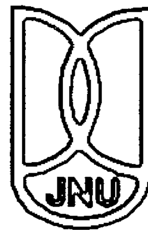
TH17731

'BETWEEN POVERTY AND THE SUN':
EXHUMING THE NON-EXISTENCE OF ALBERT CAMUS

**Dissertation Submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the award of degree of**

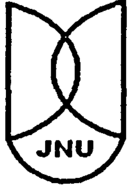
Master of Philosophy

GARGI BHATTACHARYA



**Centre for English Studies
School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067 (India)**

2009



Centre for English Studies
School of Language, Literature & Culture Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067, India

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY

Date: 20.07.09

CERTIFICATE

This dissertation titled **"'BETWEEN POVERTY AND THE SUN': EXHUMING THE NON-EXISTENCE OF ALBERT CAMUS"** submitted by **Miss. Gargi Bhattacharya,** Centre for English Studies, School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy**, is an original work and has not been submitted so far in part or in full, for any other degree or diploma of any University or Institution.

This may be placed before the examiners for evaluation for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy.

(DR. SAUGATA BHADURI)
SUPERVISOR
Dr. Saugata Bhaduri
Associate Professor
Centre for English Studies
School of Language, Literature & Culture Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi - 110 067

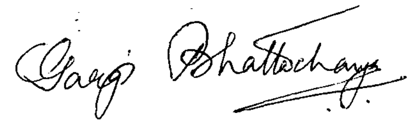
(PROF. SANTOSH K. SAREEN)
CHAIRPERSON
Prof. Santosh K. Sareen
Chairperson
Centre for English Studies
School of Language, Literature & Culture Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi - 110 067

Gram: JAYENU, Tel: 26704231, FAX: 91-011-26165886

Date : 20-07-2009

DECLARATION BY THE CANDIDATE

This dissertation titled **"'Between Poverty and the Sun': Exhuming the Non-Existence of Albert Camus"** submitted by me for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy, is an original work and has not been submitted so far in part or in full, for any other degree or diploma of any University or Institution.



(Gargi Bhattacharya)
M.Phil. student
CES/SLL&CS
JNU

Dedication

The Modern Sisyphus says:

I see the world in pixels.
I hear the world in bytes.
I ride on my axles,
Fly microchips for kites.

I want to see the world at last
As once the maker saw,
And wish the sun could tow me past
What earthlings know as law.

In between the pixels, bytes,
In between the pain,
In between the wrong and rights,
I still wait for rain.

For Albert Camus, who believed in the will to justice. And the choice to rebel.

Not many philosophers have believed, as he did, in "resistance, rebellion and death".

Acknowledgements

It's never been easy for me,
To find words to go along with melody.
But this time there's actually something on my mind,
So please forgive these few brief awkward lines.

— Hugh Grant, *Music and Lyrics*

On that note, these following few lines are dedicated:
most of all, to my mother, who said, "She should be a doctor",
almost of all, my father, who said, "No, it has to be English for her",
not least of all, my sister, who said, "Whatever she does, she will be good at it",
last of all, my roommate Jeya, who said, "Don't worry. You will finish it. In time."
Which I would not have, except for all these people. Thank god for them. And others...

(who would be):

My *Pishi*, who has no idea of who Albert Camus is, and why I should be working on this topic. *Chhordibhai*, who knows all about Albert Camus, and would consequently beg to be excused from excessive information. Piya and her puddings, though they be more British than French. Shinjini, my best ever classmate, as well as the most intelligent. Oeendrila, a most illustrious senior, of singular sagacity. The fledgling—Joh-ryu, the bobtail—who fell from her nest and has taken up residence in my room, and has, ever since, simultaneously presided over, like a responsible overseer, the excruciatingly unhurried growth of my dissertation and the equally slow sprouting of her wings. Hostelmates, who have endured untold miseries of a most marauding nature, since the very beginning of my dissertation. My friends, and fellow sufferers, Dhrupadi, Sonalie (I do hope, for reasons related to safety hazards, that I am getting the names spelled out right), Naiya, Ujjayinidi, Debasreedi (who set the precedent of an impeccable dissertation herself), Paromita, Mrinal, Kaushik, Kunal (for those piles of photostats that I could not have accessed through my meagre resources), Fritz (for his stories, especially, I am beholden), Claire, and all of those absent presences whom I am forgetting now, but will eventually remember after I get this page printed.

Of my earliest mentors, my reverence is first of all due to my godfather, teacher, and best friend, Mr Manas Roy; Prof. Betram da Silva, the best Shakespeare scholar that I have had the opportunity of interacting in my lifetime, and Prof. Partho Mukherjee, who inspired some measured method in madness, and hence miraculously pulled me through graduation. Prof. Rohinton Kapadia, Prof. Chandrani Biswas and Prof. Shukla Roy, for everything.

My professor, friend, philosopher, guide and the source of all conceivable and inconceivable inspiration—Prof. Saugata Bhaduri. The mortal peril of his prophecies, that finally made me start and finish this puerile effort. His patience paused me through the preempted pandemonium in the paper production process, and my rather sprightly alliterative spirit is a testimony to his encouragement of those numerous unconventional unusualities that are generally the worst nightmares of supervisors. I took refuge in the blessed quarters of Prof. Simi Malhotra, when I was endlessly agitated as to the actions of those astrological arts that ominously arbitrated and articulated my writing. Thus saturated with sounds of whimsicality, losing mind in musicality, my dissertation has moved on with the blessings, guidance, insights, advice, and assistance of Prof. Franson Manjali, Prof. Saumyabrata Choudhury (who, if he ever counted the number of dissertations he has been acknowledged in, would soon end up compromising his enumerative capacity), Prof. GJV Prasad who has offered help and hearing whenever necessary, Prof. S.K. Sareen (Chairperson, who has always been available for signing whatever documents I happened to produce out of thin air), Prof. Navneet Sethi, who has taught me the phenomenological definition of courage, and Prof. Makarand Paranjape, who is, well, just there.

While evaluating endless ways of engineering an emphatic escape from academic execution, I was encouraged by Rawatji, our only salvation in the Centre Office. His contagious affection has aided away every single possible peril that threatened to cross my path. Also, Bhagwatiji, who made it easier to steal the stamps. (I am confident that my very able supervisor will edit out this part, but I *will* write it anyway!)

To Mr Padmanabhan, of the Sahitya Akademy, who retrieved my deceased faith in the altruistic intent of libraries, by going out of his way in issuing books. Grateful mention is due to the French Information and Resource Centre, New Delhi, for furnishing documents which I never thought I could lay my hands on without spending a fortune. Our own JNU library, which, in its modesty, is like a mentor to my ideas. My heartfelt thanks to UGC, for having saved a frail scholar from fiscal doom with the JRF scholarship.

My beloved Sonu bhaiya, who has taken pains to photostat aeons of Albert Camus's life and lyrics. Tarique, the *Behroopia*, who has always made sure that this contraption on which I type out the dissertation, remains virus-free, and has reformatted repeatedly not only its terminally ill hard disk but also mine. Raju Bhaiya of Lohit Hostel, for the staples of egg-rolls and *nimboo paani* to keep me going through endless lines.

Enough being said about people, I conclude with the places that have made this dissertation a reality. I am grateful for the resilience of the people of Algeria, whose efforts are poeticised in the works of this author whom I have loved and studied. I am in agreement with my juniors who think JNU is a state of mind, and thank my stars that my mind was happily in conformance to that state. I love Calcutta, the city I was born in, and the city that raised me, but will always be grateful for this phenomenon called New Delhi—this 'first world' capital of my 'third world' nation—which I know I hate but feel I cannot leave, since it has driven me to my destiny.

Lastly, I would like to mention that unknown face, who now sits poring through these paltry pages in the hope of finding a paragraph—or perhaps, a line or two—worth remembering. Therefore, to you, my reader, I issue my endless thanks, for it is your trustfulness, your patience, and your tenacity, that will eventually forgive me my rhymes. I cleave to the force of your unseen will.

CONTENTS

Introduction 1

Chapter One

'Between Poverty and the Sun': The Nature of (Anti-) Space and Time in the Memories of Exile **11**

Chapter Two

'Between Hell and Reason': The Poetics and Politics of Rebellion **39**

Chapter Three

'Between Yes and No': A Critical Contemplation of the Tragical Absurd **69**

Conclusion **95**

Bibliography **101**

Introduction

Writings of light assault the darkness, more prodigious than meteors.
The tall unknowable city takes over the countryside.
Sure of my life and my death, I observe the ambitious and would like to understand them.
Their day is greedy as a lariat in the air.
Their night is a rest from the rage within steel, quick to attack.
They speak of humanity.
My humanity is in feeling we are all voices of that same poverty.
They speak of homeland.
My homeland is the rhythm of a guitar, a few portraits, an old sword, the willow groves visible prayer as evening falls.
Time is living me.
More silent than my shadow, I pass through the loftily covetous multitude.
They are indispensible, singular, worthy of tomorrow.
My name is someone and anyone.
I walk slowly, like one who comes from so far away he doesn't expect to arrive.

—Jorge Luis Borges

Alas, one must, despite oneself, begin at the beginning. I honourably let Jorge Luis Borges begin on my behalf because it is perhaps only befitting that one true artist be allowed to speak of another with some distinction and understanding, and I truly believed, when I accidentally came across the above epigraph in an otherwise unmentionable book, that Borges had inadvertently impersonated the very essence of Albert Camus (1913–1960). And why not? Since his name could be *someone and anyone*, it might as well have been Albert Camus.

Not unlike Borges, Camus thought of *homeland*, of the *loftily covetous multitude*, and still found within himself the voice of *that same poverty* that reflects him back his gaze towards his *homeland*—the Algerian *countryside* taken over by his memories of the *tall unknowable city* of Paris that he would later come to inhabit. His writings, though made in the bleakness of the dark, amongst the ruins left by the carcasses of the dead and the dying, are *writings of light … more prodigious than meteors*.

One perhaps need not take as much trouble to explain an epigraph, which is meant, for all intents and purposes, to be essentially self-explanatory and representative, but I feel obligated, since I cannot quickly overcome the fact of this uncanny similitude and of that exactness of feeling with which I started situating Albert Camus within the very private realm of this dissertation—secretly, like a wish. And yet Borges had overtaken me in his anticipation of this *someone* who had inhabited, during Borges' lifetime, another continent but lived the same dreams. They perhaps met a couple of times in those dreams, and may have discussed those lines.

Like one who walks so slowly and from so far away that he *doesn't expect to arrive*, Camus' existence in the literary canon belies his essence. Habituated to a convenient labelling of identified literary species and a consequent accommodation of contiguous specimens to corresponding genus, I faltered a little with *Betwixt and Between* (1937). Was it not written by Camus, the great existentialist? The author of *The Outsider* (1942), *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1943), *The Plague* (1947), *The Fall* (1956), *Exile and the Kingdom* (1957)? Was he not supposed to be allied in his 'existentialist' philosophy to Franz Kafka and Jean-Paul Sartre? Was he not the existentialist forefather of Brecht and Beckett? Was he not … a lot of other things that I do not even remember? Yes, all of those things that had assisted us to 'label' the artist and the works of art: measure them, weigh them, define them, name them as one might do with new-born babes. Yet, somehow, the labour of literature (or, one might add with some alacrity, any work of art) proves more complex than the birth effected by human reproductive processes, since one may not quite get away with counting ten fingers and ten toes and thereby pronouncing the infant normal. I distinctly remember counting the fingers on Camus, but it turned out that he sprouted some unseen appendages as years went by. Pre-cognition is definitely not the recipe to the flavour that is dominant (or recessive) in his cuisine. Re-cognition, on the other hand, might just do the trick. As I *perhaps* found with *Betwixt and Between*. I say 'perhaps' because I am not entirely sure of what I have found with(in) the work.

I am only sure, as of now, of the fact that Albert Camus, despite our best efforts and diligent persuasion to the contrary, has not turned into an 'existentialist' writer, at least as 'existentialism' is deigned to be understood. He definitely exists, but not existentially. It is perhaps legitimate to say that he *lives*, rather than *exists*, in his own words, in the place "half-way between poverty and the sun" (Camus 1970 p. 18). Those readers to whom these words do not come as a revelation are, happily, exempt from my discursive machinations on Camus.

To myself, there is no news more exciting, as I have always foolishly known otherwise. For me—an unenlightened graduate student—he 'exist'ed existentially in the syllabic apertures that allowed for limited vision, and a discovery of the reverse has thrown me, as Jane Austen would say, into raptures. Now that I find myself looking at him at leisure and at length, as scholars must be allowed to, I find a new aura, a new breed of existential thoughts emerge, which is distinctive in its powers of resolution and its unfailing optimism reposed on a culture of intellectual hope. In specific terms, one may say, he was a revolutionary existentialist who had preferred to live in the same world that he died in, believing that it could be, with time and effort, optimised in its atrocities.

In the course of my proposed study, the bulk of Camus' works is taken into account, including his great 'existentialist' works as a novelist and playwright, although a greater emphasis is laid on his essays and notebooks that are often overlooked or slighted in favour of his momentous achievements, but which, I venture to suggest, reveal far more of his dynamic mind—the mind of an artist at work on his surroundings—than his novels or plays. I hope to achieve no more in this academic exercise than to clarify my vision, or as one may say, re-vision, of one of the most prodigious Nobel laureates and it is not intended, wittingly or unwittingly, to superimpose existing existentialist discourses on the author and his philosophy. All I do here is a detailed study of his lesser known works to excavate certain tendencies in his writings that may have nothing or little to do with the absurd human drama that existentialism dapples in: in other words, to find a different Camus than the one we usually recognise. Rather than a severe old man who would put you off life once and for all, he now appears to be an itinerant mind dipped in sunlight, an image he recurrently uses in his writings, as if he were in love with it. Even his existentialist tendencies, I would argue, are distinct from the Sartrean variety, and definitely more spacious in its position vis-à-vis the unsurpassable dilemmas of mankind. An author of light and not of the utter darkness that blights the fringes of his name. That is Camus for me. And that is the man that I seek to research on through his works.

One also finds it necessary to furnish the reader, as well as oneself, with however brief an outline of the chapters that have been conceived in this dissertation. This becomes essential for the reason that the three chapters are—divided into three sub-parts in themselves—different vis-à-vis one another in that they follow various modes: stylistic, thematological and methodological patterns. These three chapters address themselves clearly to three phases of the author's life and literature, and, although connected to each other

through absolute necessities of biographical and thematological association, should be read as independent incursive movements into the worlds that Camus inhabits in turns. This is not to say that they are disconnected and have no palpable alliance with each other. On the contrary, it is the imperative teleological thread that runs through them that charts the metaphysics of growth in Camus' philosophy. What it means to say is that they are also supposed to be a unit in themselves, so that it makes sense to concentrate on the pieces of his life one at a time, before finally tying them together in the mind to make a complete picture of Camus.

The first chapter addresses itself to epistemological concerns in Camus' writings. His deeply nostalgic inclinations to an Algerian past, his procurement of the epistemological tools from the landscape of the sun, the *memoriality* of that space and the implementation of it—all fall under my immediate concerns in this section. The subjection of memory to the services of linguality, or the subjection of language to the service of memory, especially, is a specific concern. Memory works a proto-space—since it dissolves the segmentation of time, and past, present and future coexist here in an act that entails a veritable confounding of temporal distantiation. This memory, as one shall see, is not only a memory of the past, but also a recall of the future. This space of memory is also the space of panic, since a movement away from familiarising images engenders a sense of estrangement. Remarks D. Vance Smith:

> A recurrent image of the structure of memory in classical and medieval mnemonic treatises is the house itself, a familiar domain to which one can return imaginatively for the conceptual property that is abstracted from the real and familiar world. These places of memory are not only imaginative, imaginary spaces; they are also places in the world that are designated by the compelling work of memory, investing such sites as Western Europe, the city, the marketplace, and above all the household with an aura of familiarity, intelligibility, and presence against the threat of the real ...
>
> (Smith p. 369)

Memory is thus used as a resistance against the pure, organised spatialisation of a reality which had guided Camus' movement from Algeria to France, placing him at odds with himself and thus leading to a sense of disorienting alienation. Inhabiting a time in exile becomes, in a possibility of subversion, the very soul of uninhabiting it in a dialectic image of a genuine habitation born out of a sense of radical loss, as Ricardo Forster emphasises:

> What does it mean to un(inhabit) exile? Can one think exile, the loss of the land, as an experience contrary to inhabitation? Is exile, perhaps, the very essence of inhabitation? The wandering that is opposed to being-at-home leads us directly to the persistence of what is lost in the experience of loss, confronting us, at the point where absence becomes tragic evidence of an emptiness, with the continuous, unpostponable, and recurrent presence of what we remember, in remembrance, as true inhabitation.
>
> (Forster p. 449)

In the estrangement that is expatriation and expulsion, what has been subtracted returns, converted into a foundational mnemonic imprint, the presence–absence of inhabiting the land (understanding "land" here as birthplace, or, the place of that promise which will be transformed into a bright sign in a historic journey) as one may see in the autobiographical account of his birth.

He also, therefore, simultaneously inhabits this language of loss, and the compulsive referentiality of it stands witness to the obsessive need to invigorate this mnemonic practice of nostalgia, and to undertake a reversal of the space–time functionality of real time and real space. To that effect, the content of this chapter is also *referential* in keeping with the back-and-forth movement of memory.

The metaphysics of exile leads to the ethics of rebellion, since in some sense it is true that, as Horst Bienek significantly remarks, "exile is rebellion" (Bienek p. 41). The referentiality of the preceding section leads up to the *differential* treatment of themes in the second chapter, since it investigates the instantaneous change of the concept of rebellion in relation to Camus' variable locations in various physical spaces as well as power discourses. This chapter, therefore, deals with the ethics of his philosophy, as opposed to the epistemological preoccupation of the earlier chapter. The three sub-sections variantly engage in his early political commitments, the movement of opinions from the Left towards an independent moralistic stance, his explication of the limits within which democracy will permit justice and the corridors of power associated with the permeation of society with skewed definitions of what 'law' may entail. He undertakes a critique of high-capacity regimes and urges the Communist Party, in the wake of the Hungarian Revolution, to open the third eye of self-reflection and reinvent its roots, relinquishing its autocratic, compulsive control and its crippling dependence on the theoretical rebellion.

One can trace his departure from a state when he was put on a leash by Leftist intelligentsia, to where he could secede and deal with the concepts of revolution, justice and law from a very political, and yet, a very ethical position. He explains that justice has no history outside the limits of narrative, whereby it gets constructed through constituent models of law, for instance, cases or precedence, which often get appropriated from a radical to a normative context. He offers as an example the tradition of death penalty by guillotine as prevalent in France, quite erroneously, as "a rapid and humane method" (Camus 1960 p. 183) of killing post-French Revolution. It is because revolutions do not get revised and reformed, he argued, that the truth of justice cannot make peace with the truth of politics.

J.M. Yinger and Mark Katz remark that revolution, unlike what anarchists believe, is not, according to Camus, "necessarily something that either occurs wholly or completely or not at all" (Yinger and Katz p. 352). Whereas revolution, like art, is a process, and more often, an agonizing one, it is also the most affirmative and most creative of all actions. In contrariness to behaviour indicative of separatism, it is a force which lends solidarity to the expression of rationality in the organizing practices of society by virtue of choosing to define and distinguish *right* from *wrong*. I must take recourse to Terry Hoy to explain further that:

> What is of special significance in Camus' analysis of this question is his effort to show that political rebellion, as the demand for freedom against tyranny and oppression, is incompatible with the ideology of revolutionary nihilism; and that although rebellion involves the negation of belief in God or higher law, it is not a doctrine that sanctions the nihilist creed that everything is possible—including murder or suicide. For authentic rebellion, as opposed to revolutionary nihilism, is an affirmation, as well as negation; an affirmation that the individual person has a worth that should be respected and valued.
>
> (Hoy p. 573)

The law of the world is nothing but the law of force, whereby revolution becomes man's answer to the absurdity of this forced subordination to whatever lies outside of itself. Camus guides his readers to the destiny of revolution which is inevitable in the defining of man's dimensions, and it is this journey that this chapter traverses with him, when, in his negotiation for the transcendental model of revolutionary justice, he turns to the figure of the 'rebel', who stands outside the juridical space as an outlaw, and yet is the supreme law unto himself and others. He stands in the in-between space, spanning the art of literature and the craft of politics.

The third chapter dwells in the theory of tragic absurdism, and tries to establish a clear, signifying breach between existential philosophy and absurdism, although the two remain genealogical twins. The generic correspondence need not create a misunderstanding in terms of specific disharmony in philosophical performance though. The chapter is thus entirely devoted to bring out the latencies in Camus' writings which exhibit clearly his preference for the tragical mode, rather than the existential, even while dealing with a concept as existentially embroiled as absurdism.

Drawing from the second chapter and the explication of Camus' theory of rebellion, in this section, one moves into the *inferential* ontological criterion that demands the practice of such rebelliousness in man, and the fundamental ontology of being that commands the impulse of revolt to overcome the predictability of a convenient existence. The essence of being, which is the essence of tragedy, lies in the spirit of this unholy rebellion, which is a metaphysical tool to acquire agency versus an endemic force of facticity. The impulse to rebel is *not rational* but *instinctive*, but to know that a situation might demand action is reflective of *judgement*. Simultaneously, the *empirical* existence plays a significant role in the development of that consciousness that isolates freedom not as a supreme truth but as an ideal necessary in the progress of humanity. In a way, therefore, Camus moves away from both traditional idealism and materialism, and occupies a somewhat in-between ontological dimension. Avi Sagi writes:

> ... the optimal conceptual structure for understanding Camus' philosophical endeavour is the phenomenological ontology and epistemology of Husserl and Heidegger ... Although Camus takes issues with Husserl concerning several basic questions, he still endorses the phenomenological method 'that limits itself to describing what it declines to explain' ... Phenomenology, like absurd thought, seeks to 'enumerate what it cannot transcend' ... For Camus, the focus on the empirical world and the dismissal of the one abstract-universal truth represent phenomenology's most significant contribution. Using Husserl's formulations, Camus argues that this move results in 'a profound enrichment of experience and the rebirth of the world in its prolixity' ...
>
> (Sagi p. 76)

The wreckage of the transcendental is also the dismantling of the existential, which aspires to it. The existential axiom of man either being completely free or completely determined is contended by the tragical absurd, which formulates a path for the being to seek metaphysical freedom through the very knowledge of his having lost it, and in its course, restructure and reshape the existence itself.

The tragical absurd, in its many continuities, also dapples in the fatal fortune of man, and this chapter is also meant, therefore, to be an exposition of the agency that the tragical absurd seeks in death, and beyond. Tragedy, as a genre, necessitates the spectacle of fall, and mostly through fatality, and hence, the tragic-absurd hero is the one who is, on one hand, a Heideggerian Being-towards-death, and on the other, a being-unto-death in his resistive capacities. In tragedy, prophetic death, announced prematurely to the hero, as may be instantiated in *Oedipus Rex* (performed approximately in 429 B.C.) and *Macbeth* (1623), is the commencement of the absurd, where precise calculability of the instant and the cause of death are spectacularly foreknown. A similar comparative status of a man condemned by juridical, hence prophetic, mediation in a modern tragic narrative like *The Outsider* also posits him to that very same situation of absurdity, whereby he is compelled to feel the need of a metaphysical reconciliation with his existence and the existence of others. The tragical absurd relinquishes the bad faith of inertia, and becomes active in its fatalism, though not in the nihilistic way. The consequent position of the tragical absurd, vis-à-vis the existential absurd and nihilistic philosophy is also discussed in this chapter.

The Myth of Sisyphus, on the other hand, also expounds the theory of tragic death, and a consequent memory-being, which takes up some space in this final section. Moving away from the "ownmost possibility" (Heidegger p. 303) of a Heideggerian compulsion, death is conceived as another dimension away from *unfreedom*, but neither absolute in its wake, nor compelling in its call. This begins in Camus the traces of the tragical absurd already moving away from the monarchical realm of ancient tragedies doomed to end in murder to the aesthetic realm of modern tragedies where the protagonist remains very much dead-alive and struggling against the forces which rapidly spiral around him beyond any rational control. The tragic continuum is thereby traced, through a comparative explication of both historically dated and contemporary ontological narratives, to culminate in the *deathless* being, or this memory-being, which not only survives but conquers death and destruction, execration and extermination, penalty and pogrom, and transcends the limits of survival in the seeming impossibility of its extinction.

Having introduced each of the three phases, separately, as they exist, one must now find a sound theoretical premise to hinge them together so that they unify seamlessly in pages as they did in Camus' life and literature. The first step towards this is to yoke them firmly by virtue of careful nomenclature. It is noteworthy, perhaps, that the pronouncement of a thematological unity in the form of an avowal to study Camus in all his non-existence is immanent in the title of the dissertation itself. This is supposed to have stressed not only the merits of scholastically invisible, and therefore, non-existent works, but also his status as a non-existentialist exponent of the tragical absurd.

Also indicative of intention are the titular phrases, both of the dissertation in its entirety and of the individual chapters, which are all quotations from Albert Camus' works[1], and therefore find themselves bracketed by speech marks. The appropriation of his language to initiate a critical discussion of his work, in my opinion, was not only apt but necessary. They systematically obviate the latencies of his writings, form a grounding to premise the entire chapter, and follow each other in an obligatory thematic logicality. They also underscore the deliberate variance of his discourses, which are as different from each other as to very well be imputed to some other writer. Significantly, it is only through their very difference in conception and execution that their unity is possible, since each, in its turn, has come to represent a certain piece of a triadic set of methods and metaphysics.

I reiterate that *philosophically*, the first chapter is an *epistemological* enquiry, the second is an *ethical* concern and the third is an *ontological* occupation. The holy trinity of the Western philosophical tradition thereby amalgamates, lending this dissertation at least the structural semblance of a philosophical venture. *Stylistically*, the language is at pains to be at concurrence with the thematic evaluation in each case, varying from *referential* in the first, to *differential* in the second to an *inferential* in the third. *Methodologically* reminiscent of a panopticon, the mobile textuality of the three chapters entails engagement with three separate generic manifestations of the same writer which, in a way, completes the oeuvre—the first is indicative of an active past resurrected through notebooks, essays and autobiographical writings; the second deals with the surviving body of journalistic prose, lectures, columns and articles; the third is detailed in novels and plays. *Thematologically*, the movement can be charted from remembrance and recall, to resistance and rebellion to rest and resurrection.

[1] 'Between Poverty and the Sun' is a phrase which has been used, more than once, in the text of 'Betwixt and Between'. 'Between Hell and Reason' and 'Between Yes and No' are titles of essays penned by Camus himself. Refer to *Between Hell and Reason: Essays from the Resistance Newspaper Combat, 1944–1947*. Ed. and trans. Alexander de Gramont. Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1991.

Added to this is the most refractory and unyielding common bond—the stringent adherence of Camus to a place of *in-betweenness*, to which the titles also appropriately testify. This space enveloped him like a time capsule, a cocoon from which he almost never emerged, and hence his disrepute as a 'moderate', which is only a euphemism for a 'fence-sitter'. There is a consistency of confounding proportions in his delimited extremism of existence. The reason is perhaps that, at one point of time or another, for however short a second, he had been exposed to the atrocities of either side of any argument, any polemics, any politics, any nation. When one comes to experience both conditions of subsistence, it is difficult to choose, unless one is rooting for the lesser of the two evils. Camus wanted to choose none, since he wanted no evil. He is supposed to have said, (in)famously, that if his departure from the scene of action spared him the act of evil, he would gladly do so (see Judt p. 101).

This curious little balancing act was carried on till the curtain fell, and he remained forever doomed to historical misunderstanding. The current study, though wary of its own inefficiency, is an endeavour to exhume the loss of this master juggler in the retrospective cruelty of historical decision-makers. It is easier, sometimes, to take decisions and *perform* an expectation, than not to take sides and follow justice in its wake.

Finally, this is also an exhumation intended to resurrect and reinstate a writer on the right pages of history, although that might as well turn out to be the most supreme irony of this dissertation, since he was not one of history's minions: "Other people will have to make history" (quoted in Judt p. 101).

Chapter One

'Between Poverty and the Sun':
The Nature of (Anti-) Space and Time in the Memories of Exile

My poverty is not complete: it lacks me.

—Antonio Porchia

The sun only illumines the eye of the man, but shines into the eye and heart of a child.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

The sun shines down heavily, owing to exigencies of seasonal geography, in the summer, slanting to make room for respite in winter months. The tyrannies of poverty, on the other hand, have hardly anything seasonal about them. The sun is nature's gift of rage—to burn us into living, to teach us to clothe our bodies, to decay our bodies when they are old. Poverty, contrarily, has no naturalist's compunctions attached to its genealogy. It is inflicted arbitrarily by man upon man, by one civilization upon another, by a nation upon its neighbour, in the hope of eternal wealth. And yet, one being diurnal and the other dark, one being discovery and the other invention, these two paradigms of existence—mitigating life and living, indeed, the very beginning of life and living—share one curious phenomenon. They are not something we see: they are something we see *by* and *with*. They are the light by which all else becomes visible. It is in their presence or absence that we exercise vision or sightlessness. They are our reading glasses with which to measure the world. Man is born into them. He inherits either, or sometimes, both. For a man who inherits both "poverty and the sun" (Camus: 1970 p.18), life comes as an arbitration of indignities. The two paradigms are his critical tools—to achieve intercession in time, to negotiate space, to moderate and modify his relations to his surroundings. To choose, to adapt, or to rebel. Or adapt to rebellion, as one might hardly be left with a choice. To inherit rebellion, which the sun ripens into a rich red forbidden fruit, that every artist wants to consume. Albert Camus—conceived in poverty, conquered by the sun, convinced by both that he inhabits their shared in-between space—consumed that fruit, and became an artist. An artist in exile.

The chapter looks, largely, at the construction of these dual mytho-poetic paradigms of truth as two cognitive categories that at once inform Camus' understanding and define his writing and it investigates to what extent they influence the thematological development of the author's consciousness. A closer scrutiny is also warranted at those symptomatic 'in-between' spaces that he, virus-like, seeks to inhabit and thrive in—those between story and truth, between testimony and narrative, between memory as impossible nostalgia and memory as history, between desire and destiny, between exile and the kingdom, between, as he puts it, 'poverty and the sun'. Finally, the agenda will be to be able to undertake a deconstruction of the *constructedness* of the memories—the nature of space and time *in* exile, *of* exile—of that of *an* exile, of a land woven with the warp and weft of time and space: the land of 'poverty and the sun', Algeria. The chapter will also attempt to scrutinise the (im)possibility of spatial existence that is inscribed by the very literariness that abounds around this absent centre called Algeria. The avowed claim, in the process, will also be to locate, trace and displace these circular spatialities moving through, even while resisting, the hydraulic forces of history with both equanimity and aplomb, which gradually take the aquiline shape of a vessel forever afloat—the mind of an exile.

I. Between Property and the Slum: The Role of the Artist in Transfiguring the Spaces In-Between

Music is what lies in between notes.

—Isaac Stern

If one were to surmise that the above titular phrase is an ironic misinterpretation of what Camus might have meant by 'between poverty and the sun', one would be a tad too hasty. One may, instead, want to consider, for instance, the passage from the 'Preface' of a collection titled, symptomatically, *Betwixt and Between* (1937), where he remarks:

> I was placed half-way between poverty and the sun. Poverty prevented me from thinking that all is well under the sun and in history; the sun taught me that *history is not everything*. Change life, yes, but not the world that I worshipped as my God.

(Camus: 1970 p. 18, emphasis added)

It is perhaps akin to what most 'third-world' scholarship feels, being placed between property and the slum. It is also perhaps expressive of the fact that *in-betweenness* is forever the existential shape of one's becoming, of not being fixed in any form, of carrying forth what one means to the other within the metamorphosing self. It calls for, while not exhausting the *eaches* into the *others*, a peculiar state of awareness of both places which one lies in midst of, not since one is perpetually moving between the two, but because one defines one's suspended co-ordinates with their help. Curiously placed in between things, one may as well be a self staged at the point of centrality between the two paradigms, even while being peripheral to each individual state. One lies outside of both, but is central to both. Camus places himself between these two worlds—*between history and reality*, because 'history is not everything'. His words express the joy of finding the music between notes, of finding art between the groundless poverty on the earth below and the Algerian sun in the sky above.

When he says 'history is not everything', he already propounds a counter-historical turn in his writing. He consequently uses the mythical dimensions incipient in the phrase 'poverty and the sun' to gradually subvert and mollify historical claims to truths about Africa, and about Algeria, in particular. The first symptom of this subversion lies in the way he exalts the abject condition of his early childhood, emphasising on its sunlit terrains, thus already moving away from the canonical explication of Africa as the 'dark continent' stricken with cruel maladies and betrayed by latitudes. Therefore, contrary to expectation, in his 'Lyrical Essays', as Philip Thody calls them, Camus emphasises the need for poverty to feel the eternal harmony of creativity inside oneself. The flow of creative energy surfaces only where there is need for it. And where poverty is, there lies *need*. There lies *necessity*: not in the lame way that might necessitate a swimming pool at a beach house, but the *real*, urgent need of an oasis in the midst of a cruel desert mirage. What he works out is a symbiotic relation with poverty and creativity, as though one derived from the other:

> Poverty, first of all, was never a misfortune for me: it was radiant with sunlight. Even my revolts were lit up by the sun. These revolts were almost always, I think I can say this in all honesty, revolts on everyone's behalf, aimed at lifting up everybody's life into the light.... It is thus, no doubt, that I embarked upon my present difficult career ... In other words, I became an artist, if it is true to say that there is no art without refusal or consent.

(Camus: 1970 p.18)

The correspondence he declares between the state of poverty and of artistry is of singular importance, since it effects a harmonisation and propulsion of energies. More important is perhaps the associative analogy he forges between poverty and "revolts ... lit up by the sun" (Camus 1970 p. 18), to which I return in a few pages, in the second chapter. Poverty minimises problems and simplifies life and releases the unlimited reserves of creative impulses that may have died without a possibility:

> I lived with very little money, but also in a kind of rapture. I felt infinite strength within me: all I had to do was find a use for it. It was not poverty that stood in the way of that strength: *in Africa, the sun and the sea cost nothing....* These gave me every opportunity to develop a 'Castilian pride'.... [due to which] I can state that among my many weaknesses I have never found the most widespread of our faults – envy, that veritable cancer in societies and doctrines.
>
> (Camus: 1970 pp. 18–19, emphasis added)

What Camus seems to suggest is not an unhealthy and over-the-top romanticisation of poverty, as it might look to the sceptic's eye, but a kind of revision of what the state of poverty is construed of and what it generally entails. He reverses the idea of financial insufficiency to that of self-reliance and resourcefulness. Thereby, he not only opens up an incipient possibility of subversion, but rescues himself from the death-grip of self-pity, since he emphasises the fact that when one has little or no money, one is obliged to take recourse to other resources, including nature, as a metaphor of which he uses recurrently the image of the sun, which will be discussed in greater detail in the second and third sections of this chapter.

Also significant is the fact that for Camus, as an artist, poverty itself takes up multiple and metaphoric dimensions. Philip Thody purposefully writes in his 'Introduction' that "he never, he said, wanted to be forced to write books in order to earn money" (Camus 1970 p. 9). That perhaps sums it up exactly the way it was. Camus only wrote when he felt the *need* to write, and not merely for *lack* of a livelihood, when he felt the void that urgently needed to be filled with writing (which may or may not be his own). But the *need* must be felt. This *need*, this particular *embodied* presence of poverty, is not merely the want of money. It is the lack of anything, of everything: to that extent, it is all-consuming. It is that disruption in the habitable environment that articulates a distinct lack—a fissure or a vacuum that the artist hastens forthwith to fill.

The image of the artist that he creates, therefore, even in his autobiographical work, *The First Man* (1994), is something akin to a constructed role that he has deliberately chosen. He believed, as Herbert R. Lottman underlines while quoting him, in the multiplicity that is curious to the children born to in-between worlds, but not necessarily to indifferent fates:

> The French of Algeria are a bastard race, composed of unexpected mixtures. Spaniards and Alsatians, Italians, Maltese, Jews, Greeks, finally met here. These brutal cross-breedings produced, as in America, happy results.
>
> (Camus quoted in Lottman p. 7)

Predictably, he had also been born into that very same in-between space that he was to celebrate in his works. He saw his own in-betweenness as a particularly advantageous attribute, since it gave him the license of *unbelonging*. He could stay between two rigidly defined frontiers and develop his ideas as intercessions along their axis. He found it easier to counter singularity with his multiple and disputed ancestry. As Lottman points out:

> He was one of these unexpected mixtures. Of Spanish ancestry on his mother's side, he believed (without foundation, as will shortly be seen) that his father's family migrated from Alsace, that eternal battleground between France and Germany. Europeans who migrated to Algeria virtually waived their ancestry. Like soldiers of the Foreign Legion who abandon their identities when they enlist, like former prisoners and other rejects of society who assume a new life in a far-off colony, these settlers who found a place in the countryside or in an old or a new town among the Berbers and Arabs of North Africa were given an opportunity to start afresh. They could be what they made of themselves.
>
> (Lottman p. 7)

Already, there seems to have been a propensity towards mystification (read: *mythification*, as in, myth in fiction) on Camus' part about his ancestry. This is confirmed as one peruses the opening pages of *The First Man*, where he describes the events leading to his difficult birth. The commencement of his life, as he reports it, seems to emerge from within an image of exodus:

> Above the wagon rolling along a stony road, big thick clouds were hurrying to the East though the dusk. Three days ago they had inflated over the Atlantic, had waited for a wind from the West, had set out, slowly at first then faster and faster, had flown over the phosphorescent autumn waters, straight to the continent, had unravelled on the Moroccan peaks, had gathered again in flocks on the high plateaus of Algeria...
>
> (Camus: 1995 p. 3)

The transgression of language is apparent in the articulation of pre-natal memories. The passage enunciates a kind of counter-history since it always already exceeds the finitude of structures that is imposed on both language and history as systematic epistemes of knowledge. He could not have possibly known the absolute details of the events he specified, unless through a narrative, which could hardly have given him the shape of clouds or the colour of the sky. Instead of creating memory as language, therefore, there is an attempt, by using language in excess of the events, to construct language as memory, or "counter-memory", which he seeks, in Foucault's words, "in the most unpromising places, in what we tend to feel is without history—in sentiments, love, conscience, instincts...in order to trace the gradual curve of...evolution" (Foucault: 1977 pp. 139–140). He arrests language at a historiographic turn, since he divests it of the exactness of its factuality and turns it into an indefinite counter-narrative which has no way of being verified or attested:

> Nearly everything he would learn about his father and his father's parents would come to young Albert from his mother and his mother's mother, neither of whom could read or write. Written records were virtually non-existent.
>
> (Lottman p. 8)

In effect, therefore, he records not history but a pre-history of sorts, and the production of space in his writings is, thereby, an *anti-space*, which, fostered by the imprecision of memory, stands against the precision of historical validation. This *anti-space* is a space of myth. History is a re-description of reality, while myth is a pre-description of it. In essence, thus, history is pedagogic, and myth is prophetic. Camus' language is enunciation of this prophecy. The peculiarization of this mythical anti-space, as opposed to the historical space, happens through a careful deployment of images, and a use of a language that begins and ends in metaphor. The language, placed in between fact and fiction, effectively fashions a

quasi-mythical landscape, which is both anti-space and anti-time: outside the hovel, it was "a night in the fall of 1913" (Camus 1995 p.7), but inside,

> She was standing near the table, hands on her belly, and now her handsome face turned up to the lamplight was crossed by brief waves of pain. She seemed to notice neither the dampness nor the odour of neglect and poverty.
>
> (Camus 1995 p. 10)

I say 'anti-time' not only because there is a definite juxtaposition of historical time with mythical time in these passages, but also because Camus reverses the time-line of the coming of *Anno Domini*—'the year of our lord'. The passages here have a typical cinematic tableaux effect, which is also associated with religious iconography. Significantly, this also is an instance of mythical iconography, and not an historical one—representing a suspension, a going-back, in the chronological discourse of history. The title of the first section, named 'Search for the Father', is again symptomatic of a rewriting of history and a renewal of its reversal. A certain magnification from the order of the personal to the order of the political is certainly also noticeable, along with the obvious movement from the historical to the mythical dimension. The episode in which the mother, heavily pregnant with child, makes the journey with the father and finally ends up giving birth in a shanty, where three wise creatures—a doctor, a helper and an Arab—witness the birth, is distinctly and unmistakably reminiscent of the birth of Christ, the 'babe in the manger':

> "No more need for you, Doctor. It happened by itself." ...At that moment, the wife lifted her head and saw her husband. A marvellous smile transfigured that exhausted beautiful face. Cormery went over to the mattress. "He came", she said under her breath, and she reached out her hand to the infant.
>
> (Camus 1995 p.17)

The child, born in the stench of poverty, and in Africa, is 'the first man' of a new time. This event exceeds the annals of history, as it is liminal—insignificant, and yet significant enough to be legendary in character. This bid to auto-mythologise, then, is akin to an effort at engineering an alter-history, an anti-history, since, 'history is not everything'.

II. Between Truth and Testimony: The Artist as a Witness to Ahistoricity

> *What one can say of the absenting presence is always one of the two things: its truth, or its story (histoire). Of course, it could even be its true story. But because the presence has fled, it is no longer certain that any story about it can be absolutely true: for, no presence will be able to attest it.*
>
> *Thus what remains is straightaway divided into two parts: story and truth. The one and the other have the same origin and are related to the same thing: the same presence which has retreated. Its retreat is thus manifested as the line that separates the two, the story and the truth.*
>
> —Jean Luc Nancy

Between the construction of an empirically viable historical space and a narratorially mediated anti-space, the dream unfolds in writing all that the mind has not seen, has not perceived, and probably longs to perceive in the things that it sees. The in-betweenness of a desire that wrestles with destiny, and forms the directives to a new history, is therefore born. The artist must, then, not only be the artist of his time, but be the moment itself—embodied time. To that effect, Camus writes in the essay entitled 'The Artist and His Time':

> I can accept your expression: inserting a work into its time. But, after all, this describes all literary art.... [But] the artist of today becomes unreal if he remains in his ivory tower or sterilized if he spends his time galloping around in the political arena. Yet, *between the two lies the arduous way of art.*
>
> (Camus 1960 p.238, emphasis added)

Already there is an understanding of a middle path, a 'between-the-two'-ness, in the route that traverses the personal and the political, that leads to the resolution of history and the dissolution of myth. The appreciation of an artist's merit, therefore, does not, according to Camus, lie in his adequate and absolute capitulation to historical data, but a conscious riddance of this shell of history that shrouds one's critical vision—in other words, the artist's task is to offer a resistance to history, to thwart its grand scheme at an aesthetic and interventionist level:

> It seems to me that the writer must be fully aware of the dramas of his time and that he must take sides every time he can or knows how to do so. *But he must also maintain or resume from time to time a certain distance in relation to our history*. Every work presupposes a content of reality and a creator who shapes the container. Consequently, the artist ... *must also tear himself away in order to ... give it form*. This continuous shuttling, this tension that gradually becomes increasingly dangerous, is the task of the artist today.
>
> (Camus 1960 p.238, emphasis added)

The act of returning to the past, forging a relation with the past, is also therefore a simultaneous moving away from it. The return to genealogy, to an origin, to any origin, in fact, presupposes what Michel de Certeau calls "a distancing in respect to a past ... and a will to recover what, in one fashion or another, seems lost in a received language" (de Certeau p. 136). The perfomativity of language, in itself is non-constative, and thereby it suitably problematises propensities to historical pretensions. History does not concede the necessary excesses of truth: to that extent, history is discipline. Language itself, on the other hand, thrives in excesses, disruptions, fissures and lacks: to that effect, language is chaos. Language is endlessly, constantly, relentlessly looking for things it cannot name. Language is also, therefore, a celebration of silences, of wordlessness. It is brutal in its inexhaustible force of *renewability*. While history decries the open-endedness of language, language witholds the finitude that history demands of it. It tends to the order of the infinite, to a perpetual *deferral*. To use Paul Ricoeur's inference in 'Structure, Word, Event':

> ... language ... has a double direction: an ideal direction (to say something) and a real reference (to say about something). In this movement, language leaps across two thresholds: the threshold of ideality of meaning and, beyond this meaning, the threshold of reference. Across this double threshold and by means of this movement of transcendence, language 'means' [veut dire]; it has taken hold of reality and expresses the hold of reality on thought.
>
> (Ricoeur 1989 p. 84)

The multiplicity of language stands against the singularity of historical transcription and its effort to either achieve and attain stability in its attempt to standardise and mollify absolutes, or its endeavour to discipline experiences by awarding and attaching truth-values

to them, for language is an articulation of desire—a desire for "the prospect of many histories [which] invariably invites the possibility of many representations of those histories" (Bhattacharya p. 7). In other words, the possibility of fiction may exist only in that which does not yet exist: it gives birth to the necessity of representation as well as the inaccuracy of the same, since it is in this inaccuracy that the desire for yet another representation lies. It prefers, therefore, the *performative time* of mythicality to the *practical time* of history, of events even as language, as the possibility of intervention itself, is a new event in history.

The in-between space between myth and history is the space of memory, the space of language—the author's space. The inclination of the artist is to, therefore, veer away from mainstream historical narratives into counter/sub-historical accounts. This happened with Camus even before he had left Algeria to claim his exile-status, since his first attempts in literarity comprises efforts to alter-historicise the mainstream narratives of colonial France:

> Camus found the inspiration for his first book, *L' Envers et l'Endroit* [*Betwixt and Between*], published in Algiers by Charlot in 1937, in Belcourt the working-class quarter in east Algiers where he spent his early childhood. This also explains its initial title: *Voix du quartier pauvre* (*Voices from the Poor Quarter*)....It is about poverty and the Algerian sunlight, which, according to Camus, makes the misery of the inhabitants of southern locations less grim than the grey skies of the north; moreover, the author professes his love for the sparsely furnished Arab and Spanish houses, preferring them to the apartments of the wealthy Parisian bourgeoisie that he became familiar with after he had grown to be one of the most successful writers of his time.
>
> (Van der Poel p.14)

Expectations of narrative/historical truth being suspended, what one finds in this work (*Betwixt and Between*) is a dazzling sight of poetic/mythical truth. What becomes evident is the redemptive mechanism of fiction, a sort of corrective memory, for one finds not only that which was, but also that which should have been. And this, to the author, is truer than truth. In the 'Preface' to *Betwixt and Between*, when it was republished years later, Camus writes:

> When ... I re-read *Betwixt and Between* for this edition so many years after writing it, I knew instinctively with certain pages, in spite of their clumsiness, that this is right, that this is what really matters: that old woman, a silent

> mother, poverty, the light on the olive trees ... the populated loneliness of love, *everything that in my own eyes bears witness to the truth.*
>
> (Camus 1970 p. 23, emphasis added)

It is impossible to think that an author would use terms like 'witness' and 'testimony' without being conscious of their contextual leverage or their semantic weight. And yet, he asks, with some noticeable regret, why he should have procrastinated the production of "this feeble testimony" that *Betwixt and Between* is. It is perhaps because he was aware of what this body of 'testimony' might be expected to entail, and he could not have claimed to have borne witness to *ahistoricity* in his testimonials. He is inclined more to create a world which never existed but in the mythography of childhood, and he exalts in the role that his poverty has played, claiming to have been both an internal and external witness to extreme yet undespairing financial misery:

> I want to underline ... that poverty does not necessarily involve envy.... Poverty, as I knew it, thus taught me not resentment but, on the contrary, a certain fidelity and a silent obstinacy. If I have ever forgotten this, it is my own fault, or that of my own failings, not that of the world in which I was born.[1]
>
> (Camus 1970 p. 21)

Without intending to, perhaps, or perhaps with as much intentionality that any author might be expected to have, he defends the 'world in which [he] was born'. This redemptive gesture is then, as he states in his *Notebook I*, to make amends for the fact that:

> A guilty conscience needs to confess. *A work of art is a confession, and I must bear witness.... What also count are the small acts of cowardice, the times one is ashamed, the way one thinks of the other world, the world of money, without being aware of doing so.* I think that the world of the poor is one of the few, if not the only one, which is wholly turned upon itself, which is an island in society.
>
> (Camus 1970 p. 235, emphasis added)

TH-17731

[1] This internality of his position as a witness is in contrast to the externality of his evidence when he says, "Though I was born poor, in a working-class area, I did not know what real misery was like until I saw our cold suburbs. Even extreme Arab poverty cannot be compared to it, since the weather is so different" (Camus 1970 p. 19).

The truth, standing against his own testimony, may be found in yet another snippet in his *Notebook V*, where he declares, now mortified:

> Novel. Poor childhood. I was ashamed of my poverty and of my family. (But they are monsters!) I experienced shame ... when I was sent to the lycée. Before then everyone was like me and poverty was natural as the air we breathed. At the lycée I learnt to compare.
>
> (Camus 1970 p. 281)

What he uses against this truth is an antidote whereby he develops a mythical relationship with his own past, glorifying the wasted senses of crises to construct a memory, a creed that adheres to a life of grace, believing that "one can, with no romanticism, feel nostalgic for lost poverty. A certain number of years lived without money are enough to create a whole sensibility" (Camus 1970 p. 235). This voice-in-fiction is the voice against "history [which] has ceased to be anything but Noah's cloak that is spread over the victim's obscenity" (Camus 1960 p. 100). Camus' vulgarisation of the protocols of history emerges from the cognition of history as a discourse, and in turn, the realisation of the fact that, in de Certeau's words, "discourse is doubtless a form of capital, invested in symbols; it can be transmitted, displaced, accrued and lost" (de Certeau p. 13). The effort of an artist becomes then to negate this capitalist enterprise of history, and become a myth-maker in the process:

> Each artist thus keeps in his heart of hearts a single stream which, so long as he is alive, feeds what he is and what he says. When that stream runs dry, you see his work gradually shrivel up and start to crack... I myself know that my stream is in *Betwixt and Between*, in this *world of poverty and sunlight* in which I have lived so long, and whose *memory* still saves me the two opposite dangers which threaten every artist, resentment and self-satisfaction.
>
> (Camus 1970 p. 18, emphasis added)

By foregrounding the prospect of memory, again, Camus derives an antagonistic stance towards historical methodologies. The problem with history also lies in the fact of its ostensible spectacle of objectivity, while memory is a subjective account. Memory, like mythology allows one to safely take sides, without necessarily infringing upon the boundaries of civility that history as a discipline has procured over centuries. Having allowed the dust of history to rise and then settle at his feet, the vision of the artist in Camus only becomes

stronger. He, as I stated earlier, takes recourse to the two paradigms—poverty and the sun—to complete the process of myth-making that he commenced even before leaving Algeria. His memory of Algeria, even prior to his becoming, according to his friend Brice Parain, "the first journalist expelled from Algeria" (Thody p. 13), had already become a myth:

> *Here, nevertheless, there is a people with no past, no tradition, and yet which is not lacking in poetry.* But it is a poetry that is far from tenderness, even from the tenderness of the Algerian sky, the only poetry which in fact moves me and makes me one with myself. The opposite of a civilized people is a creative one.... *Everything that people do in Algiers indicates a disgust for stability* and a lack of regard for the future. People hasten to live, and *if an art were to be born here, it would conform to that hatred of permanence which led the Dorians to carve their first column out of wood.* And yet it is true that one can find a certain ... excess in the strained and violent faces of this people, in this summer sky..., beneath which all truths can be told and on which no deceitful divinity has traced the signs of hope or redemption. *Between this sky and the faces looking up to it, there is nothing on which to hang a history, a literature, an ethic or a religion; only stones, flesh stars and those truths which the hand can touch.*
>
> (Camus 1970 p. 89, emphasis added)

Algiers and its inhabitants, therefore, belong to a mythical time—a time beyond and averse to history, which is so ancient that it has no concept of a past preceding it. The exorcism of a historical past—a schematically structured homogenous discursive unity in time and space—is necessary before declaring a community 'people with no past'. What he undertakes perhaps is a resistance against the systematic acculturation of civilizations with appropriately manufactured national/pre-national/post-national histories. Histories are conceived in "homogenous, empty time" (Benjamin p. 252), while mythical time exists beyond temporal indices. It is anti-time, resisting movement, resisting the covenant of passages, inviting eternality and not the permanence of history. Algeria, in the memory of Camus, becomes the eternal Ithaca, myth in action, which is sans past or future. The sheer physicality of this anti-space is derivative of a kind of mythical materialism, accommodating radical contingencies, inconceivable unbelievabilities and incredible implausibilities, that history in its rigidity might shun. It is memory, turned to myth, that will prove compliant to the sufferings of resolute pangs of irreversible nostalgia, and he knows this when he says,

> If, in spite of so many efforts to build up a language and bring myths to life, I never manage to rewrite *Betwixt and Between*, I shall never have achieved anything. I feel it in my bones.
>
> (Camus 1970 p. 26)

It is a memory to be rewritten over and over, to be redone, reshaped, intensified, as only mythologies might. This memory is the memory of a dream. The dream, as well as the memory of it, is an impossibility, since it will forever lack historical resolution as it is not a problem of history. It is one of the eternal questions of the human mind.

To resolve that *memoriality* of myth to the *historicality* of nation requires the exercise of language, of narrative. The following section is an expansion of the expatriate narrative that produces an anti-history of a non-nation, which was nevertheless a presence to Camus.

III. Between Narrative and Nation: Memory as History and Memory as the Exiled Neurosis of Impossible Nostalgia

> *The present of past things is the memory...*
>
> —Augustine's *Confessions*

> *Fintan breathed in the odor. It entered him, soaked into his body. Odor of this dusty earth, odor of the very blue sky, the gleaming palm trees, the white houses. Odor of women and children dressed in rags. Odor which possessed the town. Fintan had already been there; Africa was already a memory....*
>
> *So this, then, was Africa, this warm and violent city, the yellow sky beating with a secret pulse of light....This was Africa, this darkness heavy with suffering, this odor of sweat from the depths of jails, this odor of death.*
>
> —J.M.G. Le Clézio

There is, about Africa, a sense of always already knowing. Africa is the anti-space of dreams—unreal and uninterrogated both in its many (im)possibilities and in its *anything-is-possibleness*. Africa is the land of destinies, the holy grail of imperialism. Algeria, the metonymic mimicry of Africa, is therefore a landscape of loss, of memory. It is *déjà vu*, and more so, an occasion for disbelief, a glimpse of an antique time unrecorded in annals. And all this perhaps, because it is a continent of ironies—a paradise of paradoxes—with its darkness lit by the sun. Algeria—sun-browned as poetry, and as mythical—defining itself, for the exile, through the delirium of mysticism, as Hélène Cixous does in *Reveries of Wild Women* (2006):

> *The whole time I was living in Algeria I would dream of one day arriving in Algeria, I would have done anything to get there, I had written, I never made it to Algeria, it is right now that I must explain what I mean by this, how I longed for the door to open, now not later, I had scribbled, in the fever of the July night, for it is now, and probably for dozens or hundreds of reasons that a door has cracked open in the Oblivion Wing of my memory, and now for the first time I may be able to return to Algeria, therefore I must...*
>
> (Cixous p. 3, author's emphasis)

Algeria is forever a place to return, forever a place of return. The memory of returning precedes and exceeds the event of exile, since the memory of the return is the precise moment of impossibility, as Camus says in 'Between Yes and No':

> If it is true that the only paradises are those that we have lost, I can find a name for this tender and inhuman feeling that inhabits me today. An emigrant is returning to his country. And I am remembering. The irony and tension fade away and I am back home. I don't want to chew over my happiness. It is much simpler and much easier than that. For what has remained untouched in those hours which I am bringing back from the depths of forgetfulness is the memory of a pure emotion, a moment suspended in eternity. Only this memory is true in me and I always discover it too late. We love the gentleness of certain gestures, the way a tree fits into a landscape. And we have only one detail to recreate all this love, but this is enough: the smell of a room that has been shut up for too long...
>
> (Camus 1970 p. 38)

The intermediate space of memory reverses the sentence of impossible nostalgia—Algeria, the Rushdiesque 'imaginary homeland', has been mostly de-territorialised and its locational co-ordinates defined through the amorphous deductions of mnemonic pseudopodia. To uphold my claim, I quote Salman Rushdie, who remarks:

> As for me: I, too, like all migrants, am a fantasist. I build imaginary countries and try to impose them on the ones that exist. I, too, face the problem of history: what to retain, what to dump, how to hold on to what memory insists on relinquishing, how to deal with change.
>
> (Rushdie pp. 87–88)

Being born out of the body of Africa, the migrant author now gives birth to the Africa within himself, and combines "one part memory and two parts imagination to create a land so magical, so unique, that he can never truly belong to the present" (Nair p. 93). That, in itself, of course, entails more paradoxes than it hopes to resolve, since the mapping out of memory, with its uncertain, misshapen contours, and relating it to the ferociously, vengefully rigid structures of a national landscape is a self-defeating enterprise. To lend a cognizable structure to moments, and to foreground a nation which is already historically codified, is to want to achieve the intractable. Memory is constituted before historical drama can unfurl itself, and hence this always already memory of Algiers, and to the author, this is naught but truth:

> Behold, in life's dream, the man who finds his truths and loses them, in the land of death, in order to return through wars, cries, the madness of justice and love, in short, through pain, to that quiet country where death itself is a happy silence.... *Yes, nothing prevents me from dreaming of this in the very hour of exile...*
>
> (Camus 1970 p. 26, emphasis added)

Algeria is hardly Algeria. Like a dream, it an epistemic anti-space of desire, which acts itself out in contrariness to the space of reality. Algeria is an absent presence, which spawns literariness around its core, to fill up that which is not there, or that which was never there. Algeria is a lack, a metaphysical malcontent:

> It was this same anguish that was driving me crazy, the anguish of not finding the thing itself, whose author and creature I am, which I had in my hand, which is under my roof, among me, and which starts to take over, to invade

> me, invest my lungs, my ears, my head, saturating me with its *absence*, its withdrawal, which turns my whole body into a searing pain.
>
> (Cixous p.7, emphasis added)

The dream images of return to Algeria, even while leaving Algeria, indeed, before leaving Algeria, is the dream of an impossible 'eternal return', and yet the foremost possibility, the only possibility. It is a metaphor, or the dream of a metaphor of union between the homeland and the exile. It is a syndrome, a discontent:

> It is incredibly like that sort of *Algerian disorder* I used to get in Algiers or that Algiers got to me, that feeling of being possessed by a feeling of dispossession and the response I produced to this, that struggle to vanquish the unfindable that can lead to self-destruction, just like old times, here, in my study, after so many years.
>
> (Cixous p.7, author's emphasis)

It is not only an *un-ease*, but a *dis-ease* as well. This disorder is a curious disembodied infinitude, like Algeria itself was in its in-betweenness, not having a place amongst the nations and yet existing as a desire in the rebel mind. The geopolitical future of Algeria was still as uncertain as this shadowy absent presence of what I have called its memoriality, and Camus admits as much, in an essay entitled 'Algeria 1958', when he says:

> ... Algeria is ... a conception springing wholly from emotion. There has never yet been an Algerian nation. The Jews, the Turks, the Greeks, the Italians, the Berbers would have just as much right to claim [as the French or Arabs] the direction of that virtual nation.
>
> (Camus 1960 p. 145)

In a way, it never existed outside of narrative: it was not a nation but a nervous condition. In opposition to a post-national technoscape, its existence was a pre-national mythoscape, as a definitive denial to relentless historical progression. Thus, according to Lawrence D. Kritzman, "Camus appropriates the power to imagine a community whose hybrid nature forestalls the very existence of national demarcation determined by ethnic and political purity" (Kritzman p. 565) and thereby resists totalization. The dream of Algeria is, therefore, the desire for an untruth—the fevered untruth of a neurotic imagination:

> A marked increase in mental disorders and the creation of conditions favourable to the development of specific morbid phenomenon are not the only consequences... in Algeria. Quite apart from the pathology of torture there flourishes in Algeria a pathology of atmosphere, a state which leads medical practitioners to ... [confront cases] they do not understand.... The main characteristic of these [conditions] is that they are of a psycho-somatic type. The name 'psycho-somatic disorder' is given to the general body of organic disorders the development of which is favoured by a conflicting situation.
>
> (Fanon p. 234)

The consequent literarity of these experiences almost takes the form of trauma narratives, with persistent and lingering symptoms of hysteria and disorientation. There is a distinct lack of order, of any semblance of linguistic and stylistic conformation to classically defined *prosaicity*. There is, on the other hand, a certain *poetic* cadence that comes from having surrendered one's soul to the resounding aura of insanity, as in Camus' short story 'The Renegade' in the collection called *Exile and the Kingdom* (1961):

> What a jumble! What a jumble! I must tidy up my mind. Since they cut out my tongue, another tongue, it seems, has been wagging somewhere in my skull, something has been talking, or someone, that suddenly falls silent and then it all begins again—oh, I hear too many things I never utter, what a jumble, and if I open my mouth it's like pebbles rattling together. Order and method, the tongue says, and then goes on talking of other matters simultaneously.... Day is breaking over the desert ... soon it will be too hot, this country drives men mad and I've been here I don't know how many years...
>
> (Camus 1958 p. 30)

Algeria becomes the source of a certain mnemonic paranoia. The remembrances of exile are consistently marked by such instances of pronouncements of a nation's pre-natal anxieties. Considering the in-between space that Algeria occupies both in terms of topography (between the political ideology of desire and the seeming impossibility of actualization) and metaphysics (in the memory-space lying between the real and the imaginary), the expressions are unswerving in their adherence to this curious half-life that seems to have been Camus' signature. There is no space, no style, no stance in his writing

which does not reflect this consciously attempted assimilation of contrariness in a bid to remain equidistant to the two positional standpoints—whether literary, philosophical, political or otherwise. This anti-space of non-existence becomes the epistemic space of his literary and philosophical operations. In his narratives about Algeria, and there is always Algeria in almost all his narratives, this dream world—a kind of half-world—becomes more and more apparent:

> Only recently, since he had been suffering from insomnia, could he sleep for an hour during the day.... Jacques was half asleep, and he was filled with a kind of happy anxiety at the prospect of returning to Algiers and the small poor home in the old neighbourhood.
>
> (Camus 1995 p. 40)

This anti-space therefore becomes infected with the (re)enactment of these memory-dreams, the wish-fulfilment of an ever-returning exile. Algeria, here, is a distant disembodied infinitude—an inflection in the expatriate mind. The return features in these fantasies as frequently as the fear of leaving does:

> So it was every time he left Paris for Africa, his heart swelling with a secret exultation, with the satisfaction of one who has made good his escape and is laughing at the thought of the look on the guards' faces. Just as, each time he returned to Paris, whether by road or by train, his heart would sink when he arrived, without quite knowing how, at those first houses of the outskirts, lacking any frontier of trees or water and which, like an ill-fated cancer, reached out its *ganglions of poverty and ugliness to absorb this foreign body and take him to the centre of the city* where a splendid stage set would sometimes make him forget the forest of concrete and steel that imprisoned him day and night and invaded even his insomnia. But he had escaped, he could breathe, on the giant back of the sea he was breathing in waves, rocked by the great sun, *at last he could sleep and he could come back to the childhood from which he had never recovered to the secret of the light, of the warm poverty* that had enabled him to survive and to overcome everything.
>
> (Camus 1995 pp. 40–41, emphasis added)

The necessary cognition of himself as a 'foreign body', a maladjusted element in the midst of a surreal super-space, increases and intensifies the paranoia by virtue of cognitive estrangement. His critical engagement with his surroundings is rendered possible because of his recognition of his exile status and his fundamentally displaced identity which has been thrown from the security of a serene childhood into the heart of a culture of simulation—something akin to what Jean Baudrillard would call "*the desert of the real itself*" (p. 166, author's emphasis). Algeria, converted in his memory-space, into a heuristic utopia that has forged the singularity of his narrative consciousness, now makes way to the dystopic sight of an urban hyper-space which is "coalesced into a structure of the highest impersonality" (Simmel, p. 127), and therefore belongs to no one in particular. The sense of critical defamiliarization warrants a reconstitution of the exile's mind, and a quick reinstatement of the appropriate set of mental images that help in identifying the place as a space of survival, not living. There is, in the narrative, a distinct chronotopic disjunct between the Algerian memory-space and the Parisian city-space, and the understanding of the relationship of the new world with the exile is almost an ingestive one. The image of the city's monstrous tentacles swallowing the alien intruder is an illustration of the ingestive capacity of this new space—its power of consuming and benumbing the senses—and therefore the threat of loss of not only identity but of the very modalities that construct that identity, namely, memory and consciousness. There is also an incipient dread of forgetting, of un-remembering, of the fact that the 'centre' can get a hold of the peripheral mind and 'make him forget' what Jacques Derrida, another Algerian-French, may have meant by 'genealogical fantasy' in *Monolingualism of the Other, or, the Prosthesis of Origin* (1998), where he discusses the complexities of the Franco–Maghrebian (as this community is now referred to) dialectics:

> Our question is still identity. What is identity, this concept of which the transparent identity to itself is always dogmatically presupposed by so many debates on monoculturism or multiculturism, nationality, citizenship, and in general, belonging?....To be a Franco–Maghrebian, one "like myself", is not, not particularly, and particularly not, a surfeit of richness of identities, attributes or names. In the first place, it would rather betray a *disorder of identity* [*trouble d'identité*]....Recognize in that expression "disorder of identity" all its seriousness without excluding its psychopathological or sociopathological connotations.
>
> (Derrida 1998 p. 14, author's emphasis)

The disorder of identity that he explicates is the symptom produced and suffered by Camus, who, as an Algerian–French (as opposed to a French–Algerian, though his ancestry declared him otherwise), felt the very same isolated confusion of roles that Derrida refers to:

> Does this "disorder of identity" favor or inhibit *anamnesia*? *Does it heighten the desire of memory, or does it drive the genealogical fantasy to despair?* Does it suppress, repress, or liberate? All of these at the same time, no doubt, and that would be another version, the other side of the contradiction that set us in motion. And has us running to the point of losing our breath, or our minds.
>
> (Derrida 1998 p. 18, emphasis added)

It seems to reflect the same alternative despair that Camus' passage from *The First Man* explores. The dangerous preference of the centre "sometimes [making] him forget" (Camus 1995 p. 41) is opposed to the optional resistance offered by *anamnesia*, as Derrida points out, which counters the effect of cultural *amnesia* that terrifies the exile more than it calms his mind. The term anamnesia, as Elizabeth Castelli and James McBride elaborate, signifies "a position, a stance of recollection and resistance" (p. 116). In other words, if amnesia is the absence of memory, then an-amnesia, as the word lies constructed, means a refusal of that absence. In an agony of forgetting, the exile becomes anamnesiac, whereby memory becomes a modality of resistance, of un-forgetting, and therefore, of a repudiation of mental and mnemonic colonization achieved through the reinforcement of absent or conjured images. The effective assimilation of the exile, which is perhaps dependent on his ability of remembering-to-forget, is transformed to the anti-assimilative dread of forgetting-to-remember. And the symptoms of this dread are not merely present in a single author, but a whole new dynasty of intellectuals that this *Algerian disorder* bred:

> Doyouremember says my brother and I say doyouremember then my brother says doyouremember and then I in turn say doyouremember, whereupon my brother says doyouremember, then I say doyouremember, all it takes is for one of us to say doyouremember and then the other doyouremembers right back....
>
> —Nothing here reminds me of Algeria my brother starts up again... Everything reminds my brother that nothing here reminds him in the least of Algeria.

> The sea is not the sea, the sky is nothing like the sky, the pines, when I look at the pines from here all I see are husks of pines, nothing but pines reproduced, when you define these pines you must tell the truth, they are stupid pines ... looklook says my brother whereas the Algerian pine is a parasol pine, and not stupid, a graceful twisty velvety sunshade, you must tell the whole truth...
>
> (Cixous pp. 49–50)

In these almost-dream narratives, the writer's repeated desire to 'tell the whole truth' comes across as a bid to testimonize, to bear witness (false witness, since it is hardly real, it being true to none but the self), to narrativize the truth as the exile mind perceives it. This is similar to a trauma narrative, where the desire of representation overcomes the dread of impossibility of transcription, and literature becomes the only one way memoriality can be transmitted onto a more reliable medium. Writing, thus, becomes empowerment for the exile—a (narrative) agency that retrieves for the expatriate the semblance of being-at-homeness (what Heidegger calls *heimlich* in *Being and Time*). The fictive *memory* therefore undergoes transmutation to become a fictionalized *memoria*, which is a remembrance, a recall, of what Cixous calls "the epitome of my Disalgeria" (Cixous p. 39). Derrida elaborates in *Acts of Literature* (1992):

> ... I'm referring to from memory, the obsession with the *protei* form motivates the interest for literature to the extent that literature seemed to me, in a confused way, to be the institution which allows one to *say everything,* in *every way*. The space of literature is not only that of an instituted *fiction* but also a *fictive institution* which in principle allows one to say everything. To say everything is no doubt to gather, by translating, all figures into one another, to totalize by formalizing, but to say everything is also to break out of [*franchir*] prohibitions. To *affranchise oneself...*
>
> (Derrida 1992 p. 36, author's emphasis)

No doubt that the greatness of these authors had something to do with this shared angst of exodus, and of the severity of their experiences when crisis was underway in French Algeria. Camus recognises this malady as the ironical force of an artist's angst, and exclaims: "Strange country, which gives the men it nourishes both their wretchedness and their greatness" (Camus 1970 p. 81). Derrida also recalls his conflicted existence in his last days in Algeria, and how he sought out literature as a prologue to agency:

> For me, Algeria in the forties (Vichy, official anti-semitism, the Allied landing at the end of 1942, the terrible colonial repression of Algerian resistance in 1945 at the time of the first serious outbursts heralding the Algerian war) was not only or primarily my family situation, but it is true that my interest in literature, diaries, journals in general, also signified a typical, stereotypical revolt against the family. My passion for Nietzsche, Rousseau, and also Gide, whom I read a lot at that time, meant among other things: "Families, I hate you." I thought of literature as the end of the family, and of the society it represented, even if that family was also, on the other hand, persecuted. Racism was everywhere in Algeria at that time, it was running wild in all directions. Being Jewish and a victim of anti-semitism didn't spare one the anti-Arab racism I felt everywhere around me, in manifest or latent form. Literature, or a certain promise of "being able to say everything," was in any case the outline of what was calling me or signalling to me in the situation I was living in at that time, familial and social.
>
> (Derrida 1992 p. 37–38, author's emphasis)

Writing the impossible nostalgia as impassable nostalgia is, according to Paul Ricoeur in *Memory, History, Forgetting* (2004) an endeavour to situate memory "as appearing … at the crossroads of semantics and pragmatics" (p. 4), while Michel de Certeau emphasises that writers "escape neither from these latencies nor from the weight of an endlessly present past" when he talks of 'The In-Between, the Situation of History, and the Problem of the Real' (p. 36). Thus, one has reluctantly come back to the same in-betweenness where one commenced.

On the other hand, the act of literature, of writing, that necessitates a change of practices and of medium, and brings the amoebic non-shape of memory to the folds of formalism, can also be seen as a self-defeating exercise. It can be argued, in the lines of de Certeau that:

> Writing, or the construction of an *écriture* (in the broad meaning of the organization of signifiers), is an uncanny sort of passage. It leads from practice to text. A transformation assures the passage from the unlimited field of research to what Marrou calls the "servitude" of writing—"servitude" because in effect, the foundation of a textual space carries with it a series of distortions…
>
> (de Certeau p. 86)

It is important that one remembers, however, that the narrative in question should not be misconstrued as having a historical agenda, and therefore a historical trajectory. A distinction needs be maintained between memory-writing/memorializing and the official version of memory which one recognises by the term 'memoir'. In a memoir—the 'official history of a life' in writing (of an administrative officer—a viceroy, perhaps?)—quite in opposition to the Derridean hypothesis, the project of *ecriture* attempts to 'fix' language into the tangible-and-legible referent of the 'text'. This text may then be available to a community of readers that quite exceeds the event of its 'writing', whereby the performativity of language (the pragmatic order of discourse that aspires to normativity), by its constant loyalties to historical validation, appears to be defying the very metaphor of transgression. It is of the order of a semiotically normalized history, though the semantics of it is attendant on the intervention of the post-*literarized* reader-author. It embodies a singular referent of history, though necessarily calling for hermeneutic variations. The ethics of printing calls for a heavy censorship of the excesses that constitute traumatic experiences. The instances of fictive memory or memory-writing (as opposed to documentary memory), as is the case of Camus, or many an Algerian-French author for that matter, lie well outside the formalized category of memoirs. At the centre of theses narratives, as I have already argued, is a constitutive lack, an *absence* of event, an eventlessness.

It is wafted *around* a personal and political deadlock, and therefore the authors primarily write of just about everything apart from the *actual event of the exile*. What they employ instead is the primary trope of an impossible nostalgia, communicated through a dominant feeling of unease or unbeing-at-homeness (*unheimlichkeit*), which is lived, and as a sentence, in constantly analyzing an alien environment and trying to pick out things, in the case of Camus and his likes, 'that is not like Algeria':

> What is hateful about Paris: ... a hideous sentimentality that sees everything beautiful as pretty and everything pretty as beautiful.... What is inspiring: the terrible loneliness. As a remedy to life in society, I would suggest the big city. Nowadays, it is the only desert within our means. Here the body loses its prestige. It is covered over, and hidden under shapeless skins. What is left is the soul, the soul with all its sloppy overflow of drunken sentimentality, its whining emotions and everything else.
>
> (Camus 1970 p. 256)

The contrast to the Parisian 'desert within' with the Algerian desert, the physical desolation occasioned by the absence of landscape, is of immense significance. There is a specific, superficial *unmentionability* about Algeria: the author does not mention the site to which Paris has been juxtaposed, and yet it is more apparent than anything else that has been talked/written about, and comes across as an addiction to the wistfulness occasioned by his having been transported from the idyllic to the infernal. There is a pretension of fictive dementia, an (im)posed *memorylessness*, of an impression of forgetting, while all the time there is an indirect referentiality to the lack of that Algeria which he seeks. Thomas Alsaesser insists, however, that if "trauma is experienced through its forgetting, its repeated forgetting, then paradoxically, one of the signs of the presence of trauma is the absence of all signs of it" (p. 199). In the above excerpt, however, the concordance of the non-memory of the place with his physical surroundings makes Algeria an aporia, which is a nostalgia as well as a corporeal reality, as Paul Ricoeur accounts for in *Memory, History, Forgetting*:

> Corporeal memory is thus peopled with memories affected with varying degrees of temporal distantiation: the magnitude of the interval of time elapsed can itself be perceived, felt, in the mode of regret, of nostalgia.... The moment of recollection is then the moment of recognition. The latter, in its turn, can span all the degrees from tacit remembering to declarative memory, ready for narration once again.
>
> (Ricoeur 2004 pp. 40–41)

The interval of time elapsed between experiential and expressional acts is crucial in trauma narratives since the belatedness of the telling makes it all the more intense. Thomas Alsaesser remarks to the same effect in 'Postmodernism as Mourning Work' when he says that trauma "not only names the delay between an event and its (persistent, obsessive) return, but also a reversal of affect and meaning across this gap of time" (p. 197). Cathy Caruth explicates further that "trauma is fully evident only in connection with another place and another time. Belatedness: neither inside nor outside, neither one place nor one time" (p. 8), and therefore, the temporal transgression is from the historical to the mythical. The "accusation that Camus mythologises himself" (Kelly p. 192) is valid, thus, in case of all or most exiles. In case of exile narratives, the trauma materializes from the dislocation of the body and the stationary-ness of the mind, or memories. Paul Ricoeur states:

> Returning to the memory of places, we can attempt, following Casey, to recover the sense of spatiality on the basis of the abstract conception of geometrical space. For the latter, he employs the term "site" and reserves "place" for lived spatiality. The place, he says, is not indifferent with regard to the "thing" that occupies it or rather fills it, in the manner in which, according to Aristotle, the place constitutes what is contained within a specific volume. Some of these remarkable places are said to be memorable. The act of inhabiting, mentioned above, constitutes in this respect the strongest human tie between the date and the place. Places inhabited are memorable par excellence. Declarative memory enjoys invoking them and recounting them, so attached to them is memory.
>
> (Ricoeur 2004 p. 42)

Since the memorability of Algeria is, for the exile, contingent upon his recollection of it, the nature of the memory is also what Paul Ricoeur calls "obligated memory" (Ricoeur 2004 p. 86). There is an incipient fear of extinction, a dread that, with his forgetting, Algeria will cease to be, that he is the last vector of this disease of Algerianness, and that, no one will know of Algeria if the knowledge ended with him.[2] It will disappear with the suspension of the space of desire that resuscitates its existence as an ideal. It is not, as reiterated, a burden of historical responsibility, but an existential one. True to this fact, Paul Ricoeur remarks:

> What about, I will ask in conclusion, the alleged duty of memory? In truth, the question is rather premature in view of the distance our thinking has yet to cover. It projects us well beyond a simple phenomenology of memory and even beyond an epistemology of history, to the heart of the hermeneutics of the historical condition. We cannot, it is true abstract from the historical conditions in which the duty of memory is required, namely, those of Western Europe and, in particular, France, several decades after the horrible events of the mid-twentieth century.
>
> (Ricoeur 2004 p. 86)

But the dialectics between memory and history undergoes a sudden reversal, as is evident in exile narratives where memory is constituted before the actual event, and therefore foreshadows history. Instead of memory remaining a mere province of history, memory appropriates history

[2] And yet this is accompanied by a feeling about the fundamental unknowability of Algeria: "—You didn't know Algeria, says my brother, he too given twenty-four hours to leave the known country, this was his sentence and its conclusion. This is how he attacks the subject." (Cixous p. 9)

not as the past but as the future. Historical discipline, according to Le Goff, "nourishes memory in turn, and enters into the great dialectical process of memory and forgetting experienced by individuals and societies (p. xi). Memory exceeds history, pre-empts history:

> Now the plane was descending to Algiers.... He had travelled far and wide, ... and yet now he knew from the bottom of his heart [as] he thought of the worn and green-encrusted gravestones [in Mondovi, Algeria] ... acknowledging with a strange sort of pleasure that death would return him to his true homeland and, with its immense oblivion, would obliterate the memory of that alien and ordinary man who had ... without memories and without faith, entered the world of the men of his time and their dreadful and exalted history.
>
> (Camus 1970, p. 197)

Between memorizing, mourning and memorializing Algeria, therefore, his memory also is a memory of the future, the memory of dying, and thus being united with the desire of the memory-home. This memory is the dream of future nostalgia, of the suffering that is anticipated. Between the anticipation of mobility and the apprehension of exile, these memories compose a canvas of return, of a certain finality of movement, of no other movements afterwards. This is where all mobility must cease, all experience must dissolve, and all desire must vaporize. This is the memory of his dreams—of sun, sea and open skies, of the brilliance of those afternoons, and the exhaustion of weather—and with this capital of memory he enters the life of an exile:

> A man who can feel his links with one country, his love for a few men, who knows that there is always a place where his heart will find a resting place, already owns many certainties of his life. And yet, certainly, this can be insufficient. But everything, at certain moments, yearns for that land of the soul....to be pure means rediscovering that country of the soul where the throbbing of blood mingles with the violent pulsations of the afternoon sun. It is a well known fact that we always recognize our homeland when we are about to lose it. Those whose self-torments are too great are those whom their homeland rejects...In the summer of Algiers I learn that only one thing is more tragic than suffering, and that is the life of a happy man.
>
> (Camus 1970 pp. 89–90)

Chapter Two

'Between Hell and Reason': The Poetics and Politics of Rebellion

One must isolate an event in history that will take on the value of a sign.

—Michel Foucault

Revolutionaries are more formalistic than conservatives.

—Italo Calvino

Aristotle is deemed to have stated once (if the internet be a reliable source of authentic quotations) that poverty is the mother of rebellion. When Albert Camus put an affirmative stamp of sorts on this declaration by asserting that, in his days of poverty, even his "revolts were lit up by the sun" (1970: p. 18), one found it necessary to interrogate his rebelliousness to a certain extent, and to attempt to look at this *radicality* vis-à-vis his exiled position. Situating his revolutionary impulses in relation to the singular *insider–outsider* rank he enjoyed with respect to civilian status in and outside Algeria and France is an intriguing task, considering the fact that his convictions seem to undergo specific degrees of alteration when locational loyalties manifest themselves in the form of two different, unrelated, yet embroiled warfares (embroiled meaning not *only* to the extent that warfares are always embroiled)—the World War II and, later, the Algerian War. Specific to the question of revolutionary ethics is the analysis of his works, which lead to an interrogation of the amendments he made unto his own ideals as time elapsed between his pre-lapsarian Algerian presence and his complex and dual existence as a French citizen who took an active part in the Resistance. Here, as always, he seems to be maintaining the characteristic in-betweenness that I have, by this time, come to associate with his works and his philosophy, and which arrests revolution at the precise turn where unreason takes over. The enquiry that assumes utmost importance in this case is whether revolution is possible without a certain degree of unreason, or whether Camus seeks to define rebellion as the most supreme, the absolute reason.

In the three sections of this chapter, I propose to look at the three phases of Albert Camus' political engagements, the sensitization of his literature to political events in and around his world, and his gradual metamorphosis into a voice of dissent amongst his own creed, which led to his falling out with many a comrade, with many a friend. The tyranny that

mankind unleashed upon itself in the name of war, the fight for freedom, the understanding of the very nature of that freedom, the fear for and of that very freedom, negotiate their place in his journalism as well as other personal and public documents. The transformation of individual memory and the subject's authorial position as a witness to events which prove to be auto-historical into a public archive ensues in his journalistic phase, where he already takes up the responsibility of a spectator, an observer and a recorder of movements. It is curious to note that this new functionality that his writing adopts is not in conflict with his role as the myth-maker. In fact, it lends a magic-realistic aura to his writings, blending image and memory, reason and imagination, incisive logic and plaintive nostalgia.

Even as he allegorizes 'The Myth of Sisyphus', and transfers the tragic doom of 'Helen's Exile' on to the contextual planes of ontological debates, his political activism seems devoted towards the liberation of Paris and he argues for an amicable resolution of the problem of Algeria. The strange concoction of literary devices that he summons to aid at this point of time is indeed no less than a revelation. He proliferates myriad tresses (traces) of language, in various forms, publishing in this single prodigious span of time an incredible volume of journalistic articles, lectures, novels, plays, essays and notebooks. He engages in the most active political and literary debates of his times and, more often than not, emerges scathed and battle-weary, having made more foes than friends. His commitment to leftist ideology, however strongly forged during his early days as an activist, falters on occasions. His historical confrontation with Sartre embodies the most arduous struggle between his personal and philosophical choices and commitments.

All this time, he deals with two most important concepts, both in theory and praxis, of literature and society—the act of revolution and the fact of freedom. His efforts to find a way from one to the other, his engagements with the ideational and pragmatic manifestations of democracy, his understanding of the rebel mind, and his analysis of democratic and criminal violence—all form part of the discourse generated out of these two bases. Structurally, therefore, this phase assumes a pyramidal shape, emerging through various, seemingly disconnected time zones and localized and global events, but culminating into the possibility of a single metaphor—the concept of absurdity, which I deal with in the third chapter. For the understanding of that metaphysics of violence, one must start with the physicality of it—the blatant face of tyranny, and the subtle nuances of oppression, the distinctions between revolt, revolution and rebellion, and the way Camus came in touch with them and reacted to them. Only then may one at all undertake an analytical expostulation on his philosophical development.

I. Between the Literature and the Left: Finding an Individual Genre in Political Opinion

> *There is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct or more uncertain in its success than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things.*
>
> —Niccolo Machiavelli

'Whoever heard of an existentialist journalist?'—This was my thought precisely as I turned over the pages of one of the many of Albert Camus' biographies. Sure enough, there are enough instances in history of journalists turning into writers, but there is perhaps hardly any instance of writers turning into journalists. By 1935, according to his biographer Herbert Lottman, Camus had already started maintaining a notebook which would contain "literary jottings, ideas and outlines for stories, novels, plays, notes on reading" (p. 85), which have now been collectively published.

Also important, on the other hand, is the fact that around the same time, France, and by extension, Algeria, were already gravitating towards the centre of global politics. May 2, 1935, was the date of the Franco-Soviet Treaty of Mutual Assistance, which was a bilateral pact between France and the Soviet Union to contain the aggressive foreign policy adopted by Germany as signalled by its decision to rearm and militarize the Rhineland, against the stringent conditions laid down in the Treaty of Versailles. The treaty was signed by two politicians who came, eventually, to be deemed as two of the most infamous men in world history—Pierre Laval, the Prime Minister of France (who came to be known for his extreme ideological flexibility when he shuttled from ultranationalist affiliations to independent Leftism, and later, for his co-operation with German Occupiers during the Second World War in the deportation of Jews and industrial conscription) and Joseph Stalin, the archvillain of the gruesome drama of totalitarianism about to unfold in the Soviet Union. France had ostensibly made a choice between the two evils: between Hitler and Stalin, it had chosen the latter. This temporal overlapping of two of the most crucial aspects of any author's life, the personal and the political, perhaps makes Albert Camus what he is—an anomaly: not a political writer, but a poetic journalist.

Camus' interest in politics took an active turn, since the political climate of Europe was already heating up in preparation for the scourge of war that was about to hit it in a few

years' time. Left politics was gaining ground in France, and the youth populace found itself irrevocably drawn to its radical practices, being, in Hannah Arendt's words, "sucked into politics as though with the force of a vacuum" (quoted in Judt p. 105). Camus, suffering from tuberculosis and spending a few weeks in convalescence, wrote to friend and teacher Jean Grenier, who was to remain a life-long advisor to him, in a letter dated August 21, 1935:

> You are right when you advise me to join the Communist Party. I shall do it on my return from the Balearics. I confess that everything draws me to them and that I had made up my mind to undertake this experiment. The objections I have to Communism, it seems to me it would be better to live with them.
>
> ... I don't say that this is orthodox. But in the experiment (sincere) that I shall attempt, I shall always refuse to place a volume of *Capital* between life and mankind.
>
> ... It seems to me that, more than ideas, life often leads to Communism ... I have such a strong desire to help reduce the sum of unhappiness and of bitterness that empoisons mankind.
>
> (quoted in Lottman p. 89)

There are certain very obvious deductions that one may perhaps safely undertake from this passage. First, there is a palpable resonance of the fact that far from being ideologically brainwashed into becoming a formal Party member, he saw it as an intellectual exercise, calling it an 'experiment', which, as all experiments must, in its time will reach either a positive or a negative inference. He straddles the same in-between space of the land that lies amidst the self and the other, since he clearly states that his reasons are as much personal and intellectual as they are humanitarian and social.

Second, leading from this, is the fact that he never relinquishes individual opinion as an exercise in virtual redundancy in the face of Communist collectivism, and is quite unambiguous in his understanding that ideology has to be individually mediated. In his claim that he would never place '*Capital* between life and mankind', he underscores the necessity of ideology to be conceived and considered not as a dogma but as a debate, which might leave it open-ended and therefore subject to reforms and amendments. He is already sure that he has 'objections' to Communism, but subordinates them to his stronger urge to be a part of the movement which, as it were, seemed to be going against history.

Third, there is a clear indication that a certain philosophical emphasis is being placed on humanitarian impulses, and the hope that mankind may still redeem itself. In his desire to 'reduce' that burden of unhappiness, he simultaneously expresses an optimism that belies existentialist overtures, and it is this that leads later to his breach with existentialism too.

Whether this attitude abides by the appropriate definitions of suitability of a candidate who was about to enrol himself in the French Communist Party is a matter of debate, but further evidence suggests that his 'experiment' did not exactly yield the results he had hoped for. He had envisioned Communism as embodying an intellectual culture of progress, and proceeded forthwith to reinforce the communion by "bringing friends together in a theatre group which would also be a form of political action" (Lottman p.91). As a young activist in his third and final year at the University of Algiers, he set out to change the political system with an enthusiasm which only the mad and the young can muster.

However, there were impediments in virtually every sphere, and being an Algerian-French did not help matters much:

> An effort of imagination will have to be made to understand the position of the French Communist Party in Algeria in the mid-1930s. To understand, first of all, its relative insignificance. In all it hardly controlled a hundred active members in the capital; it was a tour de force for its leaders to make up a list of thirty-five candidates at election time.
>
> (Lottman p. 92)

The political and social climate in Algeria, though related to and influenced by mainland France, was still exceedingly different from it. Algeria was ruled by a proconsul, under the pressure of a hard-boiled cabinet of colonial settlers who were not amenable to any reconstruction or reform. Public life in Algeria was also incomparable to that of Paris, with a free reign of so-called democratic forces unleashed by the Third Republic's irresponsible colonial political measures. Algeria was "governed like a frontier post, with frontier law" (Lottman p. 92). Moreover, the central paradox of being a Communist in a colonial settlement, and trying to reconcile radicality to the concept of the Empire, was a hard fact to come by. The role of an in-between Communist, as Camus saw himself, became a source of frustration and anxiety:

> If one could be a Communist openly in Paris, it was hard to be a Communist in Algiers. By encouraging Algerian nationalism (for in the 1930s the Moslem majority lacked even minimal rights), by contributing to the development of progressive organizations among Moslems not only in North Africa but (among migrant workers) in mainland France, the Communists were sure to be feared and despised. They were soon also to be prosecuted, and their local leader would have to flee Algiers for the more reasonable climate of wartime Spain to escape a prison term.
>
> (Lottman p. 92)

At the time of Camus' joining the Party, the Algerian branch was not yet autonomous, and was still very much a regional division of the French Party, with its headquarters in Paris. The topographical disjunct only made the ideological disjunct more palpable. The French-Algerian members resented being commanded by the metropolitan centre, and believed that the priorities of the Communist Party in Algeria should have been legitimately completely different from the Party commitments in Paris. There was an eminent feeling of dissatisfaction, as being treated as a "boy scout" (Lottman p. 93), and being the subservient Party cadre was neither stimulating for Camus' intellectual pride nor his philanthropic impulses. Elie Mignot, a permanent official of the local Party unit "felt that Camus and his young friends were enlisting in the Party out of emotional feeling: [as a] revolt against colonialism" (Lottman p. 93). This information from a comrade and compatriot becomes supremely important, especially in the light of later accusations of his being a believer in benign assimilative colonialism.

Meanwhile, the seeds of revolt that could not germinate in the wake of localised Communist exercises remained dormant and metamorphosed into literary efforts. Camus began to devote his efforts in the organisation of avant-garde, left-wing theatre in Algeria. It was important for him to break out of the cultural complicity of Communism which conveniently stagnated in the pools of defunct artistic forms, and to try to keep abreast with the radical art movements already established in other parts of the world. His Brechtian inclination to revolutionary theatre en route to making theatre an 'art form of the people' took a new course in Algeria. To that effect, he established, in 1935 itself, with the help of like-minded leftist intellectuals, the Labour Theatre or Théâtre du Travail. In the Manifesto tract printed for the inauguration of the group, Camus writes:

A Labour Theatre is being organized in Algiers thanks to collective and benevolent efforts. This theatre is aware of the artistic value inherent in all mass literature, wishes to demonstrate that it is sometimes advantageous to art to descend from its ivory tower, and believes that the essence of beauty is inseparable from a certain sense of humanity. These ideas are hardly original ... Its effort is to restore some human values and not to present new subjects of reflection.

It has been necessary to adapt means of production to theatrical aims. Thus some innovation in the staging and the scenery, through the application of conceptions until now unknown to Algiers.

(quoted in Lottman p. 96)

The application of 'conceptions until now unknown' emphasises his avant-garde sympathies and his uttermost efforts to bring the peripheral aesthetic life of a colonised space like Algeria out of the rut into which it was forever in danger of receding. This also somewhat clarifies why he refused to perceive either literature or politics as an end in and for itself. For him, one inevitably led to the other, since both, for him, introduced something new—'conceptions until now unknown'—in the system of things. They were both agents of radicalism, harbingers of change. If he had to woo people to a new philosophy of politics, he knew he had to initiate a novelty in the ways that could be employed to attract them to it. As a critical tool, theatre, for him, presented itself as the perfect medium to launch a pubic forum for political ideology, and hence, he pursued it with all the vehemence of youthful activism.

On 25 January 1936, the Théâtre du Travail gave the first performance of Camus' dramatic adaptation of Malraux's *Le Temps du mépris* (*Days of Wrath*). The choice of the play was symbolic in its own terms, since Malraux had written it as a contribution to the campaign for the liberation of the incarcerated German anti-Nazis. In the spring of the same year, Camus and his friends—Jeanne Sicard and Marguerite Dobrenn—rented a house above the bay in Algiers, which he called '*la Maison Devant le Monde*' (House above the World), intending this place as a 'den' or a workplace of sorts. In May 1936, Edmond Charlot published a most violently revolutionary play, *Révolte dans les Asturies* (*Revolt in Asturias*), a collaborative venture, with text by Camus, Jeanne Sicard, Bourgeois and Poignant, the two latter having been his teachers at the Algerian lycée. The play, based on the events of a 1934 revolt in Oviedo by a group of anarchist Spanish mine-workers, was violent in its concern for revolutionary justice and incisive in its reclamation of proletarian rights to freedom.

The play brought Camus more trouble than he would have bargained for. He received a summons from the City Hall, and the Mayor, Augustin Rozis, was quoted by a Communist publication, *L'Algérie Ouvrière*, as having banned the play on the pretext of it dealing with a "subject [that] is dangerous during election time" (quoted in Lottman p. 102). In protest, Camus organised public meetings and demonstrations, wrote to the Algerian press, arranged for more private performances of the play, and finally, anonymously published the play through the devices of Edmond Charlot, selling out five hundred copies in less than a fortnight. His popularity in literary circles was already established beyond doubt or denial, as were his revolutionary credentials.

This, however, could not obscure the dilemma that was by this time taking gigantic proportions in Camus' mind. The earlier ambivalence in his position vis-à-vis Communism had already developed into a full-fledged aversion to the facile ideological hypocrisy of the Party. His sympathy to the Algerian cause, by this time, had directly fallen into conflict with the Communist policies. Philip Thody helpfully furnishes readers with more information on his activities at this time when he says that despite being doubtful of the Party's decision to have "given [him] the task of spreading propaganda among the Moslems ... Camus worked enthusiastically, but in 1935 the Franco-Russian alliance and the needs of Russian foreign policy had led to a change of party line towards the Arabs, and [in 1937] he left the party in disgust" (p. 5).

His departure from the Communist Party did not put an end to his ideological adherence to Marxism in general. Théâtre du Travail, which changed its nomenclature to Théâtre de l'Equipe in 1937 following Camus' exit from the Party, was altered in its name but remained dedicated to the people's cause. His next step, which also takes one to the next section of this chapter, was to join a newspaper as a regular professional journalist. *Alger-Républicain*, with its initial number published on October 6, 1938, auto-designated itself as a 'Newspaper of the Popular Front', and articulated as its principle aim, as Philip Thody gives us to understand, "the creation of equal rights for all Frenchmen living in Algeria, Europeans and Moslems alike, and devoted much of its space in dealing with the relationship between the two communities" (p. 7). For Camus, this presented itself as a precious opportunity and it is this that I intend to discuss in the next section of the chapter.

II. Between Resistance and Revolution: At War with Home and the World

The era of chairbound artists is over.

—Albert Camus

Justin O'Brien, one of the most well-received of Camusian scholars and translators, and who conceives of Camus as a 'militant moralist' (O'Brien p. 25), recalls his post-war tour of America and the sensational response he garnered by virtue of his journalistic fame:

> No American Francophile could remember any lecture in French that had ever drawn an audience of more than three hundred in New York. Yet, on the evening of 28 March 1946, we were to be at least four times that many in the huge auditorium at Columbia University ... To be sure it was the first such manifestation, as the French say, since the war ... A few Americans in uniform had come with copies of the newspaper *Combat*, of which Camus was said to be one of the founders.
>
> (O'Brien p. 21)

This anecdote is extremely essential in retrospect for several reasons. It significantly posits Camus at a very curious stance, in a sort of in-between place that he always coveted, as someone who was both an intellectual and a documenter, and always involved in a little bit of both. In the national territory of France, he was known more as an author, and yet, internationally, his repute as a journalist who ran a clandestine, underground resistance newspaper, preceded him. It is noteworthy that this was a time when reportage was a profession which was divested of the glamour that it is associated with in current times. A reporter of some considerable reputation was a phenomenon unheard of in most parts of the world. And yet, people came, not on the basis of his name as a novelist, but on the currency of his eminence as an essayist and columnist. It is also worth mentioning that, until his death in 1960, he had never ever extricated himself from this profession, and always preferred the label of a 'professional journalist' to the one designating him as an 'intellectual'.

The genealogical strain of his theory of revolution, incidentally, acquired its manifestations from the praxis of it. Unlike many a case where theory precedes praxis, his was an instance where the theory gets constructed through and by his direct involvement in situations which demanded emphatic interventionist action, including colonial Algeria and

war-ridden France. His participation in these events led him to gradually purge his juvenile concepts of personal and political insurrections and reform a new and more mature idea of the responsibilities entailed in a situation that require defiance of legality and administration.

When he had begun to write for *Alger-Rèpublicain* in 1938, he had immediately incurred administrative wrath for his intervention into matters of political importance. He followed what Jeanyves Guerin calls "the pro-Dreyfus tradition" (Guerin p. 81), taking avid interest in a number of causes that eventually guaranteed his expulsion from the already volatile Algerian state. Chief amongst these was the initiative he exhibited in the reclamation of justice for Algerian Arabs.[1] In a scathing criticism of the callousness of French colonial exponents, he wrote in an article called 'Famine in Kabylia' in the same year:

> I think I can state that at least fifty percent of the population sustains itself on herbs and roots while waiting for assistance from administrative charity in the form of distribution of grains.... At dawn in Tizi-Ouzou I saw children in rags fight with Kabyle dogs over the contents of a garbage can. To my questions people answered, 'It's like that every morning.'
>
> (quoted in Quilliot p. 41)

Deriding what he termed as a slave economy or, more precisely, "a regime of slavery" (quoted in Quilliot p. 42), he combines ethical exhortation with a wealth of statistics to demonstrate the overpopulated masses, the lack of education, the derisory "insulting wages" (Quilliot p. 42) as he calls them—and the terrible inference ... the fact that "the wretchedness of this country is frightening" (quoted in Guerin p. 82). Guerin further quotes a whole passage to testify to the fact that Albert Camus, despite detractorial claims to the contrary, was not a naïve believer in the virtues of benign assimilative colonialism:

> An entire population is being humiliated. The fact that the road network is in a bad state, that the schools, for which people are clamouring, and the dispensaries are so few and far between, that there is water shortage, all this is the fault, not of the inhabitants, but of the colonial government. Kabylia has been left to rot.
>
> (quoted in Guerin p. 82)

[1] Say David Zane Mairowitz and Alain Korkos, "...the innate injustice of the Algerian situation was the real breeding ground for his political education. Even though Camus was convinced ... to join the Communist Party (CP) with its international bent, his concern and emphasis would always be Algeria, however much he grieved for the world-at-large" (Mairowitz and Korkos p. 30).

The debilitation occasioned by the secretion of colonial injustices, flowing like virile poison through the limpid veins of Algeria, takes up the majority of the article's spatial content. He lashes out at the blatant practices of discrimination and racialisation prevalent beneath the assimilative exteriority of the French government, and evokes the minimalist myth about the Kabylian civilization only to destroy it:

> I know of nothing more despicable than these arguments. It is despicable to say that these people adapt themselves to any condition … It is despicable to say that these people do not have the same needs as we have. If they had no such needs as these before, we would have created them a long time ago. It is strange to see how the very nature of a people can be used to justify the debasement in which one keeps them, and how the proverbial reticence of the Kabyle peasant can legitimize the hunger which gnaws his stomach.
>
> (quoted in Quilliot p. 42)

The famine in Kabylia he associated with the larger moribund policies deployed by the colonial government to extricate itself from responsible involvement with an ostensibly unequal subject, and he rues the fact that France was trying its evil best not to alter the skewed dialectic thus imposed on a subordinated mass even when history was gradually dictating otherwise. The efforts of the Popular Front, though he had already left the Party, were not be undercut by his objective analysis of the political deadlock that Algeria was rapidly becoming, and Camus freely applauded the Leftist efforts (even whilst emphasising that they were still far from undertaking any *real* revolutionary action) as did he condemn the administration's baleful motives in the maltreatment of the Arabs:

> In 1936, the Blum-Violette Project made the first step, after seventeen years of stagnation, toward a policy of assimilation. *It proposed nothing revolutionary.* It took up once again the proposal to grant civil rights and electoral status to 60,000 Mohammedans. The relatively modest project raised an immense hope among the Arab population … The powerful 'colons' grouped in financial committees and in the Association of Algerian Mayors set in movement such a counteroffensive that the project was not even presented before Parliament.
>
> (quoted in Quilliot pp. 40–41)

It is around this time that his ethics of revolution gradually starts taking shape, leaving behind its anonymous, amorphous silhouette, and becomes a new force in the political opinion of his generation. He was no longer publishing radical content anonymously, and he took up the role of an independent revolutionary who went ahead and declared war on the government all by himself. His seditious writings not only excavated the fate of a "civilization handicapped by poverty without precedent, and repressed by special laws and inhuman regulations" (quoted in Lottman p. 133), he also undertook a campaign petitioning to uphold the Blum-Violette electoral reform "as a step in the total parliamentary emancipation of the Moslems" (quoted in Lottman p. 133), and all of this, despite the presence of a very strong military censorship.

It is indeed naïve to believe that a man of his intelligence and foresight would not pre-empt a reactionary response from the government. He adds, in anticipation of the same, the following words. Martin Crowley quotes a part of the same essay to illustrate his indifference to administrative opinion in pursuit of public opinion at this point:

> Apparently, to reveal the poverty of a part of France is, today, to be a bad Frenchman. I have to say that it is difficult, today, to know how to be a Frenchman ... But it is at least possible to know what constitutes a just man. And I persist in thinking that France can be no better represented and defended than by acts of justice.[2]
>
> (quoted in Crowley p. 96)

His knowledge of the fact that investigative journalism and demands of amendments for Algerians would not excite the ruling class to a great degree made him more obstinate in his already-resolute antagonism.

These were not the only measures that he took to ensure that the government sat up and took notice of things. He devoted eleven articles, records Guerin, to the trial of Michael Hodent, an overscrupulous government employee, and the victim of a plot by powerful colonial interests. He also took an avid interest in the case of one Sheikh Okbi, a Muslim dignitary accused of having instigated the murder of a religious official, and also, later in that of a number of locals who were brought to trial for setting fire to some buildings. His articles

[2] This is an indication of his very private notional (moral) understanding of justice, particularly social justice, which he extends to individual subjects as well, and which I take up in Chapter Three.

and campaigns played an important role in the acquittal of those accused, and the intersection of his charitable intentions with governmental procedures came perilously close to treason. While defending Hodent, who had refused to relinquish his conscientious principles just to accommodate the profiteering tendencies of French land-owners (called *colons*), and was therefore controversially incarcerated for four months without any proof and held incommunicado, Camus wrote:

> On one side, there are still men who wish to carry out the duty which they have chosen and accepted, and, on the other, an élite of *colons*, *caids*, and administrators who decide to prevent that duty from being performed as soon as it began to have an effect upon their profits.
>
> (quoted in Thody p. 9)

To no one's surprise, therefore, his newspaper—run afoul of the draconian censorship regulations—was shut down in a few months' time, and he found himself to be eminently unemployable because of official hostility and the disrepute he garnered as a potential rabble-rouser. Things worsened when the second world war broke out in 1939, and Camus found himself occupying the same in-between space of inconvenient wisdom, when he refused to blame Germany completely for the state of war that was inflicted on unsuspecting nations. He reminded the French of their irresponsible act of forcing the Treaty of Versailles down Germany's gullet twenty years back, which far increased the probabilities of another war in a couple of decades' time. In his view, writes Jeanyves Guerin, "it was not only Nazi Germany that was responsible for the war; neighbouring countries had to take a share of responsibility because of their self-interest" (Guerin p. 83). His *betweenness* even in the dire days of war is not, argues Roger Quilliot, a reflection of his ambivalent political position, which was clearly directed against Nazis, but rather indicative of a refusal to play the game by expected rules which demand a convenient annexure of blames as to which side started it all:

> Like Montaigne refusing to choose between Guelphs and Ghibelines, like Romain Rolland combatting both French and German lies, Camus wanted 'to place himself in the no man's land between two armies and preach, in the midst of bullets, that war is a deception and that bloodshed, if it sometimes carries history forward, carries it forward to further cruelty and suffering'.
>
> (Quilliot p. 44)

Now "a threat to national security" (Mairowitz and Korkos p. 36), he was finally forced out of the country (the *Gouvernment Général* 'advised' him to leave) in 1940, and started looking for employment in Paris. A more critical time cannot be imagined for an author and reporter, both in terms of an excess of events and a dearth of opportunities wherein he could insert himself in this discursive trail of violence. Trapped between two contending discourses emerging in the forms of colonial enterprise and war (which also, perversely, was initiated to stall the other party's territorial expansion), Camus immediately plunged into the political scene that was characteristic of him whilst he was in Algeria.

The change of location from Algeria to metropolitan France allowed for many minute spaces of subversion as only the urban dungeons of a dystopic city can provide. A city can be a space of subterfuge. It has the advantage of being a space for the obscure and the invisible. Away from the all-revealing light of the Algerian sun, Camus sought refuge in the subterranean world of the big city. He joined the Resistance even while he was basking in the glory of his first novel, inadequately translatable as *The Stranger*, in 1942. Camus finally began work as a reader in the Editions Gallimard, the very same publisher who published his writings in Paris, and around the same time, in 1943, he was appointed the Editor-in-Chief of the underground newspaper *Combat* which represented various Resistance groups and had been in publication irregularly since December 1941. Camus regularised the clandestine *Combat* as a mode of active protest, and became a consistent contributor to it under the *nom de guerre* of Beauchard. Mairowitz and Korkos explain his motives:

> Camus was not about to take up weapons and rush to the *marquis* where an armed movement was slowly taking shape after two years of German occupation. But he was ready to fight in his own way, as a writer and man of communication.
>
> The *Combat* group was founded in 1942, basically for intelligence-gathering and sabotaging of German military compounds. But from its inception, it distinguished itself from the more conservative resistance movement led by General de Gaulle in London. *Combat* saw the liberation of France as only the beginning of its struggle, and hoped for sweeping political changes afterwards.
>
> (Mairowitz and Korkos p. 83)

The extension of the narrative of justice from private protestation to mobilised public offensive became now visible in his columns. The remarkable fact, though, was his belief not in armed conflict but in ideology, and the conviction in non-violent demonstration of will. He attested to the force of civilian assertions of resistance in his *Combat* articles:

> I have always believed that if people who placed their hopes in the human condition were mad, those who despaired of events were cowards. Henceforth there will be only one honourable choice: to wager everything on the belief that in the end words will prove stronger than bullets.
>
> (Camus 2006 p. vii)

The very mechanism of the publication and circulation of this paper became, albeit small, a somewhat revolutionary act. Its importance in the Resistance cannot be negated. It worked through an entirely subterranean network of writers, reporters, informers, editors, printers and circulators, taking extraordinary measures to stay out of the predatory clutches of the Gestapo. Mairowitz and Korkos explain the rather protracted and risk-ridden process:

> Pages would be made up and reproduced in reduced format and put onto zinc plates which would then be distributed to various clandestine printers throughout France. The next hurdle would be to get the printed paper out to the public. A valise full of copies would be sent by train from Lyon, then collected at the Gare de Lyon in Paris by someone pretending to be its owner. Afterwards, copies were shipped in crates to false addresses with fake labels like "cleaning supplies" or something equally innocuous.
>
> (Mairowitz and Korkos p. 84)

Camus procured a number of false identity papers, and even got caught once in a street round-up, while carrying the new masthead for *Combat* along with the actress Maria Casarès. These little acts of revolt were important with respect to the larger frame, and Camus, says David Carroll, in his foreword titled 'Albert Camus—Political Journalist in the Age of Terror', "along with his Resistance comrades … was fully engaged not only in reporting but also in the daily political struggles for freedom, first in occupied and later in liberated France" (Camus 2006 p. viii). Being a witness to the atrocities of war and the decrepitude of dictatorship forged his scattered ideas of resistance picked up over the years, and they now came together in a conglomeration of notions, as David Carrol puts it:

> ... Camus enthusiastically supported the idea of a 'liberal revolution' that would result in the formation of a social democracy in France. His support of 'revolution' might surprise some readers ... but after the rout of the French army at the beginning of the war, the destruction of the Third Republic by the parliamentary vote that granted Maréchal Pétain 'full powers' and thus absolute authority, followed by four years of German Occupation and the Vichy rule, it is not difficult to imagine the reasons for such enthusiasm ... on the part of a writer like Camus, whose political commitments and journalistic experience before the war had been on the political left.
>
> (Camus 2006 pp. viii–ix)

The editorial content was vigorous in its presence in all matters that could have been deemed necessitous to the political climate of France, and Europe in general. Camus was fervent in his assertion that 'political order' was not the order of the day, and that the chaos of war had to be encountered headlong with the chaotic principles of revolt. For those intellectuals who expostulated on the need of orderly action, he had no patience. In the vehemence of sarcasm, he stated in one of the editorials, dated October 12, 1944:

> There is much talk of order right now. This is because order is a good thing, and we have sorely felt its lack. The fact is that the men of our generation have never known order at all, and the nostalgia they feel for it might make them do many imprudent things if they weren't also convinced that it ought to be indistinguishable from truth. This makes them somewhat suspicious and careful when it comes to choosing among the samples of order that have been proposed to them.
>
> For order is also an obscure notion. It comes in several kinds. There is the order that continues to reign at Warsaw, there is the order that hides disorder, and there is the order that Goethe loved, which stands opposed to justice.
>
> (Camus 2006 p. 68)

This response is vital in understanding Camus' philosophy of revolt as the force of anarchy necessary to bring 'order', which he associated with systemic violence, to a close. He appeals to his readers to amend their notions of civil codes since 'restoration of order' is not always the way to social justice. This is also the reason for his refusal to accept an unconditional return to the compromised values and practices of the French Third Republic at the end of the war.

A new style was also emerging in Camus' articles—that of a rigorously following historical eventualities which went unnoticed in many nations, and extracting from this territorialized body of practices a content which he called "critical journalism" or "the journalism of ideas" (Camus 2006 p. 32). This entailed informing the public not only what the media prioritised as the most important news, but also enlightening them about politico-philosophical issues related to worldwide civilizational changes and the efforts and interest elicited from masses on these accounts. Concurrently, arguing that the media should have more functions than that of becoming a war-archive, he also pointed out the shortcomings of the French press which had a sordid propensity to stale political news, and ceased to make any intellectual or cultural contribution to the discursive domain of public knowledge, maintaining that he was "defending not a position but an ethos" (Camus 2006 p. 58).

While people were mostly busy with the spoils of victory or the discredits of defeat, Camus concerned himself with peripheral global data, especially those related to the empire and the way colonies were to be dealt with in the aftermath of the war. He devoted extensive press footage to the policies and decisions of European nations with regards to their colonies, and scoffed at French efforts at regaining prestige in Algeria which he deemed as nothing but exercises in futility, advising the French government to try to "win hearts" instead of forcefully penetrating North African minds with their unwelcome presence. He gave unbridled support to the Underground Press Federation in its protest against the "ordinances published in the *Officiel* concerning the publication and operation of the newspapers" (Camus 2006 p. 57). Of extreme consequence in this context is his position on prisoners of war:

> Of men defeated in battle and now in danger of being forgotten ... those defeated soldiers have no need of anyone to plead their cause for them. They are men of our generation, we suffered defeat along with them.... Neither your suffering nor ours was in vain. In truth it was the same suffering, and what we shared in distress, today we must recover in grandeur. For it was your refusal, coupled with our rebellion, that made us what we are.
>
> (Camus 2006 p. 36)

When the Vichy years ended and the new French government was being founded, Camus reminded the French nation of the need to incorporate revolutionary ethics into the new French constitution. In an editorial called 'From Resistance to Revolution', dated August 21, 1944, Camus anticipates that,

> In the days to come we will define, through our actions as well as in a series of articles, the content of the word 'revolution'. For the time being, however, *this word gives meaning to our preference for energy and honor*, to our decision to be done with the spirit of mediocrity and the moneyed interests and with a social state whose *ruling class failed in all its duties* and demonstrated a lack of both intelligence and heart. We want without delay to institute a *true people's and workers' democracy* ... [which] will contribute the *principles of freedom*.... We believe that any politics that cuts itself off from the working class is futile ...
>
> (Camus 2006 p. 13, emphasis added)

His Marxist affiliations are still a very clear indicator of his alliances, since he still speaks the language of Communism. He associates the revolutionary ethic to 'work ethic', and contends that revolution can only be brought about through the humility of the working class, and through its inherent energy and honour, which has been historically staked at the altar of high politics. There is, however, a subtle shift in his definition of demands that constitute a revolutionary ideal in state politics, which gradually becomes clarified once one continues with the same passage in 'From Resistance to Revolution':

> That is why we want *immediate implementation of a Constitution that will restore full guarantees of freedom and justice*; serious *structural reforms*, without which any politics of freedom would be a sham; merciless *destruction of the trusts and moneyed interests*; and a foreign policy based on honor and loyalty ... *In the present state of affairs, such a program goes by the name of 'Revolution'.*
>
> (Camus 2006 p. 13, emphasis added)

This is where he induces personality into politics—by which I do not merely mean the induction of his own personal ideas into the language of Communism, but the inclusion of the characteristics of an age into the demands that are being forwarded for its benefit. He therefore not only attempts to signify the importance of the working class as the historical agent of revolution, but articulates the requirement of suitably modifying the revolutionary criterion as moving from the extremism of anarchy to the moderation of democracy. His philosophy of politics, therefore, borders on the design of *revolutionising democracy* or *democratising revolution*. The proposal is, in other words, to combine the potency of the two historical ideals to establish an ethics of state revolution.

There is also an emphatic accent on the words 'freedom' and 'justice', which introduces two new paradigms into the discourse of revolution. Revolt or rebellion, generally conceived of as a force of mayhem that follows a trajectory outside legality, is, for Camus, the very upholder of the virtues of justice. This paradox works out in several of his plays and essays. It is his gradual gravitation towards the ideals of justice, sourced as a superior principle over and above the ethics of revolution, that will finally lead to his breach with the Left Bank intellectuals of Paris, notably Jean-Paul Sartre, who had hitherto been a close friend, comrade and literary associate to Camus for more than a decade.

This period of change plants the seeds of *L'Homme révolté*, translated into English as *The Rebel: An Essay of Man in Revolt*, which he would write almost about a decade later, in 1951, and which many construe as a scathing attack on Marxist revolutionary ideals and therefore a final testament to his prodigality.

III. Between Narratives of Legality and Justice: The Rebel as Law

> *Probably every generation sees itself as charged with re-making the world. Mine, however, knows that it will not remake the world. But its task is perhaps even greater, for it consists in keeping the world from destroying itself.*
>
> —Albert Camus

The collective fear of extinction in an age of terror is what drives the human civilization and dictates its policies. Camus' time was not yet the postnational age: it was, on the contrary, the age of nations. Postcolonial nations had woken up from centuries of slumber and were now driven by the anguish of sufferance and injustices unredeemed. Countries ravaged by war were seething under the yoke of peace treaties when all they wanted was to avenge their state of destitute ruination. Events, even post war, were unfolding at a violent pace, and the rabid poison of war had left many unhealed fissures which were, under no circumstances, going to be alleviated by any means. These fissures were eventually to prove themselves to be, each in itself, and collectively, personal and political deadlocks from which generations of narration would find it difficult to be able to extricate the trauma.

There is perhaps enough evidence of this in the fact that the war had left churning in its wake at least three different discourses of genocide that were unresponsive to treatment—the holocaust, the dropping of the atomic bomb, and the gradual unravelment of Stalinist *realpolitik*. Albert Camus, like every man who lived through the war only to die the truth of it, was witness to all of these events, which I can only call proto-incidence in the history of mass violence. These three discourses characterised the present age as an age of terror, and homogenised the fear of death into a uniform dread of mass destruction because of the invention of apocalyptic agents of annihilation. This was the age of the American nuclear energy, the German gas chambers and the Soviet *oruziye massovovo porazheniya*. The age that revolutionised the art of wilful extermination.

The propulsion of civilization to a mutually assured destruction[3] of itself was an anomaly that had to be reconciled with the poetics of literary truth. The politics of violence, whether revolutionary or reactionary, could not always reconcile with the poetics of justice. Poetics could no longer compensate, as it once was capable of, the loss of a whole world.

For Albert Camus, the ethics of violence became a force to contend with. He especially could not get over the fact that two out of the three aforementioned grievous mass murders, that of Germany and the Soviet Union, were instances of premeditated state violence committed by *autocratic* political powers, and one of them, particularly, had been perpetrated by an ostensibly Communist *regime*. The development of these fascist forces were to him the symptomatic civilizational plague that he apprehends and allegorises in *La Peste* (1947), translated into English as *The Plague*, where communal solidarity and participation finds a perverse articulation in a pestilential epidemic, suffering and agony now no longer the subjective possession of antiheroes like Mersault in *The Stranger* (1942). Individualism was very rapidly becoming a luxury one could not afford.

Yet it is clear that Camus did not lose his own individual vision or understanding. His aversion to dogmatic convictions made him flexible in his opinions and observations, and he was ready to metamorphose his ideas to accommodate the strange new face of the community that was rising like a black sun in the century of gloom. He delved into the very root of the problem, and went as back as the French Revolution of 1769 to decipher the true meaning of

[3] Lest one make a mistake in assuming that the phrase is randomly descriptive of accidental motives, one must know that 'Mutual Assured Destruction' has been an actuality for some time now as a premeditated condition of human existence. At the helm of the Cold War, the US arsenal of thermonuclear weapons was deemed necessary to stall an attack from the Soviet Union. Mutual Assured Destruction was the logic of this preventive accumulation.

revolution, and to thereby infer whether the definition of 'revolution', as Crane Brinton had specifically rued in 1938, had indeed "at one end of its spectrum of meanings ... come in common usage to be hardly more than an emphatic synonym for 'change', perhaps with a suggestion of sudden or striking change" (Brinton p. 3).

Central to the tendentious project of revolution is the concept of justice, and its explication, as David Miller points out while discussing Hume's theory of justice, as a moral virtue. If "distinction between virtue and vice is logically prior to that between right and wrong", contends Miller, then justice also may be construed as "a virtue which man possesses" (Miller p. 157). Camus emphasises this inherent and instinctive recognition of what is just by man, and underscores the role of this cognitive mechanism in the formation of a rebel psychology:

> What is a rebel? A man who says no, but whose refusal does not imply a renunciation. He is also a man who says yes, from the moment he makes his first gesture of rebellion.... What does he mean by saying 'no'? He means, for example, that 'this has been going too far', 'up to this point, yes, beyond it no'.... In other words, his no affirms the existence of a borderline. *The same concept is to be found in the rebel's feeling that the other [party] ... is exerting his authority beyond a limit where he begins to infringe on the rights of others. Thus the movement of rebellion is founded simultaneously on the categorical rejection of an intrusion that is considered intolerable and... [the] conviction of an absolute right.... Rebellion cannot exist without the feeling that, somewhere and somehow, one is right.*
>
> (Camus 1991 p. 13, emphasis added)

It is of supreme significance to note that the concept of justice also becomes *other-regarding*, since it is based on the respect one must accord to the rights of others. Hume therefore called justice an "*artificial*" (Hume p. 190) value, which one must instinctively inculcate in oneself for social survival and avoidance of conflict and extinction. Hume's idea is essential to the formation of the structure of jurisprudence, since he clarifies that apriori assumptions of what is *right* and *wrong* underlies the fact of justice, and since these assumptions are based on subjective human conditions, the parties involved in a dispute cannot ever *objectively* decide what is fair and just because of their inability to restrain or neutralise the passions of rage and vengeance and therefore their incapacity to successfully mediate what is *just*. Paul Ricoeur discusses the same ethical paradox when he remarks:

> The first stage in the emergence of justice beyond the vengeance coincides with the feeling of indignation... What does this sense of indignation lack in order to satisfy the moral demand of a veritable sense of justice? *Essentially, it lacks a distance between the protagonists in a social game—a distance between the alleged harm done and a hasty reprisal, a distance between the imposition of an initial suffering by the offender and that of a supplementary one applied as punishment.* More fundamentally, what indignation lacks is a clear break between the initial tie [of] vengeance and justice. In fact, it is the same distance that already undercuts the claim by advocates of immediate reprisal that they themselves should directly carry out justice. *No one is authorised to do justice for himself.* This is why we speak of a *rule of justice*... The establishment of this distance requires the transition between justice as a virtue and justice as an institution.
>
> (Ricoeur 2007 p. 223, emphasis added)

Supplication for justice, therefore, is always addressed to a third party, who has no immediate discriminatory bias or predisposed connection, whether favourable or not, to either party. When this argument is overlapped with Camus' concept of revolution being based on the condition of an *absolute right*, whereby the rebel takes it upon himself to *right* a given *wrong*, we are placed with a paradox that Camus himself expands into a fundamental ethical crisis. Whereas it is agreed and ratified that one must, under any and every circumstance, protest against the infringement of his/her dignity, it is also impossible for one to maintain an objective stance while rectifying the situation or punishing the offender, it being a logic-driven action, and hence, the result of a premeditation. Retribution is forever in the danger of being in excess of crime. It is this excessiveness incipient in the event of a revolution that Camus is the most disapproving of: "Find an excess in moderation" (Camus 1970 p. 244) is the aphoristic advice to candidates of revolution that can be found in his notebook.

In both *The Rebel* and *Resistance, Rebellion and Death* (1960), therefore, he proceeds in his concept of an ideal revolution by a method of elimination. A successful revolution is necessarily one that arrests the forces of domination and takes affirmative action that may effectively neutralise the negative effects and influences of the former systems. On the other hand, he rules out extremities of reaction, including terrorism, while meting out justice to the accused. There must be a balance of moderated activism, instead of a tyrannical force which stops at nothing, and makes rebellion become as mindless as the systems it rebels against.

He cites the historical examples of French Revolution, and singles out one of the most notorious means of execution that modernity witnessed—the iconic blade of the guillotine—to inscribe onto the reader's minds the ritualistic elimination that unleashed on France a Reign of Terror after the Revolution, and the continuing affective force of that very civil mode of decapitation which was then being used for the purge trials post-World War II. His contention is that violence is the very means through which revolution ceases to be inclusively liberal and becomes exclusively collectivist. In such cases, there can be hardly a distinction between the mechanics of rebellion and that of mob-violence. Furthermore, he argues that the exemplary punishment of the guillotine, while once a symbolic historic assertion of mankind's triumph over arbitrary, autocratic powers looming large over it, had now been appropriated into the services of that very State which it had once help topple, being used as a method of exacerbating crimes against humanity, as he notes in 'Reflections on the Guillotine':

> The State disguises executions and keeps silent about [the] statements and eyewitness accounts. Hence, it doesn't believe in the exemplary value of the penalty, *except by tradition* and because it has never bothered to think about the matter. *The criminal is killed because this has been done for centuries, and, besides, he is killed in a way that was set at the end of the eighteenth century. Out of habit, people will turn to arguments that were used centuries ago*, even though these arguments must be contradicted by measures that the evolution of public sensitivity has made inevitable. *A law is applied without being thought out…*
>
> (Camus 1960 p. 186, emphasis added)

His rationale could not have been more lucid. What was a symbol of one of the greatest revolutions in the history of democracy in Europe is now an instrument of arbitrary obliteration. What was once a radical apparatus of communal action is now infamous for its compliance as an inextricable part of the tradition of state terror, since death penalty is indeed a form of state terror. What once, however revolting in its precise steeliness, could have been at least envisaged as an agent of *justice* is now a tool of *law*—a law that is carried out in a way which makes it an act of vengeance, not of justice:

> Let us call it by the name which, for lack of any other nobility, will at least give the nobility of truth, and let us recognize it for what it essentially is: a revenge.
>
> A punishment that penalizes without forestalling is indeed called revenge. It is quasi-arithmetical reply made by society to whoever breaks its primordial law. That reply is as old as man; it is called the law of retaliation. Whoever has done me harm must suffer harm; whoever has put out my eye must lose an eye; and whoever has killed must die. This is an emotion, and a particularly violent one, not a law. Law, by definition, cannot obey the same rules as nature. If murder is in the nature of man, the law is not intended to imitate or reproduce that nature. It is intended to correct it.
>
> (Camus 1960 pp. 197–198)

Camus conceives revolution to be, on the contrary, above and beyond this law of retaliation, which is a perverse consequence of man's lust for power it was hitherto bereft of. The revolutionary ethic is driven by the will to justice, in contrariness to Nietzsche's will to power. Only then can it be said to be truly embodying a collective ideal and not a mere conglomeration of individual modes of redresses. It may then revolutionise the parameters set for societal norms themselves, instead of merely altering or permutating their institutions, which the case is more often. It would be oriented then towards a social form of justice and not a legal one, a division that Paul Ricoeur's earlier contention also stated.

The necessary distinguishing factors that he proposes in the categories of legal justice and social justice are fundamentally moralistic and ethical ones, but not what one may vaguely call poetic justice. It situates the figure of the rebel in the very eye of the storm, as someone who "wants good both for himself and the others" (Camus 1991 p. 59), and who neither wants to deify himself nor revel in his own salvation, but admits that "rebellion at grips with history adds that instead of killing and dying in order to produce the being that we are not, we have to live and let live in order to create what we are" (Camus 1991 p. 252). To individualise the figure of the rebel is for him to have emphasised the role each man has to play in a collective situation. He presents every man, each a rebel, as a potential moral-ethical godhead in a Nietzschean godless universe, a centre which can hold the peripheral existential concerns together:

> The rebel is a man who is on the point of accepting or rejecting the sacred and determined on laying claims to a situation in which all the answers are human —in other words, formulated in reasonable terms.... It would be possible to demonstrate in this manner that only two possible worlds can exist for the human mind: the sacred (or ... the word of grace) and the world of rebellion. The disappearance of one is equivalent to the appearance of the other ...
>
> (Camus 1991 p. 21)

Outside of religion and its absolute value, it is the rebel who can posit a new ground of faith, which is shifting, radical, non-absolute in its flux, in its desire for mobility, for change, for more evidence of life. Rebellion, consequently, is the adhesive that holds the rebels together in a moment in history: "Man's solidarity is founded upon rebellion, and rebellion, it its turn, can only find its justification in this solidarity" (Camus 1991 p. 22). This spirit of rebellion he celebrates in the Hungarian uprising of 1956 against Stalinist Soviet Union while he woes that it was one of the worst lessons in world history to have witnessed "the Hungarian people ...take up arms again in an uprising doomed to be crushed under the eyes of an international society" (Camus 1960 p. 157).

It is not, as often construed by critics, an attack on Communism in general (although his lifelong alliance to the ideology, which had earlier left him little choice in that matter, had now begun to waver). It is, on the other hand, a repudiation of political extremism and intransigence as exemplified by the Soviet Union, which went unnoticed in many literary and intellectual circles. Camus had, not by any fortuitous epiphany, but by virtue of his observation and inference, concluded that the Left is not always right. Tony Judt remarks:

> For as Camus was already beginning to shape the arguments of what would become *L'Homme révolté*, he was losing his attachment to the 'progressive' party in French public life—not just the Stalinist faithful but those who believed in progress and revolution (and the French Revolution in particular); those for whom Stalin may have been a monster but Marx was still the guiding light ...
>
> (Judt p. 114)

This revulsion solidified in the aftermath of the Hungarian crisis, and Camus wrote in utter indignation: "Foreign tanks, police, twenty-year-old girls hanged, committees of workers decapitated and gagged, writers deported and imprisoned, the lying press, camps,

censorship, judges arrested, criminals legislating ... Is this socialism, the great celebration of liberty and justice?" (Camus 1960 p. 158). His unabashed criticism of the Leftist stance in the Soviet Union and in France earned him the scorn and contempt of his contemporaries, including Sartre, who was especially harsh in his retaliation to the denigration coming off a mere 'moralist', and yet Camus could not be impeded from accepting that:

> ... our Leftist intellectuals ... would have to undertake a critique of the reasonings and ideologies to which they have hitherto subscribed, which have wreaked the havoc they have seen in most recent history. That will be the hardest thing. We must admit today conformity is on the Left. To be sure, the Right is not brilliant. But the Left is in complete decadence, a prisoner of words, caught in its own vocabulary ... The Left is schizophrenic and needs doctoring through pitiless self-criticism ...
>
> (Camus 1960 pp. 170–171)

The increasing breach was also apparent in his individual stance regarding the Algerian problem and his need to move beyond the limits of Leftist cultural commitments. To be sure, his insider-outsider status clearly demarcated him for an agonising dilemma when faced with two choices—one of that of envisaging an independent Algeria governed by rightist forces that he never could identify with, and the other, of protracted French governance in North Africa which he did not want. He rationalised the terror situation incisively, only to find that both parties were equivalent in audacious and regressive action:

> Oppression, even if benevolent, and the lie of an occupation that always talked about assimilation without ever doing anything to bring it about, have given rise to various nationalist movements, which were ideologically weak but certainly audacious.
>
> Every instance of repression, whether measured or demented, every act of police torture, every legal judgement has increased the despair and violence of militants affected by them. In the end, the police have bred terrorists, who have in turn multiplied the number of police.
>
> (quoted in Van der Poel p. 23)

For Camus, the Algerian uprising did not assume the dimensions and magnitude of a quintessential rebellion, because of the violence incipient in the crisis itself and because for him to conceive of an Algeria devoid of French presence occasioned a fear of the effacement of an entire collective history of French-Algerians. To the act of restoration of that memory, he owed not to have given up completely the hope of returning to the "land where [he] was born" and which he "passionately loved" (Camus 1960 p. 140). Tony Judt declares:

> His vision of Algeria had been formed in the thirties, when Arab sentiment was being mobilized by men like Ferhat Abbas, whose vision of an (eventually) independent Algeria was at least in principle compatible with Camus' ideal of an integrated, cooperating community of Arabs and Europeans alike. By the mid-1950s, Abbas had been discredited ... and was replaced by compromising nationalists for whom Europeans ... could never be partners, and who saw the indigenous European population of Algeria, the poor included, as their enemy—a sentiment that, by the late fifties, was warmly reciprocated.
>
> (Judt p. 118)

The change of his earlier commitments to an entirely independent Algerian state had been modified by the term of exile that he had endured, since he now was acquainted with global politics long enough to know the impossibility of an Algerian state which would be economically, politically, socially and culturally viable and stable. Algeria still needed financial assistance from Europe, and the rightist forces of FLN, in their operations of terror which matched the cruelty of the French administration, acted out no protestations to justice that would impress him. He was torn between two equally abhorrent forces contending for an unsuspecting nation, and could reconcile neither to his truest concepts of either the just or the radical. Wanting no part in the politics of hatred, he merely continued in his objective role as a journalist, writing what Judt calls a "corruscating attack on French policing and military practices in North Africa" and reminding the French public that, regarding the use of torture against Algerian citizens "the facts are there, hideous and clear: we are doing, in these cases, just what we condemned the Germans for doing" (quoted in Judt p. 117).

However disappointed he was with the catastrophic developments in the Algerian predicament, he was never quite disabused of the prospects of revolution. His love of justice had always followed him, even in the heydays of his journalistic impulses. And yet there is

something unsettling about his journalistic commitments, since he seemed to take public offences personally, and journalism seemed more of an ideological engagement for him than a professional one. This was so, one may only venture to say, because he wanted to focus on those little injustices which lay outside of the success or failure of the logic of political rationality. He looked at these minor acts as "metaphysical rebellions" whereby "man protests against his condition and the whole of creation" (Camus 1991 p. 23).

The rebel, as the very soul of positive activism against facticity, and the champion of human dignity and whatever limited freedom man is allowed, is the figure of hope Camus offers himself as a redemption to his own seemingly irresoluble philosophy of absurdism, an antidote to the relentless logic of absurdity, which I take up in the third and final chapter. The central concern for Camus is how one may arrive at a meaningful juncture in a fundamentally absurd universe, and this is his answer:

> ... we can sum up the initial progress that the spirit of rebellion provokes in the mind that is originally imbued with the absurdity and apparent sterility of the world. In absurdist experience, suffering is individual. But from the moment when a movement of rebellion begins, suffering is seen as a collective experience. Therefore, the first step for a mind overwhelmed by the strangeness of things is to realize that this feeling of strangeness is shared with all men ... *The malady experienced by a single man becomes a mass plague.*
>
> (Camus 1991 p. 22, emphasis added)

The last line is an obvious reference to his own novel, *The Plague*, which, along with *The Stranger*, succeeds in their "ability to show at one and the same time a harmonious sense of fatality and an art that springs wholly from human tragedy from individual liberty—to present, in short, a domain in which forces of destiny clash with human decisions" (Camus 1970 p. 191). The protagonists of both the novels are rebels in their own right, and forge the empirical revolutionary ethic in art:

> In our daily trials rebellion plays the same role as does the '*cogito*' in the realm of thought: it is the first piece of evidence. But this evidence lures the individual from his solitude. It founds its first value on the whole human race. I rebel—therefore we exist.
>
> (Camus 1991 p. 22)

The rebel, far from being governed by inferior energies of unreason and nihilism, is therefore the supreme rationalist, not unlike the *cogito*, since he has rationalised the absurdity of existence through creativity, that is, art. In art, therefore, resistance, rebellion and death unite mankind in a revolutionary spirit, which serves for us as an *evidence*, as Camus mentions, that mankind is no mere herd of membranous dead, as many prophets of nihilism would lead us to believe. In art, one rebels more than in life. And life proceeds, although one may believe the contrary, from the very depths of that revolutionary act of art, since:

> Art, at least, teaches us that man cannot be explained by history alone and that he also finds a reason for his existence in the order of nature. For him, the great god Pan is not dead. His most instinctive act of rebellion, while it affirms the value and the dignity common to all men, obstinately claims, so as to satisfy its hunger for unity, an integral part of the reality whose name is beauty.
>
> (Camus 1991 p. 276)

Camus remarks, therefore, in the last section of *The Rebel*, that "art should give us a final perspective on the content of rebellion" (Camus 1991 p. 253). To that art one may now proceed, having known what it was meant for. Perhaps he also meant that the ultimate position of the rebel is that of the supreme artist. Or perhaps, the supreme artist, in conformity with the worst fears of Plato, is the rebel who will change the republic, the rebel who, "once aware of his revolutionary role, is the real creator is definitive beauty" (Camus 1960 p. 254). The rebel as the upholder and arbiter of justice. *The rebel as law.*

Chapter Three

'Between Yes and No': A Critical Contemplation of the Tragical Absurd

To be, or not to be, that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them?

—William Shakespeare

In the space between yes and no, there's a lifetime.

—Jodi Picoult

The resolution of revolt is, very logically and aptly, followed with an ontological enquiry of the *whatness* of it. If one takes rebellion as a viability, one also needs to know *with regard to what* it is being offered as a passport to freedom, a transient passage of sorts. *What* is the crisis to which one may answer 'revolt'? In this case, therefore, the question follows the answer, rather than the usual academic circuit driven by causality. Consequently, following this ill-versed pattern, one may start by questioning the question instead of questioning the answer, since it is easier to entice man with the thought of revolt but more difficult, foremost, to rationalise it, since it is forever in danger of not only ending in futility but also having begun in it.

What, then, is the rationale of revolt? What the circumstantial force operating on the limbs as to hurl them into disobedience and disarray? What must one rise against, and fall fighting, since chances are that one might end up defeating oneself? Why, and for what, must one fight, if at all? What, or who, is the enemy? If it is existence itself, then how can one fight something which one lives, and lives not on occasions as one lives a truth, but lives daily as one may live a lie? Is one supposed to act, or merely be acted out? What is the very nature of that existence? What is the essence of it? And what, finally, is the consequence of it? How is the defiance of existence to be achieved without the denial of life, that is, suicide? What is death to us—an end to existence, or an answer to it? Is it agency or atrophy? Is death the most inalienable right of man, the supreme empirical fact of existence, a tool for subjectivisation?

Also challenging is to examine the relation that philosophy derives between death and freedom, and the way Camus' understanding of it departs, deviates or conforms to it in a bid to find a route which leads out of the labyrinthine roads of an eminently alienable existence. *The Myth of Sisyphus* already problematises the suitability of suicide, or self-annihilation, in the course to attain existential freedom whereby Camus contests the particularisation and substantiation of the subject en route to a practicable selfhood by a supreme act of negation. He treats suicide as the fundamental crisis facing philosophy: "There is but one truly serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide" (Camus 1955 p. 3), and therefore analyses the entire corpus of Western philosophy to judiciously locate his argument.

This chapter also looks at some enquiries in the order of this ontological dilemma, and tries to reconcile the fact of in-betweenness to the extremities of existence that encounters mankind. It tries to find out (not in the way of a detective, but more in the way of an archaeologist, and thus, not by deduction but by the sheer accident of having stumbled upon) whether existence may always be answered with a 'yes' or 'no', or whether the space of subversion lies at equal proximity from these two reference points. There may not even be two different entry points at all, since 'yes' may, and sometimes must, mean the same as 'no'. Therefore, to rephrase, the aim is to acquire an understanding of the question of existence itself before one may venture to decipher whether there is any answer to find at all.

There is also a desire to theoretically locate a trail in Camus' thoughts on absurdity, to track down the development of the concept of freedom, in other words, to join the dots on the genealogical stalk to show that his non-existential existentialism belongs to the Shakespearean tradition of the *tragical absurd*[1], and not the Sartrean variety of *existential absurd.* I also intend to draw contemporary analogies to testify to Camus' beliefs on freedom, existence, and death (of oneself and of others), and thereby propose a continuity of his ideas and their relevance in the age of terror. There is, hopefully, a semblance of unity in this chapter, which tries to blend Camus' literary traits into one single compact philosophy. In that sense, it is a chapter of inferences. It merely takes note of all the tendencies in the author's style and substance, and recapitulates them in a different way to answer the central query—whether he was able to unearth an antidote to existence.

[1] I am particularly emphatic about the coinage of this term, as I am convinced, and as I will try to show, that tragedy, as the greatest gift of the Greeks, is a genre which is essentially founded in the realm of the absurd. This literary rendition of absurdism, although never quite related to the line of Kafka and Sartre, I believe, represents the thoughts of Camus much more than the two latter influences.

I. Between Facticity and Freedom: The Spectacular Failure of Albert Camus as an Existentialist

A literature of failure is not a failure of literature.

—Albert Memmi

Freedom achieved or aspired to, whether through acceptance or rebellion, is an act of man, rather than a fact of life. It may be argued that the notion of freedom is as much a philosophical construct as the air that surrounds it, and that the practicability of the same is no longer held viable or even attainable by philosophers. The foundational principle of subjectivity which includes the centrality of the individual at the heart of the discourse of freedom, itself predicates its claims on the premise of the subjective freedom of being, and a presumptive individuating mechanism that isolates the self from the other. In the words of Jean-Luc Nancy:

> The ontology of subjectivity is also the ontology in which being—as the subject—is foundation. At the limit of the thoughts of foundation, where existence may be thought of as its own essence, which means as in-essential and un-founded, freedom as conceived by the philosophy of subjectivity is no longer practicable (but was there ever a different thought of freedom?). This is why the philosopher finds himself, dare we say, caught between the principle self evidence of a 'freedom' and the final aporia of this same freedom as foundation.
>
> (Nancy 1993 p. 6)

The theoretical turn of the twentieth century deals, therefore, mostly in the fact of failure, and the consequent historical condition of the post-Renaissance subject—the emergence of the subject through the failure of freedom. Existentialism examines the positing of the *Dasein* (being-in-the-world) in the rhetoric of predetermination, whereby the subject is hurled into a pre-existing universe which is deemed to be devoid of philosophical meaning, and therefore results in a breach between the physiological state of existence and the psychological state of purposelessness within the subjective consciousness. The failure to rationalise existence is the first step towards the condition of alienation by virtue of what Søren Kierkegaard called the existentialist 'angst', a term which, in its variety of meanings, comes closest to a kind of anxiety or dread. Yet in this anxiety is "the dizziness of freedom" (p. 61), Kierkegaard specifies, opening up for the decrepit *Dasein* the possibility of a destiny.

Strangely enough, it is exceedingly difficult to extract even the most minimal notional principle of freedom from Kierkegaard, as well as his successors, since they often conceived of existentialism and existential absurdity in causal terms, whereby one needs must necessarily lead to the recognition of the other:

> What is the Absurd? It is, as may quite easily be seen, that I, a rational being, must act in a case where my reason, my powers of reflection, tell me: you can just as well do the one thing as the other, that is to say where my reason and reflection say: you cannot act and yet here is where I have to act...The Absurd, or to act by virtue of the absurd, is to act upon faith...I must act, but reflection has closed the road so I take one of the possibilities and say: This is what I do, I cannot do otherwise because I am brought to a standstill by my powers of reflection.
>
> (Kierkegaard, quoted in Dru p. 178)

Man's obligation to make every act, therefore, an act of faith, takes him from the rational *cogito* to the rationally incapacitated *Dasein*, by virtue of mostly his inability to distinguish choice from compulsion, agency from audacity, craving from coercion. Action loses legitimacy and becomes an inevitability in the course of events on which the individual may or may not exercise any control whatsoever. Thus, every act becomes a veritable 'leap of faith', as if the futile passion that man derives from faith would let him pass muster in the given situation. His consciousness of the world is only mediated *through* his intentionality towards objects and his awareness *of* them, and not by any intrinsic identity of being-in-itself, which is the primary existential mode of non-conscious objects.

In other words, man cannot possibly, without the help of that which lies outside of him, rationalise himself, since his rationality always already *relates to* that which is outside, which is existence. On the other hand, existence itself exists without regard to the presence of the being, whereby existence is deemed to precede essence (-as-being)—a phrase that became an existential primer. Its propounder, Jean-Paul Sartre, while giving his readers a working definition of the existential absurd, states it as such when he says that "consciousness is born *supported* by a being which is not itself" (Sartre xxxvii). The consciousness, when mostly a "consciousness ignorant of itself, an unconscious", is for Sartre the "absurd" (Sartre xxviii).

By virtue of the natural deviance of followers from predecessors, Camus' discussion of the absurd bordered on but never quite overlapped with Kierkegaard's delineation. For Camus, consciousness cannot ever *not be conscious* of itself. In fact, it is in its very cognition of that consciousness and the relative unease occasioned by that consciousness that the subject knows itself to be an outsider. Instead of being-in-the-world, therefore, his concept of the *Dasein* is closer to Heidegger's concept of the *unheimlichkeit*—the uncanny ungrounding homelessness of what I would call the *destitute consciousness*, which becomes a sort of being-outside-the-world, '*l'etranger*', which is both a stranger and an outsider. He in fact invented a completely different notion of the absurd, wherein it ceases to be anthropological in nature (being-in-the-world) and becomes metaphysical in origin (being-in-time), or better still, being-outside-time. In other words, he circumvents the roundedness of the existential argument by emphasising the fact that man may cease to be in continuum with matter and break away and amputate himself by sheer force of will, and not needlessly, as David Carroll insists, by virtue of:

> the Nietzschean 'will to power'... [but rather] what [one] would call a 'will to resist', even or especially when resistance appears hopeless or turns out in fact to be completely fruitless—a will to resist that is not simply a product of history but also a *resistance to history*.
>
> (Carroll 2007b p. 54, emphasis added)

Therefore, the situating of an author like Camus, who has been associated from the outset with the philosophy of the absurd, in existential philosophy is a truism of sorts, and a facile one. The two tendencies meet and diverge almost at the same point of ontological intersection, but it can be argued, for purposes of mapping out a theoretical genealogy, that Camus aligns himself loosely to the Kierkegaard affiliates who have assiduously imparted meaninglessness to the phenomenon of estrangement. Camus differs in his understanding of existence being endowed not with meaningless but rather an *unmeaning*, which is to say that the universe is not devoid of meaning but it may not be specifically truth-bearing for the subject. To wrest away the meaning that might be there is the attempt at agency, which is Camus' prescription for the individual. In the same way that Prometheus stole fire from the gods and Sisyphus stole life from them, the *Dasein* is supposed to be leeching away meaning to construct a being-for-itself which is a self-evident consciousness. This is its primary act of rebellion, which is fundamentally a *resistance to unmeaning*.

One may round up the argument by following the anti-historical trail back to the first chapter of this dissertation, where it has been clarified that philosophy and literariness have been reinstated over and above the meta-narrative of history. The resistance that founds the core of Camus' solution to absurdist philosophy also relates the absurd theory to the realm of tragedy, since the resistance is historically deemed as futile in its act but noble in its scope. In this regard, the relevance of the commonality of difference that Camus extended between the theistic existential apprehension of freedom as infinite and absolute, which is a freedom tied to the supreme surrogate godhead, and the kind of freedom that is the will to resist, which, I contend, is the philosophical core of the tragical absurd.

To elucidate, the tragical absurd relinquishes the understanding of an absolute. The epiphanic anagnorisis that is empowering in its self-revelation is hardly an attempt to grasp the absoluteness of this or any existence that man might be offered, but on the contrary, an examination of the self with regard to that existence. Tragedy, therefore, as Marvin A. Carlson states, "is not an end in itself, but a process that points towards an unattainable complete truth" (Carlson p. 447). This does not, on one hand, discount the character's cognition of an absurd coefficient in the existent pattern of the universe, while on the other, it offers a possibility of action, by omission or commission, to the subject. The nature of that existence also offers a perspectival difference between the tragical and the existential. Significantly, the tragic-absurdist understanding of the eminently alienable existence is distinct from the existential absurd concept of facticity, which Sartre expounds thus:

> [The] inapprehensible *fact* of my condition [facticity] ... is what causes the for-itself, while choosing the *meaning* of its situation and while constituting itself as the foundation of itself in situation, *not to choose* its position. This part of my condition is what causes me to apprehend myself simultaneously as totally responsible for my being—inasmuch as I am its foundation—and yet as totally unjustifiable. Without facticity, consciousness could choose its attachments to the world in the same way as Plato's Republic choose their condition. I could determine myself to 'be born a worker' or to 'be born a bourgeois'. But on the other hand, facticity cannot constitute me as *being* a bourgeois or *being* a worker.
>
> (Sartre p. 83)

What is evident, therefore, is a heavily laden, ambiguous, definition of the being as lying between transcendence and the facticity as a subject at once both free and conditioned. The disambiguation of the dilemma of freedom in existentialism is therefore a veritable impossibility. Man is seen as neither wholly determined because, according to Sartre, "a determined consciousness—i.e., a consciousness wholly externally motivated—becomes itself pure exteriority and ceases to be consciousness" (Sartre p. 442), nor may he be completely independent of that "coefficient of adversity" (Sartre p. 484) which encounters his being in the form of facticity. The subtle convenience in stating it thus, which is to mean that the physicality of *unfreedom* is irrelevant to the development of the being's consciousness is, for Camus, the weakest link of existentialism, since this amounts to saying, as Sartre assuredly did, that "the slave in chains is as free as his master" (p. 550) and that "there is no situation in which the being is more free than in others" (p. 549). In *The Outsider*, Camus exploits this particular paradox in choosing a protagonist who spends the first half of the novel in the *unfree* world of facticity and the rest in an apparently metaphysically *free* state of incarceration. It is significant that he immediately establishes an inferential paradigm for freedom by juxtaposing these two states: in the first, Meursault is free to act but not to think, in the second, he is free to think but not to act:

> I gradually became quite friendly with the chief jailer ... it was he who brought up the subject of women. 'That's what men grumble about most,' he told me. I said I felt like that myself. 'There's something unfair about it,' I added, 'like hitting a man when he's down.'—'But that's the whole point of it,' he said; 'that's why you fellows are kept in prison.'—'I don't follow.'—'Liberty,' he said, 'means that. You are being deprived of your liberty.' It had never before struck me in that light, but I saw his point. 'That's true,' I said. 'Otherwise it wouldn't be a punishment.' The jailer nodded. 'Yes, you're different, you can use your brains. The others can't. Still those fellows find a way out...'
>
> (Camus 1985 p. 44)

Facticity is therefore not always held detrimental to but often contributive of the individual's consciousness of his freedom, or the lack of it. It is essential to understand that the nature of the universe is held as neither hostile nor favourable, it is the being whose interpretation of existence makes it either. The enabling of this interpretation happens through the encounter with facticity, and the bid to overcome it.

The physical state of being is thus given uttermost importance by Camus, both in *The Outsider* and in *The Myth of Sisyphus*, since it is the state of imprisonment in an eternal state of active inertia that arouses in them the necessary resolution towards the aspiration of metaphysical freedom. The capacity to "use your brains" (Camus 1985 p. 44), as the jailer puts it, is the ideational manifestation of this resolution. The state of physical incapacity, occasioned by facticity, awakens in both characters a capacity of rationalising their limitations, and of negotiating with those very limitations to reach a tendentious paradigm of freedom by "awakening a sleeping world and of making it vivid to the mind" (Camus 1983, p. 45). Freedom in the absurd is thus the tragic rhythm of craving for the tendentious nature of that exoneration that the being negotiates with its environment, and not the highest absolute that the being finds itself compulsively attracted to. The absurd mind is therefore a mind bound in its limits of rationality and pegged at certain corners in its logicality, in a way such that "the only thought to liberate the mind is that which leaves it alone, certain of its limits and of its impending end. No doctrine tempts it. It awaits the ripening of the work and of life" (Camus 1983 p. 116). Or rather, the ripening of the *work of life*:

> ... Men must endure
> Their going hence, even as their coming hither:
> Ripeness is all ...
>
> (Shakespeare p. 938)

Hence, the limitedness of the rational modalities that inform the existence of man is a vital recognition for the absurd man. Being swindled by a sense of an absolute rational grounding is almost tantamount to having no consciousness at all. On the other hand, the relentless bombardment of facticity makes it essential for man to lay claim to a fundamental rationality to escape alienation and affront. But unlike existentialism, the absurd does not bank upon the hostility of the universe to forge its own subliminal (or superluminal) identity. To the absurd man, the universe remains indifferent, at most apathetic and unmoved, but he also goes through life with the feeling that for some things, he cannot possibly blame either god or government (I use these two terms not merely in jest but to represent two supreme transcendent truths—belonging, respectively, to the order of the myth and the modern), meaning that the absurd man may act out of circumstantial obligation, but is never unaware of it, nor does he waste his time in thinking that any other situation would have prompted any dissimilar opportunities in life:

> All experiences are indifferent in this regard. There are some that do either service or disservice to man. They do him a service if he is conscious. Otherwise, that has no importance: a man's failures imply judgment, not of circumstances, but of himself.
>
> (Camus 1983 pp. 68–69)

The battling of the existential sets in early in Camus' writing, where he claims to have taken "the liberty at this point of calling the existential attitude philosophical suicide" (Camus 1983 p. 41), since he perceives in it a thought that "negates itself and tends to transcend itself in its very negation" (p. 41). He rallies faithfully against the existential inclination towards a desultory, promiscuous 'blame-game', pitting existence versus essence on a priority basis, stating emphatically that encounter and not escape should be the lot of the subject:

> Consciousness and revolt, these rejections are the contrary of renunciation. Everything that is indomitable and passionate in a human heart quickens them, on the contrary, with its own life. It is essential to die unreconciled and not of one's own free will. Suicide is repudiation. *The absurd man can only drain everything to the bitter end, and deplete himself. The absurd is his extreme tension, which he maintains constantly by solitary effort, for he knows that in that consciousness and in the day-to-day revolt he gives proof of his only truth, which is defiance.*
>
> (Camus 1983 p. 55, emphasis added)

'Consciousness and revolt' or consciousness of revolt is the proof of existence. It will be seen further, that his idea of an uncompromised death also takes his absurd man closer to the tragic hero, who dies an uncompromising, mandatory death, and yet remains, to the end, the very soul of resistance. The tragic anagnorisis reveals to the being the historical consequence of his defeat-in-death, and he rises to the occasion with an intrinsic tumult of momentous ecstasy, which is an elevation into the ethos of existential elation. The tragic-absurdist being-towards-death is therefore the more liberated in his rejection of escaping existence that is suicide, a rejection of help from a higher power or authority that is "the spiritual leap which basically escapes consciousness" (Camus 1983 p. 59), and his brilliantly despairing acceptance of this absurd, displaying a despair known as defiance—a defiance desired in the dream of death.

II. Between Existence and Essence: Proposing the Historical Agency of the Being in and Beyond Death in the Tragical Absurd

Because of its tremendous solemnity, death is the light in which great passions, both good and bad, become transparent, no longer limited by outward appearance.

— Søren Kierkegaard

Prevalent among the concerns of the high priests of Western Philosophy is the emphasis on the fact of death and its significance in relation to human subjectivity, which reached a point of saturation in the nineteenth century and the decades leading to it. As the epigraph above signifies, the encounter with death is often anticipated with a sense of freedom—with a renewed vision of the ultimate realm in the existential plane and beyond. Paradoxically, in those very lines, death has also been (dis)qualified as a potentially subjectifying apparatus by a conscious establishment of its equivalence to a methodological tool. It may be revelatory of a certain subjective consciousness, but may never be that consciousness itself, neither the enabling event. If it is a *light*, then it may only *illumine* what is already there, but not actually *produce* what is to be seen. On one hand, therefore, emerged a new sense of the irreplaceability of individual people, of the finality of death and the infinite preciousness of a single life; on the other, the belief that death is pure negativity or nothingness asserted itself into existence as a widely accepted cultural attitude. Jonathan Strauss says that this "image of sheer nonexistence, this death stripped down to its ontological minimum, is the most extreme form of mortality that has arisen in the history of the West, the hardest perhaps to take, the most naked" (Strauss, J. 2000a p. 90).

The seeds of tragedy were always already conspicuous in the discourse of being, which invariably hovered around the empirical fact of death. The tragic need to overcome the fear of facticity, which is at once the anxiety of existence and the dread of death, that is, the end of existence, is the most viable philosophical antidote to existential trauma. Tragedy, ending in death of being-in-revolt, foregrounds the possibility of an empirical association between death and rebellion, or death as the metaconsciousness that dictates that rebellious defiance that arises out of despair. The attempt to reconcile the agency of man to the futility of death is the 'birth of tragedy', in Nietzschean terms.

Nietzsche becomes relevant with respect to Camus' development of the tragical absurd since it is in Nietzsche that tragic death becomes the accountability that the subjective consciousness bears. In Nietzsche, one finds the beginnings of a conscious attempt to encounter 'death' as an ontological category, following his fascination with the corpus of pre-Socratic Greek philosophy and literature. His analysis of Greek tragedies especially pre-empts his commitment to the explication of the discursive unease shrouding death, as it were. In Nietzschean metaphysics, however, the 'death' of God precedes the death of man. Jean-Luc Nancy declares:

> Nietzsche says to me nothing without communicating also an experience ... This experience is always that of the death of God. The death of God is always the fact of this immense proclamation about the representation of the principle, and along with it of representation in general: for once the principle breaks down, there can no longer be any question of anything to represent. Everything from this point on, directly brings presence into question.
>
> (Nancy 2006 p. 19)

This 'presence', which would necessarily include the presence of the subject in relation to the absent centre of the transcendental signifier that is God, thereby stands problematised. God has died, in effect, for Nietzsche, because he perceives no God. Reason, the logos, has been decentred, and unlike the Biblical Christ, this God cannot be resurrected. Eric Von Der Luft argues that, for Nietzsche, "'God is dead!' involves an intricate and dynamic metaphor which has its roots deep in German thought. The phrase appears in Hegel at least three times, once in the early essay *Glauben und Wissen* (1802), and twice in that section of *Phänomenologie* (1807) called 'Die offenbare Religion'" (Von Der Luft p. 263). He agrees with Nancy on the fact that Nietzsche's philosophy stands clearly within the context established by the Platonist tradition in the sense that with the death of God, transcendence is lost, and not only lost, but purposefully done away with. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for Everyone and No One* (1883–85), II, §2, he tells us that "God is a supposition" (Nietzsche p. 110) untrue to both the essential transitoriness of the world and the highest aspirations of the human spirit. The idea of divinity is a nauseating oppression from which only the direct action of the individual will can free us. One can quote Nietzsche in this regard:

> God is a supposition; but I want your supposing to reach no further than your creating will ... I want your supposition to be bounded by conceivability...may the will to truth mean this to you: that everything shall be transformed into the humanly-conceivable, the humanly evident, the humanly palpable! You should follow your own senses to the end.
>
> (Nietzsche p. 110)

In effect, the loss of transcendence is not a regrettable accident caused by our spiritual blindness, but it is what Von Der Luft explains to be "a deliberate and definitive act of throwing down that which is found to be no longer beneficial to human cultural progress" (Von Der Luft p. 268). Hence, Nietzsche is saying that not only is God deceased, but also that "we ourselves, by our assertion of will, our refusal to believe, are His assassins" (Von Der Luft p. 268). Therefore, God's existence and His metaphorical participation in the creation of humanity (which, according to Nietzsche, were most destructive of what is most vital within man) when surmounted, would make way for what Michael Lackey calls the "coming of a new human, a 'subject' which can only become a 'self' when it paradoxically learns to overcome its very constructed 'self'" (Lackey p. 737). Thus does Nietzsche ready the path for the self-overcoming subject—the 'Übermensch' or the 'Overman'—he who overcomes man to become the ultimate subject. Gilles Deleuze maintains that:

> The overman is defined by *a new way of feeling*: he is a different subject from man, something other than the human type. *A new way of thinking*, predicates other than the divine ones; for the divine is still a way of preserving man and of preserving the essential characteristic of God, God as attribute. *A new way of evaluating*: not a change of values, not an abstract transposition, nor a dialectical reversal, but a change and reversal in the element from which the value of values derives, a "transvaluation".
>
> (Deleuze p. 163)

God's demise becomes instrumental to the death of man, and the death of man becomes central to the birth of the 'overman'. Death in Nietzschean metaphysics is therefore an enabling phenomenon, leading to the formation of a higher order of subjective manifestation. Here, he comes close to fact that on the other hand, death may not be seen as the apotheosis of subjectivity—in fact, one is never to be sure that complete subjectivity is at

all possible—whereby tragedy also relinquishes claims to the existential absolutism of freedom. Death is only an evolutionary stage in the subjective ladder, in the sense that it becomes an epistemological means of acquiring knowledge previously withheld. In Camusian consciousness, death becomes, following Nietzsche, an overruling of the foretelling by fate, and a defiance against the torment of dread itself, since dying in wisdom and wisdom in death tells us, according to Marc Crépon, "how to love life ... without being weighed down by the thought of death" (Crépon p. 55). This comprises of the fundamental core of Nietzsche's concept of 'voluntary death':

> I shall show you the consummating death, which shall be a spur and a promise to the living.
>
> The man consummating his life dies his death triumphantly, surrounded by men filled with hope and making solemn vows.
>
> [...] I commend to you my sort of death, voluntary death that comes to me because I wish it.
>
> (Nietzsche p. 97)

The 'voluntary death', however, should not be construed as an apology for suicide, which Camus also rejects as a subjectifying spectacle. Far from being an apologist for suicide, argues Crépon, Nietzsche is an advocate for a certain preparedness for death, so that death does not spring any last-minute surprises. Death holds the promise of 'eternal return'—it is a moment of epiphanic revelation, and therefore tragic in tonality. In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, the prophet does not quite die but disappears, and hence death is never physical but metaphysical. In Camus' *The Outsider*, Meursault confesses that he seeks this very same preparedness that eludes most men:

> They always come for one at dawn; that much I knew. So really all my nights were spent in waiting for that dawn. *I had never liked being taken by surprise. When something happens to me I want to be ready for it.* That's why I got into the habit of sleeping off and on in the daytime and watching through the night for the first hint of daybreak ...
>
> (Camus 1985 p. 63, emphasis added)

For the condemned man, death assumes the purity of 'voluntary death', since he wants to go to his death with his senses intact and not imprisoned. He will not allow himself to be shocked out of existence. He keeps his eyes open in the darkest hours, since daylight will succeed this period of uncertainty, and the interval of *unmeaning* will be subsequently received into the realm of knowledge. The man who knows when his death is coming, for Camus, is the very embodiment of the situation of the absurd. To have known the inevitability of eventual death is less absurd than to know the exactness of its arrival, the preciseness of the hour, the condition of ridiculous hope and horror, which makes it bizarre in its unreality. He writes in his notebook:

> On the Absurd? ... There is only one case in which despair is pure: that of a man sentenced to death.... here, the horror springs from the complete certainty of what's going to happen—or rather, from the mathematical element that creates this certainty. Here, the absurd is perfectly clear.
>
> (Camus. 1970 p. 216)

The 'voluntary death' was as much a tragic death though, since the absurd is not the impossible and hopeless absurd. It is precisely the opposite—the fact of there always being hope—that makes the absurd an *absurder* situation. The tragic element in this death is not the incredulity of the character plunged into the heart of that absurd; the tragedy rather lies in the fact of his attempt to make sense of the absurd, to undertake a resolution in the light of the revelation of its being a condition of the absurd, and if possible, to engineer a final attempt to escape it. Hence, Meursault's thought after his condemnation is anything but reflective of his 'fate', but instead an incisive plan of action:

> The only thing that interests me now is the problem of circumventing the machine.... This problem of a loophole obsesses me; I am always wondering if there had been cases of condemned prisoners escaping from the implacable machinery of justice at the last moment ... the one thing that counted for me was the possibility of making a dash for it and defeating their bloodthirsty rite ...
>
> (Camus 1970 pp. 60–61)

In this attempt to supersede his fate, Meursault becomes more than man, the alienated overman[2], who faces his fate with the blameless heroism of a survivor. There is no preference for tragic destiny, but an obstinacy of unbending grace which makes him say, in a "quite friendly, almost affectionate way, that I have never been able really to regret anything in all my life. I've always been far too busy in the present moment, or the immediate future, to think back" (Camus 1985 p. 57). It amounts to saying that he will go to his death unapologetic and unrepentant, and therein lies his resistance to the unmeaning that has been thrust upon him[3]. In the inevitable, calculated hour that seals the fate of the protagonist, (much as it does in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, where death is prophetic in nature, and therefore grounded in principles of assurance and bears close resemblance, also in the final fact of the brandished heroic head, to the ritualistic execution of criminals), the death *in* the absurd also becomes the death *of* the absurd, since there is, moments before the final hour, a decree pronounced with some degree of decisiveness. In *Macbeth*, the hero falls fighting with a ringing war-cry, while in *The Outsider*, the protagonist anticipates death thus:

> … I laid my heart open to the benign indifference of the universe. To feel it so like myself, indeed so brotherly, made me realize that I'd been happy, and that I was happy still. For all to be accomplished, for me to feel less lonely, all that remained was to hope that o the day of my execution there should be a huge crowd of spectators and that they should greet me with howls of execration.
>
> (Camus 1985 p. 68)

Tragical absurd, thus, almost assumes the responsibility of a union accomplished between the existence and essence—the unity that, according to Camus, every rebel aspires to, since, "In every rebellion is to be found the metaphysical demand for unity, the impossibility of capturing it, and the construction of a substitutive universe. Rebellion, from this point of view, is a fabricator of universes" (Camus 1991 p. 225). In the light of this statement, there is at least one inference that may therefore be drawn from the last extract

2 Alienation has been linked by scholars and philosophers alike with the evolution of higher life. Remarks Avi Sagi in *Albert Camus and the Philosophy of the Absurd* (2002, pp. 5–6): "In medieval philosophy, the concept of alienation had no negative meanings. Plotinus and his followers, for instance, held that alienation is a preferred option, pointing to a situation in which consciousness separates from real existence and shifts to a higher form of life. Alienation, then, implies development and uninterrupted human progress."

3 Since both absurdity and tragedy are conceived of as a confrontational stance—an opposition or a divorce between two ideals, or as Jean Anouilh would put it, an encounter of two opposed rights—the affective nature of the tragical absurd moves deeper into that realm of rebellion that defines the nature of that stance.

from *The Outsider*—that the end of being signifies the end of the absurd. The ceasing of the existent brings to a close one mode of existence, since one element at least has been removed from it. Existence is forced to accommodate a lacuna, a loss, a fissure, and—if indeed one may not be able to step into the same river twice, in case Heraclitus is to be truly believed—is simultaneously deemed to end. The rebel has successfully fabricated a universe, and hence, is no longer alienated from his own creation. The act of witnessing the end of being, as Meursault anticipates in the execrating crowds, is necessary to achieve this affective power that enforces and invigorates the creation of that moment of loss. Hence, tragic death needs witnessing[4], and very likely exalting, since the end of being is to be also understood as the end of existence, which is firmly placed against the existential philosophy of the being siphoning its cognitive consciousness from the existence, but the existence remaining unaffected by the transaction.

Camus' spectre of tragic-absurdist death, therefore, comes perilously close to Heidegger's existential analysis of the Being-towards-death. According to Christopher Fynsk, in Heidegger as well as Camus, the "anticipation of the possibility of death is what first discloses and makes this possibility possible, therein freeing Dasein" (Fynsk p. 193). He further argues that:

> Dasein's freedom for death is its *certainty* of the possibility of death as certain in its very uncertainty—it is Dasein's holding itself in the truth of death, holding death for true, and finally, holding the truth of death. For when Dasein assumes the possibility of death, its death becomes its own, in the sense of something that has been appropriated.
>
> We glimpse here one of the oldest and greatest ruses of philosophy—an appropriation of the very event of disappropriation, an overcoming of the most radical form of otherness and negativity in the essentially tragic gesture of confronting death. Death has become a possibility.
>
> (Fynsk p. 193)

[4] The need for witnesses is also directly related to Meursault's need, as author of what may be construed of as a novel-journal, to narrativize his death, till almost the very last hour. It is also partly evolutionary in nature, since the protagonist may himself chart his growth in terms of the progress of his consciousness, and is therefore consistent with the fact of his being an absurd hero—an overman. Life has been allowed to be random, but the disciplined spectacle acquired in death reassures the reader of the utility of tragic action.

In absurd death, "Camus, like Kierkegaard and Heidegger, seeks the 'instant experience where we apprehend the wholeness in its entirety; this instant is the aim of human passion and yearning", says Sagi (p. 32). Likewise, the pathos of Being-towards-death which Heidegger qualifies as "impassioned freedom towards death" (Heidegger p. 311) and "unshakable joy" (Heidegger p. 358) converts the negative into positive whereby "Dasein emerges from its *Angst*, and from its *agon* with death ... triumphant" (Fynsk p. 193). The more authentically Dasein projects itself upon its death, the more unambiguously are its possibilities disclosed:

> Only by the anticipation of death is every accidental and 'provisional' possibility driven out. Only Being-free for death, gives Dasein its goal outright and pushes existence into its finitude. Once one has grasped the finitude of one's existence, it snatches one back from the endless multiplicity of possibilities which offer themselves as closest to one ... and brings Dasein into the simplicity of its *fate* [Schicksals]. This is how we designate Dasein's primordial historizing, which lies in authentic resoluteness and in which Dasein hands itself down to itself, free for death, in a possibility it has inherited and yet chosen.
>
> (Heidegger p. 435)

This certainty, though not the certainty of the absolute, finds a place in the tragical absurd. The Being—ready for 'voluntary death' through the foreknowledge of his own fatality—feels a sense of exoneration in itself. The fatalism of the *Dasein*, in this case, is not nihilistic but aspiratory. To elucidate, let me once more take recourse to Camus, who says of the Beings-towards-death:

> It may be said, above all, that they feel free with regard to themselves, and not so much free as liberated. Likewise, completely turned toward death (taken here as the most obvious absurdity), the absurd man feels released from everything outside that passionate attention crystallizing in him. He enjoys a freedom with regard to common rules.... Losing oneself in that bottomless certainty, feeling henceforth sufficiently remote from one's own life to increase it and take a broad view of it—this involves the principle of liberation.
>
> (Camus 1983 p. 59)

Death lays claim to the self as an individual Dasein, sieved off from the mass of indeterminate 'they'. Death, says Strauss, by thus separating and differentiating Dasein as finite, "makes it *capable* of being a whole to [itself], and [it] actually does become whole to [itself] through [its] attitude towards that death" (Strauss, J. 2000a p. 97). Every choice is death, and through the anticipation of our non-existence, every choice is authentically revealed as choice. Human beings, by always choosing and living the question of Being and non-being, as also through their consciousness of that choice, are existing in a constant and pervasive relation to death.

Ironically, in the context of Heidegger's ontological understanding of freedom, the *only* way that life can make itself be felt is as death; and if individuals fail to construct a relation to their own individual deaths, then there is an ever-increasing scope for the development of the kind of man-made mass death of which Germany became an exemplar. If interdependence between ontological interrogation and ethics is denied, and existence is wholly taken for granted and subordinated to metaphysical reasoning, then life becomes unaddressed as a site for possible philosophical enquiry. The denial of the crucial link between ethics and metaphysics leads to a state where life becomes technical and monstrous and where human responsibility is elided to the utmost degree, and subjectivity may come to be indexed, as it were, in relation to the horrors of Holocaust, which Camus had lived through in his professional years. Camus was well aware of this ontological crisis, which he not only foresaw in *The Myth of Sisyphus* and construed as an escape from the ethics of responsibility, and hence vigorously attacked both Kierkegaard and Heidegger:

> Now, to limit myself to existential philosophies, I see that all of them without exception suggest escape. Through an odd reasoning, starting out from the absurd over the ruins of reason, in a closed universe limited to the human, they deify what crushes them ...
>
> (Camus 1983 p. 42)

Unlike Heidegger, or even Nietzsche, however, Camusian absurd draws from tragedy not only its essence of revolt, but also the dual manifestation of the epic awareness of the absurd, which is manifested twice—once in the tragic hero, which is then reflected, repeated and returned in the spectatorial consciousness. Tragedy leads to collectivisation of the absurd thematicity through the agency gained by revolt, since, according to Friedrich Dürrenmatt, it "assumes guilt, trouble, moderation, range of vision, responsibility" (p. 81–82), all of which, as

discussed in the earlier chapter, is significant in Camus' conception of metaphysical rebellion, which, to recapitulate, from the moment it begins, leads to a "collective experience" from the individual suffering of the "absurdist experience" (Camus 1991 p. 22). The reiteration of the death experience through the visual dimension contends, through the engulfment of the tragic spectacle by virtue of an epic death, "the end of man and the end of creation" (Camus 1991 p. 23) by the time the tragic narration has ceased itself. Again, the spectatorial presence imparts a sense of watchfulness—the audience is the evidence of death, the witness to the Being-towards-death. The tragic vision of purpose to passion to perception (dual) is thereby complete.

Progressively, therefore, one may find the Camusian programme of the absurd veering towards the Levinasian awareness of the other. By the denial of the self's metaphysical profligacy, Levinas moves towards the establishment of Dasein as an existent dependent on its relational significance to the other. The self exists only for the other. In Levinas, ethical questioning is essentially relational, making references back to the questioner as well as to the process of questioning, as evident in his *God, Death, and Time* (1993). Ethical questioning is concerned with the process of work within questioning itself. It works backwards, analytically, to reveal its own conditions of (im)possibility. To that extent, Levinas's argument is self-reflexive and stands in contrast to Heideggerian metaphysics[5], which, as Joanna Hodge points out, "is concerned with producing a result, with an end posited as independent of the process of enquiry" (Hodge p. 17).

At the heart of Camus' critique of Heidegger lies the reproof that the question of humanity has somewhere become submerged in the question of 'being', and thus that the recovery of being entails the forgetting of the meaning of human. Levinas follows up this idea by rigorously refuting Heidegger with a further undercutting of the selfhood of the subject as practicable through its own death. In 'Initial Questions', Levinas writes:

> My relation to death is not limited to ... second-hand knowledge. For Heidegger ... it is the certitude par excellence. There is an a priori of death. Heidegger calls death certain to the point of seeing in this certitude of death the origin of certitude itself, and he will not allow this certitude to come from the experience of the death of others.

[5] Levinas refuses to accord any privilege to the subject; in contrast, he announces the anonymity of being through his depiction of a pre-encoded, pre-symbolic, pre-discursive realm of meaning- the *il y a* ('there is') in which the impersonality of the verb mirrors the subjectless horror of existence. *Il y a* is the 'existence without existents', and both precedes and succeeds the existent. It is always already present regardless of the presence of the 'being'.

> It is nonetheless not certain that death can be called a certitude, nor is it certain that death has the meaning of annihilation. My relation with death is also made up of the emotional and intellectual repercussions of knowledge of the death of the others.
>
> (Levinas 2000 p. 10)

Seán Hand, in his 'Introduction' to *The Levinas Reader* (1989), concludes that rather than seeing death as the "ultimate test of virility and authenticity, as the proof of mineness, his ethical reaction is to view it as the other's death, in which we recognize the limits of the possible in suffering" (Hand p. 4). He further contends that Levinas, like Camus, rejects the violence incipient in the heart of Heideggerian ontology "in the face of one's responsibility for the other's death, an inescapable answerability which is that which makes [the being] an individual 'I'" whereby "ethical responsibility must remain the first philosophy" (Levinas 1989 pp. 3–4). Camus narratorially challenges the same violence: when Meursault kills the Arab—the existent 'other' to himself—he knows, in a blinding flash of terrifying foreknowledge, that he has commanded his own destiny through this annihilation of the other:

> I shook off my sweat and the clinging veil of light. I knew I had shattered the balance of the day, the spacious calm of this beach on which I had been happy. But I fired four shots more into the inert body, on which they left no visible trace. And each successive shot was another loud, fateful rap on the door of my undoing.
>
> (Camus 1985 p. 35)

Philosophically, the death of the other becomes the death of the self, and the self may vanquish the other only at the peril of endangering its ownmost existence. One may only respond and be responsible to the other, before the creation of any truth. Rather than the recovery of the self, death is a process of inevitable exposition to the other, with one's death one being irrevocably passed over to the domain of the other. There is no knowledge that can prevent this exposure. With death in view, the self cannot return to its existential time; time is what the self has to relate to the other. To take recourse to Levinas, who states in 'Death of the Other and My Own':

> ... the relationship to my own dying does not have the meaning of knowledge or of experience.... One does not know, one cannot be present at, one's annihilation (inasmuch as death might be an annihilation); this is not the case only because of the nothingness that cannot be given as a thematizable event.... My relationship with my death is a nonknowledge on dying itself ...
>
> (Levinas 2000 p. 19)

In the death of the other, the self has previewed its own obliteration. This ethical correspondence is quite deliberate on Camus' part, since practically, the situation depicted would have been quite impossible. Avi Sagi quotes Conor Cruise O'Brien: "In practice, French justice in Algeria would almost certainly not have condemned a European to death for shooting an Arab who had drawn a knife on him and who had shortly before stabbed another European" (p. 90). More than a realistic historical confrontation, this is a mythical confrontation between the self and the other whereby Camus takes recourse to a mythicism of sorts: merging with the mythical Algerian landscape, Meursault becomes a mythical figure himself.

III. Between Tragic Temporalities: Constructing Continuities in the Aesthetic Absurd

> *The tragic loans before us as an event that shows the terrifying aspects of existence, but an existence that is still human. It reveals its entanglement with the uncharted background of man's humanity. Paradoxically, however, when man faces the tragic, he liberates himself from it... Breakdown and failure reveal the true nature of things. In failure, life's reality is not lost; on the contrary, here it makes itself wholly and decisively felt. There is no tragedy without transcendence. Even defiance unto death in a hopeless battle against the gods and fate is an act of transcending: it is a movement toward man's proper essence, which he comes to know as his own in the presence of his doom.*
>
> —Karl Jaspers

> *I believe that the common man is as apt a subject for tragedy in its highest sense as kings were.*
>
> —Arthur Miller

The translocation of a myth to the modern is not uncharacteristic of Camus. In fact, 'The Myth of Sisyphus' takes up as the central figure the mythic tragic-absurd hero Sisyphus, "once the wisest and most prudent of mortals" (Camus 1983 p. 119), who becomes the prototype of modern man in his ceaseless measuring of the ground beneath his feet on his way down the mountain to claim his elusive rock. He is condemned indeed, but not condemned to die. He is already dead, and serving an infinitude of futility to pay for his transgression of existential modalities:

> You have already grasped that Sisyphus is the absurd hero. He is, as much through his passions as through his torture. His scorn for the gods, his hatred of death, and his passion for life won him that unspeakable penalty in which his whole being is exerted toward accomplishing nothing...
>
> (Camus 1983 pp. 120–121)

The hero presents to us a new dimension of the tragical-absurd. Sisyphus, "the wisest and most prudent of mortals", is clearly not a warrior—he is a philosopher. The endemic nothingness that the being encounters is not won by confrontation, but by contemplation:

> Then Sisyphus watches the stone rush down... He goes back down the plain. It is during that return, that pause, that Sisyphus interests me.... That hour like a breathing-space which returns as surely as his suffering, that is the hour of consciousness. At that subtle moment when man glances backward over his life, Sisyphus retuning toward his rock, in that slight pivoting he contemplates that series of unrelated actions which becomes his fate, created by him, combined under his memory's eye and soon sealed by his death.
>
> (Camus 1983 p. 123)

Sisyphus is the supreme artist, bestowed with memory and imagination at his disposal (to suffer, consciously, his punishment, he must remember what it was that he was being punished for), and able to use both to the service of his survival. In this imaginative acquisition of his own destiny, he becomes the creator of his course, as he narrativizes compulsively the fiction of his absurd fate. In that sense, Sisyphus is both the writer and the actor of his own tragedy, the author of his own textuality:

> Sisyphus, proletarian of the gods, powerless and rebellious, knows the whole extent of his wretched condition: it is what he thinks of during his descent. The lucidity that was to constitute his torture at the same time crowns his victory.
>
> (Camus 1983 p. 121)

Camus also achieves finally, through Sisyphus, an ontological premise that reasonably relegates the death of self to the background, and discusses absurdity in relation to not the phenomenon of living but of existing. To clarify, Sisyphus is representative of the new typology of the *undead* overman. A possibility of tragedy without death, or after death, is therefore found in the Sisyphus myth, since Sisyphus is no longer the Heideggerian Being-towards-death, but a kind of being-after-death, which is a memory-being, since the category through which that being is tied to existence is "this new attainment of the spirit of nostalgia" (Camus 1983 p. 42), when "the images of earth cling too tightly to memory" (p. 122). With the death of *the* Sisyphus (iconic, therefore, representative), and thus of humanity, one has come to the death of identity as empirically or existentially manifest, along with the loss of meaning of the semiotic structure that explicated it. It was also the death of 'truth' as in meaningful, verifiable signification, for what system of signs could have communicated that which is incommunicable? With this death of truth, fiction was reborn, as, for Blanchot, "literature begins at the moment when literature becomes a question" (Blanchot 1995b p. 300). It is reborn with a new responsibility—to embody that which cannot be embodied, and therefore to absolve the future of the burden of historical amnesia:

> Memories are necessary, but only that they may be forgotten: in order that in this forgetfulness—in the silence of a profound metamorphosis—there might at least be born a word, the first word of a poem.
>
> (Blanchot 1982 p. 87)

With the elucidation of Sisyphus, Camus exploits the incipient tragic analogies between the absurd and the existential, explaining that, "If this myth is tragic, that is because its hero is conscious. Where would his torture be, indeed, if at every step, the hope of succeeding upheld him?" (Camus 1983 p. 121) The consciousness of Sisyphus, as the author of his own undoing, is the consciousness of the *undead*—that consciousness which has lived after dying which is significant in the birth of tragedy, in fact, of all art. This death, undergone by Sisyphus-the-

artist, for Blanchot, is thereby embodied in both the linguistic and literary processes themselves. Paradoxically, as Jonathan Strauss puts it, this argument is based on language being a form of death, it should, by his reasoning, [also] be a determinate negation of it—a non-death" (Strauss, J. 2000b p. 9). One may turn, for validation, to Blanchot who states:

> Every work, and each moment of work, puts everything into question all over again; and thus he who must live only for the work has no way to live. Whatever he does, the work withdraws him from what he does and from what he can do.
>
> (Blanchot 1982 p. 87)

Literature, therefore presents itself as a paradoxical category since "it manifests existence without being, existence which remains below existence, like an inexorable affirmation, without beginning or end—death as the impossibility of dying" (Blanchot 1995b p. 328). This is because with every work, the author dies or is dispensed with, since his work, once finished, is no longer his own; it no longer recognizes him. On the other hand, it is only through the traces of his work that the author may survive futurity since "the work, after death, is sent, like the dove of Arche, to give recognition to that which has survived, in carrying back the branch green with meaning, and it comes back ... changed, by the return" (Blanchot 1992 p. 88). In other words, "the writer who writes a work eliminates himself as he writes that work and at the same time affirms himself in it" (Blanchot 1995b p. 340). In that sense, writing is in a dying, non-dying state as it is "incapable of any present" (Blanchot 1992 p. 89) but is carried on through traces into posterity. It presents the state where dying becomes impossible—a state which is the greatest dread of man since death is his only chance to glimpse the "future of a finished world":

> ... death is man's greatest hope, his only hope of being man. This is why existence is his only real dread ... existence frightens him, not because of death which could put an end to it, but because it excludes death.... there is no question we are preoccupied by dying. But why? It is because when we die, we leave behind not only the world but also death.... As long as I live, I am a mortal man, by ceasing to be a man I also cease to be mortal, I am no longer capable of dying, and my impending death horrifies me because I see it as it is: no longer death, but the impossibility of dying.
>
> (Blanchot 1995b p. 337)

Sisyphus, for whom dying has become impossible, who has already stood witness to his own dying, is therefore retrieving the task of death from his undead span. It is for this that his tragedy—his literature—authored by he himself, is an aporia. His horror of the impossibility of dying, of undying death, is made manifest in the existence of his literature ... because literature, though dying of a kind, also assures survival. Survival, thus, becomes an intrinsic component of one's understanding of both literature and death, and thus of tragedy—the literature of death. One does not follow the reason why, in an essay also entitled "The Myth of Sisyphus" in *Faux Pas* (2001), Blanchot contests the "happiness" of Sisyphus that Camus claims to detect in this character-author/character-actor:

> Happy? That is quickly written.... [Camus] himself is not faithful to his rule, because in the long run he makes of the absurd not that which disturbs and breaks everything but that which is amenable to arrangement to arrangement and which even arranges everything. In his work the absurd becomes a denouement ...
>
> (Blanchot 2001 p. 57)

Though the fact remains that "the domain of the absurd is the domain of unknowing" (Blanchot 2001 p. 58), what Blanchot fails to see is that the happiness of Sisyphus is not that of an absurd man. It is indeed a denouement, since it unfolds as tragedy, but the actor-author of that absurd tragedy is content in its eternal return, as the literature of the absurd. His *deathness* serves as his chief tool of immortality. He becomes, in Blanchot's own words, a 'dead-immortal', suffused with "a feeling of extraordinary lightness, a sort of beatitude ... perhaps ecstasy" (Blanchot 1995a p. 3). Sisyphus is the soul of tragedy itself, since his survival is the survival of what is left over after dying.

The encounter with death kills something within him. But something also survives. That which survives remains as the testimony to that which is dead, which has died at the 'instant' of death. The onus of testimony is somewhere transferred to literature, to tragedy, to be preserved in the archives of autobiography in a state of dying/non-dying, in other words, as dead-immortal. Literature survives so that, as Kafka once wished, the writer may "die content" (Blanchot 1982 p. 90). The writer, who is Sisyphus, bequeaths to his work the residual function of 'survival'—the murmurings which remain after all has been said.

Sisyphus is the speaker of that untenable residual language of the absurd from the very margins of mythology. Even Blanchot wondered why, despite being the "hero of insane torment [he] only has a relatively mediocre place in literature" (Blanchot 2001 p. 53). It is so, because he is literature himself. It is a residual language, and yet, it is a definitive language, since it is the language of renewal, of resistance, of refusal to accept. Each time he climbs down to his stone, he has a new verse ready to himself. He is his own taskmaster. The happiness of Sisyphus is akin to the laughter of Medusa—it is scornful in its tragic intensity, and amused in its state of *undead* invulnerability. The sun throws no shadow across him, because he is the shadow itself—a trace. His being is painless since he is pain itself. "One must imagine Sisyphus happy" (Camus 1983 p. 123) since he may even be plotting against the gods, since having reached the zenith of his tragic lot without losing his consciousness, nothing really remains to frighten him into submission. He may even say, in the royal tone of Oedipus: "No god may speak for me" (Sophocles p. 68). He is ready for another tragedy, since he is now *free* of fear—the fear of the absurd. And he is the supreme creator who reigns over his renewed universe, reconstituting it every time as his aesthetic whim pleases him:

> I leave Sisyphus at the foot of the mountain! One always finds one's burden again. But Sisyphus teaches the higher fidelity that negates the gods and raises the rocks. He too concludes that all is well ... Each atom of that stone, each mineral flake of that night-filled mountain, in itself forms a world.
>
> (Camus 1983 p. 123)

The absurd, instead of being an education of Sisyphus, becomes the very mechanism by virtue of which he guarantees non-existence, and therefore the absence of the absurd. He is *the* absurd, and in that he becomes the contemporary educator of mankind. I can hear his voice:

> *Thus I draw from the absurd three consequences, which are my revolt, my freedom, and my passion. By the mere activity of consciousness I transform into a rule of life what was an invitation to death—and I refuse suicide.*
>
> (Camus 1983 p. 64, emphasis added)

Conclusion

I think and think for months and years. Ninety-nine times, the conclusion is false. The hundredth time I am right.

—Albert Einstein

A conclusion is the place where you got tired of thinking.

—Arthur Bloch

To attempt to draw a finality from this tendentious dissertation perhaps goes against its very nature. A conclusive research, howsoever complete in its scope and objective, was hardly the aim in my case. Perhaps the limitations overrode the intentions at every turn, and to present three sets of three phases of an eminent and prolific writer is by no means a matter of certainty, since it entails the process of decoding an entire life. To know a writer's work is to know a lot of him, and the more embroiled one gets in the solicitude of empathy, the more it becomes arduous to keep an objective distance from the author himself. In the anxiety of misrepresenting something, one is afraid to represent anything at all. This burden of responsibility is quite curious, since one is assured of the fact that drawing the wrong conclusions in research is hardly an offence punishable by law. But the magnitude of accountability suffers no reduction, since the need to do justice to whatever was once written is paramount.

I am especially unhappy with my first chapter, since I feel it has not been able to do justice to the relationship between the authorial mind and memory. There are, as I have clarified in the Introduction, two consistent themes of his growth that I have tried to maintain—one personal and the other thematological. (The three unities of time, space and action, though done to death, may sometimes suffice as useful management tools, especially when it is used for specific purposes of coalescing various strands in a compact space.) These two themes are necessary to understand the invisible connections of the great corpus of Camus' works, which change shape faster than fantastical creatures. Essays—both personal and journalistic, novels, plays, criticism, a slightest sliver of poetry: there is no genre he has left untouched, and therefore, no single genre that I could exclusively commit myself to, compelled, instead, to compulsively waft in and out of narratives, which is a commission exceedingly far from the easy, fragrant sound of it.

I chose the essays as my primary source for the commencing chapter since I felt there had been a surfeit of criticism and speculative analyses on his novels, which happens with every major author. There is one side of him which has been excessively exposed to scholarship, while the other part has been obscured in the wake of his so-called existential, Nobel-winning novels. I hoped to resurrect that obscured, bereft-of-scholarly-attention, non-existential aspect of him, and hence the title of the dissertation. His non-existence as a non-existential author disturbed my readerly equilibrium, since the criticisms I came across seemed utterly skewed in favour (or disfavour) of a distinct pattern of writing, while his works involve and include so much more.

The second chapter, since it gathered around factual information and a more concrete political philosophy than one would have hoped for in a reputed 'existentialist', was less difficult to conceive than its amorphous predecessor. One labours under the care of striking a balance between fact and fiction, since the eye of vigil has to be constantly open so as to prevent a dissertation chapter from beginning to suspiciously resemble a Wikipedia article. Information had to be used guardedly, and the gradual movement of Camus in and out of Leftist philosophy demanded a subtlety which is extremely difficult to achieve in writing. I have tried to objectively look at his strange change of countenance when he speaks of rebellion, democracy, legality and justice with respect to politics in general, and with politics in particular regard to Algeria, as well as to analyse the specific reasons as to the fallibilities of his theory. Nonetheless, the fact remains that this is a subject on which Camus dwelt at length and with the greatest devotion, since man and his eternal instinct of revolt is what comprises his philosophy.

This brings me to my third and final chapter, where I look at Camus' distinct breed of 'existentialism', and whether it is possible to redefine its boundaries and stretch, to a certain degree, its elastic walls. Since he was at war with Sartre, it became more and more evident that the philosophical squabble had underlying layers of difference, mostly in their attitude towards Marxist politics, and their conflicting discourse on absurdism. At each point, Camus seemed to be at pains to distinguish himself from his distinguished friend, and insisted that he should be spared the label of an 'existentialist'. After having gone through a bulk of his compositions, I had to agree. But agreement must be followed and bolstered by evidence, and this chapter serves to provide as such.

However, it also rested with me, in this chapter, to find out his particular brand of philosophy, which lay somewhere between (as do all his works) the existential absurd and the tragical absurd. My attempt has been to define these two categories as different ontological primers on which, then, an author later constructs new tendencies of philosophy. I plead innocence in my love of Shakespeare, whom I have taken recourse to in my search of a delineation of the tragical absurd in those petit epigraphs, and there are perhaps no better exponents of the same. The tragical absurd took various forms in later centuries, with Eliot and Arthur Miller's plays, but the foundation was perhaps laid by the ancient Greeks who specialised in fatal narratives, so far so, that there has never been a tragedy of quite the same immensity as perhaps *Oedipus Rex.* To shuttle between tragic temporalities is an exciting enterprise, given the fact that one may finally have the chance to relate and interweave one's literary preferences, though, hopefully, not in a random way.

This chapter is also more complex than the preceding two, because it is more layered and definitely the hardest to have had to weld together. It also looks, drawing from his novels, plays and essays, at Camus' engagement with the metaphysical concept of death, and the dialectic that gets constructed during the formation of his dialogic relation with western philosophy. Death, and especially suicide, is a polymorphous problem of philosophy, and Camus' interrogation of its palimpsestic positions leaves open the scope for future negotiations by authors like Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Blanchot, Emmanuel Levinas and Martin Heidegger. He thereby situates himself in an illustrious lineage of philosophers, all of whom have been intrigued, perplexed and stimulated by similar ontological crises.

Speaking of the three chapters together, one can only say that it is, at the very most, a glimpse of the modes and phases of writing a single author can undergo in a relatively short period of time. In the variance of multiplicity, the affective capacity of his works is far from lost. The fracturing of his subjective authorial consciousness, rather, performs the impossible assignment of recuperation of some genres which are deemed to be either more or less significant than others. And yet, to aspire bring these numerous voices together to accomplish a bonding and not a bondage, is a scholar's doom. Ever an admirer of the conceits of John Donne, I inadvertently employed the Donnesque method of *discordia concors*, which I now realise, is not a flattering task to have undertaken. Yet, there was hardly any other way I could have progressed than by yoking together the disparate and conflicting elements of his writing, since Camus' works are as diverse as Rilke's imageries. However, the harmonious discord of diversity seems the fashion in postmodern times, so I am relatively at ease.

Covering the limitations of this dissertation is perhaps the easiest. It deserves more space than one would care to spare it. Since I am, like Camus, a believer in myths, I might as well begin with one. Legend has it that one cannot, on the occasion of ever having seen a *neelgai* grazing in JNU (virtuously nibbling on academic turf), leave the hallowed institution before one completes PhD. Many a hapless fresher has forever been on the lookout for clueless quadrupeds. I testify as to the veracity of this conviction, since there is no other plausible explanation as to the fact that I have—really, finally, decidedly—completed a whole dissertation before eyeing a PhD synopsis.

The shortcomings of this dissertation are more numerous, as perhaps already fathomed by the reader, than its meagre merits. The reasons that I forward are merely excuses for my own inadequacies. It is impossible to mobilize *all* the resources necessary for an epic battle in so short a time span, but as the case stands, even having accessed *some* of all of the resources is hardly any help, since half way through, one realizes that one's individual propensities to inertia is the greatest handicap en route to serious scholarship. In other words, my good intentions, while all the time at the very surface, vaporized in the wake of all those intimidating piles of research documents, and I could not read half of what I had intended to, promising myself that I would make up for my deficient readerly skills in my PhD, which also, however, seems unlikely. One does, evidently, get tired of thinking.

Inhabiting the first world capital of a third world nation also proves trying, especially in the forms of severe electricity and water crisis, and at one point of time, almost all of my batchmates were contemplating turning in our dissertations in primitive (but foolproof) handwritten form. Apparently, technology and Indian summers do not mix well. I also had the time to ruminate, when I was not doing anything else, on the perverse dependence we have come to have on the internet—for articles, e-texts, citation dates, and so on—which makes it impossible to step into the academic world without a comprehensive knowledge of the virtual one. It is one of the reasons, I think, for our gradual aversion to the print medium. My own inability to read as much and as many books as I needed to becomes evidence enough of our impatience with language that is available only on non-exotic white paper, and cannot be carried in a USB device.

Therefore, in a way, this dissertation has been more of a learning process, since I found myself spending more time meditating than expostulating. In a way, therefore, it was more successful than I expected it to be—it taught me patience, coherence and determination.

At one point of time, I was sure I would sail through a research degree which necessitated only a paper as long as, say, four term papers strung together. Yet the wefting of those imaginary papers to weld them into a strong chemical bond became a work of utmost effort. I plead guilty to charges of procrastination, since the ideation takes not as long as the expression does, and it was the expression that took so long to come out from within a recalcitrant mind.

Language is a refractory medium, and unruly in its search for ideal, making me take pains to go through the same lines over and over to find constant flaws, wanting to alter and restate things. It became a frustratingly self-defeating exercise. In its physical completion at least, a part of me also gains totality, since it had seemed so impossible for my limbs to be acting in co-ordination with my cerebral impulses, and what the hand wrote (typed) was forever at war with what the mind had meant for it to say.

In every way, this process, therefore, was an unsatisfactory one, but it taught me to hope for satisfaction in my next venture, which may not be so far away. Once one has forayed into serious research, as the first brief stint taught me, there is no way to be easily content. I hope to never comprehensively conclude this process at all, so that it spares scope for more every time, that I am asked to subordinate the supreme pleasures of creativity to the uncertain compunctions of scholarship, and achieve, each time, an incompletion, ready to accommodate what future scholarship has to offer.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Print Sources:

Camus, Albert. *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays* [1955]. New York: Alfred K. Knopf, 1983.

———. *Exile and the Kingdom* [1957]. Trans. Justine O' Brien. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1962.

———. *The Rebel* [1956]. New York: Vintage Books International, 1991.

———. *Resistance, Rebellion, and Death.* Trans. Justin O' Brien. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960.

———. *The Collected Fictions of Albert Camus* [1960]. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1985.

———. *Selected Essays and Notebooks.* Ed. Philip Thody. UK and Australia: Penguin Books, 1970.

———. *The First Man* [1994]. Trans. David Hapgood. New York: Alfred K. Knopf, 1995.

———. *Camus at Combat: Writing 1944–1947* [2002]. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006.

Secondary Sources

Alsaesser, Thomas. 'Postmodernism as Mourning Work'. *Screen*, Vol. 42, No. 2, Summer 2001, pp. 193–201.

Apter, Emily. 'Out of Character: Camus's French Algerian Subjects'. *MLN*, Vol. 112, No. 4, 1997, pp. 499–516.

Baudrillard, Jean. 'Simulacra and Simulations', in *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings.* Ed. Mark Poster. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1988.

Benjamin, Walter. 'Theses on the Philosophy of History' in *Illuminations* [1955]. Trans. Harry Zoron. London: Pimlico, 1999, pp. 245–255.

Bensmaïa, Réda. *The Year of Passages.* Trans. Tom Conley. Minneapolis, London: Minnesota Press, 1995.

Bhattacharya, Debaditya. Unpublished. 'Practising Theory in the Excesses of a Silence'. Paper submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University for evaluation in M.A.

Bienek, Horst. 'Exile is Rebellion', in *Literature in Exile*. Ed. John Glad. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1990, pp. 41–48.

Blanchard, William H. *Revolutionary Morality: A Psychosexual Analysis of Twelve Revolutionists*. California and England: ABC Clio Information Services, 1984.

Blanchot, Maurice. *The Space of Literature*. Trans. Ann Smock. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1982.

———. *The Step not Beyond*. Trans. Lycette Nelson. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992.

———. *The Infinite Conversation*. Trans. Susan Hanson. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.

———. 'The Instant of my Death' in *The Instant of My Death/Demeure: Fiction and Testimony*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1995a.

———. *The Work of Fire* [1949]. Trans. Charlotte Mandell. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1995b.

———. *The Writing of the Disaster* [1980]. Trans. Ann Smock. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1995c.

———. *Faux Pas*. Ed. Werner Hamacher and David E. Wellbery. Trans. Charlotte Mandell. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2001.

Brée, Germaine. *Yale French Studies*, No. 8, What's Novel in the Novel, 1951, pp. 93–100.

Bridgeman, Teresa. *Negotiating the New in the French Novel: Building Contexts for Fictional Worlds*. London and New York: Routledge, 1998.

Brinton, Crane. *The Anatomy of Revolution* [1938]. New York: Vintage Books, 1965.

Camus, Albert. *Youthful Writings* [1973]. London and New York: Penguin, 1980.

———. *Between and Hell and Reason: Essays from the Resistance Newspaper Combat, 1944–1947*. Ed. and trans. Alexander de Gramont. Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 1991.

Carlson, Marvin A. *Theories of the Theatre: A Historical and Critical Survey from the Greeks to the Present*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984.

Carroll, David. 'Camus's Algeria: Birthrights, Colonial Injustice, and the Fiction of a French-Algerian People'. *MLN*, Vol. 112, No. 4, 1997, pp. 517–549.

———. 'Rethinking the Absurd: *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*' in *The Cambridge Companion to Albert Camus*. Ed. Edward J. Hughes. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007b, pp. 13–25.

———. *Albert Camus the Algerian: Colonialism, Terrorism, Justice*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007a.

Caruth, Cathy (ed.) *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1992.

Castelli, Elizabeth and James McBride. 'Beyond the Language and Memory of the Fathers: Feminist Perspectives in Religion Studies', in *Transcending Boundaries: Multi-Disciplinary Approaches to the Study of Gender*. Ed. Pamela R. Frese and John M. Coggeshall. Connecticut, New Hampshire: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1991, pp. 113–140.

Charmé, Stuart Zane. *Vulgarity and Authenticity: Dimensions of Otherness in the World of Jean-Paul Sartre*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1991.

Choueiri, Youssef M. *Arab Nationalism: A History*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2000.

Cixous, Hélène. *Reveries of the Wild Woman* [2000]. Trans. Beverie Bie Brahic. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2006.

Clark, Timothy. *The Poetics of Singularity: The Counter-Culturist Turn in Heidegger, Derrida, Blanchot and the later Gadamer*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005.

Cooper, David E. *Existentialism: A Reconstruction*. Oxford and Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 1990

Crépon, Mark. 'Eternal Return and the Thought of Death', trans. Franson Manjali, in Franson Manjali (ed.) *Nietzsche: Philologist, Philosopher and Cultural Critic*, New Delhi: Allied Publishers Pvt. Limited, 2006, pp. 51–60.

Crowley, Martin. 'Camus and Social Justice' in *The Cambridge Companion to Camus*. Ed. Edward J. Hughes Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 93–105.

Dallery, Arleen B. and Charles E. Scott (ed.) *The Question of the Other: Essays in Contemporary Continental Philosophy*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989.

Davidson, Donald. *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001.

———. *Truth, Language, and History*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005.

de Certaeu, Michel. *The Writing of History* [1975]. Trans. Tom Conley. New York: Columbia University Press, 1988.

De Vries, Hent. '"Lapsus Absolu": Notes on Blanchot's The Instant of My Death', *Yale French Studies*, No. 93, 'The Place of Maurice Blanchot', 1998, pp. 30–59.

Deleuze, Gilles. *Nietzsche and Philosophy* [1962]. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson. London: The Athlone Press, 1992.

Derrida, Jacques. *Acts of Literature*. Ed. Derek Attridge. London and New York: Routledge, 1992.

———. *Monolingualism of the Other, or, The Prosthesis of Origin*. Trans. Patrick Mensah. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1998.

Douglas, Jack D., John M. Johnson. *Existential Sociology*. London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977.

Dru, Alexander (ed.) *The Journals of Søren Kierkegaard: A Selection*. London: Oxford University Press, 1938.

Durfee, Harold E. 'Camus and the Ethics of Rebellion'. *The Journal of Religion*, Vol. 38, No. 1, January 1958, pp. 29–45.

Dürrenmatt, Friedrich. *Writings on Theatre and Drama*. Trans. H.M. Waidson. London: Jonathan Cape, 1976.

Eubanks, Cecil L. and Peter A. Petrakis. 'Reconstructing the World: Albert Camus and the Symbolization of Experience'. *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 61, No. 2, May, 1999, pp. 293–312.

Eze, Emmanuel Chukuwudi. 'Language and Time in Postcolonial Experience'. *Research in African Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 1, 2008, pp. 24–47.

Fanon, Franz. *The Wretched of the Earth* [1961]. England, Australia: Penguin Books, 1967.

Forster, Ricardo. '(Un)inhabiting Exile: Franz Rosenzweig and Jewishness'. *Nepantla: Views from South*. Volume 4, Number 3, Spring 2003, pp. 449–491.

Foucault, Michel. *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*. Ed. Donald F. Bouchard, trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon. Ithaca and New York: Cornell University Press, 1977.

———. *Power*. Ed. James D. Faubion, trans. Robert Hurley and Others. England: Penguin Books, 2000.

Fromm, Erich. *Fear of Freedom* [1942]. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960.

Fynsk, Christopher. 'The Self and Its Witness: On Heidegger's *Being and Time*', *boundary 2*, Vol. 10, No. 3. (Spring, 1982), pp. 185–207.

Guerin, Jeanyves. 'Camus the journalist', in *The Cambridge Companion to Camus*. Ed. Edward J. Hughes. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 79–92.

Harvey, David. *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1996.

Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time* [1957]. Trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. New York: Harper and Row, 1962.

Heine, Steven. *Existential and Ontological Dimensions of Time in Heidegger and Dogen*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985.

Hodge, Joanna. *Heidegger and Ethics*, London and New York: Routledge, 1995.

Hoy, Terry. 'Albert Camus: The Nature of Political Rebellion'. *The Western Political Quarterly*, Vol 13, No. 3, September 1960, pp. 573–580.

Hume, David. *A Treatise of Human Nature* [1740], Vol. 2. Ed. A.D. Lindsay. New York and London: Everyman's Library, 1911.

Jaspers, Karl. *Tragedy Is Not Enough*. Trans. Harold A.T. Reiche, Harry T. Moore and Karl W. Deutch. Boston: Beacon Press, 1953.

Jones, James F. Jr. 'Camus on Kafka: An Unpublished Letter'. *The French Review*. Vol. 71, No. 4, March 1998, pp. 645–650.

Joyaux, Georges J. 'Albert Camus and North Africa'. *Yale French Studies*, No. 25, Albert Camus, 1960, pp. 10–19.

Judt, Tony. *The Burden of Responsibility: Blum, Camus, Aron and the French Twentieth Century*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1998.

Kelly, Debra. 'Le Premmier Homme and the literature of loss', in *The Cambridge Companion to Camus*. Ed. Edward J. Hughes Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 191–202.

Kierkegaard, Søren. *The Concept of Anxiety* [1844]. Trans. Reidan Thompste and Albert B. Anderson. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981.

Lackey, Michael. 'Killing God, Liberating the "Subject": Nietzsche and Post-God Freedom', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 60, No. 4, 1999, pp. 737–754.

Lacoue-Labarthe, Philippe. *Heidegger, Art and Politics: The Fiction of the Political*, trans. Chris Turner. Oxford, Cambridge: Basil Blackwell Ltd.1990.

Lamont, Rosette C. 'The Hero in Spite of Himself'. *Yale French Studies*, No. 29, The New Dramatists, 1962, pp. 73–81.

Lansner, Kermit. 'Albert Camus'. *The Kenyon Review*, Vol. 14, No. 4, Autumn 1952, pp. 562–578.

Le Clézio, J.M.G. *Onitsha* [1992]. Trans. Alison Anderson. New Delhi: Rupa and Co., 2006.

Le Goff, Jacques. *History and Memory*. Trans. Steven Rendall and Elizabeth Claman. New York: Columbia University Press, 1992.

Lesage, Laurence. 'Albert Camus and Stendhal'. *The French Review*, Vol. 23, No. 6, May 1950, pp 474–477.

Letemendia, V.C. 'Poverty in the Writings of Albert Camus'. *Polity*, Vol. 29, No. 3, Spring 1997, pp. 441–460.

Levinas, Emmanuel. *The Levinas Reader*, ed. Seán Hand. Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1989.

———. *God, Death and Time* [1993]. Trans. Bettina Bergo. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2000.

Lottman, Herbert R. *Albert Camus: A Biography.* London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1979.

Lyotard, Jean-François. *Political Writings*. Trans. Bill Readings, and Kevin Paul Geiman. London: UCL Press, 1993.

MacDonald, Paul S. (ed.) *The Existentialist Reader: An Anthology of Key Texts*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000.

Mairowitz, David Zane and Alain Korkos. *Camus for Beginners*. Ed. Richard Appignanesi. London and Cambridge: Icon Books, 1998.

Martin, Thomas. *Oppression and the Human Condition: An Introduction to Sartrean Existentialism*. Oxford and New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2002.

Matuštik, Martin J. *Postnational Identity: Critical Theory and Existential Philosophy in Habermass, Kierkegaard, and Havel.* New York and London: Guilford Press, 1993.

Mehta, Brinda. 'Geographies of Space Spatial Impositions, Circularity, and Memory in Malika Mokeddem's Les hommes qui marchent and Le siècle des sauterelles'. *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2003, pp. 1–38

Miller, David. *Social Justice*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976.

Nair, Anita. *The Better Man*, New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1999.

Nancy, Jean-Luc. *The Experience of Freedom* [1988]. Trans. Bridget McDonald. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1993.

———. *The Birth of Presence* [1993]. Trans. Brian Holmes and others. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2003.

———. 'An Experience of the Heart', trans. Franson Manjali, in Franson Manjali (ed.) *Nietzsche: Philologist, Philosopher and Cultural Critic*, New Delhi: Allied Publishers Pvt. Limited, 2006, pp. 19-23.

———. 'Between Story and Truth'. Trans. Franson Manjali. *The Little Magazine*. Available at <http://www.littlemag.com/jul-aug01/nancy.html> Date of access: 12.04.2009.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for Everyone and No One* (1883), trans. R. J. Hollingdale. Middlesex, U.K.: Penguin Books, 1969.

O'Brien, Conor Cruise. *Albert Camus: Of Europe and Africa*. New York: Viking Press, 1970.

O'Brien, Justin. 'Albert Camus: Militant', in *Camus: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Ed. Germaine Brée. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1962, pp. 20–25.

Quilliot, Roger. 'Albert Camus' Algeria', in *Camus: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Ed. Germaine Brée. New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1962, pp. 38–47.

Ricoeur, Paul. *The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics*. Trans. Willis Domingo et al. Evanston: North Western University, 1974.

———. *Memory, History, Forgetting*. Trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellaeur. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004.

———. *Reflections on the Just* [2000]. Trans. David Pellaueur. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

Rodman, P.W. *More precious than peace: The Cold War and the struggle for the Third World*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1994.

Roth, Leon. 'A Contemporary Moralist: Albert Camus'. *Philosophy*, Vol. 30, No. 115, October 1955, pp. 291–303.

Rothschild, J. *Return to diversity: A political history of east central Europe since World War II*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.

Rubé, Pierre and Kenneth Douglas. 'Who was Albert Camus?' *Yale French Studies*, No. 25, Albert Camus, 1960, pp. 3–9.

Rushdie, Salman. *Shame*, New Delhi: Rupa and Co., 1983.

Sagi, Avi. *Albert Camus and the Philosophy of the Absurd*. Trans. Balya Stein. Value Enquiry Book Series, Vol. 125. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*. Trans. Hazel E. Barnes. London: Routledge, 1958.

Shakespeare, William. *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*. Ed. W.J. Craig. London: Magpie Books, 1992.

Simmel, George. 'The Metropolis and Mental Life', in Chris Jenks ed. *Culture: Critical Concepts in Sociology Vol. IV*. London and New York: 2003, pp. 124–135.

Smith, D. Vance. 'Plague, Panic Space and the Ancient Medieval Household', *The South-Atlantic Quarterly*, Volume 98, Number 3, Spring 1999, pp. 367–414.

Sonnenfeld, Albert. 'Albert Camus as Dramatist: The Sources of His Failure'. The Tulane Drama Review, Vol. 5, No. 4, June 1961, pp. 106–123.

Sophocles. *The Theban Plays* [1949]. Trans. E.F. Watling. London: Penguin Books, 1965.

Stopinska, Agata, Anke Bartels and Raj Kollmorgen (eds). *Revolutions: Reframed-Revisited-Revised*. Frankfurt, New York and Oxford: Peter Lang, 2007.

Strauss, Jonathan. 'After Death', *Diacritics*, Vol. 30, No. 3, Post-Mortem: The State of Death as a Modern Construct, Autumn, 2000a, pp. 90–104.

———. 'Preface: The State of Death', *Diacritics*, Vol. 30, No. 3, Post-Mortem: The State of Death as a Modern Construct, Autumn, 2000b, pp. 3–11.

Strauss, Walter A. 'Albert Camus, Stone-Mason'. *MLN*, Vol. 77, No. 3, French Issue, May 1962, pp. 268–281.

Tageldin, Shaden M. 'Reversing the Sentence of Impossible Nostalgia: The Poetics of Postcolonial Migration in Sakinna Boukhedenna and Agha Shahid Ali'. *Comparative Literature Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 2, 2003, pp. 232–264.

Tarrow, Susan. *Exile from the Kingdom: A Political rereading of Albert Camus*. University, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1985.

Thody, Philip. *Albert Camus: 1913–1960*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1961.

Van der Poel, Ieme. 'Camus: a life lived in critical times', in *The Cambridge Companion to Albert Camus*. Ed. Edward J. Hughes. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 13–25.

Viggiani, Carl A. 'Albert Camus' First Publications'. *Modern Language Notes*, Vol. 75, No. 7, November 1960, pp. 589–596.

Von Der Luft, Eric. 'Sources of Nietzsche's "God is Dead!" and its Meaning for Heidegger', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 45, No. 2, April–June, 1984, pp. 263–276.

West, John K. 'Political or Personal: The Role of the Chenoua Landscape in Camus's La Mort heureuse'. *The French Review*, Vol. 73, No. 5, April 2000, pp. 834–844.

Willhoite, Fred H. Jr. 'Albert Camus' Politics of Rebellion'. *The Western Political Quarterly*, Vol. 14, No. 2, June 1961, pp. 400–414.

Woodhull, Winifred. *Transfigurations of the Maghreb: Feminism, Decolonization, and Literatures*. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.

Woolfolk, Alan. 'The Artist as Cultural Guide: Camus' Post-Christian Asceticism'. *Sociological Analysis*, Vol. 47, No. 2, Summer 1986, pp. 93–110.

Yeats, William Butler. *Selected Poems*, ed. A. Norman Jeffares. London: Pan Books, 1974.

Yinger, J. Milton and Mark N. Katz. 'Revolution: Refining its Defining'. *International Journal of Group Tension*, Vol. 30, No. 4, Winter 2001, pp. 349–367.

Zeleza, Paul Tiyambe. 'The Politics and Poetics of Exile: Edward Said in Africa'. *Research in African Literatures*, Vol. 36, No. 3, 2005, pp. 1–22.