyed.

That end, however, is accomplished by the complete destruction of that in which evil resides and Meursault is consequently condemned to death by his judges. But by the end of Meursault's trial, the reader realizes that the focus has not been placed on Meursault, mere spectator of
his own trial, but on the society which has judged him. And as Meursault's honesty and sincerity contrast more and more with the ceremonial and theatrical aspects of the court, the reader's sympathy is aroused in favor of Meursault. Essentially, what has occurred is that justice as judge of Meursault's crime, has put itself on trial. By claiming to act in the name of an absolute, society has condemned a man to death and will execute him. Thus the judicial system itself has become guilty of crime. Meursault, whose crime was unpremeditated, is proclaimed guilty by a society which has committed a very premeditated crime. The problem of guilt and of the "meurtrier coupable," which was not present in La Mort heureuse, appears in L'Etranger in such a way that, in observing society's judgment of Meursault, the reader finds himself judging the judge. Meursault's innocence contrasts with the guilt of his judges who, in their effort to abolish evil, have also committed the evil act of murder. The trial of Meursault indicates, then, that moral evil resides, not in the individual, as the court would have us believe, but in society.

We have stated that the crime has had a profound effect on Meursault's relationship with society, and that prior to the murder, Meursault did not consider himself as a stranger to that society. Let us add that Meursault is aware of the change which has taken place and of the
isolation which he as criminal experiences. The feeling of
"étrangété" first permeates him during his first meeting
with the "juge d'instruction." "En sortant, j'allais même
lui tendre la main, mais je me suis souvenu à temps que
j'avais tué un homme" (E, p. 1171). It is in his con­
frontation with society and with justice that Meursault
feels as a stranger, as if society, by the very fact that
it presents itself as judge of Meursault's act, imposes
this feeling on him. For, deep down within himself,
Meursault does not consider himself a stranger, as is
evidenced in his first meeting with his lawyer.

It is perhaps in the following scene that the gap between
society's ceremonies and Meursault's sincerity is first
visibly evident. "Ce que je pouvais dire à coup sûr, c'est
que j'aurais préféré que maman ne mourût pas. Mais mon
avocat n'avait pas l'air content. Il m'a dit: 'Ceci n'est
pas assez!'" (E, p. 1172). The "ceci," Meursault's
sincerity, is by nature such that he makes no statement
which might imply more than that which it is. Champigny
refers to the contrast between society and Meursault's
life as an opposition between "anti-phusis" and "phusis."
He states:
Meursault refuse donc de renier sa vie. Ce faisant, il se coupe définitivement et volontairement de la société théâtrale et religieuse, de la société qui est antiphusis. Mais dans le même temps, en serrant soudain sa vie presque achevée, ou du moins l'idée de sa vie achevée, comme entre ses mains, il communique avec lui-même, avec sa vie qui est phusis.  

It is during the testimony of the witnesses that Meursault learns that he is guilty, and he informs us that the notion of guilt has been imposed upon him by the judicial structure.

En arrivant, le concierge m'a regardé et il a détourné les yeux. Il a répondu aux questions qu'on lui posait. Il a dit que je n'avais pas voulu voir maman, que j'avais fumé, que j'avais dormi et que j'avais pris du café au lait. J'ai senti alors quelque chose qui soulevait toute la salle et, pour la première fois, j'ai compris que j'étais coupable (E, p. 1189).

Meursault feels as a stranger in relation to society precisely because that society considers him guilty. The feeling of "étranger" does not come from within himself, but is rather the result of a clash with an authoritative power which is exterior to him. Because of the nature of the two forces in question, the "phusis" and "anti-phusis," and of the gap which exists between them, the theme of societal misunderstanding and of the difficulty of communication between men arises. It appears as a theme only marginally in L'Etranger. In speaking about the "juge d'instruction," Meursault states: "J'ai eu l'impression

1. Ibid., p. 33.
qu'il ne me comprenait pas" (E, p. 1176). The problem of the tragedy of communication will be of predominant concern in the play entitled "Le Malentendu."

Having examined the change which occurs in Meursault's relationship to society as a result of his crime and having also observed him as he was before the crime was committed, it is only fitting to determine if and how his criminal act has affected his position in relation to his own life as well as to the world and to life as a whole.

We have observed that when the shot which kills the Arab is fired, Meursault is aware that he has upset a certain order of things. This awareness is synonymous with a level of consciousness which he has never previously attained and it is the first time that he is not totally indifferent. At this time, he undergoes a "prise de conscience" not only of his act as an event which is not unimportant, but also of the happy life he experienced before he fired the shot. The criminal act, then, constitutes a point of departure in the life of Meursault. It also is a breaking point, a sort of revelation marking the beginning of a consciousness of life.

A second notable change which occurs in Meursault regards the passing of time. In the chapter dedicated to Meursault's imprisonment (Part II, Chapter II), time, which previously was of no importance to him, now becomes
his major concern: besides being aware of the existence of time, Meursault is now forced to consider just how he will use it—in other words, how he will live—since he is isolated from the world he knew before the crime was committed. He states that "Toute la question ... était de tuer le temps" (E, p. 1181). For him, time presents itself under heretofore undiscovered dimensions and he is now conscious of it. Such consciousness of time is, by nature, consciousness of one's own life and Meursault, conscious of his present life and of the time which he possesses, affirms: "... j'ai senti que j'étais chez moi dans ma cellule et que ma vie s'y arrêtait" (E, p. 1177). Meursault's concern for the present and for this life is accompanied by a desire to enjoy pleasures previously experienced. Implicit in this desire is a belated consciousness and appreciation of the life he led before the crime.

However, conscious as he is of his state of imprisonment, he comes to consciously savor life as it is under the present circumstances.
J'attendais la promenade quotidienne que je faisais dans la cour ou la visite de mon avocat. Je m'arrangeais très bien avec le reste de mon temps. J'ai souvent pensé alors que si l'on m'avait fait vivre dans un tronc d'arbre sec, sans autre occupation que de regarder la fleur du ciel au-dessus de ma tête, je m'y serais peu à peu habitué (E, p. 1180).

Meursault now values the ordinary daily events which take place and which, prior to the crime, he would have considered as totally insignificant details.

Meursault's need to kill time evidences that he has learned that he possesses a life which belongs to him and is to be lived only by himself. But, in addition to this, it is also as a prisoner that he becomes conscious of himself as an existing being. This calls to mind the Platonic theme of man imprisoned in a cave. Camus' thought has its roots in Greek skepticism which in turn is based on the Platonic portrayal of man as imprisoned in his human condition. The prison itself is the symbol of human existence, and the problem which arises in the case of the Greek skeptics as well as in Camus' case is that of man's attainment of happiness in a prison from which he cannot escape.

Meursault's experience of consciousness of his existence is sensual: he sees himself and hears his voice. This is an important step in his development in consciousness and his account of it is related in the following terms:
Meursault's experience in consciousness thus far is two-fold. Not only is he now conscious of his state of being and of the world in which he lives. He is also very aware of his own existence and of himself as a speaking and living being. His development in consciousness does not end here, however. We shall see that it has yet to be completed by a consciousness of death.

We have already discussed Meursault's trial and the theatrical quality of that judicial ceremony. The trial, too, has its effect on the criminal's relation with life. Meursault reacts to the judicial procedures that take place and finds that the questioning he must undergo as well as the speeches of the lawyer bore him. The oppressive heat combined with the theatrical atmosphere which reigns in the courtroom burdens him. It is a world which contrasts

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1. Meursault states: "J'ai compris qu'il allait encore parler de maman et j'ai senti en même temps combien cela m'ennuyait" (E, p. 1188). And again: "... la plaïdoirie du procureur m'a très vite lassé" (E, p. 1195). Later: "La plaïdoirie de mon avocat me semblait ne devoir jamais finir" (E, p. 1198).
immensely with the world outside the courthouse, the world that Meursault knew before his imprisonment. As Meursault leaves the courthouse, he sensually experiences an awareness of the world in which he lived before the crime and of the happiness which that life offered him. Rather than indifferently stating, as he had to his boss at the office, "... je n'étais pas malheureux" (E, p. 1156), Meursault recognizes that he is isolated from a world where he once was happy.

Meursault's statement that "quelque chose était changé" is striking, for it has no resemblance to the indifferent attitude which permeates the first part of the narrative before the crime was committed. Moreover, his present consciousness of life and of his past happiness are such that his boredom with the judicial procedure develops into
disgust that time—and life—should be so ill-spent. He describes these thoughts pondered during his lawyer's defense.

A la fin, je me souviens seulement que, de la rue et à travers tout l'espace des salles et des prétoires, pendant que mon avocat continuait à parler, la trompette d'un marchand de glace a résonné jusqu'à moi. J'ai été assailli des souvenirs d'une vie qui ne m'appartenait plus, mais où j'avais trouvé les plus pauvres et les plus tenaces de mes joies: des odeurs d'été, le quartier que j'aimais, un certain ciel du soir, le rire et les robes de Marie. Tout ce que je faisais d'inutile en ce lieu m'est alors remonté à la gorge et je n'ai eu qu'une hâte, c'est qu'on en finisse et que je retrouve ma cellule avec le sommeil (E, p. 1199).

This passage, with its Proustian tone, demonstrates that living, according to Camus, is experienced through the senses, either in its actuality as one is experiencing it or through remembrance of the past.

Meursault's realization that something has changed is a statement of the now complete consciousness he has attained of the life he has lost. It involves a complete realization that a certain equilibrium has been destroyed and that he has knocked on the door of "le malheur." The crime, then, has truly been a point of departure.

Happiness, as viewed by Meursault at this point in his narrative, is a thing past, lost. Meursault will have to advance one more step in his growth in consciousness before he is able to experience happiness in his imprisoned state. That one and most significant step will involve a
complete and conscious acceptance of death which heretofore he has not experienced. Upon the announcement of the court's decision to condemn him to death, Meursault undergoes no violent reaction. In fact, he remains very calm as if this announcement were merely another in the series of judicial proclamations made during the trial. Meursault explains the following to us:

... le président m'a dit dans une forme bizarre que j'aurais la tête tranchée sur une place publique au nom du peuple français. Il m'a semblé alors reconnaître le sentiment que je lisais sur tous les visages. Je crois bien que c'était de la considération. Les gendarmes étaient très doux avec moi. L'avocat a posé sa main sur mon poignet. Je ne pensais plus à rien. Mais le président m'a demandé si je n'avais rien à ajouter. J'ai réfléchi. J'ai dit: "Non." C'est alors qu'on m'a emmené (E, p. 1201).

Of the ten pages which constitute the last chapter of the novel, five are dedicated to the problem of Meursault's condemnation and the deliberating which he undergoes as a result of it. Although he recognizes the arbitrary quality of the death sentence, he does not deny that he is faced with a very real situation that affects his life. Meursault has been placed face to face with the fact of his own death. Human consciousness of death, as demonstrated in this novel, is imposed on man by society; and it is imposed by that very society which has previously imposed upon man his consciousness of crime. This is a significant aspect of the link that exists between the themes of crime and death in this work.
Le fait que la sentence avait été lue à vingt heures plutôt qu'à dix-sept, le fait qu'elle aurait pu être tout autre, qu'elle avait été prise par des hommes qui changent de linge, qu'elle avait été portée au crédit d'une notion aussi imprécise que le peuple français (ou allemand, ou chinois), il me semblait bien que tout cela enlevait beaucoup de sérieux à une telle décision. Pourtant j'étais obligé de reconnaître que dès la seconde où elle avait été prise, ses effets devenaient aussi certains, aussi sérieux, que la présence de ce mur tout le long duquel j'écrasais mon corps (E, p. 1203).

Meursault now realizes that the existence of the fact of death is something which he cannot deny. He examines the situation carefully, without suffering great bouts of anguish, and ponders the possibility of escaping his execution, asking himself if the inevitable can be escaped:

"Ce qui m'intéresse en ce moment, c'est d'échapper à la mécanique, de savoir si l'inévitable peut avoir une issue" (E, p. 1202). But he soon concludes that such hope is unrealistic and that fate would not permit him to free himself from the execution.

In spite of this realization, however, Meursault admits that he finds it difficult to accept the certitude of his death. After going as far as to suppose the chance
malfunction of the mechanical object used to execute, he decides that if the object did not work properly, the executioner would only have to repeat the process (E, p. 1204). As for a reversal in the court's decision, Meursault, after much reflecting, also rejects hope in that possibility. "Pendant tout le jour, il y avait mon pourvoi. Je crois que j'ai tiré le meilleur parti de cette idée. Je calculais mes effets et j'obtenais de mes réflexions le meilleur rendement. Je prenais la plus mauvaise supposition: mon pourvoi était rejeté" (E, pp. 1205-1206).

The possibility of escape which Meursault ponders is accompanied by another factor which makes the acceptance of the certitude of imminent death difficult. This factor is Meursault's consciousness of the life which is in him.

J'écoutais mon coeur. Je ne pouvais imaginer que ce bruit qui m'accompagnait depuis si longtemps pût jamais cesser. Je n'ai jamais eu de véritable imagination. J'essayais pourtant de me représenter une certaine seconde où le battement de ce cœur ne se prolongerait plus dans ma tête. Mais en vain (E, p. 1205).

Meursault has indeed achieved total consciousness of his life, a life which reveals itself to him with each heartbeat.

In spite of the difficulties he encounters in his acceptance of the fact of death, Meursault calmly concludes that he will maintain a consciousness of death and remain lucid. In fact, amazed at his former disregard for
executions, he proclaims the importance of the concern that one should have for condemnations to death. His thoughts on this subject end in a determined resolution to remain always conscious.

Comment n'avais-je pas vu que rien n'était plus important qu'une exécution capitale et que, en somme, c'était la seule chose vraiment intéressante pour un homme! Si jamais je sortais de cette prison, j'irais voir toutes les exécutions capitales (E, p. 1203).

The maintenance of one's consciousness of the fact of condemnation to death is not only important to Meursault; it is, in his opinion, the most important activity of man. Although Meursault is unable to witness these executions, he is nonetheless able to maintain his level of consciousness and lucidity and he is determined to do so. It is this desire which fosters his decision to limit himself to as little sleep as possible. Meursault's condemnation has not only made him evaluate his present life and decide how to live it; it has also precipitated change in the way he lives it, a change which, as we have examined, contrasts with the dead life he was living before the crime occurred and which, as is now observed, contrasts with the life he lived in prison before his condemnation. The problem of living no longer involves killing time, but rather, maintaining consciousness during the time that is left.

C'est à l'aube qu'ils venaient, je le savais. En somme, j'ai occupé mes nuits à attendre cette aube. Je n'ai jamais aimé être surpris.
Meursault has attained a definite conviction of attitude. His life is of extreme importance to him and he has decided that he will live it and how he will live it. Like Mersault of La Mort heureuse, he has reached the level of consciousness which permits him to hold his life in his hands. His acceptance of both his life and his death have enabled him to curb and reject his speculations on the possibility of escape from death and he realizes that a state of hope would be purely illusionary. The strength of his conviction regarding the fact of death is such that he does not permit even the thought of twenty additional years of living to weaken him. For even those twenty years do not eliminate the reality of the fact of death.

The consciousness that Meursault has of his own death is accompanied by a consciousness of the universal condemnation to death of all mankind as a matter of course which no one escapes. This is revealed in his discussion with the chaplain which occurs at the end of the novel. At this
time, Meursault, being fully conscious of life and death, and having decided to accept both as they are, reacts very assertively when the chaplain presents him with a final opportunity for repentance, salvation, and hope. Not only does he ask Meursault to repent and thus place hope in a merciful and forgiving God, but he also proclaims his certainty that the appeal of Meursault's case will be accepted. It is in answer to all of this illusionary hope that Meursault proclaims his realization that all men are condemned to die.

Que m'importaient la mort des autres, l'amour d'une mère, que m'importaient son Dieu, les vies qu'on choisit, les destins qu'on élit, puisqu'un seul destin devait m'élire moi-même et avec moi des milliards de privilégiés qui, comme lui, se disaient mes frères. Comprendait-il donc? Tout le monde était privilégié. Il n'y avait que des privilégiés. Les autres aussi, on les condamnerait un jour. Lui aussi, on le condamnerait. Qu'importait si, accusé de meurtre, il était exécuté pour n'avoir pas pleuré à l'enterrement de sa mère? (E, pp. 1210-1211).

This final scene between Meursault and the chaplain constitutes the second climax of the novel. The first one in which Meursault faced the "juge d'instruction" prepared us for the second. The judge and the chaplain represent the dual aspect, both moral and religious, of society. In the scene between Meursault and the chaplain, Camus presents the problem of the meaning and purpose of religion and exposes such a system as it exists in relation to man's dual experience of crime and of death. It is in this scene
that Meursault openly asserts his belief in the certitudes of life, death, and the existence of the present world. When Meursault states that nothing is important, he is affirming that that very statement is of the greatest importance to him. For Meursault, anything which may mask or disguise the life he possesses is unimportant to him. Life and the present are not his to be wasted; they are of supreme value. Again, we observe man becoming man through his crime and ceasing to be an unconscious animal, and we see that his crime and criminality are imposed upon him by a society wherein the religious system plays a central role.

The following quote describing Meursault's encounter with the chaplain illustrates the relation between Camus' atheism and his sensualism. It points out strongly that man's preoccupation with God keeps him from being situated in time, that is, in his life, in the present, and thus keeps him from experiencing life as he does on a sensual level.

Il voulait encore me parler de Dieu, mais je me suis avancé vers lui et j'ai tenté de lui expliquer une dernière fois qu'il me restait peu de temps. Je ne voulais pas le perdre avec Dieu (E, p. 1210).

Moreover, Meursault's consciousness and appreciation of the present is again accompanied by a consciousness of the life he lived in the past, and the two constitute an awareness that, after all, not all lives are of equal value. He now
affirms the following:

Rien, rien n'avait d'importance et je savais bien pourquoi. ... Du fond de mon avenir, pendant toute cette vie absurde que j'avais menée, un souffle obscur remontait vers moi ... (E, p. 1210).

That the present life and the world are of supreme value to Meursault is also evidenced in the discussion between Meursault and the chaplain on the subject of another life. The chaplain declares: "Je suis sûr qu'il vous est arrivé de souhaiter une autre vie" (E, p. 1209). To which Meursault makes the following response:

Je lui ai répondu que naturellement, mais cela n'avait pas plus d'importance que de souhaiter d'être riche, de nager très vite ou d'avoir une bouche mieux faite. C'était du même ordre. Mais lui m'a arrêté et il voulait savoir comment je voyais cette autre vie. Alors, je lui ai crié: "Une vie où je pourrais me souvenir de celle-ci" ... (E, pp. 1209-1210).

Meursault's words to the chaplain call to mind Plato's theory of reminiscence: In Camus' interpretation of it, reminiscence would take place along with remembrance of the former life.

Meursault's love of life is inseparable from his attachment to the present in which he is deeply immersed. In addition to being conscious of the life he possesses, he is aware that by contrast, the chaplain is living a life which is dead, since the only certitudes he possesses are mere speculations regarding the future. As for Meursault, his beliefs involve no illusionary hope, but an appreciation of the concrete reality of the facts of life and death—two
certitudes which he has discovered to be evident and undeniable. In speaking about the chaplain, he states: "Il n'était même pas sûr d'être en vie puisqu'il vivait comme un mort. Moi, j'avais l'air d'avoir les mains vides. Mais j'étais sûr de moi, sûr de tout, plus sûr que lui, sûr de ma vie et de cette mort qui allait venir. Oui, je n'avais que cela" (E, p. 1210). For Meursault, death marks the end of one's life and for him, the question of immortality does not arise. Like Mersault of La Mort heureuse, Meursault's acceptance of life encompasses a consciousness and acceptance of death as it is and he affirms this belief during his last encounter with the chaplain. The latter asks: "N'avez-vous donc aucun espoir et vivez-vous avec la pensée que vous allez mourir tout entier? -Oui, ai-je répondu" (E, p. 1208). The reply is brief, assertive, and clear.

Meursault's affirmation of his acceptance of life and death has not been proclaimed lightly. His whole being has undergone a change, a change which he physically experiences: "Alors, je ne sais pas pourquoi, il y a quelque chose qui a crevé en moi" (E, p. 1210). When he proclaims his acceptance of life as it is, something bursts in him. It is essentially the same experience which Mersault of La Mort heureuse underwent on the train during his journey to Algiers. In both cases,
consciousness and acceptance are accompanied by a very definite physical reaction.

In the scene between Meursault and the chaplain, the former's development in consciousness, which began with the first shot fired at the Arab, is now complete and he now truly lives. Our examination of his development in consciousness reveals that his criminal act liberated him from the dead and unconscious life he lived prior to the crime. But that crime must be interpreted and it is our purpose to observe what it signifies on the literal as well as symbolic levels.

On one level, it can be classified as the murder of the Arab which precipitates Meursault's trial and physical imprisonment in jail; however, it is not this homicide which precipitates his condemnation to death by the court. In the eyes of his judges, Meursault is guilty of matricide and patricide, crimes which classify him as an inherently evil man who possesses a vile "âme criminelle" (E, p. 1195). The rules of justice are such that Meursault's crime consists in his refusal to accept the moral values of a judicial system which masks the reality of crime and death. Society cannot accept the fact that Meursault killed the Arab "à cause du soleil" (E, p. 1198). Moreover, neither can it accept the fact that he does not play the criminal according to the rules established by that society. If Meursault did play
according to the rules, he would feign the repentant criminal and thus disguise his crime. The same is true were he to accept the chaplain's invitation to hope in another life. He would be accepting death in its disguise chosen for it by society. Meursault cannot accept society's rules; he cannot and does not accept its authoritative dictates, as his refusal to address the chaplain as "mon père" indicates (E, p. 1210).

But Meursault is not the only criminal in question. His judges are not only actors on the judicial stage. They are distorters of the truth, inquisitors whose authority must be upheld as universal and absolute, whatever the costs. Meursault, by not playing the role of the submissive subject, threatens this authority; without subjects a ruler's existence has no meaning, a fact which, as we have brought out earlier in this study, the "juge d'instruction" fully realizes. The concept of "la pensée de minuit" is germinating in this novel. Crime as theme in L'Etranger appears not only in an individual (as in La Mort heureuse), but is extended to society as a whole. Society as criminal is guilty of more than the murder of Meursault, for the evil which resides in society exists in the forms of the judgment and domination of men.

Meursault's threatened judges have a profound resemblance to Dostoyevsky's famous Grand Inquisitor of The Brothers Karamazov. In this novel, the Inquisitor is
a tyrannical sixteenth-century ruler who executes his power to burn heretics and proudly deprives his subjects of freedom. He rebukes Christ, who by his presence and goodness has attracted the people of Seville to Him. While the Inquisitor, like Meursault's judges, deceitfully promises the people happiness in a future life, Christ actively combats injustice by healing the sick and by defying death and raising men back to life. In this way, He, too, presents Himself as a threat to the absolute authority of the Inquisitor.

In his preface to the American university edition of L'Etranger, Camus speaks to us of his character, Meursault, and refers to him as a Christ figure. Camus states: "Il m'est arrivé de dire aussi, et toujours paradoxalement, que j'avais essayé de figurer dans mon personnage le seul christ que nous méritions."¹ Camus' christ-figure, like the Christian Christ, is at one and the same time victim of societal judgment and condemnation and savior in the sense that rebirth and new life have taken place. Moreover, he is a victim become savior (who, having been condemned to death as a criminal, has moved to complete acceptance of his life) as well as savior become victim (having become man, he is condemned to die).

Camus' christ-figure is a man who is totally human, that is, a physical being who becomes man in a societal milieu. And Meursault, having been born into his humanity, in his way presents to society the evangelic message of the only form of salvation possible for man. If one thinks of another victim, Sisyphe, we observe that Camus blends together the Greek and Christian myths of fall and salvation. Sisyphe, too, is all human, at once victim and savior as he carries his boulder. Camus' christ can also be seen as a blend of Cain the criminal and the Christian Christ who came to save him.

In the image of the christ-figure, we see that in Camus' work, the problem of death is subordinate to the problem of crime: man achieves his humanity through his crime which is consciousness of himself and of his life. When he is reborn, becomes human, becomes a conscious being, he also becomes conscious of death. We have here a man born into his humanity and in quest of happiness.

On a third and symbolic level, Meursault's crime can be defined as his desire and quest for happiness. By walking in the direction of the spring, Meursault seeks to eliminate the suffering to which he is subjected. Yet, unlike the Sartrian criminal, Meursault is not a free criminal. The solar force pushes him onward in the direction of the source of comfort, coolness, and happiness. Meursault is destined to seek happiness and to kill.
one way, it would appear that by shooting the Arab, Meursault symbolically defies the solar force which prevents him from being happy. But it is that same force which condemns him to seek that happiness. Though his act is, like Mersault's, morally necessary, it is not committed freely. Meursault's death is a payment for his crime, but a payment demanded by society, the evildoer. However, this fact appears irrelevant to Meursault. Since he does not consider himself responsible for his crime, he does not regard his death as payment. Society bridges the distance which exists between man and the fact of his death by justifying it: man dies because he is guilty. (We observe that a Camusian interpretation of original sin or of Cain's crime is taking form.) On the other hand, death appears to Meursault as a natural phenomenon which all men are condemned to experience. As such, the fatality of death is a fact which supersedes the decision of a system, and the inevitability of death is emphasized by the fact affirmed by Meursault that all men are condemned to die, just as he is. This element of condemnation is a facet which was not present in La Mort heureuse.

Meursault's development has constituted rebirth, rebirth into life. His search for happiness (symbolized by his walk in the direction of the spring) and the gun-shots fired at the Arab are not events which are unimportant to him. The crime and the subsequent trial
force Meursault to decide what is important to him: his life before the crime, his former happiness of which he was unaware before the crime was committed. Moreover, his condemnation results in a consciousness and appreciation of the life that is left for him to live. The exclamation: "Rien, rien n'avait d'importance et je savais pourquoi" (E, p. 1210) is an affirmation of the importance of the acceptance of life and death as they are without hope in anything which is not this life. The phrase "je savais pourquoi" cannot be overlooked, for it is a proclamation of the totally conscious state which he has attained and which enables him to affirm: "Je me suis senti prêt à tout revivre" (E, p. 1211).

This statement, made by Meursault at the end of the novel, is doubly significant. Not only is it a totally unindifferent affirmation of the acceptance of life and death. It is also a proclamation revealing that the happiness sought has been attained. Upon a first reading of L'Etranger, one might be led to believe that happiness as a theme is quasi non-existent in this novel, especially as compared with its extensive role in La Mort heureuse. Although this theme appears, on the surface, to be overshadowed by the central themes of death and crime, it is nevertheless strongly though unobtrusively linked to the central themes which have enabled us to understand both the structure and thematic development of the work. The
crime has enabled Meursault to progress from the belief that he is not unhappy (attitude before the crime is committed) to a realization as a prisoner that he has been ostracized from a world where he once was happy (although he does not openly affirm that he is unhappy as a prisoner on trial). The crime has precipitated, then, a retroactive consciousness of happiness. Furthermore, after his last encounter with the chaplain, Meursault is conscious of having attained happiness and, paradoxically, of having always been happy.

As in La Mort heureuse, man's happiness resides in his consciousness and acceptance of life and death, of the world as it is and of the distance that exists between man and that world which he does not understand. Before the crime, the unconscious Meursault living a dead life was a stranger to his own life and to the world. Whereas he once sought to flee the heat of the sun, he now accepts it as it is, and therein lies his happiness. It is a feeling of accord with a world which oppressed him on the day of the crime. In professing his acceptance of the world and of this life, Meursault has proclaimed his love of the world, and the world welcomes man.

The night illumined by the stars is the symbol of the happiness that he has attained. It is in the acceptance of the world that the comfort of heat tempered by shade is found. In his state of happiness, consciousness
of the indifference of the world to man's fate is still maintained. Nevertheless, the crime has permitted a reconciliation between man and the world. Meursault states:

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 (E, p. 1211).

The phrase, "j'ai senti que j'avais été heureux" reveals that Meursault is also conscious of the unconscious life and therefore the dead life he previously lived. Now, he is no longer a stranger to the world. Crime has enabled him to be reborn, to become a conscious and happy creature for whom living encompasses the acceptance of his death. In this way, Meursault passes from an unknowing to a knowing state of being, so that the creature becomes man. This being who has become what he is through his crime does not consider himself inherently evil and guilty, although it is never affirmed in this novel that he is innocent. For the time being, it appears that the guilt he does bear has been imposed upon him by a criminal society whose values he has chosen to reject in order to truly live.
CHAPTER IV

PARALLEL THEME DEVELOPMENT IN THE ESSAY
AND THE THEATRE (1935-1942)

It is impossible, in Camus' work, to separate the essays and theatre from the novels and to ignore the theme of death and crime as it appears in these other genres which are contemporary to his romanesque work. Therefore, it is our purpose in this chapter to examine the Camusian essays and plays written during the period extending from 1938 to 1942. Moreover, our brief examination of these works of the same period will permit us to verify the conclusions which we reached in our study of the novels.

Le Mythe de Sisyphe, which was completed in February, 1941, is, in the sense that it exposes a theory of the absurd, the major essay of this first period in Camus' literary career. In it, Camus examines suicide in its relation to the problem of the absurd and as a solution to that problem which man faces. Camus clearly states this purpose at the beginning of the essay: "Le sujet de cet essai est précisément ce rapport entre l'absurde et le suicide, la mesure exacte dans laquelle le suicide est une solution à l'absurde" (MS, p. 101). The absurd
characterizes the situation in which Mersault, Meursault, and Sisyphe find themselves, and we observe that what is presented concretely in the novels is considered theoretically in this essay, so that in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*, we find the human condition described in terms of the absurd and Sisyphe depicted as representative of humanity faced with the problem of the absurd. In short, he is the absurd man.

Just what characterizes the absurd man, this model for living which Camus presents in *Le Mythe*? He is made up of several components which Camus examines in his depiction of him. First and most importantly, he is a conscious being: (1) conscious of his mortality and of the absolute certainty of the fact of death and (2) conscious of his criminality. Secondly, in his consciousness of death and criminality, and in having chosen to live life at a level that Camus, as we have seen, called "le point zéro," he does not accept suicide, either physical or philosophical, as a solution to the problem of the absurd and of the human condition. Thirdly, he is a solitary figure, living his life without the support of a God or of a theological and religious system of values.

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1. I am using the word "consciousness" as a translation of Camus' use of the French "conscience" which denotes both moral consciousness (the sense of good and evil and of conducting one's life in a certain way) and psychological consciousness (consciousness of self and of one's existence).
Let us examine these facets of the moral problem which the absurd man faces.

As a conscious and living being, he has the desire to live and be happy and he is also faced with the fact of death. This relation between his desire to live and his mortality constitutes the absurd. Camus states that for the absurd man, "cette idée que 'je suis,' ma façon d'agir comme si tout a un sens ..., tout cela se trouve démenti d'une façon vertigineuse par l'absurdité d'une mort possible" (MS, p. 140). The idea is reiterated in the following quote in which Camus affirms: "L'absurde et le surcroît de vie qu'il comporte ne dépendent donc pas de la volonté de l'homme, mais de son contraire qui est la mort" (MS, p. 145). Sisyphe, Mersault, and Meursault all recognize the incomprehension of the fact of death.

In addition to being conscious of death, the absurd man is also conscious of his own criminality, that very potential which makes of him a man, conscious man, and not an animal. "L'absurde, c'est le péché sans Dieu," states Camus (MS, p. 128). The absurd man, then, is a sinner, a criminal, a solitary being having no God as a support who provides justification for his mortality and criminality. The absurd man's state of consciousness distinguishes him from other living things, and this fact is of primary importance in Camus' work. The ethics of the absurd involve not only consciousness of death as an absolute
fact, but also consciousness of crime as potential in man; and that very potential for criminality makes man what he is and distinguishes him from vegetative and animal life. "Si j'étais arbre parmi les arbres, chat parmi les animaux, cette vie aurait un sens ou plutôt ce problème n'en aurait point car je ferais partie de ce monde. ... Et qu'est-ce qui fait le fond de ce conflit, de cette fracture entre le monde et mon esprit, sinon la conscience que j'en ai?" (MS, p. 136). We shall examine how this state of consciousness relates to the problem of suicide as a solution and observe how it actually precludes suicide as a solution.

As conscious, criminal man, the absurd man is responsible for his criminality, but not guilty of it. "... il n'entend pas la notion de péché. ... On voudrait lui faire reconnaître sa culpabilité. Lui se sent innocent. A vrai dire, il ne sent que cela, son innocence irreparable" (MS, p. 137). Further on in Le Mythe, the fact of his innocent criminality is emphasized again. "Il [l'absurde] ne recommande pas le crime, ce serait pueril, mais il restitue au remords son inutilité" (MS, p. 150). And again, "Autrement dit, si, pour lui, il peut y avoir des responsables, il n'y a pas de coupables" (MS, p. 150). Meursault and the absurd man feel innocent of the crime which they have committed by the very fact that they are conscious, living men.
According to Camus, suicide as a solution to the problem of the absurd is a "no" to life, a refusal to maintain consciousness of the absurd, of one's death and criminality, of one's human condition. In this case, the absurd man has decided that for him, life is not worth living. Moreover, in committing suicide, he commits a criminal act, in this case, a criminal act against himself. Suicide, therefore, is not examined by Camus in terms of the actual death of the victim, but rather, in terms of death imposed by someone and in this case, given by oneself. For Camus, then, suicide is not just a death; it is a crime committed against oneself. The suicidal victim is, in fact, the contrary of the man who is condemned to die. And all men are criminal beings condemned to die.

C'est ici qu'on voit à quel point l'expérience absurde s'éloigne du suicide. ... Il [l'absurde] échappe au suicide, dans la mesure où il est en même temps conscience et refus de la mort. Il est, à l'extrême pointe de la dernière pensée du condamné à mort, ce cordon de soulier qu'en dépit de tout il aperçoit à quelques mètres, au bord même de sa chute vertigineuse. Le contraire du suicidé, précisément, c'est le condamné à mort (MS, pp. 138-139).

A second type of suicide which Camus calls philosophical suicide is also contrary to sustenance of consciousness of the human condition and of one's death and criminality. The absurd man is solitary man. He has rejected philosophical suicide, the acceptance of support
of a God. He is an innocent criminal who does not accept guilt or punishment that would come from God or a religious system. In rejecting philosophical suicide, the absurd man destroys the theological system of values, explanations and answers and its ethics of death and crime. His point of departure is an absence of values which, as we have observed, Camus calls "le point zéro" and it is from this point only that he will place a value on life. It is at this point of the zero of values that Mersault and Meursault are situated. In L'Etranger, society judges Meursault's act of adopting the zero of values. As an absurd man, he feels alone, solitary, a stranger. And in Le Mythe, Camus expresses that solitude as follows: "... dans un univers soudain privé d'illusions et de lumières, l'homme se sent un étranger" (MS, p. 101). The absurd, then, is a solitary state, a state of consciousness of the human condition where there is no God, no explanation, no answer. The creative activity of the absurd man includes the responsibility to maintain that consciousness; he neither seeks nor creates a God, explanations, or answers. If the absurd is a state of sin or criminality without God's presence, then the absurd man is a criminal without God. As a solitary being, the absurd man is as in a desert, possessing only the burden of the Sisyphean boulder. He accepts his solitude, his death and criminality, his human condition.
As a result, his ethics are rooted in the present life which he treasures. Mersault, aware of the constant ticking of his watch in Chenoua, and Meursault, listening to the pounding of his blood flowing, are, like Sisyphe, absurd men, carrying the boulder of their consciousness and criminality. It is a creative activity and not a destructive one. Rejecting suicide and crime as solutions, Camus goes further and accentuates the creativity that the ethics of the absurd entail. The absence of values does not imply that all is permitted. Camus does not accept Ivan Karamazov's declaration that "Tout est permis." Instead, he affirms that the absurd does not authorize crime: "Il [l'absurde] n'autorise pas tous les actes. Tout est permis ne signifie pas que rien n'est défendu. ... Il ne recommande pas le crime ..." (MS, pp. 149-150). From his starting point where values are absent, the absurd man maintains creativity and does not propagate destruction, either of himself, through suicide, or of others. By maintaining consciousness of his mortality and criminality (elements making up his fundamental destiny), he becomes master of that destiny and is, in fact, creating his life.

Sisyphe's consciousness (which is his creative activity) as he returns to the bottom of the mountain is of special interest to Camus (MS, p. 196). This concern is also present in both La Mort heureuse and L'Etranger.
As we have observed, these novels are concerned with long and arduous developments in consciousness and initiations into life which constitute the Camusian creative process. In *L'Envers et l'endroit*, this creative process is referred to as rebirth. In this collection of essays, Camus affirms: "Laissez donc ceux qui veulent tourner le dos au monde. Je ne me plains pas puisque je me regarde naître."¹ Having observed the life activities of the absurd man, of Sisyphe, Mersault and Meursault, we can affirm that by maintaining consciousness, they are all men being reborn. The absurd man's ethics do not include suicide, do not include crime, but they do include the creative process of rebirth. Of his world, Camus states: "Ce qui reste, c'est un destin dont seule l'issue est fatale. En dehors de cette unique fatalité de la mort, tout, joie ou bonheur, est liberté. Un monde demeure dont l'homme est le seul maître" (MS, p. 192).

*Noces* and *L'Envers et l'endroit* had already affirmed the joy of living experienced by the man who is conscious of death and who is face to face with the world, but the element of struggle necessary to maintain such lucidity was hardly emphasized. In *La Mort heureuse* and *L'Etranger*, the two characters who undergo an arduous initiation into life take the same path as Sisyphe, and in

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¹ Albert Camus, "L'Envers et l'endroit," in *Essais*, p. 49.
Le Mythe, this struggle or continual carrying of the rock is defined as "révolte."

Sisyphe, Mersault, and Meursault accept their burden and remain in the desert of the human condition. But there are others who do not, those who submit to the boulder and to their destiny. Such are the inhabitants of Oran, slaves of the Minotaur. In the essay entitled "Le Minotaure" which forms part of L'Eté, the Monotaur devours men; they are at his mercy. As such, he is symbolic of man's destiny, of death as the most fundamental fact of the absurd. The victims, however, adopt a submissive attitude in the face of the monster and choose to turn their backs on life entirely.\(^1\) Oran is a land where the stone is king, states Camus: "Dans cette ville poussièreuse entre toutes, le caillou est roi" (Et, p. 818). But the stone is not carried and the submissive victims, who do not have the Sisyphean strength to maintain consciousness of death and to say "yes" to life, refuse to struggle and to revolt:

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\text{Au début, on erre dans le labyrinthe, on cherche la mer comme le signe d'Ariane. Mais on tourne en rond dans des rues fauves et oppressantes, et, à la fin, le Minotaure dévore les Oranais: c'est l'ennui. Depuis longtemps, les Oranais n'errent plus. Ils ont accepté d'être mangés (Et, p. 818).}
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\(^1\) Albert Camus, "L'Eté," in Essais, p. 818. Subsequent references to L'Eté will be denoted in the body of this study by the abbreviation Et and the page number from this edition of Camus' essays.
And yet, the world is no heavier for man to carry in his hands than that stone: "Pour l'initié, le monde n'est pas plus lourd à porter que cette pierre. La tâche d'Atlas est facile. ... Voici la petite pierre, douce comme un asphodèle. Elle est au commencement de tout" (Et, p. 831).

While the inhabitants of Oran retreat from life and become slaves of their destiny in their submissiveness to death, there are those who push their revolt against the absurd to extremes. Caligula is such an example and in his case, the extreme course of action is taken upon his consciousness of the absurd. His revolt, knowing no bounds, becomes a series of criminal acts. His consciousness of the absurd is revealed as follows and he states: "Les hommes meurent et ils ne sont pas heureux."¹ This is a truth which burdens man: "C'est une vérité toute simple et toute claire, un peu bête, mais difficile à découvrir et lourde à porter" (C, p. 16). It is clear, then, that the fact of death, incomprehensible and unjustifiable, burdens man as it burdens Sisyphe, Mersault, and Meursault. Rather than submitting to the burden as do the inhabitants of Oran, Caligula is determined to change the situation, to change the destiny which he does not understand, so that

¹ Albert Camus, "Caligula," in Théâtre, Récits, Nouvelles, p. 16. Subsequent references to this play will be denoted in the body of this study by the abbreviation C and the page number of this edition of Camus' works.
Men will not die and that they may be happy. His desire to have the moon consists of these very humanitarian goals.

Je ferai à ce siècle le don de l'égalité. Et lorsque tout sera aplani, l'impossible enfin sur terre, la lune dans mes mains, alors, peut-être, moi-même je serai transformé et le monde avec moi, alors enfin les hommes ne mourront pas et ils seront heureux (C, p. 27).

Caligula is a man conscious of the absurd and searching for happiness. But rather than facing destiny and death in the Sisyphean manner, he chooses to surpass them, to become that which he does not understand. Instead of carrying his boulder, Caligula chooses to become that boulder and to crush those around him. He states: "On ne comprend pas le destin et c'est pourquoi je me suis fait destin" (C, p. 69). But to become destiny is to become executor of men's destinies, to permit oneself everything, to declare oneself absolutely free to dominate man. The same society which condemns Meursault to death and executes him kills Caligula at the end of the play. Caligula depicts the "démesure" of a human being with a potential for crime and criminality who utilizes that potential to its fullest. This criminal can be described as a Meursault who does not stop firing his gun and whose crimes are totally gratuitous acts. In the treatise on execution read by Hélicon, the following is brutally stated:

L'exécution soulage et délivre. Elle est universelle, fortifiante et juste dans ses applications comme dans ses intentions. On meurt parce qu'on est coupable. On est
coupable parce qu'on est sujet de Caligula. Donc, tout le monde est coupable. D'où il ressort que tout le monde meurt. C'est une question de temps et de patience (C, pp. 46-47).

Crime is Caligula's means of revolt against the fact of man's mortality. By imposing death on others, he becomes not only destiny, but also a god. Dressed as Venus, he orders that all men worship him. In this way he may fight the gods' cruelty by being as cruel as they are. (As early as 1938, a theme which will be of prime consideration during the second period of Camus' literary career, presents itself. What Caligula considers to be unjust is combatted with injustice; the plague is fought with the plague.) Observing what he has accomplished, Caligula affirms:

Mon règne jusqu'ici a été trop heureux. Ni peste universelle ni religion cruelle, pas même un coup d'État, bref, rien qui puisse vous faire passer à la postérité. C'est un peu cela, voyez-vous, que j'essaie de compenser la prudence du destin. Je veux dire ... je ne sais pas si vous m'avez compris. Enfin, c'est moi qui remplace la peste (C, pp. 93-94).

The tyrant's criminality is viewed as a disease which he has chosen to make an integral part of him. One of the patricians refers to Caligula's acts in the following terms: "Sa maladie n'est mortelle que pour les autres" (C, p. 91). The relation between crime and disease is merely touched on in La Mort heureuse (in that novel, Mersault becomes ill shortly after having killed Zagreus) and it will be explored at length in La Peste.
In many ways, the tyrant has much in common with the Minotaur. Both victimize men. Moreover, crime has made of Caligula a monster, a fact which suggests another rapprochement. In addition to being symbolic of destiny and of the fact of death, the Minotaur, insofar as he is half-human, is representative of man self-declared god, of man self-declared destiny, of society, judge and executor which the absurd man encounters—in short, of criminal man.

Caligula's destructive actions reflect a "tout est permis" philosophy. For him, nothing is prohibited. Revolt as a creative activity is not entirely absent from the play, however. Disagreeing with Cherea who states: "Je crois qu'il y a des actions qui sont plus belles que d'autres" (C, p. 78), Caligula affirms: "Je crois que toutes sont équivalentes" (C, p. 79). This statement is nothing other than Caligula's (and Camus') observation of the absence of values. Caligula is the absurd man, but he does not observe the limits of "mesure," that important element which will serve as the basis for the solution to man's moral problem of living in the face of the absurd. Cherea, desiring like Caligula, to live happily, believes that certain limitations must be adhered to if this goal is to be attained. Like Caesonia and in contrast with Caligula's views, he believes that the search for happiness does not demand destruction and criminal acts.
Caligula, the guilty criminal, claims that he lives and is happy and that crime, the power exercised to destroy, is the source of his happiness. Yet a discrepancy exists here. The revolt which was originally undertaken so that men as a whole might be happy has disintegrated into a combat for Caligula's own personal happiness and immortality. His criminality has inevitably led him into solitary action. He proclaims:

Je vis, je tue, j'exerce le pouvoir délirant du destructeur, auprès de quoi celui du créateur paraît une singeries. C'est cela, être heureux. C'est cela, le bonheur, cette insupportable délivrance, cet universel mépris, le sang, la haine autour de moi, cet isolement nonpareil de l'homme qui tient toute sa vie sous son regard, la joie démesurée de l'assassin impuni ... (C, p. 106).

However, at the end of the play, the tyrant who has justified his crimes by imposing guilt on man ranks himself among the guilty and concludes that no one is innocent, that crime is not a solution, and that he has failed to obtain the moon. In spite of these realizations, he refuses to accept the fact of death until the very end and maintains that he is nevertheless still supreme: "Mais qui oserait me condamner dans ce monde sans juge où personne n'est innocent!" (C, p. 107). In defiance of death and destiny, even as he is dying, Caligula calls on history, proclaiming that he has not ceased to live.

Elements of "la pensée de minuit" are present in this play as well as in L'Etranger. Caligula's extreme
revolt has not enabled him to have the moon. Neither has it enabled him to be happy nor to experience a true joy of living as have Mersault and Meursault. Caligula has not changed his destiny; he is still a mortal being, and in this case, moreover, his death is a payment for his crime, since he is killed by those who oppose him. The criminal cycle continues since others engage themselves in a revolt against the tyrannical ruler-criminal by becoming criminals themselves.

The inhabitants of Oran in their submissiveness and absence of revolt and Caligula engaged frenetically in criminal activity are representative of two poles which will be examined at great length on many different levels in L'Homme révolté. These poles are the positions of slave and master, subject and ruler, victim and murderer-criminal. Between these two poles lies a vast territory of true revolt "à la Sisyphe"—and in this domain may be placed Mersault and Meursault. Neither the inhabitants of Oran nor Caligula accept their mortality for what it is; they shun the fact of death. They neither live happily nor die happily because unlike Sisyphe, Mersault and Meursault, they do not carry their lives and their mortality in their hands.

It is noteworthy that the characters examined thus far in this and the preceding chapters have one goal in
common: Mersault, Meursault, the inhabitants of Oran, Caligula, and Sisyphe all search for happiness. We have observed that in the novels of the period 1935-1942, that search is a criminal act. In *La Mort heureuse*, although his search for happiness has been premeditated and his happiness is paid with death, the criminal appears innocent. Meursault, too, appears as an innocent criminal who is destined to search for happiness and to kill. A statement in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* which refers to man's search for happiness in terms of destiny supports Meursault's and the innocent criminal's situation. In his essay, Camus states: "Le coeur humain a une fâcheuse tendance à appeler destin seulement ce qui l'écrase. Mais le bonheur aussi, à sa manière, est sans raison, puisqu'il est inévitable" (MS, p. 204). Furthermore, as had been stated earlier in *Noces*, "Il n'y a pas de honte à être heureux." ¹

The innocent crime is the search for happiness, but this very search, without limitations, can lead man into crime of which he is guilty and in such a case, he passes from a state of innocence to a state of culpability. His crimes, then, may be numerous: murder, the subjection of others through exercise of power and domination, hope in another life or philosophical suicide. All of these amount

¹ Albert Camus, "Noces," in *Essais*, p. 58. Subsequent references to this essay will be denoted in the body of this study by the abbreviation N and the page number of this edition of Camus' works.
to one basic crime: the refusal to accept the fact of one's mortality, an attempt to defy death itself. The guilty criminal fights death with death and his reaction to the absurd consists of criminal acts.

Like Sisyphe, Mersault, and Meursault, and like the flowers of the almond trees, man must maintain his revolt through the acceptance of death and be strong. For its fruit is the happiness attained in that revolt. The innocent criminal is in revolt and experiences a joy of living which is attained in *La Mort heureuse* and in *L'Etranger*. His crime, the search for happiness, has permitted him to truly live, to live consciously, to become man. By contrast, the guilty criminal lives outside of true revolt, leading a dead life. On July 15, 1939, an article written by Camus in praise of the collection of poetry, *Oiseau privé*, of Armand Guibert appeared in the *Alger républicain*. In it, Camus stated that happiness has a price. That price, paid by Sisyphe, Mersault, and Meursault, is consciousness of death. As was observed in the novels, happiness resides in the struggle to keep oneself in front of the fact of death. In this article, Camus states:

> Des hommes que la terre suffit à contenter doivent savoir payer leur joie de leur lucidité

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1. Reference to "Les Amandiers," an essay in *L'Eté*. 
et, fuyant le bonheur illusoire des anges,
accepter de n'aider que ce qui doit mourir.

Of the works written by Camus during this first period of his literary career, it is in L'Etranger that the theme of death and crime appears most stabilized. It is in this novel that he most successfully expresses the problem of death and crime and the relation which exists between these two elements. It is also in this work that a contrast between the guilty and innocent—or apparently innocent—criminal is established. This is not to say that the problem of death and crime has been definitively resolved. We must keep in mind that although the absurd man is declared innocent in Le Mythe de Sisyphe, Meursault's innocence is suggested, but never affirmed, and the question of the innocent criminal is still left open.

We observe, in Camus' works of this period, that the thematic structure death-crime-happiness is maintained and that happiness can be attained by the innocent criminal. However, because the striving for happiness demands creative activity as opposed to crime, the guilty criminal does not reach his goal. The innocent criminal lives happily and dies happily, but the fact that he is a criminal still remains. With the completion of Camus' works of this first period, the following quote from Noces

still resounds and it appears that something has been lost by man, the innocent criminal.

Il n'est pas toujours facile d'être un homme, moins encore d'être un homme pur. Mais être pur, c'est retrouver cette patrie de l'âme où devient sensible la parenté du monde, où les coups du sang rejoignent les pulsations violentes du soleil de deux heures (N, p. 75).

Mersault, Meursault, and Sisyphe appear to have attained that purity. But nevertheless, the mortality-criminality of man continues to remain, to a great extent, problematic. The fact that it will undergo added examination in La Peste is evidence of this.
CHAPTER V

LA PESTE

La Peste, the novel belonging to the second period of Camus' literary career, contrasts in many ways with the novels of the first period. One of the major differences—and an important one as regards the theme of death and crime—which is observed upon reading La Peste is that a change of focus has taken place since the first novels. In La Peste, it is not one individual who is faced with the problem of life, death, and his criminal act, as was the case in La Mort heureuse and L'Etranger, but an entire city, a community of human beings imprisoned by the plague and the suffering and death which inevitably accompany it. At the same time, rather than depicting an individual course of action taken by man in the face of such a human condition, Camus concentrates his attention on various types of courses of action taken by the prisoners of the plague. Each of the characters under observation exists, not so much as an individual personality, but as a representation of an attitude and of the course of action he has chosen to adopt. As these representative reactions to the plague unfold, the nature and symbolic dimensions of the disease manifest themselves. The purpose of this study, then, is
inevitably twofold. In examining the various human reac-
tions to the plague, we will be in a position to determine
the nature of the disease which confronts the entire
population of Oran.

There are three major reactions present in *La
Peste*: the religious, the political, and the medical,
represented by Paneloux, Tarrou, and Rieux respectively.
On a literal level, the plague appears as a physiological
disease which, as is indicated in the novel, has afflicted
men throughout various periods in history.\(^1\) As such, the
plague ravages the body and causes physical suffering and
death. The realistic descriptions of the symptoms of the
disease as they afflict the rats and man illustrate these
ravages. However, the ravages are more than physio-
logical; the disease also affects man's state of
psychological and moral consciousness as well as the
meaning of that state which is his existence. With the
advent of the disease, man finds himself imprisoned, alone,
exiled not only from the life he knew before the plague
afflicted the city, but also from the world of the non-
afflicted. The inexplicable appearance of the plague, has,
if nothing else, made its victims conscious of their

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\(^1\) Albert Camus, "La Peste," in *Théâtre, Récits,
Nouvelles*, pp. 1248, 1325. Subsequent references to *La
Peste* will be denoted in the body of this study by the
abbreviation P and the page number of this edition of
Camus' works.
existence. That consciousness of self is accompanied by a sense of good and evil. The inhabitants of Oran, faced with the disease and with the possibility of impending death, come face to face with their lives; the plague's appearance has inevitably provoked certain awarenesses in them.

The first chapter of the novel indicates that prior to the mysterious events which have occurred, a mass of humanity was living a dead life. Living was but a habit, an activity performed unconsciously. Of the city and its inhabitants, Camus states:

Ce qu'il fallait souligner, c'est l'aspect banal de la ville et de la vie. Mais on passe ses journées sans difficultés aussitôt qu'on a des habitudes. Du moment que notre ville favorise les habitudes, on peut dire que tout est pour le mieux. Sous cet angle, sans doute, la vie n'est pas très passionnante (P, p. 1221).

Such absence of consciousness is also evidenced in a more precise description of the inhabitants' activities.

Sans doute, rien n'est plus naturel, aujourd'hui, que de voir des gens travailler du matin au soir et choisir ensuite de perdre aux cartes, au café, et en bavardages, le temps qui leur reste pour vivre. Mais il est des villes et des pays où les gens ont, de temps en temps, le soupçon d'autre chose. En général, cela ne change pas leur vie. Seulement, il y a eu le soupçon et c'est toujours cela de gagné. Oran, au contraire, est apparemment une ville sans soupçons, c'est-à-dire une ville tout à fait moderne. Il n'est pas nécessaire, en conséquence, de préciser la façon dont on s'aime chez nous. Les hommes et les femmes, ou bien se dévorent rapidement dans ce qu'on appelle l'acte d'amour, ou bien s'engagent dans une longue habitude à deux. Entre ces
extrêmes, il n'y a pas souvent de milieu. Cela non plus n'est pas original. A Oran comme ailleurs, faute de temps et de réflexion, on est bien obligé de s'aimer sans le savoir (P, p. 1220).

To live without "soupçons," to act without knowing it, is to live unconsciously, to live a dead life. As was stated in the essay entitled "Le Minotaure," the entire city of Oran lacks vitality: it is a city which turns its back on the sea. Moreover, its lifelessness is such that neither animal nor vegetative life can survive there.

Comment faire imaginer, par exemple, une ville sans pigeons, sans arbres et sans jardins, où l'on ne rencontre ni battements d'ailes ni froissements de feuilles, un lieu neutre pour tout dire? (P, p. 1219).

Although the inhabitants of Oran live and die frenetically, they neither love nor detest their lives because they live oblivious to them, as the following passage indicates:

Une manière commode de faire la connaissance d'une ville est de chercher comment on y travaille, comment on y aime et comment on y meurt. Dans notre petite ville, est-ce l'effet du climat, tout cela se fait ensemble, du même air frénétique et absent (P, p. 1219).

It is the advent of the plague which brings them to a certain level of awareness of their lives. Even those who do not contract the disease do not escape the suffering of separation and exile, besides the fear of becoming themselves victims of the plague. The point is that man, after having lived a life which is dead, one day finds himself in a world where inexplicable and unjustifiable
suffering, disease, and death exist. He has become aware not only of his existence, that is, of his self as a living being, but also of the world in which he lives; and he realizes that he is imprisoned in that world, the ultimate and supreme imprisonment being his mortality. The plague has stirred "soupçons" in him and he has begun to come alive. Such is the situation in Oran as it presents itself on a literal level. But as we have previously stated, the various courses of action taken by the main characters in the novel will throw light on the nature of the disease, making the "soupçons" more specifically identifiable.

The religious position exemplified by the respected Jesuit Paneloux is not new to Camus' works. We have observed that religion as a societal system was significantly and extensively present in *L'Étranger* and that it sought to justify the unjustifiable, to bridge the gap between man and the fact of his mortality by making his criminality the scapegoat. Paneloux's first sermon is such a justification; being an exposition of the traditional Christian doctrine of original sin, it constitutes an explanation of the presence of the plague as physiological disease in Oran and an explanation of man's death. Actually, the scene depicting Paneloux's parishioners being declared guilty of crime is not much different from the scene of Meursault standing before his judges. Regarding this sermon, the narrator states: "... le prêche rendit
plus sensible à certains l'idée, vague jusque-là, qu'ils étaient condamnés, pour un crime inconnu, à un emprisonnement inimaginable" (P, p. 1301). What the religious system calls "sin" is the criminal act committed by man against the divine force. As in L'Etranger, guilt is imposed on man by the religious society, and the suffering, death, and imprisonment he faces are justified. At the same time, the suffering experienced by man is justified in terms of attainable future happiness. While imprisonment by the plague constitutes punishment for a past crime, it may also serve as atonement for that crime. In this way, the justification of man's existence as prisoner and victim of the disease is based on hope in a life other than this one. However, just as the religious system declares that man is a criminal condemned to death, just as it uses man's criminality as a justification of his human condition, so societal justice judges him. The character Othon, however relatively minor in the novel, is important as representative of a judicial societal system which resembles the system present in L'Etranger. That system is tyrannical: it judges, condemns, and executes criminal man. As a partisan of Paneloux's explanation of the presence of the plague, "M. Othon, le juge d'instruction, déclara au docteur Rieux qu'il avait trouvé l'exposé du père Paneloux 'absolument irréfutable'" (P, p. 1301). In the 1947 edition of the novel, the judge affirms man's
criminality as follows: "Les hommes sont mauvais et ils ont besoin de condamnation."¹ Having taken upon themselves the right to judge man, to declare him a criminal and to impose guilt on him, Paneloux and Othon represent the religious and judicial sides, respectively, of an authoritarian society that makes of man's criminality a justification of his life and death. It is such a system with which Tarrou will come into contact and we shall later observe his reactions to it.

As absolute as the establishment of man's criminality may be or appear to be, its fragility is nevertheless revealed when these judges observe the suffering and death of Othon's son. In this instance, the declaration of the criminality of mankind and the link established between crime and death are shattered by the child's apparent innocence. Such a shattering reveals the complexity of the problem of death and crime faced by Paneloux and the societal system, and various aspects of that problem present themselves for consideration. First, there is the consideration of man's passage from a state of innocence to a state of guilt, since it is the child (as opposed to the adult) who is an apparently innocent victim. The second consideration flows from the first: Paneloux must now contend not only with the

incomprehensibility of suffering and death (thought to have been resolved through the declaration of the absolute criminality of man), but also with the incomprehensibility of man's criminality. Having realized that his absolute explanation for the existence of the plague has been shattered, Paneloux professes submission to a divine will, as his reflection on the death of the innocent child reveals: "Cela est révoltant parce que cela passe notre mesure. Mais peut-être devons-nous aimer ce que nous ne pouvons pas comprendre" (P, p. 1397). That submission, however, is joined by a firm desire to combat the disease and in his second sermon, rather than exhorting his parishioners merely to submit and kneel before a God-judge who is punishing them (as he had done in the first sermon), he encourages them to combat the evil which exists by remaining in Oran and doing whatever good they can. It is the narrator who gives us the essence of this sermon,

Il ne fallait pas écouter ces moralistes qui disaient qu'il fallait se mettre à genoux et tout abandonner. Il fallait seulement commencer de marcher en avant, dans la ténèbre, un peu à l'aveuglette, et essayer de faire du bien. Mais pour le reste, il fallait demeurer, et accepter de s'en remettre à Dieu, même pour la mort des enfants, et sans chercher de recours personnel (P, p. 1405).

Paneloux has passed from a notion of God as judge and executioner of criminal man to that of a God who is loving and who requests man's abandonment to him and his will.
This fact is of utmost importance since it is accompanied by a significant change in Paneloux's (as well as the religious system's) position in relation to afflicted man and in his attitude toward that man. If God is no longer viewed as a judge and executioner who imposes punishment, then man's position is no longer entirely that of slave and victim, and he can combat the plague. Moreover, Paneloux himself, since his attitude toward men has been attenuated, no longer plays the role of the judge as he did in the first sermon. The fact that in addressing his audience, he now includes himself as a member of mankind by using the pronoun "nous," versus the "vous" used in his first sermon, is evidence that he no longer stands on the judge's pedestal. In the long run, he does not appear as a guilty criminal as Meursault's judges appeared.

Nevertheless, because he transcends the present and the human condition by choosing to accept man's incomprehensible death and criminality as the will of God, because his revolt is submissive, Paneloux cannot die a "happy death." He does, however, die a conscious death and in the face of it, appears neither as absolute victim nor as judge. Paneloux is a man who has recognized weaknesses in the religious system he represents, a man who, in his own way, has recognized his criminality, and who, in spite of that recognition, cannot extricate himself from the system. His ambiguous position is reflected
in his death which is classified as a "cas douteux" (P, p. 1410), since it is not known whether he has been victimized by the plague. He dies revealing neither love nor hate of life and of the incomprehensible world he knows and his face remains expressionless even as he breathes his last breath.

La fièvre monta. La toux se fit de plus en plus rauque et tortura le malade toute la journée. Le soir enfin, le père expectora cette ouate qui l'étouffait. Elle était rouge. Au milieu du tumulte de la fièvre, Paneloux gardait son regard indifférent et quand, le lendemain matin, on le trouva mort, à demi versé hors du lit, son regard n'exprimait rien (P, pp. 1409-1410).

Othon, representing the judicial aspect of society, does not undergo the significant change that we have observed in Paneloux. He lives without reflecting and does not possess the human warmth which was revealed in Paneloux. He remains, throughout the novel, as a man apart from other men, in spite of the fact that he does volunteer to work in the quarantine wards.

It is Tarrou who has come in closest contact with judges like Othon, with executioners and with societal justice. From Tarrou's perspective, society is observed as a criminal guilty of condemning and executing man. Tarrou has, from an early age, witnessed man's criminality to man and this spectacle revolts him. He cannot accept that a man take it upon himself to impose death on a fellow human being. Tarrou's consciousness of crime and of the
criminality that exists in society is vigorously expressed
to Rieux as he narrates his unforgettable experience as
spectator at a trial where his father is presiding.

Je n'écouteais presque rien, je sentais qu'on
voulait tuer cet homme vivant et un instinct
formidable comme une vague me portait à ses
côtés avec une sorte d'aveuglement entêté. ... 
Et je compris qu'il [le père de Tarrou]
demandait la mort de cet homme au nom de la
société et qu'il demandait même qu'on lui coupât
le cou, ... À partir de ce jour, je m'intéressai
avec horreur à la justice, aux condamnations à
mort, aux exécutions et je constatai avec un
vertige que mon père avait dû assister plusieurs
fois à l'assassinat et que c'était les jours où,
justemen, il se levait très tôt (P, p. 1422).

Tarrou's development in consciousness has begun,
but unlike Mersault and Meursault, his awareness is not
that of having lived a dead life; rather, it is a conscious­
ness of the existence of crime and death in the world and
of criminal acts committed by men who constitute a societal
system. Having been exposed to the judicial system's
criminality to man, Tarrou embarks on two successive and
distinct solutions. The first is his decision to work for
the elimination of condemnations to death by combatting the
dominating societal system. In his conversation with
Rieux, he states his purpose:

J'ai cru que la société où je vivais était celle
qui reposait sur la condamnation à mort et qu'en
la combattant, je combattrais l'assassinat. Je
l'ai cru, d'autres me l'ont dit et, pour finir,
c'était vrai en grande partie. Je me suis donc
mis avec les autres que j'aimais et que je n'ai
pas cessé d'aime. J'y suis resté longtemps et
il n'est pas de pays en Europe dont je n'aie
partagé les luttes (P, p. 1423).
The statement, "je combattrais l'assassinat," is a declaration which constitutes a fundamental theme in Camus' work. Tarrou's intended goal is not to combat death, but to combat crime and the assassination of men. Crime as theme is dominant in this novel and we observe that as Camus progressed in his literary career, his concern for the problem of crime and man's criminality permeated his work more and more.

In order to accomplish his goal, Tarrou begins by embarking on a political venture, joining forces together in the name of man's life, forces which aim to combat man's condemnation to death and the criminals who enslave him. His desire is to cure, to be rid of the evil that exists, to conquer it. Criminal man is an executioner; the condemnations to death which Tarrou witnesses are executions of men by their fellow men. Camus' emphasis here is not on man's natural death, but on death as an act imposed on man by man. Tarrou, in his struggle to combat death and crime, has become aware of the consequences of his political conduct and has progressed a step further in his development in consciousness.

Bien entendu, je savais que, nous aussi, nous prononçons, à l'occasion, des condamnations. Mais on me disait que ces quelques morts étaient nécessaires pour amener un monde où l'on ne tuait plus personne. ... Mais je pensais au hibou et cela pouvait continuer. Jusqu'au jour où j'ai vu une exécution (c'était en Hongrie) et le même
vertige qui avait saisi l'enfant que j'étais à
obscurci mes yeux d'homme (P, pp. 1423-1424).

In his combat against crime and against man's condemnation
to death by society, Tarrou has become conscious of his own
very real criminality and recognizes that that criminality
is the disease which afflicts him and all other criminals
and which is called "la peste." It is to this experience
in consciousness that he refers as he begins his confes-
sion to Rieux: "Disons pour simplifier, Rieux, que je
souffrais déjà de la peste bien avant de connaître cette
ville et cette épidémie" (P, p. 1420). The term "plague"
which Camus uses to describe the human condition encom-
passes many elements. In this particular scene, Tarrou
expresses his consciousness of the fact that he, as well
as all men, are potential criminals and executioners and
that that very potential for crime which is in all men is
in itself the plague. Later, he elaborates on this
realization in the following terms:

J'ai compris alors que moi, du moins, je n'avais
pas cessé d'être un pestiféré pendant toutes ces
longues années où pourtant, de toute mon âme, je
croyais lutter justement contre la peste. J'ai
appris que j'avais indirectement souscrit à la
mort de milliers d'hommes, que j'avais même
provoqué cette mort en trouvant bons les actions
et les principes qui l'avaient fatalement
entraînée. Les autres ne semblaient pas gênés
par cela ou du moins ils n'en parlaient jamais
spontanément. Moi, j'avais la gorge nouée (P,
p. 1424).

With the appearance of Tarrou in the novel, we observe that
the plague is not merely a disease exterior to man, as
Paneloux's sermons would lead us to believe. It is the criminality that exists within man, his propensity to impose death on his fellow man. This crime may be committed directly through condemnation and execution or indirectly through support of the systems which justify the existence of crime in the name of the abolition of it at some future time. Tarrou's experience in a political course of action as combat against the plague reveals that the crime committed by men against other men consists not only of the physical act of murder and execution, but also all that that major criminal act implies: tyranny, domination, and enslavement of man, and the very justification of these criminal acts.

Tarrou's development in consciousness is significant, for his consciousness of society's criminality has led him to a consciousness of his own criminality and of his membership in that society. Unlike Meursault's situation, that criminality and guilt has not been imposed on him by society. He has discovered it within himself and, with this discovery, man's innocence becomes more doubtful than it appeared in both La Mort heureuse and L'Etranger. What is of utmost importance in his case is that his passage from a certain vague state of innocence to a consciousness of culpability has constituted a rebirth for him and it is through this development that he begins to really live, to be aware of himself, and of what he is.
Of his prior state of innocence and unconsciousness, he states to Rieux:

Quand j'étais jeune, je vivais avec l'idée de mon innocence, c'est-à-dire avec pas d'idée du tout. Je n'ai pas le genre tourmenté, j'ai débuté comme il convenait. Tout me réussissait, j'étais à l'aise dans l'intelligence, au mieux avec les femmes, et si j'avais quelques inquiétudes, elles passaient comme elles étaient venues. Un jour, j'ai commencé à réfléchir (P, p. 1420).

Tarrou's rebirth is a rebirth into life, but not a life where sunshine, warmth, and sea exaltingly abound. It is, rather, a world where men are executed, where executioners are diseased, some knowing it, others not. The plague which envelops the city of Oran is death and crime itself as it is utilized by man. Tarrou is the man who has become conscious of this human condition, a man faced with the incomprehensible fact of death as it is imposed by man on man and of his own criminality. In his search for happiness, Tarrou has committed unpremeditated criminal acts. Tarrou's consciousness of his criminality may be defined as the realization that the search itself constitutes a crime; in his attempt to eliminate the evil that exists, he has propagated that which he sought to conquer. In combatting the plague, he has become stricken with it; in combatting crime, he has unwillingly become a criminal.

Tarrou's consciousness of his own as well as his fellow man's criminality is accompanied by feelings of guilt, guilt which, as we have already stated, is not
imposed upon him. He states: "Cela fait longtemps que j'ai honte, honte à mourir d'avoir été, fût-ce de loin, fût-ce dans la bonne volonté, un meurtrier à mon tour" (P, p. 1425). Moreover, with his entrance into the state of consciousness of man's criminality, there has also occurred a loss of his former state of innocence and happiness which he calls peace. "Oui, j'ai continué d'avoir honte, j'ai appris cela, que nous étions tous dans la peste et j'ai perdu la paix" (P, p. 1425). The search for happiness and the consciousness of his criminality are accompanied by a sense of loss of past happiness.

Tarrou, guilty of unpremeditated crime, having realized that in attempting to conquer crime, he has himself become a criminal, adopts a second course of action. If crime cannot be eliminated without propagating it, if man cannot heal without being infected with disease, then he must at least refuse to justify man's condemnation to death by man and to support any system which strives to heal: "Et je me disais qu'en attendant, et pour ma part au moins, je refuserais de jamais donner une seule raison, une seule, vous entendez, à cette dégoûtante boucherie" (P, p. 1425). And he adds: "J'ai décidé de refuser tout ce qui, de près ou de loin, pour de bonnes ou de mauvaises raisons, fait mourir ou justifie qu'on fasse mourir" (P, p. 1425). Tarrou refuses to combat crime with criminal acts and to make of the plague an instrument in combatting the plague.
It is only in his struggle to remain innocent, only in his "non" to the justification of death and crime, only in his refusal to spread the plague that he may attempt to attain the peace he has lost. This search for happiness as he has chosen to undertake it, with its limitations, is described in terms of his struggle against his criminality. Tarrou states: "Je la [la paix] cherche encore aujourd'hui, essayant de les [les hommes] comprendre tous et de n'être l'ennemi mortel de personne" (P, p. 1425). Tarrou's combat, once directed against the criminality of others, has become a struggle against his own propensity for crime. Yet Tarrou does not affirm that he will ever rid himself of the plague. He only affirms that he must struggle to prevent the germs from spreading and developing.

Je sais seulement qu'il faut faire ce qu'il faut pour ne plus être un pestiféré et que c'est là ce qui peut, seul, nous faire espérer la paix, ou une bonne mort à son défaut. C'est cela qui peut soulager les hommes et, sinon les sauver, du moins leur faire le moins de mal possible et même parfois un peu de bien (P, p. 1425).

The desire to cure and conquer has become a desire to combat and relieve, being careful not to transmit the disease:

Et qu'il faut se surveiller sans arrêt pour ne pas être amené, dans une minute de distraction, à respirer dans la figure d'un autre et à lui coller l'infection (P, p. 1426).

Tarrou proposes this course of action to Cottard when he advises him in the following terms: "Mais essayez au moins, dit Tarrou en souriant, de ne pas propager volontairement
le microbe" (P, p. 1349). The use of the word "volontairement" is important: Tarrou, conscious of the crimes which he has committed involuntarily and without premeditation, knows that he must keep that consciousness alive so that he may not become a criminal guilty of premeditated crime; he must struggle to be no more than an innocent criminal.

... je dis qu'il y a les fléaux et les victimes et rien de plus. Si, disant cela, je deviens fléau moi-même, du moins, je n'y suis pas consentant. J'essaie d'être un meurtrier innocent. Vous voyez que ce n'est pas une grande ambition (P, p. 1426).

This struggle, the maintaining of consciousness of his criminality, is fatiguing. There is no exuberant joy of living that results from it, but rather an extreme fatigue whose only deliverance is death itself.

Oui, Rieux, c'est bien fatigant d'être un pestiféré. Mais c'est encore plus fatigant de ne pas vouloir l'être. C'est pour cela que tout le monde se montre fatigué, puisque tout le monde, aujourd'hui, se trouve un peu pestiféré. Mais c'est pour cela que quelques-uns, qui veulent cesser de l'être, connaissent une extrémité de fatigue dont rien ne les délivrera plus que la mort (P, p. 1426).

The possibility of happiness for Tarrou and criminal man is not altogether eliminated, however, and we shall focus attention on the nature of its attainment in our conclusion.

In his revolt against the plague of criminality, in the realization that all men are more or less plague-stricken, does Tarrou affirm that men are evil as does Othon in the 1947 version of the novel? The answer is no,
for such an affirmation would constitute a condemnation of men and a criminal act, an act in disaccord with the struggle to remain an innocent criminal. Tarrou's struggle demands that his criminality be kept constantly in check; it rules out judgment of men, be they victims or "fléaux." This course of action is reflected in his attitude toward his father and he speaks of him in the following terms:

Pour parler bref, il n'était pas très original et aujourd'hui qu'il est mort, je me rends compte, que s'il n'a pas vécu comme un saint, il n'a pas été non plus un mauvais homme (P, p. 1420).

Tarrou, faced with the human condition as it presents itself to him, is the conscious absurd man who says "oui" and "non" to that condition: his acceptance of life and criminality is continually accompanied by the struggle against that criminality. And this constant lucidity and revolt enable him to die a conscious death. The acceptance of natural death has been no problem for Tarrou as it was for Meursault and Mersault. His struggle and determination to maintain consciousness of life is such that his mortality is considered an integral part of that life.

The problem of natural death is of utmost concern to Rieux, representative of the medical reaction to the plague. Like Tarrou, but on a physiological level in this case, Rieux at first seeks to cure man of the plague and comes to realize that his role cannot exceed that of the
fighter. His main preoccupation is the struggle against natural death as the following affirmations to Tarrou indicate:

Je ne sais pas ce qui m'attend ni ce qui viendra après tout ceci. Pour le moment il y a des malades et il faut les guérir. Ensuite, ils réfléchiront et moi aussi. Mais le plus pressé est de les guérir. ... puisque l'ordre du monde est réglé par la mort, peut-être vaut-il mieux pour Dieu qu'on ne croie pas en lui et qu'on lutte de toutes ses forces contre la mort, sans lever les yeux vers ce ciel où il se tait (P, p. 1323).

Rieux's determination to combat suffering and death is also evidenced in a conversation with Paneloux during which he states: "Ce que je hais, c'est la mort et le mal, vous le savez bien. Et que vous le vouliez ou non, nous sommes ensemble pour les souffrir et les combattre" (P, p. 1398). But the nature of the combat has been tempered; the desire to cure has developed into a desire to diagnose and relieve:

Car il savait que, pour une période dont il n'apercevait pas le terme, son rôle n'était plus de guérir. Son rôle était de diagnostiquer, découvrir, voir, décrire, enregistrer, puis condamner, c'était sa tâche. Des épouses lui prenaient le poignet et hurlaient: "Docteur, donnez-lui la vie!" Mais il n'était pas là pour ordonner l'isolement (P, p. 1375).

Like Tarrou, Rieux is concerned with man's health and not his salvation. The fight against disease, suffering, and death is an attempt to do something for happiness, all the while realizing that the plague cannot be eliminated. However, so absorbed is Rieux in his struggle to alleviate
suffering and to combat death that his conception of happiness becomes separate from the life he is living. As he sends his wife away to be cured, he looks forward to a time when they can begin their lives anew. Happiness is envisioned as a possible future state of being. Like Tarrou, Rieux does not know if he has renounced happiness by having decided to combat the plague and natural death.

The doctor's struggle against natural death and suffering is a fight for man's life and an attempt to minimize or reduce the suffering that he undergoes. This is significant because his revolt, like Tarrou's, is also one against that which hurts and kills man. Rieux repeatedly speaks of the disease as a tyrant and killer and he views the plague as an abstraction, as opposed to man who is not to be considered as such. As abstraction, the disease involves belief in a visionary world other than the present one. Let us recall that Tarrou fell into that very abstraction when he chose political ideology as a weapon against crime. The disease as killer and tyrant is precisely that same abstraction which Rieux combats: "Mais quand l'abstraction se met à vous tuer, il faut bien s'occuper de l'abstraction" (P, p. 1291). Later in the narrative, Rieux states: "Mais il semblait que la peste se fût confortablement installée dans son paroxysme et qu'elle apportât à ses meurtres quotidiens la précision et la régularité d'un bon fonctionnaire" (P, p. 1412). Rieux's
observations of the plague reveal once again that the disease is representative of criminal acts performed by men in the name of mankind's future happiness, acts which, while performed so that crime may be eliminated, serve only to propagate it. And society, having bestowed upon itself the justification of crime and the authorization to kill, has made of itself a criminal-hero-conqueror and is infested with the tyrannical plague. Such a course of action adopted by the guilty criminal constitutes, in Rieux's opinion, a most despicable vice.

Mais ils [les hommes] ignorent plus ou moins, et c'est ce qu'on appelle vertu ou vice, le vice le plus désespérant étant celui de l'ignorance qui croit tout savoir et qui s'autorise alors à tuer (P, p. 1326).

When Rieux affirms his preference to be on the side of the victims as opposed to that of the "fléau," he is, like Tarrou, expressing his desire to remain an innocent criminal. It is in this way that he struggles to remain a man. In an answer to Tarrou, he states: "... vous savez, je me sens plus de solidarité avec les vaincus qu'avec les saints. Je n'ai pas de goût, je crois, pour l'héroïsme et la sainteté. Ce qui m'intéresse, c'est d'être un homme" (P, p. 1427).

On the surface, to be a man would appear to be a simple enough activity, but in La Peste, a definite conception of the true man and of his relation with the world in which he lives has taken form. The human being who is a
man is neither god, saint, hero, nor conqueror. Rieux knows that to be a man is to find oneself engulfed in the problem of reform and to accept that problem as it is: if one cannot conquer or cure without aggravating the evil that exists, one must nevertheless diagnose and do all that is possible so that the disease may not be aggravated. As in the case of Tarrou, reform involves an endless struggle to maintain an equilibrium between two magnetic poles.

As one who diagnoses, Rieux's role as writer is closely intertwined with his medical profession. In diagnosing, he observes lucidly and informs the diseased so that they may also observe lucidly. As doctor and writer who diagnoses and reports the plague's developments, he makes his fellow men conscious of the plague and of the human condition in which they find themselves. Both roles of doctor and writer demand the struggle to remain lucid and conscious of the plague; that is the only way that man can remain a man and an innocent criminal. The nature of Rieux's medical and literary tasks is such that his preoccupation with objectivity in his written report of the plague corresponds to his struggle (1) to remain conscious of death and crime, (2) to avoid falling into the pit of abstractions and ideas, and (3) to avoid becoming a guilty criminal. In the effort to remain a man, the artist and the doctor are faced with one and the same
problem and one and the same way of life. In both cases death and crime must not only be accepted, but combatted knowing that victory will never be attained. And the realization of the above must always be maintained.

Whereas Rieux is representative of the combattive side of the struggle against death and crime, Grand, one of the secondary characters of the novel by comparison to the three we have already examined, represents the genuine and profound suffering which the struggle entails. Grand's desire for happiness supersedes the actual combat for happiness and he is unable to conciliate the two. This explains his concern for the past and future. Vis-à-vis the past, during which time he became conscious of the absurd, Grand experiences a sense of loss, guilt, and regret.

Le reste de l'histoire, selon Grand, était très simple. Il en est ainsi pour tout le monde: on se marie, on aime encore un peu, on travaille. On travaille tant qu'on en oublie d'aimer. Jeanne aussi travaillait, puisque les promesses du chef de bureau n'avaient pas été tenues. Ici, il fallait un peu d'imagination pour comprendre ce que voulait dire Grand. La fatigue aidant, il s'était laissé aller, il s'était tu de plus en plus et il n'avait pas soutenu sa jeune femme dans l'idée qu'elle était aimée. Un homme qui travaille, la pauvreté, l'avenir lentement fermé, le silence des soirs autour de la table, il n'y a pas de place pour la passion dans un tel univers (P, p. 1286).

Grand has become aware of having lived a dead life, but his consciousness of the relation between himself and that life involves consciousness of his relation with his fellow man,
and it is essentially the same relation of which both Tarrou and Rieux have become aware. Tarrou's struggle to maintain innocent criminality is a concern to hurt his fellow man as little as possible. Rieux, too, considers that it is his duty to alleviate the suffering of men. In his own way, Grand, like Tarrou, realizes that he has failed in his relation with another individual and in his case, the other is his wife, Jeanne; Grand has failed to love.

Grand's regret of the past, of not having loved, is accompanied by a look to the future when disease, suffering, and death from the plague will come to an end. The narrator speaks of Grand and his aspirations in these terms:

On pouvait le voir ainsi dans un continuël état d'épuisement, soutenu par deux ou trois idées fixes, comme celle de s'offrir des vacances complètes après la peste, pendant une semaine au moins, et de travailler alors de façon positive, "chapeau bas", à ce qu'il avait en train (P, p. 1374).

Grand is a man whose anguish is so intense that he cannot conciliate his present condition with his desire for happiness and thus finds it extremely difficult to live in the world as he finds it. The scene depicting Grand standing in front of the display window of a toy shop is more than that of an individual saddened by past memories. It is the depiction of suffering man: the man who finds that he inhabits a cold world where love of man is absent,
who experiences a sense of loss of former happiness (in this case, the incident of former happiness is his engagement to Jeanne) and who, being aware of his own failure to love (in other words, being conscious of having lived a dead life), yearns to find love and warmth and wishes to be happy. The world faced by both Grand and Tarrou is one and the same world, Tarrou recognizing the presence of death and crime, Grand observing the absence of love as he stands before the shop window in the plague-stricken city of Oran.

In juxtaposition to his state of anguish and suffering is Grand's vision of a world distinct from the one in which he finds himself, a world where warmth, happiness, and love of men abound. Grand attempts to depict such a world through the use of language: the scene is that of an elegant

A midi, heure glacée, Rieux, sorti de la voiture, regardait de loin Grand, presque collé contre une vitrine, pleine de jouets grossièrement sculptés dans le bois. Sur le visage du vieux fonctionnaire, des larmes coulaient sans interruption. Et ces larmes bouleversèrent Rieux parce qu'il les comprenait et qu'il les sentait aussi au creux de sa gorge. Il se souvenait lui aussi des fiancailles du malheureux, devant une boutique de Noël, et de Jeanne renversée vers lui pour dire qu'elle était contente. Du fond d'années lointaines, au cœur même de cette folie, la voix fraîche de Jeanne revenait vers Grand, cela était sûr. Rieux savait ce que pensait à cette minute le vieil homme qui pleurait, et il le pensait comme lui, que ce monde sans amour était comme un monde mort et qu'il vient toujours une heure où on se lasse des prisons, du travail et du courage pour réclamer le visage d'un être et le coeur émerveillé de la tendresse (P, pp. 1432-1433).
amazon riding through the flowered Bois de Boulogne on a beautiful morning in May.

Grand's literary endeavor is a quest to solve the problem of the suffering in human existence by creating a world where suffering, death, and crime are non-existent. But literature presents no such solution, no answers, no explanations, since Grand never achieves the desired description of such a utopian world. Realizing the futility of his attempts, he decides to burn the manuscripts of the repeatedly revised sentence. This act marks an important change in Grand's life and in the way he faces it, with its absence of love. Ill with pulmonary plague and tended by Rieux and Tarrou, Grand directly confronts the disease and at this point, rather than pursuing the creation of a world which is other than the one confronted, he chooses to accept the present and the world he faces. The decision to henceforth eliminate all qualitative adjectives in his writing marks a significant change not only in Grand's literary course of action, but in his attitude toward the world he faces and inhabits. In both cases, it is a decision to maintain lucidity and consciousness of the human condition with its suffering, death, crime, and absence of love. Grand's "oui" to life is also reflected in his act of writing to Jeanne. This second major gesture, in addition to revealing acceptance of his criminality, of his failure to have loved, constitutes a
positive act in the name of love of another human being. This positive act, also marking a change in his way of life, is an act of combat against culpable criminality, a struggle not to fall back in the cold, dead life where love is absent. Having accepted life with its criminality and absence of love and having begun to act against criminality and in the name of love, Grand begins to truly live and to experience happiness.

By the end of La Peste, the reader observes that Grand has triumphed, not in eliminating the plague, suffering, and crime, but in accepting them, by performing an act in the name of love which combats the plague, and by finally holding his criminality, his suffering, in short, his life, in his hands.

While Grand is representative of the suffering undergone by man as he seeks happiness, Rambert represents the struggle undergone to attain the happiness that he, as a victim of fate, has lost and to return to the lost homeland. Of all the characters in La Peste, Rambert best depicts man at the mercy of fate who loses a previous state of being. Rieux, speaking of Rambert and of others in situations akin to the journalist's, states that the...
experience of exile is more profoundly felt by these outsiders trapped in Oran than by the inhabitants of the city.

Mais si c'était l'exil, dans la majorité des cas il c'était l'exil chez soi. Et quoique le narrateur n'ait connu que l'exil de tout le monde, il ne doit pas oublier ceux, comme le journaliste Rambert ou d'autres, pour qui, au contraire, les peines de la séparation s'amplifièrent du fait que, voyageurs surpris par la peste et retenus dans la ville, ils se trouvaient éloignés à la fois de l'être qu'ils ne pouvaient rejoindre et du pays qui était le leur. Dans l'exil général, ils étaient les plus exilés, car si le temps suscitait chez eux, comme chez tous, l'angoisse qui lui est propre, ils étaient attachés aussi à l'espace et se heuraient sans cesse aux murs qui séparaient leur refuge empesté de leur patrie perdue (P, p. 1278).

For Rambert, the sense of loss involves more than that of a past life: in his case, a former state of happiness, a world completely exterior to and separate from Oran and its boundaries have been lost. Rambert is the innocent man who finds himself imprisoned by the plague, who is conscious of the disease and of his situation, and whose intense search for his former state of happiness suppresses that consciousness and enables him to be unaware of the plague's developments. The present is obliterated by his concern for the future, his desire to rediscover the past. However, dislike it as he may, Rambert has been brought to a state of consciousness of the existence of suffering, disease, death, and crime, since the plague is all of these. Like Tarrou who stated, "Quand j'étais jeune, je vivais avec l'idée de mon innocence ..." (P, p. 1420),
Rambert has lost a state of original innocence where consciousness of the plague was non-existent. Although he considers himself an innocent victim of the plague and its consequences, Rambert, after a period of reflection during the time spent working with Rieux, comes to the realization that he may be a potential criminal and a guilty one at that. Once consciousness is attained, to flee from it or to attempt to reject it is to experience guilt. To Rambert, man's desire for happiness is not a criminal act for which he experiences guilt; but to turn one's back on suffering, criminal, infested man, to choose to do nothing to fight crime and the plague, to do nothing for man's happiness, is a criminal act of which the criminal is guilty.

... dit Rambert. J'ai toujours pensé que j'étais étranger à cette ville et que je n'avais rien à faire avec vous. Mais maintenant que j'ai vu ce que j'ai vu, je sais que je suis d'ici, que je le veuille ou non. Cette histoire nous concerne tous (P, p. 1389).

To combat the plague is to combat crime, to work to alleviate the suffering of mankind, and not simply one's own suffering. Tarrou's struggle to maintain his state of innocent criminality is such a struggle, to do something for mankind and for happiness. By nature, it is not a struggle which limits itself to isolated individualized action; it inevitably affects those around the individual. Though he is not an inhabitant of Oran, Rambert nonetheless
confronts a world where men are diseased by the plague and with that confrontation, the journalist's desire for personal happiness undergoes re-evaluation.

Rambert dit qu'il avait encore réfléchi, qu'il continuait à croire ce qu'il croyait, mais que s'il partait, il aurait honte. Cela le gênerait pour aimer celle qu'il avait laissée. Mais Rieux se redressa et dit d'une voix ferme que cela était stupide et qu'il n'y avait pas de honte à préférer le bonheur.

Oui, dit Rambert, mais il peut y avoir de la honte à être heureux tout seul (P, p. 1389).

Clearly, a new dimension of man's criminality has been emphasized in *La Peste*, a dimension not present in the novels of the first period. Man is a guilty criminal when he fails to love his fellow man: when he engages in activity which harms him or when he acts without regard for him. At the same time, man's search for happiness is not a solitary activity. It is an activity which in one way or another affects all of mankind. To turn one's back on a criminal world, to do nothing to alleviate the suffering caused by crime, is as criminal an activity as to outrightly hurt mankind, as did the socialist revolutionaries encountered by Tarrou.

It must be made clear that Rambert's acceptance of the state of the plague and of his plunge into that state of unhappiness and suffering is not a rejection of happiness as Tarrou believes it to be. The latter,
qui s'était tu jusque-là, sans tourner la tête vers eux, fit remarquer que si Rambert voulait partager le malheur des hommes, il n'aurait plus jamais de temps pour le bonheur. Il fallait choisir (P, p. 1389).

On the contrary, Rambert's desire for happiness continues to be very intense. However, the attainment of happiness without the presence of human warmth or love for mankind constitutes a guilty criminal act. Rambert's decision to remain in Oran is a decision to maintain consciousness of the plague, to remain what he has become: man conscious of the crime and suffering that afflicts mankind. Once he has become conscious, he has the potential for becoming a guilty criminal.

Cottard is the one character in the novel who has fulfilled this potential and who uses the plague to his advantage, by gouging others very comfortably. He states openly to Tarrou: "D'ailleurs je m'y trouve bien, moi, dans la peste, et je ne vois pas pourquoi je me mêlerais de la faire cesser" (P, p. 1347). Should the plague cease, he would be an isolated prisoner and no longer a prisoner among an entire city of prisoners. Tarrou observes Cottard in the following terms:

En somme, avec nous, nous qui ne sommes pas encore morts de la peste, il [Cottard] sent bien que sa liberté et sa vie sont tous les jours à la veille d'être détruites. Mais puisque lui-même a vécu dans la terreur, il trouve normal que les autres la connaissent à leur tour. Plus exactement, la terreur lui paraît alors moins lourde à porter que s'il y était tout seul (P, p. 1381).
Cottard's crime is his refusal to become involved in the struggle against the plague and his consequent approval of crime and death. There is no love of mankind present in him, since he merely uses others to alleviate his solitude and to attain personal happiness. Rather than combat the plague, he has chosen to seek refuge in it. His guilty criminality is observed by Tarrou who at the same time recognizes a certain basic honesty in the man. Again, criminality is described in terms of man's relation with his fellow man. The narrator tells us:

Mais il est un de nos concitoyens au moins pour lequel le docteur Rieux ne pouvait parler. Il s'agit, en effet, de celui dont Tarrou avait dit un jour à Rieux: "Son seul vrai crime, c'est d'avoir approuvé dans son coeur ce qui faisait mourir des enfants et des hommes" (P, p. 1469).

Cottard, conscious of the plague, is also conscious of the fact of man's mortality. Rieux states that although the annual Feast of All Souls has been ignored by the inhabitants of Oran, "selon Cottard, à qui Tarrou reconnaissait un langage de plus en plus ironique, c'était tous les jours la Fête des Morts" (P, p. 1412). The black marketeer does not deny the existence of the disease as do certain officials of the city when the plague first appears. He faces the world he inhabits and does not place false hopes in future happiness. He does not combat the plague; nor does he desire to justify its existence or in any way attempt to escape it. In his own fashion,
Cottard works for his individual happiness and material enrichment by exploiting the inhabitants of Oran and doing nothing for their happiness.

Again, as in *La Mort heureuse* and in *L'Etranger*, the problem of death and crime predominates in the novel of Albert Camus and again, there is present in it the basic thematic structure death-crime-happiness. However, since the period of *La Mort heureuse* and *L'Etranger*, important shifts of emphasis have taken place and the structure's formation, although still consisting of the same basic thematic elements, has evolved and undergone change. Having observed the ravages of the plague and the representative courses of action and reaction to it, we find ourselves equipped to observe the thematic structure as a whole and to determine in which directions it has developed since the period of *La Mort heureuse* and *L'Etranger*.

The first major consideration which comes to our attention is that the problem of death and crime is not one involving primarily an individual as was the case of Mersault and Meursault, but one which involves an entire population: the plague has stricken a society, the inhabitants of an entire city. This consideration which is obvious and which we indicated in the introduction to this chapter, is an important one as regards the development
of the Camusian theme of death and crime, for it is linked to a second major consideration: since the novels of the first period, there has been a passage from the innocence of individual human beings to the pestilence or culpability and criminality of men, such that society as a whole is criminal. However, the criminal man as individual is not wholly disregarded--far from it, since we have observed the reactions of such individuals to the plague.

Thirdly, while the individual criminal act in question in the novels of the first period was homicide, that is, death imposed by one individual on another, as well as the search for happiness, in La Peste, the nature of man's crime has been more extensively exposed. In this novel, emphasis is not so much on the individual crime as homicide, but on (1) society's executions of men and (2) individual criminality in its various forms and as it affects one's fellow men. In the latter case, the crime committed by the individual may be one of several; its definition is not limited to the act of imposing death on another human being or to that of seeking happiness. Crime in La Peste is any act that justifies not only the execution of men, but also their suffering and unhappiness. It is also approval of any such justification. And it is any act which propagates the suffering, crime and unhappiness that already exist. The plague is symbolic of that criminality; it is the evil which resides in society and
which man encounters in the world and in himself. Tarrou's reaction to the plague has revealed that the problem of death and crime not only concerns the individual man in his relation to the world he inhabits, but also in his relation to his fellow man.

Fourthly, then, man finds himself unwillingly imprisoned by the plague, by crime and criminality. Prior to becoming conscious of the evil that exists, he lives in a state of unawareness and innocence. But when consciousness of crime is awakened, he desires happiness and wishes to rid the world of the suffering and crime which exist in it. Yet, in seeking to eliminate crime, he risks hurting his fellow man, adding to his suffering and unhappiness and depriving him of life. In his efforts to combat crime and to attain happiness, he becomes conscious of his own criminality and propensity for crime.

Conscious as he is of crime and his own criminality, man can either ignore the plague (thereby approving crime and the execution of others in his heart) or combat it, thereby taking the risk of committing criminal deeds. The problem becomes one of alleviating without propagating, of diagnosing without curing, of maintaining a state of innocent criminality. In one way or another, the characters of La Peste have passed from a course of action without limits, one which would make of them hero-conquerors as they face and fight the plague, to a second
course of action which encompasses the realization that the combat for happiness has its limits if one is to remain an innocent criminal.

A fifth consideration is that the problem of natural death and its acceptance dominated both La Mort heureuse and L'Etranger and the central characters therein underwent initiations into life and death. The problem of natural death, although present in La Peste (we observe the death of Tarrou, Paneloux and Othon's son and their struggle with it) is not of prime concern in the novel. Of prime concern is the problem of imposed death, of death as crime, of death as it appears outside its natural limits and exercised by man. At the same time, the major problem is one of the acceptance, not of death and one's mortality, but of criminality, both as it is present in the world in which man lives and in oneself. Consciousness of life and death dominated La Mort heureuse and L'Etranger and the criminal individuals in those works struggled to remain conscious of their lives and their mortality. In La Peste, the struggle is also a struggle to remain conscious of life. But this time, man's consciousness of life and of the world in which he lives encompasses consciousness of crime and the struggle becomes one against his own criminality.

A sixth consideration in the development of Camus' thematic structure regards man's innocence. Man
unwillingly and involuntarily bears within himself a propensity for crime which is the plague, and with his awakening of consciousness and desire for happiness is experienced a sense of loss of original innocence. Tarrou expressed the experience of this loss in his confession to Rieux. During that conversation, he also indicated that man's original infection with the microbe of the plague constitutes a state of being which he has not entered of his own will. The following passage presents infected man as a victim of fate. In it Tarrou states: "Ce qui est naturel, c'est le microbe. Le reste, la santé, l'intégrité, la pureté, si vous voulez, c'est un effet de la volonté et d'une volonté qui ne doit jamais s'arrêter" (P, p. 1426). Man, in his search for happiness which constitutes unpremeditated crime, has become a criminal. Once man is conscious of crime (and in La Peste consciousness of life is consciousness of crime), and as such begins to truly live, there is no turning back to that original state of innocence. He is a criminal, he cannot escape that criminality, as Rambert's position has demonstrated, and he can only avoid becoming a guilty criminal.

The microbe of the plague may lie dormant for years, but it is nevertheless always present in men. This is affirmed by Tarrou who states: "... chacun la porte en soi, la peste, parce que personne, non, personne au monde n'en est indemne" (P, p. 1425). It is also affirmed by
Rieux as he observes the Oranaïs' joy that the plague has come to an end:

Mais il [Rieux] savait cependant que cette chronique ne pouvait pas être celle de la victoire définitive. Elle ne pouvait être que le témoignage de ce qu'il avait fallu accomplir et que, sans doute, devraient accomplir encore, contre la terreur et son arme inlassable, malgré leurs déchirements personnels, tous les hommes qui, ne pouvant être des saints et refusant d'admettre les fléaux, s'efforcent cependant d'être des médecins.

Écoutant, en effet, les cris d'allégresse qui montaient de la ville, Rieux se souvenait que cette allégresse était toujours menacée. Car il savait ce que cette foule en joie ignorait, et qu'on peut lire dans les livres, que le bacille de la peste ne meurt ni ne disparait jamais, qu'il peut rester pendant des dizaines d'années endormi dans les meubles et le linge, qu'il attend patiemment dans les chambres, les caves, les malles, les mouchoirs et les paperasses... (P, pp. 1473-1474).

Again, it is indicated that man is destined to be a criminal—that is what he is when he becomes conscious and begins to live. Though he cannot be a saint, he can master his destiny and his criminality by struggling to be a doctor, to remain an innocent criminal. To struggle to remain an innocent criminal, to combat the microbe of criminality all the while remaining conscious that the microbe may never be destroyed, is to truly live.

The old asthmatic also recognizes the plague as being integrally part of the human condition and observes that the disease is always present. The cries of joy from the crowds in the street who believe that the microbe no
longer menaces them contrast with the old man's perceptual and continued activity of transferring peas from one bin to another. For him, nothing has changed; life is the same as it was when the plague began to manifest itself in the city. He comments to Rieux:


La Peste being an exposition of "la fureur du meurtre"\(^1\) which is present in man, the question may arise as to the presence or absence of goodness in him. Is man at all capable of succeeding in his struggle to do good, to alleviate his fellow man's suffering? According to Rieux, the answer to that question is an affirmative one. Revealing to the reader his identity as narrator of the chronicle of the plague, he states:

Au milieu des cris qui redoublaient de force et de durée, qui se répercutaient longuement jusqu'au pied de la terrasse, à mesure que les gerbes multicolores s'élevaient plus nombreuses dans le ciel, le docteur Rieux décida alors de rédiger le récit qui s'achève ici, pour ne pas être de ceux qui se taisent, pour témoigner en faveur de ces pestiférés, pour laisser du moins un souvenir de l'injustice et de la violence qui leur avaient été faites, et pour dire simplement ce qu'on apprend au milieu des fléaux qu'il y a dans les hommes plus de choses à admirer que de choses à mépriser (P, p. 1473).

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1. In his confession to Rieux, Tarrou speaks of man's criminality in these terms (P, p. 1425).
Out last point of consideration is concerned with the theme of happiness and its position in Camus' thematic structure. For Mersault and Meursault, happiness and a joy of living were experienced in the struggle to remain conscious. However, for the characters of La Peste, happiness is momentary and fleeting. Such moments constitute periods of repose from the struggle against criminality, rather than constituting an experience which is undergone through the conscious living of life. Those moments of happiness are as separate from the struggle as the sea is apart from the city of Oran, but even while they are experienced, consciousness of crime is still maintained. There is no escape from the plague and from one's criminality. Happiness simply consists of moments when the plague manifests itself less intensely. The unforgettable fraternal plunge and swim of Rieux and Tarrou into the sea is an experience of happiness; it is an experience in human warmth and love of man as well as a proclamation of love for life.

Devant eux, la nuit était sans limites. Rieux, qui sentait sous ses doigts le visage grêlé des rochers, était plein d'un étrange bonheur. Tourné vers Tarrou, il devina, sur le visage calme et grave de son ami, ce même bonheur qui n'oubliait rien, pas même l'assassinat (P, p. 1428).

Of the return to the city after the fraternal swim in the sea, Rieux states:
Habillés de nouveau, ils repartirent sans avoir prononcé un mot. Mais ils avaient le même cœur et le souvenir de cette nuit leur était doux. Quand ils aperçurent de loin la sentinelle de la peste, Rieux savait que Tarrou se disait, comme lui, que la maladie venait de les oublier, que cela était bien et qu'il fallait maintenant recommencer (P, p. 1429).

Despite the nature and rarity of the moments of happiness in *La Peste* and the exposition of the ravages of crime and the plague, there is undoubtedly present a genuine love of life which is revealed in the above-quoted scene of the "nage." Love of life is also reflected in Tarrou's struggle to remain conscious as he faces death. Intense suffering prevents Tarrou from dying with a smile on his face, but his struggle to remain lucid and smiling until the end is indicative that he has died, if not a happy death, at least a good one. Tarrou's death is not the happy death experienced by Mersault and Meursault. But perhaps the good death is the happiest death that man may be allowed to experience in a world where crime reigns. While Tarrou dies the good or happy death, Paneloux dies indifferently, being unable to reject the religious explanation and justification of man's suffering, death and criminality, yet realizing that he cannot comprehend it completely. At the end of *La Peste*, the problem of death as payment is left unsettled. The death of Othon's son, as we have observed, left even Paneloux perplexed. The child, suffering and dying, is the image of the
incomprehensibility of man's suffering, death, and criminality. Othon's son, too, is a "pestiféré," but as an apparently innocent victim who has not become conscious of crime and criminality, he is representative of the yet unconscious innocent man afflicted unexplicably with a propensity toward evil, a propensity of which he is not yet aware. The problem of the innocent criminal condemned to death is not resolved and *La Peste* does not explain *L'Etranger*. Camus will undertake further examination of the problem in his essay entitled *L'Homme révolté*. It is in this work that, as he specifically states, he will explore man's innocence and try to determine whether man can preserve it or whether he cannot help but kill another human being.1

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1. Albert Camus, "L'Homme révolté," in *Essais*, p. 414. Subsequent references to this essay will be denoted in the body of this study by the abbreviation HR and the page number of this edition of Camus' essays.
La Peste revealed that man harbors within him microbes which may lie dormant for some time and unexpectedly and quite suddenly come alive to ravage him. The microbes of the disease known as the plague, as we have observed in the preceding chapter, constitute the "fureur du meurtre" (P, p. 1425) which is present in man. The novel also revealed that man is imprisoned in crime, imprisoned in the propensity for criminal acts which constitutes the microbe of the plague, a microbe which, as Rieux observes at the end of his chronicle, is always at least latently present in man, if not actively so, even when the disease may seem to have disappeared entirely. Rieux's observation demonstrates that the plague forms part of human nature. The microbes which lie within man are those of violence, of the fury to kill.

This novel, then, exposed the presence of the "fureur du meurtre" in man. As in the first stage of his literary career, Camus accompanies his romanesque work with a theoretical study; and it is in L'Homme révolté that the problem of man's violence and criminal furor is expressed on a theoretical level. It is in Camus' dramatic works and
in his essays of the period ranging from 1943 to 1951, date of publication of *L'Homme révolté*, and especially in this latter essay, that man's criminality is examined and diagnosed. Genuine "pestiférés" are present in the works of this period and the reasoning behind their actions as well as the actions themselves are examined by Camus. In *L'Homme révolté*, various types of revolt undertaken against crime are viewed: the metaphysical, the historic, and the artistic. At the same time, a search for a non-criminal way of life is conducted, a way of life that coincides with Tarrou's conception of the "meurtrier innocent." It is our purpose to examine the works of this period in the light of the thematic structure observed in *La Peste*.

In his "Introduction" to *L'Homme révolté*, Camus affirms his concern regarding the problem of crime, murder and the acts of violence and destruction which men commit against one another. This problem of violence permeates the entire work and is the essential theme of the essay. Camus begins by asserting that crime is a fact of the times; he calls it "crime parfait," "crime logique," meaning that such crime— as opposed to "crimes de passion" is premeditated and justified (HR, p. 413). The perfect crime is "le crime [qui] se raisonne" and it proliferates to the point where it is no longer judged, but on the
contrary, has become law: "Hier jugé, il fait la loi aujourd'hui" (HR, p. 413). Having affirmed that such premeditated and justified crime exists in the world, Camus then explains the purpose of his essay:

Le propos de cet essai est une fois de plus d'accepter la réalité du moment, qui est le crime logique, et d'en examiner précisément les justifications: ceci est un effort pour comprendre mon temps. On estimera peut-être qu'une époque qui, en cinquante ans, déracine, asservit ou tua soixante-dix millions d'êtres humains, doit, seulement, et d'abord, être jugée. Encore faut-il que sa culpabilité soit comprise (HR, p. 413).

Man's culpability must be understood and the roots of his criminal acts must be examined. As a result, key questions are brought to the fore. Camus asks if man has the right to impose death on his fellow man and whether he is unable to act without becoming a criminal.

Il s'agit de savoir si l'innocence, à partir du moment où elle agit ne peut s'empêcher de tuer. ...
... Nous ne savons rien tant que nous ne saurons pas si nous avons le droit de tuer cet autre devant nous ou de consentir qu'il soit tué. Puisque toute action aujourd'hui débouche sur le meurtre, direct ou indirect, nous ne pouvons pas agir avant de savoir si, et pourquoi, nous devons donner la mort (HR, p. 414).

The above quote is indicative of three important ideas regarding man's criminality. First of all, there is present in man an original innocence and we recall that Tarrou of La Peste had also referred to such a state. Second, the phrase "peut s'empêcher de tuer" indicates that man has a propensity for being a criminal. And third,
the same phrase reveals that there may be a possibility that man is capable of combatting that propensity for evil. The problem of such combat against one's criminality which is identical with the search for a mode of conduct for the innocent criminal is of major and central concern in *L'Homme révolté*.

It is important to note that in his "Introduction," Camus explains just how he has come to experience the necessity of examining crime and its justifications. The essay, he states, is the continuation of previous reflections on suicide and the absurd: "Cet essai se propose de poursuivre, devant le meurtre et la révolte, une réflexion commencée autour du suicide et de la notion d'absurde" (HR, p. 414). In *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*, he had affirmed that the man who observes that the world offers no justifications for life and death and who recognizes that values are non-existent, should sustain the absurd by rejecting suicide and choosing to live. However, by that very decision, he has made a value judgment and the absurd presents itself as being self-contradictory. "L'absurde est en lui-même contradiction. Il l'est dans son contenu puisqu'il exclut les jugements de valeur en voulant maintenir la vie, alors que vivre est en soi un jugement de valeur" (HR, p. 417). Having made that value judgment and having opted for life by rejecting suicide,
man cannot justify logical, premeditated crime without reneging that value judgment.

On ne peut donner une cohérence au meurtre si on la refuse au suicide. Un esprit pénétré de l'idée d'absurde admet sans doute le meurtre de fatalité; il ne saurait accepter le meurtre de raisonnement. Vis-à-vis la confrontation, meurtre et suicide sont une même chose, qu'il faut prendre ou rejeter ensemble (HR, p. 416).

If life and living are valued, then the existence of one's fellow man is as important and as valuable as one's own. The man who has truly opted for life is aware of his position in relation to his fellow man. His is an awareness of more than the self as isolated individual, so that instead of affirming merely "je suis," he is aware that "nous sommes."

Le raisonnement absurde ne peut à la fois préserver la vie de celui qui parle et accepter le sacrifice des autres. A partir du moment où l'on reconnaît l'impossibilité de la négation absolue, et c'est la reconnaître que de vivre en quelque manière, la première chose qui ne se puisse nier, c'est la vie d'autrui (HR, p. 417).

Yet logical, premeditated crime proliferates in this world, "la vie d'autrui" is violated and furthermore, these acts are justified. It remains to be determined how man has become such a criminal, denying life to his fellow man.

In L'Homme révolté, the following explanation is given. The man who has confronted the absurd is a rebel who observes that inexplicable suffering and death exist and who wishes to eliminate them; in other words, he desires to find happiness. Camus states: "Protestant
contre la condition dans ce qu'elle a d'inachevé, par la mort, et de dispersé, par le mal, la révolte métaphysique est la revendication motivée d'une unité heureuse, contre la souffrance de vivre et de mourir" (HR, p. 436). In an interview conducted in 1948, Camus had distinguished between the suffering and death which form man's destiny and the suffering and death which are used by the rebel as instruments in combatting these. The man who had opted for life was trapped between what Camus called the "arbitraire divin" and the "arbitraire humain": "Il y a la mort des enfants qui signifie l'arbitraire divin, mais il y a aussi le meurtre des enfants qui traduit l'arbitraire humain. Nous sommes coincés entre deux arbitraires."

On the one hand, La Peste had also revealed that the child is a victim of fate: apparently innocent, condemned to die, unconscious of his propensity for criminality, a victim of "l'arbitraire divin." On the other hand, it had also revealed that man leaves his childhood state when he becomes conscious of that criminality. Once conscious, the rebel finds himself between two poles: the acceptance of the "arbitraire divin" and his combat against it. This Camusian notion of polarity is an important one regarding

1. Albert Camus, "Actuelles I," in Essais, p. 380. Subsequent references to Actuelles I will be denoted in the body of this study by the abbreviation A and the page number of this edition of Camus' essays.
the innocent criminal's mode of conduct, as we shall observe.

The rebel searches for happiness: his revolt is one against that which is considered unjust; he seeks to eliminate suffering, death, and crime; he desires to inhabit a world where man will no longer commit criminal acts. In other words, his search for happiness is a search for a state of innocence; he wishes to eliminate the plague of man's criminality. However, such a goal implies a look toward the future and a rejection of the present world. Moreover, when the idea of a one-day happy man becomes primordial, when present considerations give way to future goals, presently living man's happiness is neglected and in the meantime, all acts are justified by the goal to be attained. This is how man, throughout history, has become a criminal. Camus observes that this phenomenon is revolt repeatedly become revolution. Europe in particular has espoused this hegelian philosophy of history, turned its back to love of man and fallen into what Camus calls the "pensée de minuit," that is, the darkness of logical, pre-mediated, justified crime. The nostalgia for the light of innocence and happiness has developed into total abandonment of that nostalgia. Camus states: "Chaque révolte est nostalgie d'innocence et appel vers l'être. Mais la nostalgie prend un jour les armes et elle assume la culpabilité totale, c'est-à-dire le meurtre et la violence"
of that nostalgia entails. It is in this way that Europe
has become a guilty criminal. "Les hommes d'Europe,
abandonés aux ombres se sont détournés du point fixe et
rayonnant. Ils oublient le présent pour l'avenir, la
proie des êtres pour la fumée de la puissance, la misère
des banlieues pour une cité radieuse, la justice
quotidienne pour une vaine terre promise" (HR, p. 708).
When man passes from that nostalgia for happiness and
justice to a state of guilty criminality, when life is no
longer valued, his revolt has been abandoned: "Le crime
rationnel, non seulement ne peut s'admettre au niveau
de la révolte, mais encore signifie la mort de la révolte"
(HR, p. 693). Furthermore, the death of revolt is only
propagation of the microbes of the plague which he sought
to combat.

In contrast to the "pensée de minuit" and to the
justification of crime, there is the Greek and Mediterranean
attitude of "la pensée de midi": belief in life and in a
search for happiness, but a search that has its limits,
one that encompasses love of the world and of men rather
than the desire to purify and cure them. With its idea
of limit and love of men, then, the concept of "nous
sommes" is synonymous with that of the Camusian revolt.
It is because he believes in such limits to his actions
that the rebel professes, "je me révolte, donc nous
sommes," a profession which stands up for the light of "midi" and against the "nous serons" of the "pensée de minuit," as the following quote indicates: "Les révoltés, décidés à passer par la violence et le meurtre, ont beau, pour garder l'espoir d'être, remplacer le 'Nous sommes' par le 'Nous serons'" (HR, p. 685). We recall that Rambert of La Peste turned toward this light in deciding to remain in Oran and to do something for the imprisoned victims of the plague, rather than abandoning them in order to seek his own isolated happiness.

Examples of cases where men turn from the light of "midi" to adopt criminality as a way of life are numerous in the essay and theatre of 1943-1951. We observe in these works reformers whose criminal acts are characterized by the "pensée de minuit." In L'Homme révolté, the aborted revolts undertaken by the European world and by representatives of various political, philosophical, and literary ideologies which justify crime and permit all for the purpose of future happiness are exposed. Among those ideologies which have turned from the light and entered the realm of guilty criminality are hegelianism, Romanticism, Russian terrorism, marxism, surrealism, and Christianity. The plays of the period also expose revolts that have failed. There is, for example, Martha of Le Malentendu who commits crime because crime and evil exist.
She states with extraordinary unmercifulness to Maria who has just been informed of the murder of her husband:
"Comprenez que votre douleur ne s'égalera jamais à l'injustice qu'on fait à l'homme."\(^1\)

In *L'Etat de siège*, the major criminal is not an individual but, as is observed in the section entitled "La Révolte historique" of *L'Homme révolté*, it is government, the state, society that dominate man. In this play, crime is used as a means to combat crime. Diego, speaking in defiance of the tyrannical power which is the character called La Peste, states firmly: "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 ..." (ES, p. 290). When the people revolt against the domination of the plague, crime is again propagated and becomes a weapon against crime. As various individuals fight to obtain the secretary's notebook containing declarations of condemnations to death, La Peste exclaims: "Et voilà! Ils font eux-mêmes le travail!" (ES, p. 283).

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1. Albert Camus, "Le Malentendu," in *Théâtre, Récits, Nouvelles*, p. 179. All references to Camus' plays of this second period in his literary career are from this edition of his works. Subsequent references will be denoted in the body of this study by the following abbreviations and the page number of this edition: M indicating *Le Malentendu*; J, *Les Justes*; ES, *L'Etat de Siège*. 
Stepan of *Les Justes* is another case in point. Speaking of the grand duke as a murderer, he states: "Nous tuerons ce bourreau" (*J*, p. 309). Like Martha of *Le Malentendu*, he is a cold, unmerciful criminal. On the other hand, Kaliayev, as well as the other characters in this play (with the exception of Stepan) are considered "meurtriers délicats" as Stepan calls them (*J*, p. 340). These criminals, affirms Camus, believe that murder is both necessary and inexcusable (*HR*, p. 575). Kaliayev desires a state of happiness and innocence, affirms a love of life and yet, in spite of that, accepts crime and expounds on its justification. While he refuses to face his criminality, Dora is very much aware of the criminality of all involved.

Kaliayev: ... Seulement, la vie continue de me paraître merveilleuse. J'aime la beauté, le bonheur! C'est pour cela que je hais le despotisme ... la révolution pour la vie, pour donner une chance à la vie, tu comprends?

Dora: Oui. ... Et pourtant, nous allons donner la mort.

Kaliayev: Oui, nous? ... Ah, tu veux dire ... Ce n'est pas la même chose. Oh non! ce n'est pas la même chose. Et puis, nous tuons pour bâtir un monde où plus personne ne tuera! Nous acceptons d'être criminels pour que la terre se couvre enfin d'innocents (*J*, p. 322).

Kaliayev also affirms that the criminal acts are performed out of love for mankind, but Dora realizes fully that crime and love are not compatible: she calls the criminal's love
of mankind "un amour malheureux" (J, p. 351). Again, love of man and the performance of criminal acts for his future happiness are contradictory and the concept of "nous sommes" is rejected just as true revolt is rejected. The incompatibility of these two elements is effectively demonstrated in the parting scene between Kaliayev and Dora which takes place as he leaves on his mission to kill the grand duke. Kaliayev, unable to express his love to the young woman, leaves her with the following words: "Au revoir. Je ... La Russie sera belle" (J, p. 354). The criminal must choose between allegiance to love and loyalty to his belief in crime for happiness; and in choosing one of the two, the other is automatically rejected and annihilated. The scene also reveals that Kaliayev's choice is one between the present and the future, a choice between his present love for Dora and his work for the future beauty of Russia. Kaliayev must select his first priority, but he cannot value both love and crime equally and at the same time.

For all the failures of reform in man's history, is the rebel able to succeed in his efforts to attain happiness? In order for him to remain in the light of "midi," to combat criminality and to remain, as Tarrou wished, an innocent criminal, just what sort of limits must he impose upon himself? The answer to these questions resides in the concept of continual struggle. Camus defines the
criminal's revolt as a "lutte entre midi et minuit" (HR, p. 703). It is a struggle to keep the night from eclipsing the day (HR, p. 703), a fight to keep crime and one's criminality from eclipsing the desire for happiness and love of life and of man.

In an article which appeared in *Combat* on the seventh of May, 1947, Camus advised the rebel in the following terms: "Il faut choisir aujourd'hui de faire des choses probablement inefficaces ou certainement criminelles. Il me semble que le choix n'est pas difficile" (A, p. 325). However, that solution presents more problems than it might appear to solve. If man works to attain happiness, he is a criminal: "On ne peut être heureux sans faire du mal aux autres," affirms La Peste in the play entitled *L'État de siège* (ES, p. 289). If he does nothing for happiness, nothing to combat death and crime, then he approves crime and injustice in his heart. The struggle between "midi" and "minuit" is, therefore, one between absolute rejection and absolute acceptance of the state of criminality in which man finds himself. In whatever direction he turns, whether he acts, or chooses to do nothing, man is destined to be a criminal: "Il sait le bien et fait malgré lui le mal" (HR, p. 689). This struggle between total rejection and total acceptance is described in the following passage:
qu'elle déifie le refus total de ce qui est, le non absolu, elle tue. Chaque fois qu'elle accepte aveuglément ce qui est, et qu'elle crie le oui absolu, elle tue (HR, p. 509).

Regardless of the pole adopted, the rebel is imprisoned by his criminality, just as the diseased of La Peste suffered from exile and separation. Yet to reject the "oui" and "non absous" provides no outlet from this criminality. Camus believes that the criminal must be faithful to both poles, since he has said yes to life and no to criminal acts and their justification. "Il doit être fidele au 'oui' qu'il contient en même temps qu'à ce 'non' que les interprétations nihilistes isolent dans la révolte" (HR, p. 688). This struggle is also referred to in terms of tension between silence and crime; again the choice between action and inaction is presented: "Si le révolté ne choisit pas, il choisit le silence et l'esclavage d'autrui. Si ... il déclare choisir à la fois contre Dieu et l'histoire, il est le témoin de la liberté pure, c'est-à-dire de rien" (HR, p. 691). It is also a struggle between violence and non-violence: "La non-violence absolue fonde négativement la servitude et ses violences; la violence systématique détruit positivement la communauté vivante et l'être que nous en recevons. Pour être fécondes, ces deux notions doivent trouver leurs limites" (HR, p. 695). Since it is continual struggle, there is neither defeat nor victory for the rebel: he cannot provide miraculous cures nor
become a conqueror of evil as history and Christianity have claimed him capable of doing. The rebel is Rieux combattling and diagnosing the plague knowing that there is no cure. "... la révolte, sans prétendre à tout résoudre peut au moins faire face. Dès cet instant, midi ruisselle sur le mouvement même de l'histoire" (HR, p. 708). It demands a realization "que les enfants mourront toujours injustement" and that "le 'pourquoi?' de Dmitri Karamazov continuera de retentir ..." (HR, p. 706), that man can never rid himself of the tendency to veer in the direction of absolutes, of "démesure" and of crime (HR, p. 704). The only victory possible for the rebel, if we are to speak of victory, resides in the very absence of victory in the traditional sense of the word, since it lies in never-ending struggle against one's propensity for criminality. In his revolt against La Peste, Diego of L'État de siège affirms the existence of that state of struggle and defines the only victory that criminal man may strive to achieve: "Ni peur ni haine, c'est là notre victoire!" he exclaims (ES, p. 284). To choose fear would be total submission to the plague, while to choose hate would constitute domination of man.

But can man continually maintain such a struggle between "midi" and "minuit"? Camus himself raises the question and immediately answers it: "Peut-on, éternellement, refuser l'injustice sans cesser de saluer la nature
de l'homme et la beauté du monde? Notre réponse est oui" (HR, p. 679). Man can combat crime and can, as did Rieux, relieve the suffering which exists in the world. Whatever can be done for man's health and happiness must be done. "L'homme peut maîtriser en lui tout ce qui doit l'être. Il doit réparer dans la création tout ce qui peut l'être" (HR, p. 706). Speaking of Prometheus and his revolt, Camus declares: "... il ne lui reste que sa force de révolte pour sauver du meurtre ce qui peut l'être encore ..." (HR, p. 706). That is the meaning of Tarrou's desire to remain a "meurtrier innocent." This term appears contradictory because it, too, places man between the poles of the propensity to commit logical, premeditated crime and the combat against that propensity. It is a term which describes the innocent criminal as one engaged in a struggle between the microbe of criminality (whose presence in man forms part of his destiny) and responsible, guilty criminality. As such, Tarrou's innocent criminal is the true Camusian rebel.

The affirmation that the man in true revolt must strive to diminish the suffering and crime that exist is repeated throughout the essay, L'Homme révolté. This point had also been vigorously stressed in the article entitled "Ni victimes ni bourreaux" which appeared in Combat in November of 1946. In it, Camus defined the limit which the reformer must observe: "En somme, les gens comme moi
voudraient un monde, non pas où l'on ne se tue plus (nous ne sommes pas si fous!), mais où le meurtre ne soit pas légitime" (A, p. 334). The adherence to revolt within limits which is the "pensée de midi" constitutes a combat for happiness in man's lifetime as opposed to some future time in history. To save now what can be saved from crime and suffering is to act in the name of the possibility of happiness and Camus, again placing the rebel between two poles of suffering and happiness, states that the innocent criminal man places a bet on happiness:

La logique du révolté est de vouloir servir la justice pour ne pas ajouter à l'injustice de la condition, de s'efforcer au langage clair pour ne pas épaissir le mensonge universel et de parier, face à la douleur des hommes, pour le bonheur (HR, p. 688).

Whether that bet is won and whether happiness is deemed possible for criminal man to experience, according to the works of this second period, will be discussed later in this chapter.

We have observed that the essay and theatre of this period are primarily concerned with various types of revolt turned into revolution and with various rebels turned into guilty criminals. We have also examined the mode of conduct which the true rebel, imprisoned in his criminality, undertakes. In relation to these two major concerns, there also arises in these works the problem of death as payment for crime.
Whether the criminal abhors his criminal acts or not, there is a force within him that demands payment for having denied life to his fellow man. Although Kaliayev of _Les Justes_, for example, does not consider that crime as a means to attaining happiness and innocence is synonymous with crime as an evil deed, he insists that he will throw himself under the duke's horse-drawn carriage as a sign of loyalty to the honor of a revolution which does not glorify the triumph of crime. It is this payment which he believes makes him innocent of his criminal act. He states firmly: "J'ai choisi de mourir pour que le meurtre ne triomphe pas. J'ai choisi d'être innocent" (J, p. 341). And later, the idea of the death payment as exoneration from guilt is reiterated by this "meurtrier délicat": "Laissez-moi me préparer à mourir. Si je ne mourais pas, c'est alors que je serais un meurtrier" (J, p. 373). Dora, too, experiences the need to pay for her criminality with her death, for, at the end of the play, she affirms that she will be the next to throw the first bomb. In contrast to her fellow criminals, however, Dora is fully conscious of her criminality as well as that of the entire revolutionary group; she realizes with certainty that their approval of the murder of the duke makes them as guilty as Yanek who hurls the bomb. The scene between Dora and Stepan which takes place at the end of the third act after the explosion of Yanek's bomb is heard is
forceful. The intense anguish and suffering experienced by Dora at the spectacle of the group's criminality appears intolerable.

Stepan: Borìa n'a pas lancé sa bombe! Yanek a réussî. Rèussî! O peuple! O joie!

Dora: (s'abattant en larmes sur lui). C'est nous qui l'avons tué! C'est nous qui l'avons tué! C'est moi!

Stepan: (criant). Qui avons-nous tué? Yanek?

Dora: Le grand-duc (J, p. 357).

Dora is also aware of the danger involved in committing logical, justified criminal acts: crime for future happiness which is paid with death does not insure that that happiness will be attained--others may follow who will kill without paying for their crimes. "Sommes-nous sûrs que personne n'ira plus loin? Parfois, quand j'écoute, Stepan, j'ai peur. D'autres viendront peut-être qui s'autorisent de nous pour tuer et qui ne paieront pas de leur vie" (J, p. 384).

Having become guilty criminals, Martha and her mother of Le Malentendu must also die. For the mother, crime was a means of attaining happiness and her act could be justified as long as man was considered an abstraction. But one day, she realized that he was not an abstraction and that she had killed her son. Man as abstraction shattered, her crime could only horrify her, as her cry to Martha reveals: "Il est vrai, Martha, mais
lui, je l'ai tué!" (M, p. 167). In this case, consciousness of crime is accompanied by anguish whose source lies in the realization that love of man has been absent and that one cannot live without it: "Comment pourrais-je me passer de l'amour de mon fils?" cries the mother to Martha (M, p. 166). So overcome is she with guilt and horror in the face of her criminality that she speaks of her death as punishment for her crime (M, p. 166). This disgusts Martha who refuses to consider herself a criminal. However, though there is no evidence of human warmth in her, she, too, nevertheless experiences a need for love. Without the love of her mother, Martha is left alone in the world, surrounded only by her crimes. Being unable to live with the consciousness of her criminality, which she refuses to accept, she, too, decides that she will die. Again, the incompatibility of love and crime is emphasized as Martha laments the failure of maintaining fraternity in crime.

J'imaginais que le crime était notre foyer et qu'il nous avait unies, ma mère et moi, pour toujours. ... Mais je me trompais. Le crime aussi est une solitude, même si on se met à mille pour l'accomplir. Et il est juste que je meure seule, après avoir vécu et tué seule (M, p. 177).

Camus also comments on death as payment for crime in various passages of L'Homme révolté and states that the voluntary payment of one's life is an affirmation of belief in life as a value. He cites as examples the Russian
revolutionaries whose deaths are considered the only possible justification of their crimes:

... incapables de justifier ce qu'ils trouvaient pourtant nécessaire, ils ont imaginé de se donner eux-mêmes en justification et de répondre par le sacrifice personnel à la question qu'ils se posaient. Pour eux, comme pour tous les révoltés jusqu'à eux, le meurtre s'est identifié avec le suicide. Une vie est alors payée par une autre vie et, de ces deux holocaustes, surgit la promesse d'une valeur (HR, pp. 575-576).

The complete rejection of all values is not a satisfactory solution to man's problems; complete destruction, the course of pure crime, does not suffice in the quest for happiness.

Celui qui accepte de mourir, de payer une vie par une vie ... affirme du même coup une valeur qui le dépasse lui-même en tant qu'individu historique. Kaliayev se dévoue à l'histoire jusqu'à la mort et, au moment de mourir, se place au-dessus de l'histoire. ... Kaliayev et ses frères triomphaient du nihilisme (HR, p. 579).

The problem, however, is that such an act bears no fruit since it coincides with death. "Mais ce triomphe sera sans lendemain:" states Camus; "il coïncide avec la mort. Le nihilisme, provisoirement, survit à ses vainqueurs" (HR, p. 579).

In the chapter on "La Pensée de midi" which concludes L'Homme révolté, Camus reiterates the course of action that the true rebel undertakes: his life is one of continuous struggle against criminality and if he himself
should fall into the darkness of "minuit," he pays with his death.

En tout cas, s'il ne peut pas toujours ne point tuer, directement ou indirectement, il peut mettre sa fièvre et sa passion à diminuer la chance du meurtre autour de lui. Sa seule vertu sera, plongé dans les ténèbres, de ne pas céder à leur vertige obscur; enchaîné au mal, de se tenir obstinément vers le bien. S'il tue lui-même, enfin, il acceptera la mort (HR, p. 689).

Man's mortality, then, is payment for his criminality. And since all men have this propensity for crime, they are all condemned to die.

Whereas the works of the first period were characterized by a consciousness of crime, the period of La Peste and of L'Homme révolté is without a doubt a period of search for reform of the criminal state of man and society. Man's primary struggle is not one with the problem of natural death and of its acceptance as was observed in the works of the first period; rather, he is involved with the problem of acceptance of crime and of his criminality and with that of combat undertaken against crime, the artificial fact of death. But even more importantly, consciousness of crime as theme has evolved. It is present in the works of this period under new aspects and has taken on different dimensions than those found in the Camusian works of the first period. In Camus' first works, man's experience of consciousness of crime was linked with the experience of the absurd. Consciousness of his criminality was at the
heart of that experience and it brought him to the level of moral behavior which Camus called the zero of values. However, with the creation of _La Peste_ and _L'Homme révolté_, a change of emphasis has taken place regarding man's consciousness of crime: that same consciousness has become consciousness of revolt against crime and criminality. For one, that revolt is provoked by the violence that is part of his human nature, as the following quote substantiates: "S'il y a révolte, c'est que le mensonge, l'injustice et la violence font, en partie, la condition du révolté" (HR, p. 689). Secondly, it is in itself a criminal act. In his examination of the problem of violence in this work, Camus has made an important distinction between violence as a natural state and organized violence which constitutes the basis of one's moral conduct and which is justified by various philosophies and ideologies that Camus himself condemns. We shall elaborate on this important distinction in our discussion of Camus' juxtaposition of man's nature and his history. Important changes of perspective have taken place as regards the thematic structure death-crime-happiness since the period of _La Mort heureuse_ and _L'Etranger_. While the emphasis in the works of the first period was on mortal, criminal man, it is now on diseased man, plagued with criminality, and whose only victory is to continually
attempt to remain innocent. Death as a theme has become secondary to that of crime.

We also note that an intense sense of culpability permeates the works of the period of La Peste. This experience of personal guilt which arises from the depths of man's heart is not imposed by ideological societal structures such as Christianity and marxism that declare man guilty so that his death and their own historicity and crimes may be justified. The necessity of death as payment which we examined evidences this fact.

If there is no victory for the innocent criminal who must maintain continual struggle, then does this preclude the possibility of his attaining happiness? The sea, symbol of happiness in Le Malentendu, is a world apart from plague-stricken man just as it was in La Peste. And in L'Homme révolté, happiness as a theme does not predominate, to say the least. However, the light of "midi" is kept in mind by Camus and it manages to break through the clouds of the exposition of the "pensée de minuit."

In the struggle against crime, there are moments of joy, states Camus. But this momentary happiness does not consist of periods of escape from the struggle, as was observed in the scene of the fraternal swim in the sea in La Peste. It is a happiness which comes from a love of life as it is, with the suffering, death, and crime that is part of life.
Dans la lumière, le monde reste notre premier et notre dernier amour. Nos frères respirent sous le même ciel que nous, la justice est vivante. Alors naît la joie étrange qui aide à vivre et à mourir et que nous refuserons désormais de renvoyer à plus tard. Sur la terre douloureuse, elle est l'ivraie inlassable, l'amère nourriture, le vent dur venu des mers, l'ancienne et la nouvelle aurore (HR, p. 708).

The criminal must live not to become what he is not (i.e., he must not strive to become an innocent being); he must become what he is: man, conscious of his criminality, yet combatting that propensity for crime. "... la révolte aux prises avec l'histoire ajoute qu'au lieu de tuer et mourir pour produire l'être que nous ne sommes pas, nous avons à vivre et faire vivre pour créer ce que nous sommes" (HR, p. 653).

This juxtaposition between what man becomes and what he is is one between the history he has created and his criminal and violent human nature. It is a distinction between organized violence and natural violence, between "le meurtre de raisonnement" and "le meurtre de fatalité."

In regards to this, Camus specifically states: "Un esprit pénétré de l'idée d'absurde admet sans doute le meurtre de fatalité; il ne saurait accepter le meurtre de raisonnement" (HR, p. 416). Man's revolt has become "meurtre de raisonnement," that is, organized human violence, the crimes of man's history. It is that history that is justified by philosophies and ideologies of the "pensée de minuit." For Camus, history is a succession of crimes
and violence. For those advocates of historicity and of the "pensée de minuit" that characterizes it (such as Hegel and Marx), it is considered progress. In reality, what they have done is to transform history into a myth of evolution and progress, all the while justifying violence and crime. "Dans l'histoire considérée comme un absolu, la violence se trouve légitimée ..." (HR, p. 695). Theirs is a claim that all acts are necessary to achieve their goals (HR, p. 693).

As we have previously mentioned, Camus contrasts the belief in historicity which is "la pensée de minuit" with Greek naturalism which opts for "la pensée de midi." The latter is, as he calls it, the Mediterranean spirit; it reflects light, warmth, sun, and a sense of balance in the relation that exists between what man is and what he can become. Camus, juxtaposing man's nature and his history, states the following:

Ce contrepoids, cet esprit qui mesure la vie, est celui-là même qui anime la longue tradition de ce qu'on peut appeler la pensée solaire et où, depuis les Grecs, la nature a toujours été équilibrée au devenir. L'histoire de la Ire Internationale où le socialisme allemand lutte sans arrêt contre la pensée libertaire des Français, des Espagnols et des Italiens, est l'histoire des luttes entre l'idéologie allemande et l'esprit méditerranéen (HR, pp. 701-701).

In the passage from "midi" to "minuit," nature has been sacrificed to history.
In observing man situated as he is in history and in a society which exalts historicity and "la pensée de minuit," Camus also recognizes the element of fate that exists regarding man's position and observes that the human being is neither entirely guilty nor entirely innocent: "L'homme enfin n'est pas entièrement coupable, il n'a pas commencé l'histoire; ni tout à fait innocent puisqu'il la continue" (HR, p. 700).

We have seen that the course of action which the innocent criminal, the rebel, undertakes is a difficult one. It knows no rest or victory, for if these be attained, man becomes a guilty criminal, his revolt against crime has itself turned into a criminal act and has become revolution. Violence is part of man's nature and this "déméasure" will always be within him. "Quoi que nous fassions," states Camus, "la démésure gardera toujours sa place dans le coeur de l'homme, à l'endroit de la solitude" (HR, p. 704). Moreover, as is indicated in this quote, there is a relation between man's acts of violence and his state of solitude. Revolt involves human solidarity, man working with his fellow man for the good of mankind; it involves communication among men. Whereas "déméasure" or violence separates the criminal from his fellow man and makes of him a solitary being.

We have seen that the major theme of Camus' work of his second literary period is that of violence; it is
the cause of crime and constitutes the sum and substance of man's history. Nevertheless, Camus affirms that the light of true revolt remains visible. In spite of the violence that is in man, he can struggle against the dissemination of it. "Nous portons tous en nous nos bagnes, nos crimes et nos ravages. Mais notre tâche n'est pas de les déchaîner à travers le monde; elle est de les combattre en nous-mêmes et dans les autres" (HR, p. 704).

Man, then, can direct himself in the path of the light of a revolt with limits, never losing sight of that light, always striving to attain it. At the end of the essay, Camus states:

Alors, quand la révolution, au nom de la puissance et de l'histoire, devient cette mécanique meurtrière et démesurée, une nouvelle révolte devient sacrée, au nom de la mesure et de la vie. Nous sommes à cette extrémité. Au bout de ces ténèbres, une lumière pourtant est inévitable que nous devinons déjà et dont nous avons seulement à lutter pour qu'elle soit (HR, p. 707).

Because it is a difficult, strenuous, and unending one, the rebel's course of action does not constitute a neat, well-packaged solution to the problem of man's criminality. In fact, it raises a multitude of questions and problems. The fact that the period of La Peste and L'Homme révolté is one of search for reform and for alleviation of pain from the plague of criminality reveals that it was a time of definite questioning and exploring. It was also a period of intense reaction to L'Homme
révolté and of the polemic between Sartre and Camus and these did not make the anguish of questioning easier for Camus to bear.

After publication of the essay, Camus was accused of presenting himself as a judge of mankind while pretending to be a brother of men, one who had taken it upon himself to condemn man while situating himself outside the mass of mankind. A second accusation was that of abstention from efficacious action so as not to aggravate a given situation. In fact, Jeanson, in his article entitled "Pour tout vous dire . . .," defined this abstention as the only efficaciousness known by Camus. Of L'Homme révolté, he stated:

"... le thème de l'abstention constitue l'axe même de votre livre, ... il ne m'a pas été possible de situer la différence que vous paraissez concevoir entre l'"efficacité" choisie par vous et, précisément, une attitude d'abstention pure et simple. D'avantage; c'est dans le choix même de l'abstention que m'a semblé réserver pour vous la seule véritable efficacité."

The innocent criminal's course of action was viciously attacked; and in the same article, Jeanson referred to it as "cette noble exigence, qui maintient les injustices


réelles par souci de ne les point aggraver."¹ Both Jeanson and Sartre viewed Camus as a dictatorial moralist whose recommended "morale" consisted exclusively of abstraction, ideas and absolutes. These accusations were serious: they contributed to paving the way not only for a moral crisis that Camus would have to face, but for an esthetic one as well. Implicit in the accusation of abstention from efficacious action was the question of the efficacy of the written page on such action. Had the act of writing about crime and man's criminality and suffering contributed to the alleviation of man's suffering that the author so ardently recommended? Or does a literary artist's work also fall into the realm of abstention of action to avoid aggravation? Is man so imprisoned in his criminality that, in order to remain an innocent criminal, he is condemned to total inactivity? If that is so, then he is not exercising his humanity; he is dead. These are questions which were raised by the polemic between Sartre and Camus and which the latter was forced to confront. It was the beginning of a period of crisis, one which would find its culmination in the writing of La Chute.

¹. Ibid., p. 366.
CHAPTER VII

THE PERIOD OF LA CHUTE AND L'EXIL ET LE ROYAUME

The publication of L'Homme révolté and the polemic between Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus were followed by a five-year period during which Camus produced no major literary work. From 1951 until the publication of La Chute in 1956, a number of essays forming part of L'Été were written, as well as the short stories of L'Exil et le royaume and various theatrical adaptations. Concerning the writing of La Chute, which was originally intended to be included as a longer short story in L'Exil et le royaume, Roger Quilliot tells us that there exist two manuscripts: one which is undated and the other dated 1956.¹

The period of La Peste and of L'Homme révolté was one of concern with the problem of man's criminality which resulted from his combat against death and crime. Focus was on the nature of man's positive action undertaken in that combat and it was revealed that such action was to be undertaken within certain limits if the reformer was to attempt to maintain a state of innocent criminality. However, in La Chute as well as in the short stories of

L'Exil et le royaume, the reverse side of the coin is presented: that of crime as failure to act. At first glance, one might say that there is no criminal act present in La Chute. True, there is no homicide involved, no positive reformatory act which constitutes a crime. The central incident in the work may be described as follows: one night, a woman throws herself from the Pont Royal into the waters of the Seine. A gentleman in his forties who happens to be returning home by way of this same bridge witnesses the suicide, hears the screams of the woman as she is drowning and continues on his journey. The incident constitutes a turning point in Jean-Baptiste Clamence's life. It will be for him an unforgettable incident—one which will always face him and which will never be blotted from his memory. It is our purpose to examine this ex-Parisian lawyer as he proceeds with his narration, to also examine his act of being witness to the suicide and to observe the thematic structure death-crime-happiness as it exists not only in the novel, but also in the short stories of L'Exil et le royaume.

There are three major concerns which penetrate Clamence's narration: he tells of (1) his life as it was before the drowning incident, (2) the incident itself which he witnesses on the Pont Royal and (3) his life as he lives it following the event in the "Mexico-City" bar. As a
middle-aged Parisian lawyer, Clamence was a man successful in his profession, content and happy with himself and proud of his excellence as noble defender of the oppressed. He lived in an untroubled and edenic state and as such experienced an accord with life.¹ Clamence's narration is a long monologue. He addresses himself to an ever-present friend who does not respond or intervene in that monologue. The friend's role is that of listener; and the listener is also the reader of La Chute.

As the ex-lawyer proceeds with his narration in the "Mexico-City" bar, he describes his former kingdom of innocence as a state of peace, affirming: "Mais voilà, j'étais du bon côté, cela suffisait à la paix de ma conscience" (Ch, p. 1485). That state of peace, however, was to be violently disrupted by a series of incidents, the first and major one being the suicidal drowning of the woman in the Seine. This upheaval of his peaceful state is the experience of "la chute" which he is narrating. On the rainy evening in question, Clamence hears the sound of a body falling into the waters of the Seine. He is jolted by the cries of a drowning woman but does not respond. Nor

¹. Albert Camus, "La Chute," in Théâtre, Récits, Nouvelles, p. 1489. All references to La Chute are from this edition of Camus' works. Subsequent references to this novel will be denoted in the body of this study by the abbreviation Ch and the page number of this edition.
does he attempt to save her and furthermore, he informs no one of the incident.

Two or three years later, a second important event occurs—it is the episode of the laugh. Like the drowning incident, it occurs when Clamence finds himself very happy and content with himself and his good deeds. The laugh startles him; it appears to come from nowhere, if not from the very waters where the woman had drowned two or three years previously. This incident brings him face to face with himself and his own duplicity. In addition, certain incidents of public humiliation (the episodes involving the cyclist and a woman with whom he has an affair) reinforce the upset of his edenic state. As a result, Clamence also becomes aware of an intense desire for revenge, a furious desire to maintain his superiority in the midst of humiliating circumstances and to dominate his fellow man. Also, he now views his previous edenic state of happiness as one of inaction, the absence of any kind of positive action. Now, having been brought down from his elevated position, he becomes a cruel, dominating judge of men. Since these events, Clamence has abandoned his law practice and become a judge-penitent in the "Mexico-City" bar in Amsterdam.

Having observed the major and secondary incidents which have awakened Clamence to consciousness of himself and of his actions, let us examine that present state of
consciousness in its various aspects. Several observations are brought to the fore regarding this state. We have observed that Clamence's edenic state of peace, tranquility, and self-satisfaction has been drastically shaken. As a result, he suffers a sense of loss of happiness and the edenic state is referred to as a period of time which extended up until the evening in question. The repeated references to the incident on the Pont Royal in which he uses the prepositional phrase "jusqu'au soir où" indicate that his happiness has abruptly ended. At one particular point in his narration, he states: "Je courais ainsi, toujours comblé, jamais rassasié, sans savoir où m'arrêter, jusqu'au jour, jusqu'au soir plutôt où la musique s'est arrêtée, les lumières se sont éteintes. La fête où j'avais été heureux ..." (Ch, p. 1491). That happy state was one which he also refers to as a period of soaring, a period during which he kept himself apart from and above his fellow man: "J'ai plané jusqu'au soir où ..." (Ch, p. 1490). Again, we have another indication of the abruptness of the loss of the edenic state and of Clamence's consciousness of the change that has occurred. Clamence is now conscious of having believed that he was neither judge nor victim, of having believed that he was in this way superior to his fellow man, all of which amounts to the fact that he believed himself to be an innocent and privileged being.
The revelatory incidents have made him take a good look at himself. In the perception of the double smile lies the realization that his state of innocence has consisted of inactivity or of the absence of positive action of any sort. If Clamence thought that such inaction would forever keep him innocent and pure, neither judged nor judge, then the episode of the drowning woman changed all that. Faced with the call of the woman, Clamence struggles with himself—he wants to run and cannot, he realizes that whatever must be done must be done promptly, but, as we have already observed, weakness penetrates his body. What follows is a sense of having failed, of not having answered the call. Clamence neglected to act, he did nothing to combat the woman's death, and she died. "A partir du soir où j'ai été appelé, car j'ai été appelé réellement, j'ai dû répondre ou du moins chercher la réponse" (Ch, p. 1518). There is no doubt that Clamence experiences regret for having shirked a responsibility—he has a sense of what he should have done. It is his lack of action that obsesses him. The laugh that follows two or three years later is that of his consciousness of culpability which reappears when he is again feeling comfortable with himself. Referring to that second incident, he states: "Du jour où je fus alerté, la lucidité me vint, je reçus toutes les blessures en même temps et je perdis mes forces d'un seul coup. L'univers
entier se mit alors à rire autour de moi" (Ch, p. 1516).
In Clamence's case, the crime he has committed is not a
positive action as it has been in Camus' previous novels.
Rather, the negative side of a moral act is presented.
Clamence realizes that his non-committal act is a
criminal one and that he is in fact not innocent, but a
criminal in the total sense of the word. He acknowledges
this in an address which he gives in court. "Je n'ai tué
personne? Pas encore sans doute! Mais n'ai-je pas
laissé mourir de méritantes créatures? Peut-être. Et
peut-être suis-je prêt à recommencer" (Ch, p. 1524). This
recognition and admission of his criminality reflects an
important evolution in the death-crime theme in Camus' work. Clamence has not killed, but in doing nothing for
man, he has abandoned him to his suffering and death.
Clamence's crime is precisely that responsibility for the
death of his fellow man. Through the depiction of his
character, Camus focuses on man's responsibility for human
mortality, for the natural death that is part of the
human condition. Natural death is inevitable and man can
do nothing to eliminate the fact of his mortality. But
death becomes a crime when man does nothing to combat it
(as Clamence did nothing); hence the source of his guilt,
for having done nothing to prevent the death of another
human being. Though he has not killed, he feels responsible
for the death of the other and death is his criminal act.
He has not imposed death; he has let death take place. In other words, Clamence and all men must learn to live as well as to die. They must accept natural death and the fact of their mortality and at the same time, combat their criminality which constitutes their human nature, strive to eliminate the causes of crime and avoid making of death a criminal act.

This crime constitutes the core of Clamence's feelings of guilt. It also reveals to Clamence that he has loved no one but himself, that all his acts have been directed exclusively toward him. He states frankly: "Il est faux, après tout, que je n'aie jamais aimé. J'ai contracté dans ma vie au moins un grand amour, dont j'ai toujours été l'objet" (Ch, p. 1505). Such self-love relates directly to isolation from mankind, to lack of love of man and to the desire to dominate. All of these elements are facets of one and the same crime. Throughout his narration, Clamence's crime is depicted in terms of inaction. For example, he tells us: "J'ai vécu ma vie entière sous un double signe et mes actions les plus graves ont été souvent celles où j'étais le moins engagé" (Ch, p. 1520). This criminal's lack of response to his fellow man, his lack of human warmth and his failure to love is the core of his crime. The incident of the drowning woman substantiates this.
The fact that a woman drowns because man does not save her suggests that he has failed in love. In the sense that she has been abandoned by man, the woman is a victim of Clamence's crime. The depiction of man's criminality in terms of a man-woman relationship has not been present in Camus' previous novels. Later, however, we shall observe that reference is made to a drowning woman and that it relates to man's criminality in the short story entitled "Jonas ou l'artiste au travail" which was written in 1952 and which forms part of L'Exil et le royaume.

The man who believed himself innocent experiences intense feelings of guilt when he realizes that he is not innocent at all. Conscious of his detachment from men, of his domination over them, Clamence is unable to rid himself of the guilt which he bears within him. "... j'ai plané, littéralement, pendant des années dont, à vrai dire, j'ai encore le regret au cœur" (Ch, p. 1490). Later in his confession, Clamence reveals that those regrets are deep, so deep that they constitute feelings of shame for the way he was living in his innocent and edenic state.

Quand je pense à cette période où je demandais tout sans rien payer moi-même, où je mobilisais tant d'êtres à mon service, où je les mettais en quelque sorte au frigidaire, pour les avoir un jour ou l'autre sous la main, à ma convenance, je ne sais comment nommer le curieux sentiment qui me vient. Ne serait-ce pas la honte? (Ch, p. 1510).
Recognition of this guilt began with the episode of the drowning woman and Clamence realizes that it has followed him ever since. He continues to speak of the shame and culpability he experiences in the following terms:

Alors, il s'agit peut-être d'elle [la honte], ou d'un de ces sentiments ridicules qui concernent l'honneur. Il me semble en tout cas que ce sentiment ne m'a plus quitté depuis cette aventure que j'ai trouvée au centre de ma mémoire et dont je ne peux différer plus longtemps le récit, malgré mes digressions et les efforts d'une invention à laquelle, je l'espère, vous rendez justice (Ch, p. 1510).

Again, the guilt experienced by Clamence stems from the crime of his responsibility for the natural death of his fellow man. This guilt and the consciousness that he has of himself as criminal guilty of death are inescapable. The episode at sea will confirm this.

In addition to affecting his position in relation to himself, the state of consciousness attained by Clamence also provokes a change in his relation with those around him whom he had previously thought to be inferior to him. Whereas Clamence had once been a superior judge of men, the experience of guilt now makes of him a victim, a man who is judged by others. Being vulnerable to public accusation, he comes to realize that he is a judge among other judges, a criminal among other criminals.

Mes amis n'avaient pas changé. Ils vantaient toujours, à l'occasion, l'harmonie et la sécurité qu'on trouvait auprès de moi. Mais je n'étais sensible qu'aux dissonances, au
désordre qui m'emplissait; je me sentais vulnérable, et livré à l'accusation publique. Mes semblables cessaient d'être à mes yeux l'auditoire respectueux dont j'avais l'habitude. Le cercle dont j'étais le centre se brisait et ils se plaçaient sur une seule rangée, comme au tribunal. À partir du moment où j'ai appréhendé qu'il y eût en moi quelque chose à juger, j'ai compris, en somme, qu'il y avait en eux une vocation irrésistible de jugement. Oui, ils étaient là, comme avant, mais ils riaient (Ch, p. 1515).

The protection of the circle of Clamence's self-love and esteem has been dissipated by the conscious state; the circle has been broken. Consciousness has brought Clamence face to face with himself, his own culpability and the culpability of his fellow man. The circle having been opened, Clamence has been forced to look out beyond himself as central point and to observe his position in a world that extends beyond the boundaries of that circle. The laugh of the tribunal is, as was the laugh heard on the bridge, the sound of consciousness and conscience being aroused. What is important in this development-in-consciousness process is that the experience of guilt and judgment comes from within Clamence. It is not imposed from without.

The possibility of being rid of that culpability and of being cured (for Clamence does seek a cure) is never realized. It is when Clamence has once again returned to his edenic state (or rather, when he appears to have re-discovered the protective circle of innocence and
self-satisfaction that the episode at sea takes place, that he is brought back to consciousness of his criminality. The episode is important—when he sees the black spot on the ocean, he thinks of a drowned man. The spot appears, reminding him by its very presence not to sit back too comfortably, not to bask in a state of innocence, not to believe in cure. Try as he may to escape the prison of his criminality and culpability, Clamence is reminded that he remains a criminal. The sense of guilt and consciousness of criminality may be dulled at times, but they are nevertheless always present. Rieux was aware of this fact and affirmed that awareness at the end of his chronicle. We observe that in La Chute, as in La Peste and L'Homme révolté, the relation between cure and culpability arises. When Clamence is convinced that he has been healed, consciousness of his criminality and culpability re-emerges. When he believes that he has rediscovered peace, innocence, happiness, the black spot, sign of his criminality and culpability, appears. The incident that occurs during Clamence's transatlantic celebration of what he believes to be his newly found innocence constitutes, in my opinion, the climax of this novel.

Un jour pourtant, au cours d'un voyage que j'offris à une amie, sans lui dire que je le faisais pour fêter ma guérison, je me trouvais à bord d'un transatlantique, sur le pont supérieur, naturellement. Soudain, j'aperçus au large un point noir sur l'océan couleur de
fer. Je détournai les yeux aussitôt, mon cœur se mit à battre. Quand je me forçai à regarder, le point noir avait disparu. J'allais crier, appeler stupidement à l'aide, quand je le revis. Il s'agissait d'un de ces débris que les navires laissent derrière eux. Pourtant, je n'avais pu supporter de le regarder, j'avais tout de suite pensé à un noyé. Je compris alors, sans révolte, comme on se résigne à une idée dont on connaîtrait depuis longtemps la vérité, que ce cri, qui, des années auparavant, avait retenti sur la Seine, derrière moi, n'avait pas cessé, porté par le fleuve vers les eaux de la Manche, de cheminer dans le monde, à travers l'étendue illimitée de l'océan, et qu'il m'y avait attendu jusqu'à ce jour où je l'avais rencontré. Je compris aussi qu'il continuerait de m'attendre sur les mers et les fleuves, partout enfin où se trouverait l'eau amère de mon baptême (Ch, pp. 1530-1531).

It is at this point that full consciousness has been attained: Clamence is now not only aware of his criminality; he has also come to realize that it has accompanied him since the episode on the Pont Royal and that it will continue to do so. He has come to understand that he cannot rid himself of that criminality or of his consciousness of it. Clamence's lucidity, as one critic states, cannot be destroyed.¹

Clamence had, however, dedicated much effort to eliminating that lucidity, fleeing his criminality and his consciousness of it. One method of such attempted escape was to be constantly judge of others, to put them on trial,

to place himself in constant domination of his fellow man.

Tenez, après tout ce que je vous ai raconté, que croyez-vous qu'il me soit venu? Le dégoût de moi-même? Allons donc, c'était surtout des autres que j'étais dégoûté. Certes, je connaissais mes défaillances et je les regrettais. Je continuais pourtant de les oublier, avec une obstination assez méritoire. Le procès des autres, au contraire, se faisait sans trève dans mon cœur (Ch, p. 1514).

We see Clamence as criminal man who puts his fellow man on trial, judges him, as judge condemns him to die and becomes guilty of his natural death.

Clamence's desire to dominate others in this way also manifested itself in his attempt to join those who laughed and mocked their fellow men. "Pour prévenir le rire, j'imaginaï donc de me jeter dans la dérision générale. En somme, il s'agissait encore de couper au jugement. Je voulais mettre les rieurs de mon côté ou, du moins, me mettre de leur côté" (Ch, p. 1522). Although most of these attempts to mock men were plotted in Clamence's mind, they never materialized into anything more. And so another solution was sought: that of self-accusation. By accusing himself, Clamence hoped to be rid of his culpability and return to his innocent state. But the laugh continued to be present and he realized that innocence would not be so readily found through this means.

Voyez-vous, il ne suffit pas de s'accuser pour s'innocenter, ou sinon je serais un pur agneau. Il faut s'accuser d'une certaine manière, qu'il
m'a fallu beaucoup de temps pour mettre au point, et que je n'ai pas découverte avant de m'être trouvé dans l'abandon le plus complet. Jusque-là le rire a continué de flotter autour de moi, sans que mes efforts désordonnés réussissent à lui ôter ce qu'il avait de bienveillant, de presque tendre, et qui me faisait mal (Ch, p. 1524).

We shall observe in our discussion of Clamence's way of life as he lives it in the "Mexico-City" bar exactly what that certain type of self-accusation entails.

Self-accusation having failed as a means of ridding himself of the laugh and of his culpability, Clamence chooses to seek refuge in women. Here again, he places himself in a dominating position, but fails again to attain his goal. Despairing of this means as a solution, he then seeks immortality by living a life of debauchery. It is this route that Clamence claims to be most successful in spite of the fact that his health suffers from it. He finds that debauchery tones down the laugh so that it becomes inaudible. But at the same time, Clamence becomes indifferent, not only to the laugh, but to everything in general. The apparent healing of the wound of culpability has been accompanied by the deterioration of other parts of him.

Je voulais seulement vous dire l'avantage que je tirai de ces mois d'orgie. Je vivais dans une sorte de brouillard où le rire se faisait assourdi, au point que je finissais par ne plus le percevoir. L'indifférence qui occupait déjà tant de place en moi ne trouvait plus de résistance et étendait sa sclérose. Plus
The relation between cure and death which arises here cannot be overlooked. When man believes he has been cured (i.e., gone beyond the limits established by the effort to alleviate), there is aggravation of the disease and loss of life. A parallel relation exists between unconsciousness and death—when consciousness is dulled, there is also loss of life. What is presented here is the reverse side of the relation consciousness-life that appeared in Camus' previous novels. In reality, there has been no cure in Clamence's case. The man who has dulled consciousness and who has strived to eliminate it is not a living being; he is living a dead life; he is dying. The day of his experience on the transatlantic vessel, Clamence learns that he has not, in spite of his repeated efforts, been cured at all.

Mais ce sont les mêmes qui criaient, qui appelaient déjà sur l'Atlantique, le jour où je compris définitivement que je n'étais pas guéri, que j'étais toujours coincé, et qu'il fallait m'en arranger, Finie la vie glorieuse, mais finis aussi la rage et les sobresauts. Il fallait se soumettre et reconnaître sa culpabilité. Il fallait vivre dans le malconfort (Ch, p. 1531).

For Clamence, however, the term "s'en arranger" (to adapt, put up with, make the best of) does not restrict itself to acceptance of his imprisonment in his criminality and
culpability and of the impossibility of cure. Accompanying
the realization that he is not innocent is a pronouncement
on all of mankind: that the innocence of no one can be
affirmed and that all men are without doubt guilty
criminals, "Du reste, nous ne pouvons affirmer l'innocence
de personne, tandis que nous pouvons affirmer à coup sûr
la culpabilité de tous. Chaque homme témoigne du crime de
tous les autres, voilà ma foi et mon espérance" (Ch, pp.
1531-1532). Drowning men continually cry out from the
waters which surround them and all men are immersed in
these same waters, affirms Clamence (Ch, p. 1531). That
observation and the above quote reinforce the depiction
of man's crime as his responsibility for the death of his
fellow man. The central idea present in this novel is that
man must face his responsibility for the fact of natural
death. He is a conscious being: conscious not only of
his mortality, but of death as his criminal act.

With La Chute, Camus surpassed his previous
analyses of man's crime and criminality. In L'Etranger,
he portrayed the act of committing a crime. Later, in
La Peste and in L'Homme révolté, the violence which man
commits against his fellow man was presented. In both
cases, these criminal acts were separate and apart from
the universal situation of natural death as part of man's
condition. On the other hand, in La Chute, Camus presents
man as a creature who bears the responsibility for his
fellow man's natural death. Mortal man is not innocent of the fact of death; he experiences guilt for a crime which he has not committed. In other words, all men are criminals.

Crime and culpability, states Clamence vehemently, are not a divine invention. It is man who has judged and punished his fellow man.

Dieu n'est pas nécessaire pour créer la culpabilité, ni punir. Nos semblables y suffisent, aidés par nous-mêmes. Vous parliez du jugement dernier. Permettez-moi d'en rire respectueusement. Je l'attends de pied ferme : j'ai connu ce qu'il y a de pire, qui est le jugement des hommes. Pour eux, pas de circonstances atténuantes, même la bonne intention est imputée à crime (Ch, p. 1532).

Clamence observes the world of mankind as one much like that of the fish in the Brazilian rivers who attack and devour the imprudent swimmer (Ch, p. 1479). In the case of man, the question is who will destroy the other first. As an example of man's criminality to man, Clamence cites the prisoner's "cellule des crachats" (the spitting-cell) in which the victim suffers the degradation of being spat upon by other men. It is an example of violence committed against one's fellow man and of the dominance of the more powerful over the weaker. "Tous cancrès, tous punis, crachons-nous dessus et hop! au malconfort! C'est à qui crachera le premier, voilà tout. Je vais vous dire un grand secret, mon cher. N'attendez pas le jugement dernier. Il a lieu tous les jours" (Ch, p. 1532).
Clamence also recognizes that such criminal acts are justified by men: "Il y a toujours des raisons au meurtre d'un homme. Il est, au contraire, impossible de justifier qu'il vive. C'est pourquoi le crime trouve toujours des avocats et l'innocence parfois, seulement" (Ch, pp. 1532-1533). On the other hand, Clamence realizes, too, that there are criminals by omission of action. He cites Christ as an example of one who, although he did not kill, unwillingly became a criminal because he was not among the victims of the massacre of the innocents in Judea, those children who died because of him. Christ's innocent crime appears analogous to Clamence's--Clamence supposes that Christ, too, was followed by the cry of a woman: in his case, a woman mourning the death of her children. In speaking of Christ the innocent criminal, Clamence leads us to believe that his death was a necessary result of his crime.

Sachant ce qu'il savait, connaissant tout de l'homme--ah! qui aurait cru que le crime n'est pas tant de faire mourir que de ne pas mourir soi-même!--confronté jour et nuit à son crime innocent, il devenait trop difficile pour lui de se maintenir et de continuer. Il valait mieux en finir, ne pas se défendre, mourir, pour ne plus être seul à vivre ... (Ch, p. 1533).

The state of innocent criminality is described by Clamence as a Limbo where man has the energy to do neither good nor evil,

As a criminal, Clamence is exiled in the Limbo of innocent criminality. The state of Limbo is one in which man is considered neither entirely guilty nor totally innocent. The drowning of the woman was not willed by Clamence. Neither did he will his presence at the scene of the incident. Yet the episode revealed his criminality to him. When he heard the woman's cries for help, Clamence, although disturbed by them, was unable to do anything to prevent her death. The propensity was in Clamence and he became guilty of a totally unpremeditated crime.

We have examined the unconscious Clamence who, before the crime, believed himself to be an innocent being. We have traced his numerous efforts, subsequent to the event on the bridge, to escape his state of consciousness of criminality. Our next object of consideration is the way of life this criminal adopts after the incident at sea has occurred and shaken him into unresectable lucidity and consciousness of his imprisonment in criminality. Clamence describes the life he now leads by directly giving us two important facts concerning it: (1) he exercises the role of judge-penitent and (2) he practices frequent public confession. The second aspect of his way of life is
concomitant to the first, the confession being an integral part of the role of judge-penitent, as we shall observe.

The incident on the Pont Royal was, as we have seen, the occasion of the first step in Clamence's development in consciousness. Moreover, the revelatory nature of this experience was such that Clamence was presented with knowledge and freedom: knowledge of himself and freedom to accept or reject that knowledge and to act accordingly. His fear of consciousness is a fear of freedom. He states: "Mais sur les ponts de Paris, j'ai appris moi aussi que j'avais peur de la liberté" (Ch, p. 1545). The paradoxical quality of this freedom lies in the imprisonment in criminality which accompanies it. Freedom bears with it a discovery of one's criminality and culpability. Once consciousness is attained, one is free to act or not to act, all the while being locked in the propensity for crime. "Au bout de toute liberté, il y a une sentence; voilà pourquoi la liberté est trop lourde à porter, surtout lorsqu'on souffre de fièvre, ou qu'on a de la peine, ou qu'on n'aime personne" (Ch, p. 1544). If, at the end of all freedom, there is a verdict of man's criminality, then innocence is a lost kingdom, according to Clamence. He states to his listener: "Oui, nous avons perdu la lumière, les matins, la sainte innocence de celui qui se pardonne à lui-même" (Ch, p. 1550). Now, there is no innocence and therefore, no lamb. This is
one explanation Clamence offers for not returning the stolen panel from van Eyck's "The Mystic Lamb." There are only guilty judges whose criminal justice exists outside the realm of innocence.

Clamence, however, cannot live in such exile of criminality, consciousness, and freedom. He therefore chooses not to change his way of life, a fact which he openly states to his listener: "Je n'ai pas changé de vie, je continue de m'aimer et de me servir des autres" (Ch, p. 1548). He has chosen to maintain his elevated position of judge of men and to continue to dominate for all time: "Je règne enfin, mais pour toujours. J'ai encore trouvé un sommet, où je suis seul à grimper et d'où je peux juger tout le monde" (Ch, p. 1548). Clamence has resolved that the laugh of culpability within him will never again make a victim of him. He makes this declaration firmly, without hesitating: "Parfois, de loin en loin, quand la nuit est vraiment belle, j'entends un rire lointain, je doute à nouveau. Mais vite, j'accable toutes choses, créatures et création, sous le poids de ma propre infirmité, et me voilà requinqué" (Ch, pp. 1548-1549). All of Clamence's attention is now voluntarily and premeditatedly directed toward self. Not only does he do nothing for his fellow man; he has decided that he will oppress and crush him in order to alleviate the burden of his culpability and to deaden the laugh.
Clamence's role of judge-penitent is characterized by self-love and the oppression of others as described above. It is the role which he has again, voluntarily and premeditatedly chosen. Camus tells us that Clamence's confession is calculated: "L'homme qui parle dans la Chute se livre à une confession calculée."¹ The penitent confesses in order to avoid being judged and to become himself judge of all mankind. The act of repeatedly confessing his crime and of accusing himself of his deeds does not transform him into an innocent being. But Clamence is not merely painting his own portrait; he is not restricting judgment to himself. He presents his portrait as a mirror to others and rises to his elevated position of judge and condemnner of men. This cold, calculating purpose is affirmed by him in the following passage: "Puisqu'on ne pouvait condamner les autres sans aussitôt se juger, il fallait s'accabler soi-même pour avoir le droit de juger les autres. Puisque tout juge finit un jour en pénitent, il fallait prendre la route en sens inverse et faire métier de pénitent pour pouvoir finir en juge" (Ch, p. 1546). Camus also describes this cold calculation in similar terms and extends the description of his character to the modern world in general. Of Clamence, he states: "Il a le coeur moderne, c'est-à-dire qu'il ne

The antithetical quality of Clamence's role might lead one to view Clamence as a totally hypocritical and insincere being. Yet in his very hypocritical role of penitent, there streams lucidity and honesty. Clamence tells us that his goal is to avoid being judged, to dull consciousness of his criminality and culpability and to deaden the sound of the laugh.

Non, j'ai assez parlé pour ne rien dire, autrefois. Maintenant mon discours est orienté par l'idée, évidemment, de faire taire les rires, d'éviter personnellement le jugement, bien qu'il n'y ait, en apparence, aucune issue. Le grand empêchement à y échapper n'est-il pas que nous sommes les premiers à nous condamner? Il faut donc commencer par étendre la condamnation à tous, sans discrimination, afin de la délai déjà (Ch, p. 1543).

Clamence is not the repentant penitent who strikes his breast and regrets the wrongs he has committed. Though he aims to avoid being judged, he knows that judgment is unavoidable since he must judge himself in order to avoid judgment by others. Self-judgment, like the sound of the laugh, is inescapable. Having become conscious of his criminality, Clamence has willfully chosen to continue to

1. Ibid., p. 2015.
dominate and condemn his fellow man. He has become a guilty criminal, a man guilty of premeditated crime.

The judge-penitent's world is a closed one. Neither light nor warmth nor human love is allowed to penetrate it. The concentric circles of Amsterdam are closed to any exterior light. Clamence is surrounded by his criminality and culpability. The more he works to escape consciousness of these, the deeper he sinks into the realm of guilty criminality. His chosen relationship with men constitutes a turning away from the light of "midi." Clamence does not want to do anything for man's happiness. Men are not his brothers, but his trampled subjects. Clamence's world is one where guilty criminality reigns.

Car nous sommes au coeur des choses. Avez-vous remarqué que les canaux concentriques d'Amsterdam ressemblent aux cercles de l'enfer? L'enfer bourgeois, naturellement peuplé de mauvais rêves. Quand on arrive de l'extérieur, à mesure qu'on passe ces cercles, la vie, et donc ses crimes, devient plus épaisse, plus obscure. Ici, nous sommes dans le dernier cercle (Ch, p. 1483).

Clamence is situated "au coeur des choses," in the very depths of guilty criminality. And yet he reigns by bringing visitors to this underworld of crime, dominates by bringing them to these depths. We observe again, this time under a different aspect, the antithetical quality of his role as judge-penitent.
In choosing to inhabit these circles, Clamence refuses to live consciously and lives a dead life. It is not surprising that he is attracted by the funereal odors which emanate from the canals. "Comme les canaux sont beaux, le soir! J'aime le souffle des eaux moisies, l'odeur des feuilles mortes qui macèrent dans le canal et celle, funèbre, qui monte des péniches pleines de fleurs" (Ch, pp. 1497-1498). One would think that Clamence has attained happiness and repose, as he admires the funereal world in which he lives. But in the next breath he tells us: "La vérité est que je me force à admirer ces canaux" (Ch, p. 1498). He admits that light, innocence, and happiness have been lost (Ch, p. 1550). Happiness, like innocence, is always desired, never attained. The pathetic quality of his insistence that he is happy is evidence of this.

Rather than seeking to do something for the happiness of all men, Clamence seeks his own solitary happiness, knowing that he is unable to ever attain it. Moreover, in his quest for that solitary happiness, he adds to man's suffering and pain and compounds the plague of his own
guilty criminality. While refusing to accept his crimi-
nality, he also refuses to combat it and only intensifies it.

It is the first time that the judge-penitent figure appears in Camus' work. We recall that in L'Etranger, Meursault the criminal was condemned by all representa-
tives of human justice and the judicial system. As judge-
penitent, the main character in La Chute encompasses all of these roles. Clamence is judge and he is also on trial. He depicts man judging his fellow man, being tried by his fellow man and at the same time, recognizing his own guilt and the guilt of all.

If one asks whether or not Clamence considers his role of judge-penitent to be an ideal solution to the problem of his crime and of the laugh that follows him, the answer is without a doubt negative. But what else is there to do when one does not love life and one's own life? For in not accepting his criminality and culpability, Clamence refuses to accept his life and his existence as it is. Yet he thrives on his criminality, believing that to do anything for one's fellow man is to negate one's existence, to become no one. At the end of his narrative, he states: "Ma solution, bien sûr, ce n'est pas l'idéal. Mais quand on n'aime pas sa vie, quand on sait qu'il faut en changer, on n'a pas le choix, n'est-ce pas? Que faire pour être un autre? Impossible. Il
faudrait n'être plus personne, s'oublier pour quelqu'un, une fois, au moins. Mais comment?" (Ch, p. 1550). It is this impossibility for man to become other than what he is that constitutes the core of Clamence's concluding words. But in the affirmation of that impossible task lies a refusal to struggle against his propensity for crime. In Clamence's opinion, were man given a second chance to save the drowning woman, to do something for the love of mankind and to alleviate his suffering, he would be incapable of performing a non-criminal act. The possibility of a second chance, however, is quickly dismissed by Clamence who realizes that there are no second chances—it is too late to do anything about the incident that took place on the Pont Royal. Moreover, it is a situation which he would never want to encounter again. In addressing himself to his listener, Clamence states:

Prononcez vous-même les mots qui, depuis des années, n'ont cessé de retentir dans mes nuits, et que je dirai enfin par votre bouche: "O jeune fille, jette-toi encore dans l'eau pour que j'aie une seconde fois la chance de nous sauver tous les deux!" Une seconde fois, hein, quelle imprudence! Supposez, cher maître, qu'on nous prenne au mot? Il faudrait s'exécuter. Brr ... ! L'eau est si froide! Mais rassurons-nous! Il est trop tard, maintenant, il sera toujours trop tard. Heureusement! (Ch, p. 1551).

Clamence's fear of life as it is is accompanied by a deep-rooted fear of leaving this life. He can envision his death only under the following condition: that he would be decapitated, his head held high above the people, in a
gesture of proclamation of his domination over men. As he envisions his arrest for possession of the stolen panel "The Last Judges" from van Eyck's "The Mystic Lamb," he affirms his fear of death. There is evidence here that, for Clamence, the crime of domination and lack of love of men is used as a means not only to deaden consciousness of criminality and culpability, but also to subdue his consciousness and accompanying fear of death. "Peut-être s'occuperait-on ensuite du reste, on me décapiterait, par exemple, et je n'aurais plus peur de mourir, je serais sauvé. Au-dessus du peuple assemblé, vous élèveriez alors ma tête encore fraîche, pour qu'ils s'y reconnaissent et qu'à nouveau je les domine, exemplaire" (Ch, p. 1551).

Clamence is a criminal who will cultivate his criminality until the end.

The incident which took place on the Pont Royal and which revealed to Clamence his criminality exiled him from the kingdom of happiness, innocence, and unconsciousness. The experience of exile is also predominantly present in the short stories of L'Exil et le royaume. Crime appears in some form or another in all of these short stories. It is perhaps least pronounced as a theme in "Les Muets" in which the central character, Yvars, carries an unnamed burden. There is also present in these
stories, as was the case in *La Chute*, a strong sense of loss of happiness which man wishes to recover.

"La Femme adulèrè," for example, depicts a woman who is conscious of carrying a great burden, one from which she desperately desires to be delivered. Hers is the burden of consciousness of living a dead life, a life where love between herself and her husband has been absent for twenty years. Janine, under such conditions, suffers exile from life. At the same time, she is fearful of the solitude she would experience did she not have her husband and yet, she also fears death, fears that she will die without having been delivered from her burden and without having experienced happiness. Janine desires happiness, repose, deliverance from the dead life which is reflected in the cold, bleak hotel room she shares with her husband. Living in a lifeless, loveless world, she looks out to the kingdom of happiness and life where the sound of waves breaking and the presence of palm trees provide soothing comfort. During her first contact with the kingdom of life and happiness, Janine is an observer of this world exterior to herself; and as she looks out over the horizon, she becomes conscious of the happiness which invitingly waits for her to perceive it. "Mais elle ne pouvait détacher ses regards de l'horizon. Là-bas, plus au sud encore, à cet endroit où le ciel et la terre se rejoignent dans une ligne pure, là-bas, lui semblait-il.
soudain, quelque chose l'attendait qu'elle avait ignoré jusqu'à ce jour et qui pourtant n'avait cessé de lui manquer."¹ These few moments of observation which constitute this contact with the kingdom of happiness are fugitive, however.

Elle savait seulement que ce royaume, de tout temps, lui avait été promis et que jamais, pourtant, il ne serait le sien, plus jamais, sinon à ce fugitif instant, peut-être, où elle rouvrit les yeux sur le ciel soudain immobile, et sur ses flots de lumière figée, pendant que les voix qui montaient de la ville arabe se taisaient brusquement (ER, p. 1570).

The repose she experiences is expressed in terms of the world itself at rest, a world where even old age and death have been suspended. The above quote continues: "Il lui sembla que le cours du monde venait alors de s'arrêter et que personne, à partir de cet instant, ne vieillirait plus ni ne mourait" (ER, p. 1570). While Janine's hotel room is cold, dark, and uninviting, while dust, dryness, and oppressive heat permeated the atmosphere of the long bus ride, the kingdom is one where soft, crystal-like, liquid light expands. As it does so, the tenseness of a knot slowly unties itself within Janine's heart (ER, p. 1570).

Janine's second experience of contact with the kingdom is an experience of union with it. Union with

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¹ Albert Camus, "L'Exil et le royaume," in Théâtre, Récits, Nouvelles, p. 1570. All references to these short stories are from this edition of Camus' works. Subsequent references to them will be denoted in the body of this study by the abbreviation ER and the page number of this edition.
this kingdom is union with the night, with life, with happiness. It is during this second experience that Janine comes to a stop: rather than fleeing from her fear of life and death as she had done for many, many years, she stands in front of life, drinks of it, and is refreshed by the invigorating sap that fills her. The night is cold, but it is tempered by the light of the stars. Janine's union with the night is a union of love—she is embraced by it and abandons herself to its love. This experience of life, love, and happiness is a sensual one.

Janine has experienced happiness, however momentary and fleeting these moments have been. But, as the title of her story indicates, she is an adulterous woman. Her adulterous act is not her exchange with the soldier on the bus, but rather the experience with the night. The experience of
happiness appears again, as in Camus' previous works, as a criminal act.

The tone of the second of this group of short stories is very different from that of "La Femme adulte." In "Le Rénégat ou un esprit confus," the themes of crime, evil, power, and domination are predominant. In the case of the missionary, crime is viewed as a means of deliverance from the injustice that he himself has suffered. Evil is committed by the principal character because evil has been done unto him. The dominance of the cruel master is combatted by the victim with the same weapon of tyrannical power which he despises in his master. The victim has turned master and has become that which he wishes to combat. Originally, the missionary's goal was to conquer evil and subjugate the wicked executioners of men. He viewed the religious mission of conversion as one of domination and exercise of power and rule over men.

Puissant, oui, c'était le mot que sans cesse, je roulais sur ma langue, je rêvais du pouvoir absolu, celui qui fait mettre genoux à terre, qui force l'adversaire à capituler, le convertit enfin. ... je voulais être reconnu par les bourreaux eux-mêmes, les jeter à genoux et leur faire dire: "Seigneur, voici ta victoire," régner enfin par la seule parole sur une armée de méchants (ER, pp. 1581-1582).

Such thirst for crime and absolute power reaches gargantuan proportions and excludes belief in any goodness in man. Like Clamence, the missionary believes that justice and good are non-existent and that all men are evil: "Seul
le mal peut aller jusqu'à ses limites et régner absolument, c'est lui qu'il faut servir pour installer son royaume visible, ensuite on avisera, ensuite qu'est-ce que ça veut dire, seul le mal est présent, à bas l'Europe, la raison et l'honneur et la croix" (ER, p. 1590). He who sought to cure men and to eliminate crime did no more than to convert himself to the religion of his oppressors. The above quote continues with a recognition of this fact on the part of the missionary: "Oui, je devais me convertir à la religion de mes maîtres, oui oui j'étais esclave, mais si moi aussi je suis méchant je ne suis plus esclave, malgré mes pieds entravés et ma bouche muette" (ER, p. 1590). Crime is for the missionary a means of obtaining refreshment from the suffering he has undergone as a slave. It is significant that he finds refreshing coolness from the intense heat of the sun and the dryness of the desert only in the barrel of his gun as he anxiously awaits the arrival of the man he is planning to kill (ER, p. 1582). Having been subjugated by those he had intended to subjugate, the missionary salutes evil and adores it. As he prepares to kill his victim, he prays that crime may forever reign.

Criminality in this study is present as a theme in very concentrated form. The missionary appears totally engulfed in it. If he were traveling down the pit of hell to which Clamence refers in his narration, we would
envision him at the very bottom where crime, according to the judge-penitent, is most dense (Ch, p. 1483). In adoring criminality, the missionary exercises evil to its ultimate degree.

Le fusil, vite, et je l'arme vite. O fétiche, mon dieu là-bas, que ta puissance soit maintenue, que l'offense soit multipliée, que la haine règne sans pardon sur un monde de damnés, que le méchant soit à jamais le maître, que le royaume enfin arrive où dans une seule ville de sel et de fer de noirs tyrans asserviront et possèderont sans pitié! (ER, p. 1592).

For the missionary, the only kingdom that exists is one where crime and hatred of men reign. It is the kingdom also instituted by Clamence in the depths of the "Mexico-City" bar. The crimes of such tyrannical rulers of men are destructive of all life—they destroy love, light, vegetation, youth, all that is warmth and growth.

O mes maîtres, ils vaincront ensuite les soldats, ils vaincront la parole et l'amour, ils remonteront les déserts, passeront les mers, rempliront la lumière d'Europe de leurs voiles noirs, frappez au ventre, oui, frappez aux yeux, sèmeront leur sel sur le continent, toute végétation, toute jeunesse s'éteindra ...

(ER, p, 1592).

All that is darkness, hate, domination, violence, and crime is saluted here. There is complete and total absence of love and warmth in this short story, as well as the affirmation of the impossibility of combat against crime and man's criminality. Happiness, peace, light, warmth, and human kindness are regarded by the missionary as illusions. "... le bien est une rêverie, un projet sans
cesse remis et poursuivi d'un effort exténuant, une limite qu'on n'atteînt jamais, son règne est impossible" (ER, p. 1589). The world of criminality in which the missionary has chosen to dwell is not satisfying, however. Though he has chosen to dominate and to be a criminal, he does not regard his choice as the ideal solution. In spite of his affirmation that all is crime and evil and that man is incapable of doing good, the missionary continues to desire that man manifest goodness. As he hears the sound of someone approaching, he appeals to the lost love that men once had for one another. In his own way, the missionary, too, desires happiness, repose from criminality, a state of being where good and love of men would reign.

Hommes autrefois fraternels, seuls recours, ô solitude, ne m'abandonnez pas! Voici, voici, qui es-tu, déchiré, la bouche sanglante, c'est toi, sorcier, les soldats t'ont vaincu, le sel brûle là-bas, c'est toi mon maître bien-aimé! Quitte ce visage de haine, sois bon maintenant, nous nous sommes trompés, nous recommencerons, nous referons la cité de la miséricorde, je veux retourner chez moi. Oui, aide-moi, c'est cela, tends ta main, donne ... (ER, p. 1593).

Unfortunately, however, the plea is answered and the missionary is silenced with a fistful of salt which is thrown into his mouth.

The atmosphere of the third story entitled "Les Muets" is brighter and warmer than that of "Le Rénégat." Here the emphasis is not so much on man's criminality to
man as on the loss of happiness which he experiences. The kingdom of happiness is one of fleeting and momentary experiences; it is a world apart from Yvars' daily routine at work. The cooper is exiled from the sea, the sun, and joys he knew in his youth. He is imprisoned in a world where injustice reigns, where he cannot experience the peace of earning a just wage. The social structure is such that Yvars' position in it is that of victim, victim of injustice which men like M. Lassalle, although possessing a good amount of human warmth, find impossible to remedy. The following reflection on Yvars' life reveals that happiness is a lost state. Happiness and love of life are now experienced by Yvars only on certain occasions.

Malgré ou à cause de sa boiterie, il avait toujours aimé la nage. Puis les années avaient passé, il y avait eu Fernande, la naissance du garçon, et, pour vivre, les heures supplémentaires, à la tonellerie le samedi, le dimanche chez des particuliers où il bricolait. Il avait perdu peu à peu l'habitude de ces journées violentes qui le rassasiaient. L'eau profonde et claire, le fort soleil, les filles, la vie du corps, il n'y avait pas d'autre bonheur dans son pays. Et ce bonheur passait avec la jeunesse. Yvars continuait d'aimer la mer, mais seulement à la fin du jour quand les eaux de la baie fonçaient un peu (ER, p. 1598).

The experience of loss of happiness is described in terms of the distance which separates man and the world of sun, warmth, and sea. It is also described in terms of loss of love and human warmth which, as we have seen, characterizes criminal man. The moment of tenderness which takes
place during the closing scene of the story is a moment of happiness which Yvars and Fernande have not experienced in a long time.

Fernande demanda à Yvars si tout s'était bien passé. Il ne dit rien, se lava dans la buanderie, puis s'assit sur le banc, contre le petit mur de la terrasse. Du linge repris pendant au-dessus de lui, le ciel devenait transparent; par-delà le mur, on pouvait voir la mer douce du soir. Fernande apporta l'anisette, deux verres, la gargoulette d'eau fraîche. Elle prit place près de son mari. Il lui raconta tout, en lui tenant la main, comme aux premiers temps de leur mariage (ER, p. 1608).

However, the strike having failed, the sea seems further removed from Yvars than ever: "Le soleil avait beau briller, la mer ne promettait plus rien" (ER, p. 1600).

The kingdom of happiness is a distant world situated as far as the eye can see as man looks out at the sea. The narrative ends with the expression of Yvars' intense desire to go to that kingdom, to find that lost happiness and youth once again. "Il aurait voulu être jeune, et que Fernande le fût encore, et ils seraient partis, de l'autre côté de la mer" (ER, p. 1608).

The sense of loss of happiness is also present in "L'Hôte," but, as is the case in La Chute, a revelatory incident is associated with that loss. Crime is the central theme of the story. However, focus is not on the Arab's crime, but on Daru's struggle with his own criminality. His decision to do nothing, the absence of positive action will change his life. This schoolteacher
is a non-violent man who has no desire to dominate or hurt his fellow man. In fact, the crimes, hate and violence of men revolt him. He observes the criminal Arab and: "Une colère subite vint à Daru contre cet homme, contre tous les hommes et leur sale méchanceté, leurs haines inlassables, leur folie du sang" (ER, p. 1615). In addition, it is Balducci who is concerned about Daru's protecting himself and who convinces him that he should be armed. Daru, on the other hand, is deeply troubled by the fact that he is unwillingly and unexpectedly left with the burden of condemning the prisoner by delivering him to the proper authorities at Tinguit. Daru, against his own volition, has had imposed upon him the role of judge and executor of criminal man. He prefers to have nothing to do with the fate of the Arab and intensely hopes that the latter will flee during the night so that he may be relieved of the imposed responsibility which could make of him a criminal. "Quand il [Daru] se leva, aucun bruit ne venait de la salle de classe. Il s'étonna de cette joie franche qui lui venait à la seule pensée que l'Arabe avait pu fuir et qu'il allait se retrouver seul sans avoir rien à décider. Mais le prisonnier était là" (ER, p. 1618).

Prior to the arrival of Balducci and his victim, Daru's life had been fairly peaceful and relatively happy. The schoolteacher is a man who reigned in his kingdom: "Devant cette misère, lui qui vivait presque en moine dans
cette école perdue, content d'ailleurs du peu qu'il avait, et de cette vie rude, s'était senti un seigneur, avec ses murs crépis, son divan étroit, ses étagères de bois blanc, son puits, et son ravitaillement hebdomadaire en eau et en nourriture" (ER, p. 1612). However, Daru's kingdom is a sterile region where life is absent, and where the land consists of fields of dry stone.

On ne labourait ici que pour récolter des cailloux. D'autres fois, on grattait quelques copeaux de terre, accumulée dans des creux, dont on engraisserait les maigres jardins des villages. C'était ainsi, le caillou seul couvrait les trois quarts de ce pays. Les villes y naissaient, brillaient, puis disparaissaient; les hommes y passaient, s'aimaient ou se mordaient à la gorge, puis mouraient (ER, p. 1617).

There is absence of life here, in both the land and its people. The inhabitants of the region merely exist—they are born, live loving or hating their fellow men, and die—the cycle from birth to death is followed unconsciously.

The arrival of Balducci and the Arab disrupts Daru's peaceful, lifeless, unconscious state. Balducci claims that once Daru has performed the deed in question, he will return to his normal, peaceful, happy life; nothing will have changed. "Après, ce sera fini. Tu retrouveras tes élèves et la bonne vie" (ER, p. 1615).

The relationship between Daru and the prisoner throughout the story is one of deep human warmth and love. Though the man's crime revolts Daru, he does not wish to
judge and condemn him. And he curses destiny for having presented him with this responsibility. "Le crime imbécile de cet homme le révoltait, mais le livrer était contraire à l'honneur: d'y penser seulement le rendait fou d'humiliation. Et il maudissait à la fois les siens qui lui envoyaient cet Arabe et celui-ci qui avait osé tuer et n'avait pas su s'enfuir" (ER, p. 1621). The sense of honor which is present in Daru is reflected in his love for the man, a sense of fraternity with him which he would rather be rid of (ER, p. 1620). Yet the man is treated with warm hospitality, as a guest (as the title indicates) in Daru's home. In my opinion, the theme of genuine and unselfish human warmth is depicted in its purest form in the dinner scene. We observe here an atmosphere where love of man reigns in the total absence of judgment and of domination. Daru is all that Clamence is not; yet he will, like Clamence, become guilty of a crime against his fellow man.

Il [Daru] donna de la lumière et servit l'Arabe: "Mange," dit-il. L'autre prit un morceau de galette, le porta vivement à sa bouche et s'arrêta,

"Et toi? dit-il.
--Après toi. Je mangerai aussi."

Les grosses lèvres s'ouvrirent un peu, l'Arabe hésita, puis il mordit résolument dans la galette.

Le repas fini, l'Arabe regardait l'instituteur. "C'est toi le juge?"
--Non, je te garde jusqu'à demain.
--Pourquoi tu manges avec moi?
--J'ai faim (ER, p. 1618).

The last response made by Daru is genuinely sincere and open. It is, in its simplicity, reflective of the intensity and depth of unpretentious human warmth displayed by this man.

When it comes time for Daru to lead the Arab to his fate, he struggles in his indecision. He begins to lead the man east in the direction of Tinguit, only to retrace his footsteps and return to his starting point. He then leads his guest in a southerly direction and abandons him at a crossroads from which he may go south or east, thereby ridding—or attempting to rid—himself of the burden of making a decision regarding the Arab. Nevertheless, it is with great difficulty that Daru leaves his guest—he turns back a number of times to observe him, then hesitatingly retraces his steps and determinedly returns, running, to the top of the hill to observe the prisoner. The anguish and indecision he undergoes during this episode are described in the following passage:

Il [Daru] lui [à l'Arabe] tourna le dos, fit deux grands pas dans la direction de l'école, regarda d'un air indécis l'Arabe immobile et repartit. Pendant quelques minutes, il n'entendit plus que son propre pas, sonore sur la terre froide, et il ne détourna pas la tête. Au bout d'un moment, pourtant, il se retourna. L'Arabe était toujours là, au bord de la colline, les bras pendants maintenant, et il regardait l'instituteur. Daru sentit sa gorge se nouer. Mais il jura d'impatience, fit un
grand signe, et repartit. Il était déjà loin quand il s'arrêta de nouveau et regarda. Il n'y avait plus personne sur la colline.

Daru hesita. Le soleil était maintenant assez haut dans le ciel et commençait de lui dévorer le front. L'instituteur revint sur ses pas, d'abord un peu incertain, puis avec décision. Quand il parvint à la petite colline, il ruisselait de sueur. Il la gravit à toute allure et s'arrêta, essouflé, sur le sommet. Les champs de roche, au sud, se dessinaient nettement sur le ciel bleu, mais sur la plaine, à l'est, une buée de chaleur montait déjà. Et dans cette brume légère, Daru, le cœur serré, découvrit l'Arabe qui cheminait lentement sur la route de la prison (ER, p. 1623).

Daru's anguish is accompanied by physical discomfort. The sun oppresses him, he is uncomfortably warm, he experiences shortness of breath and discomfort in the area of the heart. The arrival of Balducci and his prisoner has placed Daru in a situation which he must confront: he is faced with his propensity for crime and potential culpability. Daru struggles to combat that propensity by displacing himself in relation to the situation: the Arab has been led only as far as the crossroads; nothing has been done to save him or to condemn him. Rather than be guilty of delivering the criminal to the judicial authorities, Daru chooses to abandon him, to do nothing. He fails, however, to escape his destiny of criminality and culpability. Through his absence of action, Daru has become guilty of a crime that must be paid. In the concluding scene of this short story, we observe Daru the criminal looking out from the window of his classroom.
Derrière lui, sur le tableau noir, entre les méandres des fleuves français s'étalait, tracée à la craie par une main malhabile, l'inscription qu'il venait de lire: "Tu as livré notre frère. Tu paieras." Daru regardait le ciel, le plateau et, au-delà, les terres invisibles qui s'étendaient jusqu'à la mer. Dans ce vaste pays qu'il avait tant aimé, il était seul (ER, p. 1623).

Daru's efforts to preserve his comfortably innocent, uninvolved and relatively happy state have failed to free him from the prison of propensity for crime. Furthermore, his crime must be paid and will be. In the effort to preserve his happiness, he became a criminal and lost that state of happiness. That an irrevocable change has taken place in his life is evidenced in the use of the pluperfect tense of the verb "aimer" in the last sentence of the narrative. It reveals that Daru, as a criminal, has been exiled from the kingdom of happiness he knew before the crime. Roger Quilliot, in his notes to this short story, states: "Il y a, dans le plus-que-parfait finalement choisi 'qu'il avait tant aimé' comme un renoncement et un adieu."¹ Crime has once again been an experience of reawakening of consciousness: Daru is now conscious of his criminal self and of the happiness and peace he experienced before the crime took place.

The abandonment of one's fellow man and the absence of action performed for his happiness are themes which

¹. Roger Quilliot, "'L'Hôte': Notes et variantes," in Albert Camus, Théâtre, Récits, Nouvelles, p. 2052, note no. 3 for p. 1623.
reappear in "Jonas ou l'artiste au travail." In this case, the criminal in question is an artist who rises to fame and glory and who experiences the need to create in solitude. As he undergoes a period of search and intense personal reflection, he progressively alienates himself from society and his own family in order to create. Jonas considers that a dichotomy exists between his artistic activity and his relationship with his fellow man. "Il était difficile de peindre le monde et les hommes et, en même temps, de vivre avec eux" (ER, p. 1642). Jonas' progressive self-alienation from mankind constitutes a failure to love and he is conscious of that fact. On one occasion, in the midst of a throng of visitors applauding his work and fame, he perceives the sadness visible in Louise's eyes: "De loin en loin, par-dessus les têtes, Jonas apercevait le regard de Louise et il lui semblait que ce regard était triste" (ER, p. 1644). Jonas has realized that a state of happiness, human warmth, and tenderness has been lost, and that recovery of this state is but momentary and fleeting. In a scene previous to the one cited above, the contrast between a past state of happiness and the present brief, momentary experience of human warmth is striking:

"Et puis, dit Louise, si tes amis partent tôt, nous nous verrons un peu plus." Jonas la regarda. Une ombre de tristesse passait sur le visage de Louise. Emu, il la prit contre lui, l'embrassa avec toute sa tendresse. Elle s'abandonna et, pendant un instant, ils furent
heureux comme ils l'avaient été au début de leur mariage (ER, p. 1640).

Louise's face is a portrait of a suffering woman who has been abandoned by man. He has neglected to love her and she has not been saved from her sorrow. Jonas is, in this way, as much a criminal as Clamence. Jonas recognizes his criminality and culpability and experiences shame for the lack of love he has shown her and for the hurt he has done her. As critical attacks of Jonas' work augment and as he progressively alienates himself from mankind, Jonas, like Clamence, experiments with debauchery as a solution. When he admits his unfaithfulness to Louise, she appears as a drowning woman to him.

It is at this point that Jonas' search for happiness manifests itself as a criminal act. His crime can be defined as absence of love of a woman and she is drowning, unaided by man. Jonas nevertheless pursues his search, and in so doing slowly isolates himself more and more from her and the rest of mankind. In order to attain this happiness and to be able to devote himself to his art, he creates a kingdom apart from and above the world of the
suffering, drowning woman. In the protective enclosure of the small room he has constructed, Jonas reigns over his fellow man. Like Clamence, he "soars," dominates, looks down on those below. He has constructed his kingdom of happiness, but at the same time, has exiled himself from mankind, from love and from human warmth. The happiness attained by Jonas is solitary; it brings with it deprivation of life, and the victim dies. The supposed cure has aggravated the disease.

Jonas' abandonment of men is followed by a decision to also abandon art altogether. His isolation constitutes a refusal to accept life, a refusal to create and to perform positive acts. Jonas' criminal act of abandoning Louise and his fellow man is concomitant with his abandonment of art. Whereas he exiled himself from mankind in order to better exercise his artistic creativity, this state of exile was not conducive to creativity, but to lifelessness and death. The importance of this story is that the crisis which Jonas experiences concerns the direction of the artist and of all art. We observe here a man who is faced with his life, who searches for a way to live it. In his case, his art is his life and we observe that the two are inseparable. Jonas differs from the criminals in Camus' other works: he is not an artist and a criminal, but rather a criminal-artist. His particular experience reveals that art cannot exist for its own sake alone and
that the artist cannot create in a world which excludes his fellow men. In a lecture given on December 14, 1957 at the University of Uppsala, Camus described his view of the relationship that exists between the artist and his fellow man:

Qu'il [l'artiste] traduise les souffrances et le bonheur de tous dans le langage de tous, et il sera compris universellement. En récompense d'une fidélité absolue à la réalité, il obtiendra la communication totale entre les hommes.

Cet idéal de la communication universelle est en effet celui de tout grand artiste. Contrairement au préjugé courant, si quelqu'un n'a pas droit à la solitude, c'est justement l'artiste (DS, p. 1085).

The abandonment of art, in its abandonment of man and of the drowning woman, constitutes a criminal act.

Criminality and the burden of culpability appear forcefully in "La pierre qui pousse" and in this case, two diametrically opposed methods of living with that burden are presented. D'Arrast's search and ultimate decision constitutes one of the methods in question; the other is that of a religious system adopted by the natives of a Brazilian village and by their leader who submissively carries the burden as part of the religious ceremonies which take place. On the one hand, we have d'Arrast, a man without a kingdom who is in search of something, not knowing what the object of the search is. He is a man experiencing exile; he is alone, unguided.
Lui aussi attendait, devant cette grotte, sous la même brume d'eau, et il ne savait quoi. Il ne cessait d'attendre, en véritable, depuis un mois qu'il était arrivé dans ce pays. Il attendait, dans la chaleur rouge des jours humides, sous les étoiles menues de la nuit, malgré les tâches qui étaient les siennes, les digues à bâtir, les routes à ouvrir, comme si le travail qu'il était venu faire ici n'était qu'un prétexte, l'occasion d'une surprise, ou d'une rencontre qu'il n'imaginait même pas, mais qui l'aurait attendu, patiemment, au bout du monde (ER, p. 1668).

The search and wait for an unknown constitute a search for happiness. But in that search, d'Arrast is a man in solitude: he has no kingdom, no subjects, no church. D'Arrast neither rules nor dominates. He lives, but has no destination. Nor does he find himself on a path which may lead him to a given destination. This state of solitude is described in the following conversation between d'Arrast and Socrate. For the latter, religion has provided such a path, guidelines, and rules. Socrate asks d'Arrast:

"Et toi, tu vas à la messe?
--Non.
--Alors où tu vas?
--Nulle part. Je ne sais pas."

Socrate riait encore.
"Pas possible! Un seigneur sans église, sans rien!"

D'Arrast riait aussi:
"Oui, tu vois je n'ai pas trouvé ma place. Alors, je suis parti" (ER, p. 1679).

Furthermore, d'Arrast has no desire to rule and dominate. The religious system with its rulers and lords ("seigneurs"), as Socrate refers to them, as well as the
ceremony in honor of Saint George are oppressive to him. The atmosphere of the ceremony is a suffocating and overbearingly hot one. Consequently, d'Arrast seeks shade, coolness, and openness where he can breathe, and by extension, live freely. He expresses this preference when Socrate asks his opinion of the ceremony which is taking place in the stifling atmosphere of the hut: "'Alors, monsieur d'Arrast, tu aimes la cérémonie?' D'Arrast dit qu'il faisait trop chaud dans la case et qu'il préférerait le ciel et la nuit" (ER, p. 1679). D'Arrast's desire for relief from the intense, oppressive heat is a desire for happiness. He reaches for the sky and the night and does not seek the shelter of a religious system which justifies their existence as well as his own.

Although little is said of d'Arrast's past, he does reveal one very important fact: that he was at one time in a situation where he recognized his propensity for crime. He tells us that he was a potential criminal, stating: "Je puis te le dire, bien que ce soit sans importance. Quelqu'un allait mourir par ma faute. Il me semble que j'ai appelé" (ER, p. 1672). In this case, it is the potential criminal who cries for help. Roger Quilliot, in one of his notes to this short story, remarks that this
last statement made by d'Arrast appears to be an echo to the cry which remains unanswered in La Chute. ¹

The participants of the religious ceremony are also criminals. But unlike d'Arrast, they have become submissive penitents and worshippers. They look to the "coq," their representative, who will carry the burden of criminality and culpability for them. The leader himself carries it in payment for having been saved from death. Moreover, the entire ceremony in honor of Saint George is a celebration of the conquest of evil. Man, undeserving of happiness, penitently submits, striking his breast, and hoping for that happiness nevertheless. This hope for happiness is found in the miracle of the growing stone, states Socrate: "Chaque année, c'est la fête. Avec le marteau, tu casses, tu casses des morceaux pour le bonheur béni. Et puis quoi, elle pousse toujours, toujours tu casses. C'est le miracle" (ER, p. 1668). However, the search for happiness is one for a life other than the life which these penitents possess. And the promise of happiness that the stone has for them is paid with unconsciousness of that life. In the height of the religious ceremony, the dancers progressively attain a state of trance.

¹ Roger Quilliot, "'La Pierre qui pousse': Notes et variantes," in Albert Camus, Théâtre, Récits, Nouvelles, p. 2068, note no. 2 for p. 1672.
during which they are neither lucid nor conscious beings (ER, pp. 1674-1675).

While the "coq," leader of the penitents, represents the traditional penitent who wishes to be saved from his criminality and culpability, striking his breast and affirming mea culpa's, d'Arrast accepts his culpability without striking his breast, without submitting to a religious system that imposes culpability upon him, and without losing his lucidity and consciousness. D'Arrast refuses to accept the kingdom of safe submission that will guarantee him salvation. That refusal is reflected in his act of carrying the leader's boulder and very deliberately and unhesitatingly hurling it into the fire rather than presenting it as an offering at the church. This act constitutes deliverance from the religious solution to the problem of man's criminality. D'Arrast will not use criminality and repentance as a means of salvation. Rather, he affirms his consciousness of criminality and culpability and accepts his propensity for crime. The carrying of the boulder is an act of acceptance of life as it is. It is in the performance of this act that he experiences true life and genuine happiness. The force of life manifests itself within him and he greets it. D'Arrast has found what he has been searching for in the very rejection of answers, explanations and salvation offered to mankind. The following description of d'Arrast
after he has rid himself of his burden is that of criminal man who has accepted his criminality and his life, who has refused to place hope in a life other than the one he possesses and who therefore, truly lives. "D'Arrast, debout dans l'ombre, écoutait, sans rien voir, et le bruit des eaux l'emplissait d'un bonheur tumultueux. Les yeux fermés, il saluait joyeusement sa propre force, il saluait, une fois de plus, la vie qui recommençait" (ER, p. 1686).

Looking back on the second period of Camus' literary career, we recall that it was one of deep concern for reform—we observed criminal man who, conscious of his criminality and that of his fellow man, undertook positive action in an attempt to alleviate the ills that he perceived. Through such action, however, recognition of another problem arose—that such positive action often aggravated rather than relieved the ills, the diseases, the wounds of death and crime. Man was imprisoned in his criminality—his very efforts to combat crime and criminality were criminal acts. Nevertheless, Rieux affirmed his belief in man's continually renewed combat against crime and injustice. During the period of La Peste and of L'Homme révolté, criminal man was viewed as one who must strive to do what he can to fight the bacillus of the
plague, all the while maintaining the realization that it can never be eliminated.

In the works of the third period of Camus' career as a writer, the crimes which are committed are not, for the most part, positive acts of reform, but rather, acts of omission. We have observed that primary emphasis in both *La Chute* and *L'Exil et le royaume* is on absence of action on the part of the criminals in question. In these cases, nothing has been done to help man, to alleviate his suffering, to combat his death and his crime. If acting for the good and happiness of man has consisted of criminal acts, the reverse—absence of action—has not, as perhaps one would expect, preserved a state of blissful innocence. Daru, Jonas, d'Arrast, and Clamence chose not to act. Yet this did not permit them to escape criminality and culpability. In fact, their failure to act only revealed their culpability to them. In all of these cases, love of man has been absent in the sense that nothing has been done to help him. And in the few cases in *L'Exil et le royaume* where something is done for man's happiness, either one's own, as in the case of Janine in "La Femme adultery," or for another's, as in the case of the missionary in "Le Rénégat," a criminal act has been performed and crime and evil have only been propagated.

Regardless of the nature of the criminal situation present in the various short stories, however, one important
factor must be mentioned concerning them. Janine, Yvars, Daru, Jonas, and d'Arrast in some form or another desire and search for happiness, sun, warmth, light, sea, and life. Even the missionary, worshipper of man's violence, calls upon the lost fraternity and goodness of man, begging him to abandon his hatred. All of these characters inhabit a world where crime, injustice, and unhappiness reign and where love, warmth, and sunshine are, for the most part, absent. Yet there are moments, however sporadic and fleeting, where light and happiness are present, even if only at a distance from man.

A second factor of great magnitude which is observed in this collection of short stories is that although the characters in question recognize that they inhabit a loveless world where happiness does not reign, they do not, in the face of such a situation, adopt a totally destructive and nihilistic solution. They are not engaged in a massive project to dominate, encompass and condemn everyone around them, depriving them of life. But such is the solution that will be adopted by Clamence. These two important factors concerning L'Exil et le royaume indicate that these short stories prepare the way for La Chute. Unlike the characters in the former work, Clamence turns his back on love, warmth, light, and happiness. Because of the role of judge-penitent which he has
chosen to adopt, he is situated in a category apart from that of his counterparts in the short stories.

Clamence is a man who does not experience the force of life within him, who does not wish to experience that force. He cannot, as did d'Arrast, accept the burden of his criminality and culpability. Consequently, he attempts to squelch his consciousness of these, that very consciousness which constitutes the force of life within him. Clamence does not love his life and does not love man. He despises himself, yet antithetically, also loves himself exclusively. In striving to escape the prison walls of his criminality, he only sinks deeper into the quagmire of crime and evil. He has chosen to inhabit the dark, cold, rainy circles of Amsterdam where no light may enter. As the antithesis of Rieux, Clamence observes the world as one where there is no sun, warmth and refreshing sea. For him, the world is infected with the criminality and evilness of men who are totally incapable of ever performing a deed that does not constitute a criminal act. The reader of La Chute finds himself in an atmosphere which is a long way from that reflected in Rieux's statement at the end of his chronicle: "qu'il y a dans les hommes plus de choses à admirer que de choses à mépriser" (P, p. 1473).

Clamence is not only criminal man; he is totally despairing man who chooses to utilize his criminality in the most destructive and despicable of ways, making it a
tool to exploit his fellow man. The accusation of self
(role of penitent) enables him (1) to avoid being the one
accused by others and (2) to extend the mirror of this
accusation to everyone he encounters (role of judge).
Unable as he is to escape the echo of the laugh within and
around him, Clamence can only attempt to alleviate the pain
of his criminality and culpability by imposing that pain
on his fellow man, and by proclaiming him a culpable
criminal. The role of judge-penitent makes of Clamence a
criminal guilty of premeditated crime. In a recent study
on Camus, Brian Masters discusses this role in terms of
the sadomasochistic quality of Clamence's way of life
and of his narration. Masters states:

The self-vilification of his [Clamence's] tech-
nique masks a perverse self-glorification; the
important element is that the attention should
be directed towards himself. There is a large
degree of sadomasochism in his behaviour.
Clamence invites the listener to despise him,
then delights in his discomfiture when he
realizes that his contempt may be directed
towards his own behavior, since it is no better
than Clamence's.

Who is Clamence's listener to whom Masters refers? He is
precisely anyone to whom the narration is directed; the
listener is the reader. The narration is a calculated
confession directed to that reader; it is also the novel
entitled La Chute. The reader as listener of the narrative

is a victim of the judge-penitent. Clamence manipulates his listener, the reader. The narrative, literary art form, is the medium of Clamence's judgment and condemnation of men. The implications of this situation are serious: we are faced not only with the deviousness of a criminal individual but also with the question of the criminal quality and deviousness of literary artistry itself. Jonas may have abandoned artistic creativity entirely, but Clamence uses his confession as a means of dominating and destroying his listeners. To sum up, Clamence works to create his kingdom, but in doing so, he exiles himself from mankind as well as from light and life. In rising above all men, he has fallen into the depths of criminality and culpability.

We ask ourselves, what is "la chute" then? And what does it consist of? Has man fallen from a kingdom of happiness and innocence to a state of criminality? The episode of the drowning woman was without a doubt one which was, for Clamence, unexpected; he did not will to be present on the bridge of the Seine at the time of the incident. But fate had it that he would come into contact with the woman and the incident revealed his criminality and culpability to him. It exposed Clamence to himself. A mirror of consciousness was placed before him—he was as a dormant creature who began to come alive, who developed into that which he did not know he was.
Consciousness was awakened in Clamence on that rainy night in Paris. If one is to speak of a fall, it can be defined as a passage from a state of unconsciousness to a state of consciousness. However, it is important to realize that the previous state of innocence and happiness is only viewed as such when the human being has become conscious. In his unconscious state, man was not conscious of his unconsciousness. And it is through crime that he becomes conscious. It is in the sense that Clamence, victim of fate, passes from a state of unconsciousness to a state of consciousness through crime that his experience is called a "fall." The actual propensity for that crime was present within him to begin with, before the episode of the drowning woman occurred. The following passage from the collection of essays entitled L'Été was written in 1953, three years before the creation of La Chute, but it describes accurately, in my opinion, the experience of the fall which man undergoes. In it Camus stated: "D'abord innocents sans le savoir, nous étions maintenant coupables sans le vouloir ..." (Et, p. 871). The experience of "la chute" is a revelation of man's imprisonment in criminality and culpability. It is a revelation that he bears within him an inescapable propensity for crime. Clamence defines this propensity for violence, this thirst for power and domination and for the death of his fellow man as a need. The episode of the drowning woman symbolizes that need,
that propensity which he cannot escape. Clamence expresses this in his narration of his relationship with women:
"Dans mes moments d'agacements, je me disais alors que la solution idéale eût été la mort pour la personne qui m'intéressait" (Ch, p. 1510). His crime is again viewed as the need of the death of his fellow man when he states: "En somme, pour que je vive heureux, il fallait que les êtres que j'élisaïs ne vécussent point. Ils ne devaient recevoir leur vie, de loin en loin, que de mon bon plaisir" (Ch, p. 1510).

The works of this period in Camus' literary career present the human condition as one of imprisonment in criminality. Consciousness of life is consciousness of that criminality as well as acceptance of it. Clamence, however, refuses to accept his state of consciousness and this refusal is exercised through the voluntary and premeditated perpetuation of crime. The innocent criminal of the Pont Royal continues to do nothing for the kingdom of man's happiness. He does nothing to combat crime and makes no attempt to struggle to maintain a state of innocent criminality. Instead he chooses to be a guilty criminal. Such a "no" to life, such a refusal to accept the myth of the fall constitutes a second stage in Clamence's fall. This second stage is more serious than the "fall" from the state of unconsciousness to a state of consciousness (which constitutes the first stage) by the
fact that it is made lucidly and that it consists of premeditated crime. In Camus' "Prière d'Insérer" (written in 1957) for L'Exil et le royaume, it is stressed that man must struggle to rediscover a kingdom of happiness, that the exile of criminality leads him in the direction of such a kingdom, that criminality can be combatted. There is, in this statement, an echo of Tarrou's affirmation of faith in man as an innocent criminal and of Rieux's statement of belief in man's capacity for goodness. "Quant au royaume dont il est question aussi, dans le titre [L'Exil et le royaume], il coïncide avec une certaine vie libre et nue que nous avons à retrouver, pour renaitre enfin. L'exil, à sa manière, nous en montre les chemins, à la seule condition que nous sachions y refuser en même temps la servitude et la possession." ¹ The acceptance of one's exile in criminality must be accompanied by combat against that criminality and a search for a kingdom of happiness.

It is no exaggeration to state that Clamence, the guilty criminal, is not a happy man. We have observed, earlier in this chapter, his tyrannical, yet pathetic declaration toward the end of his narration: "... je vous interdis de ne pas croire que je suis heureux, je suis heureux à mourir!" (Ch, p. 1549). His reign, however, will

not endure forever. It is limited by the fact of his mortality. He who has permitted others to die and who has stifled the life out of his fellow man through domination will eventually face his own death. During his narration, Clamence speaks of natural death only once, and we learn that he does not accept his mortality any more than he accepts his own criminality and culpability. For him, one's mortality and the solitude which accompanies death must be avenged. "Sans compter, cher ami, qu'il faut se venger de devoir mourir seul. La mort est solitaire tandis que la servitude est collective" (Ch, p. 1545). Clamence is so afraid of death that he would rather be executed than have to face natural death. Furthermore, as we have already observed, execution would permit him to be presented as an example to the crowds—he would continue to dominate. Clamence refuses to die a conscious death just as he refuses to live a conscious life. As such, this criminal is not a candidate for a happy death any more than he has been a man living a happy life. Clamence's guilty criminality is not only a means of avenging his death, criminality, and culpability; he is avenging his entire human condition, his life as a man. It is the case of a man who—having arrived at an impasse by the recognition that whether he does something or nothing for man's happiness, he is a criminal—despises not only his fellow man, but life and his own existence to the core.
La Chute has generated much discussion and a diversity of interpretations of Clamence and of his fall. Critics are very much divided on the subject. One view is that Clamence is really Sartre or Camus himself. Jean Onimus, for example, is of the opinion that Clamence is probably a caricature of the existentialists and that La Chute may have been an act of vengeance on Camus' part, a reaction to the trial which he himself had suffered during the polemic with Sartre. Onimus also affirms the possibility of Camus being identified with his character; he believes that despite Camus' repeated denial of identification with Clamence, "[il] s'est glissé dans son personnage." On the other hand, such critics as Roger Quilliot and Conor Cruise-O'Brien do not believe that Clamence can be identified with the man who created him. Quilliot, in his notes on La Chute in the Pléiade edition of Camus' works, emphasizes the fact that Camus himself explicitly denied any identification of this sort and he emphatically affirms that to identify the two would be as gross an error as to identify Camus with Tarrou. He does point out,

2. Ibid., p. 89.
however, that La Chute owes much to the polemic of 1952 and that in the first drafts of the novel, there is specific evidence of attacks or counter-attacks essentially non-equivocally directed against leftist intellectuals. It was in his later revisions that Camus eliminated those statements which reflected his personal bitterness for the Paris intellectuals.¹

Conor Cruise O'Brien, although agreeing with Quilliot that Clamence is certainly not Camus, believes that the novel does reflect the Sartre-Camus controversy. At the same time, in his opinion, to identify Clamence as a caricature of Sartre is a seriously erroneous interpretation.² I agree with his assessment of La Chute as "a probing of man's nature as known to Camus through his own experience," Clamence being "the arrangement of mirrors through which Camus inspects that experience . . . ."³ I do not believe that Camus or Sartre can be identified with the judge-penitent, although Camus' concerns and the polemic in which he was involved contributed to the formation of his vision of criminal man. To limit one's interpretation of Clamence as being Sartre or Camus is to ignore that throughout Camus' entire literary career,


³. Ibid.
including the period of La Chute, the problem of man's criminal nature was of prime concern to him. Clamence does not represent one individual or one small segment of mankind. He is a more universal figure than that, a depiction of man and his nature as Camus envisioned these at that particular point in his life and in his literary endeavors.

A second source of controversy in the criticism surrounding La Chute concerns Camus' recognition of man's fall from grace in the Christian sense. Onimus classifies Camus as a partisan of pessimistic Christianity, a pessimism which is evidenced in his observance of the evil that man commits. He affirms that the idea of man's culpability has its roots in Christianity and that it subsists in Camus' atheistic humanism. He calls that humanism a secularization of the Christian notion of man's culpability.\(^1\)

Both Pierre-Henri Simon and Conor Cruise O'Brien also recognize that the Christian concern of man's culpability is present in the novel. Simon affirms that the presence of this theme as central problem of La Chute gives it much in common with the concerns of Christian theology, but that there is great distance between Christ and the Camus of La Chute. Clamence, like the Christian,  

1. Onimus, pp. 91-100.
discovers his culpability and criminality. However, for the judge-penitent, there is no salvation, states Simon.

Cruise O'Brien, admitting that there are Christian elements in this work, affirms that one specifically Christian characteristic is its confessional form. However, he points out that it does not have a Christian ending: that is, grace does not intervene and Clamence is not saved. On the whole, he leans toward belief in Camus' consciousness of the Christian fall and goes as far as to affirm that the work bears a message: that it is only through recognition of his sinful nature that man can hope for grace. Quilliot, in his notes to La Chute, on the other hand, quotes Camus' affirmation that Clamence is not Christian and that Camus is not Clamence. In spite of that affirmation, he does believe that La Chute reflects a period of anguish, of a desire for catharsis and of questioning of man's moral standards.

It is undeniable that Christian elements are present in the work. It is also undeniable that Clamence's discovery of himself as criminal man is also a Christian concern and problem. But I would not classify Clamence as


2. Cruise O'Brien, p. 100.

a Christian character. Camus' recognition of man's culpability and of his fall is not the Christian depiction of man and evil. Camus' concern with the problem of man's fall from a state of innocence to that of criminality is also a Christian concern. However, he does not redo the Christian myth of man's fall, but rather, presents a secular depiction of it--there is no Christian hope, no God or grace present. There exists a Camusian notion of original sin which is presented in a non-Christian setting. For Camus, this sin is one which man commits against himself and not against a divine being. He pays for this sin, suffers because of it, and it is repeatedly committed by his fellow man from generation to generation.

However, the judge-penitent's solution to the problem of his crime, criminality, and sinfulness is rejected in *La Chute*. Camus condemns moral values and systems which are made of judgment and penitence. For him, judgment and penitence are means of justifying one's criminality, means of avoiding acceptance of responsibility for that criminality and for that original sin committed against himself.
CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION


Je me pose les mêmes questions que se posent les hommes de ma génération, voilà tout, et il est bien naturel qu'ils les retrouvent dans mes livres, s'ils les lisent. Mais un miroir renseigne, il n'enseigne pas.¹

With these statements, Camus, in his last interview which took place on December 20, 1959, shortly before his death, described his work as a writer. And, in fact, his affirmations are true. His literary works expose, without resolving, man's suffering, his doubts, the questions and problems that he faces as he journeys through life. One of those problems, as we have seen, has been that of death and crime, a theme consistently present in the works of Camus. In creating his novels, plays, and essays, Camus is a moralist who presents no set of morals for man to follow.²


Through the creation of his work and the presence of this predominant death-crime theme, Camus has exposed mortal and criminal man to us. Two facts are consistently present in his work: man is mortal and he is a criminal. We have seen that the thematic structure death-crime-happiness is consistently present throughout his work. Its pattern, however, changes and shifts from one work to the next and from one literary period to the next. There is constant evolution in the structure, in the definition of mortal-criminal man, and in the relation that exists between man's consciousness of death and of his criminality. What has been the nature of this evolution, then?

In the first literary period of *La Mort heureuse* and *L'Etranger*, man is an innocent criminal: that is, he feels innocent of his crime. Mersault of *La Mort heureuse* has committed the premeditated free act of killing Zagreus. His own natural death is somehow linked to his crime, since it is a payment for that crime, but he is not presented as a guilty criminal. Meursault, too, has no feelings of guilt, nor does he affirm his innocence. His crime differs from Mersault's in several ways: it is not a free act on his part and it is unpremeditated. In both cases, man is born into his humanity through his crime. He passes from a primitive state of innocence and animality to a state of consciousness of his criminality and takes on his humanity. In both cases, he is engaged in a search for
happiness which is his crime. The scope of the criminal act widens in L'Etranger where we observe that Meursault's crime, as far as society is concerned, is not so much the murder of the Arab, as Meursault's refusal to accept justification of man's mortality and criminality as established by judicial and religious systems which proclaim to have resolved the problem of man's criminality and mortality. In L'Etranger, then, we have society present as an added dimension—and with that, the beginnings of a focus on the culpability of men as a group (which will be pursued in the works of the second period) rather than that of an individual criminal alone. Mersault, born into his humanity through crime, dies a happy death. Meursault, also born into his humanity through crime, does not die a happy death as such, but accepts his death and consents to it even though it is imposed on him by his fellow man. This is a major difference between La Mort heureuse and L'Etranger. In both cases, however, the criminal's acceptance of life comprises the inevitable acceptance of death. It is important to note that the theme of death, beginning with these works, is subordinate to that of crime, in that man achieves his humanity through crime and thereby becomes conscious of his criminality and of his mortality.

The second period of La Peste and L'Homme révolté is that of crime as violence, as criminal acts which man
commits against his fellow man in the name of man's future happiness. The microbes of the plague constitute his criminality. In La Peste, Tarrou is representative of man who recognizes his plague-ridden condition, his culpability, the fact that he is unwillingly a guilty criminal and that his search for happiness consists of criminal acts against mankind. This recognition is not imposed on him by society, but comes from within himself: he has a sense of his guilt. In these works of the second period, all men are presented as criminals, carrying with them the microbes of the plague. All carry the potential for violence and the assassination of men within them. Tarrou, Rieux, Rambert, Paneloux, and Grand can only combat the microbe without aspiring to eliminate it: they can only diagnose their criminality, they cannot rid themselves or other men of it. They can only strive to remain innocent criminals, that is, maintain consciousness of their criminality and of the violence inherent in them, and avoid assassinating their fellow man and committing premeditated acts of organized violence. Once again, as in the first Camusian literary period, the theme of death is subordinate to and exists apart from that of crime. Rieux strives to combat the plague, that is, assassinations and the violence committed by man against his fellow man.

During this period, violence is the element which is at the root of crime committed against man. It is also
at the root of man's history, the latter consisting of consecutive crimes and acts of organized violence in the name of man's future happiness, of crime used as a means to combat crime. Happiness as part of our thematic structure has faded by contrast with its presence in the works of the first period. Happiness in La Peste is fleeting, only momentary. The plague-ridden criminal characters do not aspire to dying happy deaths, but as Tarrou affirms, hope to remain innocent criminals and to die good deaths. In addition, this momentary happiness has its source in the solidarity of true revolt, of men working together to remain innocent criminals. It does not reside in the solitude of crime and violence. We recall Rambert who affirms that he would experience guilt in being happy alone.

Further evolution takes place in the death-crime theme during Camus' third literary period of La Chute and L'Exil et le royaume. During the period of La Peste and L'Homme révolté, man's crimes were positive acts of assassination and violence committed against his fellow man. With La Chute, our thematic structure undergoes vast change. The narrator is a criminal who has failed to act, who has done nothing so that his fellow man may live, nothing to prevent him from dying. Crime has become man's responsibility for the death of another. He is a criminal who has committed no crime, but who experiences guilt for
letting death take place. Death then becomes a crime in his eyes: he is a criminal guilty of natural death. The shift which has taken place in the thematic structure lies in the fact that man is not only a creature who knows he must die, but one who allows others to die and is thereby guilty of natural death.

Clamence's consciousness of his criminality has been a passage from an edenic, innocent state to a state of consciousness of criminality and culpability. He is man imprisoned in his criminality, for whom death has become crime. In the process of this fall from his edenic state, a sort of original sin has been committed; committed not, as in the Christian sense, against a divine being, but against himself. In La Chute, we are presented with the Camusian version of man's fall from a state of innocence to that of his criminality. Through his character Clamence, Camus has reenacted and depicted the myth of original sin. He had stated in Le Mythe de Sisyphe that the absurd was "le péché sans Dieu" (MS, p. 128). And in accordance with this, Clamence can be called the sinner without God, who chooses to cultivate his criminality and to continue being a guilty criminal, to do nothing to combat the criminality inherent in him. As judge-penitent, he is a conscious criminal guilty of premeditated crime.

Happiness as part of our thematic structure has again faded in the works of this period. There is little
light, warmth and human solidarity in *La Chute* and in the short stories of *L'Exil et le royaume*. Furthermore, as an isolated guilty criminal, Clamence does not live a happy life, nor will he die a happy death.

The thematic structure which we have examined has undergone evolution; it is in movement, evolving toward another period which remains unknown to us. We can only try to surmise Camus' thought and the shape and content of that thematic structure as it would have unfolded were it not for his sudden death in 1960. Our conclusions are based on an unfinished work, but this fact has been insignificant in our examination and study of his literary works and thought. We see man a prisoner of his criminality which makes of him man and constitutes his humanity. He passes or falls from a state of innocence in order to become human. Looking back on Camus' works and on his criminals, we observe that every criminal, from Mersault on, has undergone this passage; each crime committed has been a fall. Criminal man is imprisoned in his criminality. How he is to live in that prison is his choice. He can love life and look out to the sea and sky and light as did Mersault and Meursault. He can adopt the optimism of Doctor Rieux and Tarrou and again, look toward the light in the belief that there is more goodness in man than there is evil. Or he can further imprison himself in the darkness of his criminality and adopt the pessimism of Clamence
who never looks to the light and the sea and who strives to silence the laugh of his own culpability, knowing full well that he and all men are criminals. As we have mentioned before, this third period is, in itself, a period of transition in Camus' works, one which would have led to yet another phase in his literary career.

Our study of the death-crime theme in the works of Camus is a stepping-stone to further research. It has opened up numerous possibilities for further exploration and understanding of his ideas and work. For one, by contrast to the theme of death and crime is that of warmth and human love. Furthermore, other types of death as themes present in his work are also open for study and analysis. There are also rich and numerous possibilities for comparative thematic studies of death and crime in the works of Camus, Dostoyevsky, Gide, and Sartre, authors that we have touched on briefly in this study.
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