REVOLT AND LIBERTY IN THE ORIGINAL THEATER OF ALBERT CAMUS

Thesis for the Degree of M. A.

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

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1965

REVOLT AND LIBERTY IN THE ORIGINAL THEATER OF ALBERT CAMUS

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A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Romance Languages

1965

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INTRODUCTION

In this analysis of revolt and liberty in Albert Camus' original theater, the objective is twofold; to point out an evolution in the moral and metaphysical nature of Camus' treatment of revolt and liberty, and to trace a corresponding change in esthetic approach or form.

Certain limitations must be established in approaching these two objectives. The work will therefore be limited to the following goals: one--an analysis of the personages essential to an understanding of the nature of the revolt and its liberty. This will include the esthetic or artistic conception of Albert Camus. These major theatrical characters are four in number, Caligula of the play of the same name, Martha of Le Malentendu, Diego of L'Etat de Siège, and Kaliayev of Les Justes. These four characters will be considered in the aforementioned order since each play will be analyzed chronologically.

The other characters will only be treated in their relationship to the major personages and the contrast that exists between them. These contrasts will be used to illuminate the position of the character under investigation.

The analysis of this philosophical and moral evolution will consist of (1) the original position of the

character in relation to the absurd, that is, his confrontation with absurdity; (2) his coming to terms with this confrontation, that is, his revolt and its implied freedom; (3) the issue of the revolt.

A second goal--in addition to the metaphysical position of each character, the character's essential qualities will be considered revealing how Camus has succeeded or failed in their delineation. In this way we may observe those qualities which give characters the right to be called more than "mouthpieces" of a moralist or philosopher, but the creation of an artist.

Considering this second goal, it must be remembered that the theater for Camus is not principally a "théâtre de thèse" as that of Jean-Paul Sartre.

It is rather a theater in the more traditional sense, a work of art not of philosophy with the major concern of the author being that of artistic honesty to the characters and the issue of the human situations involved.

Camus was first of all an artist and his theater in several instances demonstrates many of the characteristics of the classic style of theater, e.g., Les Justes and to a lesser extent Le Malentendu and L'Etat de Siège.

In an interview with Paris-Théâtre (1958) Camus states his reasons for choosing to write for the theater and his desire to create a form of modern tragedy:

> J'ai écrit pour le théâtre parce que je jouais et je mettais en scène. Ensuite, j'ai compris qu'à

> cause de ses difficultés même, le théâtre est le plus haut des genres littéraires. Je ne voulais rien exprimer, mais créer des personnages, et l'émotion, et le tragique. Plus tard, j'ai beaucoup réfléchi au problème de la tragédie moderne. Le Malentendu, L'Etat de Siège, Les Justes sont des tentatives, dans des voies chaque fois différentes et des styles dissemblables, pour approcher de cette tragédie moderne.[1*]

Again as a witness to Camus, the artist, we note the choice of themes and plays which he adapted, as well as his manner of adaptation. In all the works involved there was a constant concern to maintain his artistic integrity through faithfulness to the author of the original work.

Camus simply found in these works many instances in which the problems involved were related to his own concerns.

Stressing the importance in differentiating his dramatic art from a philosophical medium, Camus states in "prière d'insérer":

> Est-ce à dire que l'on doive considérer le théâtre d'Albert Camus comme un 'théâtre philosophique'? Non--si l'on veut continuer à désigner ainsi cette forme périmée de l'art dramatique où l'action s'alanguissait sous le poids des théories. Rien n'est moins 'pièce à thèse' que Le Malentendu, qui, se placant seulement sur le plan tragique, répugne à toute théorie. Rien n'est plus 'dramatique' que Caligula, qui semble n'emprunter ses prestiges qu'à l'histoire.[2]

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[1]Roger Quilliot, "Interviews," Théâtre Récits Nouvelles Albert Camus (Paris, 1962), p. 1713.

[2]Quilliot, "Prière d'insérer," p. 1742.

*Note: All quotes from the text of the four plays and all other references not footnoted are taken from Quilliot.

A third goal will be an evaluation of the esthetic or artistic concerns of Camus and their effect on his style. These will emerge in a discussion of merits or defects in style in each individual piece. This discussion will merge with a consideration of the author's esthetic goal envisioned in each individual work.

We will observe several qualities important to Camus which reoccur throughout the four plays reflected in the actions of the characters under study. These "passions" may be seen in the words which he stated as his preferred ones: "le monde, la terre, la douleur, la mère, les hommes, le désert, l'honneur, la misère, l'été, et la mer."[3]

We witness most of these themes in the four plays, but one which may be considered most important and of direct bearing on the first objective of this work is "l'honneur."

A fourth goal will be a retracing of the evolution in Camus' treatment of the absurd, revolt, liberty, and their issue. The previous "explication de texte" will be utilized to demonstrate the evolution or springing forth of the two penchants of Camus, one, that of the absurd, and the second the revolt its freedom and their issue. These different "faces" of the author tied together where possible, differentiated where necessary, will evolve into a final position, the issue of the revolt.

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[3]Jean-Claude Brisville, Camus (Paris, 1959), p. 223.

This fourth goal represents the fifth chapter, the preceding four chapters comprising the four plays and their respective "explications de texte."

A concluding section will present conclusions reached concerning Camus' final position in his original theater.

At this point it must be mentioned that the several adaptations, although an integral part of Camus' theater, will be omitted due to the limited nature of the subject matter under study.

The following plays were adapted by the author and may be found in Quilliot: Les Esprits de Larivey, La Dévotion à La Croix de Pedro Calderon de la Barca, Un Cas Intéressant de Dino Buzzati, Le Chevalier D'Olmedo de Lope de Vega, Requiem pour une Nonne de William Faulkner, et Les Possédés, de Dostoievski.

Although these works possess certain themes pertinent to the absurd and revolt, they understandably do not reflect them as directly as do the original works.

Camus' adaptation of these works, especially Requiem for a Nun and The Possessed, would make a good subject for a dissertation in itself.

An early work of Camus, Révolte dans les Asturies, which the author called an "Essai de Création Collective" interests us from a historical and biographical point of view, since it reflects Camus' literary and political views at the time it was written in 1934. The play concerns a

workers' revolt in the Asturias region of Spain on the eve of the Spanish Civil War. It is a product of the "Théâtre de l'équipe" a group of young artists in Algiers with whom Camus cooperated to produce the work.

Jeanne Sicard, a witness to the work's creation, asserts however in Quilliot's "Presentation" of the work that it was essentially the creation of Camus. Quilliot depicts it as an "Oeuvre de circonstance, de propagande, . . ."[4]

Because of the subject matter and propoganda nature of the work, it remains of limited artistic value and for that reason does not appear of significance to this study. But it does reveal the budding artistic talent of the young Camus.

A final point: the analytical approach of this study will be of a literary nature. That is, the works will be considered for their literary merit and not as works specifically written for the theater. Their stage direction and the mechanical aspect of stage adaptation and histrionics must be omitted since it exceeds the goal of this paper.

In the analysis of these four theatrical creations, about a dozen critical studies and essays have been utilized, as well as the other original works of Albert Camus. These include his notebooks, essays, journalistic writings, and finally his "Recits" and "Nouvelles."

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[4]Quilliot, "Présentation," p. 1844.

His two philosophical essays Le Mythe de Sisyphe and I'Homme révolté, have proved to be useful in demonstrating the evolution in Camus' metaphysical and moral concerns in his theater.

Although Camus wrote the plays before the essays which treat in a semi-rational manner the same problems, I think it is not unfaithful to Camus' theater to refer to these essays when considered appropriate.

CHAPTER I

Camus has chosen the historical figure Caligula to present his first exposition of the sentiment of the absurd and the absurd man.

Inspired by his reading of two Roman authors, Suetonius and Seneca, the author took his Caligula most likely from Suetonius' Vie des Douze Césars.[5]

Caligula, the "poète enragé," fits well into Camus' philosophical scheme of life as expounded in his philosophical and moral essay Le Mythe de Sisyphe. It must be remembered, however, that Caligula, written in 1938, was conceived three years before the writing of the "Mythe" in 1941.

Concerning the notion of the absurd, what is Camus' point of departure? To understand the absurd feeling and reasoning which drives the emperor to his death in a destructive rage, we must turn to Le Mythe de Sisyphe and the sentiment as described by Camus.

> Ce monde en lui-même n'est pas raisonnable, c'est tout ce qu'on en peut dire. Mais ce qui est absurde, c'est la confrontation de cet irrationel et de ce désir éperdu de clarté dont l'appel résonne au plus profond de l'homme.[6]

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[5]Quilliot, "Notice Historique," p. 1738.

[6]Albert Camus, Le Mythe de Sisyphe (Paris, 1958), p. 37.

And referring to the birth of the absurd, Camus states: "L'absurde nait de cette confrontation entre l'appel humain et le silence déraisonable du monde." (44) Camus continues to explain that the absurd feeling springs forth as the result of a comparison between a certain state of fact and reality, between an action and the world which surpasses it. In his definition of the absurd, he says: "L'absurde est essentiellement un divorce. Il n'est ni dans l'un ni dans l'autre des éléments comparés. Il nait de leur confrontation" (48).

This divorce, then, arises between the reasoning mind of man which calls for clarity and the world which rejects it. This is seen in the Mythe when Camus states:

> Mon raisonnement veut etre fidèle à l'évidence qui l'a éveillé. Cette évidence, c'est l'absurde. C'est ce divorce entre l'esprit qui désire et le monde qui déçoit, ma nostalgie d'unité, cet univers dispersé et la contradiction qui les enchaîne. . . . A partir du moment où elle est reconnue, l'absurdité est une passion, la plus déchirante de toutes (71-38).

This "nostalgie d'unité," this longing for the whole is a good point of departure in a look at Caligula.

"Les hommes meurent et ils ne sont pas heureux."[7] A truth which the emperor Caligula has discovered in the death of his sister and lover. A simple discovery, but one which will set the young poet on a logical path of destruction which will only end in his own.

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[7]Quilliot, p. 16.

Drusilla, Caligula's sister-lover dies. Rushing off with "un regard étrange" the emperor disappears for three days. Upon his return, he announces the reason for his long departure and fatigue: "Caligula: C'était difficile à trouver. . . . Hélicon: Et que voulais-tu? Caligula: La lune. . . . Simplement, je me suis senti tout d'un coup un besoin d'impossible. Les choses, telles qu'elles sont, ne me semblent pas satisfaisantes" (14-15).

This is Caligula's dilemma, the desire for the impossible, something which is not of this world, the moon or perhaps immortality. To Hélicon's retort that this reasoning doesn't hold up to the end, Caligula is quick to reply: "C'est parce qu'on ne le tient jamais jusqu'au bout que rien n'est obtenu. Mais il suffit peut-être de rester logique jusqu'à la fin" (16).

Caligula, then presents his plan, that of a pedagogue who will show his people the one truth, that of the absurd condition of man. He will force them to live this truth to its fullest extent. Finding nothing but lies around him, he proposes, with his unlimited powers to force the people to experience the absurd as he himself has experienced it. " . . . j'ai les moyens de les faire vivre dans la vérité. . . . Ils sont privés de la connaissance et il leur manque un professeur qui sache ce dont il parle" (16).

For Caesar there is one reality, the ultimate, that of death. All values all petty concerns collapse and disappear in the face of this final truth. Leveling all other

planes of truth, all morals, everything takes on the same meaning or lack of meaning. Nothing matters or following the same logic, everything is of importance. Caligula expresses this new-found truth when he says: "Tout est important: les finances, la moralité publique, la politique extérieure, l'approvisionnement de l'armée et les lois agraires! Tout est capital, te dis-je. Tout est sur le meme pied" (21). This then is the first step in his plan to direct his little "comedy of the absurd."

A second point is the arbitrary nature of death as experienced in the absurd condition. Caligula, therefore, decides to put his subjects to death, arbitrarily of course, following a list established in the same manner. As our Caesar points out, each of these executions has the same importance which means they have none. "Au demeurant, moi, j'ai décidé d'être logique et puisque j'ai le pouvoir, vous allez voir ce que la logique va vous couter. J'exterminerai les contradicteurs et les contradictions" (22-23).

One of the characteristics of the individual who lives the absurd is his complete liberty of action. "Or si l'absurde annihile toutes mes chances de liberté éternelle, il me rend et exalte au contraire ma liberté d'action."[8] The absurd liberates man from his myopia concerning death and an afterlife. Since Camus is concerned with man and his condition on earth, the metaphysical question is dismissed

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[8]Mythe, p. 80.

as not pertinent to his absurd condition. On the contrary, acceptance of the religious interpretation, "la réponse sacree le saut religieux" destroys it. Therefore, the absurd supplies him with the possibility of a complete freedom within this condition. "L'absurde m'éclaire sur ce point: il n'y a pas de lendemain. Voici désormais la raison de ma liberté profonde" (82).

This is the road which Caligula has chosen to follow and which will push him on to his inevitably tragic conclusion. Using his full powers as emperor, which few mortals possess, he rushes after the moon. The obvious consequence which he is most certainly aware of, will be dealt with in the following pages in the section treating "le suicide supérieur."

> Je viens de comprendre enfin l'utilité du pouvoir. Il donne ses chances à l'impossible. Aujourd'hui, et pour tout le temps qui va venir, ma liberté n'a plus de frontières. . . . Réjouissez-vous, il vous est enfin venu un empereur pour vous enseigner la liberté.[9]

Does he wish to equal the gods as Caesonia, his mistress, states? He responds to this suggestion: "Ce que je désire de toutes mes forces, aujourd'hui, est au-dessus des dieux. Je prends en charge un royaume où l'impossible est roi" (27).

As previously stated, one of Caligula's goals, in compliance with the absurd, is to render all conditions all principles the same, to equalize them through a leveling

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[9]Quilliot, pp. 24-25.

process. He would mix the sky and the sea, confound ugliness and beauty, transform suffering into laughter.

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

His stakes are high, all or nothing, the totality.

As we approach the end of Act One, Caligula's scheme emerges. Playing the role of director, as well as the principle actor, he will create a "fete sans mesure."

> Ah, c'est maintenant que je vais vivre enfin! . . . c'est moi qui t'invite à une fête sans mesure, à un procès général, au plus beau des spectacles. Et il me faut du monde, des spectateurs, des victimes et des coupables. . . . Faites entrer les coupables. Il me faut des coupables. Et ils le sont tous. . . . Juges, témoins, accusés, tous condamnés d'avance (28)!

The stage set, the curtain rises on this drama of the impossible.

Camus' choice of the protaganist's means to achieve his end obeys the nature of the absurd man as outlined in the "Mythe." Since the absurd man is unable to achieve a unification of his experience, the "moon" in the case of Caligula, he chooses to multiply his experience. Since our stay here is of a short duration, a fixed time span beyond which there is nothingness, the emphasis turns to the quantity of our experience, its quality losing significance. Camus chooses four activities by which to achieve this multiplicity of action. These four roles are that of the Don Juan, the Comedian, the Conqueror, and the Creator.

Caligula assumes all of these roles, stressing the Comedian. Deciding on the "apparaitre" of the actor, he is finally going to live.[10]

Why does he proclaim that he is finally living as this absurd game begins? Describing the Comedian, Camus informs us that comedy directs us towards the surest experience, that is to say the immediate one. "De toutes les gloires, la moins trompeuse est celle qui se vit.

L'acteur a donc choisi la gloire innombrable, celle qui se consacre et qui s'éprouve" (107).

Camus continues to explain that the more lives an actor has experienced, the better he removes himself from them. But the time comes when he must leave the stage and the world. What he has experienced is before him. "Il voit clair. Il sent ce que cette aventure a de déchirant et d'irremplacable" (114). This condition will be seen in the final scene of the play, when Caligula in a veritable fit of clairvoyance stands before his mirror. Thus we see in action what Camus calls "une moralité de la quantité."

Throughout the second act of the play we witness the emperor's reversal of the normal social order. Along with the arbitrary executions, he debases the senators, forcing their wives into prostitution, requiring them to serve him etc. He successfully terrorizes them into submission. Through fear and cowardice, they accept his reign of terror,

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[10]"L'Homme absurbe," Mythe, pp. 93-124.

at least temporarily. He concludes: "Vous avez fini par comprendre qu'il n'est pas nécessaire d'avoir fait quelque chose pour mourir" (40-41). His order established, he explains his murderous logic, stating that we die, condemned to death from birth, therefore we must be guilty. The will of Caligula is to teach us of death and its absurdity to make us live this reality (46-47).

In the final scene of the second act the dialogue between the young Scipion and Caligula shows us the poet and the purist which our hero remains. In response to Scipion who praises the beauty of nature, Caligula verifies his unmeasured passion for life. "Mais je sais trop la force de-ma passion pour la vie, elle ne se satisfera pas de la nature. . . . Tu es pur dans le bien, comme je suis pur dans le mal" (58).

This passion which knows no bounds reverses itself shortly afterward, and Caligula expresses his solitude "empoisonnée" of this world. This time the other pole of the nihilistic "all or nothing" attracts the tyrant and his "nostalgie du néant" emerges. " . . . ah! si du moins, . . . je pouvais gouter la vraie, le silence et le tremblement d'un arbre" (59)!

Act Three opens as this play within a play continues. This time the "Comédien" has chosen the gods to impersonate and today Caligula portrays Venus. Caesonia, Caligula's tool of implementation of the absurd, announces:

"L'adoration commence. Prosternez-vous et répétez après moi la prière sacrée à Caligula-Vénus . . ." (62).

The bitter irony in the incantations presented by Caesonia show the protaganist's scorn for the gods and their succor. "Comble-nous de tes dons, répands sur nos visages ton impartiale cruauté, ta haine tout objective; . . . Toi, si vide et si brulante inhumaine, mais si terrestre, enivre-nous du vin de ton equivalence . . ." (64). Informing Scipion of his designs, Caligula explains that there is only one way to equal the gods, to imitate their cruelty (67).

> Caligula dépeuple le monde autour de lui et, fidèle à sa logique, fait ce qu'il faut pour armer contre lui ceux qui finiront par le tuer. Caligula est l'histoire d'un suicide supérieur. C'est l'histoire de la plus humaine et de la plus tragique des erreurs. Infidèle à l'homme, par fidélité à lui-même, Caligula consent à mourir pour avoir compris qu'aucun être ne peut se sauver tout seul et qu'on ne peut être libre contre les autres hommes.[11]

With these words, Camus comments on the denouement of this "tragedy of the intelligence."

As Act Four opens, Caligula's designs are clear. He will push his terrible logic to its inevitable conclusion, his death at the hands of those who refuse to bend before his reasoning and in whom the revolt emerges. This inevitable issue of Caligula's rampage is far from rejected on the part of the mad emperor. On the contrary, our hero has accepted this outcome as a natural evolution of his absurd

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[11] Quilliot, p. 1728.

revolt. It is expected desired by the emperor, weary of the demands of his logic but refusing to alter his course. In any case, it is too late. When Scipion foresees the revolt about to spring forth, Caligula responds: "J'imagine difficilement le jour dont tu parles. Mais j'en rêve quelquefois" (69).

Yes, it is too late and besides Caesar would deny this murderous logic. "La logique, Caligula, il faut poursuivre la logique. Le pouvoir jusqu'au bout, l'abandon jusqu'au bout. Non, on ne revient pas en arrière et il faut aller jusqu'à la consommation" (75)!

This then is the suicide par excellence. And Caligula is ready. He states that if it is easy for him to kill, it is not difficult for him to die. As early as the second act he ignores the plot formed against him. And Helicon confirms his master's ends when he states to the young Scipion: "Je sais aussi que tu pourrais tuer Caligula . . . et qu'il ne le verrait pas d'un mauvais oeil" (54).

Camus has chosen Cherea to represent the revolt. An intellectual as Caligula, he possesses the opposing logic to that of the emperor. In Act Two Scene Two he presents to the patricians his reasons for opposing Caligula. They are not the same as those of the former. He despises the others' revolt out of petty concerns thus ignoring the real enemy. "Vous n'avez pas reconnu votre véritable ennemi, vous lui prêtez de petits motifs. Il n'en a que de grands. . . . Mais

il met son pouvoir au service d'une passion plus haute et plus mortelle, . . . voir se dissiper le sens de cette vie, disparaître notre raison d'exister, voilà ce qui est insupportable. On ne peut vivre sans raison. . . . je ne suis avec vous que pour un temps. . . . Ce n'est pas l'ambition qui me fait agir, mais une peur raisonnable, la peur de ce lyrisme inhumain auprès de quoi ma vie n'est rien" (34-35).

Why is Cherea so aware of the logic which he must combat and destroy? Because he himself possesses a penchant towards this feeling. In response to the questioning of Caligula, aware of the plot against him, Cherea responds: " . . . on ne peut aimer celui de ses visages qu'on essaie de masquer en soi" (77).

Cherea also has another idea of the duties of each man. He wants to be happy and live and one can be neither if one pushes the absurd in all its consequences as Caligula has done. His reasoning does not result in a leveling process as does the emperor's. "Je crois qu'il y a des actions qui sont plus belles que d'autres"(78).

This confrontation between Cherea and Caesar ends in the sealing of the mad poet's destiny by his own hands. Aware that if Cherea whom he admires does not succeed in his plan, others will, Caligula destroys the evidence against himself thus assuring his doom. In a sense he is controlling his own destiny, it is Caligula who is pulling the strings. "Continue, Cherea, poursuis jusqu'au bout le magnifique

raisonnement que tu m'as tenu. Ton empereur attend son repos" (81).

A second personage of interest to the reader because of his likeness to Caligula as well as his divergences is the young Scipion. Scipion could well be a young Caligula before his choice of the absurd reasoning. Scipion is also a purist a poet. He refuses to join Cherea's forces against Caligula because of his sympathy for the passion driving the young emperor.

He is in love with beauty. This is witnessed in the scene between Scipion and Caesar, (II, 14), in which Scipion lauds the beauty of life. As with Cherea, Scipion could well be a spokesman for the author since many of his truths are those of Camus. In protesting the cruelty of Caligula, Scipion states that there is only one way of balancing the hostility of this world, and that is poverty. And one might add modesty (67-68).

Another quality of Scipion which draws admiration from Caesar is the young poet's reality of life and death. Unlike the others, he is not a phony. During Caligula's "poetry reading contest" this reality emerges in Scipion's poem on death, the only one which the emperor accepts: "Chasse au bonheur qui fait les êtres purs, Ciel où le soleil ruisselle, Fêtes uniques et sauvages, mon délire sans espoir! . . ." (100).

Concerning this likeness of souls which exists between the young Scipion and Caesar, part of its origin can

be traced back to the murder of Scipion's father by Caligula. As Scipion states: " . . . c'est là que tout commence. . . . quelque chose en moi lui ressemble pourtant. La même flame nous brûle le coeur. . . . Mon malheur est de tout comprendre" (83). With the death of his father, Scipion also has been given a taste of the absurd. He is suffering and in despair, but he now resembles the emperor too much to aid in destroying him. Caligula confirms this when he states: "Oh! ce ne sont pas ceux dont j'ai tué les fils ou le pére qui m'assassineront. Ceux-là ont compris. Ils sont avec moi, ils ont le même goût dans la bouche" (103).

Act Four brings the inevitable climax to the rage of Caligula. The tragedy of Caesar's passion is compounded in this final act with the realization that the road he has chosen is not the right one.

Caligula's hate is reflected in that of the citizens who revolt, and jolted from their slumber rise up against him. Like a scourge he has raised the specter of revolt. This phenomena will be studied in a later work of Camus, L'Etat de Siège. Cherea describes the nature of this revolt when, referring to the emperor, he says: "Il force à penser. Il force tout le monde à penser. L'insécurité, voilà ce qui fait penser. Et c'est pourquoi tant de haines le poursuivent" (87).

Caligula himself feels the nihilism which he has unleashed overwhelming him. His solitude complete, the void

which surrounds him and which he feels within himself, oppresses him. "Quand vous êtes tous là, vous me faites sentir un vide sans mesure où je ne peux regarder. Je ne suis bien que parmi mes morts. Eux sont vrais. Ils sont comme moi" (102).

There remains only one small sentiment in this void. And that is a "shameful tenderness" which Caligula possesses for his aging mistress Caesonia. She is the final witness to that human being which the emperor was. But this love which he possessed for Drusilla and of which Caesonia is the witness, must be destroyed as well if his task is to be complete. His conviction is that nothing has meaning including love, loved ones, not even their memory, since they are soon forgotten with death, all is eventually lost. As with Camus' absurd man, there is no concern with a possible after life.

With this conclusion, his liberty which he terms an "insane" happiness is complete. "Mais aujourd'hui, me voilà encor plus libre qu'il y a des années, libéré que je suis du souvenir et de l'illusion. Je sais que rien ne dure" (106)!

Strangling Caesonia, he completes his destruction of the human warmth and love he once possessed. The exaltation in this power, his lucidity in the knowledge of its error reach a height at this point. As his mistress falls to the floor, he concludes: "Mais tuer n'est pas la solution" (107).

As the men come to carry out his scheme, he turns to accept its consumation. "Je vais retrouver ce grand vide où le coeur s'apaise" (107). Falling beneath the blows of the conspirators, he cries: "Je suis encore vivant" (108)!

The absurd condition never leaves man as long as he is alive to experience it. This then represents the first of Camus' two-part "théâtre de l'impossible."[12] To better understand the purpose of Camus in presenting the plays of Caligula and Le Malentendu which will be entertained shortly, it is valuable to turn to Camus' own comments concerning these two works. What is his goal in presenting this theater of the impossible?

> . . . elles [the first two works of Camus' theater] tentent de donner vie aux conflicts apparemment insolubles que toute pensée active doit d'abord traverser avant de parvenir aux seules solutions valables. Ce théâtre laisse entendre par exemple que chacun porte en lui une part d'illusions et de malentendu qui est destinée à etre tuée. Simplement, ce sacrifice libere peut-être une autre part de l'individu, la meilleure, qui est celle de la révolte et de la liberté. Mais de quelle liberté s'agit-il?"[13]

This, then, is the problem posed by Camus. The absurd destroys our illusions and misunderstandings concerning our existence. What remains is our revolt and its ensuing liberty. But is the freedom chosen by Caligula the right one? Camus is firm in his reply to this question. In his preface to the American edition of his theater, he says

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[12] Quilliot, p. 1742.

[13] Ibid.

of Caligula: "Mais, si sa vérité est de se révolter contre le destin, son erreur est de nier les hommes. On ne peut tout détruire sans se détruire soi-meme."[14] Caligula affirms this conclusion in his final agonizing speech. Addressing himself in the mirror he cries:

> L'impossible! Je l'ai cherché aux limites du monde, aux confins de moi-même. J'ai tendu mes mains, je tends mes mains et c'est toi que je rencontre, toujours toi en face de moi, et je suis pour toi plein de haine. Je n'ai pas pris la voie qu'il fallait, je n'aboutis à rien. Ma liberté n'est pas la bonne (107-108).

Camus' conclusion is simple. Caligula's liberty is not the right one.

This new liberty revealed by the absurd experience has its limitation. Camus confirms this in the Mythe de Sisyphe when he asserts: "Cette indépendance nouvelle est à terme, comme toute liberté d'action" (83).

To better understand how Caligula failed not only in his choice of action in revolt, but in his experience of the absurd sentiment itself, we must again turn to the "Mythe." Properly speaking, Caligula is not Camus' idea of "l'homme absurde."

For Caligula denies that very singular truth which set him on his rampage, the consciousness of the absurd itself. By destroying himself he broke the only tie the only sustaining factor which the absurd man possesses within in his condition, his conscious awareness of this absurdity.

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[14] Quilliot, p. 1727.

Camus hints at this when he states:

> L'unique donnée est pour moi l'absurde. Le problème est de savoir comment en sortir et si le suicide doit se déduire de cet absurde. La première et, au fond, la seule condition de mes recherches, c'est de préserver cela meme qui m'écrase, de respecter en conséquence ce que je juge essentiel en lui. Je viens de le définir comme une confrontation et une lutte sans repos (49).

In Camus' absurd reasoning, he does not completely deny the efficacy of reason. It is limited but it has its place. This Caligula denied trying to push the "raisonnement absurde" to its limit. We see this limitation which Camus has placed on the absurd man in the following statement: "L'homme absurde au contraire ne procède pas à ce nivellement. Il reconnaît la lutte, ne méprise pas absolumnet la raison [since this is what brought him face to face with the absurdity in the first place] et admet l'irrationnel" (56). Camus says the same thing in different words when he remarks: "L'absurde, c'est la raison lucide qui constate ses limites" (71).

CHAPTER II

The second work in Camus' "théâtre de l'impossible" is the play Le Malentendu written in 1943. As with Caligula, its character is ridden with the absurd. Although Camus seems to have given more importance to the dominating situation, the major personage, the daughter Martha, possesses many of the traits of the absurd hero Caligula. She has been called a female Caligula by one critic.

The plot is simple and old. A man returns home after a long absence to renew his relationship with his mother and sister only unrecognized to be murdered by the two women. The motive: robbery, so that the two may flee their isolated sad prison in the mid-continent.

Le Malentendu lends itself well to the classical tragic situation. And this is what the author has tried to develop in a modern setting. It must be remembered that as with Caligula, Camus' aim is not to create a "pièce à thèse." "Rien n'est moins 'pièce à thèse' que Le Malentendu qui, se plaçant seulement sur le plan tragique, répugne à toute théorie."[15] The aim as expressed by the author himself is: "Faire parler le langage de la tragédie à des personnages contemporains, . . ." (1729).

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[15]Quilliot, p. 1742.

Mention of Le Malentendu is found in L'Etranger when Meursault in his prison cell discovers a piece of newspaper which recounts the substance of the plot.

> Il relatait un divers dont le début manquait, mais qui avait du se passer en Tchécoslovaquie. Un homme était parti d'un village tchèque pour fair fortune. Au bout de vingt-cinq ans, riche, il était revenu avec une femme et un enfant. . . . Dans la nuit, sa mère et sa soeur l'avaient assassiné à coups de marteau pour le voler et avaient jeté son corps dans la rivière. Le matin, la femme était venue, avait révélé sans le savoir l'identité du voyageur. La mère s'était pendue. La soeur s'était jetée dans un puits.[16]

Camus has retained the gist of this account changing only two points. The couple has no children and the son is put to sleep and then thrown into the river.

Roger Quilliot, in a footnote to his presentation of Le Malentendu, points out that this particular story is found in the legends of many countries dating from the Middle Ages. He cites two examples: "M. Paul Bénichou m'a signalé en particulier une vieille chanson du Nivernais: Le Soldat tué par sa mere (Littérature et traditions du Nivernais, Tome I, page 286). De meme, dans Mon portrait de Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin, cette histoire est rapportée comme un fait divers qui se serait passé à Tours en juin 1796" (1780).

The first indication that Camus was envisaging such a work appears in Carnets in April 1941 "Budejovice, trois

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[16]Quilliot, p. 1180.

actes."[17] Budejovice is a town in Bohemia on the Moldau river. Quilliot suggests that Camus may have visited this town in 1936 during his visit to Bohemia as related in Carnets.

Camus developed the idea of Le Malentendu during his "exile" spent in the middle of France in the early stages of World War II. He probably resided in the little hamlet of Panelier in the "Massif Central" where he stayed at that time for health reasons. He traveled in the region visiting Lyon several times. It is also at this time that he first encountered other writers and journalists engaged in the resistance movement and these contacts seem to have had an influence on his eventual decision to enter the movement himself.

In November 1942 he notes a possible title for the work: "L'Exilé (ou Budejovice)" (59). This period in Camus' life was one of solitude in the midst of the nihilism which surrounded him.

As death, always present in Caligula, solitude is the dominating theme of Le Malentendu. This will be pointed out shortly in the analysis of the play. Camus witnesses this phenomena when he states:

> Je vivais alors, à mon corps défendant, au milieu des montagnes de la France. Cette situation historique et géographique suffirait à expliquer la sorte de claustrophobie dont je souffrais alors

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[17] Albert Camus, Carnets (Paris, 1962), p. 229.

> et qui se reflète dans cette pièce. On y respire mal, c'est un fait.[18]

The stifling suffocating atmosphere which surrounds and possesses the principal characters of Le Malentendu is immediately perceived in the opening of Act One. The mother and daughter are discussing the new client and potential victim. In the dialogue, one passion dominates Martha, a physical union with the sea in the countries of sunlight and warmth. Camus' first reality, the happiness of physical pleasure and union, possesses her. Unlike Caligula, there is no metaphysical drive, no intellectual motivation in her passion. Although she conceives no limits to achieve her goal, as we saw to be the case with the mad emperor, her desire is practicable. No moon for Martha, her need is as near as the sea.

In Scene One, addressing her mother, Martha speaks of her dream:

> Quand nous aurons amassé beaucoup d'argent et que nous pourrons quitter ces terres sans horizon, quand nous laisserons derrière nous cette auberge et cette ville pluvieuse, et que nous oublierons ce pays d'ombre, le jour où nous serons enfins devant la mer dont j'ai tant rêvé, ce jour-là, vous me verrez sourire" (117)!

But the absurd intervenes and thwarts her ambition.

Whereas Caligula sought solace from the agony of his absurd situation in the "néant" of death, Martha seeks an escape from this unbearable tension in the peaceful oblivion,

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[18]Quilliot, p. 1728.

the empty void which characterizes the body and soul of man before the blazing sun.

> J'ai lu dans un livre qu'il mangeait jusqu'aux âmes et qu'il faisait des corps resplendissants, mais vidés par l'intérieur. . . . Oui, j'en ai assez de porter toujours mon âme, j'ai hâte de trouver ce pays où le soleil tue les questions. Ma demeure n'est pas ici" (120).

With the entrance of Jan, the returning son, the tension of the characters' isolation emerges. Like a group of persons carrying on a dialogue with themselves, their speeches, like a series of monologues, fail to break the barriers between them. Jan's problem is simply to find the words to say "It is I, Jan." Maria, his wife, a warm simple person not complicated by the intricacies which Jan demands of himself, states the simplicity of the solution: "Il n'y a qu'un moyen. C'est de faire ce que ferait le premier venu, de dire: 'me voilà,' c'est de laisser parler son coeur" (123).

Jan, apparently leading a happy life with Maria in a faraway land of the sun, has decided to return to his family. Why? He is searching for a renewed attachment to his people and his land, hunting for a nonexistent duty towards them. He admits he doesn't need them but perhaps they need him. Happiness is not everything he proclaims. "Le bonheur n'est pas tout et les hommes ont leur devoir. Le mien est de retrouver ma mère, une patrie . . ." (124).

Maria, in contrast to Jan, is content with her love, an earthly one, and her only reality. To her Jan is living

in a dream world. Her solitude, unlike Jan's, would be the loss of this love. Protesting Jan's explanation of his dream to conciliate this love with his "duties" to his family, she states:

> Non, les hommes ne savent jamais comment il faut aimer. Rien ne les contente. Tout ce qu'ils savent, c'est rêver, imaginer de nouveaux devoirs, chercher de nouveaux pays et de nouvelles demeures. Tandis que nous, nous savons qu'il faut se dépêcher d'aimer, partager le même lit, se donner la main, craindre l'absence. Quand on aime, on ne rêve à rien. . . . C'est la voix de ta solitude, ce n'est pas celle de l'amour (127).

Quilliot parallels well the fundamental difference which separates this couple.

> Mais précisément, elle [Maria] y apparaît comme la femme en général, ou plutot une certaine conception de la femme charnelle, enracinée dans la terre, sans complication, par opposition au goût viril de l'aventure, de la curiosité et du tourment" (1783).

Jan, as mentioned earlier, is an outsider, searching for a reunion with his family which is impossible to achieve, and which will end in his death.

A second temptation for Jan is his desire of a metaphysical union, a love which he does not seem to find in his relationship with Maria. Referring to Jan, Quilliot stresses this metaphysical character of his preoccupations. " . . . la grande tentation de Jan n'étaitelle pas celle d'un amour divin, qu'il repoussait au nom de l'amour humain et de l'attachement à la terre" (1784)? It is questionable whether Jan really resisted this temptation as witnessed in the fourth scene of Act One.

Throughout the rest of the first act we see the inability of Jan to express his true purpose at the inn. This illustrates the lack of communication which exists throughout the play and life in general. When the mother questions him as to the length of his stay, Jan responds that it will depend on his reception. To maintain his little act he must disguise his identity, and in the process his language becomes incommunicable. In response to his explanation, Martha remarks that it doesn't mean much. To which Jan retorts that he is unable to better express himself.

The irony of the speeches takes on added importance here since each individual reveals his or her real thoughts to the reader without the other character perceiving them. This is the tragedy of the entire work.

The character of the mother springs forth more clearly in the final scene of the first act. She is an old and tired woman. Her weariness is not only physical, it is spiritual. She desires one thing, the repose of sleep or better yet, death.

Unlike Martha, in whom the absurd has brought forth the bitterness of revolt, in the mother it has resulted in an indifference a weariness in her crimes. She is used up and the revolt which Martha has learned from her has given way to a desire for forgetfulness. Lamenting the weight of the job ahead of her, she complains: "Je suis trop vieille! . . . Je dois lui donner le sommeil que je souhaitais pour ma propre nuit" (141).

In the opening scene of Act Two, a certain hesitation in her determination to carry through the crime overcomes Martha. Perhaps it is due to the weariness of the mother, or perhaps to a certain compassion for the innocence of her victim. Giving way to her only passion, she is filled with revery as her brother describes the beauty of North Africa. Her language assumes a warm human quality which to this point has been lacking. Jan notes this change in Martha when he says: ". . . puisque, en somme, nous venons de laisser nos conventions, je puis bien vous le dire: il me semble que, pour la première fois, vous venez de me tenir un langage humain" (150).

Resuming the bitter irony which characterized her previous speeches, Martha admits her hesitation, but she is resolute now. Arousing her old desire, Jan has sealed his own fate.

> Je vous remercie seulement de m'avoir parlé des pays que vous connaissez. . . . Il a réveillé en moi des désirs qui, peut-être, s'endormaient. S'il est vrai que vous teniez à rester ici, vous avez, sans le savoir, gagné votre cause. J'étais venue presque décidée à vous demander de partir, mais, vous le voyez, vous en avez appele à ce que j'ai d'humain, et je souhaite maintenant que vous restiez. Mon goût pour la mer et les pays du soleil finira par y gagner (151).

Jan's dilemma is clarified as this scene closes. The strangeness of his hosts' language puzzles him as well as these strangers themselves. But it is not only the solitude and the lack of communion which surrounds him. They spring forth from his own nature. Martha, in response to

his remark concerning the queerness of the hotel, retorts: "Peut-être est-ce seulement que vous vous y conduisez de façon etrange" (152).

Jan's doubts and anguish rise at this point.

> Et voici maintenant ma vieille angoisse, là, au creux de mon corps, comme une mauvaise blessure que chaque mouvement irrite. Je connais son nom. Elle est peur de la solitude éternelle, crainte qu'il n'y ait pas de réponse (152).

Finally, aware that no response is forthcoming, he decides to leave. But it is too late, for Martha has already served him the tea which will put him to sleep. Explaining his error to the mother, he states: " . . . j'ai le sentiment de m'être trompé et de n'avoir rien à faire ici. Pour tout dire, j'ai l'impression pénible que cette maison n'est pas la mienne" (156).

During Act Two Scene Six, as Jan explains his reasons for leaving to the mother, the technique of an unwonted tragic dialogue dominates. Like a series of monologues, each person's lines, reasonable and apparent in his own eyes, become incoherent and foreign to the other. There is a complete lack of even a desire to communicate.

The mother, although pitying Jan's lack of decision, feels only her weariness and desire for rest. Witness the following comments:

> Je vous comprends, Monsieur, et j'aurais voulu que les choses s'arrangent pour vous. . . . Quand les choses s'arrangent mal, on ne peut rien y faire. Dans un certain sens, cela m'ennuie aussi que vous ayez décidé de partir. Mais je me dis qu'après

> tout, je n'ai pas de raisons d'y attacher de l'importance (157).

The mother's indifference dominates this speech. As Jan falls asleep and the two prepare to dump him into the river, the mother envies his sleep, the nothingness which awaits him. " . . . oh, je l'envie de dormir maintenant et de devoir mourir bientot . . ." (161).

Thus the issue of this modern tragedy is prepared. Martha confirms what Jan has decided. This house is not his nor is it anyone's. "S'il avait compris cela plus vite, il se serait épargné et nous aurait évité d'avoir à lui apprendre que cette chambre est faite pour qu'on y dorme et ce monde pour qu'on y meure" (162).

This speech of Martha's is interesting from a technical point of view. Camus explains the difficulty of achieving his avowed goal in his preface to the American edition of his theater when he points out:

> Rien de plus difficile à vrai dire puisqu'il faut trouver un langage assez naturel pour être parlé des contemporains, et assez insolite pour rejoindre le ton tragique. Pour approcher de cet idéal, j'ai essayé d'introduire de l'éloignement dans les caractères et de l'ambiguité dans les dialogues. Le spectateur devait ainsi éprouver un sentiment de familiarité en même temps que de dépaysement (1729).

As witnessed in the sixth scene of the second act, he seems to have succeeded.

But the preceding speech of Martha is marked by the unlikelihood of a tone which, commonplace in a house foreign to its occupants, terminates in a symbolic allusion to the

fact that this world is made for us to die in. Quilliot supports this conclusion when he remarks: "Il [Camus] a plusieurs fois repris sa pièce, . . . gommant certains propos qui sentaient trop le symbole métaphysique. . . " (1784).

According to Quilliot, this is particularly the case in Act Two Scene Eight and Act Three Scene One where the author lightens the dialogue and gives it more vivacity and a tragic density.

The players, having fulfilled their roles, the absurd takes charge. The Third Act is laden with the situation of the two women caught in the hands of destiny. The dialogue, up to this point, cerebral and devoid of a human quality, takes on a much more lyrical vain. This is especially the case of Maria. Martha, the hope of achieving her goal swelling in her, cries: "Il me semble que j'entends déjà la mer. Il y a en moi une joie qui va me faire crier. . . . Je redeviens la jeune fille que j'étais. De nouveau, mon corps brûle, j'ai envie de courir" (163-164).

The denouement begins with the discovery of the murdered client's identity. Reading her son's passport, the mother recognizes that her role has ended. Previously devoid of meaning, her life takes on a new sense in the realization of a renewed love for a son whom she has murdered.

> . . . mon vieux coeur, qui se croyait détourné de tout, vient de réapprendre la douleur. . . . Et de toutes façons, quand une mère n'est plus capable de reconnaître son fils, c'est que son rôle sur la terre est fini. . . . je viens d'apprendre que j'avais tort et que sur cette terre où rien n'est assuré, nous avons nos certitudes. L'amour d'une mère pour son fils est aujourd'hui ma certitude"(165).

Discovering a reason to live, the mother has found as well a reason to die. " . . . cet amour est assez beau pour moi, puisque je ne peux vivre en dehors de lui" (166).

The resignation of the mother before her fate raises the revolt long contained within Martha. Her dreams are slipping away. Concerning the mother's resignation before her condition, Martha proclaims:

> Vous tenez un langage que je méprise et je ne puis vous entendre parler de crime et de punition. . . . Et sous le vain prétexte qu'un homme est mort, vous ne pouvez vous dérober au moment où j'allais recevoir ce qui m'est dû. . . . Vous me frustrez de tout et vous me'ôtez ce dont il a joui" (166-168).

The first scene of the third act terminates in a tender exchange between the mother and daughter in which Martha claims the love which the mother owes her but has never shown her. But it is too late. (La mère): "Mais je n'ai pas cessé de t'aimer. Je le sais maintenant, puisque mon coeur parle; je vis à nouveau, au moment où je ne puis plus supporter de vivre" (169). What is stronger than the distress of Martha? (La mère): "La fatigue peut-être, et la soif du repos" (169).

Martha's monologue in the second scene of Act Three evokes certain lyrical passages of Noces[19] in which Camus praises the physical joys of his native Algeria. The following lines could well have been taken from one of Camus' earlier poetic essays: "Il est des lieux pourtant

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[19]Albert Camus, Noces Les Essais XXXIX (Paris, 1950).

éloignés de la mer où le vent du soir, parfois, apporte une odeur d'algue. Il y parle de plages humides, toutes sonores du cri des mouettes, ou de grèves dorée dans des soirs sans limites" (170).

Frustrated in all her turns, Martha's tender eloquence in praising the faraway sea turns into hate and anger and her revolt like that of Caligula will only find its issue in death. Unlike Maria who will turn to God for aid, Martha will leave this world her reconciliation frustrated. Referring to her mother, she cries:

> Qu'elle meure donc, puisque je ne suis pas aimée! Que les portes se referment autour de moi! Qu'elle me laisse à ma juste colère! Car, avant de mourir, je ne lèverai pas les yeux pour implorer le ciel. Là-bas, où l'on peut fuir, se délivrer, presser son corps contre un autre, rouler dans la vague, dans ce pays défendu par la mer, les dieux n'abordent pas. . . . Oh! je hais ce monde où nous en sommes réduits à Dieu. Mais moi, qui souffre d'injustice, on ne m'a pas fait droit, je ne m'agenouillerai pas. Et privée de ma place sur cette terre, rejetée par ma mère, seule au milieu de mes crimes, je quitterai ce monde sans être réconcilée (170-171).

As in the final scene of Act Two, the unequalness of this monologue is apparent. The highly lyrical quality of the first half simply does not balance the final expressions, of a metaphysical character. Martha throughout the play is an individual obsessed by the physical pleasures of the body which she has not experienced. The final sentence of this tirade doesn't parallel with the preceding lines. It is Camus and his concern for the metaphysical who intercedes on Martha's behalf and the personage suffers as a consequence.

In the final scene in which Martha is confronted with Maria, the contrast between the two sharpens. Martha witnesses this gulf between them when she states: "Il n'y a rien de commun entre nous." And when Maria proclaims her love for the dead man and the suffering which is tearing her apart, Martha's reply is that of the absurd reasoning. "Vous parlez décidément un langage que je ne comprends pas. J'entends mal les mots d'amour, de joie ou de douleur" (173-174).

Maria's solitude is complete as is Martha's. The latter's mistake was to think that the crime united her to her mother, but she recognizes the solitude of her crime when she avows: "Mais je me trompais. Le crime aussi est une solitude, même si on se met à mille pour l'accomplir. Et il est juste que je meure seule, après avoir vécu et tué seule" (177).

There remains the task of affirming the order of things and Martha jumps at it with a vengeance. It is her role to drive Maria to despair, to teach her this newly discovered truth. What is this order? That of the absurd,

> Celui où personne n'est jamais reconnu. . . . Pourquoi crier vers la mer ou vers l'amour? Cela est dérisoire. Votre mari connaît maintenant la réponse, cette maison épouvantable où nous serons enfin serrés les uns contre les autres. . . . Priez votre Dieu qu'il vous fasse semblable à la pierre. C'est le bonheur qu'il prend pour lui, c'est le seul vrai bonheur" (178-179).

As with Caligula, Martha's taste for the "néant" appears here, an issue from this heart-rending tension which

is the absurd condition, an attraction toward the mute unconscious nature of the mineral world the rocks, trees etc.

The author clarifies this desire to be nothing, this "goût du néant" which we observed in Caligula in the following remarks from Le Mythe de Sisyphe:

> Si j'étais arbre parmi les arbres, chat parmi les animaux, cette vie aurait un sens ou plutôt ce problème n'en aurait point car je ferais partie de ce monde. Je serais ce monde auquel je m'oppose maintenant par toute ma conscience et par toute mon exigence de familiarité (74).

We now witness the final scene of the third act where on Martha's exit, Maria turns to God to implore his pity. The old servant enters and simply answers "no" to the begging of Maria for aid. This scene resembles the second scene of Act Two when Jan calls for a "response" and the servant appears refusing to speak.

Camus seems to have chosen the servant as a symbol of the absence of answers to our condition. He could be considered God or destiny or the absurdity, whatever one wishes to call him. But as the author states:

> Quant au personnage du vieux domestique, il ne symbolise pas obligatoirement le destin. Lorsque la survivante du drame en appelle à Dieu, c'est lui qui répond. Mais c'est, peut-être, un malentendu de plus. S'il répond "non" à celle qui lui demande de l'aider, c'est qu'il n'a pas en effet l'intention de l'aider et qu'à un certain point de souffrance ou d'injustice personne ne peut plus rien pour personne et la douleur est solitaire.[20]

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[20]Quilliot, pp. 1728-1729.

This conclusion by the author would seem to sum up the final situation of the tragedy. Suffering and pain the injustice of this world beyond a certain point must be endured alone.

What conclusions may be drawn from Le Malentendu? What is Camus' purpose in the development of such a pessimistic work? Considering the "blackness" and pessimism of the play, Camus states:

> Il n'empêche que la noirceur de la pièce me gêne autant qu'elle a gêné le public. . . . je proposerai au lecteur: 1°) d'admettre que la moralité de la pièce n'est pas entièrement négative; 2°) de considérer Le Malentendu comme une tentative pour créer une tragédie moderne (1729).

Considering the first point proposed by the author, Camus states:

> Sans doute, c'est une vue très pessimiste de la condition humaine. Mais cela peut se concilier avec un optimisme relatif en ce qui concerne l'homme. Car enfin, cela revient à dire que tout aurait été autrement si le fils avait dit: "C'est moi, voici mon nom." Cela revient à dire que dans un monde injuste ou indifférent, l'homme peut se sauver lui-même, et sauver les autres, par l'usage de la sincérité la plus simple et du mot le plus juste (1729).

A certain optimism does exist in regard to man. For Camus it is simply a question of the greatest honesty possible. As Maria expresses to Jan, it is simply a matter of saying "Here I am."

Concerning the second point cited above, it is questionable how successful the author was in rendering this work a modern tragedy. In another preface found in Camus' archives and undated, Camus, defending his goal in Le Malentendu states:

> Le malheur n'a qu'un moyen de se surmonter lui-même qui est de se transfigurer par le tragique. . . . Le Malentendu tente de reprendre dans une affabulation contemporaire les thèmes anciens de la fatalité. C'est au public à dire si cette transposition est réussie (1785).

The public, of course, as well as the critics, responded cooly to the presentation of the work.[21]

In the same preface cited above, Camus notes that it would be false though to assume that this play defends a submission to fatality. On the contrary, he points out that it is a play of the revolt and could be considered to involve a moral of naturalness. This supports the conclusion noted above. Camus continues that if man wants to be recognized, he must simply identify himself. If he remains silent or lies, he dies alone and all that surrounds him is devoted to misfortune (1785).

Le Malentendu represents the second of Camus' two-part theater of the impossible. With-Caligula it was an impossible character, in the case of the latter play it is a question of an impossible situation. In both cases the absurd which dominates ends in revolt and a murderous liberty of the protaganists. We have seen that this freedom as envisaged by the author is not the right one.

But the question arises, then, what is the right freedom? What path should one follow in this revolt emerging from the absurd condition? This is the central problem to

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[21]Cruickshank, p. 17.

which Albert Camus turns in the second half of his theater. As we have seen, the first two works concerned the problem of the individual and his absurd experience ending in a form of revolt against this experience which Camus concluded was not the right one. But the revolt did not emerge as the central issue. The tragedy of the absurdity of the experience of Caligula and Martha lies in the absurd itself, not so much its issue.

CHAPTER III

We now turn to Camus' third and fourth theatrical works in which the revolt, its form, and especially its liberty are questioned. If Caligula and Le Malentendu may be considered as a "theater of the impossible," I think it is not too simplified to consider the last two original works of Camus, L'Etat de Siège and Les Justes, as a theater of the possible.

The fact that the absurd reasoning is only a point of departure appears early in Le Mythe de Sisyphe. The author points this out when he states in a short note to "Le Mythe:" "Mais il est utile de noter, en même temps, que l'absurde, pris jusqu'ici comme conclusion, est considéré dans cet essai comme un point de départ" (11).

When Camus turned to the result of the absurd, the revolt, as outlined in his second philosophical essay, L'Homme révolté, he again insisted on the importance of the character of the absurd as analyzed in Le Mythe de Sisyphe. The absurd reasoning which might logically end in suicide is rejected and Camus goes on searching for another truth revealed by the absurd, that of the revolt.

> . . . l'on prétend se maintenir dans l'absurde, négligeant son vrai caractère qui est d'être un passage vécu, un point de départ, l'équivalent,

> en existence, du doute méthodique de Descartes. L'absurde en lui-même est contradiction.[22]

It is important at this point to consider this "logical" conclusion from the absurdity which springs forth before the lucid consciousness of man. That is suicide. But suicide, whether it be the "superior" one of Caligula or that of Martha escaping her crimes, destroys this unique "truth" which for Camus is the lucidity of the absurd condition.

Thus, one of the author's conclusions in the Mythe de Sisyphe, is that individual suicide, a possibly natural "logical" conclusion of the "raisonnement absurde" is not the desired issue of this condition. Here is how Camus outlines this reasoning:

> C'est ici qu'on voit à quel point l'expérience absurde s'éloigne du suicide. On peut croire que le suicide suit la révolte. Mais à tort. Car il ne figure pas son aboutissement logique. Il est exactement son contraire, par le consentement qu'il suppose. Le suicide, comme le saut, [existentiel] est l'acceptation à sa limite. . . . A sa manière, le suicide résout l'absurde. Il l'entraine dans la même mort. Mais je sais que pour se maintenir, l'absurde ne peut se résoudre. Il échappe au suicide, dans la mesure où il est en même temps conscience et refus de la mort (77).

To remain faithful to this absurd truth one must reject death and as a consequence suicide as well.

A notable difference between the two stages of Camus' theater is a turn from an individual experience of the absurd and its solitude to a group or collective

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[22]Albert Camus, L'Homme révolté (Paris, 1951), p. 19.

experience. Paralleling this is an extension of Camus' concern regarding individual suicide. He now turns to murder or collective suicide from which the group suffers. This is the case, of course, whether it be logical crime or suffering caused by the arbitrary nature of the absurd. The former is the condition of modern man and that which seems of most concern to the author, that condition in which crime has been rendered "logical."

> Mais à partir du moment où, faute de caractère, on court se donner une doctrine, dès l'instant où le crime se raisonne, il prolifère comme la raison elle-même, il prend toutes les figures du syllogisme. Il était solitaire comme le cri, le voilà universel comme la science. Hier jugé, il fait la loi aujourd'hui.[23]

Once an isolated arbitrary force, the absurd takes on the form of modern logic. Crime, once considered the exception is intellectualized and becomes the rule. Given this legalization of crime, now it is a question for Camus of finding out whether innocence, from the moment it acts, can prevent itself from killing. And the absurd sentiment and its liberty render murder not only logical, but possible.

Before turning to the second part of the author's original theater, a final change, an evolution in the character of the absurd and revolt in the personages, must be noted.

As we observed, Caligula and Le Malentendu were marked by an individual revelation of the absurd condition.

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[23] H.R., p. 13.

Isolation and solitude characterize both Caligula and Martha. They are alone in their separation as in their revolt.

The absurd and its characteristics are abstract in these plays. They tend to be metaphysical in nature. The death of Drusilla is not the real cause of Caligula's madness. It is what this loss revealed, our condemnation to death and its ensuing leveling of meaning which we attach to our existence. Even Martha whose object of revolt is a more concrete attainable goal, in her case the sun and sea and this far away land where man finds happiness in forgetfulness, finds herself in a hopeless impasse. We find here the more general abstract quality of man's absurd condition.

However, in the second half of Camus' theater, there is an effort to render the nature of the absurd more concrete, in the case of L'Etat de Siège through personification. The author brings it down out of its abstract metaphysical realm thus making revolt against it more feasible. In L'Etat de Siège two individuals represent two facets of the absurd, disease and death.

On the other hand the so-called absurd hero, although in my opinion in the case of Dora and Kaliayev of Les Justes well delineated, tends in the author's effort to emphasize the group or collectivity in revolt, to become more abstract dehumanized losing the individual strength which Caligula possesses. This will be developed further in the treatment of Les Justes.

This is especially the case in L'Etat de Siège and is one of the reasons for which this work was the least enthusiastically received of the four works treated in this analysis.

This change in Camus' conception of the absurd and man's revolt can be traced back to the Second World War and his experience in the Resistance movement in France. It is here that Camus was most directly confronted with a kind of absurdity, in this case war and its atrocities. Camus was obliged to turn away from a personal more narrow concept of the absurd, adapting it to a universal collective experience.

This attitude concerning the solidarity of collective revolt already appears in Lettres à un ami allemand.[24]

In these letters revolt becomes a positive cry for justice in the name of man. It is no longer the negative despairing cry of a Caligula or Martha.

Speaking to an imaginary German friend and protesting against the road chosen by Nazi Germany, Camus states this self-evident truth:

> Pour tout dire, vous avez choisi l'injustice, vous vous êtes mis avec les dieux. Votre logique n'était qu'apparente.
>
> J'ai choisi la justice au contraire, pour rester fidèle à la terre. Je continue à croire que ce monde n'a pas de sens supérieur. Mais je sais que quelque chose en lui a du sens et c'est l'homme, parce qu'il est le seul être à exiger d'en avoir (73-74).

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[24]Albert Camus, Lettres à un ami allemand (Paris, 1948).

Camus' experience and its interpretation are changing as witnessed by this passionate protest in Letters to a German Friend. As contrasted to the desperate nihilistic cry of Caligula against his condition and in favor of an impossible goal, the author has turned to a cry of revolt against this nihilism, and in favor of the one thing in this world that does matter, which has a self-evident meaning, man.

Turning back again to the problem of freedom in the revolt, perhaps the central issue in all of Camus' original theatrical works, we turn to L'Etat de Siège. Camus continues his quest for the "right" liberty, the one which will not betray man.

L'Etat de Siège differs from Camus' other three plays in that it was a joint effort presented with Jean-Louis Barrault. Barrault directed the play and was at least partly responsible for the maze of technical effects used in its production. It is not known how much direct influence Barrault exercised on Camus' development of the play, but it was probably considerable.[25]

Camus, in his introduction to the play, comments on the multiplicity of its structure.

> [Il s'agit] . . . d'un spectacle dont l'ambition avouée est de mêler toutes les formes d'expression dramatique depuis le monologue lyrique jusqu'au théâtre collectif, en passant par le jeu muet, le simple dialogue, la farce et le choeur; . . . (187).

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[25]Cruickshank, p. 209.

The structure of the work lacks the unity of the other three plays and consequently as a theatrical effort it suffered.

Of all Camus' works, this play is certainly the most didactic. Concerned primarily with the scourge of the plague, he widens it symbolically to all forms of tyranny which beset man. This includes those of a physical social or moral nature, man-made or of an origin other than man.

Camus' choice of Spain as the setting of his work is worth noting since it gives us an insight into his purpose in the work; that of relating the plague with the tyranny of modern totalitarian bureaucracies whether they are communist or fascist.

In a response to Gabriel Marcel on why he chose Spain as the site of this work, the author states:

> Aucun spectateur de bonne foi ne peut douter que cette pièce prenne le parti de l'individu, de la chair dans ce qu'elle a de noble, de l'amour terrestre enfin, contre les abstractions et les terreurs de l'Etat tolitaire, qu'il soit russe, allemand ou espagnol. . . . Oui, malgré la commisération de nos grands politiques, c'est tout cela ensemble qu'il faut dénoncer. Et je n'excuserai pas cette peste hideuse à l'Ouest de l'Europe parce qu'elle exerce ses ravages à l'Est, sur de plus grandes étendues.[26]

The opening scene stage direction of L'Etat de Siège suggests Camus' intention to draw a parallel between the plague and the invasion of Hitler's armies as a form of scourge. "Ouverture musicale autour d'un thème sonore rappelant la sirène d'alerte" (189).

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[26]Albert Camus, "Pourquoi l'Espagne," Actuelles (Paris, 1950), pp. 242-244.

The scene begins with a supernatural symbol, a comet which appears in the sky of Cadiz, Spain.

As the citizens gather in the town square forming a sort of chorus functioning as spokesman for the people, we are introduced to the first important personage of the play. Nada, ["nothing," in Spanish] appears. It is soon obvious that the author has chosen Nada to represent the nihilist. Serving as an observer, and a spokesman for nihilism, his only concern is alcohol. "Moi, je parle à ma bouteille" (191).

Shortly afterward, Nada introduces himself: " . . . ivrogne par dédain de toutes choses et par dégoût des honneurs, raillé des hommes parce que j'ai gardé la liberté du mépris, . . ." Scorn characterizes Nada and hate as well. Anticipating the fate of his fellow citizens, he cries: "Non, vous n'êtes pas dans l'ordre, vous êtes dans le rang. Bien alignés, la mine placide, vous voilà mûrs pour la calamité" (192-193).

A judge in his own fashion, Nada finds it better to be an accomplice of the heavens rather than their victim (192-193). Camus' view of the functions of a judge in our society is apparent in Nada's speech. His attack then turns to the church and its role in "encouraging" modern tyranny.

Diego, our hero, now appears, and refutes the vauntings of Nada regarding his nihilism. We have a glimpse of a man full of pride and a sense of honor. He is an idealist and a man of an extreme naivety.

Nada, approving the government's desire to ignore this "bad omen" [the comet] which must be considered a false sign, points out: " . . . c'est l'heure de la vérité . . . " (195)! The road is now open to the scourge.

The first in a series of moral dialogues, so characteristic of Camus' theater, ensues. Contrasted to the nihilism of Nada, who proclaims to be above all things, and like a god, desires nothing, Diego claims that no one is above honor which gives life meaning and man his reason for being. Convinced that this belief in man holds him above calamity, Diego is concerned with one thing, being happy.

> Personne n'est au-dessus de l'honneur. . . . Elle m'attend. C'est pourquoi je ne crois pas à la calamité que tu annonces. Je dois m'occuper d'être heureux. C'est un long travail, qui demande la paix des villes et des campagnes (196).

Ignoring the warnings, the people turn to drink and forgetfulness. Nature is good and her bounties many. "Buvons jusqu'à l'oubli, il ne se passera rien" (198)!

At this point, Victoria, the judge's daughter enters, and in a lyrical dialogue between her and Diego their love emerges.

In the following pages the different figures of society are presented. First the astrologer, the "wiseman" comes forward. For Camus, he is another individual who plays on the people's ignorance and superstition. He proclaims ironically: "Je ne suis pas responsable de ce qui n'a pas eu lieu" (202)!

Following the astrologer, the actors appear hypocritically complementing the citizens. Ironically and with bitter humor they announce:

> Ouvrez vos beaux yeux, gracieuses dames et vous, seigneurs, prêtez l'oreille! Les acteurs que voici, . . . vont jouer, . . . pour l'édification du public de Cadix, le plus averti de toutes les Espagnes (202-203)!

Next the governor appears on the scene. The parallel between this character and the rightist government of Spain is apparent when he declares: "Le changement m'irrite, j'aime mes habitudes! . . . Rien n'est bon de ce qui est nouveau. . . . Je suis le roi de l'immobilité" (204-205)!

The nihilists heartily approve this position and the people follow suit.

> (Le choeur): Rien n'est changé! Il ne se passe rien, il ne s'est rien passé! . . . En vérité, tout est en ordre, le monde s'équilibre, . . . C'est le midi de l'année, la saison haute et immobile! . . . Sages! Nous resterons sages puisque rien ne changera jamais (205).

As they all attempt to lose themselves in forgetfulness, the dialogue rises to a crescendo which reaches its height with the arrival of the plague.

As the plague arrives, fear and superstition encouraged by the responsible authorities, e.g. the priest and the government, seize the people. Each group repeats its conclusion concerning the threat of the plague. The church offers repentance before the punishment of God for the people's sins. The astrologer says that the stars are at fault, the government that the people must be forced to

ignore the situation. Forgetfulness is the answer. The irony of these speeches is bitter and forceful but most open and instructive.

An example of this obvious social disparagement on the part of Camus, is the speech of the priest who, exhorting the people in a fire and brimstone manner, urges them to publicly confess their sins. He continues: "Je m'accuse pour ma part, d'avoir souvent mangué de charité" (210). Camus' social criticism is obvious, too much so in fact, thus dulling the dramatic impact of the speeches.

The stage is now set for the scourge in all its collective horror. Interesting to note is that in its initial production L'Etat de Siège was performed by actors dressed as German storm troopers. They represented the personage of the plague and his entourage.[27]

Diego, the medical student, appears at this point, aiding the sick. He is followed by Victoria seeking to escape the scourge in the arms of her lover.

A major conflict emerges at this point which will continue as one of the more important moral issues of the play. Diego must choose between the warmth and forgetfulness offered him by Victoria and the bitter intellectual sacrifice involved in the revolt. (This theme reoccurs in Les Justes which will be treated later.) Victoria exclaims to Diego: "Oh! Diego, c'est enfin toi! Enlève ce masque

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[27]Cruickshank, p. 212.

et serre-moi contre toi. Contre toi contre toi; et je serai sauvée de ce mal" (212)!

Horror stricken, Diego cannot ignore the sickness. His illusion of happiness and honor as man's lot begins to disintegrate. He rebuffs Victoria while assuring her that the evil cannot endure for long. Possessing hope in the future, he assures her: "Cela va finir. Je suis trop jeune et je t'aime trop" (213).

The chorus, Camus' mouthpiece here, announces the absurd feeling which the plague and death have established. In a lyrical vain they chant: "Qui a raison et qui a tort? Songe que tout ici bas est mensonge. Il n'est rien de vrai que la mort" (214).

At this point, the plague enters the stage. It is personified by a fat little man accompanied by his female secretary, evidently death; both are in uniform. Their purpose is to administer the scourge, to establish a bureaucratic tyranny, an evident allusion to modern totalitarianism. In short time the "new order" is established, the government and its officials quickly fleeing. To facilitate their work, they need to obtain the consent of those submitted to the new "reform" and this goal is quickly achieved with a few "radiations" performed by the secretary in her notebook.

With the willing help of Nada, quickly drafted by the secretary who recognizes his usefulness, as well as the "Alcade," who serves as an intermediary, the new "ordonnance"

is initiated and the "réglementation" and "ordres" of the plague emerge (219-220). Camus' allusion to the Nazi occupation of France during the Second World War is inescapable. The author again remarks through the chorus: "L'Etat, c'était lui, [the governor] et maintenant, il n'est plus rien. Puisqu'il s'en va, c'est la Peste qui est l'Etat" (222).

Establishing different interdictions by means of several messengers, the arbitrary totalitarian nature of the plague used as a symbol is well delineated in the following prohibition recited by the fourth messenger:

> Il est sévèrement interdit de porter assistance à toute personne frappée par la maladie, si ce n'est en la dénonçant aux autorités qui s'en chargeront. La dénonciation entre membres d'une même famille est particulièrement recommandée et sera récompensée par l'attribution d'une double ration alimentaire, dite ration civique (224).

In the preceding lines, the play loses its reality. Camus' didactic purpose and moral concern overwhelm the dramatic integrity of the play.

The chorus, chanting lyrical praises to the sea, the people's saviour, reminds one of the poetic passages of such early essays of Camus as Noces. They evoke the sea, the deliverer, the pacifier. "Qui me rendra les mers d'oubli, l'eau calme du large, ses routes liquides et ses sillages recouverts. A la mer! A la mer, avant que les portes se ferment" (225)!

The chorus as a lyrical expression of the author seems too forced. Commentary of a poetic nature, the above lines change to a more rational metaphysical quality.

As the priest flees, all the traditional forms of authority collapse, ceding to the will of the new order.

At this point we see Camus' concept of the partial innocence of man related to those forces of nature and his condition over which he has no control. The choir chants:

> Frères, cette détresse est plus grande que notre faute, nous n'avons pas mérité cette prison! Notre coeur n'était pas innocent, mais nous aimions le monde et ses étés: ceci aurait dû nous sauver (227)!

Proclaiming the "state of siege," the plague begins his reign, first separating men from women. The solitude of death is part of this new order.

> . . . vous allez apprendre à mourir dans l' ordre. . . . vous ne mourrez plus par caprice, . . . Le destin, désormais s'est assagi, a pris ses bureaux (229).

One can not help but think of the reign of Caligula and his murderous logic.

Continuing this monologue, the plague comments on the establishment of his reign. "Je vous apporte le silence, l'ordre et l'absolue justice. . . . Mais j'exige votre collaboration active" (229-230). To render his functioning most efficient, collaboration is mandatory. Here lies for Camus the nature of a tyranny as well as the seed of its downfall, eventual revolt.

The bureaucratic systematized nature of modern totalitarianism appears as the plague and his secretary introduce "les perfectionnements de la comptabilité" (233).

The stage directions which open this second part of the play also contribute to the symbolic nature of the plague. Cadix has been turned into a sort of concentration camp with its functionaries and charnel houses. As with Caligula, the citizens' very right to exist is questioned. They are condemned, their only reprieve a "certificat d'existence" distributed arbitrarily and which is "provisoire et à terme" (236).

Turning to the figure of the plague itself, Camus seems to be alluding to the two natures of the absurd, one--that of man's condition or destiny exemplified by diseases such as the plague, and of course the final absurdity, death. A second trait is the absurd condition created by man himself, whether it be the individual in his nihilism or the mass murder unleashed by modern collective ideologies.

The absurd reasoning of Caligula in denying man's innocence and very existence because he is condemned to die can be seen in the words of the "secretary." "Notre conviction, c'est que vous êtes coupables. Coupables d'être gouvernés naturellement. Encore faut-il que vous sentiez vous-mêmes que vous êtes coupables" (239).

Again the "concentration" nature of the order is seen in the words of the plague: "Je les ai concentrés. Jusqu'ici ils vivaient dans la dispersion. . . . Maintenant ils sont plus fermes, ils se concentrent" (243)!

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Nada continues to execute the orders of the plague, destroying understanding and communication. Dialogue must be eliminated to achieve his goal, that of nothingness and death.

In order to enhance the besieged nature of Cadix, the following stage directions are illuminating: "Lumière au centre. On aperçoit en découpure des cabanes et des barbelés, des miradors et quelques autres monuments hostiles" (248).

Proclaiming his innocence, Diego flees as the chorus in a long monologue proclaims the people's despair and isolation. In a veritable cry of the heart they chant:

> Nous, nous sommes devenus sages. Nous sommes administrés. Mais dans le silence des bureaux, nous écoutons un long cri contenu qui est celui des coeurs séparés et qui nous parle de la mer sous le soleil de midi, de l'odeur des roseaux dans le soir, des bras frais de nos femmes. . . . Mais le seul refuge est la mer dont ces murs nous séparent. Que le vent se lève et nous pourrons enfin respirer . . . (249-250).

As we meet the judge, Victoria's father, again the travesty of officialdom emerges when the judge explains his function. "Je ne sers pas la loi pour ce qu'elle dit, mais parce qu'elle est la loi. . . . Si le crime devient la loi, il cesse d'être crime" (251).

We find again a reasoning which can lead to tyranny. The judge with the law on his side and his own hatred an accomplice, typifies this "new" justice. His position is not far from that of Nada. Desiring peace and sleep they both

have chosen nihilism, Nada in his alcohol and the judge in the law. In driving Diego from his home where he has isolated himself and his family, the judge cries: "Je dénoncerai cet homme qui a causé ce trouble! . . . je le ferai au non de la loi et de la haine" (256).

The full nature of the crisis which Diego will confront surges forth in an exchange between Victoria and Diego. It is apparent that he is torn between the love and diversion which Victoria offers him and his duty towards his fellow man in the face of the absurd. Rejecting Victoria's suggestion that they turn away from their condition, he replies: "Mais je suis trop fier pour t'aimer sans m'estimer" (258).

As Diego is drawn to Victoria by the force of their love and his desire to escape, the "secretary" interrupts their efforts contaminating Diego with the plague. His solitude is complete now. Embracing Victoria, he cries out: "Ah! Je hais ta beauté, puisqu'elle doit me survivre! Maudite qui servira à d'autres! Là! Je ne serai pas seul! Que m'importe ton amour s'il ne pourrit pas avec moi" (260)?

As Victoria makes a last plea for Diego's love, he rejects it, casting his lot with the people suffering from the scourge.

> Non! Désormais, je suis avec les autres, avec ceux qui sont marqués! Leur souffrance me fait horreur, elle me remplit d'un dégoût qui jusqu'ici me retranchait de tout. Mais finalement, je suis dans le même malheur, ils ont besoin de moi (261).

Completely lucid, his last hope of evasion snatched away, Diego cries out: "Ils ont interdit l'amour! Ah! Je te regrette de toutes mes forces" (262)!

Marking the contrast between man, his honor and duty to his fellow man, and the love of a woman, Victoria exclaims: "Je ne connais que mon amour! . . . Je suis sourde [to the cries of the others] jusqu'à la mort! . . . Mes yeux ne voient plus! L'amour les éblouit" (262).

Victoria's desperate cry in favor of her only reality, her "raison d'etre," that of her love for Diego, appears here to be the most dramatically worthy language of the play. The following passage parallels well Victoria with Maria of Le Malentendu.

> Je ne vais pas encore me charger de la douleur du monde! C'est une tâche d'homme, cela, une de ces tâches, vaines, stériles, entêtées, que vous entreprenez pour vous détourner du seul combat qui serait vraiment difficile, de la seule victoire dont vous pourriez être fiers (262-263).

Camus' Victoria appears to the reader as the most real the most human personage of the play.

There is one misfortune to fight in Victoria's eyes and that is found within Diego himself. For Victoria, it is that which separates them, not only Diego's physical imparity, but a humanitarian duty to his fellow man. But Diego's solitude prevents him from conquering it. "Le malheur est trop grand pour moi." Victoria's succor useless, Diego flees. Victoria, left alone exclaims: "Ah! Solitude" (263-264)!

Victoria's position is then intellectualized by the female chorus which wails its lost joys, awaiting the return of the wind from the sea with its promises of corporal pleasure. " . . . le souvenir des mers libres, le ciel désert de l'été, l'odeur éternelle de l'amour" (264).

Fleeing the city, Diego encounters the "secretary" engaging her in a conversation. As death describes her work, a matter of statistics to her, our hero is disgusted. His despise and fury rising, he proclaims the revolt.

> Le coeur me vient à la bouche tant vous me répugnez! . . . Mais je vous en préviens, un homme seul, c'est plus gênant, ça crie sa joie ou son agonie. Et moi vivant, je continuerai à déranger votre bel ordre par le hasard des cris. Je vous refuse, je vous refuse de tout mon être! . . . il y a dans l'homme . . . une force que vous ne réduirez pas, une folie claire, mêlée de peur et de courage, ignorante et victorieuse à tout jamais. C'est cette force qui va se lever et vous saurez alors que votre gloire etait fumée (270-273).

This cry of outrage, a passionate plea in favor of man, resembles in many respects the long emotional outcries which characterize Letters to a German Friend.

The "secretary" laughs in response to this diatribe. Diego slaps her, his fear disappearing as well as the marks of the plague's contamination, and with them the scourge's terror. The power which the tyranny of the plague and his entourage has wielded is gone. Death herself explains the nature of the plague and its "machine," faced by revolt.

> Du plus loin que je me souvienne, il a toujours suffi qu'un homme surmonte sa peur et se révolte pour que leur machine commence à grincer. Je ne dis pas qu'elle s'arrête, il s'en faut. Mais

> enfin, elle grince et, quelquefois, elle finit vraiment par se gripper (273).

With the loss of his fear before death, death herself loses her influence upon Diego and she retires. Removing the gag which covers a fisherman's mouth, obviously a reference to the efforts of the "order" to repress communication, dialogue returns and with it the sea breeze.

The third part of L'Etat de Siège, the denouement, opens with the revolt which has arisen from Diego's refusal to bend before the plague and death. Directing the people in this uprising, Diego transforms an individual "no" into a collective revolt.

At this point it is worthwhile to turn to Camus' principal essay on the revolt, L'Homme révolté, to witness his more formal rational description of the emergence of revolt.

"Dans l'expérience absurde, la souffrance est individuelle. A partir du mouvement de révolte, elle a conscience d'être collective, elle est l'aventure de tous. . . . Le mal qui éprouvait un seul devient peste collective" (35).

But a most important characteristic of this revolt is its positive nature. The author points out that the rebel's refusal is not a renouncement. He is a man who also says yes.

> Apparemment négative, puisqu'elle ne crée rien, la révolte est profondément positive puisqu'elle révèle ce qui, en l'homme, est toujours a défendre (32).

The rebel thus becomes the defender of certain human values. An individual has an innate value and dignity which cannot be denied through imprisonment or murder. He shares this value with all other men, the realization of which brings him in defense of them. ". . . le mouvement qui dresse l'individu pour la défense d'une dignité commune à tous les hommes" (31).

As with Diego, Camus' rebel refuses to be reduced to a statistic, a thing of little significance when viewed from a historical point of view. He possesses certain qualities in common with all men and which must not be denied. Turning to the long speech of Diego before death, we see these qualities.

> Mais dans votre belle nomenclature, vous avez oublié la rose sauvage, les signes dans le ciel, les visages d'été, la grande voix de la mer, les instants du déchirement et la colère des hommes (271)!

And the author confirms this common nature expressed by Diego when he states in L'Homme révolté:

> La révolte est dans l'homme, le refus d'être traité en chose et d'être réduit à la simple histoire. Elle est l'affirmation d'une nature commune à tous les hommes, qui échappe au monde de la puissance (307).

This statement may be contrasted with the existentialist philosophies which deny the existence of a permanent and universal human nature as well as values derived from such a nature.

Pointing out this basic difference existing between Camus and an existentialist writer such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Cruickshank contrasts them well in the following note:

> Sartre asserts that values do not pre-exist. They are simply invented or made by a man as he performs acts and accepts choices in the process of living. These "invented values" combine to form an image of man in general such as the individual considers he ought to be. No doubt Camus is unsure about the metaphysical status of values, but he does make some of them independent of the individual. He is not saying that such values are absolute or eternal in the traditional sense. But contrary to Sartre he finds their pre-existence, in some form, essential to his picture of what it means to be a human being (97).

Turning to the final part of the L'Etat de Siège, we witness Diego directing the forces organized to combat the scourge. Aware of the nature of the intimidation exercised by the tyranny, he proclaims:

> N'ayez plus peur, c'est la condition. Debout tous ceux qui le peuvent! . . . Relevez le front, voici l'heure de la fierté! . . . O sainte révolte, refus vivant, honneur du peuple, donne à ces baillonnés la force de ton cri (275)!

Admirable as the ardor of Diego may be, as well as his lucidity in revolt, this passage demonstrates the difficulty which Camus seems to have encountered in finding a dramatic medium between the didactic aims inherent in his theater, the metaphysical concerns expressed through his characters, and a certain theatrical warmth, a human quality which his creations sometimes lack. Rising to the point of allegory, the dialogue loses its dramatic impact. This was the case in the Malentendu when Martha at times lost all human credibility.

The chorus continuing in a lyrical vain chants: "Voici revenu le bruit des sources que le soleil noir de la peste avait évaporées" (280).

Struggling against fear, hate and ignorance, Diego's battle for the minds of the people, his fight to overthrow the established order, begins.

Unfortunately, Diego's sense of common collective revolt experienced at the end of part two, a lucidity in the face of the absurd, is not shared by the other members of the group. As victory seems near and the people rally around Diego, the following words of the chorus are revealing:

> Ils fuient. L'été s'achève en victoire. . . . Et la victoire alors a le corps de nos femmes sous la pluie de l'amour. . . . O mon amour, le désire crève comme un fruit mûr, la gloire des corps ruisselle enfin. . . . Ce sont les fêtes de la victoire, allons chercher nos femmes (285)!

Solidarity is non-existent, "l'inconscience," a lack of lucidity characterizes these people. The plague has not even departed and they are rushing off to their habitual diversions hurtling back to the oblivion from which the plague has separated them.

As noted above, Diego's oneness with his fellow citizens in revolt is not what it might first appear to be. And his essential solitude, his isolation from the group even in revolt, reasserts itself in the final scene of the play when the plague confronts Diego with his greatest moral decision. His commitment, ironically in favor of the solidarity of the revolt is tested.

Seeing that the citizens have rallied around Diego, the plague sensing his own defeat before the revolt, makes one last move. He strikes down Victoria and as a kind of blackmail holds her hostage promising to render her to Diego if he renounces his effort to fight. Diego vividly expresses his despair at the thought of losing his love. "Ne me quitte pas, la terre est froide. Mon amour, mon amour! . . . Si tu meurs, pendant tous les jours qui me restent à vivre, il fera noir en plein midi" (285)! We see here the image dear to Camus of the black sun of noon.

In the following passages a lyrical warmth arises, the lines losing their earlier metaphysical quality. It is the heart which speaks.

A mouthpiece for women, the female chorus comments on Diego's heart-rending tension so important to Camus in that this is the true nature of the revolt against the absurd. "L'homme crie vers l'impossible, la femme souffre tout ce qui est possible. . . . Ce corps était ta patrie sans laquelle tu n'est plus rien! Ta mémoire ne rachètera rien" (286)!

Tempting the hero with the physical realities of existence, the plague offers Diego these as well as his woman. Responding negatively, Diego asserts: "Ma vie n'est rien. Ce qui compte, ce sont les raisons de ma vie. Je ne suis pas un chien" (288).

The plague, admitting his position, that of a master of all or nothing, points out that if Diego escapes from his

grasp, the city will follow our hero. This is a part of the rule of the "new" order. Diego asserts its origin in man, a part of his very nature, when he says: " . . . elle est plus grande que toi, plus haute que tes gibets, c'est la règle de nature. Nous avons vaincu" (289).

Finally the "peste" plays his final card, that of the choice between Diego's own death with the liberation of Cadix, or Victoria's release and the continued siege of the scourge.

Diego's response is Camus' own. "L'amour de cette femme, c'est mon royaume à moi. Je puis en faire ce que je veux. Mais la liberté de ces hommes leur appartient. Je ne puis en disposer" (289). The one reality for the author, the most tangible of all man's values, that of life itself and the liberty which this value entails cannot be reduced to the whims or reasoning of any other man.

Attacking the reasoning of modern collective ideologies where we find the individual expendable and replaced by history, Diego expresses the author's criticism of this logic.

> Il faut tuer pour supprimer le meutre, violenter pour guérir l'injustice. Il y a des siècles que cela dure! il y a des siècles que les seigneurs de ta race pourrissent la plaie du monde sous prétexte de la guérir, et continuent cependant de vanter leur recette, puisque personne ne leur rit au nez" (290)!

The passion and sincerity with which Diego protests against this reasoning informs us of Camus' concern regarding the dangers of modern political ideologies.

If we turn again to L'Homme revolté, we find an effort on Camus' part to demonstrate the betrayal of the revolt which characterizes modern political or philosophic ideologies. Whether it be the superman of Nietsche and its adaptation by Nazi Germany, or Hegel's concept of historical determinism as interpreted by Marx and then rendered sacred by his followers, in both cases modern man by deifying in the first case himself or in the second history has betrayed the revolt. For Camus this revolt is faithful to the individual from whom it springs forth.[28]

Germaine Brée in describing Camus' treatment of modern revolt, points out its nature and the point beyond which it is lost in revolution:

> Revolt is then defined by Camus as the "impulse that drives an individual to the defense of a dignity common to all men." It involves the idea of a measure of liberty and a measure of justice; it contains an affirmation of human solidarity which, in its turn, serves as a limit for revolt itself. The "No" thrown in the face of a violation that has gone beyond a certain limit is spoken in the name of all men and presupposes that the slave's revolt must stop at the moment when it reaches that limit. If, in his turn, the slave claims absolute freedom, he then becomes the master to some other slave whose right he violates.[29]

Thus we find the limit of the revolt in its very premise, the individual and his innate worth as well as a limited freedom and justice in whose name revolt erupts in the first place.

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[28]"La révolte historique," H.R., pp. 133-299.

[29]Brée, p. 223.

The refusal to observe this original premise is what Diego attacks.

There follows a polemic discussion in which the plague casts doubt on the very human solidarity for which Diego has committed himself.

Diego's response is that of an idealist aware of the limitations of his commitment. But his duty is to serve the others. "Je sais qu'ils ne sont pas purs. Moi non plus. Et puis je suis né parmi eux. Je vis pour ma cité et pour mon temps" (290).

Continuing, Diego states the limits which the revolt, as defined by Camus, has set on man's freedom:

> Il est vrai qu'il leur arrive d'être lâches et cruels. C'est pourquoi ils n'ont pas plus que toi le droit à la puissance. Aucun homme n'a assez de vertu pour qu'on puisse lui consentir le pouvoir absolu (291).

Compassion highlights Diego's plea in favor of man against this scornful tyranny.

Although it is not denoted in this dialogue, perhaps the real tragedy of Diego's situation is the following point which the scourge cruelly brings out: most men, although accepting Diego's commitment because they are forced to rather than from a conscious decision, remain indifferent to Diego's motives. Rejected by Diego in favor of a certain compassion for his fellow man and his innocence, the above observation nonetheless remains valid.

The tension and sacrifice chosen by the hero become even more tragic in their essential singularity. But then this is the very nature of the absurd hero who in the lucidity of the basic futility of his efforts, remains faithful to his condition rejoicing in this lucidity.

As with "Sisyphe" who obstinately sticks to his task, Camus insists: "Il faut imaginer Sisyphe heureux."[30] Within the absurd condition itself, the grandeur of man is manifest.

Diego's victory is near. The plague, realizing this, admits that if Diego had given in to his proposition, all would have been lost including Victoria and Diego himself. "Tu vois, il suffit d'un insensé comme toi . . . L'insensé meurt évidemment. Mais à la fin, tôt ou tard, le reste est sauvé" (292)!

As we approach the end of the play, an interesting dialogue occurs between death and the plague in which their functions are contrasted. The hatred and scorn of the plague, or of any tyranny, is opposed to death which has become fatigued, a worn out old woman. She is arbitrary, impersonal, disassociated from man, but tyranny borrows its hate and cruelty from man.

Remembering her former nature before she became associated with the plague, she notes: "J'étais libre avant vous et associée avec le hasard. . . . J'étais la stable.

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[30]Mythe, p. 166.

Mais vous m'avez mise au service de la logique et du règlement" (293-294).

So the plague and his traveling companion death, leave in search of new hunting grounds, new accomplices and new victims. Content with his work, the plague informs the people of his ideal; that surpassing the whims of God in his vengeance and good will, he, the force of evil, has chosen power and domination alone. "L'idéal, c'est d'obtenir une majorité d'esclaves à l'aide d'une minorité de morts bien choisis. Aujourd'hui, la technique est au point" (296).

But the plague, far from being vanquished, always carries with it the ever present danger of return, in this case on the heels of those returning authorities who relinquished their control to it in the first place. The Plague witnesses this fact when it declares upon the return to Cadix of the authorities:

> Ecoutez! Voici ma chance qui revient. Voici vos anciens maîtres que vous retrouverez aveugles aux plaies des autres, ivres d'immobilité et d'oubli. . . . Honneur aux stupides puisqu'ils préparent mes voies! Ils font ma force et mon espoir (296)!

However there remains honor and pride which end up in revolt. "(La Secrétaire): "Nous triompherons de tout, sauf de la fierté" (296).

There is one consolation for the tyrannical plague and that is the suffering of Diego, both physical and moral. To save the honor of his revolt and to comply with the terrible exigency of the tension of his commitment, he must sacrifice himself before it. But as we observed earlier,

this truth which demands allegiance even to death is not shared by Victoria. To Diego's assertion that he is happy since he did what needed to be done, Victoria has one response. "Non. Il fallait me choisir contre le ciel lui-même. Il fallait me préférer à la terre entière" (297).

Diego's strength has nothing to do with Victoria and her love. As Diego observes, it is a force which devours everything wherein happiness has no place. He is pure in his strength but has dried up in his fight, no longer a man, unable to experience the pleasures of this world. Even his love for Victoria is the pure love of the soul, something which Victoria cannot admit. There is no consolation for her in this kind of love. When Diego proclaims: "Je t'ai aimée de toute mon âme," she responds with a cry: "Ce n'était pas assez. Oh, non! Ce n'était pas encore assez! Qu'avais-je à faire de ton âme seule" (298)! This same difference will emerge in Les Justes with respect to Kaliayev's love for Dora.

Mourning the death of Diego, the women protest against those men who, deserting their female companions, prefer an idea and pursuing it only encounter death.

> Mais les hommes préfèrent l'idée. Ils fuient leur mère, ils se détachent de l'amante, et les voilà qui courent à l'aventure, blessés sans plaie, morts sans poignards, chasseurs d'ombres, chanteurs solitaires, appelant sous un ciel muet une impossible réunion et marchant de solitude en solitude, vers l'isolement dernier, la mort en plein désert (298)!

Thus Diego dies, remaining faithful to his one truth, his love for man and justice, his revolt.

Nada, observing the arrival of the old administration, that of forgetfulness, of habit and hypocrisy, bitterly denounces their order:

> Les voilà! Les anciens arrivent, ceux d'avant, ceux de toujours, . . . Le soulagement est général, on va pouvoir recommencer. A zéro, naturellement. Voici les petits tailleurs du néant, vous allez être habillés sur mesure. . . . Au lieu de fermer les bouches de ceux qui crient leur malheur, ils ferment leurs propres oreilles. Nous étions muets, nous allons devenir sourds. . . . le sang de ceux que vous appelez les justes illumine encore les murs du monde, et que font-ils: ils se décorent . . . (299)!

As they arrest Nada, he proclaims the arrival of the "new" justice. Camus' answer to his tirade is a simple one. The chorus chants that there is no justice in this world, but there are some limits. "Et ceux-là qui prétendent ne rien régler, commes les autres qui entendaient donner une règle à tout, dépassent également les limites" (300). Both orders are in the wrong in Camus' eyes, that one which does nothing as well as that which pretends to give one answer to all things, to right all wrongs.

Nada administering his own justice, thus escaping that of a society which he scorns, jumps into the sea. Like Caligula, the issue of his nihilistic reasoning is death. He cries out before departing: "Adieu, braves gens, vous apprendrez cela un jour qu'on ne peut pas bien vivre en sachant que l'homme n'est rien et que la face de Dieu est affreuse" (300).

The fisherman, describing (in a lyrical vain) the drowning of Nada, "sings" the vengeance of the sea, the people's protector, exclaiming: "Elle nous venge. Sa colère est la nôtre. Elle crie le ralliement de tous les hommes de la mer, la réunion des solitaires. O vague, o mer, patrie des insurgés, voici ton peuple qui ne cédera jamais" (300).

In a hodge-podge of dramatic expressions, from two long dramatic monologues by the women and Nada to the didactic exclamations of the chorus and the stiff poetic conclusion of the fisherman, L'Etat de Siège comes to an end.

Although the final scene served well its purpose as a vehicle for the metaphysical and moral concerns of Camus, as a dramatic piece it leaves a lot to be desired. The transition from the semi-lyrical lamentation of the women's speech, to the purely social criticism of Nada's monologue, and then on to several didactic comments before concluding in a forced lyrical vain, all of this in three final pages gives us no impression of experiencing a dramatic reality. Camus gets his point across but as a dramatic expression L'Etat de Siège lacks.

Dramatically speaking none of the characters, except for Victoria, offer us a feeling of verisimilitude. Victoria remains warm and alive attached to her human vitality, one of the flesh and warmth of female love. The others however remain too cerebral, too attached to the

author and his metaphysical concerns. They never come alive as theatrical realities.

Roger Quilliot in his "Présentation" of the work, gives us a hint as to the reasons for the technical failure of the play. Jean-Louis Barrault had long dreamed of adapting Daniel de Foe's Journal de l'année de la Peste to the stage. After reading Camus' La Peste, Barrault turned to Camus, requesting his collaboration in the realization of his dream. Camus accepted, attracted as he was by Barrault's idea of "théatre total," that is, a theater which uses all forms of dramatic expression.

Quilliot points our that Barrault was expecting a lyrical Camus, the Camus of Caligula or Noces which fit into his scheme of the theater. But Camus at that time was the ironic author of La Peste, the editorialist of "Combat."

Quilliot concludes:

> . . . les deux hommes, . . . montèrent un spectacle tantôt lyrique et surchauffé, comme le désirait Barrault, tantôt aristophanesque, proche de la revue ou de la bouffonnerie absurde, comme le voulait Camus. Cette hésitation fut cause sans doute que la pièce manqua d'unité et fut accueillie froidement" (1812-1813).

What conclusions may we draw from L'Etat de Siège concerning the revolt and its liberty?

At this point in the evolution of the philosophical and moral positions of Albert Camus, a trait appears which was not emphasized in the earlier forms of revolt in his theater. This involves a certain measure or moderation.

There are limits which must be drawn beyond which, as we saw earlier, the revolt is betrayed.

The chorus witnesses the existence of these limits as well as the error of those who fail to heed them. This failure may consist of exceeding them in doing nothing or trying to resolve everything.

Turning to the problem of freedom, which we have observed to be inherent in the revolt, it does not emerge forcefully in L'Etat de Siège since it was not the major concern of the protaganist, Diego. His problem was the difficulty of being faithful to the revolt, but liberty was not the central issue. In fact, in observing the conclusions announced by the chorus, we get the impression that the author added them as an afterthought, since they add nothing to the essentially tragic situation of Diego nor to its denouement. It becomes pure polemics.

We must turn to the final work in the original theater of Camus to see a much more complete treatment of the freedom involved in the revolt.

CHAPTER IV

Les Justes seems to have emerged during the period 1945 to 1947 when Camus, while preparing L'Homme révolté, was concerned with the problem of revolt and its liberty. In Carnets mention is made of an essay on the revolt appearing as early as 1945 as well as in an article "Remarque sur la révolte," published in L'Existence during 1945. From this article came the first chapter of L'Homme révolté.[31]

The Just Assassins seems to have crystallized by June 1947 when we may read in Carnets: "I^{re} Série. Absurde. L'Etranger, Le Mythe de Sisyphe, Caligula, Le Malentendu. 2^{e} Série. Révolte. La Peste et annexe, l'Homme révolté----- Kalyaev------.3^{e} Série. Le Jugement. Le Premier homme, etc." (201).

During most of these years, while the author was preparing l'Homme révolté, the problem of murder and its relationship with revolt and revolution were his major concerns.

In April 1946 we find the following note in Carnets:

> Révolte, commencement: le seul problème moral vraiment sérieux c'est le meurtre. Le reste vient après. Mais de savoir si je puis tuer cet autre devant moi, ou consentir à ce qu'il soit tué, savoir que je ne sais rien avant de savoir si je puis donner la mort, voilà ce qu'il faut apprendre (172).

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[31]Quilliot, p. 1814.

Quilliot remarks in his "Présentation" to Les Justes that the author, after a controversy with Mauriac on "les lois d'exception," left his journalistic work and plunged into a study of Russian history through two works, A qui la faute? by Hersen (1947) and le Développement des idées révolutionnaires en Russie. Quilliot brings out the probable origin of Les Justes when he states: "Apparement pendant plusieurs mois, l'étude du terrorisme, comme préparation à L'Homme révolté, et la mise en chantier des Justes se confondent."[32]

The play seemed to be taking form in July 1947 according to an entry in Carnets: "Pièce. La Terreur. Un nihiliste. La violence partout. Partout le mensonge. Détruire, détruire. Un réaliste. Il faut entrer à l'Okhrana. Entre les deux, Kaliayev.--Non, Boris, non" (204).

To understand Camus' goal in writing Les Justes it is worthwhile to turn to the text of "Les Meurtriers Délicats" published in January 1948 in La Table Ronde. This article later became the title of a chapter in L'Homme révolté in which the author traces the historical origins of Les Justes.[33]

The student Kaliayev and his comrades worked together in the "Organization de Combat" of the Socialist Revolutionary Party.

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[32]Quilliot, p. 1814.

[33]Ibid., 1819.

But this revolutionary group differed from many of its contemporaries. In contrast to those which followed, it possessed certain scruples as well as doubts concerning the efficacy of a revolution without limits.

> Ils sont venus à la terreur, poussés par une exigence personnelle autant que par leur système politique. Et s'ils y ont vécu, . . . ils n'ont jamais cessé d'y être déchirés. L'histoire offre peu d'exemples de pratiques qui aient souffert de scrupules jusque dans la mêlée (1819).

Their revolutionary career was shortlived. In 1903 Kaliayev joined the terrorist group at the age of twenty-six. Two years later the so-called "poet" was hung. Kaliayev, unlike his fellow terrorists, believed in God. A few minutes before an attack he was seen kneeling before an icon, a bomb in one hand crossing himself with the other. But, as Camus points out, he rejected organized religion, and in his cell before his execution he refused any religious succor (1820).

Because of the clandestine nature of the enterprise, the revolutionary group lived in solitude.

> Ils ne connaissent pas, sinon de façon abstraite, la joie puissante de tout homme d'action en contact avec une large communauté humaine. Mais le lien qui les unit remplace pour eux tous les attachements (1820).

In a "Prière a'insérer" written in 1949, the author presents a short note describing the situation of these "meutriers délicats" from which Les Justes was adapted.

> En février 1905, à Moscou, un groupe de terroristes, appartenant au parti socialiste révolutionnaire, organisait un attentat à la bombe contre le grand-duc Serge, oncle du tsar. Cet attentat et les

> circonstances singulières qui l'ont précédé et suivi font le sujet des Justes (1826).

The author continues pointing out that as extraordinary as it might appear, several of the situations in the play are historically true. However, this does not mean that the Just Assassins is a historical play. All Camus' characters with the exception of Stépan, chosen by the author to contrast Kaliayev's personality, truly did exist. But his effort here is to render what was already true believable (1826).

Before turning to the play, we should take notice of its structure and Camus' goals in utilizing the form which he did. The author's avowed goal was the creation of a dramatic tension classical in nature. Quilliot confirms this when he states: "Il semble que Camus ait adopté dès le début le mouvement classique de la pièce, assez proche de celui de Polyeucte, avec ses cinq actes et ses dépassements successifs" (1816).

More than any other of his works, it appears that Camus considered the situation of Les Justes to possess the elements necessary for the creation of a drama in the classic tradition. Again in his "Prière d'insérer" the author recognizes this purpose when he states:

> J'ai essayé d'y obtenir une tension dramatique par les moyens classiques, c'est-à-dire l'affrontement de personnages égaux en force et en raison (1826).

We will examine the author's success in achieving this goal after a closer look at the work itself.

In defending the style chosen for Les Justes, and again revealing the influence of the classic theater, especially that of the Greeks, Camus asserts:

> " . . . il me semble qu'il n'est pas de théâtre sans langage et sans style, ni d'oeuvre dramatique valable qui, à l'exemple de notre théâtre classique et des tragiques grecs, ne mette en jeu le destin humain tout entier dans ce qu'il a de simple et grand. Sans prétendre les égaler, ce sont là, du moins, les modèles qu'il faut se proposer" (1827).

If we look at Camus' own definition of the tragic element in the theater, we can better understand what he was trying to achieve with Les Justes. Let us look at the major points which Camus dealt with in his lecture on the future of the tragedy pronounced in Athens, Greece.

> Voici quelle me paraît être la différence: [between the tragedy and the melodrama] les forces qui s'affrontent dans la tragédie sont également légitimes, également armées en raison. Dans le mélodrame ou le drame, au contraire, l'une seulement est légitime. Autrement dit, la tragédie est ambigue, le drame simpliste. Dans la première, chaque force est en même temps bonne et mauvaise. Dans le second, l'une est le bien, l'autre le mal. . . . La formule du mélodrame serait en somme: "Un seul est juste et justifiable" et la formule tragique par excellence: "Tous sont justifiables, personne n'est juste." C'est pourquoi le choeur des tragédies antiques donne principalement des conseils de prudence. Car il sait que sur une certaine limite tout le monde a raison et que celui qui, par aveuglement ou passion, ignore cette limite, court à la catastrophe pour faire triompher un droit qu'il croit etre le seul à avoir. Le thème constant de la tragèdie antique est ainsi la limite qu'il ne faut pas dépasser. De part et d'autre de cette limite se rencontrent des forces également légitimes dans un affrontement vibrant et ininterrompu. Se tromper sur cette limite, vouloir rompre cet équilibre, c'est s'abimer.[34]

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[34]Quilliot, "Sur l'Avenir de la tragédie," p. 1703.

This is the case with Caligula, who, as we saw in the climax of the play, mistaken about this limitation, broke this equilibrium and was lost.

As an example of this pure form of the tragedy, Camus takes Aeschylus' Prométhée enchainé.

> . . . il est permis de dire que c'est, d'une part, l'homme et son désir de puissance, d'autre part le principe divin qui se reflète dans le monde. Il y a tragédie lorsque l'homme par orgueil (ou meme par betise comme Ajax) entre en contestation avec l'ordre divin, personnifié dans un dieu ou incarné dans la société. Et la tragédie sera d'autant plus grande que cette révolte sera plus légitime et cet ordre plus nécessaire (1704).

What destroys this tension or equilibrium which is the tragedy? Anything which within the tragedy tends to break this tension destroys the tragedy as well. If there is no way in which to contest the divine order and there is only fault and repentance then there is no tragedy. What remains is the religious drama, mystery, or parable.

Inversely anything which frees the individual and submits the universe to a human law, above all by the negation of the mystery of existence, again destroys the tragedy (1705). We cannot help but wonder if Camus was thinking of his own Caligula when he made these statements.

Concluding his definition of the qualities of the tragic element, Camus states:

> La tragédie nait entre l'ombre et la lumière, et par leur opposition. Et cela se comprend. Dans le drame religieux ou athée, le problème est en effet résolu d'avance. Dans la tragédie idéale, au contraire il n'est pas résolu. Le héros se

> révolte et nie l'ordre qui l'opprime, le pouvoir divin, par l'oppression, s'affirme dans la mesure même où on le nie. Autrement dit la révolte à elle seule ne fait pas une tragédie. L'affirmation de l'ordre divin non plus. Il faut une révolte et un ordre, l'un s'arcboutant à l'autre et chacun renforçant l'autre de sa propre force. . . . Le héros nie l'ordre qui le frappe et l'ordre divin frappe parce qu'il est nié. Tous deux affirment ainsi leur existence réciproque dans l'instant même où elle est contestée. Le choeur en tire la leçon, à savoir qu'il y a un ordre, que cet ordre peut être douloureux, mais qu'il est pire encore de ne pas reconnaître qu'il existe. La seule purification revient à ne rien nier ni exclure, à accepter donc le mystère de l'existence, la limite de l'homme, et cet ordre enfin où l'on sait sans savoir. (1705-1706).

It must, of course, be remembered that the author was speaking here of the ideal tragedy in the tradition of the ancient Greeks or the tragedy of the Renaissance.

Camus notes that form and content make a whole, the literary creation. Modern dramatists are in search of a tragic form or language which may create for us a modern renaissance of the tragedy in the tradition of Sophocles, Shakespeare, and Racine (1708-1709).

Let's turn now to Les Justes in order to analyze Camus' endeavor to create a form of modern classic drama, his effort to obtain "une tension dramatique par les moyens classiques."

The first act opens on the return, after three years in prison, of Stepan, a member of the terrorist group. The party has sent him to join the group in order to kill the Grand Duke.

We immediately become aware of the hate which Setpan has accumulated during his absence. There is one thing which matters to Stepan and that is the arrival of liberation day for the Russian people. To hurry it along there is the bomb and its terror. When Kaliayev's nickname the Poet is mentioned, Stepan reacts suspiciously. To a remark of Annenkov, the leader of the group, that Kaliayev finds poetry revolutionary, Stepan responds: "La bombe seule est révolutionnaire" (311).

Voinov, a young revolutionary and idealist enters. He has mapped the route from the palace to the theater. Announcing his reason for joining the group, he says: "J'ai compris qu'il ne suffisait pas de dénoncer l'injustice. Il fallait donner sa vie pour la combattre. Maintenant, je suis heureux" (314).

At this point we meet the protaganist, Kaliayev, who arrives replacing a member killed in a previous incident. He brings the news of the Duke's plans to attend the theater this particular week.

Kaliayev strikes us immediately as a happy individual. Laughing often, he reveals an honest joy and love of life. He hardly seems the revolutionary type. Recalling earlier times when he and Dora were happy together, he remarks to the latter: "Tes yeux sont toujours tristes, Dora. Il faut être gaie, il faut être fière. La beauté existe, la joie existe . . . (316)!

Full of fervor and determination, Kaliayev, who has been chosen to throw the bomb at the Grand Duke's carriage,

is ready. Desiring to give his life to the cause, he intimates throwing himself under the horses if he fails to throw the bomb. Exalted, he suggests suicide if the attack on the Duke fails. He must give his life in a kind of suicidal idealism, the sacrifice taking on more importance than the cause for which it is made.

Stepan finds Kaliayev's attitude that of a bored bourgeois who enters the revolutionary movement to find excitement and amusement. It is no game for Stepan. "Mais pour moi, la haine n'est pas un jeu. Nous ne sommes pas là pour nous admirer. Nous sommes là pour réussir" (319). For Kaliayev it is love of life which brought him into the movement, not boredom.

The sharp contrast between the two emerges. Kaliayev justifies his role out of love for the Russian people and a justice which serves them, while Stepan's justification is his despise and hatred, acquired in prison.

Speaking for the group, Annenkov declares: "Nous tuons ensemble, et rien ne peut nous séparer" (321).

Turning to Kaliayev we see that as the others, he wants to sacrifice himself to the cause. But unlike Stepan he loves life, a paradox which begins to emerge at this moment.

> Comme eux, je veux me sacrifier. . . . Seulement, la vie continue de me paraître merveilleuse. J'aime la beauté, le bonheur! C'est pour cela que je hais le despotisme. . . . La révolution, bien sûr! Mais la révolution pour la vie, pour donner une chance à la vie, tu comprends (322)?

And Dora, anticipating the contradiction in their ideology, expressing a doubt, unable to feel Kaliayev's optimism concerning their goal, states: "Et pourtant, nous allons donner la mort" (322).

Kaliayev's reasoning is that of the just assassins. They accept murder to build a world where no one will be murdered. Accepting the role of criminals, they have done so so that finally the world will be full of innocent people.

Dora, on the other hand, more experienced, and wiser perhaps than young Kaliayev, questions the arrival of this innocent world.

For Kaliayev there is one solution. "Mourir pour l'idée, c'est la seule façon d'être à la hauteur de l'idée. C'est la justification" (323). With these words, Kaliayev expresses their justification, their sole justification. They must give their own lives as a kind of exchange for the life they take in order to justify their act of terrorism.

Again Dora raises another problem which they will be obliged to face; that is the human personal contact involved in killing the Duke. Dora brings this out when she conjectures:

> Un homme est un homme. Le grand-duc a peut-être des yeux compatissants. Tu le verras se gratter l'oreille ou sourire joyeusement. Qui sait, il portera peut-être une petite coupure de rasoir. Et s'il te regarde à ce moment-là . . . (325).

Thus the two major dilemmas of Kaliayev's situation emerge. His very firmness almost violence in his response

to Dora's projection of these problems informs us of the conflict involved between these realities and his idealistic goals.

Kaliayev must kill the Duke, a highly demanding task for a young man who loves life and people. It would be fine if he could remain indifferent to the act, his mind fixed on the goal, a just one in his eyes. But he must blow a man to pieces, a warm breathing individual, watch the blood and life run out of him and that is a different story.

Secondly, there remains the possibility that this innocent world for which Kaliayev will sacrifice the Duke and himself, may never arrive.

This then is the predicament as the first act closes, the assassination set for the following day when the Duke will pass in his carriage.

As Act Two opens, we see Annenkov and Dora awaiting the bombing by Kaliayev, Voinov and Stepan. In the conversation which follows, Annenkov reveals his nostalgia for his earlier days, carefree and full of the joy of living. "Sais-tu que je regrette les jours d'autrefois, la vie brillante, les femmes . . . Oui, j'aimais les femmes, le vin, ces nuits qui n'en finissaient pas" (328).

Their exchange appears warm and credible as Dora expresses her fear and Annenkov his longing for the pleasures of life.

No bomb is thrown, however, and Kaliayev returns revealing the presence of the Duke's niece and nephew in the

carriage. Their presence caused him to hesitate, not fulfilling his mission. His belief: "Tu n'as pas le droit" (331)! We haven't the right to destroy innocent beings no matter how just our goal may be.

In a long monologue, Kaliayev's feelings regarding the children appear. The language here strikes us as lyrical, not the cerebral dramatically improbable lines of Diego.

> Je ne pouvais pas prévoir. . . . As-tu regardé des enfants? Ce regard grave qu'ils ont parfois. . . . Ils ne riaient pas, eux. Ils se tenaient tout droits et regardaient dans le vide. Comme ils avaient l'air triste! Perdus dans leurs habits de parade, les mains sur les cuisses, le buste raide de chaque coté de la portière! . . . Ces deux petits visages sérieux et dans ma main, ce poids terrible. . . . Oh, non! Je n'ai pas pu. . . . J'imaginais le choc, cette tête frêle frappant la route, . . (332-333).

A small debate ensues in which the merits of Kaliayev's decision are weighed by the group. Dora, agreeing with Yanek, contradicts Stepan whose logic, one of hate, demands a totality in their revolution. Stepan's opinion emerges when he states: "Quand nous nous déciderons à oublier les enfants, ce jour-là, nous serons les maîtres du monde et la révolution triomphera" (336).

Stepan, the nihilist, would stop at nothing to achieve their goal even if all the Russian people were to reject his revolution. And to Dora's suggestion that if his idea were carried out, all of humanity would hate it, Stepan replies: "Qu'importe si nous l'aimons assez fort pour l'imposer

à l'humanité entière et la sauver d'elle-même et de son esclavage" (336).

Annenkov sides with Dora and Kaliayev, agreeing that there are limits. "Mais quelles que soient tes raisons, je ne puis te laisser dire que tout est permis. Des centaines de nos frères sont morts pour qu'on sache que tout n'est pas permis" (337).

Stepan here becomes the spokesman for the revolutionary and although the discussion takes on a polemic nature, it does not seem as forced as the dialogues of the same nature which we observed in L'Etat de Siège.

What are two children when thousands of Russian children die every year? Stepan's argument is a convincing one. "Alors choisissez la charité et guérissez seulement le mal de chaque jour, non la révolution qui veut guérir tous les maux, présents et à venir" (337).

Continuing his revolutionary reasoning, he exclaims:

> Il n'y a pas de limites. La vérité est que vous ne croyez pas à la révolution . . . Si vous y croyiez totalement, complètement, si vous étiez sûrs que par nos sacrifices et nos victoires, nous arriverons à bâtir une Russie libérée du despotisme, une terre de liberté qui finira par recouvrir le monde entier, si vous ne doutiez pas qu'alors, l'homme, libéré de ses maîtres et de ses préjugés, lèvera vers le ciel la face des vrais dieux, que pèserait la mort de deux enfants? . . . Et si cette mort vous arrête, c'est que vous n'êtes pas sûrs d'être dans votre droit (338).

Stepan, spokesman for the modern revolutionary, paints us a perfect picture of these "meurtriers délicats." His words ring true.

Dora claims that the death of the two children wouldn't prevent a single child from starving to death. "Même dans la destruction, il y a un ordre, il y a des limites" (338).

Kaliayev, in defending his position, appears as Camus' mouthpiece: "J'ai accepté de tuer pour renverser le despotisme. Mais derrière ce que tu dis, je vois s'annoncer un despotisme qui, s'il s'installe jamais, fera de moi un assassin alors que j'essaie d'être un justicier" (338).

Again we see not only an allusion to modern totalitarianism but the predicament of Kaliayev which we observed at the end of Act One. That is he must justify the murder of one man to ensure the end of persecution and murder of all men. But will this goal ever arrive? Kaliayev's defense of man's innocence, noble and sincere here, contrasts sharply with Stepan's choice of ignoring it so that it may someday take on a greater meaning. Kaliayev feels that one must be very sure justice will arrive in order to deny every thing which makes life worth living. Stepan is convinced of it but Kaliayev still has doubts.

Remaining faithful to Camus' ideal of the revolt, refusing to sacrifice those for whom the rebel has risen up, Kaliayev cries out their innocence:

> . . . j'aime ceux qui vivent aujourd'hui sur la même terre que moi, et c'est eux que je salue. C'est pour eux que je lutte et que je consens à mourir. Et pour une cité lointaine, dont je ne suis pas sûr, je n'irai pas frapper le visage de mes frères. Je n'irai pas ajouter à l'injustice vivante pour une justice morte (339).

At this point, a value related to the human value, fundamental in the revolt, emerges. This is honor for which Diego remained faithful even to death.

Declaring the inseparable character of the revolution and its honor, Kaliayev states: " . . . tuer des enfants est contraire à l'honneur. Et, si un jour, moi vivant, la revolution devait se séparer de l'honneur, je m'en détournerais" (340).

Accepting the decision of the group to wait until the Duke is alone, Stepan reaffirms his belief that "la terreur ne convient pas aux délicats" (340).

But Kaliayev, refusing to accept Stepan's declaration that they have chosen to be murderers, continues to remain faithful to his own conviction. That is, that one must die in order that murder may not triumph, thus insuring one's innocence (341).

The opening scene of Act Three involves a touching exchange between Voinov, the youth, and Annenkov. Informing Annenkov of his fear, Voinov reveals his shame and despair for failing the group. The dialogue, full of tenderness and gravity, discloses Voinov's anxiety in face of the human side of the terrorist act. Voinov finds himself too close to the act of terrorism, something for which he is not made.

> Tandis que se tenir debout, quand le soir tombe sur la ville, au milieu de la foule de ceux qui pressent le pas pour retrouver la soupe brûlante, des enfants, la chaleur d'une femme, se tenir debout et muet, avec le poids de la bombe au bout du bras, et savoir que dans trois minutes, dans deux minutes,

> dans quelques secondes, on s'élancera au-devant d'une calèche étincelante, voilà la terreur (346).

Unable to make that terrible decision of throwing the bomb, Voinov retires from an activist role in the group reflecting: " . . . il me sera moins difficile de mourir [condemned to death] que de porter ma vie et celle d'un autre à bout de bras et de décider du moment où je précipiterai ces deux vies dans les flammes" (347).

In this decision of Voinov and the description of his impasse, we anticipate the same gravity in Kaliayev's predicament when the time arrives for the bombing.

We now turn to one of the principal scenes of the play, one of tenderness and love. Quilliot suggests, I think reasonably, that the intention of Camus at the start of the play was twofold: one, to treat love and its relationship with politics and the revolutionary mind and secondly to take on the problem of murder and the abstraction it supposes (1815).

Here, the first of Camus' preoccupations appears according to Quilliot: " . . . réussir enfin une scène d'amour" (1815).

In previous treatment of love, Camus' effort remained on a basically metaphysical plane. With the love of Caligula for Drusilla, of secondary importance in Caligula, that of Jan for Maria, with the exception of a few speeches of the latter, and Diego and Victoria, again excepting Victoria's declarations of her love, the nature of these

respective relationships remained abstract and symbolic in nature.

Quilliot finds here and with reason, that Camus succeeds in rendering the love between Kaliayev and Dora a real one.

> Cette fois, Camus, en contrepoint de ce terrible amour de l'humanité qui anime les terroristes, a tenu à esquisser la possibilité pour Dora et Kaliayev d'un amour normal, chargé de tendresse et d'égoïsme, par delà l'injustice et les révolutions. La grande scène de l'acte III, la plus belle scène d'amour qu'ait écrite Camus, nous la trouvons dans sa quasi-intégralité dans les Carnets de 1947--la toute première en quelque sorte (1815).

As Dora and Kaliayev are left alone, we are immediately aware of Kaliayev's distress and a certain sadness. The tension involved in this "just" action is emerging. It is not as simple as Kaliayev had imagined, and the abstract love which justifies this act is heavy to bear.

Dora, denying her female sensibility, concludes that those who truly love justice have no right to a love, at least an earthly one. Their love is of another nature, for all the people. But its abstract nature leaves nothing to grasp for support. It is solitary and apparently unreciprocal.

> Nous l'aimons d'un vaste amour sans appui, d'un amour malheureux. Nous vivons loin de lui, enfermés dans nos chambres, perdus dans nos pensées. Et le peuple, lui, nous aime-t-il? Sait-il que nous l'aimons? Le peuple se tait. Quel silence, quel silence . . . (351).

In a terrible solitude, they remain alone sequestered with this idea of a humanitarian love.

The following speech by Dora is eloquent and poignant, full of nostalgia for the physical love to which she aspires. Referring to Kaliayev's pure absolute love, she states:

> C'est l'amour absolu, la joie pure et solitaire, c'est celui qui me brûle en effet. A certaines heures, pourtant, je me demande si l'amour n'est pas autre chose, s'il peut cesser d'être un monologue, et s'il n'y a pas une réponse, quelquefois. J'imagine cela, vois-tu: le soleil brille, les têtes se courbent doucement, le coeur quitte sa fierté, les bras s'ouvrent. Ah! Yanek, si l'on pouvait oublier, ne fût-ce qu'une heure, l'atroce misère de ce monde et se laisser aller enfin. Une seule petite heure d'égoïsme, peux-tu penser à cela (351)?

Dora questions Kaliayev's love for the people. Does it possess this transport which Kaliayev terms tenderness? Is it full of sweetness and abandon or the flame of vengeance and revolt? And what about his love for her?

Kaliayev, however, cannot love like others. His love for Dora remains pure, unifying itself with his love of justice and the revolutionary cause.

Recalling her days as a student before she inherited this terrible passion for justice, Dora wonders if Kaliayev would love her with a selfish tender love if she were not a "juste," if she were not a part of the organization.

> Je me souviens du temps où j'étudiais. Je riais. J'étais belle alors. Je passais des heures à me promener et à rêver. M'aimerais-tu légère et insouciante? . . . il faut bien une fois au moins laisser parler son coeur. J'attends que tu m'appelles, moi, Dora, que tu m'appelles par-dessus ce monde empoisonné d'injustice . . . (353).

Kaliayev's response identifies once more his love for Dora with that of his duty, and Dora bitterly renounces her self-centered hope. Giving up a warm human affection, she chooses the cold ideal love of Kaliayev as she responds:

> Je t'aime du même amour un peu fixe, dans la justice et les prisons. L'été, Yanek, tu te souviens? Mais non, c'est l'eternel hiver. Nous ne sommes pas de ce monde, nous sommes des justes. Il y a une chaleur qui n'est pas pour nous. Ah! pitié pour les justes (353)!

Dora casts her lot with Kaliayev and his "love." As he leaves for his mission and they say their goodbyes, Camus' stage direction is revealing. "Dora va vers lui. Ils sont tout près l'un de l'autre, mais ne se toucheront pas" (354).

As we saw in the historical commentary, "Les Meurtriers Délicats," Kaliayev crosses himself before the icon upon his exit. Stepan observes that although Kaliayev is not practising, "Il a l'âme religieuse, pourtant" (355). Yanek has refused to reject God in the same manner that he has retained a limit within his revolt.

The following remark by Stepan contrasts the two men: "Pour nous qui ne croyons pas à Dieu, il faut toute la justice ou c'est le désespoir" (355). For Stepan it must be all or nothing.

As the report of the explosion reaches the apartment the solidarity of the group, and especially that of Dora with Kaliayev and his commitment, is seen in the following exchange between Stepan and Dora: (Dora): "C'est nous qui l'avons tué! C'est nous qui l'avons tué! C'est moi."

(Stepan): "Qui avons-nous tué? Yanek?" (Dora): "Le grand-duc" (357).

With the beginning of the fourth act, the full nature of this dramatic tension, which Camus expressed his desire to achieve, reveals itself.

Through three individuals, Kaliayev, imprisoned, experiences the heart-rending ordeal of fidelity to his commitment, rendered painful from doubts raised as to its efficacy.

Foka, a common criminal, enters Kaliayev's cell to clean up. In the ensuing conversation, the protagonist learns of Foka's complete ignorance and disinterest in the cause of social justice. Even more ironic is Foka's role, that of a hangman. He is pardoned a year of his sentence for each execution. The striking irony of the situation intensifies in the following exchange: (Kaliayev): "Tu es donc un bourreau?" (Foka): "Eh bien, barine, et toi" (364)?

Kaliayev's second visitor is Skouratov, a crafty police commissioner. His role is, of course, to turn Yanek from his avowed goal of going to his death to render his act innocent. Yanek, his eyes set on the abstract, that is tyranny and justice, refuses to focus his attention on the particular, in this case the Grand Duke and his bloody assassination.

Skouratov's first move, we learn, was to send Foka in order to give Kaliayev a view of one of the "innocents," the mass for whom he has sacrificed the Grand Duke.

The policeman has now come to offer our hero grace. Kaliayev is determined in his sacrifice, but his weak spot is personal human relations which he has tried to escape in the abstract and which Skouratov will use to his advantage.

(Kaliayev): "Je suis prêt à payer ce qu'il faut. Mais je ne supporterai pas cette familiarité de vous à moi. . . . J'ai lancé la bombe sur votre tyrannie, non sur un homme" (366).

Kaliayev deals in ideas here, the police commissioner in individuals. As he says:

> Que voulez-vous, je ne m'intéresse pas aux idées, moi, je m'intéresse aux personnes. . . . Ce qui n'est pas une idée, c'est le meurtre. Et ses conséquences, naturellement. Je veux dire le repentir et le châtiment (367).

Skouratov offers the peace of heart inherent in repentance and the desire of reparation and a new term on life. By accepting to live, Kaliayev would in the process bring about the arrest of his comrades, but ensuring their escape from the scaffold.

This Kaliayev refuses and the policeman draws his third card. Quizzing Yanek about his reasons for sparing the Grand Duchess and the children, Skouratov touches the contradiction inherent in Kaliayev's act. "Alors une question se pose: si l'idée n'arrive pas à tuer les enfants, mérite-t-elle qu'on tue un grand-duc" (369)?

With this remark Skouratov has the Grand Duchess enter. Her role is that of a Christian, to try and save Yanek's soul and as an individual to remind him of the

husband whom he has destroyed and the suffering he has brought upon her.

Skouratov departs and remarks ironically: "La voilà. Après la police, la religion! On vous gâte décidément. Mais tout se tient. Imaginez Dieu sans les prisons. Quelle solitude" (370)!

The visit of the Grand Duchess proves to be the most difficult trial for Kaliayev. The solitude and suffering of the widow moves Kaliayev, a sensitive individual. Again we see the female personage, as in the three previous plays, grasping after those realities of the flesh which are torn from them by fate. Their men leave them to chase after ideas which the women fail to comprehend.

She recounts those little details of an individual nature which, as we observed with Skouratov, force Yanek to lose view of the ideas on which his sight is focused. "J'ai vu. J'ai mis sur une civière tout ce que je pouvais trainer. Que de sang! J'avais une robe blanche . . . Sais-tu ce qu'il faisait deux heures avant de mourir? Il dormait. Dans un fauteuil, les pieds sur une chaise . . . " (372).

Trying to prove that Kaliayev, like the others, is unjust, she continues:

> Ma nièce a un mauvais coeur. Elle refuse de porter elle-même ses aumônes aux pauvres. Elle a peur de les toucher. N'est-elle pas injuste? Elle est injuste. Lui du moins aimait le paysans. Il buvait avec eux. Et tu l'as tué. Certainement, tu es injuste aussi (373).

In her eyes not even the children, whom the terrorists spared, are innocent.

Pleading with Yanek to accept to live and consent to be a murderer, she offers the forgiveness of God who would justify him. But Kaliayev's God is not the same as her Christian God. And " . . . la Saint Eglise . . . n'a rien à faire ici" (373).

Referring to the Duchess and her race as his enemy, Yanek laments the predicament he and his brothers have chosen for themselves. "Il y a quelque chose de plus abject encore que d'être un criminel, c'est de forcer au crime celui qui n'est pas fait pour lui. Regardez-moi. Je vous jure que je n'étais pas fait pour tuer" (374).

The author confirms the essentially innocent nature of these "meutriers délicats" and the paradox of their commitment.

> Ce petit groupe d'hommes et de femmes, perdu dans la foule russe, serrés les uns contre les autres, choisissent le métier d'exécuteurs auquel rien ne les disposait. Et c'est ici que la parenté de ces êtres s'affirme. Ils vivent en effet sur le même paradoxe, unissant en eux le respect de la vie humaine en général et un mépris de leur propre vie, qui va jusqu'à la nostalgie du sacrifice suprême (1820).

Refusing to pray with the Grand Duchess, Kaliayev doubts any reconciliation with God. His only solace is his fidelity to his comrades. To pray to God would be treason.

> J'ai une longue lutte à soutenir et je la soutiendrai. Mais quand le verdict sera prononcé, et l'exécution prête, alors, au pied de l'échafaud, je me détournerai de vous et de ce monde hideux et je me laisserai aller à l'amour qui m'emplit (375).

Kaliayev is no longer the young naive lover of beauty whom we met in the first act. In the tension which characterizes his paradox, the world has grown bitter and "hideux." He has made a commitment to his fellow revolutionaries and to man in general. For this he must kill one man for the supposed betterment of all men.

The paradox, that he must kill to prevent men from being killed and suffering, is heart-rending, the tension shattering. He obviously has doubts as to its efficacy. This appeared in the exchange between him and the prison warden in the final act. Why does Yanek doubt? Who is to say that the day of justice will ever arrive for the whole society?

His one possible justification is to give his own life in a sort of swap, a payment or restitution for the life which he must sacrifice. To justify himself and his act in this manner, he believes in the equal value of human life and that one life taken away can be repaid by another.

But as his love widens its scope to include all men, it loses that which characterizes an individual love. This "amour pour la créature" which was at first full of warmth and tenderness has become, as Dora observed (III, 352), filled with "la flamme de la vengeance et de la révolte."

Kaliayev, driven to despair, repeats the only solution acceptable to him.

> Mourir avec elle! [la créature] Ceux qui s'aiment aujourd'hui doivent mourir ensemble s'ils veulent etre réunis. L'injustice sépare, la honte, la

> douleur, le mal qu'on fait aux autres, le crime séparent. Vivre est une torture puisque vivre sépare . . . (375).

With these words we think back to Dora's remark on his love, " . . . un vaste amour sans appui, . . . un amour malheureux . . . . C'est l'amour absolu, la joie pure et solitaire, . . (351).

The Grand Duchess is unable to recognize this "love" which Yanek expresses. As he elaborates, his love for Dora and humanity crystalize joining in a whole in the following speech:

> Mais ne peut-on déjà imaginer que deux êtres renonçant à toute joie, s'aiment dans la douleur sans pouvoir s'assigner d'autre rendez-vous que celui de la douleur? Ne peut on imaginer que la même corde unisse alors ces deux êtres (376)?

We understand now the note which precedes the play, a quote from Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet (IV, 5): "O love! O life! Not life but love in death."

Life and love as it is offered to us by life are intolerable for Kaliayev. How can one truly love another individual when within the framework of a society men are being persecuted by other men? Kaliayev's conclusion is that one cannot love in a terrestrial sense under these circumstances. His solution: to give his life for a greater more abstract love, an idea. This idea holds that if he gives his life for the betterment of all men, his act of murder is justified and in a sense he has consumated this humanitarian love. It is in this sense that he is able to join his love for Dora to that of all men. Thus he resolves the conflict

between a personal self-centered tenderness which he feels for Dora and his desire to serve his fellow man.

Failing to sway Kaliayev, Skouratov's last resort is a threat to announce to the newspapers Yanek's full repentance thus leading his comrades to believe that he has betrayed them. Kaliayev's response is short. "Vous ne connaissez pas leur amour" (377).

Act Five, although in a sense anticlimactic, retains the dramatic tension of Act Four in the experience of Dora as she learns of Kaliayev's execution and thus his fidelity. Voinov has returned to the group motivated by Yanek's trial speech in which he justifies his decision. "Si je me suis trouvé à la hauteur de la protestation humaine contre la violence, que la mort couronne mon oeuvre par la pureté de l'idée" (381-382).

Dora, full of bitterness and remorse, shares this terrible paradox which Yanek must carry to his death. Her only wish is that the execution move swiftly.

But is death the only answer to the predicament? Dora thinks not when she exclaims:

> Si la seule solution est la mort, nous ne sommes pas sur la bonne voi. La bonne voie est celle qui mène à la vie, au soleil (383).

This tension proves heavy to bear and Dora is full of doubt. "Il va mourir. Il est mort peut-être déjà pour que les autres vivent. Ah! Boria, et si les autres ne vivaient pas? Et s'il mourait pour rien" (383)?

We are conscious here of the figurative death of Dora with Yanek's approaching execution. "J'ai si froid que j'ai l'impression d'être déjà morte" (384).

As with Yanek, the doubts and contradiction of Dora's dilemma press down upon her, warping her previous vision of life.

> Mais c'est avec un coeur joyeux que j'ai choisi cela et c'est d'un coeur triste que je m'y maintiens. . . . C'est facile, c'est tellement plus facile de mourir de ses contradictions que de les vivre (385).

Finally Stepan arrives revealing Kaliayev's execution. Recounting his death in minute detail, Stepan reassures Dora of Kaliayev's constancy to the very end. During the four hour wait for the execution he speaks not a word.

Dora, joining the ranks of the just assassins, realizes that her role as a woman is finished. There remains the terrible joy of Yanek's sacrifice. In bitter irony, she cries:

> Yanek n'est plus un meurtrier. . . . Il a suffi d'un bruit terrible et le voilà retourné à la joie de l'enfance. Vous souvenez-vous de son rire? Il riait sans raison parfois. Comme il était jeune! Il doit rire maintenant. Il doit rire, la face contre la terre (392)!

Accepting her plea to throw the next bomb, Annenkov recognizes that she is useless now except to follow in Kaliayev's footsteps. There remains but death for her. "Je la lancerai. Et plus tard, dans une nuit froide . . . Yanek! Une nuit froide, et la même corde! Tout sera plus facile maintenant" (393). Dora's final statement witnesses her renouncement of her love for Yanek turning it to the

group. Her identity and personal desires disappear and she functions as a part of the revolutionary whole.

Of all the works of Albert Camus, Les Justes seems to have complied most closely with his expressed ideal of "une tension dramatique" obtained by classic means, "c'est-à-dire l'affrontement de personnages égaux en force et en raison" (1826). Kaliayev carries this contradiction to the limit, his death.

Turning again to "Les Meurtriers Délicats," we find the author's direct comment on this contradiction inherent in "L'organisation de Combat."

> Un si grand oubli de soi-même allié à un si profond souci de la vie des autres permet de supposer que ces meurtriers délicats ont vécu le destin révolté dans sa contradiction la plus extreme. On peut croire qu'eux aussi, tout en reconnaissant le caractère inévitable de la violence, avouaient cependant qu'elle est injustifiée. Nécessaire et inexcusable, c'est ainsi que le meurtre leur apparaissait, . . . Et dès lors, incapables de justifier ce qu'ils trouvaient pourtant nécessaire, ils ont imaginé de se donner eux-mêmes en justification et de répondre à la question qu'ils se posaient par le sacrifice personnel. Finalement, le meurtre s'est identifié en eux avec le suicide. Une vie est alors payée par une autre vie. . . . Cette contradiction ne se résoudra pour eux qu'au moment dernier. Solitude et chevalerie, déréliction et espoir ne seront surmontés que dans la libre acceptation de la mort. Mais c'est alors la paix étrange des victoires définitives (1823-24-25).

Although certainly not as pessimistic as Caligula or Le Malentendu, Les Justes does end with a negative conclusion. The revolt again ends in the death of the protagonist as in the other works we've analyzed. Is this the only answer to the absurd? Is this the only possible

resolution between revolt and liberty? The answer to this question is found in the words of Dora in the final act: "Si la seule solution est la mort, nous ne sommes pas sur la bonne voie. La bonne voie est celle qui mène à la vie, aux soleil" (383).

We may conclude that this is not the only answer and that Camus remains faithful to "le soleil" of his fatherland and the road that leads to life not death. We shall take another look at the image of this sun in the conclusion.

There are certainly, however, some positive elements involved in this contradiction. One is the nature of the revolt which springs forth in the tension, an inherent part of it. " . . . les révoltés de 1905 nous enseignent, . . . que la révolte ne peut conduire à la consolation et au confort dogmatique" (1824-1825).

> On a fait du progrès depuis, il est vrai, et la haine qui pesait sur ces âmes exceptionnelles comme une intolérable souffrance, est devenue un système confortable.. Raison de plus pour évoquer ces grandes ombres, leur juste révolte, leur fraternité difficile, les efforts démesurés qu'elles firent pour se mettre en accord avec le meurtre--et pour dire ainsi où est notre fidelité (1826).

Admitting that their only apparent victory is a triumph over solitude in their fidelity to each other, Camus demonstrates here a certain limit to the revolt to which the just assassins remained faithful. This is contrasted to modern revolution in which these limitations are brushed aside and the fidelity betrayed along with the revolt.

Perhaps the most positive truth which emerges from Les Justes is this "mean" inherent in the limits attached to the revolt. Camus stresses this point in the following comment:

> Mais il serait faux d'en conclure que tout s'équilibre et qu'à l'égard du problème qui est posé ici, je recommande l'inaction. J'ai seulement voulu montrer que l'action elle-même avait des limites. Il n'est pas de bonne et juste action que celle qui reconnaît ces limites et qui, s'il lui faut les franchir, accepte au moins la mort. Notre monde nous montre aujourd'hui une face répugnante, justement parce qu'il est fabriqué par des hommes qui s'accordent le droit de franchir ces limites, et d'abord de tuer les autres, sans jamais payer de leur personne. C'est ainsi que la justice d'aujourd'hui sert d'alibi aux assassins de toute justice (1826-1827).

Albert Camus holds up here for all to see the example of the "meurtriers délicats" as a kind of guidepost, a point of reference for modern revolutionaries.

> Aux hommes de 1903, du moins, les doutes n'ont jamais manqué. Le plus grand hommage que nous puissions leur rendre est de dire que nous ne saurions, en 1947, leur poser une seule question qu'ils ne se soient déjà posée et à laquelle, dans leur vie ou par leur mort, ils n'aient en partie répondu" (1819).

We turn now to the second preoccupation of Camus in the work, that is the love of Kaliayev and Dora and its paradoxical union with an ideal love of humanity. It is questionable how successful Camus was in integrating this theme into the general context of the historical situation involved, that is the problem of the revolt and its limitation.

First of all, Camus seems to have succeeded in rendering most believable the love between Dora and Yanek and its conflict with a pure love for humanity. Witness the love scene between Dora and Kaliayev analyzed on pages 93 to 95.

Germaine Brée in an interesting note on Les Justes concludes that Camus followed Savinkov's Souvenirs d'un terroriste[35] too closely in creating the scenario and dialogue of Les Justes. According to Brée the characters suffer as a consequence.

> Although Camus's characters are essentially the same as Savinkov's (except that Camus tightens the link between Dora and Kaliayev), because of the tenseness of the dramatic action something of their flesh and blood reality is sacrificed with the weight of their everyday personality and of their past. They tend to become voices, not human beings, to designate positions taken, parts recited.[36]

Camus rejects just such a criticism as witnessed by Quilliot. Quilliot, in referring to Camus' description of the drama of Dora and Yanek as "le drame d'une époque," quotes Camus directly.

> On nous reproche de faire des hommes abstraits. Mais c'est que l'homme qui nous sert de modèle est abstrait d'ignorer l'amour, mais c'est que l'homme (qui nous sert de modèle) est incapable d'amour, etc., etc., . . . Le vieux militant communiste qui voit ce qu'il voit est ne s'habitue pas: "Je ne veux pas guérir de mon coeur (1816).

But the mixing of the two themes previously mentioned does seem to weaken the play structurally. Camus' effort to

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[35] Payot, (Paris, 1931), pp. 112-166.

[36] Brée, p. 161.

remain faithful to the historical situation, thus dedicating the final acts strictly to the tension of the revolt and the trials of Kaliayev, seems to have sacrificed the tragic potential inherent in the love between Dora and Yanek.

Brée suggests this structural defect when she cites:

> Structurally, the play would have been stronger if Camus, instead of following the successive episodes of the murder, had concentrated our attention on one of these episodes, focusing the conflict either on Kaliayev alone or on both Dora and Kaliayev. . . . Indeed both plot and characters suffer from the episodic nature of the action as Camus faithfully follows its outer line of development (162).

It appears that in marked contrast to his previous work L'Etat de Siège, Camus has to a certain measure succeeded in an effort to depersonalize the dramatic creation of Les Justes.

The weaknesses which we observed in Le Malentendu and L'Etat de Siège, in which the metaphysical concerns of the dramatist emerge and dominate the character e.g. Martha and Diego, become less apparent in Les Justes. Dora in our eyes is most credible, as is Yanek, especially in the confrontations in prison.

CONCLUSION

Turning now directly to the goal of this paper, we will retrace briefly the absurd as experienced by each of the major characters. Secondly, we will consider their method of coming to terms with the absurd. After a look at this confrontation, we may attempt a certain synthesis and indicate some final conclusions concerning all four plays.

Caligula and Le Malentendu comprised for Camus what he termed "un théâtre de l'impossible." That is, the impossible character of Caligula and the impossible situation of Le Malentendu.

We have noted that the absurd dominates both plays, in the first instance impersonated by the mad emperor who decides to push the absurd condition to an extreme. In Le Malentendu it is less apparent, but none the less emerges in the tragic series of misunderstandings which lead to the deaths of Jan, his mother, and Martha. Here the absurd takes the form of circumstances or destiny.

The characters, although in the final analysis responsible for their dilemma, were also the victims of several pure mishaps in which chance played a major role. They weren't completely conscious of the absurd or the possibilities for action which it reveals.

In Caligula the absurd condition was intellectualized by the protaganist. In other words, Caligula, fully aware of the absurd and therefore of the resultant choices open to him, chose to push the absurd to its extreme instead of fighting it. It became a form of intellectual exercise.

We observed in the Mythe de Sisyphe, that when a man chooses to accept the absurd as valid, a certain freedom appears, opening new roads of possible action. This is a result of a leveling process of morality and ethics inherent in the absurdity. This liberty is essential to and a part of the revolt dealt with more completely in the latter two theatrical works of Camus.

The liberty chosen by Martha and Caligula, a murderous one, ended in their own deaths by suicide.

In both cases the protagonist himself observes that this choice was not the right one and this the author confirms. The absurd which dominates the first two works emerges into revolt but an unjust one.

In the second half of Camus' theater, it is a consideration of the revolt itself which predominates as well as concern for its form. In other words the "how" of the revolt emerges. The liberty, which we observed in the first two works to be an essential quality of the absurd man's experience, now takes the spotlight.

Diego's essentially tragic position is the terrible choice between fidelity to the revolt and therefore to his

fellow man, thus sacrificing himself, or stopping short of the supreme sacrifice and betraying his commitment to his fellow man as well as a corresponding honor. For Diego, the question is simply of remaining faithful to the revolt and its honor in the face of death.

Kaliayev's position is similar but of a more sophisticated nature. His paradox also comprises death as a component of fidelity to the revolt. But of more importance is the emphasis on the kind of revolt, and above all its liberty whose justification entails a form of suicide.

Another point is the fact that revolt dominates Les Justes whereas it does not emerge until the final part of L'Etat de Siège.

With Les Justes there is a dramatic tension charged with moral implications also true of L'Etat de Siège, but not as "vraisemblable."

As noted above Camus is especially concerned here with the form of revolt, the how.

In this sense, the latter half of Camus' theater is concerned with the possible, the first half with the impossible. The second half begins with a given recognition of the absurd condition, but deals principally with the revolt and its form, whereas the first half remains at the level of the absurd reality, never rising above it. The first half is a negative cry against the absurd (a form of nihilism) the second a positive cry for (in favor of man) a form of humanism and optimism.

Although Diego testifies that there are limits to oppression beyond which man rises up in revolt, in Les Justes the experience of the rebel is more advanced. It is he who is faced with the choice of accepting certain limitations or assuming the role of master against whom he revolted. It is here that the revolt will be followed or pushed to its natural conclusion which is revolution and a renewed oppression.

Thus a basic value emerges in L'Etat de Siège and dominates Les Justes. This is a human nature which all men share and which the revolt reveals and defends. It is the recognition of this basic human value which causes Diego to revolt.

In Les Justes it is in favor of this intrinsic value that Kaliayev limits this revolt. In this way he remains loyal to man, its source of illumination.

This is the same self-evident assumption for which Camus declared his support in the Lettres à un ami allemand.

A final characteristic and one which proves to be a basic concern in all of Camus' works, is moderation. The one mark or trend which dominates Camus' original theater is an evolution towards a definite emphasis on "mesure" in the liberty of revolt.

In Caligula and Le Malentendu it was absent or not emphasized. We saw it emerge in L'Etat de Siege when Diego declares a limit to the tyranny of the scourge.

And it dominates and is the major motivating force of Les Justes.

Let us take a closer look at this important quality for Camus which emerged at the very beginning of the absurd experience and which never ceases to influence his writings.

Camus' very first work, a group of essays entitled L'Envers et L'Endroit, was printed for the second time in 1958 since the first edition was quite limited. In the preface to this second edition, the author expresses for us not only the dominant theme of these essays, but the very truth which never ceases to influence his writings:

> Pour corriger une indifférence naturelle, je fus placé à mi-distance de la misère et du soleil. La misère m'empêcha de croire que tout est bien sous le soleil et dans l'histoire; le soleil m'apprit que l'histoire n'est pas tout. Changer la vie, oui mais non le monde dont je faisais ma divinité.[37]

Quilliot expresses the author's fidelity to this balance which he inherited from his native Algeria when he states:

> L'équilibre est au commencement. Toute l'oeuvre est d'une rare continuité. De 1937 à 1953, il n'est guère pour Camus que deux problèmes, le suicide et le meurtre, qu'on ramènerait aisément à l'unité. Il n'est aussi que quelques thèmes qui vont par couples: La prison ou l'échafaud et la mer ou le soleil, la solitude ou l'exil et l'amour ou la fraternite, la passion et l'indifférence l'innocence et la morale, la démesure et les limites.[38]

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[37]Albert Camus, L'Envers et L'Endroit (Paris, 1958), p. 14.

[38]Roger Quilliot, La Mer et Les Prisons Essai Sur Albert Camus (Paris, 1956), p. 265.

We must again turn to L'Homme révolté to observe the author's effort to express in a rational form this "mean" which we have uncovered. It is the lands which surround the Mediterranean especially the Greek civilization to which Camus turns to discover this truth, "the golden mean" of the ancient Greeks.

Here is how the author characterizes this "pensée grecque" which he terms "La pensée du midi":

> Ce contrepoids, [to the revolutionary mind] cet esprit qui mesure la vie, est celui-là même qui anime la longue tradition de ce qu'on peut appeler la pensée solaire et où, depuis les Grecs, la nature a toujours été équilibrée au devenir.[39]

The Greek ideal of preexisting values contrasted to modern historical determinism (where the values do not precede the action but follow it) we see in the following words of Camus:

> Mais l'absolutisme historique, malgré ses triomphes, n'a jamais cessé de se heurter à une exigence invincible de la nature humaine dont la Méditerranée, ou l'intelligence est soeur de la dure lumière, garde le secret (359).

Camus shows us that measure and revolt are simply two sides of one coin:

> La mesure n'est pas le contraire de la révolte. C'est la révolte qui est la mesure, qui l'ordonne, la défend et la recrée à travers l'histoire et ses désordres. L'origine même de cette valeur nous garantit qu'elle ne peut être que déchirée. La mesure, née de la révolte, ne peut se vivre que par la révolte. Elle est un conflit constant,

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[39]H.R., p. 357.

> perpétuellement suscité et maitrisé par l'intelligence. Elle ne triomphe ni de l'impossible ni de l'abîme. Elle s'équilibre à eux (360-361).

After considering Camus' "mesure," another fundamental difference may be seen in the contrast between this value and Sartre's existentialist philosophy. For Camus revolt is innocent whereas revolution historically has been guilty since it betrays the very essence of revolt, man.

Cruickshank contrasts this viewpoint with that of Sartre in the following note:

> Sartre, in his essay on Baudelaire, takes the opposite view to Camus on the question of the relative merits of revolt and revolution. The aim of the metaphysical rebel, he says, is to keep intact the abuse from which he suffers so as to be able to continue his rebellion against them. The revolutionary, on the other hand, is actively concerned to change the world of which he disapproves. He seeks future values by inventing them and fighting for them here and now. From Sartre's point of view Camus' preference for revolt over revolution is sentimentality, ineffectualness and "bad faith" in the existentialist meaning of the term (103).

Again regarding this equilibrium, it may also be observed in the "Mythe" where a fidelity to the absurd condition itself required this measure. "Il y a ainsi des dieux de lumière et des idoles de boue. Mais c'est le chemin moyen qui mène aux visages de l'homme qu'il s'agit de trouver" (139).

But man for Camus never loses these temptations of "all or nothing" which would destroy this balance. "Quoi que nous fassions, la démesure gardera toujours sa place dans le coeur de l'homme, à l'endroit de la solitude."[40]

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[40]"La pensée de midi," H.R., 361.

We witnessed this in the final words of Caligula, "Je suis encore vivant."

Camus again and again uses the sun and its light as symbols of this measure which is the "pensée de Midi." As with all the major symbols of his work, they can be traced back to his early writings. This fidelity to the light of the south appears in the essays entitled L'Eté which came out in 1954, paralleling the publishing of L'Homme révolté. In the essay "L'Enigme," Camus states:

> Je n'ai jamais cessé, pour ma part, de lutter contre ce déshonneur. . . . Au plus noir de notre nihilism, j'ai cherché seulement des raisons de dépasser ce nihilism. . . . par fidélité instinctive à une lumière où je suis né et où, depuis des millénaires, les hommes ont appris à saluer la vie jusque dans la souffrance. . . . Au centre de notre oeuvre, fut-elle noire, rayonne un soleil inépuisable, le même qui crie aujourd'hui à travers la plaine et les collines.[41]

There remains the second objective of this paper, a consideration of Camus' ideal of an esthetic unity or synthesis in which form and content are one.

We have observed the problem which Camus confronted, a long process of depersonalization. He was not always successful and his metaphysical ideas often imposed themselves on his work. This proved to be the case with Martha in Le Malentendu and certainly Diego in L'Etat de Siège. Camus remarks in Quilliot: "Depuis mes premiers livres (Noces) jusqu'à La Corde [Camus' original title for Les Justes] et

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[41]Albert Camus, L'Eté (Paris, 1954), p. 133-134.

L'Homme révolté, tout mon effort a été en réalité pour me dépersonnaliser, . ." (1817).

Camus seems to have been most successful when he dealt with human relationships in human terms as we observed with several of the female characters as well as with Caligula and perhaps to a lesser extent, Kaliayev. His theater breaks down dramatically, however, when he deals with philosophical or metaphysical symbolism. This was obvious in Le Malentendu and L'Etat de Siège.

For Camus, stylisation created problems when he moved from the more lyrical personal expressions of a play like Caligula, in which he seemed most at ease, to the collective nature of a work like L'Etat de Siège. It must be remembered that his goals were ambitious ones, for example the use of multiple forms in L'Etat de Siège. Although Le Malentendu does not treat the group the collectivity, the author's desire to express the abstractions of the absurd harm the work as a dramatic creation.

The intellectual forces at work in Camus' dramatic art, at the expense of individual or psychological fidelity, is well described by Brée when she says:

> The stage in Camus's hands, therefore, becomes the "décor" of a mental universe, and the characters that live their short lives upon it are reasons, emotions, forces, inner and outer attitudes, which try to impose their own form upon the play, creating the situation and the inner dynamism of the action. Allegorical in nature, these two plays [L'Etat de Siège and Les Justes], have very little connection with the current "well-made" psychological or realistic play, and yet by their very

> realistic technique they remain outside the realm of the so-called poetic drama (176-177).

Pointing out that the characters in L'Etat de Siège lose their personality and turn into abstract virtues or vices, Brée states:

> . . . the spectator must accept the characters not as personalities but as abstract forces incarnate, . . . They are there in their positive forms: courage in Diego, pure love in Victoria, for example; and in their negative form they are perverted incarnations: law without justice in the judge, government without power in the governor, power without humanity in the Plague (176).

Camus' goal, as we saw in the introduction to Les Justes, was the search for and realization of a style which would accomplish his dream of the creation of a modern tragedy. The style and content would merge as one in the equilibrium and tension which characterizes the classic tragedy.

The closest the author seems to have come in achieving this goal is Les Justes where he achieves a definite tension between the universal and the individual in regards to content. It has been criticized however for unevenness in style and an abstraction in the characters.

We may conclude that what Camus has accomplished in dramatizing his metaphysical concerns in the theater, he lost in the corresponding diminuation in dramatic style.

To sum up the preceding synthesis which terminates this analysis, Brisville states it well in the following words:

> Da sa fidélité à une terre où l'excès est de règle à sa croyance en une instinctive mesure humaine, du besoin d'épuiser le champ du possible à la morale des limites, l'oeuvre d'Albert Camus s'inscrit encore ici dans son mouvement double et son balancement profond.[42]

In concluding this paper, it is important to note that any particular work or group of works of an author, any one style among many styles must be considered as one view of the whole of the work, one side of the pyramid which is his work. They all help illuminate this whole. This is true of the works of Albert Camus. The author asserts this when he states:

> Je ne crois pas, en ce qui me concerne, aux livres isolés. Chez certains écrivains, il me semble que leurs oeuvres forment un tout où chacune s'éclaire par les autres, et où toutes se regardent.[43]

In choosing the original theater of Albert Camus, we have thus attempted to analyze and describe one side of the pyramid, to give one glimpse of the whole.

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[42] Brisville, p. 38.

[43] Ibid., p. 255.

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