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THE LIMITS OF REASON AND THE AWARENESS OF ABSURDITY IN VOLTAIRE AND CAMUS
Volume I
by

PATRICK GERARD HENRY

A Thesis Submitted In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Thesis Director's Signature:

Houston, Texas
May 1974
"...il est beau d'écrire ce qu'on pense, c'est le privilège de l'homme."

Voltaire, *Canide*

"My own conviction is that we can better understand our present hopes and also our frustrations by scrutinizing the mind of the Enlightenment at work."

Arthur M. Wilson, *Diderot*
# DISSESSATION OUTLINE

**THE LIMITS OF REASON AND THE AWARENESS OF ABSURDITY IN VOLTAIRE AND CAMUS**

## INTRODUCTION

1

## PART ONE: ANTI-RATIONALISM AND THE LIMITS OF REASON

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INTRODUCTION
INTRODUCTION

If one views Voltaire as a traditionalist and Albert Camus as a thoroughly modern thinker who broke all ties with the past, the names Voltaire and Camus will immediately evoke dissimilarities. Yet, Voltaire was constantly disassociating himself philosophically from his predecessors, while Camus often found himself rooted in traditional notions. Almost two hundred years separate Candide and L'Etranger, but the men who created these works were not only wrestling with the same philosophical problems, they were formulating similar world visions.

Time lends new perspectives to both literary and philosophical criticism. It took a full ten years, for example, to finally and rightfully separate Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus, who had been linked together from the early 1940's in the then vague "existential" movement. How much more time and sifting is needed to adequately assess whole periods, and then, perhaps, even to relate them, when, at first glance, they might have seemed quite disparate. From a strictly historical point of view, too, one must be cautious in reading the criticism of one age made by the age that immediately succeeds it, for often that criticism is put forth in the heat of battle, and time alone will allot the distance necessary for objectivity. Such was the case in the evaluation of the Enlightenment by the Romantics, an assessment that Peter Gay esteems "a myth . . . which [still] haunts our estimation of the Enlightenment to this day."
The view of the 18th century (promulgated originally by the Romantics) as a purely intellectual, rationalist era is an erroneous one. If the complexity of individual authors is so great that they escape facile categorization, how much more so are periods themselves, populated with so many brilliant minds engaged in intellectual activity of such diversity. It is a critical commonplace to refer to the Enlightenment as "The Age of Reason," but that aspect of the Enlightenment—although valid when understood correctly—will not be the predominant one dealt with in this study. Modern critics of the Enlightenment concern themselves with the deep-seated complexity of the age and with the crises that the philosophes faced when they tore down the barriers of traditional methods. One of the key crises that the philosophes faced was the crisis of reason, and the reality of that crisis, as we shall see, precludes any single-edged oversimplification applied to the Enlightenment in that respect.

The length of this study can be partially explained by the perspective adopted, for it is one that attempts to be both diachronic and synchronic. The first two parts compare certain philosophical notions in Voltaire and Camus with respect to their existence in time as aspects of the general development of human thought. Thus we present, in the first chapter, the anti-rationalist position of Voltaire seen in the light of contemporary empiricism and against the backdrop of seventeenth century Rationalism as it is defined in the works of Descartes, Leibniz, Spinoza and Malebranche. The psychological anti-rationalism of the French Enlightenment too is seen mainly as a reaction against the rationalist theories of the previous century.
In the second chapter, the development of anti-rationalism is traced through the works of the anti-rationalists of "la belle époque" and the pre-World War II novelist-philosophers. In addition, Camus' own position is viewed in the light of contemporary epistemology with particular reference to the phenomenologists and the existentialists. Once more, Camus' anti-rationalist stance is distinguished from earlier forms, notably that of Henri Bergson.

Voltaire's refusal to abandon reason is developed in Chapter 3 by a comparative study of those persons whom he criticized for doing just that. Thus, the proper "use" of reason, according to Voltaire, is partially defined by his particular criticism of the "abuse" of reason in both Pascal and Rousseau, whose places in the history of anti-rationalism are briefly delineated. Finally, a definition of reason for the 18th century is offered and contrasted with the very different notion of reason held by the 17th century.

The final chapter of the second part depicts Camus' refusal to abandon reason by a study of his critique of Kierkegaard, Chestov and Jaspers who, according to him, have all left the domain of reason by assorted leaps of faith. In this section, Camus' attack on the surrealists is also portrayed in an historical light.

The double-edged evaluation of human reason in Voltaire and Camus is particularly interesting and perhaps partially explained chronologically by the fact that Voltaire emerged from a highly rationalist period and both lived and actively took part in the commencement of the empirical age, whereas Camus came out of a highly non-rationalist era (romanticism--
surrealism—existentialism) and found himself at odds with their excesses. Both men experienced tension between these two polarities and sought a moderate position that lucidly viewed the excesses of rationalism and antirationalism as well as the beneficial function of rationality.

In the main, the much longer third part, while it does not totally ignore all diachronic aspects, is basically of a synchronic nature. Here the comparative analysis is outside of the religious, historical and social circumstances in which the works were created. Abstraction is made of all particular historical circumstances in this comparison and the general dimension treated independent of the historical perspective. Not only is our reading of L'Étranger based exclusively on ideas developed by Camus in Le Mythe de Sisyphe, but Candide, although it appeared 183 years before Le Mythe de Sisyphe, is approached solely in the light of Camus' theoretical essay. In this section, it is a question of universal literature and of a concept of man which, while it exists in time, transcends any particular time and is consequently always relevant.

In Chapter 5, a definition of the absurd is extracted from Le Mythe de Sisyphe and compared and contrasted with the notion that emanates from the text of L'Étranger. The absurd is studied here on both the metaphysical and social planes and Meursault is compared to the homo absurdus and étranger of Le Mythe de Sisyphe. In addition, the themes of habit, fatality and play—the latter notion based on the definition of play by J. Huizinga in his Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture—are analyzed, along with the style of the work, as reinforcements of the more encompassing theme of absurdity.
The road to *Candide* is explored in the opening section of the sixth chapter. Then absurdity in *Candide*, at both the metaphysical and social levels, is elucidated through an analysis of Camus' notion as it appears in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*. Candide, too, is compared to the *homo absurdus* and *stranger* of Camus' theoretical essay. Voltaire's technique of absurdity by juxtaposition is illustrated by a symbolic perusal of the Westphalia and Eldorado anecdotes.

Finally, a whole network of convergent themes—*homo viator*, time, *homo ludens*, puppets, passivity, fatality and pace, all brilliantly buttressed by the inimitable style of the author—are shown to strengthen the major leitmotif of absurdity which undulates throughout the pages of the tale.
PART I

ANTI-RATIONALISM AND THE LIMITS OF REASON
"Il s'agit de savoir pour nous si l'homme, sans le secours de l'éternel ou de la pensée rationaliste peut créer à lui seul ses propres valeurs."

Camus

"Ce qui caractérise notre siècle, ce n'est peut-être pas tant d'avoir à reconstruire le monde que d'avoir à le repenser."

Camus
PART ONE

ANTI-RATIONALISM AND THE LIMITS OF REASON

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Chapter I

Voltaire

A. Definition

In the true philosophical sense of the term, rationalism, frequently termed classical rationalism, emphasizes the power of *a priori* reason to obtain substantial truths about the Creator and the human condition. When Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Malebranche and other systematic thinkers of the 17th and early 18th centuries are referred to as rationalists, it is in this sense of the term and it is understood that this notion implicitly connotes a radical contrast between reason and experience as well as a belief, to a greater or lesser degree, in some innate theory of knowledge. Although it is sometimes difficult to clearly separate rationalism and empiricism since many philosophers show tendencies in both directions, one can nevertheless safely hold that rationalists are those philosophers who stress reasoning or thought as the essential factor in knowledge while empiricists stress the role of experience and the senses in the acquisition of knowledge. Descartes, for whom the mind is equipped with faculties before experience occurs, is the classic example of the former, while Locke, who claims that the mind begins its operations only after being furnished with sensations or "ideas" by the senses, represents the latter. Though there are various degrees of rationalism and empiricism, "all rationalists hold that the mind has the power to know with certainty various truths about the universe which
outward observation can never give us.”⁷ All rationalists unequivocally claim that we possess some of this so-called a priori knowledge whereas all empiricists categorically deny a priori knowledge. The rationalist maintains that the foundation of knowledge consists of a set of self-evident first principles—the universal a priori principles—known intuitively from which he deduces other truths, while the empiricist rejects "the conception of knowledge as a closed deductive system, based on fixed a priori principles.”⁸ In the strict sense of the term then, rationalism is opposed to empiricism as a priori reason is opposed to experience, and in this vital dichotomy the "philosophes" in general and Voltaire in particular fall into the latter category, being both pro-empiricist and anti-rationalist in their approach to epistemology.

To the extent that the term "rationalism" implies a deep-seated belief that reason can penetrate and solve all the philosophical dilemmas inherent in the human condition, the 18th century which insisted upon human ignorance and the impossibility of attaining certainty in many domains is essentially an age of anti-rationalism. The tendency to examine the 18th century through the eyes of the Romantics distorts our perspective and helps to perpetuate the myth of the Enlightenment that has been bequeathed to us. Peter Gay points out that "this myth of a prosy, presumptuous precision, of a cold rationalism, was invented by the German Romantics, although Burke had his share in it, and it haunts our estimation of the Enlightenment to this day.”⁹ Far from subscribing to the rationalist unbounded faith in reason, the "philosophes" attacked this notion and ended by severely limiting the efficacy of this human
faculty.

The revolt against rationalism in the French Enlightenment took two closely related forms. On the one hand, "it rejected the assertion that reason is the sole, or even the dominant, spring of action" and, on the other, it denied that all mysteries in the world can be penetrated by inquiry."¹⁰ "The claim for the omniscience of criticism," continues Gay, "was in no way a claim for the omnipotence of reason."¹¹ This is an important distinction for while the "philosophes" insisted that all fields be open to rational criticism and scrutiny, they did not maintain that everything could be known or mastered by rationality. This is the point of cleavage between the rationalists of the 17th century who did in fact believe that reason could master and even systematize reality and the more modest empiricists of the Enlightenment who subjected everything to rational scrutiny but who recognized the limits of rationality. The Enlightenment, while definitely not an Age of Unreason, was an age of Anti-Rationalism that attacked the absolute notion of reason held by its immediate predecessors.

B. Climate

The shift from rationalism to empiricism in France approximately coincides with the beginning of the 18th century. One of the major distinctions between the rationalist 17th century and the predominantly empirical 18th century is seen in the breakdown of systematic thought. The essence of the philosophical quest for the abstract rationalists of the 17th century was precisely the creation of a coherent metaphysical
system which would adequately explain the real world. These grandiose constructions, deduced from intuitively grasped *a priori* notions, existed "in the realm of eternal verities of those truths held in common by the human and the divine mind."\(^{12}\) For the more experimentally thinkers of the 18th century, the abstract structures of Descartes, Spinoza and Malebranche came tumbling down in the face of reality. Philosophical trends had by this time so substantially changed that in the minds of the analytical empiricists of the age the sacrosanct system had virtually become impotent. The philosophical system was no longer able to contain all of reality, no longer able to squeeze "the real" into a preconceived notion of reality. The men of the Enlightenment considered these systematic constructions of the previous century to be nothing more than intellectual illusions. Vowing not to become, in their turn, the dupes of their imagination, they sacrificed systematic completeness for empirical facts and ultimately rejected the "esprit de système" of the 17th century replacing it by their own "esprit systématique."\(^{13}\)

One can readily perceive in the critique of rationalism made by the men of the Enlightenment that the "philosophes" of the 18th century preferred analysis to hypothesis. They banished innate ideas in favor of experimentation and in true empirical fashion, they shifted the emphasis from the general to the particular and from principles to facts. As the proscription of the "esprit de système" became more firm "the spirit of patient empirical inquiry continued its triumphant march in science."\(^{14}\) A Baconian aura surrounded scientific investigation where experimentation guarded against error at the same time that it helped to reach a "definite
result" rather than a "hypothetical conclusion." Reason was brought down from its high rationalist throne and rigorously applied to the experimental sciences, thus precluding the automatic acceptance of the postulates of the past.

The men of the Enlightenment, while following Pope's dictum that "the proper study of Mankind is Man," added a nuance of their own. They placed the emphasis on "man" and not on "Man" for they attempted to reduce the abstract to the concrete and the theoretical to the practical. In this respect Roger Mercier notes in *La réhabilitation de la nature humaine* that the 18th century "rompt avec l'image d'un homme abstrait, réduit à l'état de concept, défini par ses relations soit avec Dieu son Créateur, soit avec la raison universelle. L'homme n'est plus considéré dans son essence abstraite, mais dans son existence concrète ... la réalité vivante de l'individu se substitue à l'idée d'homme."17

One is able to attain a still finer appreciation of the philosophical progress from rationalism to empiricism that characterizes the Enlightenment by analyzing the ambivalent attitude that the "philosophes" maintained *vis-a-vis* Descartes. Descartes had not only suggested that the intellectual progress of humanity was in great part contingent upon its ability to liberate itself from the sterile influence of the past but by his method he indicated precisely how men could rid themselves of prejudice and corruption. In this sense, despite the numerous differences between Descartes and the men of the Enlightenment, the latter remain his heirs for in their attempt to free the human mind from the shackles of tradition, they too waged a long and difficult war against the noxious
authority of the past. The influence of Descartes upon the "philosophes" seems even greater when one considers his constant effort to mark the limitations of the human mind. In addition to this fresh attitude of mind in regard to accepted prejudices, authority and tradition in general, what the "philosophes" savored primarily in Descartes was his method; for they, too, were seeking a basis for reliable knowledge. They overtly rejected his system but adhered to his pattern of methodical doubt. Seeing themselves primarily as empiricists and not rationalists, they simultaneously developed the empirical possibilities of his thought and cast aside the whirlpools, the self-evident ideas and all the remaining speculative impediments. Ironically enough, it was Descartes' own innovation that ultimately accounted for his rejection by the "philosophes" who, employing his methodical doubt, his clear and orderly analysis and his reliance on fact, were compelled to reject his system. In the final analysis, one is tempted to say that Descartes was not "Cartesian" enough to be accepted by the men of the Enlightenment. Descartes, who had successfully disposed of scholasticism, was now himself banished. As Voltaire has written in numerous works, Descartes had discovered the follies of the ancients but had the misfortune of replacing their follies with his own.

It was consequently to the British empiricists that the "philosophes" turned and John Locke, in large measure due to Voltaire, became the dominant philosophical influence on the men of the French Enlightenment. Descartes was exiled, as Voltaire was so fond of repeating, for having written the "roman" of the soul, while Locke was warmly
embraced for having traced its "histerie." The metaphysical "novels" of the previous age sinned grievously against the criteria of experience and experimentation established by the new epistemology. The abstract reasoning patterns of the 17th century, oriented toward the celestial, gave place to empirical reason which exclusively emphasized the terrestrial. Not only did the "philosophes" refuse to weave intricate metaphysical systems of their own, but they also felt morally obliged to demolish these fallacious fabrications of old. Before they would be able to make positive advances for humanity in the present, they would have to undo the evil done in the past; in short "destruction had become the precondition of construction."18 And in their efforts to construct upon the ashes of the past, Locke's theory of sensationalism, Newton's analytical method and Baconian experimentation were their guideposts.

C. Voltaire: spokesman of French Anti-rationalism and Continental Empiricism

No one epitomized these trends more than the great eclectic Voltaire. As ironic as it may seem, since Voltaire is commonly depicted as a man desperately and futilely clinging to the past, no one more than he was a man of his age. Ernst Cassirer has perceptively noted that:

The true nature of Enlightenment thinking cannot be seen in its purest and clearest form where it is formulated into particular doctrines, axioms, and theorems; but rather where it is in the process, where it is doubting and seeking, tearing down and building up.19
This description of Enlightenment thought is tailor-made for Voltaire, whose name itself seems to immediately evoke movement, whose impetuous temperament has already lent itself to the title of a work about himself.\textsuperscript{20}

Voltaire incarnated the evolution from speculation to experimentation, from rationalism to empiricism, from \textit{a priori} intuitions and systematic word spinning to tangible phenomena and analysis, from the theoretical to the practical and from the metaphysical to the moral. Voltaire's key role in the Enlightenment cannot seriously be doubted. Windelband remarks that Voltaire's "sceptical sensualism" was the fundamental note of the French Enlightenment,\textsuperscript{21} and Dieckmann esteems that Voltaire exemplified "the drift to pragmatism, utilitarian, anti-metaphysical values."\textsuperscript{22}

Voltaire's work reflects the multi-faceted endeavors of the "philosophes" for it represents a fusion of the scientific, literary and philosophical progress of the times.\textsuperscript{23} In this section Voltaire's antirationalism will be elucidated through the double approach of construction and destruction, a Voltairian device that characterizes most of his thought. In this particular case, we are referring to the positive constructions of the British Empiricists for whom Voltaire was the Continental spokesman and the destruction of the philosophical "myths" of the seventeenth century rationalists.
I. CONSTRUCTION: Praise of British Empiricism

Although Morley's judgment: "Voltaire went to England a poet and returned a philosopher" appears to be an exaggeration, one can hardly question the tremendous influence that England had upon the philosophical development of Voltaire. The assertion of Morley seems to be overstated inasmuch as Voltaire's writings before he set sail for England evince a great deal of philosophical cerebration. Once more, he had indubitably not been oblivious to the skeptical thought of previous French philosophers, of Descartes and Montaigne for example, to mention but two. All of his skepticism cannot, therefore, be attributed to his exposure to British empiricism when, according to Wade, he had even been quite familiar with Bayle before leaving for England in early 1726. Nonetheless, Torrey is quite correct in affirming that Voltaire's trip to England was indeed "the decisive factor" in the formation of his philosophy. Here Voltaire familiarized himself thoroughly with the English mind and at the same time became cognizant of the disparity between the empirical British approach to philosophy and the rationalist French method. That this experience was both novel and exhilarating emerges in a letter to Thierry where Voltaire states: "Si je suivais mon inclination ce seroit là [en Angleterre] que je me fixerois dans l'idée seulement d'apprendre à penser" (Best. 291).

Voltaire, the great anglophile of the French Enlightenment who went so far as to proclaim that "la raison humaine est née dans ce siècle en Angleterre," saw fit to praise both Bacon and Newton and to elucidate their importance in the history of philosophy and science. While
both are clearly done justice in this respect, neither occupies a very large portion of Voltaire's philosophical commentaries. The twelfth letter of the *Lettres philosophiques* is dedicated to the chancellor Bacon whom Voltaire already recognizes as the "père de la philosophie expérimentale" (M. XXII 118). He particularly singles out for praise his *Novum Scientiarum Organum*, stating that it is "l'échafaud avec lequel on a bâti la nouvelle philosophie" (M. XXII 118). Newton, the "d destructeur du système Cartésien" (M. XXII 128) is principally lauded for his recognition that experience is the "vrai maître de philosophie" (M. XXII 449). Each time that his name appears in Voltaire's work, it is accompanied with much praise, earned by his theory of light, his innovations in gravitation, the fact that he had no system, his observation and experimentation and his refusal to put "ses imaginations à la place de la vérité" (Best. 2309). Following Bacon, he demonstrated the folly of a priori speculation and insisted upon the experimental method. By simply producing the results of his experiments, he depicted the fallacies inherent in non-experimental Cartesianism. In fact, as Wade notes, "his observation of phenomena was the opposite of rational logic." Newton taught Voltaire to "examiner, penser, calculer et mesurer mais jamais deviner" (Best. 2309). According to Gay, "such Newtonian modesty led men to focus on what they could know and to be tolerant." The recognition of human limitations implicit in Newtonianism would hopefully have positive ethical ramifications.

Despite Voltaire's overwhelmingly eclectic nature, it can be maintained that to a great extent he was a disciple of Locke. In all of
Voltaire's work, no one receives the constant praise that is allotted John Locke. Hazard calls Locke, Voltaire's "maître et oracle," and even this statement does not seem to be an exaggeration. At a time when he was shifting emphasis from poetry to philosophy, Voltaire himself acknowledges, in a letter to M. de Sade, that:

Ovide autrefois fut mon maître
C'est à Locke aujourd'hui de l'être.
(Best. 628)

When one calls to mind Voltaire's scorn for complicated, nonsensical philosophical jargon, one readily comprehends why he praised Locke for his simplicity and his clarity. In the Siècle de Louis XIV, Voltaire commends Locke not only because he alone "a développé l'entendement humain dans un livre où il n'y a que des vérités," but also because "toutes ces vérités sont claires" (M. XIV 562). Furthermore, the fact that Locke opposed the construction of philosophical systems pleased the eclectic Voltaire whose skeptical nature was equally placated by the Englishman's modesty and lack of pretentiousness.

From the Lettres philosophiques onward, Voltaire uses the ideas found in Locke to refute what he considers to be the absurdities found in Cartesianism. Locke's view that the mind at birth is a tabula rasa, a clean slate, for example, is frequently alluded to in order to point out the fictitious nature of Descartes' innate ideas. For Locke, as for Voltaire, nothing enters into the mind that does not first pass through the senses (M. XXVI 74). As Voltaire points out in the Traité de Métaphysique, the proof that all our ideas come to us by way of the
senses is simply that "lorsque les sens nous manquent, les idées nous manquent" (M. XXVI 204). One recalls too that Descartes defines the soul as a "res cogitans," a thinking substance. This definition implies, on the one hand, that the soul is the equivalent of thought, "l'âme était la même chose que la pensée" (M. XXII 122), and therefore immaterial and, on the other, that man always thinks since the essence of the soul is to think. Locke doubts the first implication or at least suggests another possibility while he flatly denies the second. Neither Voltaire nor Locke affirm the existence of a material soul, but both offer this as a distinct possibility, finding it extremely pretentious on the part of man to declare God unable to give the power of thought to matter. Then, too, both Locke and Voltaire refuse to accept "la pensée" as a definition of man's essence, for they both reject the idea that man is perpetually in a state of thought. Apropos of this notion, Voltaire writes: "Je ne pense pas toujours. Par conséquent, la pensée n'est pas l'essence mais l'action de mon entendement" (M. XXVI 74).

Voltaire, like Locke, does not hesitate to profess his own incompetence when attempting to define the nature of the soul. This is quite clear in Micromégas which is, to a certain extent, a novelistic version of the Lettres philosophiques. Here, in the comic rendition of the earlier work, the author seems preoccupied with the same philosophical problems and once again speculation is frowned upon while experimentation is extolled. The Saturnian, who is "un petit partisan de Locke" (M. XXI 121), affirms the supremacy of the senses, observation and experimentation as well as recognition of the limits of human intelligence.
The animal of Sirius judges the disciple of Locke not "le moins sage" of the group of philosophers discussing these questions (M. XXI 122). The approximate conclusion of Micromégas is restated later in the Dictionnaire philosophique: "J'avoue que mille tomes de métaphysique ne nous enseigneront pas ce que c'est que notre âme ... . Concluons que nous devons employer cette intelligence, dont la nature est inconnue, à perfectionner les sciences qui sont l'objet de l'Encyclopédie" (M. XVII 139 & 141).

In practically all his philosophical speculation, Voltaire comes back to Locke, as he states in Le Philosophe ignorant, "comme l'enfant prodigue qui retourne chez son père" (M. XXVI 74), limiting himself to observation and the sciences and affirming man's inability to intellectually proceed through other channels. This is manifest in the Traité de Métaphysique where Voltaire remarks: "Quand nous ne pouvons nous aider du compas des mathématiques, ni du flambeau de l'expérience et de la physique, il est certain que nous ne pouvons faire un seul pas" (M. XXII 204). Locke is systematically praised by Voltaire for he had wisdom enough to scorn metaphysical systems and to stick to experience. He proscribed all a priori nonsense, avoided what passed for metaphysics at that time and based his thought on rigid experimentation. In his methodical and logical manner, like Newton, he weighed, measured and calculated using experience as the sole criterion of truth. While he unceasingly sought knowledge he remained skeptical, clearly proclaiming human ignorance a very essential part of human understanding and the key to human knowledge. As Voltaire remarks in a note to the third part of
his Poème sur la loi naturelle, Locke is above all: "connu pour avoir développé toute la marche de l'entendement humain et pour avoir montré les limites de son pouvoir."\(^{31}\)

In defending British empiricism, Voltaire was greatly responsible for the decline in metaphysics and in systematic a priori thinking as well as for the new emphasis in the experimental sciences that characterized the French Enlightenment. He remains, therefore, the champion of English empiricism in France and the French enemy of continental rationalism.

II. DESTRUCTION: Critique of 17th century Rationalism

1. Descartes

Voltaire's anti-rationalism is at once obvious in his treatment of Descartes\(^{32}\) who is dealt with at length in each of Voltaire's philosophical works. While it is true that Descartes often becomes the whipping boy for rationalist folly, it is equally true that Voltaire is generally quite objective vis-a-vis Descartes. He refers to him on occasion as a "grand génie,"\(^{33}\) not only conceding that he was "le plus grand géomètre de son siècle" (M. XIV 534) but also "le premier des mathématiciens" of all time(M. XIV 534). Voltaire shows great respect for Descartes' criticism of tradition and at times mentions that he was responsible almost single-handedly for the discovery of the errors of the ancients (M. XXII 122). "C'était beaucoup de détruire les chimères du péripatétisme," notes Voltaire in Le Siècle de Louis XIV (M. XIV 535), continuing an earlier thought he had expressed in Les Lettres.
philosophiques, where he referred to these "chimères" as "les chimères absurdes dont on infatuan la jeunesse depuis deux mille ans (M. XXII 131). Voltaire's highest praise for Descartes, like that of his contemporaries, was reserved for his method. How could the skeptical Voltaire not esteem this approach to philosophy that was founded on doubt and that systematically proscribed all that was not evident? According to Voltaire, it was the Cartesian method which provided "le fil du labyrinthe" (M. XIV 535), "donna la vue aux aveugles" (M. XXII 132), and consequently "nous a mis sur la voie de la vérité" (M. XXII 131).

Despite this occasional praise of Descartes, Voltaire's definitive opinion of his philosophy is unequivocally negative. From the Lettres philosophiques of 1734 to the Aventure de la mémoire in 1775, from the Traité de Métaphysique to the Questions sur l'Encyclopédie, Voltaire consistently attacks the rationalist a priori nature of Cartesian metaphysics which, as Voltaire saw it, was holding back the progress of the human mind. Like all the "philosophes,'" Voltaire rejected, in a general sense, Descartes' "esprit de système" which was typical of his epoch and which, in Voltaire's eyes, was capable of blinding even the greatest of thinkers (M. XXII 122). More specifically, the disciple of Locke spurned Descartes' ontological proof of the existence of God, clearly an outgrowth of speculative a priori reason, and attempted to replace it by his own cosmological proof, an obvious product of empirical a posteriori reason. For the author of Les Lettres philosophiques, God's role in the Cartesian scheme of things, which he consistently referred to ironically as the "Cartesian universe," thus implying that it had little if anything
in common with our universe, was indeed a negligible one. By contrast, he found God infinitely more present and necessary in the Newtonian cosmos.

*Micromégas*, one of Voltaire's earliest "contes," ridicules Descartes' chimerical dichotomy of mind and body. The disciple of Locke, not the least important personnage to appear in the story, puts forth Voltaire's views on the subject. Following the precedent set by La Fontaine a century earlier in his *Discours à Madame De la Sablière*, Voltaire attacked Descartes' notion of the "animaux-machines" which he found at bottom reeking of human pride. Voltaire not only considered this opinion to be empirically untenable, but also perceived that it created a cleavage in the zoological chain of being and was essentially an offshoot of the old anthropocentric vision of the world. Descartes' definition of man as a "res cogitans" was equally unacceptable to the non-speculative Voltaire who systematically spoke out against it. This is, of course, what Voltaire is alluding to in *Les Lettres philosophiques* when he states that Descartes "s'imagina avoir montré que l'âme était la même chose que la pensée" (M. XXII 122), whereas Locke, according to Voltaire, had sufficiently proven that the contrary was true (M. XXII 128).

What Voltaire derided incessantly in Cartesian rationalism was the latter's belief in innate ideas. It was particularly at this junction where Descartes earned the sobriquets "réveur" and "romancier"; for to affirm that "nous naissions avec des pensées métaphysiques" (M. XXVI 50), was, in the opinion of the practical minded Voltaire, both to assert one
of the greatest possible philosophical absurdities and to prove beyond a
shadow of a doubt one's complete detachment from reality. The non-
existence of innate ideas seemed so evident to Voltaire that it bordered
upon mathematical certitude. As a result, he was unable to refrain from
ridiculing Descartes on this point and did so, in fact, in every major
philosophical treatise that he composed. Voltaire's own view is directly
and quite compactly expressed in the following sentence drawn from the
Dictionnaire philosophique: "Rien n'est ce qu'on appelle inné, c'est à
dire né développé, mais répétions-le encore, Dieu nous fait naître avec
des organes qui, à mesure qu'ils croissent nous font sentir tout ce que
notre espèce doit sentir pour la conservation de cette espèce" (M. XIX
548).

As Voltaire saw it, Descartes, assuming a position of doubt,
commenced thereupon to discourse in an affirmative tone about matters
that were empirically unfounded. He ended up, as Voltaire indicates in
the Lettres philosophiques, by not only creating a universe of his
imagination but also by populating that universe with men equally born
of fantasy. Voltaire, as well as Locke and Newton, felt impelled there-
fore, to challenge both the theoretical foundation of his work and every
scientific principle he affirmed in reality (notion of matter, nature of
light, laws of movement, etc.). The fundamental censure then, leveled
by Voltaire at Cartesian physics and metaphysics, is the fact that its
author repeatedly failed to have recourse to experience. Wade informs us,
furthermore, that Descartes "made practically no experiments," was "not
well-read in the scientific literature of the time," and "made no
observations on falling bodies as Galileo did." It is not, therefore, surprising that he proposed erroneous laws of movement as well as a fallacious explanation of the circulation of the blood, for, as Voltaire notes in *Le Siècle de Louis XIV*, "un homme qui dédaigna les expériences ne pouvait élever qu'un édifice imaginaire" (M. XIV 534). Without an empirical basis, his physics, which he chimerically insisted be founded upon metaphysics, was totally proscribed by the "philosophes" who discerned that it rested upon a series of hypotheses that were clearly untenable. Voltaire recognized that Descartes lacked the experimentation of the Age of the Enlightenment and for that very reason regarded "le siècle des lumières" as "autant supérieur à Descartes que Descartes l’était à l'Antiquité" (M. XXII 440). As Wade concisely states, Voltaire definitively viewed Cartesian philosophy as "a total loss because it was dogmatic, a priori and not in conformity with observed facts." Descartes’ need to create a universe was greater than his desire to empirically investigate the one in which he lived. He, therefore, as Voltaire wryly observes, "fit une philosophie, comme on fait un bon roman, tout parut vraisemblable, et rien ne fut vrai" (M. XXII 134).

2. **Leibniz**

Voltaire’s stance vis-a-vis Leibniz once again underscores his anti-rationalist position. From the *Lettres philosophiques* of 1734 to the *Dialogues d’Evrénaire* of 1777, Leibniz is frequently the topic of discussion in the works of Voltaire. While one can neither state exactly when nor to what initial extent Voltaire came into contact with Leibniz, it has been suggested by Barber that of all the major intellects at work
in France during the eighteenth century, Voltaire "alone" was "seriously concerned," "deeply and continuously involved" with Leibniz, with his philosophical ideas and with the question of theodicy that he occasioned.\textsuperscript{40} It should be noted that Voltaire's proscription of Leibnizian metaphysics is in addition an implicit rejection of the metaphysical system of his disciple Wolff, for, as Voltaire's letter to Frederick of 20 December, 1737 indicates, the two men had been definitively linked together, from a philosophical point of view, in the mind of Voltaire: "Quant à la Métaphysique de Wolff, il me paraît presque en tout dans les principes de Leibniz" (M. XXXIV 360).\textsuperscript{41}

Despite occasional positive references to Leibniz,\textsuperscript{42} the picture drawn of the German rationalist in the works of Voltaire is overwhelmingly negative. One could hardly expect it to be otherwise, for Voltaire, whose mind in the words of Wade, "had already been corrupted by English common sense,"\textsuperscript{43} considered empirical England with Locke and Newton to be in the philosophical avant-garde, and "Germany as the home of a newly resurgent scholastic reaction."\textsuperscript{44} Even when Leibniz and Voltaire believed the same thing, they reached that belief by different routes. Wade affirms, for example, that both Leibniz and Voltaire were "cause-finaliers."\textsuperscript{45} This statement is correct but should be clarified, for, as Barber points out, Voltaire's belief in God is based upon "the scientist's apprehension of order in the universe, rather than upon \textit{a priori} and ontological considerations, like that of Leibniz."\textsuperscript{46} This distinction indicates perfectly the disparity between the rationalist and empirical approach to knowledge.
Voltaire's disagreements with Leibnizian rationalism can be divided into two groups: the minor criticism pertaining to physics where Voltaire rejects Leibniz's views on space, matter, and time, the major, of course, pertaining to metaphysics. Voltaire opposed the very notion of "monade" because of its hypothetical nature and still more forcefully rejected the Leibnizian theory that the monad called man is a "miroir vivant de cet univers" (M. XXII 426). It goes without saying that, for Voltaire, this notion, which has no basis in reality, no scientific support whatsoever, was of a pure dreamlike nature. Voltaire's metaphysical criticism of Leibniz however deals mainly with three notions: preestablished harmony, sufficient reason and optimism.

Since, according to Leibniz, the monads are "windowless," the soul acts in no way upon the body, nor the body upon the soul (M. XXIII 136). God had, in creating man, ordained a preestablished harmony between man's body and soul, constituting "un accord sans communication" between them. For one thing, Voltaire found this doctrine incongruous with Leibniz's own notion of sufficient reason, but another, he found it completely incompatible with Lockean epistemology for it shuns sensationalism à la Locke in favor of an off-beat genre of innateness. Voltaire consequently subjects it to his irony even in the otherwise serious Eléments de la philosophie de Newton where he writes: "l'âme de Virgile produisait l'Enéide, et sa main écrivait l'Enéide sans que cette main obéit en aucune façon à l'intention de l'auteur; mais Dieu avait réglé de tout temps que l'âme de Virgile ferait des vers, et qu'une main attachée au corps de Virgile les mettrait par écrit" (M.
The most hilarious reference to Leibniz's notion of pre-established harmony appears however in *Micromégas* where the disciple of Leibniz responds to the question "Qu'est-ce que ton âme?" in the following fashion: "C'est une aiguille qui montre les heures pendant que mon corps carillonne; ou bien, si vous voulez, c'est elle qui carillonne pendant que mon corps montre l'heure; ou bien mon âme est le miroir de l'univers, et mon corps est la bordure du miroir: cela est clair" (M. XXI 121).

If the Leibnizian notion of "sufficient reason" simply meant that every effect has a cause, Voltaire never would have taken Leibniz to task on this point, for, while rejecting the idea that every cause has an effect, Voltaire believed along with Leibniz that every effect has a cause. Apropos of this nuance, he writes in the *Dictionnaire philosophique*: "tout effet a évidemment sa cause, à remonter de cause en cause dans l'abîme de l'éternité, mais toute cause n'a pas son effet, à descendre jusqu'à la fin des siècles. ... Tout être a son père, mais tout être n'a pas des enfants" (M. XVIII 127). Leibniz, however, went much further for he asserted that, by his very nature, God cannot act without a sufficient reason. There is consequently a sufficient reason for everything that exists. Voltaire, on the contrary, feels at a loss for an explanation of why the planets move "d'occident en orient plutôt qu'en sens contraire" (M. XXIII 130), for example, or why a given star is in a certain place in the sky and not elsewhere. In the eyes of Voltaire, the notion of sufficient reason, "plus sublime que vrai" (M. XVII 470), creates a system "de la nécessité et de la fatalité" (M. XVIII
126) where "tout est rouage, poulie, corde (et) ressort" (M. XVIII 126). On a more practical level, as Brooks points out, Voltaire perceived the "logical abuses" that could come about "by applying the idea of sufficient reason to explain away causes and events embarrassing to a devout theologian."49

In addition to his formal criticism of sufficient reason, Voltaire frequently alludes to it in his masterpiece, Candide. Early in the "conte," Cunegonde chances upon Pangloss, who, "entre les broussailles," is giving a lesson in experimental physics to the chambermaid. Cunegonde, who is quite inclined to the sciences herself, carefully observes "les expériences réitérées," clearly perceives "la raison suffisante du docteur, les effets et les causes" and finally runs home breathlessly reflecting upon the possibility of becoming the sufficient reason for Candide, who, in his turn, might also be hers (M. XXI 139). From this moment onward, Voltaire unmercifully and mordantly ridicules this notion of Leibniz. In the war that occupies the third chapter, for example, "la baionnette" becomes "la raison suffisante de la mort de quelques milliers d'hommes" (M. XXI 142). It is Pangloss, however, the pedagogue, who assumes the role of ringmaster in this ludicrous side show where Leibnizianism becomes the laughing stock of the audience, where the ringmaster, without being cognizant of it, is metamorphosed into the "maître-sot" of the spectacle. It is he who is in charge of linking up cause and effect, of finding sufficient reasons for all sorts of phenomena, of demonstrating that since things are made for an end, they are necessarily made for the best end. Thus he states at a given moment that: "les nez
ont été faits pour porter des lunettes, aussi avons-nous des lunettes. Les jambes sont visiblement instituées pour être chaussées, et nous avons des chausses . . . les cochons étant faits pour être mangés, nous mangeons du porc toute l’année" (M. XXI 138). The highlight of his performance, the scene that brings the spectators to their feet, occurs in the fourth chapter, when Pangloss, having not only "goûté les délices du paradis" in the arms of Paquette, but who is presently suffering from the after effects, attempts to find a sufficient reason for his malady. After tracing the sickness from Paquette to a friar, to an old countess, to a captain of the cavalry, to a marquise, to a page, to a Jesuit and finally to one of the companions of Christopher Columbus, he concludes that syphilis is "une chose indispensable dans le meilleur des mondes, un ingrédient nécessaire," for if Columbus had not caught the disease "qui empoisonne la source de la génération, qui souvent même empêche la génération, et qui est évidemment l’opposé du grand but de la nature, nous n’aurions ni le chocolat ni la cochenille" (M. XXI 145).

If, in fact, the Eléments de la philosophie de Newton and other works of Voltaire seem to implicitly sanction the "optimistic" philosophy of Pope and Leibniz, later works will explicitly attack it. As a young epicurian, Voltaire more or less dismissed the question of evil as irrelevant. "Dieu a mis les hommes et les animaux sur la terre, c'est à eux de s'y conduire de leur mieux" (M. XXII 228), writes the author of the Traité de Métaphysique in 1734. There is no anguish here; good and evil are clearly social notions, the problem of evil is strictly a human affair. There is no mention of Leibniz, no question of the contradiction
between divine goodness and the existence of evil. Yet the 1740's and 1750's were years of hardship for Voltaire and brought with them a growing sensitivity toward the evil in the universe and the suffering of humanity which is reflected in Voltaire's subsequent refusal of Leibnizian optimism. In the space of twelve years, three major works appear which denounce with growing vehemence the philosophy of optimism.

The tale entitled Zadig which appeared in 1747 is, despite the attempts of critics to establish the contrary, an implicit rejection of optimism. That Jesrad expounds numerous tenets of Leibnizianism should not be taken as an indication that these are notions that Voltaire both accepts and promulgates. One would hardly be more correct in making this assumption than one would be in viewing Pangloss as the spokesman of Voltairean philosophy in Candide. It seems much more logical to consider the ever skeptical Voltaire's position in the resounding "mais" of Zadig, which carries with it an implicit protest against the injustice of the order of the creation and at the very least an intellectual refusal to condone it. While the hermit possessed all the Leibnizian answers to the problems that were perplexing Voltaire, Zadig, like Voltaire, remained unconvinced and judged human destiny to be as inscrutable as ever, even after the visit of Jesrad. Voltaire seems more and more aware of the fact that the answers to the questions he poses are outside the realm of human knowledge.

The Poème sur le désastre de Lisbonne (1756), which proclaims the concrete existence of evil and human suffering, is an explicit rejection of optimism which is therein depicted as a fatalistic delusion, totally
incapable of appreciating human misery:

Leibniz ne m'apprend point par quels noeuds invisibles,
Dans le mieux ordonné des univers possibles,
Un désordre éternel, un chaos de malheurs,
Mêle à nos vains plaisirs de réelles douleurs,
Ni pourquoi l'innocent, ainsi que le coupable,
Subit également ce mal inévitable (M. IX 475).

The third work, Candide, is the major offensive launched by
Voltaire against Leibniz, his optimism, his incomprehensible jargon and
"all the other paraphernalia of German idealism."51 The Seven Years'
War, "the symbol of a total failure in the Enlightenment,"52 ironically
comes to the center of the stage in this best of all possible worlds.
For that matter, every detail that Voltaire carefully inserts is there
precisely to give the lie to optimism. While it is true that we do not
find a philosophical refutation per se of Leibniz's optimism in Candide
and while it is equally evident that Leibniz is hardly done justice as
a thinker, we cannot in good faith expect the satirist to be completely
objective in his presentation. Then too in 1759 Voltaire most definitely
felt that no discussion was any longer possible, for the time had come
to reduce optimism to the absurdity that it is by opposing reality to
this fictitious hypothesis. The background of the tale is exclusively
German for Voltaire has artistically woven the antithesis of the
optimistic German presumption on the one hand and the brutal reality of
the Seven Years' War on the other. Pangloss performs marvelously and is
single-handedly responsible, without knowing it of course, for the
reductio ad absurdum of the optimistic philosophy: "S'il y a un volcan à
Lisbonne," he proclaims, oblivious to the human suffering that surrounds
him, "il ne pouvait être ailleurs. Car il est impossible que les choses ne soient pas où elles sont. Car tout est bien" (M. XXI 148). Defending Leibniz at all cost, sacrificing reality for a priori conjecture, he forms the following ludicrous sophism: "les malheurs particuliers font le bien général, de sorte que plus il y a de malheurs particuliers, et plus tout est bien" (M. XXI 146). Even the inexperienced Candide perceives that this is hardly the best of all possible worlds and when asked by Cacambo for a definition of optimism, he replies, at one of his most lucid moments: "C'est la rage de soutenir que tout est bien quand on est mal" (M. XXI 180-1).

In the final analysis, as early as 1737, Voltaire saw the fatalistic implications of the optimistic doctrine. He quotes Clarke's response to Leibniz with apparent approbation in the *Eléments de la philosophie de Newton*: "Votre idée mène à la fatalité absolue; vous faites de Dieu un être qui agit par nécessité et par conséquent un être purement passif: ce n'est plus Dieu" (M. XXII 411). In his letter to Bertrand of 28 February 1756, he vehemently denounces optimism as "désespérant, une philosophie cruelle sous un nom consolant" (Best. 6738). Optimism is primarily repudiated because of its pessimistic fatalism that Voltaire deemed dangerous and because of the inherent insult to human suffering that it contained. It seemed to imply resignation to the status quo as well as the justification of evil and, in the eyes of the melioristic Voltaire, this could lead only to sterile inaction. It was ultimately a philosophy of consent and not one of revolt.

In conclusion, the major objection that Voltaire levels at
Leibnizianism is basically the same one he had previously directed at Cartesianism; that is to say, that it is not based upon experimentation and that it is unempirical. Leibniz's sufficient reason, his monads and simple beings, his pre-established harmony were for Voltaire "just so much jargon." Any explanation of matter, that must have recourse to the non-material was, for Voltaire, no explanation whatsoever. Clothed in ludicrous terminology, Leibniz's philosophy remained an obscure, bizarre and fantastic doctrine for the empirical, practical minded, level-headed realist Voltaire. "Toute la Théodicée de Leibniz," writes Voltaire, "ne vaut pas une expérience de Nollet" (M. XXXV 219).

Whereas Leibniz was concerned primarily with the problem of "defining nature," Voltaire was essentially at grips with the quest for human happiness; where Leibniz essayed to justify the presence of evil, Voltaire, taking a more active, humanitarian stance before the suffering of humanity, was directly engaged in the eradication of evil. Voltaire's struggle against Leibnizianism, and more particularly against optimism, with its emphasis on the practical recognition and amelioration of human misery, left an indelible mark in the cosmological annals which very clearly underscores the modernity of Voltaire's thought. For as Haac perceptively remarks: "After Voltaire, cosmology could not ignore subjective experience and the realization of suffering. From Hegel to Kierkegaard the preoccupation with individual, concrete fate and pain took precedence over the definition of transcendental values."
3. **Spinoza and Malebranche**

One would not do justice to Voltaire's attack on rationalism without mentioning both Spinoza\(^57\) and Malebranche\(^58\) since they are frequently alluded to in Voltaire's philosophical works. Voltaire's positive assessment of Spinoza's moral conduct is a rare constant amid constantly fluctuating views on the Jewish metaphysician. Voltaire, taking his cue from Bayle's *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, makes Spinoza the incarnation of the virtuous atheist as early as the *Lettres philosophiques* of 1734 and, even as late as 1767 in the *Lettres à M.S.A.Mgr. Le Prince de...sur Rabelais (etc.)*, Voltaire is still dichotomizing vis-à-vis Spinoza: "On doit détester son athéisme," he notes, "mais on ne doit pas mentir sur sa personne" (M. XXVI 522). One discovers, therefore, beside the metaphysical criticism of Spinoza, habitual praise of the life led by the virtuous philosopher "sobre, désintéressé, généreux, patient et informe dans sa conduite" (M. XXVI 69).

Regarding Spinoza's specific philosophical position, Voltaire never appears able to definitively decide between pantheism and atheism. Until the mid-1760's, Voltaire had accepted Bayle's judgment without question and even thereafter when he questions Bayle's view of Spinoza's atheism, he seems hesitant to contradict Bayle and consequently assumes one position, then the other, and often both at the same time.\(^59\) In the final analysis, however, atheist or pantheist, he is systematically condemned. As Voltaire saw it, Spinoza, constructing his "roman, comme Descartes a construit le sien, sur une supposition," ended up by being "la dupe de son esprit géométrique" (M. XXVI 68). Voltaire objected to
his rejection of final causes, to his implicit denial of creation and to the absurdity of making God everything. Spinoza's system is, like Descartes', an a priori structure which starts from the preconceived notion that God is the immensity of things rather than from the rigorous observation of facts. If Spinoza had based his idea of God on the design of the cosmos, if he had argued from the order of the universe to the existence of the orderer of the universe, he would have consequently perceived the distinction between God and matter, as well as the necessity of creation. As it was, in Voltaire's opinion at least, he simply created a: "citadelle bâtie, si je ne me trompe sur l'ignorance de la physique et sur l'abus le plus monstrueux de la métaphysique" (M. XXVI 525).

A disciple of Descartes, Malebranche earns the same pejorative terms of "rêveur" and "romancier" that Voltaire previously applied to the author of the Discours de la méthode. Malebranche is Cartesian, as Voltaire indicates in the Éléments de la philosophie de Newton, for he retains the "prétendus tourbillons de matière lumineuse" of Descartes (M. XXII 446), and because he clings to innate ideas (M. XXII 122). Like Descartes too, he created a system without any experimentation. Voltaire frequently alludes to his "édifice imaginaire" (M. XXII 446), his "roman absurde" (M. XXII 205), his "illusions sublimes" (M. XVII 122). While he gives Malebranche credit in the Siècle de Louis XIV for having "montré admirablement les erreurs des sens et de l'imagination," he also charges that when Malebranche attempted to unveil the nature of the soul, "il s'est perdu dans cet abîme comme les autres" (M. XIV 101).
Malebranche, like Leibniz and others, sets out to solve the question of communication between mind and body which he ultimately explains by his "vision in God." Restated briefly, Malebranche maintains that the mind is incapable of influencing the body, the body unable to influence the mind and the mind itself incapable of producing its own ideas. God alone has the power to act on the mind. This is the meaning of the words of the "philosophe malebranchiste" in Micromégas who exclaims: "C'est Dieu qui fait tout pour moi" (M. XXI 121). Voltaire was far from accepting this imaginary hypothesis and in censuring Malebranche on this point, he embodies the spirit of the Enlightenment, for, in Cassirer's words: "the 18th century opposed the attempt to solve the problem of knowledge by means of a transcendent world." Then, too, Voltaire affirms that in the Malebranchian scheme of things not only is man no longer free but he is nothing other than a modification of God himself (M. XXII 425). We are obviously approaching Spinozism, a fact that Voltaire readily perceived as early as 1734 in the Traité de Metaphysique where he refers to "toutes les absurdités qui découlent nécessairement de ce principe" (M. XXII 205).

When everything is placed in its proper perspective, when all Voltaire's commentary on Malebranche, including the controversial Tout en Dieu, is perused, adequately assessed and carefully sifted, one is forced to conclude that Malebranche fares no better than the other speculative rationalists. He is condemned along with them for his a priori speculation, his lack of experimentation and his mystical delusions.
D. Voltaire and the Psychological Anti-rationalism of the French Enlightenment

The revolt against metaphysical rationalism by the 18th century in general and by Voltaire in particular is not the only aspect of the anti-rationalism that one perceives in the study of the French Enlightenment. In the psychological sphere too, the "philosophes" reacted negatively to the 17th century notion, as is manifest in the works of Corneille and Descartes, that reason can and should tame the passions. Here again, Voltaire played a vital part in the Enlightenment's rehabilitation of man as a natural creature. 61

The philosophes denied that reason could master the passions and, for that matter, they did not wish it to do so. Descartes' claim:

Qu'il n'y a point d'âme si faible qu'elle
ne puisse, étant bien conduite, acquérir
un pouvoir absolu sur ses passions. 62

is clearly rejected by the Enlightenment which denied reason the power of subduing the passions. The limitations of rational inquiry are indeed a very constant theme of the Enlightenment as well as the inability of reason to subjugate the passions. In their attempt to create the total man, one might more correctly speak of their endeavor to unveil the real man, the "philosophes" avoided the excesses of the 17th century rationalist who attributed too much power to reason and not enough positive substance to the passions as well as the excesses of the early 19th century sentimentalist who scorned reason and exaggerated the
benefits of feeling.

Where the seventeenth century, emphasizing the celestial, held
man as the image of God and revealed religion as the basis of its moral
code, the eighteenth century stressed the terrestrial, judged man a
natural being, and considered society as the foundation of its morality.
Voltaire expresses this lay credo in the Traité de Métaphysique: "La
vertu et le vice, le bien et le mal moral est donc en tout pays ce qui
est utile ou nuisible à la société" (M. XXII 225). It is precisely the
passions, these "roues qui font aller toutes les machines" (M. XXII 223),
that keep society functioning, that unite and reunite men and that draw
from the earth both art and pleasure. Voltaire exhibited this lucid
appreciation of the passions which he judged "la principale cause de
l'ordre que nous voyons aujourd'hui sur la terre" (M. XXII 222). It was
not, therefore, the role of reason to subdue these natural gifts that
help to establish harmony between the individual and society.

Pride, in Voltaire's eyes, rather than an evil instinct that
should be suppressed, is above all "le principal instrument avec lequel
on a bâti ce bel édifice de la société" (M. XXII 222). "L'amour-propre,"
the sentiment that makes the scorn of one's fellows unbearable, teaches
man the wisdom of being an "honnête homme," even if solely for his own
interests (M. XXII 229).

The great passions then are at the base of the social experience
and should not, as Pascal suggested, be suppressed but rather directed
toward a useful end. This is, in part, the meaning of Voltaire's short
tale entitled Memnon ou la sagesse humaine. Gay's observation that:
"Voltaire's fables are filled with cautionary figuhrs who fell low because they reached too high,"\textsuperscript{63} is perfectly applicable to this tale where the protagonist foolishly proclaims: "Pour être très sage et par conséquent très heureux, il n'y a qu'à être sans passions" (M. XXI 95). Voltaire carefully points out that Memnon conceived his "petit plan de sagesse" in his "chambre" before he speaks of the failure that immediately takes place when he puts his head "à la fenêtre" (M. XXI 96). This implicit dichotomy between intelligence and the real world emphasizes the failure of reason to come to grips with reality. In any event, Memnon, the complacent rationalist, who believed that all passions would yield to reason, abruptly discovers that the contrary is true; he suffers the loss of an eye as well as his entire fortune in the bargain. Once again, the endeavor to suppress the passions rather than guide them in some useful action for the individual or for humanity results in tragedy. The most ironic detail concerning this tale in particular and the Enlightenment in general is noted by Gay: "Memnon is the ideal representative of an age of reason, but he is an anti-Voltaire; he is the very type that the Enlightenment repudiated and that its critics later took as its embodiment."\textsuperscript{64}

While clearly defending both the legitimacy and the productivity of the passions, Voltaire indicates that these gifts can be dangerously utilized and consequently urges that they be wisely moderated. They are indeed "les vents qui enflent les voiles du vaisseau" but they can sink the ship if used without moderation (M. XXI 88). As the author of \textit{Zadig}, realistically observes: "La bile rend colère et
Voltaire and the other "philosophes" chose to depict the benefits of the passions rightfully employed. A final aspect of this humanitarian and humanistic morality that they pieced together is the necessity and legitimacy of sexuality for all beings, the right to naturally fulfill, both corporally and spiritually, the passion of love. Diderot was not the only "philosophe" to depict the lamentable situation in religious houses where those who wished to "faire l'ange" ended by "faire la bête."

In Candide, Voltaire alludes to the same situation on several different occasions with a broad reference, albeit quite subtle, to the practice of homosexuality among the Jesuits (M. XXI 144), and further along in the tale by more easily read allusions to the homosexuality of Cunegonde's brother, also a Jesuit (M. XXI 167 & 211). Voltaire's most extensive treatment of this theme in Candide however deals with Frère Giroflée and underscores the unnatural aspect of the religious life which denies an essential function of the human creature. Frère Giroflée, like Diderot's protagonist in La Religieuse, has been forced into the religious life without a vocation so that the fortune of his older brother might be preserved intact. Having been denied a legitimate sex life, he finds himself involved in a degrading affair with the prostitute Paquette whose life of misery equals his own. The particular is suddenly elevated to the general when Giroflée, speaking at length about his plight, observes that: "Tous mes confrères sont dans le même cas" (M. XXI 200). To Pascal's famous: "L'homme n'est ni ange ni bête, et le malheur veut que qui veut faire l'Ange fait la bête," Voltaire had responded 25 years
earlier in *Les Lettres philosophiques* by stating: "Qui veut détruire les passions, au lieu de les régler, veut faire l'Ange" (M. XXII 53).

**E. The Limits of Reason**

Voltaire never explicitly defines reason and when one of his characters does so, it is to claim that reason is something like an instinct "un don inexplicable de comparer le passé au présent et de pourvoir au futur" (M. XXX, 498). We can, nonetheless, infer a great deal about the limits that Voltaire imposed upon reason from his other remarks about that human faculty.

When not linked with experience, for example, we have seen that Voltaire not only considers reason an ineffectual instrument on the road to truth, but also a potentially dangerous one. We have observed too that Voltaire, along with the other great minds of the French Enlightenment, has insisted upon the inability of reason to systematize reality. Moreover, he has maintained a constant skepticism vis-à-vis the pretended power of reason to dominate both the psychological and metaphysical domains. As much as any thinker before him, Voltaire patiently defined the limits of the human mind, preferring an avowal of human ignorance to an illusory hypothesis. Here we would like to examine these general observations and elucidate in greater detail the limitations of human reason as they appeared to Voltaire who equated true wisdom with both a lucid appraisal of human ignorance and a humble acknowledgment of human knowledge.

Like Locke and unlike Descartes, Voltaire believed that all knowledge is derived from the senses. But how does this all take place?
That we think cannot be questioned but by what process do we think? Voltaire writes in the *Traité de Métaphysique:* "C'est ici que tous les philosophes ont fait de beaux romans" (M. XXII 204). Rather than add additional speculation on the matter, he simply gives his favorite four word answer "Je ne sais pas." According to Voltaire, we cannot understand any of our sense faculties and therefore to know how we think, how we feel or how our movements obey our will "c'est demander le secret du Créateur" (M. XXII 204). As Voltaire observes in the *Lettres Philosophiques:* "Je suis corps et je pense; je n'en sais pas davantage" (M. XXII, 125). What "nos yeux" and "les mathématiques" demonstrate, we can accept as true, writes Voltaire to Le Cat, but "dans tout le reste, il n'y a qu'à dire, j'ignore" (Best. 2309).

It goes without saying that if human reason is unable to penetrate the notion of "corps," it is equally incapable of sounding the question of "âme." Voltaire scoffed at the scholastic jargon "âme végétative," "âme sensitive" and "esprit" (M. XVII 163), finding these dichotomies both humorous and pretentious. He is forever pointing out the folly of the "beaux systèmes" that philosophers have fabricated on the nature of the soul. Here again he begins: "essayant (sa) faible raison" and ends: "avouant (son) ignorance" (M. XXII, 209). One has, nevertheless, the impression, when evaluating all of Voltaire's writings on the soul, despite his avowal of ignorance, that he believed the soul both material and mortal. In this respect, he writes convincingly in the *Traité de Métaphysique:* "Je n'assure point que j'aie des démonstrations contre la spiritualité et l'immortalité de l'âme, mais toutes les
vraisemblances sont contre elles" (M. XXII 215). This seems to be Voltaire's most constant viewpoint despite the fact that he frequently writes, in order to placate the censors, that only through religion do we know about our soul's nature, its immateriality and its immortality. He notes, for example, in Les Lettres philosophiques: "la raison humaine est si peu capable de démontrer par elle-même l'immortalité de l'âme que la Religion a été obligée de nous la révéler" (M. XXII 124). As regards to human existence, reason fails to tell man who he is, where he has come from, where he is going and what he is doing. As Voltaire observes in the Dictionnaire philosophique: "Tu es né, tu vis, tu agis, tu penses, tu veilles, tu dors sans savoir comment" (M. XVII 164). That man, in Voltaire's eyes, is incapable of knowing his own essence is clearly seen in the Dictionnaire philosophique where Voltaire writes: "Connais-toi toi-même, excellent précepte mais il n'appartient qu'à Dieu de le mettre en pratique; quel autre être que lui peut connaître son essence" (M. XVII 162)? If man is ultimately unable, through the power of reason, to discover his own finite essence, how can he hope to penetrate the essence of his infinite Creator? Voltaire, therefore, openly and frequently acknowledges his ignorance of divine essence. He notes in the Traité de Métaphysique, for example: "Je ne sais point ce que sont les attributs de Dieu et je ne suis point fait pour embrasser son essence" (M. XXII 221); and later in the Philosophe ignorant he writes: "Si je ne puis savoir ce qui m'anime, comment connaîtrai-je l'intelligence ineffable qui prèside visiblement à la
matière entière" (M. XXVI 60)? Torrey reminds us that as early as the trip to England, Voltaire was aware of "the necessary limitations of the finite mind in understanding an infinite universe."65 Voltaire's entire work thereafter is replete with allusions to the failure of reason to grasp the workings of the infinite universe. "Qu'est-ce que le soleil," observes the author of the *Philosophe ignorant*, and "Pourquoi tourne-t-il sur son axe" (M. XXVI 53)? Faced with his own weakness and "les lueurs trompeuses de notre raison," he adds later in the same work: "L'infinit en nombre et en étendue est hors de la sphère de mon entendement" (M. XXVI 59 & 60). The nature of matter itself, suggests Voltaire, cannot be fathomed by human reason. Many have claimed that matter is incapable of thought, an hypothesis that Voltaire judged untenable. While not affirming the contrary, he attacks the pretentiousness of this stand in the *Lettres philosophiques* where he states: "Quel est l'homme qui osera assurer, sans une impétitude absurde, qu'il est impossible au Créateur de donner à la matière la pensée et le sentiment" (M. XXVI 125). He often returns to this point, always emphasizing the fact that since God can do anything, it would not be impossible that he endow matter with the power of thought.

Human reason, capable of knowing only accidents or qualities, is unable to seize essence or substance. Then, too, only able to know through experience, man must profess his ignorance of first principles. Voltaire's most succinct exposé of the failures of human reason appears in the *English Notebooks*. Despite its length, it is certainly worth quoting for it denotes not only the extent to which Voltaire perceived the
limitations of human reason but also the practical ramifications of these limitations upon which Voltaire insisted.

Je ne saurais comprendre ce que c'est que la matière encore moins ce que c'est que l'esprit . . . . .
S'il y a un dieu, s'il n'y en a point, si le monde est fini ou infini créé ou éternel, arrangé par intelligence ou par loix phisiques, encore moins par hasard.
Je ne saurais comprendre
comment je pense,
comment je retiens mes pensées,
comment je remue.
Les premiers principes aux quels mon existence est attachée sont tous impénétrables. Ce n'est donc pas cela qu'il faut chercher mais ce qui est utile, et dangereux, au corps humain, les loix par les quels il se meut, non p' quoy il se meut, l'art d'augmenter les forces mouvantes, non les principes du mouvement.
Savoir comment je puis guérir la dissenterie, non si le ventre est formé avant le coeur ou le coeur avant le ventre.
Tâcher de rendre une terre fertile, non rechercher comment le blé peut croître.66

With reference to the limits of reason, but in a more general sense, there seems to be three major problems that continually dismayed Voltaire. The first of these virtual torments was the blatant failure of metaphysics in general. Despite the fact that Voltaire constantly posed metaphysical questions, he firmly believed that metaphysics was indecipherable. He found this terrain of uncertainty called metaphysics totally impervious to human reason and fought against the intellectual fanaticism à la Pascal which led men astray into this area of fruitless speculation. Not only did he deem the faculty of reason helpless in its effort to fathom the impenetrable questions of metaphysics, but he perceived the innate danger of metaphysics because it ultimately stressed
dogma over morals.

The second of these problems, the failure of reason to evaluate the question of evil, haunted Voltaire and perhaps more than any other question made him painfully aware of the inadequacy of human reason. "L'origine du mal," writes Voltaire in the *Dictionnaire philosophique*, "a toujours été un abîme dont personne n'a pu voir le fond" (M. XVII 583). The mature Voltaire was consequently unable and unwilling to establish theodicy. When faced with the so-called perfection of the Almighty on the one hand, and the evil that inundated the universe on the other, he could only proclaim once again the inability of human reason to solve the dilemma and the folly of man to attempt to do so. Unlike Kant who wrote a treatise on the impossibility of establishing theodicy, Voltaire refuses to speculate any further and proclaimed in *Candide* that action must replace futile speculation.67 Voltaire's position on this point is one of methodical skepticism which he opposes to both theological and metaphysical investigation and surpasses with fruitful action. Not only is Pangloss' position ridiculed and rejected in *Candide*, but along with it any attempt to justify evil. As Bertrand Russell observes in an article where he explains Voltaire's influence on his thought: "This is the great merit of ridicule in controversy. Ridicule does not substitute one dogma for another, but suggests the absurdity of all dogmas in regions where only doubt or a confession of ignorance is rational."68 For Voltaire, the origin of evil was both unknown and unknowable but its reality was not. Therefore, in the Voltaireian chain of values, the suppression of evil definitively trans-
cended in importance the futile attempts to delve into the origins of
evil.

The third problem that sheds still more light on the limits of
reason is the inscrutability of human destiny. Voltaire's work is dotted
with references to man's inability to grasp the meaning of his destiny
and the attentive reader of Voltaire must agree with Ira Wade who notes
that Voltaire became more and more conscious that "philosophy, for all
its vaunted power, is not worth an hour's thought when man comes face to
face with his destiny."69 This is precisely why the laconic dervish in
*Candide* slams the door in the face of Pangloss when the latter invites
him to "raisonner un peu" on some key philosophical issues (M. XXI 216).

The unintelligibility of human destiny is a particularly recurrent
theme in the works of Voltaire from the late 1740's onward. In the
"conte" entitled *Zadig*, for example, the protagonist meets the soon to be
unveiled hermit who happens to be reading "le livre des destinées." When
Zadig tries to read the text, "tout instruit qu'il était dans plusieurs
langues, (il) ne put déchiffrer un seul caractère du livre" (M. XXI 86).
In *Micromégas*, the giant who had promised "un beau livre de philosophie"
which would contain "le bout des choses," was only able to produce "un
livre tout blanc" (M. XXI, 122). Voltaire is more explicit in the *Poème
sur le désastre de Lisbonne* where he observes that the questions perplexing
man in general and himself in particular: "Que suis-je, où suis-je,
où vais-je et d'où suis-je tiré," all of which pertain to his destiny, are
unanswerable for "le livre du sort se ferme à notre vue" (M. IX 477).
Finally, in a less well-known tale, *Le Blanc et le Noir*, which appeared
in 1764, the same theme recurs. Here a parrot that has lived since the
deluge, who "a été dans l'arche (et) a beaucoup vu" (M. XXI 233) is
supposed to deliver a message about human destiny. Unfortunately notes
the author in a footnote to the text, the message was not found in the
portfolio that contained the rest of the tale (M. XXI 233).

Man, then, in the Voltairian view of the universe, is not only
ignorant of his destiny but relatively helpless in a labyrinth of forces
over which he has little control. This picture of the "misère de l'homme"
was surprisingly already present in 1736 in a letter to Frederick. It
appears in the form of a metaphor that will return twenty-three years
later in Candide:

Les souris qui habitent quelques petits trous
d'un bâtiment immense ne savent ni si ce bâtiment
est éternel, ni quel en est l'architecte, ni
pourquoi cet architecte a bâti..... Nous sommes
les souris, et le divin architecte qui a bâti cet
univers n'a pas encore, que je sache, dit son
secret à aucun de nous (M. XXXIV 108).

In more general terms, it is of the utmost importance that one
note in conclusion that in attacking metaphysical rationalism which
defined reason as "a faculty independent of, or opposed to, or otherwise
contrasted with, experience or observation, "70 Voltaire limited reason
to the realm of human experience. Then, too, the attack on psychological
rationalism placed reason in its proper position vis-à-vis the passions.
As Irving Babbitt points out in his Rousseau and Romanticism: "The
'reason' to which he [Voltaire] appeals has all the shallowness that I
have noticed in the 'reason' of the eighteenth century."71 By thus
limiting reason, man was denied the possibility of solving the major
questions of life and death that the rationalist approach proposed
answers for. The whole notion of "rational cosmology setting forth the
ways of God to man" was rejected by Voltaire as early as the late
1740's. Voltaire's experience with life unequivocally taught him that
all could not yield to human rationality. *Candide* serves as a perfect
exemplification of Voltaire's belief that reality cannot be neatly re-
duced to rational categories and the human dilemma subsequently "solved"
or explained by the faculty of reason. Lester Crocker notes in *Nature
and Culture* that although Sade was the first to face the failure of
rationalism: "Voltaire knew of it and suffered of it." In Voltaire's
eyes, "the world was a desert which man must make habitable by his
efforts and endure with his humor."
Chapter II

Camus

A. Climate

The twentieth century has been clearly marked by an intense anti-rationalism. The suspicions of Voltaire and the other "philosophes" as to the weaknesses and dangers of rationalism have been confirmed and their moderate anti-rationalism has blossomed into what might appropriately be termed "la faillite du rationalisme." Henri Bergson triggered off the new waves of anti-rationalism in the early part of the century. He criticized the intellect mainly for its treatment of the world "as though it were fundamentally static and immobile," for in doing so it necessarily failed to comprehend and to adequately appreciate the facts of motion and change. The works of the literary masters of the "belle époque" manifest these philosophical trends inherent in the atmosphere of the time. The early works of Gide, for example, as well as the work of Proust have a definite anti-rationalist flavor. Gide's exhortation to Nathanaël in the preface to Les Nourrites terrestres "de sortir de [sa] pensée" and the value given to the "mémoire involontaire" in the Proustian universe underline the importance of the non-rational. At approximately the same time, the works of the surrealists clearly evince violent anti-rationalist tendencies. The first few pages of André Breton's Manifeste du surréalisme cynically attack "le règne de la
"logique" under which we live and vehemently point out that "le rationalisme absolu qui reste de mode ne permet de considérer que des faits relevant étroitement de notre existence." The surrealist methods of automatic writing and free association in dream analysis are obviously attempts to throw off the heavy shackles of logic in order to discover the deeper, freer, truer self. The surrealists who linked themselves with the revolution had surely not forgotten the anti-rationalist precepts of Marx himself who hinted that "it would be easier, and preferable, to change the world, than to understand it." 

In 1926, the perceptive 23 year old observer of Western society in Malraux's *Tentation de l'Occident* underscores the fact that occidental man "ne [conçoit] que des fragments de la vie" because he seeks only with his mind and is ignorant of the other sources of knowledge. The same protagonist then lucidly proceeds to diagnose the situation of Western man finding "au centre de l'homme européen, dominant les grands mouvements de sa vie, une absurdité essentielle." The key word "absurdité" has finally been pronounced and with this acknowledgment we have reached the epitome of anti-rationalist thought. Western man finding himself in a universe whose key has been lost can do nothing but proclaim the fundamental absurdity of his existence. No system nor rational method can help him escape his dilemma. Roughly speaking, from the Enlightenment onward, notwithstanding certain obvious exceptions, the history of philosophy has slowly moved in this direction, finally attaining the summit of the long tradition of anti-Cartesian rationalism. With it, we witness the virtual death of abstract philosophy, the emphasis now being placed on the existential or lived experience of the
human condition.

After Nietzsche's proclamation of the "death of God," the waves of agnosticism and atheism inundated the philosophical atmosphere. The twentieth century, however, perceived much deeper ramifications of the atheistic stance than those asserted by its predecessors, for, whereas Marx wrote that atheism is "the negation of God" and the postulation of "the existence of man through this negation," Malraux carries this notion one giant step further to the "death of man." Here, again, our penetrating Chinese observer clarifies the point in question: "La réalité absolue a été pour vous Dieu, puis l'homme; mais l'homme est mort, après Dieu, et vous cherchez avec angoisse celui à qui vous pourriez confier son étrange héritage." Malraux has pointed out that this particular epoch represents the first era of non-transcendence. This age consequently finds itself grasping once more for the essential truths of life and death, starting from scratch and posing anew the basic questions pertaining to the human condition. As Alvear proclaims to Scali in Malraux's L'Espoir: "L'âge du fondamental recommence. La raison doit être fondée à nouveau..." Camus echoes this observation when he notes that "ce qui caractérise notre siècle, ce n'est peut-être pas tant d'avoir à reconstruire le monde que d'avoir à le repenser." Once more, as in the Enlightenment, this effort to "rethink the world" would have to be accomplished without the aid of rationalism or the eternal and in the realm of history.
B. Anti-Rationalism

Albert Camus is quite easily linked with the long tradition of skeptical French thought from Montaigne to Voltaire and from Pascal to Vigny. His explicit proclamation of the absurdity of human existence however indicates that his anti-rationalism is more extreme than that of his French predecessors. This is logically explained by the development of the history of philosophy for Camus began to write in the late 1930's during the so-called "l'âge du fondamental" cited by Malraux. Camus' work does indeed return to the fundamental questions of human existence: Le Mythe de Sisyphe poses the question of the value of individual existence, L'Étranger, the role of the individual vis-à-vis the collectivity and L'Homme révolté, the question of murder.

Camus' anti-rationalism is more readily perceived than that of Voltaire for the so-called "philosopher of the absurd" should be immediately recognized as an ardent anti-rationalist. In the pages that follow, therefore, we will only briefly sketch the main tenets of Camusian anti-rationalism. First of all, the anti-rationalism of Camus, like that of Voltaire, denotes a decidedly empirical quality. Cruickshank remarks that "What is real for the author of Noces, is what can be experienced by the senses." This comment is equally applicable to Le Mythe de Sisyphe where we find a more detailed exposition of Camusian epistemology the first law of which is reminiscent of Locke's dictum that all knowledge comes through the senses. Camus writes for example: "Ce coeur en moi, je puis l'éprouver et je juge qu'il existe. Ce monde, je peux le toucher et je juge encore qu'il existe. Là
s'arrête toute ma science, le reste est construction" (ESS. 111). This epistemology eschews, therefore, both abstraction per se and all assertions about the future.

Like Voltaire, Camus brings to light the impossibility of constructing systems of thought when he notes that "Fenser, ce n'est plus unifier" (ESS. 117), and when he underscores the inability of reason to perform its classical function of categorization: "Cette raison universelle, pratique ou morale, ce déterminisme, ces catégories qui expliquent tout, ont de quoi faire rire l'homme honnête" (ESS, 113).

Then, too, his metaphysical skepticism, his moderate pessimism as to the destiny of men and his stoic qualities are once again reminiscent of the "sage de Ferney." His criticism of scientific pretention, which he finds ultimately bordering on poetry, as evinced in the following quote from le Mythe, recalls Voltaire's criticism of Descartes' philosophical pretention in particular and the legendary sobriquets of "rêveur" and "poète" that he constantly leveled at the author of Discours de la méthode:

Vous me parlez d'un invisible système planétaire où des électrons gravitent autour d'un noyau. Vous m'expliquez ce monde avec une image. Je reconnais alors que vous en êtes venus à la poésie: je ne connaîtrai jamais.... Cette science qui devait tout m'apprendre finit dans l'hypothèse...si je puis par la science saisir les phénomènes et les énumérer, je ne puis pour autant appréhender le monde, (ESS. 112)

His deep-seat-d need to comprehend remains frustrated and he finds himself in a blind alley forced to choose "entre une description qui est
certaine, mais qui ne m'apprend rien, et des hypothèses qui prétendent m'enseigner, mais qui ne sont point certaines" (ESS, 112).

In much broader terms, Camus' anti-rationalism can be seen as a violent reaction against Hegel's assertion that the real is rational and the rational real. Here he joins the existentialists but above all Kierkegaard who was the first to vehemently oppose Hegel's dictum. Camus points out that "jamais peut-être en aucun temps comme le nôtre, l'attaque contre la raison n'a été plus vive" (ESS, 114). He then proceeds to describe in detail the anti-rationalism of the existentialists, "ceux de la pensée irrationnelle et religieuse" (ESS, 114). With their strong anti-rationalism, thinkers like Jaspers, Heidegger, Kierkegaard and Chestov have attempted to bar "la voie royale de la raison" and find anew "les droits chemins de la vérité" (ESS, 114). It is precisely due to their philosophical innovations, and the philosophical endeavors of others, that our century has witnessed the downfall of rationalism and the subsequent birth of "absurdity." While Camus definitely shares the anti-rationalist views basic to the existentialist position, he condemns the existentialists in Le Mythe de Sisyphe for seeking a means of explanation in the non-rational. This is precisely what he terms the "leap of faith." Equally as skeptical of reason as they are, he nevertheless refuses to plunge forward into the kingdom of the irrational.

Camus asserts that the intellect is unable to encompass the complex reality of existence. Man, finding himself before this despairing maze of irrationality, is forced to conclude that "rien n'est clair; tout est chaos" (ESS, 117). In the Camusian view of things, the world appears
irrational to man and his rapport with it absurd. Intellectual awareness of the absurd, as Cruickshank observes, is the experience of an individual "who has expected--no doubt on the basis of Hegel's assurances--a rationally ordered cosmos," but who finds instead "on the basis of his own immediate experience, a chaos impervious to reason." 86
The absurd, which we will study in depth in part three, is therefore born of the divorce between the chaos of the world (ESS. 136) and man's need for unity, between the irrationality of the universe (ESS. 136) and man's deep-seated thirst for clarity. Intensely seeking a total explanation of existence, the frustrated rationalist discovers instead "an unbridgeable gulf between rationality and experience." 87 As Sprintzen observes, "the more profound contemporary man's penetration, the more clear his perception that man's experience is constantly, and ever has been factually, at odds with his yearnings." 88
Camus' position of deep-seated anti-rationalism is quite evident when he writes that:

...on désespère aujourd'hui de la vraie connaissance. S'il fallait écrire la seule histoire significative de la pensée humaine, il faudrait faire celle de ses repentirs successifs et de ses impuissances.

(ESS. 111)

His skepticism before the powers of reason explain his vehement attack on prophetic Marxism which he deems a form of absolute rationalism:

le rationalisme le plus absolu que l'histoire ait connu finit, comme il est logique, par s'identifier au nihilisme le plus absolu.
En vérité...la justice n'est plus en cause.
Ce qui est en cause, c'est un mythe prodigieux
de divinisation de l'homme, de domination,
d'unification de l'univers par les seuls
pouvoirs de la raison humaine. Ce qui est
en cause, c'est la conquête de la totalité
et la Russie croit être l'instrument de ce
messianisme sans Dieu. Que pèse la justice,
la vie de quelques générations, la douleur
humaine, auprès de ce mysticisme démesuré?
Rien, à proprement parler. (ESS. 352)

It is imperative to note at this junction that Hegel is seen by Camus as
the chief influence on "prophetic" Marxism. Blind faith in reason can
have, therefore, the most dire of practical ramifications. For Camus and
Voltaire, not only were the rationalists off course intellectually, but
they were simultaneously obstructing human happiness and paving the road
to ultimate destruction.

C. The Limits of Reason

For the author of *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*, the power of human
reason is indeed limited. In fact, throughout the bulk of Camus' work,
we find the traditional strain of skepticism as to the efficaciousness
of reason. Like Voltaire, he preferred to make an avowal of his ig-
norance rather than subscribe to a poetic hypothesis. Yet his distrust
of reason is fundamentally more extreme than Voltaire's in that he
explicitly formulated a doctrine of absurdity to explain man's situation
in the world.

Camus perceived, like Voltaire, the failure of reason to plumb
the notions of essence, soul, body, God, universe, infinity, matter and
spirit but these were really not central to his philosophical treatises.
Philosophy had progressed beyond these particulars to more general observations about the limitations of reason. These general observations, which had already been posited by Voltaire, were the failure of metaphysics, the impenetrable question of evil and the perplexing enigma of human destiny. Camus, in true Voltairean fashion, saw the futility of metaphysics, the folly and inherent danger of playing the philosopher's abstract word game as a substitute for attacking real concrete human dilemmas. Like Voltaire, he judged man to be adrift in a universe not only inundated with evil but fundamentally incomprehensible. The major question for both ultimately became not one of essence, not a pre-occupation with seeking a definition of this rapport between man and the creation, but one of existence, how to live in this malefic, unfathomable universe.

*Le Mythe de Sisyphe* deals in large measure with the weaknesses of reason. While Camus was concerning himself with contemporary epistemological questions, it should be noted that he formulates no lasting metaphysical pattern: "aucune métaphysique, aucune croyance n'y sont mêlées pour le moment" (*ESS*. 97). It is the author's belief that reason cannot reduce reality to rational categories and consequently fails to resolve the key difficulties confronting man. Reason is unable to encompass the complexity of human existence; it cannot make sense of man's situation in the world. By not being able to demonstrate universal truths, for example, man is at a loss for absolute values. This lack of an absolute value system creates an infinite number of possibilities, all unable to be justified, on the strictly moral level
of human action. At this stage of Camus' writing—his prefatory remark should be recalled "il y a du provisoire dans mon commentaire" (ESS. 97)—the quantitative ethic has replaced the traditional qualitative one: "ce qui compte n'est pas de vivre le mieux mais de vivre le plus... les jugements de valeur sont écartés ici au profit des jugements de fait" (ESS. 143). This, however, is not an invitation to crime, for as Camus points out later in the same work, the famous "tout est permis" of Ivan Karamazov does not mean that "rien n'est défendu" (ESS. 149).

Camus insists, furthermore, that there will always be a gap between "ce que nous imaginons savoir et ce que nous savons réellement" (ESS. 149). Like the existentialists, he concedes that reason is unable to pin down, to grasp existence because of the eternal lacuna between the concept and the thing, the abstract and the concrete, the essence and the existence of a phenomenon. To understand, writes Camus, "c'est avant tout unifier" (ESS. 110). Only the rationalists, however, still maintain the possibility of rational consolidation. For the contemporary non-rationalist, in psychology as in logic, there are many truths but no truth. Human reason can describe the world but it cannot explain it; the scientist can seize and enumerate phenomena but he does not help us to apprehend the world. Science is ultimately reduced to poetic expression and man's nostalgia for absolute knowledge rests unfulfilled, for he is left only the choice between uncertain hypothesis and infinite description. The former, since it will inevitably change, must be fundamentally false, while the latter, unquestionably true, tells us little about the world.
We are now in the realm of phenomenology and it is pertinent to indicate Camus' critique of Husserl who, faced with this choice, "leaped" into the domain of absolute reason. Husserl's starting point is quite similar to Camus'. For Husserl, "Penser, ce n'est plus unifier" (ESS. 117). Like Camus, he, therefore, denies the transcendent power of reason, "la démarche classique de la raison" (ESS. 129). The initial link between the phenomenologists and "la pensée absurde" is quite evident. The phenomenologists refuse to explain the world, they are satisfied with "une description du vécu" (ESS. 129). They share, therefore, with the so-called "philosophers of the absurd" an initial affirmation that there is no one truth, only "des vérités" (ESS. 129-130). The following quote of Camus too comes quite close to the descriptive practices of the phenomenologists: "Pour l'homme absurde, il ne s'agit plus d'expliquer et de résoudre, mais d'éprouver et de décrire" (ESS. 174). From this point, however, Husserl, according to Camus, goes on to establish a "métaphysique de consolation" by introducing an infinity of extra-temporal essences which, in effect, give meaning to an infinity of temporal objects (ESS. 131). From a starting point that stated that thought is description, Husserl goes on to make thought synonymous with explanation, not one single thought that explains everything but this infinity of extra-temporal essences that "donnent un sens à une infinité d'objets" (ESS. 131). Husserl, after having denied "le pouvoir intégrant de la raison," "leaps" into what Camus labels the domain of "la Raison éternelle," where reason no longer has any limits (ESS. 132 & 134).

Since, for Camus, reason can no longer unify but only enumerate
and describe, it goes without saying that he bans all philosophical systems, for reason, having lost the power to unify, cannot order, categorize and systematize reality. "Je ne crois pas assez à la raison pour croire à un système," writes Camus (ESS. 1427). This sentence underscores his distrust of reason which, far from being able to construct a coherent system or explanation of the real world, can do no more than proclaim the lack of coherence, the state of chaos that exists when the rational mind is juxtaposed with the irrational universe. On the one hand, the creation of a system would necessarily imply a failure to take into account all the aspects of man's situation. In this respect, Camus quotes Nietzsche with apparent approbation in his Carnets: "La volonté du système est un manque de loyauté" (CAR. 1, 174). On the other hand, reality will always have the last word, for any system is ultimately doomed to contradict concrete facts. Camus notes in the Carnets for example: "Ville heureuse. On vit suivant des systèmes différents. La peste: réduit tous les systèmes" (CAR. 1, 229).

Camus rejects not only philosophical systems but historical ideological ones as well. Any kind of abstraction is seen by Camus as a potential source of evil: "Que l'abstraction est le mal," writes Camus, "elle fait les guerres, les tortures, la violence" (CAR. 11, 133). It is once again his distrust of reason that keeps him from subscribing to ideological theories: "Je ne crois pas assez à la raison pour souscrire au progrès ni à aucune philosophie de l'histoire" (ESS. 835). Ideological theories, like philosophical systems, ultimately give the lie to reality. In this respect, he criticizes Marx in l'Homme révolté because "il a fait
passer le système avant la réalité" (ESS. 609). What particularly upset Camus was the fact that individual lives become abstractions when they are forced to yield to the ideology, with the result that "salvation" becomes "oppression." The following words of Camus have a prophetic quality about them when one considers the present situation in both China and Russia:

La vie de chacun ne peut être autrement qu'abstraite à partir du moment où on s'avise de la plier à une idéologie. Le malheur est que nous sommes au temps des idéologies et des idéologies totalitaires, c'est-à-dire assez sûres d'elles-mêmes, de leur raison imbécile ou de leur courte vérité, pour ne voir le salut du monde que dans leur propre domination" (ESS. 401)

For Camus then reason is a very limited tool when used lucidly; when used without lucidity, it becomes the basis for ideologies and systems that end in destruction. Camus, therefore, refused all absolutes whether temporal or eternal, for man, in the Camusian vision of things, is unable to know if the world has a meaning that transcends it. Reason, both in science and philosophy, fails to explain the world to man. Man himself cannot be explained solely by rational principles; the world is irrational, totally unable to be reduced to "un principe rationnel et raisonnable" (ESS. 136); the situation of man in the world is one of deep-seated absurdity. Reason fails for Camus, as for Voltaire, before the questions of evil and of human destiny. In short, reason is unable to absolve the human dilemma while man is condemned to live in it. Man finds himself plunged into a maze of irrationality that rests impervious to his
reason. Do what he might, he remains surrounded on all sides by "les murs absurdes."

In conclusion, let us note that the first meeting place of Voltaire and Camus, one that adds both historical and philosophical significance to our study, is in the mainstream of French anti-rationalist thought. More detail was allotted to the presentation of Voltaire's anti-rationalism for it is less readily accepted than that of Camus. While Voltaire and Camus belong to the tradition of French anti-rationalism, while each had an important role to play in the anti-rationalist movement, both are radically different from the majority of anti-rationalist thinkers and paradoxically waged war on a certain form of extreme anti-rationalism. This war on anti-rationalism will be explained in Part Two of this study where, in addition, the proper sphere of reason, according to Voltaire and Camus, will be elucidated.
PART II

THE REFUSAL TO ABANDON REASON AND THE PROPER SPHERE AND LIMITED VALIDITY OF RATIONALITY
"Pour un esprit absurde, la raison est vaine et il n'y a rien au-delà de la raison."

Camus
PART TWO

THE REFUSAL TO ABANDON REASON AND THE PROPER SPHERE
AND LIMITED VALIDITY OF RATIONALITY

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Chapter III

Voltaire

A. The Refusal to Abandon Reason

Despite Voltaire's innate skepticism vis-à-vis human reason, he refused to acknowledge the validity of other epistemological channels. This is what is implied in this study when Voltaire is referred to as an anti-Rationalist who opposed a certain form of anti-rationalism. The following brief analysis of Voltaire and Pascal and of Voltaire and Rousseau will help to elucidate this somewhat ambiguous position of Voltaire who, on the one hand, shared a deep appreciation of the limits of reason with both Pascal and Rousseau, but, on the other hand, refused to follow them into the realm of the non-rational. Later, we shall depict the same phenomenon in the case of Camus, who, like Voltaire, violently opposed anti-rationalist theories of knowledge, such as faith, hope and need as means of defining "truth" and escaping the absurd.

Unlike Pascal and Rousseau, Voltaire refuses to abandon reason despite its many limitations and ultimately finds no substitute for reason as both Pascal and Rousseau do. Voltaire's stance reflects that of the mainstream of Enlightenment thought which chose as its intellectual ancestors men "who had distrusted reason without exalting unreason," primarily men like Montaigne, Hobbes, Bayle and Locke. The awareness of the limits of reason and the refusal to substitute a
panacea such as faith or feeling in the place of reason accounts, in no small way, for the anguish that is readily perceived in much of Voltaire's later works.

1. **Pascal**

   As noted above, Voltaire shared Pascal's basic skepticism as to the absolute efficacy of human reason. Both readily proclaimed the limitations of human reason vis-à-vis abstractions, absolutes, infinity and a host of other problems that they deemed impervious to human thought. Voltaire would certainly accept, for example, the following "pensée" of Pascal:

   La dernière démarche de la raison est de reconnaître qu'il y a une infinité de choses qui la surpassent, ..... Que si les choses naturelles la surpassent, que dira-t-on des surnaturelles?\(^91\)

   Voltaire would also completely agree with this thought of Pascal which once again underscores the weakness of reason: "S'il y a un Dieu, il est infiniment incompréhensible, puisque n'ayant ni parties ni bornes, il n'a nul rapport à nous."\(^92\) Both men sensed a fundamental absurdity in man's situation in an indifferent, incomprehensible universe, realizing, paradoxically perhaps, at the same time, that reason, despite its inability to decipher the human dilemma, was man's claim to nobility. It was the outstanding characteristic that made him both superior to the universe and to the other animals. The conclusions that they drew from these initial observations were nonetheless diametrically opposed.

   Voltaire, as early as *Les Lettres philosophiques* in 1734 and as
late as *Les Dernières remarques* in 1777, attacks both Pascal's abuse of reason and his ultimate abandonment of reason. It should be noted that this critique of Pascal spans forty-three years and in the later work, the last work published by Voltaire before his death, the overwhelmingly majority of the "dernières remarques" concern Pascal directly. It is difficult not to conclude that Voltaire felt a definite mission to point out the errors and fanaticism of Pascal and to attempt to undo the noxious influence that Pascal had exercised upon contemporary thought and morals. In this respect, Mina Waterman notes that Voltaire died believing firmly "that if he and Condorcet together had accomplished the destruction of the *Pensées*, the struggle of the Enlightenment against fanaticism might well be called successful."\(^93\)

In reference to reason, Voltaire's criticism is leveled in three specific domains: the question of Pascal's wager, the supposed Pascalian proof of the Christian religion by the use of reason and finally the pre-Kierkegaardian, Pascalian leap of faith. After stating that the idea of wagering on God's existence is not only "un peu indécent et puéril" (M. XXII 32) but also strikingly in contrast with the gravity of the subject, Voltaire proceeds to make two major criticisms of "le pari." First of all, Voltaire finds it incorrect to say, as Pascal does, that "ne point parier que Dieu est, c'est parier qu'il n'est pas" (M. XXII 32). He points out that one who remains in a state of doubt does not in fact wager either for or against. Voltaire perceptively indicates that man is not condemned to believe or not to believe; he has a third option, namely to refuse to wager. Consequently,
Voltaire affirms the validity of the agnostic position. He then attacks the wager on much more practical grounds indicating what he considers to be an inherent danger in the wager. If one affirms that reason does not lead to God, suggests Voltaire, he is ultimately paves the road to atheism:

Votre raisonnement ne servirait qu'à faire des athées, si la voix de toute la nature ne vous criait qu'il y a un Dieu, avec autant de forces que ces subtilités ont de faiblesse. (M. XXII, 33)

It should now seem evident, due to Voltaire's skeptical notion of human reason in the metaphysical sphere, that he would maintain a sharp distinction between reason and faith. Critics argue as to the source of this dichotomy in Voltaire. Lanson, for example, feels that Voltaire borrowed from the English deists the device of separating faith and reason, while Mason, on the other hand, feels that this phenomenon in Voltaire was heavily influenced by Bayle. Be that as it may, Voltaire consistently maintains the separation between faith and reason. In the variants of the twenty-fifth letter of the Lettres philosophiques, Voltaire writes: "Ce n'est pas à la Métaphysique de prouver la Religion Chrétienne ..... La Raison est autant au-dessous de la Foi que le fini est au-dessous de l'infini (M. XXII 28). Once again, in La Henriade, Henry IV "avoue, avec foi, que la religion est au-dessus de l'homme, et confond la raison" (M. VIII 172). It can consequently be expected that Voltaire severely criticize Pascal for his attempt to prove the veracity of the Christian Religion by reason. In all fairness
to Pascal, however, it is necessary to point out just what he was attempting to do because Voltaire frequently refuses to get the point in question of the "pensée" that he comments upon. In fact, the twenty-fifth letter of Les Lettres philosophiques, which weaves the thoughts of Pascal with the commentary of Voltaire, reads at times like a dialogue in an "absurd" play, that is to say a "dialogue de sourds" put on the stage to demonstrate the total lack of communication between human beings.

In his effort to convert the libertines of his day, Pascal was forced to use reason and logical argument even though he himself felt the inadequacies of reason in this area. Mina Waterman very perceptively notes Pascal's substitution of "applied psychology" for "logical consistency." Even though reason is ultimately misleading, Pascal hoped to reach the skeptic on his own grounds.

Pascal did not accept the cosmological proofs that in fact satisfied the Newtonian Voltaire, yet, at the same time, he sensed the need to employ reason as a guide to the truth that he hoped to establish. As he himself states:

A ceux qui ont de la répugnance pour la religion, il faut commencer par leur montrer qu'elle n'est point contraire à la raison; ensuite qu'elle est vénérable et en donner du respect; après la rendre aimable, et faire souhaiter qu'elle fût vraie; et puis montrer, par des preuves incontestables, qu'elle est vraie; faire voir son antiquité, et sa sainteté par sa grandeur et par son élévation; et enfin qu'elle est aimable, parce qu'elle promet le vrai bien.
Despite the fact that Pascal speaks of "des preuves incontestables," many other "pensées" indicate that he was well aware that these were proofs only for one who already had intuitively become aware of God's existence. These were simply ways of rationalizing what one has felt, means of convincing the intellect of the validity of what the intuition has grasped. They might also serve as ways of preparing the unbeliever intellectually for what his intuition hopefully would seize.

Notwithstanding the willful lack of comprehension at times apparent in the last letter of *Les Lettres philosophiques*, Voltaire's analysis of Pascal's observations is often quite penetrating. First, Voltaire repudiates what he terms "le roman théologique de la chute de l'homme" (M. XXI 35), whereas Pascal had claimed that only the mystery of original sin could explain man's double nature. In fact, Voltaire rejects the notion of the duplicity of man, an idea he esteems "aussi absurde que métaphysique" (M. XXII 31). More essentially, Voltaire finds at bottom a fundamental contradiction in the thought pattern of Pascal. On the one hand, Pascal rejects reason and on the other he attempts an obvious apology. First, he claims that reason cannot prove the existence of God, then he states that reason can prove the intricate dogmas of the Christian Religion. As Voltaire puts it: "Il est étrange que M. Pascal ait cru qu'on pouvait deviner le péché originel par la raison et qu'il dise qu'on ne peut connaître par la raison si Dieu existait" (M. XXII 59). Voltaire inveighs against both points claiming that the first, the concession that reason cannot lead to God, will encourage atheism, while the second, the admission that reason can prove
the Christian religion, will lead to fanaticism. Voltaire's most consistent view, or at least the view that he was most consistently willing to publicly profess, was in fact the direct opposite of Pascal's. For Voltaire, reason led to an affirmation of God's existence but was incapable of proving anything about the Christian religion. Voltaire continually upheld the division between faith and reason and judged Pascal's effort to prove Christianity "plus capable de scandaliser que d'édifier" (M. XXII 28).

Voltaire's third major criticism of Pascal with reference to reason, that of the leap of faith, deals more with the abandonment of reason than with the abuse of reason. Pascal's dictum that "Tout notre raisonnement se réduit à céder au sentiment" meets with Voltaire's concise riposte: "Notre raisonnement se réduit à céder au sentiment en fait de goût, non en fait de science" (M. XXII 51). Whereas Pascal judged that reason alone was unable to combat the deceptions imposed upon it by the imagination and consequently needed the aid of intuition for epistemological perception, Voltaire refused to abandon reason in favor of intuition or feeling except in matters of taste. Inasmuch as Camus makes the same criticism of Kierkegaard in Le Mythe de Sisyphe, it is à propos at this juncture to distinguish between Pascal's notion of faith and that of Kierkegaard. For Kierkegaard, faith is the crucifixion of reason, for if reason led to faith, if it were logical to believe, Kierkegaard would argue, faith would have no value. Reason would compel us to believe and the act of faith would in no wise be meritorious. Although Mina Waterman maintains that for Pascal "reason
and faith are incompatible,″99 this is not at all the case. While reason cannot lead to God in the Pascalian view of things, for only the intuition can grasp his existence, faith is not against reason "elle est seulement au-dessus d'elle."100 As Pascal notes elsewhere: "si on choque les principes de la raison, notre religion sera absurde et ridicule."101 This is precisely why Pascal esteemed his so-called "proofs" efficacious arguments of the intellect capable of rationally justifying the perception of the intuition.

In sum, both Pascal and Voltaire felt that reason was inadequate to produce absolute truths. Yet they followed divergent paths from this point onward. Pascal, on the one hand, abandons reason to find God, he humiliates the intellect to establish intuitive truth. This is the leap of faith, out of the realm of reason into the area of intuition, out of the domain of logic, out of history into the realm of faith, into the eternal. Pascal, starting from the same basis as Voltaire, a basis of deep-seated skepticism as to the efficacy of human reason, ends by turning via metaphysics, from the terrestrial toward the celestial. Giving credence to intuitive truths known to the heart but known to reason, he plunges forward into the kingdom of faith. Voltaire, on the other hand, refuses to yield. He will not abandon reason despite its many limitations. His view is a courageous one for he clings pertinaciously to reason even though that stand precludes the consolation of revealed religion. Voltaire refuses what Camus labels in Le Mythe de Sisyphe "le troisième sacrifice exigé par Ignace de Loyola—le sacrifice de l'intellect" (ESS. 126), choosing to remain within the limits
of reason and history, confining himself to the human and the terrestrial even though, as Crocker words it: "He had no refuge but a meager faith in man's courage and intelligence."\textsuperscript{102}

2. Rousseau

The individual criticism that Voltaire levels at Rousseau for his abuse of reason and for his abandonment of reason is clearly linked with his entire criticism of Rousseau's thought, \textsuperscript{103} for, as we shall see, Rousseau's entire philosophy is, to a great extent, based on a non-rational foundation of feeling. Rousseau's deism, for example, is based on the notion of natural feeling as a source of knowledge, whereas Voltaire's is the product of intellectual analysis.

That Rousseau sinned against human intelligence and reasoned poorly must have been quite apparent to Voltaire who refers to him as "un absurde raisonneur" (M. IX 554). Perusing the marginalia of Voltaire on the pages of Rousseau affords us additional insight into the question. Where Rousseau writes, in the \textit{Discours sur l'Inégalité}, that "l'état de réflexion est un état contre nature et que l'homme qui médite est un animal dépravé," Voltaire laconically and meaningfully replies "dépravé."\textsuperscript{104}

The fact that Rousseau, like Pascal, uses intuition for epistemological perception is at once evident in his formulation of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul which is the key question raised by his \textit{Lettre sur la Providence}. However, the whole process is a maze of contradictory thinking. On the one hand, Rousseau states:
"Si Dieu existe, il est parfait; s'il est parfait, il est sage, puissant, et juste....s'il est juste et puissant, mon âme est immortelle." This is a clear a priori argument, but despite its promulgation, Rousseau does not believe it, for he goes on to state, in reference to the immortality of the soul that: "Quant à moi, je vous avouerai naïvement que ni le pour ni le contre ne me paraissent démontrés sur ce point par les seules lumières de la raison."106

There are several important ramifications of this notion in Rousseau's philosophy. For one, since Rousseau's notion of morality is partly founded upon the immortality of the soul, that too then stems from a basis of feeling rather than from reason. In the Nouvelle Héloïse, Julie's last letter points out the link between individual morality and eternal life: "Non, je ne te quitte pas, je vais t'attendre. La vertu qui nous sépara sur la terre nous unira dans le séjour éternel."107

His defense of optimism and Providence too is founded upon sentiment because it is based first of all on God's existence which is a perception of the heart: "si Dieu existe," writes Rousseau, "il est parfait, s'il est parfait, il est sage, puissant et juste; s'il est sage et puissant, tout est bien."108 It is also contingent upon the immortality of the soul which cannot be posited rationally: "Combien la question de la Providence tient à celle de l'immortalité de l'âme," writes Rousseau, "que j'ai le bonheur de croire, sans ignorer que la raison peut en douter."109 Rousseau believed in the existence of evil, even though he assented to the notion of both
individual and general Providence, but the role of the immortality of
the soul played a large part in the formulation of his doctrine of
optimism for things would be rectified to a large extent in the life to
come.

The following sentence that appears in *Emile*: "Exister, pour
nous, c'est sentir,"\textsuperscript{111} stresses the importance of feeling in the
whole Rousseuistic scheme of things. Parodying Descartes, it could
be correctly rewritten as "Je sens donc je suis" for the emphasis is on
personal, individual feeling as Le Vicaire points out. What the in-
dividual feels is good, is good and what he feels is bad, is bad. This
stands in contradiction to Voltaire's notion of good and evil as
strictly social entities. Finally, this emphasis on feeling explains
the innate contradiction in Rousseau who was capable of violently
attacking Christianity and then humbly subscribing to it for it was
"émouvant." This contradiction baffled Voltaire. On the one hand,
he felt that Rousseau was a hypocrite for remaining a Christian and
having the Vicar continue to say mass,\textsuperscript{112} and on the other, the overall
mixture of rational criticism and mystical adherence was unacceptable
to the ever logical Voltaire.

It is clear that Rousseau in his metaphysical quest was com-
pletely unable to abandon the hope that he was pathologically in need
of. If unable to rationally posit the "truths" that offered him the
consolation he wanted, he would go elsewhere to establish them. He
frankly admits in *La Lettre sur la Providence* that "l'état de doute est
un état trop violent pour mon âme."\textsuperscript{113} Once again, in the same work,
confusing wishing with being, he writes:

Non, j'ai trop souffert en cette vie pour n'en pas attendre une autre. Toutes les subtilités de la métaphysique ne me feront pas douter un moment de l'immortalité de l'âme, et d'une Providence bienfaisante. Je la sens, je la crois, je la veux, je l'espère, je la défendrai jusqu'à mon dernier soupir, et ce sera, de toutes les disputes que j'aurai soutenues, la seule où mon intérêt ne sera pas oublié.¹¹⁴

Even if some of the modern critics are correct in attempting to give a more rational basis to the philosophy of Rousseau, it would not invalidate our major claim that Rousseau, like Pascal, fled from reason to establish certain truths that reason could not establish. Sounding a great deal like Pascal, Rousseau writes in *La Nouvelle Héloïse*: "la religion n'est jamais contraire à la raison."¹¹⁶ Perhaps it is not, but Rousseau points out that God's existence, the immortality of the soul and the whole philosophy of optimism and Providence are truths intuitively known only, for reason can give no assurance in these matters.

The passions were important for Voltaire, indeed his ideas about them were revolutionary; but, as he responded to Pascal, the faculty of reason only yielded to feeling in matters of taste and not in matters of knowledge. The passions for Voltaire may have been the wheels that make the whole society rotate but they were not epistemological channels. Voltaire would not replace reason either by Pascalian faith or grace or by Rousseauistic feeling or sentimentality.
Voltaire stoically balancing between the "super-rational perception" of Pascal and the "subrational heart" of Rousseau, clinging tenaciously to reason, formulated a horizontal humanism which was in clear contradiction with the traditional, vertical humanism of both Pascal and Rousseau.

B. The Proper Sphere and Limited Validity of Rationality

The first chapter elucidated the restrictions placed upon reason in both metaphysics and psychology by the movement from rationalism to empiricism while the preceding analysis of Voltaire's criticism of Pascal and Rousseau depicted Voltaire's refusal to abandon reason despite these limitations. The crisis of reason, therefore, faced by the men of the Enlightenment neither precluded the delineation of a realm where reason might be efficacious nor did it necessarily cause an evolution toward nihilism. Crises themselves, like the one in question, can be fruitful if they lead to re-evaluation and the "philosophes" lucidly chose to re-evaluate and redefine rather than to abdicate.

As a result, one notes a continuous re-examination of the power of reason from Descartes to Voltaire, a phenomenon in no small measure influenced by Bayle in France as well as by the British empiricists, and a simultaneous attempt to reappraise the faculty of reason, to redefine it and perhaps above all to mark its limitations. At this point we encounter the "fallacy of spurious persistence," a term
coined by Gay to define the error of treating ideas as independent, unchanging entities. For while the term "reason," of course, remained in usage from Descartes to Voltaire, the meaning of the term changed radically. In the mainstream of Enlightenment thought, reason no longer had anything to do with a closed system of knowledge. In addition, all a priori conjectures were proscribed and reason was declared incompetent in any domain outside of the domain of human experience. Reason was now viewed more as an active force, an energy that was progressively applied in the sciences with the hope of discovering truth and in the practical affairs of humanity with the hope of doing good. The use of reason for the "philosophes" meant primarily the right to criticize rationally the traditional forces of faith, superstition and fanaticism.

Of all the definitions of reason that the author of this study has been able to secure, the following comes closest to defining reason as it was understood by the "philosophes":

Reason to signify the free and exclusive exercise of the intelligence in inquiry. It is intended as synonymous with 'reasonableness' or the most judicious employment of the conscious faculties. The use of reason in this sense does imply an activity superior to any other. It is meant to be contrasted with barbarism, prejudice, emotion or whatever blindness characterizes faith and authority. It is what the philosophers have referred to when they have spoken of the 'life of reason'.

Reason, viewed in this light, would be efficacious if it avoided metaphysics, abstractions and all speculative impediments and limited
itself to the realm of human experience. This is quite clearly connoted by the following phrase found under the heading "Raison" in the Encyclopédie: "Par conséquent, dans toutes les choses dont nous avons une idée nette et distincte, la raison est le vrai juge compétent..." 120

Reason must stand its ground even against the pronouncements of faith as the editor of the Encyclopédie very courageously and humanistically exclaims in the article entitled "Raison":

...quoique la révélation en s'accordant avec elle puisse confirmer ces décisions, elle ne saurait pourtant dans de tels cas invalider ses décrets; & par-tout où nous avons une décision claire & évidente de la raison, nous ne pouvons être obligés d'y renoncer pour embrasser l'opinion contraire, sous prétexte que c'est une matière de foi. La raison de cela, c'est que nous sommes hommes avant que d'être chrétiens. 121

While reason, for the men of the Enlightenment, was a competent judge in the realm of human experience, outside of this domain, human rationality was deemed a futile tool in search of what it could never adequately comprehend.

This was also Voltaire's notion of reason: a force that he could use scientifically and sociologically to thwart the effects of prejudice and custom. It meant essentially a rational inquiry into practical problems confronting humanity. It included a preference for knowledge over ignorance, facts over faith and demonstration over custom. Reason, as Voltaire writes in Zadig, is "plus ancienne que la
coutume" (M. XXI 60) and this ancient torch was indispensable to the realm of human experience. The following statement of Camus, made in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*, incarnates the notion of reason essential to Voltaire and the other "philosophes": "Il est vain de nier absolument la raison. Elle a son ordre dans lequel elle est efficace. C'est justement celui de l'expérience humaine" (ESS. 124).

This specifically human faculty would be a guide to help man against the fallacies established by doctrine, custom, faith and sentiment. In the sciences, reason based on experiments would create "un guide sûr" as long as man would stop where "la lumière de son flambeau lui manque" (M. XXII 205, 215). In the practical affairs of life, the use of reason, of human intelligence, of rationality could improve the lot of man. Here Voltaire linked his belief in the rational approach with his passion for justice and wrote fearlessly for the rights of man, pleading for the use of reason in public life. In this respect, Voltaire is very definitely an "écrivain engagé" whose treatises had immediate ramifications in reality. He himself may have had this in mind when he wrote that "Jean-Jacques (Rousseau) n'écrit que pour écrire et moy j'écris pour agir" (Best. 13221).

In his later years, he waged a constant struggle in the name of reason—reasonableness as opposed to barbarism and ignorance—hoping to establish justice and happiness by suppressing fanaticism and intolerance. Voltaire doubted that the masses would ever act rationally, as is manifest in his letter to d'Alembert: "Elle
(reason) triomphera, comme vous le dites, au moins chez les honnêtes gens; la canaille n'est pas faite pour elle" (M. XXXIX, 167). He nevertheless claimed that if reasonableness prevailed rather than prejudice and hatred, man would be happier for his lot would be subsequently ameliorated. In his histories, too, Voltaire traces the very slow march of reason and its occasional triumph over the forces of darkness. In fact, Voltaire writes in reference to Le Siècle de Louis XIV that: "C'est l'histoire de l'esprit humain" (M. XXXV 30). Voltaire made it quite clear that it was what reason established in a particular age that made that age worthy of study by succeeding generations. In writing his histories, he, therefore, stressed the products of reason over the laborious descriptions of wars practiced by his predecessors. Throughout his life, Voltaire clung to what he had written in his Poème sur la loi naturelle: "Nous n'avons qu'un flambeau (la raison), gardons-nous de l'éteindre" (M. IX 450). For this, he certainly merited Nietzsche's praise in Ecce Homo: "Voltaire était avant tout un grand seigneur de l'intelligence."

The notion of reason expounded by the men of the Enlightenment, however, was not one-dimensional. It was essentially a double-edged sword, praised for its ability to lead to some truths when properly employed but limited because of its inability to fathom certain fundamental questions of the human condition. Whereas the rationalist was able to tell man who he was, where he came from and where he was going, the empiricist judged these questions outside the realm of
human knowledge.

No one more than Voltaire emphasized both these aspects in his evaluation of human rationality. On the one hand, contrary to Pascal, Voltaire "a cultivé le jardin de la pensée," on the other, he became more and more aware of the limitations of human reason. *Micromégas*, an early conte, still maintains a delicate balance between man's rationality and his irrational follies. Some men appear here as killers, assassinating each other for control of "un tas de boue," others are pedants, uselessly throwing around their vain philosophical jargon. Yet, at the same time, the grandeur of human thought is stressed: "Cet atome m'a mesuré! Il est géomètre" (M. XXI, 119, 117), exclaims the surprised giant. The limits of reason are emphasized, however, in the later tales. In *Candide*, when Martin affirms: "Travaillons sans raisonner, c'est le seul moyen de rendre la vie supportable" (M. XXI, 217), he uses the term "raisonner" in the sense of "spéculer" and implicitly underscores the futility of philosophical theorization. This is, of course, far less pessimistic than the equally famous "te taire" of the dervish (M. XXI, 216) and it should be noted that the author of *Candide* speaks of Martin's proposition as a "louable dessein" (M. XXI, 217).

Much of Voltaire's later work, however, reveals that this "louable dessein" is impossible to actualize. This is particularly well developed in his *Histoire d'un Bon Bramin* which was published two years after *Candide*. In the tale, the unhappiness of "une vieille Indienne bigote, imbécile et assez pauvre...un vieil automate qui ne
pense à rien, et qui vit content" (M. XXI, 219, 220). Voltaire stresses the fact that the ignorant are quite content, quite happy while those who speculate are not. Reason, because of its inability to furnish answers to key questions about the human condition, not only leads to a blind alley intellectually, but, as in the case in point, leaves the Brahmin on the fringes of despair. In this respect he notes:

Je suis prêt quelquefois de tomber dans le désespoir, quand je songe qu'après toutes les recherches je ne sais ni d'où je viens, ni ce que je suis, ni où j'irai, ni ce que je deviendrai." (M. XXI 219)

Once more reason is essentially opposed to felicitousness because man, for his part, is incapable of not speculating. This is not all. Given the choice, an intelligent man would choose reason over happiness in the sense that he would not renounce reason to secure felicitousness. This is the conclusion of the Brahmin who states:

Je serais heureux si j'étais aussi sot que ma voisine et cependant je ne voudrais pas d'un tel bonheur.... Je n'aurais pas voulu être heureux à condition d'être imbécile." (M. XXI 220, 221)

In the first place, this tale gives the lie to the eudemonistic view that happiness is the end of man, for man will not choose it at any cost. In this respect, Voltaire writes: "De là je conclus que, si nous faisons cas du bonheur, nous faisons encore plus de cas de la raison" (M. XXI 221). Although he finds an incredible contradiction
in the fact that man prefers reason to happiness, indeed he judges it, "très insensé" (M. XXI 221). Voltaire recognizes it as an essential part of the human condition. Man, as Voltaire conceives him, chooses that specifically human function, reason, "le propre de l'homme"; he opts in short to be a man rather than to be happy.

Then, too, the tale insists upon the anguish that accompanies this choice of reason. Voltaire's vision has become more and more Pascalian, for here it is clear, just as it was for Pascal, that reason leads to anguish, with the sole difference, of course, that Voltaire does not erase that anguish by electing faith. He remains stoically in the blind alley that reason leads him into. Voltaire wrote long before Malraux that man is "le seul animal qui sache qu'il doit mourir" and it is the knowledge of death that is greatly responsible for man's choice of reason over happiness, for it is this lucidity inherent in man, the knowledge of his own mortality, that condemns him to question the meaning of his situation.

Certainly, Voltaire would say along with Camus who writes in Le Mythe de Sisyphe that: "Je ne sais pas si ce monde a un sens qui le dépasse. Mais je sais que je ne connais pas ce sens et qu'il m'est impossible pour le moment de le connaître" (ESS. 136). Like Camus, Voltaire leans toward cosmic pessimism and his humanism is a tragic one, for like Camus', it stresses the limits of man and the power of the forces such as absurdity and evil that plague him. Yet, neither Camus nor Voltaire can be labeled either optimistic or pessimistic for both terms connote some type of resignation while
neither label opens the path to moderation. Voltaire, for his part, forged a "mi-chemin" between Rousseau and Holbach, between Pascal and Sade, between eternity and nihilism and "tentait de vivre" with measure within the limits of reason.

C. Voltaire – Moralist

The much debated question of "Voltaire le philosophe" will now be discussed since it is fundamentally linked with his evaluation of the faculty of reason. Voltaire philosophe by Georges Pellissier represents one of the early attempts to establish Voltaire as a philosopher. But, as Mr. Pellissier points out, he has taken the word "philosophe" "dans la signification où le dix-huitième siècle l'entendait."\textsuperscript{125} In 1944, Ian Alexander published an article entitled "Voltaire and Metaphysics." His conclusions are certainly original inasmuch as he recognizes Voltaire, the arch-enemy of metaphysics and the most eclectic of thinkers, as a "metaphysician" who had "a system ... a coherent body of conceptions."\textsuperscript{126} Norman Torrey sees Voltaire as a philosopher but admits that Voltaire is not a philosopher "in the present narrow acceptation of the term."\textsuperscript{127} Theodore Besterman, while recognizing that "a philosophe of the Enlightenment is by no means the same kind of animal as a philosopher in modern times," insists that one can be a philosopher without creating a system. He concludes nonetheless that Voltaire was "a man of science rather than a philosopher."\textsuperscript{128}

Virgil Topazio notes that since "the emergence of philosophy in
the 19th century as a separate discipline ... Voltaire's reputation as a philosopher has gone into gradual eclipse." He feels that etymologically at least Voltaire should be considered a philosopher for he was "a lover of wisdom and truth" but, like Torrey, he concedes that in the narrow and formal sense of the 19th and 20th centuries, Voltaire was not a philosopher. I29 Ira Wade states that Voltaire was indeed a true philosopher even though "he often expressed himself simply and unambiguously and refused to offer a system of philosophy."130 René Pomeau seems unable to decide whether Voltaire merits the name "philosopher" in the modern sense of the term. He claims in Voltaire par lui-même that since Voltaire "a cherché obstinément le mot de la grande énigme, il mérite le nom de philosophe, au sens où nous l'entendons."131 The following year, however, he notes in La Religion de Voltaire that: "Voltaire n'a pas pû être philosophe, au sens ou nous l'entendons," because he did not create a system.132 Finally, Peter Gay makes a case for all the "philosophes" but he too utilizes the term in its 18th century context. He declares that the "philosophes" felt that they deserved the name "philosopher" because they referred back to the Greeks.133

Since the return to metaphysics in the 19th century, the term "philosopher" has not been applied without dispute upon those thinkers who have not managed to create a philosophical system. Camus writes, for example, "Je ne suis pas un philosophe. Je ne crois pas assez à la raison pour croire à un système" (ESS. 1427). This is the modern viewpoint that Camus puts forth and from this perspective
neither Voltaire nor Camus can be aptly called a philosopher. Voltaire
supporters seem to take offense when Voltaire is denied the
appellation "philosopher," as if this necessarily implied a rejection
of Voltaire's value as a thinker. The fact remains that if Voltaire
knew the contemporary connotation of the term, he would shrink from
it openly as Camus did. System makers and word-spinners for Voltaire
were always "rêveurs" and "romanciers" whose imagination had gotten
the best of their reason.

There were two distinct meanings of the term "philosophe"
in the 18th century. When the term "philosophe" was not used
pejoratively, it connoted what is meant in this study when the same
term is used: a practical, moral thinker who distrusted metaphysics,
systems and all the remaining abstract paraphernalia and who thought
of philosophy in terms of criticism of tradition and in terms of
science. In the strictest sense of the term, as the author of the
Encyclopédie implies, - "... la philosophie ou la science (car ces
mots sont synonymes). ...",134 the "philosophe" was the man of
science.

In this study, we have used the term "philosopher" as a
translation of the word "philosophe" when that word is employed by
Voltaire in a disparaging manner. This type of thinker, in
Voltaire's eyes, was a lover of abstractions who inevitably created
a system of thought which, like all systems, ultimately had little
to do with reality. In this respect, Voltaire defines "philosopher"
in his Dictionnaire philosophique as referring to "des hommes qui
d'ordinaire aiment mieux une absurdité qu'ils imaginent qu'une vérité que tout le monde adopte" (M. XXI 282). Once again, a phrase from Le Traité de Métaphysique clearly indicates that Voltaire voluntarily disassociates himself from the philosophers: "Il est donc clair jusqu'à présent que ni les philosophes, ni moi, nous savons ce que c'est que cette âme" (M. XXII, 211. Our underlining).

Voltaire derided those thinkers who were intent upon creating philosophical systems and Camus consistently denied that he was a philosopher in the modern sense of the term because it implied one who had a philosophical system. Both openly shunned systems because they did not believe that human rationality was capable of probing metaphysics and systematizing reality. In our view, both Camus and Voltaire are moralists and that term is used in this study to indicate a thinker who is interested primarily in human behavior and whose interest in thought is essentially directed to action and not to thought per se.

There are three major reasons why Voltaire should not be considered a philosopher. The first, of course, stemming from his limited faith in the power of reason, is his refusal to construct a philosophical system. Our ignorance of first principles, of "soul," "matter," "God," "infinity" and "essence" eliminate the basis for any system of philosophy. Voltaire esteemed that all systems not only contradict one another but all of them ultimately contradict factual reality. As he wrote in L'ABC in 1762: "Il est vrai qu'en fait de systèmes, il faut toujours se réserver le droit de rire le
lendemain de ses idées de la veille" (M. XXVII 399).

In addition, the creation of a system somehow forces a philosopher into rigid consistency that too would run counter to reality. Pangloss incarnates the ridiculous philosophical consistency that Voltaire derided. No longer believing in optimism because of extreme personal suffering, he still remains a prisoner of his system: "Pangloss avouait qu'il avait toujours horriblement souffert; mais ayant soutenu une fois que tout allait à merveille, il le soutenait toujours et n'en croyait Rien" (M. XXI 215). Voltaire, for his part, rather than establish another "roman," preferred to work in the realm of pragmatic moral eclecticism.

The second reason is Voltaire's all-out war on metaphysics. For Voltaire, metaphysical speculation was the most useless and fruitless pastime possible, for metaphysics contained two parts: "la première, tout ce que les hommes de bon sens savent; la seconde, ce qu'ils ne sauront jamais" (M. XXXIV 249). The folly of metaphysical speculation is indeed a leitmotif in the contes. In Candide, for example, Pangloss and Martin discuss metaphysics aboard ship and Voltaire informs us that by the fifteenth day they had made as much progress as they had on the first day (M. XXI 185). In Voltaire's eyes, however, metaphysics is not only a waste of time but potentially quite harmful. He frequently returns to this point as in his Traité de Tolérance where he writes: "Les tigres ne déchirent que pour manger et nous nous sommes exterminés pour des paragraphes" (M. XXV 40). Metaphysical controversies are akin to theological disputes
which Voltaire considers "à la fois la farce la plus ridicule et le fléau le plus affreux de la terre, immédiatement après la guerre, la peste, la famine et la vérole" (M. XX 467).

Voltaire's war on metaphysics cannot be disassociated from his innate love of clarity. He judged metaphysical jargon confusing, obscure and nonsensical, referring to it in Candide as "le métaphysico-théologo-cosmolo-nigologie" (M. XXI 138). Once again, in Histoire de Jenni, when the wise Freind attempts to speak to the atheist Birton about the existence of God, he prefaces his discourse by indicating some errors and obscurities of Clark that deal with "la réalité de l'infini actuel et de l'espace." At these words, the simple people of America, the good Parouba and his daughter and several English who were present "voulurent aller prendre l'air sur le tillac" and only return when Freind promises to be intelligible in his discussion (M. XXI 553). The error that philosophers make, as Valéry points out, is "de prendre le langage pour une fin alors qu'il n'est qu'un moyen." Voltaire recognized this to be true and avoided it in his own works while he derided it in others.

Thirdly, we note the fact that Voltaire deliberately taught the contrary of what he believed for practical moral reasons. This is particularly true in three works where his end dictated his means, where he was more concerned with utility than truth per se. In the Poème sur la loi naturelle, in order to undo the atheistic influence of La Mettrie on Fréderic, he adopts the Rousseauistic
position that God is found in our hearts. In his *Poème sur le désastre de Lisbonne*, he ends on a note of hope and never published his revision which was far more pessimistic, much closer to Hume than the original. In *Histoire de Jenni*, in order to reverse the growing influence of Holbach's atheism, he preaches the goodness of God and the immortality of the soul with the idea of rewards and punishments after death.

These latter ideas are in fact insisted upon in other works which span his entire career for Voltaire judged that social morality exacted that the masses believe in hell. This belief served as a "frein" to keep them in line. In the *Lettres philosophiques*, for example, Voltaire writes: "Le bien commun de tous les hommes demande qu'on croie l'âme immortelle" (M. XXII 124). Later, in his *Dictionnaire philosophique*, he states that "Le dogme de la Providence est si sacré, si nécessaire au bonheur du genre humain, que nul honnête homme ne doit exposer ses lecteurs à douter d'une vérité qui ne peut faire de mal en aucun cas, et qui peut toujours opérer beaucoup de bien" (M. SVII 1).

Voltaire was not interested in thought for thought's sake; his interests were diverse and far more varied and complex than those of one interested solely in constructing a body of thought. Valéry succinctly and perceptively noted with no pejorative intent whatever:

Non, ce n'est point un philosophe que ce diable d'homme, dont la mobilité, les
Ressources, les contradictions font un personnage que la musique seule, la plus vive musique pourrait suivre, suivre jusqu'à sa fin.\textsuperscript{137}

Voltaire wanted to establish a way of life, not a body of thought. His main concerns were practical not speculative. Gay notes that the "philosophes" were so preoccupied with practicality that "they sometimes skirted close to philistine anti-intellectualism."\textsuperscript{138} This statement seems excessive in the case of Voltaire but does underline his obsession with practicality, with the useful, with the concrete. Voltaire's preference for "la morale" can be readily seen in his treatment of the Greek philosophers and the Eastern thinkers. If, as Gay points out, the "philosophes" judged themselves "philosophers" because they referred back to the Greeks, they oddly enough referred back to them only as moralists. Voltaire ridicules them for their philosophical beliefs: "La Grèce, berceau des arts et des erreurs où l'on poussa si loin la grandeur et la sottise de l'esprit humain" (M. XXII 121). Their views on the soul, Voltaire points out in \textit{Les Lettres philosophiques}, were as absurd as ours: "Platon et Socrate," for example, "disaient l'âme corporelle et éternelle" (M. XXII 121). Plato is constantly lampooned for his philosophical views: "O Platon tant admiré! j'ai peur que vous ne vous ayez conté que des fables, et que vous n'ayez jamais parlé qu'en sophismes" (M. XVIII 125). Aristotle, it is true, has been "expliqué de mille façons," but simply because he was "inintelligible" (M. XXII 121).
The Greeks, then, for Voltaire "ont tous dit des sottises en physique et en métaphysique," but they were all "excellents dans la morale" (M. XXVI 89). Voltaire's advice, of course, is to forget their "sottises" and imitate "leur sage tolérance" (M. XXVI 92). His appreciation of the Brahmins is similar: "mauvais métaphysiciens, ridicules théologiens, mais quelle sublimité dans la morale." They were not only just "envers les autres" but "rigoureux envers eux-mêmes" (M. XXVI 88). His love of Confucius and his simple precepts is unequivocal. Never claiming to be inspired, Confucius cultivated friendship, modesty and honesty and only asked that one adore God and be just (M. XXVI 88).

Voltaire's preference for "la morale" over dogma, be it philosophical or theological, goes all the way back to Les Lettres philosopiques where he presents the Quakers in a favorable light. Although they are somewhat ridiculous with their "galimatias" and their "contorsions," they have rejected theological abstraction and are basically concerned with "being good." They have freed themselves of dogma, the sacraments and of priests while they consider all men their brothers, hate war and favor religious tolerance. The rest of Voltaire's work too insists on the importance of moral action to which philosophical speculation is subordinate. He writes in his *Philosophe ignorant*, "soit que la matière puisse penser ou non, quiconque pense doit être juste" (M. XXVI 77); and in the *Lettres philosophiques*:

"Il importe peu à la Religion de quelle substance soit l'âme, pourvu qu'elle soit vertueuse" (M. XXII 1245).
The end of thought then for Voltaire is action. "S'il est impossible de le mettre en pratique," writes Voltaire in Les Dernières Remarques, "il est donc inutile d'en parler" (M. XXI 10). The essential function of thought is to find a moral principle: "ce peu de vérités que j'ai acquises par ma raison sera entre mes mains un bien stérile, si je n'y puis trouver quelque principe de morale" (M. XXVI 78). The contradictions of speculative thought are therefore resolved by fruitful action. The moral principle that Voltaire established was a social one; his main concern was the happiness of the individual in an enlightened, tolerant social structure that he and the other "philosophes" were hoping to construct.

The concerns of the moralist are apparent in each of the genres that Voltaire practiced. In his contes, which are openly didactic, the "moraliste" is ever present, even at times to the exclusion of the "psychologue." Voltaire ends his two most important philosophical treatises, La Traité de Méthaphysique and Le Philosophe ignorant, with rather lengthy discourses on "la morale." Just as Voltaire attacks theology every time that it sins against "la morale," he emphasizes here the importance of the "la morale" in philosophical thinking and attacks philosophical beliefs that are harmful to the morality of the nation. As an historian too, the moralist is always there, "plaire et instruire" are the key-words to the histories that Voltaire wrote. In fact, Voltaire dealt exclusively with modern history for he believed that ancient history could only satisfy our curiosity whereas modern history could be a definite source of moral
instruction. It goes without saying that his theatre too is didactic. Voltaire considered tragedy "l'école de la vertu" (M. IV 505) and nearly all of his plays, to varying degrees, evince the concern of the moralist.

Being a philosopher, not only as we conceive of it today but as Voltaire conceived of it himself, was simply not enough. He chose to play the role of the moralist because "Aucun philosophe n'a influé seulement sur les mœurs de la rue où il demeurait. Pourquoi? parce que les hommes se conduisent par la coutume et non par la métaphysique. Un seul homme éloquent, habile, et accrédité, pourra beaucoup sur les hommes, cent philosophes n'y pourront rien s'ils ne sont que philosophes" (M. XXVI 69).
Chapter IV

Camus

A. The Refusal to Abandon Reason

Despite Camus' skeptical attitude vis-à-vis human reason, notwithstanding his creation of the doctrine of the absurd, one might indeed state because of it, he refused to deviate from what he esteemed the dictates of reason lucidly employed. Absurdity is a feeling to be sure; one probably becomes aware of the absurd physically or emotionally before one intellectualizes this feeling, but absurdity is also a notion, an intellectual conclusion given all the facets of human experience. In fact, at a given moment, Camus writes in Le Mythe de Sisyphe: "l'absurde, c'est la raison lucide qui constate ses limites" (ESS, 134). Absurdity, then, is a product of reason, of the intellect, that Camus will not reject.

This brings us face to face with another aspect of Camus' stoical anti-rationalism: belonging to the traditional stream of French skepticism and French anti-rationalism, yet, like Voltaire, ardently fighting against certain anti-rationalists. John Cruickshank, who notes the rise of anti-rationalism around the turn of the 20th century both in philosophy, (Bergson), literature (Proust, Péguy, Rolland), the arts, (symbolism and Impressionism) and literary criticism, (Thibaudet and Charles du Bos) stresses the difference
between the anti-rationalism epitomized by Bergson and that of Camus.\textsuperscript{1h1} First, he notes that the notion of absurdity may be "so intense" as to differ from the earlier anti-rationalism of the turn of the century both "in kind as well as degree." He admits nonetheless that "a rejection of the claims of classical rationalism obviously prepared the ground for it."\textsuperscript{1h2} More fundamentally, he points out that essential to Bergson's anti-rationalism is "its continuing belief in the inherent intelligibility of existence."\textsuperscript{1h3} For Bergson, therefore, reality is intelligible, existence can be known and is in fact known. Where reason fails to encompass reality, in the Bergsonian scheme of things, intuition comes to its aid. Here emerges the cleavage between Bergson and Camus. For the latter, existence is not intelligible and therefore not known. Either reality is comprehended by reason or it remains unknown; no substitute, such as faith, feeling or intuition is allowed to function in the place of the intellect.

Many anti-rationalists, Pascal, Rousseau and Bergson for example, stressed the limits of reason but substituted another means of knowledge, like faith, sentiment or intuition, in its place. Camus, as well as Voltaire, stressed the limitations of reason without substituting an alternative. Indeed, as we have seen, Voltaire repudiated both Pascal and Rousseau for having done so, just as Camus reproaches the Existentialists for the same reason. For both Voltaire and Camus "la raison est vaine et il n'y a rien au-delà de la raison" (ESS, 124).

Camus' stoic adherence to the limits of reason can be clearly
seen in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* where he criticizes the Christian Existentialists for choosing an alternate path. The book itself, as Camus notes, "était dirigé contre les philosophes dits existentialistes" (*ESS*, 1424). It should be pointed out that Camus shares many things in common with these very same Christian Existentialists: above all, their deeply-rooted anti-rationalism which is evinced in Kierkegaard's vociferous protest against Hegel's claim that the real is rational and their starting point, that of the absurd. Camus rejects, however, the neo-romantic tendencies of the Existentialists which oppose his own Mediterranean classical measure. He deplores the fact that they defy logic, deny their starting point and leap into the kingdom of the irrational. Like Husserl, the existentialists betray reason but, unlike Husserl, who ends finally with the triumph of reason, the existentialists abandon and humiliate reason and conclude with the glorification of the irrational. Camus' own view, of course, is moderately situated somewhere between these two extreme positions.

Camus challenges, therefore, in a short study of three major existentialist thinkers--Kierkegaard, Chestov and Jaspers--the logic, or lack of such, by which the leap is made from the "absurd" starting point to ultimate consolation in God. There are differences, to be sure, between these thinkers; as Camus points out: "Il y a plusieurs façons de sauter," but the essential, the need to "leap," is a constant (*ESS*, 129). The road taken is less important than the desire to get there; "la nostalgie est plus forte que la science" (*ESS*, 133). All three take a rationally unjustifiable leap that
negates the absurd, although they all started from that point; all three, despite their differences, begin by proclaiming the failure of reason yet make of this very failure a reason for going beyond reason. They presuppose the absurd, they insist upon it at the onset but in reality only demonstrate it in order to dissipate it. This is the attitude that Camus labels "philosophical suicide"; the philosophical position that denies reason to find consolation, that abandons lucidity in search of hope, that disavows its own premise to establish a God that can only be maintained by the negation of human reason. Whereas for Camus, the absurd is lucid reason declaring its limits, the irrational for the existentialists: "C'est la raison qui se brouille et se délivre en se niant" (ESS. 134).

The existence of God for Kierkegaard is not only beyond reason, as it was for Pascal, but against reason. Faith is a free act for Kierkegaard precisely because it carries with it no logical necessity. As Camus indicates, Kierkegaard humiliates reason when he chooses to "perdre la raison pour trouver Dieu," at the same time that he denies his starting point by resolving the absurd. By taking the leap of faith, Kierkegaard commits philosophical suicide, refuses to live the absurd paradox and reconciles himself "par le scandale" (ESS. 127). Kierkegaard's preoccupation is with solving the dilemma rather than enduring it: "Tout l'effort de son intelligence est d'échapper à l'antinomie de la condition humaine" (ESS. 126). Kierkegaard willingly submits himself to the third sacrifice exacted by Ignatius Loyola "celui dont Dieu se réjouit le plus": "le
sacrifice de l'Intellect" (ESS, 126). Refusing to maintain the
equilibrium between the irrationality of the world and the nostalgic
revolt of the absurd, Kierkegaard ends by divinizing the irrational,
betraying reason and consequently denying his starting point which
was the "absurd" point of view.

As with Kierkegaard, Camus partakes in large measure of
Chestov's anti-rationalism. Camus admits that "Chestov a raison
contre le rationaliste" and he praises his work for its brilliant
criticism of rationalism. Chestov's work admirably points out what
Camus had always underscored, namely that "le rationalisme le plus
universel finit toujours par buter sur l'irrationnel de la pensée
humaine" (ESS, 123 & 116). In short, Chestov draws Camus' praise
for his attack on rationalism in general, for his specific critiques
of Spinozism and Hegelianism and for his original conclusion: "la
vanité de toute raison" (ESS, 125).

Camus takes issue with him, however, for his illegitimate
return to the preeminence of the irrational which in effect discards
all notions of moderation and puts him in blatant contradiction with
the "commandements de l'absurde" (ESS, 123). When Chestov discovers
the fundamental absurdity of human existence, instead of proclaiming
"Voici l'absurde," he cries out "voici Dieu" (ESS, 123). Even though
the notion of God corresponds to none of our rational categories,
even though this God is perhaps "haineux et haissable, incompréhensible
et contradictoire," Chestov turns to Him when faced with the absurd.
The greatness of this God, "C'est son inconséquence," and the proof
of his existence, "c'est son inhumanité" (ESS. 123).

By turning toward Him, Chestov frees himself of rational illusions. The absurd, therefore, loses its true character which is both human and relative, for it only serves as a springboard to eternity. The absurd, once linked with human lucidity, once born of opposition, torment and divorce, is now resolved in an eternity "à la fois incompréhensible et satisfaisante" (ESS. 124). Chestov turns to God to obtain the impossible, everything gives way to the irrational, lucidity is dissolved and with it the absurd disappears. For Chestov, as well as for Camus, reason is vain, but, unlike Camus, Chestov finds something else beyond reason.

The third existential thinker criticized by Camus is Jaspers. Like Kierkegaard and Chestov, this apostle of "la pensée humiliée" discovers "la faille de chaque système" as well as the inevitable failure of reason; like them, too, he succumbs to the temptation of seeking "le fil d'Ariane qui mène aux divins secrets" (ESS. 115). Jaspers finds no justification in experience for his leap of faith. He admits this himself but leaps anyway affirming at the same time "le transcendant, l'être de l'expérience et le sens supra-humain de la vie" (ESS. 122). He offers the following as an explanation: "L'échec ne montre-t-il pas, au-delà de toute explication et de toute interprétation possible, non le néant mais l'être de la transcendance" (ESS. 122).

Abandoning his "absurdiste" starting point, Chestov discovers an inconceivable unity between the general and the particular; the
inability to understand becomes the phenomenon that explains everything. The absurd once again has become God. No logic, however, can warrant this leap and for that very reason, Camus rejects it.

Outside the purely philosophical realm, Camus briefly remarks on the same abandonment of reason, the same betrayal of the absurd in two novelists: Dostoevski and Kafka. The leap is apparent in Dostoevski who poses the question of absurdity but ultimately resolves it. Camus notes this complete metaphysical turnabout in Dostoevski by quoting the following passage of his *Journal*:

Si la foi en l'immortalité est si nécessaire à l'être humain (que sans elle il en vienne à se tuer) c'est donc qu'elle est l'état normal de l'humanité. Puisqu'il en est ainsi, l'immortalité de l'âme humaine existe sans aucun doute. (ESS. 186).

Camus concludes, therefore, that Dostoevski is not an absurd novelist, not necessarily because of the Christian aspect of his work but more precisely due to the future life that is announced in his work.

To the question that the children pose on the final pages of the *Brothers Karamazov*: "Karamazov, est-ce vrai ce que dit la religion, que nous ressusciterons d'entre les morts, que nous nous reverrons les uns et les autres?", Aliocha answers: "Certes, nous nous reverrons, nous nous raconterons joyeusement tout ce qui s'est passé" (ESS. 186). Camus consequently considers Dostoevski to be an existential novelist. The leap of faith betrays the "absurd" starting point once again. Dostoevski finds a response to the absurd —
"l'humiliation, la honte" (ESS, 187) where, in fact, an absurd work of art furnishes no answer.

Camus spends more time analyzing Kafka but is less sure of his ultimate betrayal. He praises Kafka's universality and his greatness but feels that his work is "probablement pas absurde" (ESS, 209) because in it the absurd is accepted, man resigns himself to it and consequently there is really no longer any absurdity. Camus, therefore, seems to discover in Kafka's universe the same existential leap, another case of lucidity that betrays itself; the means may be different but the end is the same.

In his own fictive universe, Camus created one character who evolves toward and ultimately assumes the position of the Christian Existentialists. From a viewpoint of traditional Christianity, Paneloux, the Jesuit in La Peste, discovers the incomprehensibility of evil in the universe but rather than revolt against what is repugnant not only to his mind but to his heart, he takes an existential leap, accepting the incomprehensible.

Father Paneloux is a Jesuit scholar, a man without a great deal of extra-bookish knowledge. Dr. Rieux notes this when he states that: "Il (Paneloux) n'a pas vu assez mourir et c'est pourquoi il parle au nom d'une vérité; (T.R.N. 1320). When he first learns of the plague, he reacts in a curious manner: "Oh! dit le Père, ce doit être une épidémie, et ses yeux sourient derrière les lunettes rondes" (T.R.N. 1229). From the very first pages of the novel, therefore, long before his ultimate transformation, we are aware of
Paneloux's need of proof, of his inclination toward doubt. His smiling eyes here betray the smile of certitude, the much needed concrete affirmation of his religious abstraction. Furthermore, Paneloux's position has definite Pascalian overtones in that he sees in human infirmity—in this case the plague sent by a vengeful God—the proof of the veracity of Christianity.

The main theme of his first sermon is best expressed in this sentence chosen from the text itself "Mes frères, vous êtes dans le malheur, mes frères, vous l'avez mérité" (T.R.N. 1294). The plague for Paneloux is of divine origin and of a punitive character. The plague was not willed by God although it manifests divine mercy for it transforms evil into goodness by elevating a suffering but culpable humanity and pointing out the way of truth: "Depuis le début de toute l'histoire, le fléau de Dieu met à ses pieds les orgueilleux et les aveugles. Méditez cela et tombez à genoux" (T.R.N. 1294).

For Paneloux, then, who seems at this point totally indifferent to human suffering, God is speaking through the plague. Paneloux finds meaning in human suffering and not only accepts it but justifies it. His sermon is one of penitence and acceptance, not one of revolt. What Camus deplores in Paneloux's position, is exactly what Vigny decried in the philosophy of Joseph De Maistre and what Voltaire attacked in Pascal: that is to say, a certain form of "souffrance expiatoire" by which evil is accepted and justified as a form of punishment inflicted by a vengeful God upon a culpable
humanity.

Soon Paneloux joins the teams formed to fight against the plague and even merits a bit of sympathy from the narrator. Rieux states at a given moment, for example, that Paneloux "est meilleur que son prêche" (T.R.N. 1340). Nevertheless, a veritable crisis is about to burst forth in the heart of the erudite Jesuit; he sees a young innocent die, the son of the judge Othon. Paneloux seems completely shaken. He admits that even for him this spectacle is "insupportable" (T.R.N. 1395). He loses all confidence in his first sermon but still forces himself to "aimer ce que nous ne pouvons pas comprendre" (T.R.N. 1395).

Paneloux's second sermon, entitled "Un prêtre peut-il consulter un médecin?", is quite different from his earlier discourse. The tone, for one thing, is much softer and the "vous" has been replaced by "nous." Paneloux now distinguishes between what is comprehensible and what is incomprehensible in respect to the Creator: "Il y avait par exemple le mal apparemment nécessaire et le mal apparemment inutile. Il y avait don Juan plongé aux Enfers et la mort d'un enfant. Car s'il est juste que le libertin soit foudroyé, on ne comprend pas la souffrance de l'enfant" (T.R.N. 1400). He pushes this idea still further: "Mes frères, l'instant est venu. Il faut tout croire ou tout nier. Et qui donc, parmi vous, oserait tout nier" (T.R.N. 1400). Forced between choosing to love God or to hate Him, Paneloux admits "le scandale" and opts for the former stating that "la vérité jaillira de l'apparente injustice" (T.R.N. 1403).
Like the Christ of Vigny depicted in *Le Mont des Oliviers*, Paneloux, admitting the incomprehensibility of evil, gets down on his knees before the author of the malefic universe: "Que Votre volonté soit faite et non la mienne...et pour toute l'Éternité."\(^{145}\)

The traditional Christian of the first sermon transforms himself, via experience in the real world, into a Christian existentialist. Like Kierkegaard, he admits the scandal and the necessity "de sauter au cœur de cet inacceptable qui nous est offert justement pour que nous passions notre choix" (T.R.N. 1402). For Paneloux, as for Kierkegaard, the act of faith is radically opposed to certitude. Faith consists precisely in believing what one cannot comprehend; one must "perdre la raison pour trouver Dieu."

Paneloux, like Kierkegaard, accepts the ultimate sacrifice, that of the intellect. Faith is the crucifixion of reason as it was for Kierkegaard but here we might also add "of the heart" for as Paneloux states: "Certes, la souffrance d'un enfant était humiliante pour l'esprit et le coeur. Mais c'est pourquoi il fallait y entrer" (T.R.N. 1401). The existential elements in Paneloux's second mode of thinking have already been denounced in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*: the acceptation of the incomprehensible, the humiliation and abandonment of reason, the all or nothing approach coupled with the leap from history to eternity to avoid living the absurd paradox.

Paneloux follows his logic to death: struck down by what probably was the plague, he dies without accepting the care of the doctors. The sickness was sent by God, it is therefore His will. A
priest cannot consult a doctor because the doctor, since he fights against death, impedes the will of God. Paneloux dies, therefore, in a tragic scene without relinquishing the crucifix that he holds tightly in his hand.

It goes without saying that Camus feels a certain amount of sympathy for the dilemma of his protagonist who, after all, did voluntarily join the "équipes." His text is nevertheless riddled with irony. To be sure, Camus appreciates the drama that unravels in the torn soul of Paneloux but the repetition of the words "doute," "ambigu," "incertitude" and finally the "cas douteux" (T.R.N. 1407-08) help to create a tableau as grotesque as it is tragic of this priest who, alone on his deathbed, his crucifix in his hand, refuses the care of the doctors. Paneloux's death symbolizes the sterility involved in the acceptance of an unjust creation and is opposed quite sharply to the revolt of Doctor Rieux who is always ironically present at the side of the dying priest.

Through this protagonist whom Camus refutes on two different occasions for two different philosophical and religious stances, as is manifest in the two sermons, Camus rejects two forms of Christianity, one traditional and one recently come into vogue, both of which condone the plague, accept and justify evil in general and the suffering of the innocent in particular. In addition, Paneloux seems guilty of two types of suicide: his philosophical suicide that characterizes the existential tendency and the element of physical suicide that shrouds his death.
A further illustration of both Camus' scorn of the irrational and his pertinacious impulse to stick to reason despite its shortcomings can be seen in his criticism of the surrealists in *L'Homme Révolté*. Camus assails the doctrine of surrealism which he considers a bible of disorder, "une théorie pratique de la révolte irrationnelle" where "l'abêtissez-vous pascalien prend avec lui un sens littéral" (ESS, 490-491, 494). Camus' attack upon "ces nihilistes de salon qui ont cru pouvoir exalter le meurtre et le suicide" (ESS, 500-01) goes far beyond the purely theoretical level, for he judges surrealism a revolt against both society and reason, a veritable refusal of rational consciousness that, as a movement, opened the gates to totalitarianism.

Like Voltaire then, Camus, while violently criticizing the traditional claims of reason and indeed severely limiting the efficaciousness of reason, refuses to abandon reason and attacks those who did so. Reason may be limited but it is still the best tool available to man with which to deal with his condition. As he writes in *Le Mythe*: "Je ne veux rien fonder sur l'incompréhensible. Je veux savoir si je puis vivre avec ce que je sais et avec cela seulement" (ESS, 127). At times, in reference to reason, it sounds a great deal like his criticism would equally be leveled at Rousseau for confusing "vouloir" with "être":

Chercher ce qui est vrai n'est pas chercher ce qui est souhaitable...Je me refuse seulement à croire que dans l'ordre métaphysique le besoin d'un principe nécessite l'existence de ce principe. (ESS, 128 & 1424)
The only absolute for Camus is the absurd and the absurd is a given of reason: "la raison lucide qui constate ses limites" (ESS. 134). It is reason itself:

...cette raison, si dérisoire, c'est elle qui m'oppose à toute la création....
Ce que je crois vrai, je dois donc le maintenir. Ce qui m'apparaît si évident, même contre moi, je dois le soutenir.
(ESS. 136)

The Mythe, therefore, bans all means of escape, both physical and philosophical suicide; the absurd man attempts to live "sans appel" (ESS. 137). As in the case of Voltaire, yet even more extreme here, this stance creates an anguish that rises often to the surface in the works of Camus— an anguish fundamentally linked with the refusal to leap out of the realm of reason into some other facile domain to avoid the absurd and the living paradox that the absurd creates.

The Proper Sphere and Limited Validity of Human Rationality

Camus' view of reason is a moderate one that avoids extremes. The "absurd man" perceives irrational elements in man's condition but does not deny the rational ones. In a quest for completeness, he acknowledges all the elements that his reason and experience demonstrate. Just as Voltaire shunned the rationalists, on the one hand, and the "irrationalists," on the other, Camus defines the proper sphere of reason between Husserl for whom "la raison finit par n'avoir point de limites" (ESS. 134), and Kierkegaard who not only abandons reason but
ends by exalting the non-rational. Like the *philosophe ignorant*, Camus marks out with great precision the legitimate boundaries of human reason and then stoically adheres to these limits.

For Camus then, the efficacious realm of reason is precisely the realm of human experience. He notes this in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*:

> Notre appétit de comprendre, notre nostalgie d'absolu ne sont explicables que dans la mesure où justement nous pouvons comprendre et expliquer beaucoup de choses. Il est vain de nier absolument la raison. Elle a son ordre dans lequel elle est efficace. C'est justement celui de l'expérience humaine. (ESS, 124-5)

This notion of reason is similar to that of the Enlightenment in general and to that of Voltaire in particular in the sense that it is empirically orientated, anti-rationalist and *a posteriori*. Like Voltaire's it emphasizes the shortcomings of reason and cries aloud for the use, not the abuse of reason. For if reason is to be a valid tool, its limits must be properly and clearly delineated. Only this lucid appraisal of reason is the full acceptance of reason: an admission of the greatness and the limitations of the human mind. As Jean Grenier taught Camus: "peur fonder la sagesse, la raison exploite ses meilleures chances quand elle reconnaître ses limites" (ESS, 1411).

First of all, on the practical concrete level, as was the case with Voltaire, reason performs efficaciously. Reason, meaning reasonableness, serves as a guide in the ever-present labyrinth of doctrine, custom, faith, fanaticism, intolerance and barbarity. In
Le Peste, for example, Rieux exemplifies this proper use of reason before the forces of stupidity and conformity that surround him. As with Voltaire, this function of reason is linked with literary commitment, justice in public affairs and general humanitarianism. It is by this use of reason that prejudice and ignorance can be thwarted and social good realized.

The forces of history, too, for Camus are blind and must be held in check or directed melioristically. This is also the function of reason, as is evinced in L'Été where Camus notes: "L'histoire est sans yeux, il faut donc rejeter sa justice pour lui substituer autant qu'il se peut celle que l'esprit conçoit" (ESS. 843). All of Camus' work, from Le Mythe onward, testifies to Voltaire's statement in Le Poème sur la loi naturelle: "Nous n'avons qu'un flambeau, gardons-nous de l'éteindre" (M. IX, 450).

On a level as important as that of concrete application, the proper use of reason is the basis of Camus' two major ideas: absurdity and revolt. It is the human mind that posits the absurd, it is reason that leads to the formulation of the notion of absurdity. In this respect, Camus writes in Le Mythe: "Il ne peut y avoir d'absurde hors d'un esprit humain" (ESS. 121). The absurd is born, so to speak, "à la rencontre de cette raison efficace mais limitée et de l'irrationnel toujours renaisissant" (ESS. 125). The absurd is reason's statement of its limitations and its refusal to mask the evidence that it has unfolded.

The absurd is not an irrational proclamation but a product
of human rationality. Without reason, there could be no notion of absurdity and Camus' desire to cling to this discovery is in fact a testimony to his faith in reason. As he writes in Le Mythe de Sisyphe: "Tout commence par la conscience et rien ne vaut que par elle" (ESS, 107). Both physical and philosophical suicide suppress man's rationality and the possibility of man dealing with his situation from a rational point of view. Camus consequently proscribes them both; he prefers lucidity to evasion.

When employing reason lucidly, man functions as a clear and coherent being. The "absurd man," in Camus' view, is a rational, lucid individual who has peraciously appraised his situation in the world. He has not succumbed to the absurd, he has simply postulated it. Because his reason demands order, he named the dis-order and chaos that creates his only link with the world "absurdity."

Just as "l'homme absurde" formulates his doctrine by the proper use of reason, so too does "l'homme révolté." Revolt is born of the spectacle of irrationality in an unjust and incomprehensible creation. "L'homme révolté" demands order in that chaos "un ordre humain où toutes les réponses soient humaines, c'est-à-dire raisonnablement formulées" (ESS, 430).

Like the Voltarian notion of reason, Camus' is also a double-edged sword for it stresses the power of reason in certain domains while it proclaims the limits of reason in other areas. The notion of measure that we find elsewhere in Camus is here quite evident. In this respect, Camus notes in L'Homme révolté, with obvious approval,
the following words of Lazare Bickel: "L'intelligence est notre faculté de ne pas pousser à bout ce que nous pensons, afin que nous puissions croire encore à la réalité" (ESS, 698).

Reason is man's best tool and Camus will not negate the value of reason because it is limited; he will not choose a substitute in the place of reason. Weak as it is, reason is still strong enough to define the absurd and build a doctrine of revolt based on the value of the individual and the notion of solidarity. Camus notes in his Carnets: "Je méprise l'intelligence signifie en réalité: "je ne peux supporter mes doutes." Je préfère tenir les yeux ouverts" (CAR, 1, 41). This stoic defense of human intelligence is at the basis of his humanism. He clings tenaciously to the path of reason, that specifically human path, rather than succumb to the irrational.

This horizontal humanism, limited to the terrestrial and eschewing all vertical or celestial transcendance, is also, as it was with Voltaire, a tragic humanism for the powers of darkness, the blind forces of the universe, absurdity and evil, are stressed; indeed they inundate the Camusian universe. They account for the cosmic pessimism that we find both in Camus and Voltaire. Not only are the forces of the enemy underscored but also the limitations of the tools available to man. This is what Camus intends when he writes: "Pour un esprit absurde la raison est vain et il n'y a rien au-delà de la raison" (ESS, 124).

Despite the efficacy of reason in certain domains, reason remains unable to find the key answers to the human enigma; the questions
of human destiny, of evil, of the nonsense of the human situation remain impervious to the human mind. While reason can and does tell us that it is unable to solve these problems, it cannot satisfy the ultimate human longing for clarity and coherence and once more it teaches us that there is nothing beyond reason that can do it either. So man remains frustrated and perplexed and the anguish that one encounters throughout Camus' work is the result of this frustration.

The following quote of Stuart Mill that Camus notes with apparent approbation in his Carnets curiously brings us back to Le Bon Bramin of Voltaire: "Cf. Stuart Mill: "Mieux vaut être Socrate mécontent qu'un cochon satisfait" (CAR, 1,147). Everything that Voltaire so brilliantly presented in that tiny masterpiece is latently present in this phrase: the fact that reason leads to unhappiness, the fact that lucid man chooses reason over happiness and with that choice rejects the traditional theory that happiness is the end of man and finally the inference that reason is indeed "le propre de l'homme."

Just as the analysis of Le Bon Bramin and so much of Voltaire's latter work brings the reader back to Pascal, so too, here in the midst of Camus, one is forced back to that great 17th century moralist who has left an indelible mark in the annals of French thought. In the Camusian universe, man is adrift between the two infinities where he finds nothing that corresponds to his yearning. Then, too, the notion that reason leads to anguish is reminiscent of Pascal as well as its counterpart that reason constitutes the greatness
of man. With this latter affirmation, one sees in Sisyphus a veritable Pascalian hero, in the sense that he is greater than his destiny, stronger than his rock, for he is "aware" of his destiny. His consciousness makes him superior to his fatal destiny of "travail inutile et sans espoir" (ESS. 195). Sisyphus is a tragic hero only because he is conscious of his absurd condition. There are two differences nonetheless. Camus informs us that we must imagine Sisyphus happy whereas Pascal painted the misery of man without God. Then, too, as was the case with Voltaire, there is no escape into faith, no evasion into another realm to escape the anguish of maintaining the absurd paradox.

C. Camus - Moralist

Even in the case of Camus who clearly stated that he did not consider himself a philosopher, critics have attempted to maintain the contrary. Thomas Thorson, for one, claims that Camus was "primarily a philosopher,"\textsuperscript{146} while David Denton states that the "philosophy" of Camus is grounded in, and developed out of, a feeling: "the feeling of absurdity" which he deems, oddly enough, "both a priori and empirical."\textsuperscript{147} Thomas Hanna, who like Denton esteems that Camus "feels his way into philosophy," makes the dubious statement that only if we understand Camus first as a philosopher can we fully appraise his literary works. For Hanna, Camus is primarily a moral philosopher who shuns the "ontological and epistemological experiments of Husserl, Heidegger and Sartre," a "lyrical existentialist" whose
thought cannot be systematized but rather described and then
characterized.\(^{148}\)

Another critic who supports this view is Germaine Brée who
writes rather arbitrarily: "If we think of a writer whose essential
effort is directed toward elucidating his own experience through an
effort of his intelligence as a 'philosopher,' then Camus most certainly
is a philosopher."\(^{149}\) Finally, David Sprintzen holds that Camus was
a philosopher, "a metaphysician who works in the concrete." Although
he does not consider him a "technical philosopher,"\(^{150}\) he is convinced
that his problems are philosophical and that his approach to them is
worthy of philosophical treatment.

Our view, as it was with Voltaire, suggests that Camus be
primarily considered a moralist since he constructed no philosophical
system, had no interest in speculation, was desperately seeking a
moral basis in a century he deemed nihilistic and because his interest
in thought was limited to that which could be immediately applied to
action. This does not necessarily imply that Camus cannot be con-
sidered a philosopher nor does it connote that the problems he posed
are not worthy of philosophical treatment. It does emphasize, however,
that, in our opinion, one drives to the center of Camus' preoccupations
when one approaches him from this perspective.

The first point that should be stressed is that Camus con-
sistently and categorically refused the title of "philosopher." He
writes in *Entretien sur la Révolte*: 
Je ne suis pas un philosophe, en effet, et je ne sais parler que de ce que j'ai vécu. J'ai vécu le nihilisme, la contradiction, la violence et le vertige de la destruction. (ESS, 753)

and finally in his Interview à "Servir," he stated, "Je ne suis pas un philosophe. Je ne crois pas assez à la raison pour croire à un système" (ESS, 1427). Frequently, too, he rejected the term "philosopher," preferring to be considered an artist as the following quote from his Carnets manifests: "Pourquoi suis-je un artiste et non un philosophe? C'est que je pense selon les mots et non selon les idées" (CAR, II 146). Certainly an author can be mistaken as to his true value or the value and even nature of his work. The analysis that follows however will attempt to show that Camus was indeed correct in this respect.

It is Camus who equates the formal term "philosopher" with a strong enough confidence in the power of reason to establish a philosophical system. If this is the modern connotation of the term, Camus can hardly be judged a philosopher, for to posit the absurdity of life, as Camus does, is to affirm that the real is not rational and consequently cannot be fully encompassed by any system of thought. In addition, Camus realized the futility of attempting to force reality--a continual becoming--into a system which by its nature is closed. Camus always remained skeptical of systems, whether they were purely philosophical abstractions or historical ideological constructions, because they were not only condemned to be fallacious but
almost inevitably caused destruction. Realizing his own weakness in
the field of abstractions and his own value as an artist, he preferred
to concentrate his efforts on his art and stand clear of the purely
philosophical domain.

Then, too, Camus' thought is at times ambiguous, often unclear,
even contradictory. He knew this himself and in this respect writes
in his Carnets:

Je crois que cela m'est égal d'être dans
la contradiction. Je n'ai pas envie
d'être un génie philosophique. Je n'ai
même pas envie d'être un génie du tout,
ayant déjà bien du mal à être un homme.
(CAR. II 172)

Even Germaine Brée who considers him a philosopher of sorts observes
that: "His logic is the logic of life and death, not the logic of
philosophy." Even one should add, however, that even if Camus' thought
was not philosophically consistent, it was always morally coherent.
The lack of philosophical consistency can be accounted for by the fact
that his thought was the outcome of personal experience; he wrote of
what he knew, wrote of what he lived and never tried to simplify his
thought to a common denominator not found in existence.

Once more as we saw with Voltaire, Camus' preference is for
action over words. This is quite clear in La Peste where Rieux
frequently tires of the useless speculation of his fellow doctors and
pushes them toward fruitful action: "Il importe peu que vous l'appeliez
peste ou fièvre de croissance. Il importe seulement que vous
l'empêchiez de tuer la moitié de la ville" ... "Vous posez mal le
problème. Ce n'est pas une question de vocabulaire, c'est une question de temps" (T.R.N. 1255-6). Words and concepts that do not lead to action are sterile, useless, intellectual impediments. Robert Champigny writes that:

Meursault's philosophy is a philosophy of contemplation and of possession; he adopts, broadly speaking, an ancient point of view. His philosophy is one of having rather than a philosophy of doing.¹⁵²

This seems plausible for Meursault but not at all for Camus. If Camus, as a young man, held the philosophy of Meursault, he went far beyond it later in life, all the way from contemplation to action.

The starting point of all Camusian ideas and theories is concrete reality. In L'Homme Révolté, he opposes trade-unionism and the prophetic revolution, praising one and condemning the other along these very lines:

Le syndicalisme partait de la base
concrète, la profession ... la cellule
vivante sur laquelle l'organisme
s'édifie, tandis que la révolution
césarienne part de la doctrine et y
fait entrer de force le réel.
(ESS. 700-01)

The great fault of the "révolution sans honneur" is that it starts from an absolute and attempts to mold reality—a task not only futile but dangerous since, in effect, it generally ends by preferring "un homme abstrait à l'homme de chair" (ESS. 707), a preference that usually favors concentration camps and gas chambers where this "homme
de chair" is brutalized, mutilated and finally exterminated so that the idea of "l'homme abstrait" might be held intact. In L'Homme révolté, Camus specifically elucidates Hegel's influence on Marx to indicate that abstract philosophy—"la philosophie qui peut servir à tout" (ESS, 413)—can be the cause of concrete disaster.

Both Camus and Voltaire find their true place in the French moralist tradition that dates back to Montaigne. Lanson esteemed that Voltaire "est moraliste plus que psychologue" and his judgment is sound for the great bulk of Voltaire's work, excepting of course several plays like Merope and possibly even Zaire. The same is true for Camus whose work reveals the moralist rather than the psychologist.

As a moralist, Camus' foremost aim was to create a viable moral code in a century noted for its nihilism. One principal contribution of Camus was the introduction of morality into the field of politics. Camus' politics were fundamentally anti-Machiavellian, as Sartre himself points out:

... par l'opiniâreté de ses refus, il réaffirmait, au coeur de notre époque, contre les machiavéliens, contre le veau d'or du réalisme, l'existence du fait moral. 154

There was, however, a type of moralist that Camus did not wish to be, that is the moralist who separates himself from his own generation and judges it from on high. Camus attacks this type of moralist in his Lettre sur la révolte and notes his own position: "Je la (mon époque) juge de l'intérieur, me confondant avec elle" (ESS, 753). Nor
did Camus wish to be the preacher. In this respect, he writes: "la vertu n'est pas haissable--mais les discours sur la vertu le sont" (T.R.N. 2002). Camus epitomizes the type of moralist that he discusses in his *Introduction aux "Maximes" de Chamfort*:

Nos plus grands moralistes ne sont pas des faiseurs de maximes, ce sont des romanciers. Qu'est-ce qu'un moraliste en effet? Disons seulement que c'est un homme qui a la passion du coeur humain. (ESS. 1099)

Camus was mainly interested in a way of life not a coherent body of thought. Faced with contemporary nihilism, Camus sought to create a viable ethical code where belief in God had been rejected, belief in history as an absolute banned and faith in the absolute value of reason refused. Like the author of *Candide*, Camus was essentially preoccupied with human behavior. "Ce qui m'intéresse, c'est de savoir comment on peut se conduire quand on ne croit ni en Dieu ni en la raison" (ESS. 1427). His answer underscored human dignity and moderation, the value of the individual and the importance of solidarity.
PART III

THE ABSURD AND ITS FICTIONAL PORTRAYAL
L'homme est le seul animal qui sache qu'il doit mourir.

Voltaire (Notebooks II 502)

L'existence humaine est une parfaite absurdité pour qui n'a pas la foi en l'immortalité.

Camus (Le Mythe)

Lever, tramway, quatre heures de bureau ou d'usine, repas, tramway, quatre heures de travail, repas, sommeil et lundi mardi mercredi jeudi vendredi et samedi sur le même rythme...

Camus (Le Mythe)

...on joue, on soupe, on médit, on fait de mauvaises chansons, et on s'endort dans la stupidité, pour recommencer le lendemain son cercle de légèreté et d'indifférence.

Voltaire (Notebooks)

On n'est entouré que de désastres. On voit tomber à droite et à gauche, comme dans une mêlée, et on reçoit enfin le coup après avoir fatigué inutilement sa vie.

Voltaire (M. XXXVII iii)

Tu es né, tu vis, tu agis, tu penses, tu veilles, tu dors sans savoir comment.

Voltaire (Dict. phil. "Âme")

Nous sommes des victimes condamnés toutes à la mort; nous ressemblons aux moutons qui bâlent, qui jouent, qui bondissent, en attendant qu'on les égorge. Leur grand avantage sur nous est qu'ils ne se doutent pas qu'ils seront égorgés et que nous le savons.

Voltaire (M. XLVI 406)
PART THREE

THE ABSURD AND ITS FICTIONAL PORTRAYAL

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Chapter V

Camus, L'Etranger

A. Introduction

The first part, which focused on the historical perspective, outlined the basic strain of anti-rationalism in Camus and Voltaire. The second investigated both the efficacy and the limitations of the faculty of reason as assessed by these same two writers. This third part is intrinsically linked with the two preceding ones, for the notion of absurdity is at once the epitome of anti-rationalism and a declaration of the severe limitations of reason as a tool for sounding the human condition.

In *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*, Camus explicitly formulates his doctrine of absurdity to define man's position in the world. This notion of absurdity is illustrated and fictionally recreated, to a large extent, in *L'Etranger*, *Caligula* and *Le Malentendu*. Although the absurd is present in all of Camus' works, it is the cornerstone of his early cycle, in his plays, his "novel" and his essay. Voltaire never devised any such doctrine but he was headed in that direction and in some of the tales, particularly *Candide*, one perceives an implicit pattern of absurdity that approaches the notion of Camus.

In this chapter, therefore, we will seek a precise definition of the absurd, as Camus propounds it, in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*. Then the
rapport, between Meursault and the absurd hero of Le Mythe will be examined. This will be followed by an in-depth study of the meaning and levels of interpretation of the notion "étranger." Next, both the notion of absurdity, metaphysical and social, as it is fictionally portrayed in L'Étranger, and the manner in which this notion is thematically and stylistically reinforced will be elucidated. Finally, in the second half of this chapter, a detailed study of Candide (to be further delineated in the introduction to that section), based in part on the Camusian notion of absurdity, will clarify, both the meaning of absurdity in the tale and the methods employed by Voltaire the conteur to project the omnipresence of absurdity in the universe of his creation.

B. Le Mythe de Sisyphe--Definition of the Absurd

What doubt was for Descartes, absurdity was for Camus: a starting point, a first truth, upon which a body of tenets would ultimately be constructed, yet an ever-present basis that remained even after it had been partially transcended. The author of Le Mythe de Sisyphe defines the absurd, offers examples of how both the feeling and the notion of the absurd can be perceived and presents the alternatives that exist after this initial discovery.

Through habit, familiarity and a lack of insight, man can travel the absurd roads of life indefinitely without recognizing their essential nature. For the future "homme absurde," however, inevitably "les décors s'écroulent" (ESS. 106) and awareness of the "caractère insensé de cette agitation quotidienne" (ESS. 101) is produced. Suddenly,
man is faced with the perplexing question: "Why?". Everything begins
at this point where consciousness comes into play: cognition of the
absurd, followed either by unconscious retreat into those daily chains
or the definitive awakening, and, ultimately, either by suicide or re-
covery.

Camus indicates that the "feeling" (le sentiment) of the
absurd, which is to be distinguished from the "notion" of the absurd—
"Il la fonde, un point, c'est tout" (ESS. 119)—can be roused in five
ways. First of all, by the awareness of time, the strange sensation that
our life is fundamentally orientated out of the present into a series
of indefinite moments in the future, "demain," "plus tard": "Le temps
nous porte...nous vivons sur l'avenir" (ESS. 107). A second way is
through the apprehension of the primitive hostility of the world about
us and the subsequent feeling of alienation of the self; a third way,
the perception of the automatous gestures, the mechanized life, the
meaningless daily rituals of other men; a fourth, the inability to
recognize oneself, one's reflection perhaps or one's own voice. Finally,
the ineluctable presence of death and the uselessness of suffering.

The perception of absurdity, however, is not limited to the
"feeling" of absurdity, although the "feeling" generally precedes the
"notion." This awareness exists on the intellectual plane as well:
"L'intelligence aussi me dit à sa manière que ce monde est absurde"
(ESS. 112). Most fundamentally, the "notion" of the absurd is the re-
sult of man's failure to unify his position in the world, his relation
to the universe. "Comprendre, c'est avant tout unifier" (ESS. 110),
notes Camus, and to understand the world, to unify it, is to reduce it to terms of thought. Here the lacuna becomes apparent, the unbreachable gap between man's desire for clarity, his need for unity and the disjointed, chaotic nature of the world: "mon appétit d'absolu et d'unité et l'irréductibilité de ce monde à un principe rationnel et raisonnable...cette fracture entre le monde et mon esprit" (ESS. 136). Man's thirst for clarity is met by the lack of intelligibility of the world, his desire for order by the chaos of the universe, his wish for immortality by the inevitability of death.

The world, for Camus, is irrational, not absurd. Nor is man absurd. The absurd is born of the confrontation of man, in whom we find "ce désir d'unité," "cet appétit de résoudre," "cette exigence de clarté et de cohésion" (ESS. 136) and the irrational universe: "Ce chaos, ce hasard roi et cette divine équivalence qui naît de l'anarchie" (ESS. 136). The absurd is contingent upon both elements of this opposition; it is, in fact, the only link between them. Accompanying the absurd, therefore, in Le Mythe de Sisyphe is the ever-present notion of confrontation ("(de) l'esprit qui désire et (du) monde qui déçoit" (ESS. 135), of divorce ("entre l'homme et sa vie, l'acteur et son décor" (ESS. 101), of comparison ("entre un état de fait et une certaine réalité, entre une action et le monde qui la dépasse" (ESS. 120). Unlike the Sartrian notion of absurdity, the absurd, in Le Mythe, is never the conclusion of an analysis of one fact; it is always the product of a contrast. It never exists integrally in either of the terms compared but springs from their antagonism. The absurd, then, is neither in man nor
in the world, but in their common presence, their incongruous juxta-
position.

For the author of Le Mythe de Sisyphe, there can be no 
absurdity without the human mind. The "notion" of the absurd is a 
product of reason that he will not reject; it is a rational conclusion, 
quite the opposite of irrationality. Camus writes in L'Homme révolté: 
"Pour dire que la vie est absurde, la conscience a besoin d'être 
vivante" (ESS. 416). Hence the paradoxical statement of Le Mythe de 
Sisyphe: "J'installe ma lucidité au milieu de ce qui la nie" (ESS. 
166). Lucid reason proclaims its own inability to rationalize 
existence and it defines man's situation in the world as essentially 
absurd. Since the absurd man wishes to live the paradox and cling to 
his truth, any suppression of the human mind—philosophical suicide as 
well as physical suicide—which was responsible for the formulation of 
that truth, is proscribed.

Sisyphus, superior to his destiny because he is aware of it, 
stronger than his rock since he pushes it knowingly, becomes the symbol 
of the absurd man. Condemned to "useless work without hope" because of 
his excessive love of the things of this world, he is characterized by 
revolt, liberty, scorn of the Gods, loathing of death and passion for 
life.
C. Meursault -- Homo Absurdus of Le Mythe?

Is Meursault the homo absurdus of Le Mythe de Sisyphe? If he is, is he that person from the beginning of the "novel" or only at the end, after the explosive scene with the chaplain? The "décors s'écroulent" for Meursault; all agree on this point. But when does this take place? This "caving in," we recall from Le Mythe, carries with it: "le mouvement de la conscience" (ESS. 106). More specifically then, we ask: When does Meursault become aware of the absurd? This question has received a great deal of attention from the critics who remain divided on the issue.

Jean-Paul Sartre was the first to claim that Le Mythe de Sisyphe teaches us how to interpret L'Etranger. For Sartre, Le Mythe is "le commentaire exact" of L'Etranger, the former exposing the "notion" of the absurd, the latter inspiring the "feeling" of absurdity. He justifies this hypothesis in part by noting the order in which the works appeared, L'Etranger first, which "nous plonge sans commentaires dans le 'climat' de l'absurde," followed by Le Mythe "qui éclaire le paysage."156 Basically, then, Sartre sees Le Mythe as an explanation of L'Etranger and Meursault's absurdity given rather than achieved. Even though he maintains this view, he still states, somewhat paradoxically, that Meursault revolts at the end of the book and then only attains absurd "awareness" even though he always lived according to the absurd.

Other critics, too, explicitly tie the two works together. Carl Viggiani claims that: "Le principal procédé ironique de l'Etranger est
la reconstruction du mythe de Sisyphe"\textsuperscript{157}; while Robert Tuppé notes: "Le Mythe de Sisyphe relate la découverte soudaine de la monotonie des jours.... L'Étranger est la mise en image de cet automatisme."\textsuperscript{158}

William Manly consecrates an entire article to the subject. He views Meursault's adventure as a "parable of mental awakening" or conscious awareness corresponding "in detailed thematic and imaginistic ways" to the mental awakening of the absurd hero in Le Mythe de Sisyphe.\textsuperscript{159}

Thus, not only does Manly tie the two works together, but he also agrees with Sartre that absurd awareness is only achieved by the protagonist just prior to his death. His article portrays the progressive pattern of development leading to ultimate cognition of the absurd.

Any criticism of L'Étranger that insists upon an evolution in the protagonist usually hints at least implicitly at this same diagnosis of intellectual awareness toward the end of the "novel." Pierre-Henri Simon, for one, speaks of Meursault's "éveil" after the visit of the chaplain and his subsequent passionate attachment to "son seul bien: sa vie."\textsuperscript{160} W. D. Redfern, for another, concentrates on the isolation of Meursault in prison which enables him to "focus clearly on himself for the first time" and ultimately to achieve a "moral emancipation."\textsuperscript{161}

Finally, Germaine Brée mentions Meursault's "inner transformation" in prison which snaps him out of his purely passive state and gives him an "inner awareness" that he had previously lacked.\textsuperscript{162}

Roger Quilliot notes, in a review of Brian Fitch's Narrateur et Narration dans l'Étranger d'Albert Camus, that the later critics of L'Étranger, including Fitch: "...(ont) renoncé...à voir arbitrairement
Dans *l'Étranger* un écho du *Mythe de Sisyphe*.

These critics openly attack the position held by Sartre and Manly. Louis Hudon, for example, warns that the "novel" not be taken as a treatise on the perception of the absurd, "a book about a man who is transformed by an experience." For Hudon, Meursault has changed none of his ideas; the point of his adventure being, therefore, not the revelation of the absurd, but "simple certainty of the feeling of the absurd, intensified by a situation created by a master craftsman." 

Although he feels that Meursault lives out his absurd destiny in accordance with the ideas expressed by Camus in *Le Mythe*, Philip Thody too, refuses to see any evolution in the hero. For Thody, Meursault was always conscious of the absurd; he had passed through the experience of the absurd before the book began. His lack of consciousness in the first part "is only apparent" and he states his reasons clearly at the end. Finally, Murray Krieger offers an interesting version of what roughly amounts to the same interpretation. He holds that after the death sentence, Meursault, perhaps aware now, due to the trial, that choices do matter, appears "humanized or at least partially conventionalized." He seems, therefore, ready to reject the "machine," the automatic world that he never questioned. The visit of the chaplain, however, convinces Meursault that he has been right "that choices do not matter and that all comes to the same thing in the end, to man's condemnation and execution one fine dawn." For Krieger, therefore, Meursault has come full circle, picking up only "a rational justification of the way of life he had aimlessly drifted into."
All these critics have presented very intelligent arguments, even though they maintain opposing viewpoints. *L'Étranger* is fundamentally an ambiguous work, at times even enigmatic, despite the surface simplicity of both the protagonist and the style. Somewhat like in *La Chute*, but to a lesser degree, the closer we get to the hero, the more easily he escapes us; the greater our "knowledge" of Meursault, the less capable are we of defining him. This is in great part due to the stylistic technique employed by the author in the first part of the work. Camus claimed that he utilized the behavioristic technique in the first part "parce qu'elle convenait à (son) propos, qui était de décrire un homme sans conscience apparente" (T.R.N. 1910). Here is the crux of the problem: while exhibiting the indifference and the quantitative ethic of the absurd man of *Le Mythe*, Meursault appears to lack consciousness of the absurd during the first part of the "novel."

Given this fundamental ambiguity, it is our contention that either of the views discussed above can be logically maintained. On the one hand, it is plausible to uphold the view that Meursault was aware of the absurd, consciously aware of it, before the book begins. Camus himself noted in 1956 that he intended to present Meursault "comme un homme conscient, dès le début du roman, de l'absurdité du monde." In addition, as suggested above, Camus employed the behavioristic style to describe a man, not without consciousness, but "sans conscience apparente." Then, too, there are two important remarks in the text itself that substantiate this view. The first occurs when Meursault's boss chides him for his lack of ambition. Meursault reflects: "Quand
j'étais étudiant, j'avais beaucoup d'ambitions de ce genre. Mais quand j'ai dû abandonner mes études, j'ai très vite compris que tout cela était sans importance réelle" (T.R.N., 1154). It is very significant that this passage was not in the first manuscript of *L'Étranger*. Camus very possibly inserted it into the text to give further evidence to the view that he himself held of the protagonist. The second remark refers to the indifferent manner in which Meursault led his life and appears at the very end of the work after his encounter with the chaplain:

"J'avais eu raison, j'avais encore raison, j'avais toujours raison" (T.R.N., 1208). The two declarations could be construed to mean that Meursault was conscious of the absurd since his days as a student and that his adventure has not changed his view of things at all.

Despite Camus' assertions, which exist after all outside of the text, the opposite view seems equally tenable. In the first part, one could argue that Meursault is portrayed without the consciousness of the absurd. When this is coupled with what one might consider the "awakening" at the end, one could feasibly conclude that the slow coming to light in prison of the consciousness of Meursault culminates in the illumination of the absurd after the visit of the chaplain. Furthermore, it is only at this point that the consequences of the knowledge of absurdity rise to the surface, namely, passion for life and revolt. One might argue, therefore, in upholding this latter view, that the first part of the book portrays the "feeling" of the absurd, while the second part presents the "notion" of the absurd.

However one views the previous discussion, it cannot be denied
that, in many ways, Meursault resembles the absurd man of Le Mythe. From the very first page of the "novel," he displays the indifference of the absurd hero and at "some time" in the "novel," he exhibits full consciousness of the absurd. He practices an ethic of quantity rather than the traditional qualitative one and lives in the present, basing his values on that present rather than on some uncertain future time. In addition, his life during the first part of the "novel" approximates the patterned routine outlined in Le Mythe, and, being a clerk, the following remark of Le Mythe applies perfectly to him: "un surnuméraire aux Postes est l'égal d'un conquérant si la conscience leur est commune. Toutes les expériences sont à cet égard indifférentes" (ESS. 150).

Finally, just before his execution, he manifests the consequences of the absurd: freedom, revolt, scorn for death and passion for life.

Yet, it is a mistake to view L'Etranger only in the light of Le Mythe and to blindly apply notions of Le Mythe to L'Etranger can be dangerously misleading. We are dealing with two different forms of expression: the essay, by its nature clear, rational and abstract, and the novel, particularly the one in question, ambiguous, concrete and definitely lacking the coherence of the essay. Once more, despite the similarities already outlined, there are some very distinct, significant differences between Le Mythe and L'Etranger that will become apparent in the following pages that treat Meursault as "étranger" and the notion of absurdity in L'Etranger.
D. Meursault – Etranger

The theme of exile in the "novels" of Camus\textsuperscript{170} exists on the solitary plane -- \textit{L’Etranger}, \textit{La Chute} -- as well as on the collective level -- \textit{La Peste}. Both forms of exile are without recourse, as the author of \textit{Le Mythe} suggests: "Puisqu’il(s) (sont) privé(s) des souvenirs d’une patrie perdue ou de l’espoir d’une terre promise" (ESS, 101). That Camus experienced an intense feeling of alienation at the time he was composing \textit{L’Etranger} is clearly manifest in \textit{Les Carnets}: "Tout m’est étranger.... Que fais – je ici, à quoi riment ces gestes, ces sourires? Je ne suis pas d’ici – pas d’ailleurs non plus. Et le monde n’est plus qu’un paysage inconnu où le coeur ne trouve plus d’appuis. Etranger, qui peut savoir ce que ce mot veut dire. Etranger, avouer que tout m’est étranger..." (CAR, I, 23). In fact, he indicates elsewhere that his life had a role in the conception of \textit{L’Etranger}: "Trois personnages sont entrés dans la composition de \textit{L’Etranger}: deux hommes (dont moi) et une femme" (T.R.N. 1926). Be that as it may, it is pertinent at this juncture to ascertain the essence of the alienation of Meursault, to establish to what degree and in what respect the protagonist of \textit{L’Etranger} is a "stranger."

Some critics have maintained that Meursault, like the absurd man of \textit{Le Mythe}, is a stranger before the universe. In this respect, André Nicolas notes: "Le monde, en tant qu’il ne dépend pas de l’homme, lui est étranger."\textsuperscript{171} Sartre, too, stated in reference to Meursault: "...l’étranger, c’est l’homme en face du monde."\textsuperscript{172} There is a sense in which one might claim that a lacuna exists between Meursault and
the universe. This is, of course, the gap between Meursault's mind and the universe, between the need for order in the protagonist and the chaotic nature of the world. This feeling is conveyed by the style: Meursault deliberately avoids all connective coordinates that indicate causality, with the result that the reader finds in the "novel" a universe devoid of order. Unable to link cause and effect, Meursault is constrained to phenomenologically describe the universe. There is, then, perhaps, some truth to the assertion that Meursault is rationally alienated from the universe, insofar as he cannot order it. The objectivity of the style and the lack of connective coordinates of causality employed by the protagonist could produce the impression that the world is "étrange" and the protagonist an "étranger" vis-a-vis this world.

The absurd man in Le Mythe is a stranger to the world. In fact, one way in which he might become aware of the absurd is through the recognition that: "L'hostilité primitive du monde à travers les millénaires, remonte vers nous" (ESS. 108). This is hardly the case of Meursault whose creator judged him "adopté à la nature" (T.R.N. 1907). Pierre Castex claims that Meursault and Roquentin, the metaphysical hero of La Nausée, both feel "de trop."173 No one can contest that statement but a vital dichotomy is lacking. Although Roquentin is certainly "de trop," and consequently a stranger, in the bourgeois society in which he finds himself, the major feeling of alienation in that personage stems from his contact with nature. Meursault, like Roquentin, feels "de trop" vis-a-vis society but, unlike him, not at all before
nature. Restricted to a phenomenological description of a universe in which he cannot find order, Meursault lives in accord with that universe. The lacuna that exists between his mind and the universe is bridged by his senses. By the senses, he comes in contact with the universe attaining familiarity and harmony with it. Only once in the novel, on that fatal day at the beach, does he overindulge, refusing to heed the sun's warning: "...toute cette chaleur s'appuyait sur moi et s'opposait à mon avance" (T.R.N. 1165). He thus surpasses the ideal of moderation and opens the door to tragedy. Throughout the "novel," he is portrayed as an individual who lives in unison with nature; at the end of the "novel," he explicitly speaks of the benign indifference of the universe: "...je m'ouvrais pour la première fois à la tendre indifférence du monde" (T.R.N. 1209). This may be the first time that Meursault "consciously" opens himself up to the tender indifference of the universe, but the whole book exists to convince the reader that he did this "instinctively" heretofore. Now, having been rejected by the world of men, he turns consciously to the universe, but he never was a stranger to that universe. He lived in communion with it; he never felt alienated from it.

Meursault is primarily a stranger among men. Although the absurd man in Le Mythe is principally estranged from the world, he, too, partakes of the social type of alienation. This phenomenon stems in part from the knowledge that man cannot fully know other men, nor does he always effectively communicate with them. In this respect, Camus writes in Le Mythe: "Il est probablement vrai qu'un homme nous
demeure à jamais inconnu et qu'il y a toujours en lui quelque chose
d'irréductible qui nous échappe" (ESS. 105). The most striking example
in L'Etranger of the solitude created by the lack of communication
between men appears during Marie's visit to the prison. The glaring
breach between men is here symbolized in general by "la distance entre
les grilles" (T.R.N. 1176) separating the prisoners and the visitors, and
more particularly by the "petit jeune homme et cette vieille qui se
regardaient" without speaking (T.R.N. 1177). Individual solitude,
at this point in the "novel," is further emphasized by the obvious
lack of communication rising to the surface as Meursault confronts the
law.

It is Meursault himself, of course, who epitomizes man set off
from other men. Is he cognizant of his alienation? Does he regard
himself as a stranger? In the first part of the "novel," several re-
flections of the protagonist suggest that this is the case. One of these
occurs as Meursault sits among the group of mourners: "Je les
voyais comme je n'ai jamais vu personne," he notes, "et pas un détail
de leurs visages ou de leurs habits me m'échappait. Pourtant je ne
les entendais pas et j'avais peine à croire à leur réalité" (T.R.N.
1129). This is the reaction of a man who sees others in a body and
himself separately, alienated from that body. It also recalls the
following phrase of Le Mythe: "Un homme parle au téléphone derrière
une cloison vitrée; on me l'entend pas, mais on voit sa mimique sans
portée: on se demande pourquoi il vit" (ESS. 108). Both passages
denote not only a recognition of the absurd but an accompanying sense of
deep-seated estrangement from others. Then, too, in the first part, the reader encounters several comments of Meursault that indicate his awareness of instinctively behaving differently from other people. After telling his boss, for example, that it was not his fault that he needed two days off to attend his mother's funeral, he reflects: "J'ai pensé alors que je n'aurais pas dû lui dire cela. En somme, je n'avais pas à m'excuser. C'était plutôt à lui de me présenter ses condoléances" (T.R.N. 1125). Once again, after informing the concierge that he does not want to see his mother's body, he writes: "...J'étais gêné parce que je sentais que je n'aurais pas dû dire cela" (T.R.N. 1127).^{174}

It is only in the second part of the "novel," however, that Meursault becomes fully aware of his alienation from society, of the profound disparity between his individual quantitative morality and the absolute qualitative moral standards of the community, of the dissimilarity between his thirst for truth and attachment to nature and society's rituals and adherence to conventions. All this is latently contained in a scene deliberately reminiscent of the one at the morgue quoted above where Meursault actually noted: "J'ai eu un moment l'impression ridicule qu'ils étaient là pour me juger" (T.R.N. 1130). This time the people before him are actually there to judge him and once again they appear set off into a body of indistinguishable persons:

Tous me regardaient: j'ai compris que c'étaient les jurés. Mais je ne peux pas dire ce qui les distinguait les uns des autres. Je n'ai eu qu'une impression: j'étais devant une banquette
de tramway et tous ces voyageurs anonymes épiaient le nouvel arrivant pour en apercevoir les ridicules. (T.R.N. 1183)

Meursault has achieved complete consciousness of his estrangement from other men, noting, in fact, the feeling of being "de trop, un peu comme un intrus" (T.R.N. 1183).

How do others react to Meursault? Do they see him as a stranger? Do they judge him odd? Most critics maintain that Meursault becomes a stranger to others only in the second part of the story. Carina Gadourek, for one, esteems that:

...on n'a pas l'impression que ceux qui connaissaient Meursault avant le décès de sa mère le trouvent étrange, ni qu'il vive à l'écart de la société... Une seule personne qualifie Meursault de bizarre. C'est la dactylo Marie Cordona. 175

Thomas Hanna writes: "...No one else /except the reader/ is disturbed by Meursault's conduct; neither Marie, nor Emmanuel, nor Céleste, nor Raymond, nor Masson, nor Salamano..." 176 Robert Champigny also notes that: "throughout the first portion of the book, characters meeting Meursault do not feel him as a stranger any more than he feels estranged." 177

There is much in the first part, nonetheless, to support the contrary view, even though Meursault does get on well with his little group. We learn at the trial, for example, that at the old age home Meursault "avai(t) fait preuve d'insensibilité" (T.R.N. 1170).

These people, therefore, the director among others, must have considered
his behavior quite unnatural. Furthermore, Salamano informs Meursault that "dans le quartier on (1) avant mal jugé" (T.R.N. 1157) because he sent his mother to the home. The neighbors judged him strange, or at least a stranger to their values. In addition, his boss cannot comprehend his lack of ambition and his indifference toward a trip to Paris and the possibility of a significant change of life style.

Finally, Marie, on two different occasions, appears stunned by Meursault's conduct and ideas. The first takes place on the day that their liaison begins. After a swim together, she inquires about the mourning band that Meursault is wearing. He tells her that his mother is dead. "Depuis hier" (which is false; it is now Saturday and his mother died either on Wednesday or Thursday) and "elle a eu un petit recul, mais n'a fait aucune remarque" (T.R.N. 1137). The second incident occurs during a discussion on love and marriage and here Marie calls him "bizarre" (T.R.N., 1154). These are individual instances that point out that even during the first part Meursault appears strange to certain persons on given occasions, even though, on the whole, he functions well with these people, some of whom are in fact his friends. In the second part, Meursault becomes a stranger not simply to those with whom he comes in close contact (the chaplain, the magistrate and the prosecutor) but to all those who sit in judgment of him and by extension to society as a whole.

Two very specific traits of Meursault's character help to reinforce the impression of his social alienation. First, there is his refusal to lie or, more specifically, his refusal to exaggerate his
feelings. This is insisted upon throughout the work but particularly in reference to his feelings for Marie and his mother. No matter how badly Marie wants him to admit that he loves her, Meursault will not capitulate. When his lawyer asks him whether he can say that on the day of the funeral he dominated his natural emotions toward his mother, Meursault immediately retorts: "Non, parce que c'est faux" (T.R.N. 1170). He then notes the reaction of his lawyer: "Il m'a regardé d'une façon bizarre, comme si je lui inspirais un peu de dégoût" (T.R.N. 1170).

It is precisely the juxtaposition of this quest for truth in the protagonist and society's ritualistic, spontaneous formalities that produce the effect of Meursault's estrangement. In his preface to the American edition of L'Étranger, Camus points out the importance of this aspect of his hero:

Le héros du livre est condamné parce qu'il ne joue pas le jeu. En ce sens, il est étranger à la société où il vit, il erre, en marge, dans les faubourgs de la vie privée, solitaire, sensuelle... En quoi Meursault ne joue pas le jeu? La réponse est simple: il refuse de mentir. (T.R.N. 1920)

Camus goes on to state that lying in his view, is not simply saying what is blatantly false but claiming to feel more than one does in reference to the human heart: "C'est ce que nous faisons tous, tous les jours, pour simplifier la vie" (T.R.N. 1920). Meursault, on the contrary, refuses to simplify life by stating what he does not feel or by exaggerating what he does feel, and is willing to die rather than betray that principle. This explains in part why he is frequently viewed
as a Christ symbol, a martyr who accepts death in the name of truth.

Linked with this passion for truth is the impression of fundamental innocence that is projected into Meursault. Here Camus employs an eighteenth century literary technique, creating a character who represents innocence on the one hand and nature on the other and opposing him to society which stands for artificiality and convention. This appears, in any case, to have been Camus' intention and the desired effect of this technique is once again to stress the idea that Meursault is fundamentally at odds with society. This is not to say, however, that Camus deemed his hero a completely positive individual. While the author has lauded "la passion de l'absolu et de la vérité" in the protagonist, he has also maintained that: "Il s'agit d'une vérité encore négative, la vérité d'être et de sentir, mais sans laquelle nulle conquête sur soi et sur le monde ne sera jamais possible" (T.R.N. 1920). It seems more correct, therefore, to say that Camus considered him at once innocent and incomplete. To a large degree, Meursault appears to consider himself innocent too. Although he admits that: "On est toujours un peu fautif," (T.R.N. 1137) on the conscious level, it is only when he judges himself through the eyes of other people—through their absolute moral system—that he "discovers" his guilt. When he puts his life up against their values, he "recognizes" his culpability: "pour la première fois, j'ai compris que j'étais coupable" (T.R.N. 1187). But this "recognition," as Robert Champigny remarks, is not tantamount to "acceptation" of guilt: "This does not mean that Meursault feels guilty. Previously aware that he was a criminal, now
he feels that he is religiously guilty in the eyes of theatrical society. But he does not internalize this mask of guilt, he does not assume responsibility. What he may experience is solitude. Later on in the novel, after the visit of the chaplain, he reevaluates his situation and comes to quite a different conclusion about his own personal guilt.

Fundamentally, Meursault is a stranger to the body of men, to the collectivity, to society; a stranger to its games and to its hypocrisy. If this fact is thoroughly illuminated in the second part, it is nonetheless integrally present throughout the entire work. From the first pages of the "novel," the reader is aware that the protagonist is consistently indifferent to conventions that most men tenaciously cling to.

He exhibits a striking indifference toward friendship in the scene where Raymond invites him to be his friend: "...il m'a demandé encore si je voulais être son copain. J'ai dit que ça m'était égal" (T.R.N. 1144). A similar lack of conventional response, now toward filial devotion, echoes in Meursault's response to the magistrate's question: "Il m'a demandé si j'aimais maman. J'ai dit: Oui, comme tout le monde (T.R.N. 1172). The same unconventional reaction permeates his attitude toward love: "...elle m'a demandé si je l'aimais. Je lui ai répondu que cela ne voulait rien dire, mais qu'il me semblait que non..." (T.R.N. 1149); and toward marriage: "Marie est venue me chercher et m'a demandé si je voulais me marier avec elle. J'ai dit que cela m'est égal et que nous pourrions le faire si elle le
voulait.... Elle a observé alors que le mariage était une chose grave. J'ai répondu « Non » ... Elle voulait simplement savoir si j'aurais accepté la même proposition venant d'une autre femme, à qui je serais attaché de la même façon. J'ai dit « Naturellement » (T.R.N. 1154).

Meursault's indifference toward social ambition becomes apparent when he turns down a chance to go to Paris. His boss speaks enthusiastically to him about this "projet," but Meursault responds with his customary "cela m'était égal" (T.R.N. 1153). His employer, dissatisfied, reprimands him for his lack of ambition since "cela était désastreux dans les affaires" (T.R.N. 1154). "Projets" are necessarily concerned with the future, however, and Meursault is preoccupied with the present.

Then, too, after the crime, we are faced with Meursault's refusal to play the conventional game of regret. The first time that he is asked whether he regrets his crime, he reflects: "plutôt que du regret véritable, j'éprouvais un certain ennui" (T.R.N. 1174). Later he is more explicit: "Je n'avais jamais pu regretter vraiment quelque chose. J'étais toujours pris par ce qui allait arriver par aujourd'hui ou par demain" (T.R.N. 1195). To the protagonist's way of thinking, regret is to the past what hope is to the future and he willingly opts for the present. 180

Meursault is also a stranger to legal conventions. His honesty compels him to change certain statements that his lawyer wants him to make for the good of his own defense. When he suggests to his lawyer that the whole business about his mother has no rapport whatsoever with his case, his lawyer quickly informs him that: "... il était visible
Finally, Meursault is a stranger to religious conventions. He bluntly responds, "Non" to the prosecutor when he asks him if he believes in God and, as a result, subsequently answers to the name "Monsieur l'Antéchrist" (T.R.N. 1173 and 1174).

Meursault's confrontation with justice enables society to observe him in his moral nakedness and to judge him. They find him "un monstre moral" (T.R.N. 1181). "Voulez-vous que ma vie n'ait pas de sens?" (T.R.N. 1173) protests the magistrate, and justifiably so. If Meursault's values are applied to the life of the magistrate, it becomes stripped of meaning. The prosecutor's analysis is equally penetrating. He tells Meursault that he has absolutely nothing to do "avec une société dont (il) méconnaissait les règles les plus essentielles" (T.R.N. 1196). Meursault will not don the mask of hypocrisy, will not observe meaningless social rituals, will not play in the social comedy. For these reasons, he becomes a scapegoat and is executed.

Meursault is also, like the absurd hero of Le Mythe, a stranger to himself. In Le Mythe we read: "Pour toujours, je serai étranger à moi-même... Le <<connais-toi toi-même>> de Socrate a autant de valeur que le <<sois vertueux>> de nos confessionaux.... Ils ne sont légitimes que dans la mesure exacte où ils sont approximatifs" (ESS. 111). Despite the fact that Meursault uses the first person singular narrative, one that traditionally is a tool for self-analysis and penetration, he guards an incredible tone of objectivity. This stylistic device suggests, therefore, that, from the beginning of the "novel," Meursault
is a stranger to himself, constrained to describe from the outside what he cannot fully penetrate from the interior. A lacuna immediately becomes apparent between Meursault the observer and Meursault the observed, between himself and his life. Camus has stated that, in his view, the title indicated precisely: "l'objectivité et le détachement du narrateur."181

The fact that Meursault is a stranger to himself is therefore given on the stylistic level but, on the conscious level, achieved as the novel progresses. Slowly and more or less inevitably, due to the structure of the novel, the hero becomes a stranger to his early life and to himself. Having attained a level of introspection in the second part that he did not seem to possess during the first part of the "novel," Meursault is no longer the same person who gave himself up to unreflected habit. Then, too, as Brian Fitch remarks: "Quand il /Meursault/ essaiera de reconstituer sa vie d'avant le procès, ce faux portrait brouillera ses souvenirs de lui-même jusqu'à donner l'impression qu'il parle d'un étranger."182 Twice during the final pages of the "novel," this notion of "stranger to self" is brought to the literal level and with it a recall to Le Mythe: "...l'étranger qui à certaines secondes, vient à notre rencontre dans une glace, le frère familier et pourtant inquiétant que nous retrouvons dans nos propres photographies..." (ESS. 109). Once it is suggested, and one is reminded of Kyo in Malraux's Condition humaine, by the fact that Meursault comes to the recognition that during a long period of time he had been speaking aloud in his cell without ever having recognized
his own voice. The second time occurs as Meursault looks at his image in his tin pannikin:

Je me suis regardé dans ma gamelle de fer.
Il m'a semblé que mon image restait sérieuse
alors même que j'essayais de lui sourire.
Je l'ai agitée devant moi. J'ai souri et elle a gardé le même air sévère et triste.
(T.R.N. 1161)

There is one more person for whom Meursault is a stranger; this is, of course, the reader. Meursault will appear a stranger to the reader to the extent that he adheres to the conventions that Meursault instinctively rejects: love, marriage, law, ambition (etc.) and to the degree that he cannot empathize with Meursault's general indifference, his "indifference" to his own fate, his values and his code of morality. While Meursault might be a stranger to the reader throughout the entire first part, it seems nonetheless true that in part two, no matter what the values of the reader, Meursault will appear less and less a stranger to him. The book is written in such a way that the reader learns to understand him, even if he does not agree with him, through the protagonist's self-analysis. This effect on the reader is especially potent since it is concomitant with the opposite effect on society. Whereas Meursault slowly emerges as a moral stranger to those with whom he comes in contact in the second part, the reader simultaneously attains a greater comprehension of him and familiarity with him.

A metaphysical stranger in that the world goes beyond his rational categories, Meursault, unlike the absurd man of Le Mythe, is not
a stranger in the cosmos; he is, on the contrary, perfectly attuned to nature. He remains, nonetheless, a stranger to society, a stranger to himself and, to varying degrees, a stranger to the reader. At times during the "novel," Meursault is aware that he is a stranger and is tempted to react as one might expect him to do. Nevertheless, the trial and above all the visit of the chaplain convince him of the value of his own individuality. Ultimately, then, his own recognition of "self as stranger" triggers off an heroic fidelity to self. He refuses to deny the values that constitute his own authenticity and for that reason is executed. He has chosen nature over society and pays the price of that choice. Robert Champaigny interprets Meursault's reaction to the chaplain's intervention as "his refusal to become a total stranger," meaning that Meursault refuses to become a stranger "to himself and to his own life."183 This is true; Meursault affirms by his death the validity of the life he led, if only in his own eyes and possibly in those of the reader.

Another dimension exists, however, where Meursault will always remain a stranger. Meursault, the common man, "cet aventurier du quotidien" (ESS. 144) is an "everyman" figure. He symbolizes "everyman" precisely because he is a stranger. Alienation is an inherent part of the human condition; men are, by their very nature, estranged from one another. This is quite clearly manifest in the "novel." Every man is a stranger, even if he refuses to face this fact by donning masks of all sorts. Inability to perceive the veritable nature of one's condition does not mean that one does not partake of that
condition. One of the subtitles on the manuscripts of *L'Étranger* is "Un homme comme les autres" (T.R.N. 1908). Meursault himself realizes that his destiny is no different from that of other men. At a given moment, he reflects: "J'avais le désir de lui /son avocat/ affirmer que j'étais comme tout le monde, absolument comme tout le monde" (T.R.N. 1171). When he enters into prison in the second part of the "novel," into the prison within the larger prison of the human condition, the reader is slowly brought to the recognition that Meursault's fate, while exemplary, is common to all men: the prison symbolizes the human condition, the forthcoming execution, human destiny.

E. Absurdity in *L'Étranger:* Metaphysical and Social

There are many suggestions and reinforcements of the general theme of absurdity, both in style and content in *L'Étranger,* which will be elucidated in the following section of this chapter. There are, nonetheless, two basically distinct notions of absurdity that emanate from the text, the one metaphysical which, unlike the same notion in *Le Mythe,* is not founded upon the idea of divorce, the other, social, and like the idea in *Le Mythe,* based on the notions of confrontation and comparison.

It will be recalled that in *Le Mythe* the idea of metaphysical absurdity is intrinsically linked with the concept of divorce between two juxtaposed phenomena. This is not so, however, in *L'Étranger,* where the omnipresence of death alone seems to constitute the fundamental basis of metaphysical absurdity, even though this motif is nourished
by secondary thematic patterns.

One might argue that in *L'Étranger* the divorce is between man's yearning for immortality on the one hand and death on the other, between the passion for life and the reality of death. This is applicable to the last death in the work -- Meursault's own death -- but not to the two earlier "deaths" in the "novel." Nor would this do justice to the importance of the theme of death around which, in fact, the entire work is constructed. The critics seem to have neglected the importance of this theme in the "novel." The narrative begins with the telegram that announces the death of the mother of the protagonist; the theme of death is at the center of the "novel" with the murder of the Arab on the beach and the work ends with the forthcoming execution of the hero: three deaths, three different ways -- natural death through old age, murder and capital punishment -- of meeting the fate that awaits all men. "Tout le monde était privilégié" (T.R.N. 1209), notes Meursault; all men are ultimately condemned to death. Only with the last death, however, is there juxtaposed a passion for life which, when seen in contrast with the inevitability of death, could produce a form of absurdity based on the notion of divorce. At this point in the "novel," Meursault resembles many a hero of Malraux in that his encounter with death affords an illumination about the true nature of life, for whom proximity with death gives birth to a lucid appraisal of human existence which, in his case, is a reaffirmation of the values he had always clung to in the face of a society that denied their validity. But Perken's dictum
has been present from the very first page of the novel: "La mort est là, comprenez-vous, comme... comme l'irréfutable preuve de l'absurdité de la vie."\textsuperscript{185}

On the last page of the narrative, it becomes evident, not only to the reader, but to the protagonist himself, that it has been death all along that constituted the absurdity of man's condition. In one of the key passages of the "novel," Meursault notes:

J'avais eu raison, j'avais encore raison, j'avais toujours raison. J'avais vécu de telle façon et j'aurais pu vivre de telle autre. J'avais fait ceci et je n'avais pas fait cela. Je n'avais pas fait telle chose alors que j'avais fait cette autre. Et après? C'était comme si j'avais attendu pendant tout le temps cette minute et cette petite aube où je serais justifié. Rien, rien n'avait d'importance et je savais bien pourquoi. ...Du fond de mon avenir, pendant toute cette vie absurde que j'avais menée, un souffle obscur remontait vers moi à travers des années qui n'étaient pas encore venues et ce souffle égalisait sur son passage tout ce qu'on me proposait alors dans les années pas plus réelles que je vivais.
(T.R.N. 1208)

Death the "souffle obscur" that has blown throughout the pages of the entire "novel," forms the basis of the absurdity of human existence, equalizes all propositions, levels all acts, reduces to absurdity the ethic of quality and justifies the quantitative ethic that the protagonist has practiced throughout that part of his life when we have known him. Like the absurd hero in \textit{Le Mythe}, he has multiplied what he has been unable to unify. No human act is more important than any
other; each one is as veritable as it is vain.

Death then is at the core of the indifference of the absurd hero, an indifference that emerges from the first pages of the narrative, even when the consciousness of the absurd hero was not apparent to the reader. Only on the last pages of the "novel," do we have what we might term "conscious indifference" that is set against the "tendre indifférence" of the universe (T.R.N. 1209). But the spontaneous, instinctive indifference of Meursault is everywhere present in the work. "Cela m'est égal" is his response toward the friendship of Raymond (T.R.N. 1144), toward serving as Raymond's witness (T.R.N. 1150), toward a new job in Paris (T.R.N. 1153), and toward marriage with Marie (T.R.N. 1154). Just before firing on the Arab on the beach, Meursault reflects: "J'ai pensé à ce moment qu'on pouvait tirer ou ne pas tirer...rester ici ou partir cela revenait au même" (T.R.N. 1164). Finally, in the courtroom as his fate is being decided, he is lost in thoughts of "la trompette d'un marchand de glace...des odeurs d'été...le rire et les robes de Marie" (T.R.N. 1197). Camus' first choice of title, "L'Indifférent," would have been as applicable to the hero as the one ultimately decided upon (T.R.N. 1908).

The notion of social absurdity in L'Etranger parallels that of Le Mythe since it is founded upon the principle of divorce and contrast. Camus writes in Le Mythe that "Ce divorce entre l'homme et sa vie, l'acteur et son décor, c'est proprement le sentiment de l'absurdté" (ESS.101). This idea fits L'Etranger perfectly if we
equate "l'acteur" with Meursault and "décór" with society, for, at the social level, the notion of absurdity is not in Meursault nor in society but in their confrontation. It is produced not by Meursault nor by society but by Meursault in society.

Social absurdity is created by a series of neatly juxtaposed contrasts that exist on various levels: the murder as seen by Meursault, the murder interpreted by society, the values of Meursault contrasted with those of society and producing the confrontation of the quantitative ethic and the absolute moral standards of society, nature represented by Meursault, convention by society, Meursault as representative of naked truth, society as incarnation of mask or deceit, Meursault's behavioristic "objective" presentation of reality, society's logical -- but false -- diagnosis of that reality, and finally, Meursault's attempt to maintain authenticity and society's endeavor to reduce him to zero. The concept of social absurdity in *L'Étranger* is built into the very structure of the novel as Camus himself has suggested: "Le sens du livre tient exactement dans le parallélisme des deux parties" (T.R.N. 1924).

**F. Thematic and Stylistic Reinforcement of the Notion of Absurdity**

In *Le Mythe*, absurdity is rationally put forth, according to the genre, in the form of a doctrine. In *L'Étranger*, the idea of absurdity emanates, not in specifically rational terms nor in any systematic exposition, but from a lived experience that the artist, not the theoretician, creates. Camus, the artist, projects this impression
of absurdity in L'Étranger through a network of thematic and stylistic patterns that reinforce the notion of absurdity on both the social and the metaphysical levels: habit and fatality on the metaphysical level, play on the social level and style on both levels.

1. Habit

One of the key themes that nourish the notion of absurdity at the metaphysical level is the theme of habit or pattern. In Le Mythe we read: "Vivre, naturellement, n'est jamais facile. On continue à faire les gestes que l'existence commande, pour beaucoup de raisons dont la première est l'habitude" (ESS. 101). In L'Étranger, the author insists on this role of habit or pattern and upon its unreflective and deadening nature. Most of the characters, at one time or another in the "novel," are characterized as pure victims of habit. The protagonist's mother, for example, we are told, cried often when she first entered the old age home: "C'était à cause de l'habitude." Then, fixed anew in a different pattern of existence, she would have cried again had she been forced to leave: "Toujours à cause de l'habitude" (T.R.N. 1126). Salamano is another classical victim of habit. When Meursault informs him, after the loss of his dog, that he might quite easily purchase another one, Salamano replies that "il était habitué à celui-la" (T.R.N. 1156). Then, too, though he had not been really happy with his deceased wife, "il s'était bien habitué à elle" (T.R.N. 1156). Because his life has now radically changed, because his patterned routine has been abruptly broken: "il ne savait pas trop ce qu'il allait faire" (T.R.N. 1157).
In prison, Meursault reflects upon routine, noting that once very much a victim of the smoking habit, "à ce moment-lâ, (il) (s')étai(t) habitué à ne plus fumer" (T.R.N. 1179). Consequently, not smoking was no longer a punishment for him. Once more, the protagonist observes that if he had been compelled to live in a tree trunk with no other occupation than looking at the sky immediately above his head, "(il) (s'y) (serait) peu à peu habitué" (T.R.N. 1178). He then adds that his mother had always been fond of repeating that "on finissait par s'habituer à tout" (T.R.N. 1178). Furthermore, this idea of the protagonist's mother harmonizes perfectly with her son's notion of the equality of acts. For Meursault, one set of habits, one patterned routine, is no better than another. This is primarily what he means when he tells his employer that "on ne changeait jamais de vie" (T.R.N. 1154). On the exterior, the acts may change but one ultimately becomes a victim of habit, simply of a different set of habits, and, as Meursault notes in the same conversation: "toutes se valaient" (T.R.N. 1154).

If the chapters of L'Etranger were to be entitled, the fifth chapter of the first part could very aptly be called "The Inevitability of Habit," for it deals in depth and variety with the role of routine in human existence. We are presented with the story of Salamano and the scene between Meursault and his employer both of which have already been alluded to. Far more significantly, however, the reader here makes the acquaintance of the robot woman who epitomizes the theme of unreflective habit.

In the paragraph that follows the scene in which Marie murmurs
that Meursault is "bizarre," Meursault uses the same adjective twice
to describe the robot woman (T.R.N. 1154 and 1155). It is no accident
that these two scenes follow one another. Camus undoubtedly juxtaposed
them for effect since the robot woman, in the first part of the "novel,"
serves as a reflection, a mirror-image of the protagonist: his
judgment of her parallels society's, and probably the reader's, judgment
of him. Clearly in the first part of the narrative, both are given
over to deadening routine. Meursault's life is neatly categorized,
Monday through Saturday. The reader has the impression that everything
just falls into place, eating, working, sleeping, the same routine
described in Le Mythe. On Sundays, however, things are quite different:
in the sixth chapter of the first part, on a Sunday, Meursault kills
the Arab, but, for our purposes, the Sunday of the second chapter is
far more important because it explores in great detail a day on which
routine, or patterned existence, is broken.

In this chapter, an aspect of the theme of time in the "novel"
is neatly linked with the theme of habit, for, when routine is
broken, the protagonist is forced "to kill time," an expression he
uses three times in the "novel." Meursault complains: "J'ai pensé
que c'était dimanche et cela m'a ennuyé: je n'aime pas le dimanche"
(T.R.N. 1137). It becomes evident that Meursault does not like
Sundays because the routine has been broken and his efforts to pass the
day ultimately end in boredom. These efforts on the part of Meursault
to "kill time" are reminiscent of the Pascalian divertissements. He
sleeps until ten, smokes in bed till noon, pastes newspaper clippings
in a notebook and spends the day looking out the window. His vocabulary expresses his restlessness: he mentions twice that he is "ennuyé" notes that he has "erre dans l'appartement" and that "pour faire quelque chose, (il) (a) pris un vieux journal et (il) (l'a) lu" (T.R.N. 1137). In the midst of his boredom, he murmurs: "C'était vraiment dimanche" and, at the end of the day, with a sigh of relief, he exclaims that it is "un dimanche de tiré" (T.R.N., 1138 and 1140).

While at the window of his apartment, in the process of "killing time," he outlines the absurd circle of human activity, once again recalling Le Mythe, that goes on in the street below: the comically drawn family off on a Sunday promenade, then their return, the soccer players, the movie goers, the host of people parading to and fro. Everything here is viewed in a circular perspective—anticipating the "itinéraire d'aveugle" of which he later speaks (T.R.N. 1192)—the strollers "allant et venant sur le trottoir d'en face," even "la journée (qui) a tourné encore un peu" (T.R.N. 1139).

This chapter is not only important thematically but also structurally for it prepares the future scenes in prison where the protagonist will once again be faced with time but not with pre-fabricated pattern: "dans les derniers mois, je dormais de seize à dix-huit heures par jour. Il me restait alos six heures à tuer avec les repas, les besoins naturels, mes souvenirs et l'histoire du Tchécoslovaque" (T.R.N. 1180). From the moment that Meursault enters into the prison within the larger prison of the human condition, he is forced, without the help of routine, to fill his days. He calls
upon memory and sleep above all to help him through a new existence where every day is Sunday: "C'était sans cesse le même jour qui déferlait dans ma cellule" (T.R.N. 1181).

It is the robot woman, nonetheless, who incarnates more than any other personage the deadening routine of pattern. Meursault sees her, for the first time, when he dines at Celeste's restaurant. She sits down at his table, orders her meal, figures out the bill in advance, rapidly devours the hors-d'oeuvres and during the entire meal ticks off radio programs in a magazine. He judges her bizarre but is also fascinated by her; he follows her into the street and watches her until she disappears. In the first part of the novel, she serves as Meursault's feminine counterpart, having fallen, like him, into a pattern of seemingly unquestioned habits or routines. Their mutual fascination for one another—she turns up in the second part of the novel at the trial—can be explained by the fact that each serves as a mirror for the other. 186

To underscore the patterned existence of "la petite automate" (T.R.N. 1185), Camus has recourse to a stylistic device that insists upon the puppet-like, mechanical aspects of her gestures. While this technique is particularly effective in the portrayal of the robot woman, it had previously occurred in the "novel." The description of the funeral march, with its restricted use of verbs and conjunctions, gives the impression of a mechanically organized parade of puppets that is, ironically, not without a comic effect: "A partir de ce moment, tout est allé très vite. Les hommes se sont avancés vers la
bière avec un drap. Le prêtre, ses suivants, le directeur et moi-même sommes sortis.... L'ordonnateur nous donna nos places. Le curé marchait en avant, puis la voiture. Autour d'elle, les quatre hommes. Derrière, le directeur, moi-même et, fermant la marche, l'infirmière déléguée et M. Pérez" (T.R.N. 1132-33). When Pérez faints, "on eût dit un pantin disloqué"(T.R.N. 1135), the fall is in perfect harmony with the puppetlike motion of the entire procession.

In the restaurant, this same technique is brilliantly employed to describe "les gestes précis d'automate" (T.R.N. 1155). Once again a string of verbs of action with relatively few conjunctions underscore the "gestes saccadés" of the woman. The jerky effect produced by the style in fact approaches the technique of the animated cartoon: "Elle s'est débarrassée de sa jaquette, s'est assise et a consulté fiévreusement la carte. Elle a appelé Céleste et a commandé immédiatement tous ses plats d'une voix à la fois précise et précipitée. En attendant les hors-d'œuvre, elle a ouvert son sac, en a sorti un petit carré de papier et un crayon, a fait d'avance l'addition, puis a tiré d'un gousset, augmentée du pourboire, la somme exacte qu'elle a placée devant elle" (T.R.N. 1155).

In Le Mythe, Camus speaks of "le caractère insensé de cette agitation quotidienne" (ESS. 101) and the mechanical aspects of other men that readily produce the feeling of absurdity in the onlooker. In L'Étranger, the reader is the onlooker in front of a tableau, drawn by the author, of the puppetlike mechanical movements of his protagonists, all engrossed in a series of seemingly unreflected rituals.
In the *Carnets*, too, Camus links up habit with the mechanical: "l'aspect mécanique des choses et des êtres -- avec l'habitude" (T.R.N. 1894). The secondary characters then, Pèrez, Salamano and above all the robot woman, by their succumbing to patterned existence, reflect the absurd.

The role that Meursault plays in this network of routine has been discussed by the critics. For Sartre, Meursault is reduced "à l'état de marionnette manipulée par l'auteur." Carina Gadourek objects: "*L'Étranger* est une œuvre minutieusement concertée et le personnage de Meursault n'est certainement pas une marionnette dont Camus manipule les ficelles quand bon lui semble." In our view, Sartre's opinion is valid only for the first part of the "novel" where Meursault too contributes to the overall picture of unreflected pattern created by all the protagonists. This is why the robot woman can be interpreted as his female counterpart. Until the encounter on the beach, which, in fact, destroyed more than the balance of the day, Meursault at least "seems" to the reader to be the victim of unreflective habit whose life parallels, although to a less intense degree, that of "la femme automate."

In the second part, however, Meursault goes beyond these secondary characters who never surpass the state of unquestioned routine. While he remains, like all men, the marionette of destiny, he seems to attain a new dimension in that, for the first time, to the reader at least, he is fully cognizant of his fate. Through his experience in prison, his discovery of the past, his long hours of
reflection, he succeeds in developing an introspective side of his personality in the second part of the "novel" that runs counter to the unreflective routine that he exhibited in the earlier part of the narrative. Meursault has now fully come to terms with the absurd, exhibiting not only the indifference of the absurd hero but the consciousness of the absurd hero too. Taken out of his patterned existence and forced in upon himself, he has come to grips with his fate on all levels.

Habit, in the first part of the "novel," helps to create the feeling of absurdity, introspection, in the second part, the consciousness of absurdity. Two sides of Meursault's personality are thus represented by the two parts of the "novel," pattern and reflection. As we have shown, pattern, in the first part of the "novel," is primarily represented by the robot woman. In the second part of the "novel," introspection is represented by the journalist. At the trial, Meursault notices that one of the journalists "(le) regardait... ses deux yeux, très clairs, (1') examinaient attentivement" (T.R.N. 1184). Meursault notes: "...j'ai eu l'impression bizarre d'être regardé par moi-même" (T.R.N. 1184). This is, of course, precisely what Meursault has been doing since the beginning of the second half of the "novel" and which had been glaringly absent from the earlier section of the work where Camus was interested in depicting "un homme sans conscience apparente" (ESS. 1426). In that earlier part, Meursault, was, for his creator, "un personnage négatif dans la mesure où il paraît privé de toute subjectivité" (T.R.N. 1910). In
the second part, he develops subjectivity as he develops, or seems to
develop in the eyes of the reader, full consciousness and introspective
qualities. It is highly significant, therefore, that, at the trial,
where Meursault is hardly able to distinguish between the faces of
those in the crowd, he alludes six times to the robot woman and the
journalist, four of these times to the two of them together and five of
these times they are intently gazing upon him. They are visible per-
sonifications of the two aspects of his personality, routine and
reflection. The robot woman (pattern) and the journalist (reflection)
Together depict the total personality of the protagonist which has
flowered across the pages of the tale before the eyes of the reader.

Meursault, therefore, goes beyond habit to reflection, but
the other characters do not and the depiction of their patterned
existence, and of Meursault's to the extent that it resembles theirs,
reinforced by the mechanical and puppetlike movements of the pro-
tagonists and by the circular perspective frequently employed, sustain
the notion of absurdity on the metaphysical level which permeates
the "novel." Habit explains not only how but why man performs the
daily routines of human existence and, as delineated in Le Mythe, one
who observes the mechanical in the human is apt to be struck by a
feeling of the absurd. The reader of L'Étranger is the spectator in
this case, and, if his perception is keen, he sees in the theme of
habit a reflection of the larger motif of metaphysical absurdity.
2. Fatality

The other key theme that strengthens the impression of absurdity at the metaphysical level in *L'Étranger* is that of fatality. This theme of fatality from which the feeling of absurdity emanates is constituted in three dimensional fashion: the interior dimension or passivity of the hero, the exterior dimension or role of nature and finally the social dimension or the "logical" and "legal" interpretation of "chance."

From the very first pages of the "novel," the reader is aware of the protagonist's physical passivity which sometimes borders on sheer laziness. He does not visit his mother at the Home because he would lose his Sunday "sans compter l'effort pour aller à l'autobus, prendre des tickets et faire deux heures de route" (T.R.N. 1126). He accepts Raymond's invitation to dinner because "cela (lui) éviterait de faire (s) cuisine" (T.R.N. 1143). Then, on Sunday morning, he cooks eggs and eats them without bread "parce qu'(il) n'en avait plus et qu'(il) ne voulait pas descendre pour en acheter" (T.R.N. 1137).

There is a certain intellectual passivity on the part of the protagonist too that is apparent when he notes: "Je ne voulais pas déjeuner chez Céleste comme d'habitude parce que, certainement, ils m'auraient posé des questions et je n'aime pas cela" (T.R.N. 1137). This intellectual passivity is linked with, perhaps synonymous with, a verbal hesitancy on his part: "Je n'ai jamais grand-chose à dire," he tells the magistrate, "alors, je me tais" (T.R.N. 1171).
The passive side of his character is once again evinced by the negative manner in which he refers to himself: "Je n'étais pas malheureux," and to his life which "ne (lui) déplaisait pas du tout" (T.R.N. 1179). Meursault's passivity, however, does not warrant Maurice Nadeau's remark that the protagonist "n'a jamais été au monde; il n'a pas vécu" nor does it justify either Max Jacob's assertion that the work is an "étude d'un homme insensible aux réalités présentes" or Morvan Lebesque's retort "Insensible? Mieux absent." The two most glaring examples of the passivity of the protagonist occur later in the "novel" in very key situations. The first, at the moment of the murder, when the protagonist notes: "La gâchette a cédé"; the second, at the trial, when he exclaims that he killed the Arab "à cause du soleil" (T.R.N. 1166 and 1196). In the first case, one has the impression that the passivity of Meursault makes him a puppet of fate while in the second example we see him acting as a result of an exterior force. Both examples underscore the fact that Meursault is more acted upon than actor.

Extracts from Les Carnets indicate that Camus considered his protagonist to be "un être passif qui se borne à répondre aux questions" (T.R.N. 1910). He takes issue with those critics who claim that Meursault "se justifie" in his encounter with the chaplain, claiming that Meursault does not justify himself but rather "se met en colère." He then adds: "Il n'y a pas rupture dans mon personnage. Dans ce chapitre comme dans tout le reste du livre, il se borne à répondre aux questions" (T.R.N. 1923). Despite Camus' assertion,
the prison experience which forces the hero onto himself, has the beneficial effect of jolting him from passivity and leading him to conscious revolt.

Far more important and far more pervading in the "novel," is the extréme dimension of fatality. The role of external nature cannot, however, be entirely disconnected from the subjective nature of the protagonist for it acts upon that nature, modifying it and ultimately, due to the tragic flaw of the hero, triumphs over it.

On each key day in the "novel" -- the day before the funeral, the day of the funeral, the day on the beach and even on the two days of the trial -- light, sun and fatigue are all closely linked with the theme of death and the motif of fatality.

On the day before the funeral, the sun is stifling and the protagonist falls asleep on the way to the Home. Later the same evening dozing next to the casket of his mother, he is "aveuglé par l'éclaboussement soudain de la lumière" (T.R.N. 1128), when the concierge switches on the light. From this point onward, we are cognizant not only of the oppressive effect of light in general but of the protagonist's personal hyper-sensitivity to any form of light and of its resulting effect of fatigue, as the following remark, made in the same room, indicates: "L'éclat de la lumière sur les murs blancs me fatiguait...une pureté blessante pour les yeux...cette lumière aveuglante" (T.R.N. 1128).

On the morning of the funeral, we find the protagonist in the same dazed state: "fatigué," even before "trois quarts d'heure de
marche," under "l'éclat du ciel insoutenable" (T.R.N. 1131, 1132, 1134). Once again this semi-hypnotic state causes visual and intellectual confusion in Meursault: "Tout cela, le soleil, l'odeur de cuir et de crottin de la voiture, celle du vernis et celle de l'encens, la fatigue d'une nuit d'insomnie, me troublait le regard et les idées" (T.R.N. 1134).

The themes of fatigue and light not only return on the day of the murder but reach their apex. Meursault experiences "de la peine à (se) réveiller" and when he leaves the house "le jour, déjà tout plein de soleil, (l') a frappé comme une gifle" (T.R.N. 1158). Once on the beach, there are innumerable references to the unbearable effects of the heat. The blazing sun, causing the sand to appear red, renders the protagonist "à moitié endormi" (T.R.N. 1162). Then, in an otherwise metonymic narrative, the reader encounters a shower of metaphors: the protagonist finds it difficult to remain immobile "sous la pluie aveuglante qui tombait du ciel," wherever he turns he is met by this "épée de lumière" and the day itself, no longer advancing, "avait jeté l'ancre dans un océan de métal bouillant" (T.R.N. 1164, 1165). Finally, vis-a-vis the Arab, the sun becomes a blade that pierces his forehead: "La lumière a giclé sur l'acier et c'était comme une longue lame étincelante qui m'atteignait au front" (T.R.N. 1166).

It is quite normal, therefore, at the trial that the funeral of the protagonist's mother be associated with the murder on the beach, although not for the same reason that the prosecutor does so.
Meursault had linked them together himself long before the trial when he noted at the moment of the murder: "C'était le même soleil que le jour où j'avais enterré maman" (T.R.N. 1166). Then, too, the following explanation that Meursault offers his lawyer in reference to the day of the funeral is perfectly applicable to the day of the murder. "Je lui ai expliqué que j'avais une nature telle que mes besoins physiques dérangeaient souvent mes sentiments. Le jour où j'avais enterré maman, j'étais très fatigué et j'avais sommeil. De sorte que je ne me suis pas rendu compte de ce qui se passait" (T.R.N. 1170).

At the trial, too, fatigue and the sun's effects are sometimes responsible for the aloofness of the accused. In all three cases, therefore, there is an over-riding presence of fatality glowing forth in the rays of the Algerian sun: in the beginning of the "novel" (death of the protagonist's mother), in the middle of the "novel" (murder of the Arab), at the end of the "novel" (the forthcoming execution of the protagonist), where the overbearing and excruciating presence of the sun and its deadening effects dominate a scene of death.

The sun thoroughly permeates the three major scenes of the narrative — each scene dealing with death. The sun functions then, on the one hand, as a symbol of implacable human destiny. In this respect, Roland Barthes has noted:

Tout comme dans les mythologies antiques ou la Phèdre racinienne, le soleil est ici expérience si profonde du corps, qu'il en devient destin; il fait l'histoire, et
Yet the sun in *L'Étranger* is a double-edged sword. While it symbolizes necessity and destiny and is therefore linked with death, it also is a life-giving beneficial force that must be used moderately. When Meursault is viewed as a tragic figure, his tragic flaw appears to be lack of moderation in solar indulgence. The sun "warns" Meursault on the beach just before the murder: the sun "s'opposait à (son) avance," but rather than heed the sun's warning and turn back, he attempts to conquer the sun and ironically ends by being vanquished by her sharp rays: "Je me tendais tout entier pour triompher du soleil et de cette ivresse opaque qu'il me déversait" (*T.R.N.* 1165).

As one sees Meursault slowly led to his doom, one is reminded of Oedipus, but the hubris of Oedipus keeps him from seeing the light until he blinds himself while Meursault is blinded by the light and his lack of moderation as regards the light leads to his downfall. Furthermore, like Melville's Billy Budd who, tormented to interior nature, lunges forward and plants a deadly blow on the forehead of Claggart, Meursault obsessed and "attacked" by exterior nature, fires deadly shots into the Arab and consequently, again like Billy, raps on the door of his own misfortune.

Whereas the sun, on one level, symbolizes destiny and necessity,
the sea, on another, represents freedom, liberty and purification by life-giving cleansing waters in which the protagonist bathes himself in ritual fashion. Two of the psychoanalytical approaches to L’Étranger greatly enrich the symbolical possibilities of both the sun and the sea. Carl Viggiani in "L’Étranger de Camus" views the sea as the mother symbol with appropriate fertility and consolation, liberty and regeneration and the sun as the father symbol which "épouse la mer et la terre" and is "l’image de la vérité, il écrase et détruit." 195 John Fletcher, in "Interpreting L’Étranger," views the fundamental conflict of the "novel" as that of the hero and the dominant father-figure, the sun. The battle is waged, according to Fletcher, "over the mother-figure, that is, the earth and the sea." 196 Stressing the role of fatality, he reads the novel as a secular tragedy: the first chapter serves as the prologue, the last chapter as an epilogue, the robot woman is the sphinx and the old people at the morgue as well as the spectators at the trial represent the chorus. As for Meursault, once he has "détruit l’équilibre du jour," he is left without defense against the machinations of a vindictive destiny and, like the tragic hero described by Freud, he takes the "tragic guilt" upon himself "in order to relieve the chorus from theirs," and thus becoming, "though it might be against his will, the redeemer of the chorus." 197

There is still a third dimension to the theme of fatality in L’Étranger, existing on the social level and characterized by the "logical" and "legal" interpretation of "chance." At the trial,
Meursault is asked if he returned to the spring with the intention of killing the Arab. His answer, of course, is negative. The prosecutor then asks: "Alors, pourquoi était-il armé et pourquoi revenir vers cet endroit précisément?" to which Meursault responds: "C'était le hasard" (T.R.N. 1186). Later on at the trial, Raymond asserts that Meursault's presence on the beach was "le résultat d'un hasard" and when asked to explain how the letter to his mistress was written by Meursault, he exclaims: "C'était un hasard" (T.R.N. 1191). The reader is aware of the great role played by chance in the events of the "novel"--the chance meeting of Marie, her desire to see a Fernandel movie, the presence of the Arab at the spring, etc.--and now witnesses these chance occurrences legally put together in the form of premeditated evidence used against the accused that will inevitably lead to his execution.

Fatality here is not the result of interior nature--passivity of the hero--nor is it the result of external natural forces--the sun--but rather springs from the fact that Meursault is judged according to the whims of a legal and "logical" society. Furthermore, this judgment takes place as the accused looks on, as if somehow he had no part to play. "Mon sort se réglait sans qu'on prenne mon avis," notes Meursault who later refers to his lawyer's use of "je," "chaque fois qu'il parlait de moi." He then adds: "Moi, j'ai pensé que c'était m'écartier encore de l'affaire, me réduire à zero et, en un certain sens, se substituer à moi" (T.R.N. 1193, 1196, 1197). This inability to play a role in one's own fate, forcing the protagonist
to virtually watch his fate be decided, heightens the effect of fatality on the reader. The prosecutor has linked a series of chance occurrences into an elaborate cause and effect relationship and presents them in a damning accusation of premeditated murder. His rational and logical interpretation of the facts, excluding any role to chance, is clear, even plausible, but the reader knows at bottom blatantly false. In this respect, Meursault relates the argument of the prosecutor:

J'avais écrit la lettre d'accord avec
Raymond pour attirer sa maîtresse....
Je lui avais demandé son revolver.
J'étais revenu seul pour m'en servir....
Et «pour être sûr que la besogne
était bien faite», j'avais tiré
encore quatre balles, posément, à
coup sûr, d'une façon réfléchie en
quelque sorte. (T.R.N. 1194)

Several critics hold that Meursault never reaches the tragic realm. Among them is Murray Krieger who argues that Meursault's "constitutional unassertiveness prevents any approximation to the tragic." Meursault does, however, reach the realm of tragedy for at the end of the tale he displays both the dignity and the consciousness of the tragic hero which is also that of the absurd hero. In addition, his is a total acception of life with its absurd destiny. While Meursault's destiny parallels that of Oedipus, for the above mentioned reasons, it also approaches that of Christ, insofar as Meursault is a sacrificial victim of society. The function of these easily read allusions is precisely to raise the
tale or lend to the tale tragic proportions.

Numerous reasons have been forwarded to explain Meursault's desire for "des cris de haine" at his execution. W. D. Redfern claims that Meursault hopes for the hateful crowds because they would provide "a living proof that he has served as a scapegoat for guilty consciences." Philip Thody sees in the same phenomenon a revolt against society, blatant scorn for its conventions and a desire to live intensely at the very last moments of his life. Yet, if we recall the classical structure of the narrative, as well as a remark of the protagonist made immediately before this final wish, we discover what seems to be a much deeper motivation.

In the final paragraph of the "novel," Meursault reflects upon his mother, noting that: "Si près de la mort, maman devait s'y sentir libérée et prête à tout revivre. Personne, personne n'avait le droit de pleurer sur elle" (T.R.N. 1209). No one had the right to cry over her destiny because "tout le monde était privilégié" (T.R.N. 1209); everyone shares that same destiny; all men are condemned to death, whether it be today or some distant time in the future. When Meursault exclaims, therefore, in the last sentence of the narrative: ". . . il me restait à souhaiter qu'il y ait beaucoup de spectateurs le jour de mon exécution et qu'ils m'accueillent avec des cris de haine" (T.R.N. 1210), he is, on the one hand, asking that no one waste his sympathy on him just as he had refused to do in reference to his mother who was also condemned to death. More important still is that those spectators who will witness the execution of the protagonist
constitute the final appearance of the "chorus." Meursault, the tragic figure, has assumed their tragic guilt, he can now only hope that their howls of execration will be tantamount to the recognition of their own fate in his and their conscious revolt against it.

Meursault's fate then is exemplary inasmuch as he lives the prison experience which symbolizes the human condition and is condemned to death, a symbol of human destiny. Yet his fate, as we have seen, is that of every man. His last wish, therefore, is that those who witness his execution might realize that he, Meursault, like every man, "porte la forme entière de l'humaine condition." 201

A very definite feeling of absurdity at the metaphysical level is elicited by the theme of fatality. The attentive reader cannot help but come to this realization as he views Meursault more or less passively subjected to the interior forces, the natural forces and the social forces that lead to his tragic destiny. Two concomitant aspects create this effect: the "enchaînement" or concatenation of events and the "entraînement" or sweeping along of the protagonist.

3. Play

The theme of play which reinforces the larger theme of social absurdity is particularly manifest in the second half of the narrative where the comedy of justice is unravelled. The games begin with the magistrate who plays "le jeu" (T.R.N. 1169) of light and darkness, turning the light on Meursault who is asked a series of questions while the magistrate, of course, remains in the darkness. The final
"Jeu" (T.R.N. 1206) is that of the chaplain who tries to outstare Meursault during a discussion of the possibility of life after death.

The legal games that precede the trial work so well that the protagonist notes: "Tout était si naturel, si bien réglé et si sobrement joué que j'avais l'impression ridicule de faire partie de la famille" (T.R.N. 1174). Our underlining. During the major game of the work, however, the game of law, the trial, that is played out in the third and fourth chapters of the second half of the "novel," Meursault learns that he is the unwanted son of that family that is in the process of preparing his execution.

In his influential work entitled Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture, J. Huizinga defines play as:

...a free activity standing quite consciously outside 'ordinary' life as being not serious, but at the same time absorbing the player intensely and utterly. It is an activity connected with no material interest, and no profit can be gained by it. It proceeds within its own proper boundaries of time and space according to fixed rules and in an orderly manner. It promotes the formation of social groupings which tend to surround themselves with secrecy and to stress their difference from the common world by disguise or other means. 202

The entire book demonstrates, nonetheless, particularly for our purposes in the chapter entitled "Play and Law" and in the chapter on "Play and War" (which will be studied in reference to Candide), that the seriousness, even sacredness of an action, does in no way preclude its "play-quality." The play element can be, therefore, essentially
present in actions such as law and war that are inherently serious and that have material interests at stake.

Huizinga's approach is an historical one and he sounds archaic justice for the game elements inherent in the practice of law, finding "not so much the abstract question of right and wrong" occupying the archaic mind, but rather "the very concrete question of winning and losing." He discovers, therefore, in archaic justice a feeble ethical standard existing in a very definite play-sphere where justice is made subservient to the rules of the game, casting lots would serve as a perfect example. In short, the agonistic factor is at its strongest in archaic justice while the ideal foundation of Justice is at its weakest. He notes more specifically that: "In Greece, litigation was considered as an agon, a contest bound by fixed rules and sacred in form, where the two contending parties invoked the decision of an arbiter." It is important to note then that there is no real distinction between ritual and play, between the sacred and the agonistic. On the one hand we have the lawsuit viewed as a contest, taking place in a "court" of justice and subject to regulations with the express purpose of winning--"The lawsuit can be regarded as a game of chance, a contest or a verbal battle."--and on the other hand, costumes are worn and the ground is sacred -- "a veritable temenos, a sacred spot cut off and hedged in from the 'ordinary' world." Finally, Huizinga judges that:
The struggle to win is itself holy. But once it is animated by clear conceptions of right and wrong the struggle rises into the sphere of law; and seen in the light of positive conceptions regarding Divine Power it rises into the sphere of faith. In all this, however, the primary thing is play which is the seed of that ideal growth.  

A look at Meursault’s trial from the perspective of play is quite illuminating—all the elements of game and ritual are there. The courtroom scene is agonistic with its two competing sides and arbiter, its exigence of order, its fixed rules and its emphasis on winning. The ritualistic is mixed with the play—quality for in the ambiance of the agon we have a sacred place, sacred language and costume. 

The first of our bells rings, "une petite sonnerie a résonné dans la pièce" (T.R.N. 1182), signalling the beginning of the match or more specifically the pre-game introductions. Meursault’s lawyer approaches the journalists and shakes hands while the handcuffs are removed from the prisoner—all of the combatants must be ostensibly free—symbolically giving the illusion of temporary equality among all persons involved in the game of justice about to begin. The significance of the bells, however, is not limited to the play sphere. Here again we witness the intermingling of game and ritual, for the bells, just as in the celebration of the Mass, signify the movement from profane to sacred time.  

At this point, the protagonist has the impression that he is in a club of some sort: "J'ai remarqué à ce moment que tout le monde
se rencontrait, s'interpellait et conversait, comme dans un club
où l'on est heureux de se retrouver entre gens du même monde" (T.R.N.
1183). This observation provokes a feeling of alienation in the
hero who records: "la bizarre impression qu'(il avait) d'être de
trop, un peu comme un intrus" (T.R.N. 1183). Meursault is then
led to his corner, into "le box des accusés" (T.R.N. 1182), and a
moment later an agonistic factor reminiscent of ancient justice
becomes apparent: the drawing of lots for the jury, "le tirage au
sort des jurés" (T.R.N. 1184).

A second bell is rung (T.R.N. 1184), indicating the commencement
of the game itself now that the necessary order has been established
and that all the parties have regained their respective corners:
"Tout le monde a regagné sa place" (T.R.N. 1184). The players are
introduced: the jury, the judge, the prosecutor, the defense
attorney and the defendant. As the players step forward, one notes
the ritualistic, sacred element of costume: the defense attorney
arrives "en robe," the prosecutor "vêtu de rouge," the ensemble
"trois juges, deux en noir, le troisième en rouge" (T.R.N. 1184).
Unlike in England, the judge's wig is not worn but "la toque de juge"
--judge's cap--is a traditional headpiece in litigation in France. It
would appear, therefore, that Huizinga's observation, made in reference
to the wig, applies to "la toque de juge" as well. He considers it
"more than a mere relic of antiquated professional dress.
Functionally, it has close connections with the dancing masks of
savages. It transforms the wearer into another «being».
more, while one other sacred element, the bible, is never mentioned, in the trial, another, the crucifix, plays an important role throughout the entire second half of the narrative.

Some of the rules of the game are then announced by the judge: the sentence passed down by the jury must be accepted in the spirit of justice and the court room will be emptied if the spectators do not maintain the proper order (T.R.N. 1185). The role of the spectators thus delineated, the judge elucidates the nature of his part in the game: "Selon lui," notes Meursault, "il était là pour diriger avec impartialité les débats d'une affaire qu'il voulait considérer avec objectivité" (T.R.N. 1185).

The trial commences, the witnesses are called, "les véritables débats" (T.R.N. 1185), adorned in theatrical and sacred language, begin. The repartee between the defense attorney and the prosecutor is often accompanied by corporal gestures that suggest that one is on the "court" and in the realm of "play": "L'avocat levait les bras et plaidait coupable, mais avec excuses. Le procureur tendait ses mains et dénonçait la culpabilité, mais sans excuses" (T.R.N. 1193. Our underlining). These gestures clearly suggest a game situation in which any ball might be thrown by one player and then caught by another. (One is reminded of Didi's remarks in En Attendant Godot: "Voyons, Gogo, il faut me renvoyer la balle de temps en temps.") Here the ball of litigation is tossed among the players as the arbiter looks upon the action. Outside the realm of play, the gestures have additional meaning. The vertical gesture of the defense
attorney can be interpreted as an appeal to a higher truth beyond social truth while the horizontal movement of the prosecutor indicates quite unequivocally that the accused is being tried and will be condemned by society itself.

Just like in any game, a series of totally arbitrary roles and functions are assigned, as in the following ludicrous assertion of the prosecutor: "un étranger pouvait proposer du café, mais un fils devait le refuser devant le corps de celle qui lui avait donné le jour" (T.R.N. 1188. Our underlining). Once more, the conclusion of Meursault's lawyer indicates the arbitrary nature of the whole trial: "Voilà l'image de ce procès. Tout est vrai et rien n'est vrai" (T.R.N. 1188). All appears just if one accepts these arbitrary regulations, nothing does if one does not adhere to them.

After the performance, handshakes and accolades are in order. "Magnifique, mon cher" (T.R.N. 1198), rings out in the courtroom for the defense attorney. All players now nervously await while the results are tabulated by the jury. A bell is rung that signals the announcement of the verdict to the public and then the bell tolls a fourth and final time as Meursault is brought into the court to hear the pronouncement of his fate.

This game situation would not produce an effect of absurdity if all those involved played the game. But a very definite effect of absurdity is created because one of the persons involved in the game, the one whose life is at stake, refuses to participate. When Camus mentions that "le héros du livre est condamné parce qu'il ne joue pas
le jeu," he meant that "il refuse de mentir" (T.R.N. 1920). This is certainly one aspect of his refusal to play games, for, in effect, he will not lie about his feelings for his mother or for Marie but not lying does not fully explain the significance of his non-participation.

Society, represented by the prosecutor and the magistrate among others, demands that Meursault give a socially acceptable presentation of his behavior, one that contains excuses and regrets. His lawyer asks him if he might say that, on the day of the burial of his mother, he dominated his natural filial instincts. Meursault notes his response and the reaction of his lawyer: "Je lui ai dit:  Non, parce que c'est faux . Il m'a regardé d'une façon bizarre, comme si je lui inspirais un peu de dégoût" (T.R.N. 1170). When the prosecutor asks him if he regrets his act, Meursault notes: "J'ai réfléchi et j'ai dit que, plutôt que du regret véritable, j'éprouvais un certain ennui. J'ai eu l'impression qu'il ne me comprenait pas" (T.R.N. 1174). Later, at the trial, the prosecutor mentions that the protagonist never expressed any regret whatsoever. Meursault reflects:

Sans doute, je ne pouvais pas m'empêcher de reconnaître qu'il avait raison. Je ne regrettais pas beaucoup mon acte...je n'avais jamais pu regretter vraiment quelque chose. J'étais toujours pris par ce qui allait arriver, par aujourd'hui ou par demain. (T.R.N. 1194-5)
Not only does Meursault refuse to lie, which, of course, is the case in the two incidents just quoted, but, more significantly, perhaps, is the fact that he refuses to play the role of the repentant sinner or any other role in the game of social justice. It is quite clear that if Meursault would consent to play any acceptable part in the game, his life would be spared. Meursault, however, will accept no role whatsoever; he is not the cheater—one must play the game to cheat—but rather the spoil sport and by being the spoil sport he ruins the game for he will not participate in it. He has virtually nothing to say in his own defense and this obstinate refusal to play a role in the game of social justice is readily interpreted as a threat to the game-playing society. In this respect, Huizinga's remark about the "spoil sport" seems almost prophetically tailor-made for Camus' hero:

The player who trespasses against the rules or ignores them is a 'spoil sport.' The spoil sport is not the same as the false player, the cheat; for the latter pretends to be playing the game and, on the face of it, still acknowledges the magic circle. It is curious to note how much more lenient society is to the cheat than to the spoil sport. This is because the spoil-sport shatters the play-world itself. By withdrawing from the game he reveals the relativity and fragility of the play-world in which he had temporarily shut himself with others. He robs play of its illusion—a pregnant word which means literally 'in-play' (from inclusio, illudere or inludere). Therefore he must be cast out, for he threatens the existence of the play-community.
When the prosecutor notes that Meursault "n'avai(t) rien à faire avec une société dont (il) méconnaissai(t) les règles les plus essentielles..." (T.R.N. 1196), he is not very far from the truth. Whether Meursault is ignorant of or more knowingly refuses to play social games, his natural spontaneity and thirst for truth preclude his participation. His comment about the story that he read "des milliers de fois," which forms the plot of Camus' *Maientendu*, should have given the reader an insight into his ideas on games: "D'un côté, elle était invraisemblable. D'un autre, elle était naturelle. De toute façon, je trouvais que le voyageur l'avait un peu mérité et qu'il ne faut jamais jouer" (T.R.N. 1180. Our underlinings). Meursault's reaction carries with it an explicit condemnation of game playing. He refuses to create another self, a social self, to be distinguished from the natural self, and indulge in social games, even though he is enmeshed in them and his fate will be decided by them.

It is not for murder, therefore, that Meursault is condemned, for play is the thing that ultimately decides the fate of the protagonist. By his refusal to play, Meursault denies the validity of social ritual and by extension the very fabric of society. "Le seul Christ que nous méritions" (T.R.N. 1921), as Camus enigmatically and ironically referred to his hero, is sacrificed as a tribal sacrificial victim, not to placate the whims of a revered God, but to insure the validity of the social structure. Both Christ and Meursault epitomize the scapegoat issue, for neither of them is killed
for content but for form, the maintenance of the form or structure upon which society is constructed. Neither attempts to save his life, for each knows that, by doing so, he would lose that life, its validity, its authenticity and its redeeming quality that, paradoxically enough, is only maintained if it is sustained to the end.

Whereas, J. Huizinga takes an historicocultural approach to game playing, Dr. Eric Berne, in his now famous *Games People Play*, assumes a transactional analytical perspective. Although some of the individual games enumerated in the "Thesaurus of Games" that constitutes the major portion of the book are acted out in *L'Etranger*, it is the final portion of *Games People Play*, "Beyond Games," that interests us here. Basically for Dr. Berne, beyond the realm of game playing lies the cherished domain of autonomy, characterized by awareness, spontaneity and intimacy that is attained by certain fortunate people. In our view, Meursault reaches this state of autonomy, although his situation at the end of the narrative precludes the realization of the highest type of intimacy that Berne refers to.

Awareness, which Berne characteristically defines as "the capacity to see a coffee pot and hear the birds sing in one's own way, and not the way one was taught," requires living in the present "and not in the elsewhere, the past or the future." One can hardly argue that Meursault does not fit into this definition of the "aware" individual. The originality of his perceptions, the uniqueness with which he regards the world about him, in part created by a stylistic technique, is so exceptional that it partially serves to
create the impression in the reader that he is a stranger among men. Then too, he is the epitome of man living in the present, rejecting hope, which is concerned with the future, as well as regret, which is concerned with the past, to cement himself to those fleeting precious seconds of immediate experience. Meursault, like the aware person defined by Berne, "is alive because he knows how he feels, where he is and when it is. He knows that after he dies the trees will still be there, but he will not be there to look at them again, so he wants to see them now with as much poignancy as possible."\(^{214}\) Spontaneity, which for Berne transcends the programming of the past, means "option, the freedom to choose and express one's feelings from the assortment available (Parent feelings, Adult feelings, and Child feelings). It means liberation, liberation from the compulsion to play games and have only the feelings one was taught to have."\(^{215}\) Here, again, there can be no doubt that Meursault has thrown off the programming of the past for he was certainly not taught to have the feelings he does have toward friendship, filial devotion, love, marriage, social ambition and religion. Once more, he not only has these feelings, he expresses them freely.

Far more rewarding than games, intimacy, as it is defined by the author of \textit{Games People Play}, "means the spontaneous, game-free candidness of an aware person, the liberation of the eidetically perceptive, uncorrupted child in all its naiveté living in the here and now."\(^{216}\) While it is clear that Meursault has reached this state of intimacy, of the spontaneous, game-free perception of the child,
several questions arise as to the nature and limits of its applicability. One can be intimate in a vacuum, or in a prison cell, with oneself and this intimacy is desirable and beneficial. Once more, as the first part of the "novel" demonstrates, one can be intimate with both objects and nature, and this form of intimacy is both wholesome and profitable. It would seem, nonetheless, that the highest form of intimacy would be with other human beings who have reached the same level of consciousness and true freedom.

In the second part of the "novel," there is an undeniable conscious propensity in the protagonist for meaningful communication with other people, but it is generally frustrated either by the rules of the game \textit{per se} or by the situation of the protagonist. As he leaves the magistrate, for example, Meursault notes: "En sortant, j'allais même lui tendre la main, mais je me suis souvenu à temps que j'avais tué un homme" (\textit{T.R.N.} 1169). When Meursault's lawyer leaves his cell somewhat angrily, the protagonist remarks: "J'aurais voulu le retenir, lui expliquer que je désirais sa sympathie, non pour être mieux défendu, mais, si je puis dire, naturellement" (\textit{T.R.N.} 1171). After having done his best on the witness stand to help out Meursault, Céleste turns and looks upon his friend with shining eyes and trembling lips: "C'est la première fois de ma vie," writes Meursault, "que j'ai eu envie d'embrasser un homme" (\textit{T.R.N.} 1189). Furthermore, at a given moment in the trial, when Meursault feels the scorn of others, he notes: "...pour la première fois depuis bien des années, j'ai eu une envie stupide de
pleurer parce que j'ai senti combien j'étais détesté par tous ces gens-là" (T.R.N. 1187).

Meursault, then, is clearly frustrated in his attempt for intimacy with other people because he is a condemned man living alone in prison and because he is in a game-playing society. When he is rejected and condemned by this society, he seeks his intimacy on a cosmic level, turning toward the universe and its benign indifference:

...je m'ouvrais pour la première fois à la tendre indifférence du monde. De l'éprouver si pareil à moi, si fraternel enfin, j'ai senti que j'avais été heureux, et que je l'étais encore. (T.R.N. 1209)

In Berne's terms, therefore, Meursault has reached autonomy and is consequently ready for game-free relationships since he has lifted "the weight of a whole tribal or family historical tradition" as well as "the influence of his individual parental, social and cultural background." Finally, Berne notes that the same must be done with the demands of contemporary society and "the advantages derived from one's immediate social circle have to be partly or wholly sacrificed." Meursault accomplishes all this and his endeavor is heroic inasmuch as, in order to do so, he had to put his life on the line.

The game of justice played out in the "court" of law epitomizes society's games in general for it is the sacred-play ritual acted out on sacred ground and in appropriate ritualistic garb in which all
the other social games are evaluated and where the cheaters and spoil
sports are punished. Seen in the context of the work as a whole,
this theme of play nourishes the larger theme of social absurdity
for it juxtaposes a game-playing society with a protagonist who will
not play social games even though his life depends upon his par-
ticipation. The absurdity here is neither in the game-playing society
nor in the protagonist who refuses to join the games but in their confron-
tation.

4. Style

Up to this point we have referred to L'Étranger as a novel
but have placed the term in quotes for, although it appears even
in the Pléiade edition as a "roman," the term is not really appropriate.
In this respect, M. G. Barrier notes that Camus himself refused to
call L'Étranger a novel: "et ceci en dépit des éditions qui le
rangent dans cette catégorie." He goes on to point out that "le roman exige une durée continue, un devenir, la
présence manifeste de l'irréversibilité du temps." He, for one,
would not, therefore, apply the term "roman" to L'Étranger and its
"succession de présents inertes qui laisse entrevoir par en dessous
l'économie mécanique d'une pièce montée." Once more, inasmuch
as Camus felt, on the one hand that: "Les grands romanciers sont des
romanciers philosophes," and, on the other, that he himself was not
a philosopher, it was logical that he seek a term other than "roman"
for his works. 221

Roger Quilliot claims that Camus judged *L’Étranger* to be a "récit." 222 Pierre Descaves puts forth the same argument, noting that Camus had no desire to write novels: "Il a fait autre chose, au-dessus et au-delà du roman." 223 Germaine Brée, too, affirms that:

Camus calls his works 'récits' after the manner of Gide. He can truthfully assert, again like Gide, that they are essentially ironic, since the narrator himself unconsciously exposes the extreme consequences of an attitude that Camus observes critically. 224

Even though Camus did refer to *L’Étranger* as a "récit," 225 and even though the work is ironic, in the sense that Miss Brée means, the term "récit" can definitely be misleading. This does not mean, however, that *L’Étranger* is without analogy to Gide's "récits"—Rachel Bespaloff notes for example that: "Gide lui [Camus] a montré l'usage qu'on pouvait faire du je pour exprimer avec le maximum de détachement l'expérience la plus intime." 226—but, in our view, the term "conte philosophique," first applied to *L’Étranger* by Jean-Paul Sartre, is more appropriate.

In the first place, as Sartre explains, "le récit explique et coordonne en même temps qu'il retrace, il substitue l'ordre causal à l'enchaînement chronologique." 227 This is clearly not the case in *L’Étranger*. Then, too, as in the philosophical tale à la
Voltaire, as we shall see in the second half of this chapter when we analyze Candide, everything in L’Etranger is subordinate to the theme—the absurd—including psychology. This is not the case in Gide’s "récits" where psychology is of the utmost importance. In the tale by Camus, the protagonist lacks, to a certain degree, human density, sometimes appearing mechanical or puppet-like as we have shown. Once more, the behaviorist style of the first part defies psychological penetration from the interior for man is described from the outside. This is not true of Alissa, Jérôme, Michel or the other protagonists of the "récits" of Gide who exist, in the tradition of the French psychological "novel," as fully developed individuals. Furthermore, they are described from the interior by the use of the first person narrative, even though the ironic detachment noted by Miss Brée is ever present.

This is not to say, however, that psychology is totally absent from L’Etranger. In the second half of the tale, the protagonist discovers the world of memory and with it attains a certain level of introspection. But psychological analysis is inevitably subordinte to the theme and in this respect resembles the philosophical tales of Voltaire where the sub-title announces the main leitmotif to which all, including characterization and psychological analysis, is secondary: Zadig ou la destinée, Candide ou l’optimisme. L’Etranger can be read, then, and perhaps most advantageously, as a philosophical tale of absurdity. Furthermore, as in the tales of Voltaire, the realm of the metaphysical is more important than that
of the psychological. When Camus notes that: "Le classicisme est l'art de sacrifier l'individu à la généralité humaine et la passion à l'ordre esthétique" (T.R.N. 1885) and that "Les passions collectives prennent le pas sur les passions individuelles. Les hommes ne savent plus aimer. Ce qui les intéresse aujourd'hui, c'est la condition humaine et non pas le destin individuel" (Can. II, 151), one is reminded not only of the modern novel in general and Camus' prose works as well as those of Malraux, Sartre, Saint-Exupéry, and Céline in particular, but of the Eighteenth Century tale as it is epitomized by Voltaire, for, in both eras, unlike a great portion of the century that separates them, the individual is put aside and the human condition rises to the surface and with it concern for the metaphysical rather than the psychology of the individual.

Before depicting how the style in L'Étranger nourishes the impression of absurdity, there are several stylistic traits that deserve our attention. The first is Camus' rather unique use of the first person narrative. In literature in general--Montaigne's Essais and Rousseau's Confessions--and in fiction in particular--one might think of a number of personal, romantic novels--the first person narrative is a stylistic technique employed by the author to project a tone of confidence, a subjective, introspective, personal approach in which the reader easily identifies with the narrator. In the first part of L'Étranger, however, the style eschews introspection for it describes man from the exterior and proports to be objective. In fact, in a letter written to the director of Les Temps Modernes,
Camus notes that his "novel" is "un exercice d'objectivité et de détachement comme, après tout, son titre l'indique." The first person narrative is employed and yet the impression is one of objectivity; Meursault relates his adventures and Camus considers him "négligé dans la mesure où il paraît privé de toute subjectivité" (T.R.N. 1910: Our underlining). The outstanding stylistic device then, in our view, is the objectivity of the narrative through the use of the first person.

The behaviorist style is reminiscent of Steinbeck and Hemingway. Most of Hemingway's stories and novels are written in the third person but The Sun Also Rises and A Farewell to Arms are two notable exceptions where, like in L'Étranger, the story is told in the first person, by Jake Barnes in one and Frederic Henry in the other, and the same objective style is employed. But Camus' work was the first French "novel" to attempt this feat, making it a veritable "étranger" among the European literary productions of the day. Like Hemingway's use of the first person narrative in the two above-mentioned novels, Camus' use of "je" is more or less equivalent to "lui." In this respect, Roger Quilliot explains that for Camus "le roman exige l'impartialité formelle" and the "je" of Meursault and of Clamence is no more or less impersonal than the "il" of Rieux.

Yet, Camus attains still another level of objectivity, unlike The Sun Also Rises or A Farewell to Arms, by his paradoxical use of "je." In a perceptive article, entitled "Aesthetic Distance and Inner Space in the Novels of Camus," Brian Fitch notes that:
The first-person narrative of the novel places the reader not in the mind of the hero but in that of the narrator. And the distance in question is that which separates the latter from the former, and not only by virtue of his relating events that have taken place some time previously. The very nature of certain of these events, those subsequent upon his arrest, means that the person whose life he is describing has become a complete stranger to him.\textsuperscript{231}

Since the Meursault who writes the story is no longer the Meursault who lived it, another level of objectivity is added, one that enables the narrator to objectively view the hero, and this angle of perspective precludes the reader's total identification with the protagonist, enabling him, the reader, to maintain an objective view despite the use of the first person narrative with which he is traditionally at least, supposed to identify.

The use of "je" in \textit{L'Étranger} carries with it the question of tense, for, just as we have noted two "je," that of the hero and that of the narrator, we have a double temporal perspective, as Champigny notes, where Meursault attempts "to place himself both at the moment when he writes or speaks and at the moment when what he is narrating occurred."\textsuperscript{232} Despite the double perspective, the \textit{passé composé} is maintained throughout the narrative.

The \textit{passé composé} is used in the first part to approximate in description, as \textit{Le Mythe} would suggest, "un homme sans espoir...(qui) n'appartient plus à l'avenir" and who acts, according to the ideal of the absurd man, in "le présent et la succession des présents" which
constitute his kingdom (ESS, 121, 145, 137). It is written in
the form of a diary, from day to day covering eighteen days, and the
protagonist chooses this tense, first of all, because the events
described happened shortly before he jots them down and also because
it retains the impact of immediacy, giving the impression that the
hero is still in contact with his immediate past. Stephan Ullmann
claims that the use of this tense "robs [the novel] of all time-
perspective and heightens the impression of discontinuity and incon-
clusiveness,"233 while John Cruickshank explains that the use of the
passé composé gives the impression "that one is experiencing these
events directly, before they have been analyzed, classified—and
misrepresented—by rational scrutiny... (and that) the indefiniteness
of the perfect tense also emphasizes that gratuitous and arbitrary
quality of experience which is associated with the absurd."234

In the second half of the "novel," the form changes from
that of a day to day diary to a regular narrative. Jean-Claude
Pariente accounts for the change in the following fashion:

Comment pourrait-il donc tout revivre si
cel n'est symboliquement, dans l'écriture,
en rapportant tout ce qui s'est passé
depuis qu'il a cessé de tenir son
journal... seulement, à revivre, il faut
maintenant revivre 'tout' parce que les
derniers mois de sa vie ont formé pour
lui une seule expérience, mais aussi
parce que, son pourvoi rejeté, il n'a
plus rien à vivre, et que l'approche im-
perceptible de la mort frappe de vanité
la tenue d'un journal.235
Despite the change in form, perhaps because of it, the passé composé is retained. Here the passé composé gives a psychological boost to the protagonist, for it retains a link with the present thus enabling the narrator to grasp on to the life that he is about to lose, for which he is willing to die and which constituted his only certainty. This explanation justifies the following remark of Brian Fitch: "Cette histoire n'est donc, au fond, rien d'autre que l'effort d'un prisonnier pour se rappeler un passé qui symbolise une vie qu'il a perdue; revivre son passé est la seule façon de vivre qui lui reste." Then, too, the passé composé seems appropriate to describe all post-crime activity, even though it spans a period of over eleven months, since the protagonist now finds himself in an eternal present where the same day greets him each morning in his cell, where time has almost come to a standstill. To faithfully describe past action in that eternal present, he can only call upon the passé composé.

Many critics have noted that the vocabulary in L'Étranger is singularly objective and lacking in adjectival color. John Cruickshank, for one, indicates that:

The severely restricted vocabulary prevents analytical complication. And by bringing authentic directness [a result of the first-person narrative] and lack of analytical power together in the same character, Camus conveys a strong impression of the void felt by someone who experiences the absurd.
Then, too, Richard Lehan points out that:

le roman du XIX siècle est rédigé dans une prose lourde en adjectifs. Le recours aux adjectifs implique une sorte de confiance dans les apparences, une certaine nonchalance à l'égard du temps, une manque d'urgence tragique. Le roman du XX siècle au contraire abonde en verbes. Cette prédominance du verbe est l'indice d'une méfiance à l'égard de toute élaboration intellectuelle, d'une conscience aiguë du tragique de la condition humaine soumise au temps et à la mort.238

While both these statements seem at once penetrating and correct, other critics such as Stephan Ullmann go too far, or perhaps not far enough, in their analysis of the vocabulary of L'Etranger. Ullmann maintains that the vocabulary is "predominantly concrete and very limited in range, flat and colourless, without expressive effects or evocatory overtones."239 In our view, the remark of Roland Barthes is thoroughly justified by a second reading of the text. When Barthes first read L'Etranger, he perceived above all "l'admirable silence qui l'égalait aux grandes œuvres classiques, toutes produites par un art de la litote." Years later, in rereading the text, he was struck primarily by the "lyrisme" of the narrative.240

The behaviorist, objective style of L'Etranger should not blind us to the lyricism of the author—Nathalie Sarraute remarks that Meursault "note avec la tendresse d'un poète les jeux délicats de lumière et d'ombre et les nuances changeantes du ciel"241—and his original use of metaphor which separates it in part from the behaviorist approach of American authors. This has been admirably shown
by W. M. Frohock in "Camus: Image, Influence and Sensibility."

Frohock notes that before the scene on the beach, there are only fifteen metaphors in the work. On the four pages that cover the murder scene, however, there are twenty-five metaphors in a scene of hallucination and they present the motive of the crime, as they depict the effect of the sun and heat upon the physical and psychic states of the protagonist. Camus uses metaphor, therefore, as a "vehicle of drama" and an "instrument of psychological analysis."

What is particularly striking about the scene, inasmuch as the "novel" has been dubbed "pure Hemingway," is how the scene differs from most highly pitched scenes in the American author. As Frohock points out, the tenser the action in Hemingway, the less likely the metaphors are to appear, "especially at the moment of killing (when) Hemingway does not permit--except perhaps by chance--any veil of unreality to hang between his hero and what his hero is doing."

Camus performs, in L'Etranger, a perfect marriage of form and content for it is precisely the behaviorist manner of the first part of the narrative that upholds stylistically the theme of absurdity which is philosophically at the core of the "novel." The protagonist, a witness rather than a participant at the funeral of his mother, enumerates phenomena in short snapshot sentences:

Devant la porte, il y avait la voiture. Vernie, oblongue et brillante, elle faisait penser à un plumier. A côté d'elle, il y avait l'ordonnateur, petit homme aux habits ridicules et un vieillard à l'allure
empruntée. (T.R.N. 1133).

His naked eye scans the surface like a camera and registers with photographic fidelity the objects that surround him. As he enters the morgue where the cadavre of his mother lies, he observes:

C'était une salle très claire, blanche à la chaux et recouverte d'une verrière. Elle meublée de chaises et de chevalets en forme de X. Deux d'entre eux au centre, supportaient une bière recouverte de son couvercle. On voyait seulement des vis brillantes, à peine enfoncées, se détacher sur les planches passées au brou de noix. Près de la bière, il y avait une infirmière arabe en sarrau blanc, un foulard de couleur vive sur la tête. (T.R.N. 1127). 243

Unable to comprehend the world, like the absurd man of Le Mythe, Meursault multiplies by activity "ce qu'il ne peut unifier" (ESS. 155), and in writing the style reflects this philosophical outlook for instead of explaining and resolving, he phenomenologically describes the universe in which he finds himself. As Carl Viggiani explains: "Le monde extérieur, dense, étranger, hostile, se refuse à toute connaissance, sinon à la description." 244 Thematically, this style serves a variety of functions: it underscores the monotony of existence as well as the mechanical aspects of human behavior and it depicts the incoherence and the discontinuity of human existence for it presents events in succession but not in a sequence. Each sentence exists by and for itself, as Sartre noted long ago: "Chaque phrase est un présent...une phrase de l'Étranger, c'est une fête." 245
Philosophically, this isolation of sentences reflects the egalitarian
universe of the absurd hero where all acts are equivalent and
psychologically, as André Meunier explains, "la non-coordination des
états de conscience de Meursault trouve sa traduction dans la non-
liaison des phrases." Syntactical isolation suggests individual
human isolation in a world of incoherence where man can grasp individual
phenomena to the extent that he can describe them but fails to grasp
what links them.

The question of forms of syntactical coordination is then of
major importance and here again we find the style nourishing the
theme of absurdity. Sartre was the first to note that: "on a
soigneusement extirpé la causalité" from this absurd fictional
universe. The obliteration of causality in L'Étranger is clearly
seen in the coordinate conjunctives chosen by the narrator; only a
handful of causal coordinates exist in the first part of the work;
the usual choice is a temporal coordinate "puis" or "ensuite" which
abound in the text or the enumerative coordinate "et." There is no
relation between isolated sentences; sentences do not form a sequence
of cause and effect in this narrative dealing with the absurd, just
as events in an absurd universe cannot be explained by simple cause
and effect. The "unordered" style then suggests the lack of order
in the universe; stylistics reinforces cosmology.

The narrator describes what his senses perceive but his mind
attributes no meaning to it. In Le Mythe, Camus writes: "Un homme
parle au téléphone derrière une cloison vitrée; on ne l'entend pas,
mais on voit sa mimique sans portée" (ESS, 108). In *L'Étranger*, the glass partition is the mind of the protagonist which is "transparente aux choses et opaque aux significations." *Victor Brombert* likens this phenomenon to "an opera scene for a deaf man." *Sartre* essays an analogy—

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and compares the technique to that of *Voltaire* in *L'Ingénue* or *Micromégas* and to that of *Swift* in *Gulliver's Travels*: "Car le XVIII è a eu aussi ses étrangers—en général de "bons sauvages" qui, transportés dans une civilisation inconnue, percevaient les faits avant d'en saisir le sens." *251*

A literary example, not of the 18th century, but of 20th century American literature, could be extracted from *William Faulkner's* *The Sound and the Fury* where Benjy describes a golf match on the opening page of the novel:

THROUGH the fence, between the curling flower spaces, I could see them hitting. They were coming toward where the flag was and I went along the fence. Luster was hunting in the grass by the flower tree. They took the flag out, and they were hitting. Then they put the flag back and they went to the table, and he hit and the other hit. *252*

John K. Simon, who quotes the above passage, concludes that:
The urgent confrontation of man with the inanimate, seen and recorded best through the eyes of an 'innocent' or idiot, whether he be the protagonist, narrator, or both, is the central theme of the modern novel, and it represents the most significant aspect of _L'Étranger._

We shall see, in the second portion of this chapter, when we treat _Candide_, that it is also an integral part of the Voltairean _conte philosophique_.

Camus used the behaviorist style in the first part of the narrative, for, as he explained, it "convenait à [son] propos qui était de décrire un homme sans conscience apparente" (_ESS_. 1426). In the first portion of the book, therefore, we, the readers, receive a very definite "feeling" of the absurd. In the second half of the tale, the protagonist is no longer "sans conscience apparente," no longer "privé de toute subjectivité" (_T.R.N_. 1910). Forced back on the past, having discovered the world of memory, he becomes introspective and reflective and the style too changes accordingly. Here we, as readers, gradually form a "notion" of the absurd. Perhaps this stylistic dichotomy with all its philosophical and psychological ramifications is the meaning of Camus' remark: "Le sens du livre tient exactement dans le parallélisme des deux parties" (_T.R.N_. 1924).

There is one more significant stylistic change in the second half of the work as we move from diary to narrative. We now encounter a series of people—magistrate, prosecutor and chaplain—who have a
completely different world view than that of the protagonist and his friends whom we met in the first part and here again stylistics reflects cosmology. Armand Renaud partially notes the significance of this change: "Evidemment ceux qui veulent parler de Dieu, de l’âme et de la justice emploient de longues phrases, mais pour Meursault la vie n’avait rien offert de très compliqué." This is true but much more significantly these same people believe in an ordered cosmos and a morally structured universe existing in cause-effect sequence. They, consequently, introduce language of causality into the text and most ironically indeed the only time in the "novel" that events are "explained" in this fashion, they are blatantly false. This occurs in an argument of the prosecutor related by Meursault:

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Chapter VI

Voltaire, Candide

A. Introduction

The question of Voltaire's relevance has been posed since the mid 1940s. On December 10, 1944, in his famous Discours sur Voltaire, Paul Valéry noted that: "Voltaire vit, Voltaire dure: il est indéfiniment actuel."\(^{255}\) Eleven years later, René Pomeau wrote in the introduction to Voltaire par lui-même:

Il reste légitime de poser les questions, toujours actuelles, aux- quelles s'efforcera de répondre le présent essai: qui fut Voltaire? qu'a-t-il à dire aux hommes d'aujourd'hui?\(^{256}\)

The purpose of this chapter is not to indicate the relevance of Voltaire, but the content of this study, the absurd in Candide, will in effect manifest that relevance.

Voltaire relevant? Many a critic would scoff at the proposition. Even though John Weightman concedes that: "There can be no doubt that his pen helped to shape the modern world,"\(^{257}\) he maintains that if he had not written Candide just before he was sixty-five, he would long ago have lost his place in living literature and would have retained only a biographical

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interest as one of the leading personalities of the French Enlightenment. 258

Once more, Weightman asserts that Voltaire, "by some extraordinary fluke," produced one classic; "this was his single permanent triumph as a literary artist." 259 For Weightman then, "nothing remains immediately alive for the average reader except the one little book, Candide." 260

On the one hand, the terms "living literature," "immediately alive" and "average reader" are vague and do not really tell us too much. On the other hand, a collective aberration of taste and not a lack of literary talent on the part of Voltaire may be responsible for the fact that plays such as Merope and Zaire, tales such as Zadig, L'Ingénu, Micromégas, Mémnon and Le Monde comme il va and other works (not to mention Voltaire's poetry), 261 such as Les Lettres philosophiques, Le Dictionnaire philosophique and Le Siècle de Louis XIV no longer interest the modern reader. In the opinion of most Voltairean scholars, for example, Zadig is structurally much tighter than Candide and thematically more concise. Then too, L'Ingénu, a work that Voltaire judged superior to Candide "en ce qu'il est infiniment plus vraisemblable" (Best, 13360), is closer to the traditional form of the novel than Candide. Finally, Bertrand Russell, not the average reader, however, but one who epitomizes contemporary skepticism, has admitted the influence of Voltaire's Dictionnaire philosophique upon his thought. 262
The fact remains, nonetheless, that Candide is Voltaire's masterpiece and the sole work of the "sage de Ferney" that modern man has taken to his bosom. The question of Voltaire's relevance in this context can therefore be reduced to the question of the relevancy of Candide. Seen on the strictly literal level, one might argue that Candide is limited to the eighteenth century problem of optimism, but this is to ignore the rich symbolic overtones of a work which, like Zadig, "...dit plus qu'il ne semble dire" (M. XXI 32). Like the reader of Rabelais, the student of Voltaire is compelled to break the bone made of caricature and buffoonery to draw out the marrow that frequently exists only on the symbolical level.

Due to Voltaire's equivocation, the symbols in Candide are at once ambiguous, rich and multi-leveled. Norman Torrey admits that "a lot of Voltaire is ambiguous"\textsuperscript{263} and Jean Sareil justifiably adds that this ambiguity is "tout autant artistique que philosophique."\textsuperscript{264} If Ira Wade, however, goes too far in seeing in Candide: "unremitting ambiguity which leads to a puzzling clandestinity,"\textsuperscript{265} William Bottiglia futilely claims that the ending of Candide is unequivocal, for he proceeds to enumerate fifteen or so conflicting interpretations of "le jardin," some of which have been offered by the outstanding Voltairian scholars of the past decades.\textsuperscript{266} In any case, it is the ambiguous nature of the Voltairian symbols that creates a multi-leveled richness that, in its turn, lends the text to a host of significant readings at different levels.

Candide has remained in the library of Everyman of the
twentieth century not only because of the inimitable brilliance of its form but because in dealing with the philosophical problems that exercised the men of the Enlightenment, it touches upon many contemporary philosophical questions. In addition, it not only prefigures the social and cosmic chaos of the twentieth century but offers the modern antidote of social morality, lay humanism and humanitarianism. The notion of the philosophical tale too approaches the modern concept of the novel in that it deals more with metaphysics and man's fate than with individual psychology.

To a generation that can conceive of Alceste as a stranger, a social outcast alienated from his fellows, somewhat akin to Meursault in his thirst for truth and sincerity, *Candide* offers a wealth of contemporary overtones both on the literal and symbolical levels. Although Voltaire devised neither an explicit formulation of the absurd in fictional form nor a theoretical treatise on the absurd, by 1759 in *Candide*, which Theodore Besterman labels "le point zéro de la pensée voltairienne," one finds implicitly present all the elements of the absurd as Camus would later propound them. Several critics—lra Wade, Lester Crocker, and Haydn Mason—have indicated the presence of the absurd in Voltaire's work. Other critics whom we shall refer to later in this chapter, namely René Pomeau and William Bottiglia, have denied the absurd in *Candide*. No one, however, has yet defined nor analyzed the notion of absurdity in *Candide*.

*Candide* is a masterpiece because it is an infinitely rich, universal, dynamic and symbolical work that can be significantly read
and reread by succeeding generations without losing its vitality in either form or content. The particular reading of Candide in this chapter essays a creative re-examination of the text seen in the light of the contemporary notion of absurdity as it was outlined by Albert Camus in Le Mythe de Sisyphe.

B. The Road to Candide

Although critics of Voltaire sometimes tend to over-simplify the evolution of his thought, one may safely assert that the Voltaire of the 1730s and early 1740s was relatively optimistic, whereas the works of Voltaire from 1747 to 1759 depict a much darker vision of the human condition. Early works of Voltaire such as Les Lettres philosophiques (1734), Traité de Métaphysique (1734), Le Mondain (1736) and Les Éléments de la philosophie de Newton (1737) seem to implicitly sanction the "optimistic" philosophy of Pope and Leibniz. Yet even here Voltaire was not really concerned with justifying the ways of God to man as was Pope. He was simply more or less content with his lot and not overly concerned with the question of evil in the universe and the contradiction between the omnipotence and all-goodness of the Creator and the existence of that evil. That one must know why Voltaire wrote a particular work to decipher his exact stance in that work is immediately manifest in a reading of Le Mondain. It is true that Voltaire was happy and carefree in 1736 and showing strains of epicureanism, but even at that date he probably did not conceive of the human condition as a "paradis terrestre" (M. X 88). The work in
question cannot be taken at face-value for it is a semi-facetious reply to Fénélon.

Be that as it may, the late 1740s and the whole decade of the 1750s were years of hardship for Voltaire which brought with them a growing sensitivity toward the evil in the universe, the sufferings of humanity and a gradual emergence of the absurd in his fictional universe, characterized, if not by a loss of faith in the order of the universe, then certainly by a firm belief in man's inability to comprehend that order. Lester Crocker very concisely and aptly notes that this "crisis of pessimism" was caused by a series of "personal, political and metaphysical" events.²⁶⁸

In 1745, Voltaire's brother Armand died; in 1748 he was subjected to the infidelities of Emilie du Châtelet with Saint-Lambert. Then in 1749 Emilie died in childbirth carrying the child of Saint-Lambert. This was a tremendous blow to Voltaire who lost far more than a mistress. In fact, he had lost that mistress years before and had already begun a liaison with his niece, Mme. Denis. Voltaire lost a friend who knew him well, and his intellectual companion since 1734.

After two and one-half years at the court of Frederick, Voltaire was ordered to leave Berlin in 1753. Unable to return to Paris or to stay in Germany, in disfavor with both Frederick and Louis XV, an expelled traveler without roots, lonely, not getting any younger nor any healthier, feeling "unwanted and unloved,"²⁶⁹ Voltaire settled in Switzerland.
On November 1st of 1755, the famous earthquake of Lisbon occurred, taking the lives of thousands. It appears that this was the straw that broke Voltaire's back. He viewed this disaster as a metaphysical scandal and it shook his belief in Providence. As Ira Wade has recently noted: "He seemed more ready to assume that his misery and suffering were characteristic of the human situation in general."270

Things became still darker in 1756, the year that, in Lester Crocker's view, marks the nadir of Voltaire's "...faith in happiness--in God and in man too..."271 For one thing in 1756 Voltaire published his *Essai sur les moeurs*, a work for which he was compelled to do extensive research that imprinted upon his mind the misery and folly of man, the wars, rapes and pillages which inundate the history of mankind. Ira Wade estimates that this research played a large rôle in the composition of *Candide*: "The play between history and fiction, fact and fancy, reality and Utopia ultimately makes *Candide* a fictional *Essai sur les moeurs et sur l'esprit des nations*."272 Then, too, in 1756 the Seven Years War began and "Voltaire voit plus que jamais l'humanité d'emuerement malheureuse, méchante ou aveuglée."273 We might add that the theme of war in *Candide* is far more pervasive than that of natural disaster such as the earthquake which occupies only Chapter V.

A series of disasters, both personal, natural and universal, thus act in conjunction to darken Voltaire's view of the human condition between the years 1747 and 1759. This is not only true because Voltaire seems more sensitive to the existing social, physical and moral
evil in the universe to which man is subjected, but it is equally due
to his growing awareness of man's inability to make sense of his
situation, to bring all the disparate elements together and to rationalize
and comprehend his position. The gap that exists between the deep-
seated yearnings of man and the impossibility of realizing those needs
in this universe becomes quite apparent to Voltaire. As William
Bottiglia words it, it is "a painful awareness of the unresolvable
conflict between the clockwork order of a rational, mechanical universe
and the mad confusion of an illogical, capricious actuality."274

This evolution in Voltaire's thought is mirrored not only
in his Correspondance between the years 1747 and 1759, but also in the
genre of the philosophical tale which, significantly enough, he begins
to publish in 1747.275 The tale afforded Voltaire the opportunity to
express deep personal feelings in fictional form and the evolution of
his thought throughout these twelve years can be roughly traced from
the publication of Zadig in 1747 to the appearance of Candide in 1759.

Critical opinion of Zadig is divided. Jacques Van der
Heuvel claims that while the ways of Providence may seem obscure at
first in this tale, they become "à la longue éclatantes."276 For
Heuvel, Zadig, who occasionally despairs of Providence, becomes the
providence of others and in the name of humanity saves several pro-
tagonists from cruel deaths. The rôle of Zadig, as Heuvel views it,
is to "faire resplendir l'ordre de la justice et de la vérité,"277
and the tale itself, where the protagonist accomplishes his "triple
rêve d'amour, de justice et de gloire,"278 is clearly optimistic.
In the same vein, E. J. H. Greene comments that Voltaire: "winds the tale up with a rather orthodox Leibnizian explanation of Destiny, as Providence, and leaves his hero to live happily ever after, in conditions befitting his definition as a near-perfect human being."\textsuperscript{279} Once more, Robert Mauzi explicitly denies any absurdity in \textit{Zadig}:

\begin{quote}
puisque tout y possède un sens. Il n'y a jamais d'accident, mais une infinité de manifestations particulières de la volonté divine. La Providence veille sur chaque destinée individuelle.\textsuperscript{280}
\end{quote}

Our view of \textit{Zadig} is quite different from the views expressed by the preceding critics. Voltaire's first published tale takes place in a world of both moral and physical chaos where men of justice are unjust, women are frivolous and unfaithful, good is rare, evil is everywhere and men are seen as "des insectes se dévorant les uns les autres sur un petit atome de boue" (M. XXI 54).

Three themes combine to give the lie to the optimistic notion of Providence—the themes of chaos, chance and destiny. The chaotic nature of the universe is due to the reign of chance which, in its turn, precludes the claim for Providence and creates a situation where human destiny remains inscrutable. \textit{Zadig}, unable to decipher the book of Destiny that is presented to him by the angel, slowly becomes aware of the contingency of all events as he is subjected throughout the tale to the whims of a capricious fate—at one point in the tale, his life is saved by a parakeet—to the point where he secretly accuses Providence "qui le persécutait toujours" (M. XXI 86).
Zadig (whose name comes from the Arabic sadik, meaning "just")
realizes that there is no justice in the creation, for his good works
are usually repaid in bad luck and persecution: "Si j'eusse été
méchant comme tant d'autres," he sighs, "je serais heureux comme
eux" (M. XXI 54). Neither wisdom, nor goodness nor virtue can secure
happiness; indeed they often seem opposed to felicitousness and several
times Zadig is, in fact, punished for these virtues. Announcing the
theme of "le matelot" in Candide, Zadig notes at a given moment:
"Orion mérıte d'être puni. Mais d'ordinaire ce sont ces gens-là qui
sont les favoris de la destinée" (M. XXI 77).

In the final analysis, Zadig contains an implicit rejection
of optimism, a protest against the injustice of the order of the
creation and at the very least an intellectual refusal to condone it.
If Zadig "à genoux, adora la Providence et se soumit" (M. XXI 91),
his mind is not convinced, as his final "Mais" reveals (M. XXI 91),
and his objections, that the angel avoids by taking off to the tenth
sphere, are the seeds of the revolt of his reason and his consciousness
against the optimistic explanation of the universe and the chaotic
and immoral machinations of destiny.

There can be no doubt that Voltaire is on the side of Zadig
and not on that of the angel whose violence surely repelled him, for
the angel is, in effect, a doer of great evil. When the angel claims
that "il n'y a point de mal dont il ne naisse un bien," Voltaire-Zadig
responds: "Mais s'il n'y avait que du bien, et point de mal" (M. XXI 90)?
Then, too, Zadig protests violently against the so-called moral order
of the universe: "Mais quoi! dit Zadig, il est donc nécessaire qu'il y ait des crimes et des malheurs et les malheurs tombent sur les gens du bien" (M. XXI 90)?

There is neither rhyme nor reason in the universe of Zadig; no logic to explain human destiny, nor to make Providence comprehensible to man. Even if one subscribes to the so-called "happy ending" of the tale, it is clearly chance that forged it and Zadig cannot understand it. It is important to note that it is precisely man's inability to comprehend that creates the overtones of the absurd, for even if one believes in Providence, the order of that Providence, as the tale unequivocally denotes, remains impervious to the human mind. Zadig is not only the just man but the wise man and even he finds no explanation for the chaos of the universe in which he would like to discover order but can see only disorder, with which he would like to find harmony but can feel only alienation, where he would like to find justice but can perceive only injustice. As Lester Crocker has observed: "Voltaire gives up the attempt to find a rational explanation for what happens here—cause and effect do not seem to work in the moral world, as Zadig finds out."

Memnon ou la sagesse humaine (1749) continues down the path away from optimism and blind faith in the order of the universe and the belief in the justice of Providence. Voltaire's position here, seen in the totality of the tale, is two-sided. On the one hand, as previously stated, Memnon is an anti-Voltaire who seeks happiness by suppressing the passions rather than by utilizing them with moderation. Voltaire's irony is apparent in this respect in the first part of the tale. But
on the other hand, the tale reveals the inability of reason to come to grips with chaotic reality and the incapacity of man to reach a state of perfect happiness or perfect wisdom. As in Zadig, an "esprit céleste" is called upon to explain to us feeble mortals the workings of the universe. The Popian-Leibnizian explanation is rejected by Memnon who now, at the end of the tale, has become the alter ego of Voltaire. With only one eye, Memnon can see the fallacies inherent in "optimism": "Ah! je ne croirai cela, répliqua le pauvre Memnon, que quand je ne serai plus borgne" (M. XXI 100).

Jacques Van der Heuvel, who judged Zadig optimistic in the main since, according to him, Zadig abandoned his pessimism, now perceives in Memnon "l'absurde logique des événements qui lui [Memnon] donne une destinée opposée à celle de Zadig." For Heuvel, Memnon is the first tale where the hero "ne parvienne pas à une vérité stable"; where "la vie ne rend rien et l'homme-marionnette se sent entraîné dans un mouvement de dégradation inéluctable."

While Heuvel's observations seem correct for Memnon, they were already pertinent to Zadig, for the fate of the protagonist has little to do with the philosophy of the tale. Just as chance caused the downfall of Memnon, chance finally straightened some things out for Zadig. But in neither tale does Voltaire resign himself to the injustice of destiny, nor does he claim to comprehend the chaos of the universe. If one argues that Voltaire believed all was well because Zadig marries the queen at the end of the tale, one argues as Rousseau does in his Lettre sur la Providence in which he condemns Voltaire for
attacking Providence inasmuch as he was relatively healthy, happy and famous, while Rousseau, himself sick and alone, joyfully defended it. as Virgil Topazio points out: "Voltaire deserved praise, not censure, precisely because he could disregard his own blessings and share the sufferings of those less fortunate." In this respect, so does Voltaire's alter ego, Zadig.

Our protean subject Voltaire, with the publication of Le Monde comme il va (1748) and Micromégas (1752), now throws a wrench in our project to slowly trace his unswerving movement toward absurdity and a darker view of the human condition. In fact, outside the realm of the tale, as late as 1751 in his Bibliothèque raisonnée, we find him defending Leibniz. Voltaire is hard to move in one direction, of that there can be no doubt, but we can try to partially explain the appearance of these two tales at a moment when he was definitely moving, at his own pace of course, in an opposite direction.

Micromégas, in effect, presents little difficulty for, although it appeared for the first time in 1752, it was more than likely written long before that year and is quite possibly the first-written of all surviving tales of Voltaire. Thematically it is closer to Les Lettres philosophiques than to Zadig and may even have been composed in the late 1730s, eight to ten years before Zadig, Voltaire's first published tale. René Groos notes that in a letter of June 5, 1752, Voltaire refers to Micromégas as "une ancienne plaisanterie." Groos argues that it may have been a second version of Voyage de Gangan that Voltaire addressed to Frederick in 1739. He points out too that
"l'action de Micromégas se situe en 1737, lors du retour de
l'expédition de Maupertuis [to Tornée] et qu'elle a donc fort bien pu
être conçue vers 1739."\textsuperscript{287}

\textit{Le Monde comme il va} (1748) was definitely composed in 1747,\textsuperscript{288} probably after \textit{Zadig} (under its original title \textit{Memnon}) had already been published in July in Amsterdam. The conclusion of the tale—"si tout n'est pas bien, tout est passable" (M. XXI 16)—indicates clearly that philosophically as well as historically we are exactly halfway between \textit{Le Mondain} (1736) and \textit{Candide} (1759). And yet there is something somewhat misleading about that statement inasmuch as, in a real sense, \textit{Le Monde comme il va} is quite different from the tales that precede it—\textit{Zadig} and \textit{Memnon}—and those that follow it—\textit{Scarmentado}, \textit{Le Bon Bramin} and \textit{Candide}.

Whereas these other tales all deal mainly with metaphysics and human destiny, \textit{Le Monde comme il va} is limited to social commentary. All of Voltaire's favorite targets—priests, magistrates, women, soldiers—are there but, unlike the other tales which all assume cosmic proportions, Babouc's vision remains on the social plane. While it is true that there is more balance in this tale than in \textit{Zadig} or in \textit{Memnon}, as there is, for that matter in \textit{Micromégas} and the much later \textit{L'Ingénu}, it can logically succeed \textit{Zadig} for the simple reason that Voltaire temporarily placed aside the questions of destiny and metaphysics to create a tale that deals solely with man as a social being.

The effect of the Lisbon disaster on Voltaire was so shattering
that he moved from the tale to poetry and from the third person to the
first person to express his concern. Le Poème sur le Désastre de
Lisbonne was written in December 1755, one month after the earthquake
and this accounts for the highly emotional involvement of the author.

On the twenty-fourth of November, 1755, he writes to Tronchin:

Voilà monsieur une physique bien cruelle.
On sera bien embarrassé à deviner comment
les lois du mouvement opèrent des désastres
si effroyables dans le meilleur des mondes
possibles ... Quel triste jeu de hasard.
que le jeu de la vie humaine ... Cela
devrait apprendre aux hommes à ne point
persécuter les hommes, car tandis que
quelques sacrés coquins brûlent quelques
fanatiques la terre engloutit les uns et
les autres. (Best. 5933)

At this early date the letter already contains the leitmotif of Candide,
"le meilleur des mondes possibles," an accusation against Providence
and a lesson for humanity.

The poem deals essentially with the concrete existence of evil
in the universe and the abstract philosophical stance of optimism. The
philosophy of "tout est bien" is therein depicted as a fatalistic
delusion which fails to take into account the diverse forms of human
misery. Our prime concern here, however, is not the question of evil
but rather the slow emergence of the absurd in Voltaire's vision of the
world.

Le Poème sur le désastre de Lisbonne is above all a very subtle
poem, for Voltaire, hardly a believer in rash heroism, takes pains to
conceal the fine points of his thought and even ends these somber lines
on a note of hope: "Mais il pouvait encore ajouter l'espérance"
(M. IX 478). George Havens, however, in his article entitled "Voltaire's
Pessimistic Revision of the Conclusion of his Poème sur le Désastre de
Lisbonne" reveals several changes that suggest that Voltaire's view
was less encouraging than the text would make it appear. The somewhat
reassuring verse: "Un jour tout sera bien, voilà notre espérance"
(M. IX 478) becomes "Un jour tout sera bien, quelle frêle [sic]
espérance."289 Likewise, a question mark changes the entire significance
of the last line: "Mais il pouvait encore ajouter l'espérance?"290
Whether Voltaire's prudence was prompted by personal heedfulness or by
a genuine concern for the need of most people to hope for a comforting
future when the present is dreary, the fact remains that the definitive
edition of the poem contains an obvious attack against Providence and
the lack of hope that these changes make manifest gives the poem a
definite aura of pessimism.

The absurdity of man's position in the universe emanates from
the text not only because Voltaire's belief in a morally ordered
universe has been shaken,291 but also because man is painted as a lost
creature incapable of finding the key to his existence:

Des humains égarés partageant la faiblesse,
Dans une épaisse nuit cherchant à m'éclairer
(M. IX 478)

Questions such as "Que suis-je, où suis-je, où vais-je et d'où suis-je
tiré?" (M. IX 477) remain impervious to the human mind for "... le
livre du sort se ferme à notre vue" (M. IX 477). Man's only hope is
hope itself and, as Havens perusal of the manuscript reveals, Voltaire could not share that blind hope in an unknown future.

Histoire des Voyages de Scarmentado was composed in the first person in 1753 immediately after the Berlin disappointment but not published until 1756.\textsuperscript{292} An interesting pattern in Voltaire's method of creation begins to make itself felt at this point. When Voltaire writes immediately after a moment of crisis—Le Poème sur le désastre de Lisbonne written one month after the earthquake and Histoire des Voyages de Scarmentado composed shortly after the Berlin crisis—he employs the first person, whereas if he waits some time before composing a fictional work based on a crisis, he almost inevitably displays the objectivity that time affords him by writing in the third person. This should not, however, be construed to mean that Voltaire is not both emotionally and intellectually involved in, let us say, Candide, because the third person narrative used therein may be a device on the exterior, a type of subterfuge, as is Voltaire's humor itself on repeated occasions, that conceals or attempts to conceal the author's personal involvement in his text and a technique that has resulted in the blatantly erroneous misreadings of Voltaire by the Romantics who could find, for example, as did Mme. de Staël, that the author of Candide was "indifférent à notre sort, content de nos souffrances, et riant comme un démon, ou comme un singe, des misères de cette espèce humaine avec laquelle il n'a rien de commun."\textsuperscript{293} Nevertheless, by the time that he wrote Candide, the earthquake would occupy only a short chapter whereas the theme of war—because of the Seven Years War—pervades the
entire tale. It should be pointed out, too, that the enormous Correspondance served as a first person outlet, a living record of the naked reactions of the immediately involved Voltaire.

Be that as it may, Histoire des Voyages de Scarmentado is a fantasy perhaps of the anticipated travels, rather than the voyages already made, by the uprooted Voltaire now homeless and unwanted both in France and Germany. The tale in many ways serves as a prelude to Candide. Scarmentado (from the Spanish escarmentado, meaning "instruit par l'expérience")²⁹⁴ is born in "Candie" (M. XXI 125), travels throughout Europe, Persia and China and once again, like Candide, encounters at every turn the folly of mankind, religious persecutions, the frivolity of women and the licentiousness of priests. Yet, unlike Candide who has been opened up to philosophical ideas which range all the way from those of Pangloss to those of Martin, Scarmentado, as his name indicates, learns only from concrete experiences. Scarmentado tells us exactly what he has learned: "J'avais vu tout ce qu'il y a de beau, de bon et d'admirable sur la terre: je résolus de ne plus voir que mes pénates" (M. XXI 132. Our underling.)

While this may seem to be in line with Candide's conclusion, or what has traditionally been accepted as Candide's conclusion, in our view this places Scarmentado on the same level as the Turk in Candide who, like Scarmentado, contents himself with a strictly familial existence. Jacques Van der Heuvel very perceptively entitled his chapter on Histoire des Voyages de Scarmentado: "Scarmentado ou l'abidation devant l'absurde" because Scarmentado's retreat from an
absurd world, "dur et hostile, le monde sans la grâce de Pascal," is a sterile one that negates the ever-growing reality of commitment on the part of his creator.

Histoire d'un bon Bramin which has been discussed at length earlier, although published for the first time in 1761, was written along with Candide, in 1759 and portrays the impasse between the bliss of the ignorant and the unsatisfied mind of the sage. The tale insists on three points that create overtones of absurdity. First of all, if we judge by appearances, not only does reason not lead to happiness but it seems opposed to felicitousness. The good Brahmin is a spiritual brother of Memnon, for, like Memnon, "plus il avait de lumières dans son entendement et de sensibilité dans son coeur, plus il était malheureux" (M, XXI, 220). Then, too, reason does not lead to knowledge of human destiny, since, as the Brahmin points out "après toutes les recherches (il) ne sait ni à oû (il) vien(t), ni ce qu'(il) (est), ni où (il) ir(a), ni ce qu'(il) deviendr(a)" (M, XXI 220). Finally, assuming that man could renounce reason to find the happiness of the ignorant, very few persons would be willing to do so. The Brahmin looked high and low but could no one "qui voulût accepter le marché de devenir imbécile pour devenir content" (M, XXI 221).

These early tales depict the nascent seeds of absurdity in Voltaire's works but only Candide which, in René Pomeau's view, was composed "aux points bas de la courbe pessimiste," presents a veritable absurd universe. After at least twelve years of practicing his new genre and after a decade of growing pessimism, Voltaire is
finally ready to create the masterpiece with which twentieth century
man feels a profound affinity.

C. Candide as "homo absurdus" and
"étranger"

It was mentioned earlier that Voltaire began writing philosophical
tales, with some regularity, around 1746. For the man who was unable to
complete either his Mémoires or his autobiography, this new genre
afforded the possibility of writing about his own crises, both in-
tellectual and personal, in a disguised manner. Theodore Besterman
refers to these prose tales as "Voltaire's kind of interior auto-
biography,"297 while René Pomeau claims that Candide has endured pre-
cisely because "l'auteur [y] a mis le plus vrai de lui-même."298

A good author, rather than putting all of himself in one of
his characters, more often spreads himself out among several persons
that populate a particular work, placing a part of himself in one
character, another part of himself in another, and so on down the line.
He then might add to that grain of truth other characteristics that
are not his own or exaggerate that part of himself so greatly that the
character in question no longer bears much resemblance to him at all.
Voltaire has placed a great deal of himself in several characters of
Candide who, in their turn, reflect the diverse tendencies of his
complex nature. In "la vieille," for example, who possesses "toute la
prudence que l'âge et l'expérience donnent" (M. XXI 164), one perceives
the reflection of Voltairian realism as well as an obstinate love of
life despite the sufferings that life imposes. In "le derviche," it
is the a priori refusal of metaphysical speculation that makes one think of Voltaire.

Due to Voltaire's remark to Thieriot in March of 1759: "Moi, j'ai assez l'air de ressembler ici au Seigneur Pococurante" (M. XL 58), most critics have exaggerated the rapport between the character in question and his creator. While it is true that, to a certain extent, Voltaire shares some of Pococurante's literary dislikes as well as his praise of the freedom of expression, he certainly was not disgusted with everything as was the Italian nobleman. Furthermore, Pococurante does not escape the barbs of Voltaire's irony manifested by Candide's statement: "Oh! quel homme supérieur! . . . quel grand génie que ce Pococurante. Rien ne peut lui plaire" (M. XXI 205); and Martin's final evaluation of the subject: "les meilleurs estomacs ne sont pas ceux qui rebutent tous les aliments" (M. XXI 205).

The case of Martin, who not only performs several important functions in the narrative, but is also Candide's constant companion from Chapter 19 to the end of the tale, is perhaps even more ambiguous. Structurally, Martin, by his pessimism and his realism, is at once the foil of Pangloss and the male counterpart of "la vieille," while philosophically his character is constructed upon Bayle's notion of Manichaeism and Hobbes' belief that the natural state of man is the state of war. Martin's pessimism, which was influenced not only by personal and national disasters but equally by Voltaire's research for Essai sur les moeurs, represents Voltaire's personal temptation toward pessimism that might have ended in nihilism, a temptation that Voltaire
did not avoid but that he by-passed by social commitment. While it is true that Voltaire shares Martin's social, political and religious criticism of France, he ends by referring to his collective views as "ses détestables principes" (M. XXI 215).

Certainly, Theodore Besterman is correct in claiming that "all these personages are Voltaire, weeping over mankind and his own failure to mould the world to his ideals," yet one person stands out in relief as a representative of the author. This is Candide himself. Not only does Candide resemble Voltaire by his scorn of slavery and his deep-seated belief in human dignity, but much more fundamentally he represents, in the form of caricature of course, the entire evolution of his creator from optimism toward pessimism and finally to meliorism through social commitment. René Pomeau, who refers to *Candide* as "Les Confessions de Voltaire," stresses that Voltaire, like Candide, "avait cru 'naïvement' que tout était pour le mieux dans le meilleur des mondes. . . ." For our purposes here, in dealing with Candide as an "étranger," the principal rapport between author and character is one of solitude and expulsion, both disenchanted and expelled from Germany, traveling alone as social and metaphysical strangers in a bellicose, destructive society and in an incomprehensible, malefic universe.

Due to the significance that Camus attributes to the theme of travel in relation to the absurd, that theme will be analyzed in depth when the thematic reinforcement of the absurd is studied. It is nonetheless pertinent at this juncture to mention the theme of travel for
the "voyageur" is also the "étranger." It was suggested in the preceding chapter that the eighteenth century frequently employed a device for juxtaposing nature and convention. It generally consisted of placing a traveler or a "bon sauvage" into a highly conventionalized society which the onlooker would clinically observe. In most cases, his natural "bon sens" would point out the folly of existing social conventions.

Montesquieu, for one, as early as 1721, introduced this technique in his *Lettres persanes*, where the two Persians, Usbek and Rica, visit France from 1712 to 1720 and their commentary, in epistolary form, constitutes a strong criticism of French manners and institutions. The theme appears in Voltaire's work as early as *Les Lettres philosophiques* of 1734 where one already finds, in the early chapters which deal with the Quakers, the theme of the "étranger." "Ami," says the Quaker to the fictive "je" of the work, "Je vois que tu es un étranger" (M. XXII 83). The protagonist is a stranger in a totally different society as will be the case with later heroes of Voltaire.

*Micromégas*, which was not only influenced by *Les Lettres persanes* (1721), but also by Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), as well as *Le Monde comme il va* (1748) and *L'Ingénu* (1767) all utilize this same technique. Here the gaze of the stranger, virgin and undefiled by convention, is the perspective from which nature and society are seen. Whereas in all the above mentioned tales, the traveler is a stranger only on the social level, in *Candide*, homo
viator is at once a stranger in a society of corrupted conventions and a metaphysical stranger in a universe whose meaning escapes him.

As was the case with Meursault, certain character traits of Candide help to reinforce the impression of his social alienation. Camus' statement about Meursault—"il refuse de mentir" (T.R.N. 1920)—is perfectly applicable to Voltaire's hero, who, when asked: "Nous vous demandons si vous n'aimez pas tendrement le roi des Bulgares," responds: "Point du tout, car je ne l'ai jamais vu" (M. XXI 140). Candide's basic honesty is again apparent when he refuses to mislead the Spanish señor by telling him that Cunégonde is his wife or his sister, even though he is alarmed by the manner of this great gentleman who "aimait les femmes à la fureur" (M. XXI 163). As Voltaire writes: ". . . son âme était trop pure pour trahir la vérité" (M. XXI 163). The impression of alienation is, of course, attained, as it is in L'Etranger, by the juxtaposition of this sincerity on the part of the protagonist and the hypocrisy of society. Candide does not play "le jeu" anymore than Meursault does, and he is thus estranged from society.

Candide's ingenuousness—he is "fort ignorant des choses de ce monde" (M. XXI 141) and always has "le coeur sur les lèvres" (M. XXI 181)—is juxtaposed with the deceit of those people he encounters and produces the same effect of dissimilarity with society. Voltaire keeps us continually aware of the fact that Candide is a stranger by the vocabulary he repeatedly makes use of throughout the tale. To underscore the wonder that must be apparent in the glance of
the stranger as he peruses a society from which he finds himself
alienated, we find Candide "stupéfait," "toujours étonné," "toujours
étonné de tout," "en extase," "étonnait," "étonna," "éperdu et
stupéfait," "étonné," "si étourdi et si choqué," "fort étonné" and
"étonné" (M. XXI 140, 150, 170, 177, 178, 182, 188, 197, 203,
206).

Candide is, then, like Meursault and the homo absurdus of
Le Mythe de Sisyphe, a stranger among men. The theme of solitude is
one of the key themes of the work in which man is depicted as a
creature who suffers alone amidst all other men who, for the most
part, not only suffer themselves, but remain totally indifferent to
the sufferings of their fellows. Exile among other men appears to
be the fate of Everyman. As Robert A. Adams notes: "It is less
the idea of a beating that makes us cringe here, than the absolute
alienation of one suffering human mind in the midst of thousands."

Having been expelled from the terrestrial paradise of his
youth, Candide is led by a series of counselors—Pangloss [Chaps.
4–6, 27–30], La Vieille [Chaps. 7–13, 29–30], Cacambo [Chaps.
14–19, 26–30], and Martin [Chaps. 19–30]—through the labyrinth of
existence where, at every turn, he discovers his own alienation.
Whereas Meursault was primarily a stranger to social hypocrisy and
the social games of friendship, filial devotion, love, marriage,
social ambition, legal conventions and religion, Candide's fundamental
frankness, innocence, sincerity and concern for others make him a
stranger to the deceit, hypocrisy, inhumanity and crimes of the people that populate the tale. When one considers that Candide ultimately remains estranged even from his comrades—he cannot accept Martin's Manichaeism; he eventually rejects Pangloss' optimism; his real sense of belonging to Cunégonde is ultimately shattered—one recalls Camus' remark in Le Mythe de Sisyphe: "Il est probablement vrai qu'un homme nous demeure à jamais inconnu et qu'il y a toujours en lui quelque chose d'irréductible qui nous échappe" (ESS, 105).

The fact that Meursault is a stranger to himself is much more readily perceived than the same phenomenon in Candide. We noted in the preceding chapter that it is given on the stylistic level by the objectivity attained despite the use of the first person narrative. Then, too, it is achieved on the conscious level as the novel progresses, for the dichotomy becomes apparent between the hero and the narrator. Finally, it appears on the literal level in the scene where Meursault does not recognize himself in the tin pannikin.

Much of Voltaire's work reveals his own preoccupation with man's inability to know himself. In his Dictionnaire philosophique, for example, Voltaire notes:

Connais-toi toi-même, excellent précepte
mais il n'appartient qu'à Dieu de le mettre en pratique; quel autre être que lui peut connaître son essence?
(M. XVII 162)
(One is reminded of Camus' remark in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* cited in Chapter 5:

Pour toujours, je serai étranger à moi-même... Le 'connais-toi toi-même' de Socrate a autant de valeur que le 'sois vertueux' de nos confessionaux... Ils ne sont légitimes que dans la mesure exacte où ils sont approximatifs. (ESS. 111)

Nine years earlier, Voltaire wrote in *Le Poème sur le désastre de Lisbonne*: "L'homme, étranger à soi, de l'homme est ignoré" (M. IX 477); indicating that man is not only a stranger to others but to himself as well. Candide exemplifies this strangeness to self, for, as much as he discusses the nature of man with Pangloss and Martin, he cannot comprehend that nature or essence and yet he partakes of it. Jacques Van der Heuvel approaches this question from an interesting angle when he discusses the protagonists of *Micromégas*:

Ils ont une position privilégiée pour observer, ces êtres intelligents issus d'autres mondes. Comme étrangers à la terre, ils échappent à ses préjugés, comme êtres pensants, ils se rattachent à ses préoccupations... Par eux, la conscience arrive à sortir de soi pour se regarder exister... Le procédé littéraire ne fait que traduire une exigence philosophique: cette dissociation d'avec soi-même, qui fait qu'on devient étranger à sa propre personne, sans cesser de l'assumer, c'est la figure de l'entendement humain, quand il se prend pour son propre objet.
Our reading of *L'Étranger* stressed that Meursault, unlike the *homo absurdus* of *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*, was in tune with the universe. He was, as the style indicates, rationally alienated from the world but was not judged to be a stranger vis-à-vis the world because his senses bridged the gap that rationally separated him from the universe. In this respect, Candide, who remains a stranger to the universe, is closer to the *homo absurdus* of *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* than is Meursault himself whom Camus judged "adapté à la nature" (T.R.N. 1907).

According to Camus, one way in which man can become aware of the absurd is through the realization of: "l'hostilité primitive du monde, à travers les millénaires, [qui] remonte vers nous" (ESS. 108). This feeling is definitely conveyed in *Candide* where the protagonist is subjected to the malefic workings of the universe and remains estranged from it. This is one of the most striking aspects of *Candide* which indicates that we are at the nadir of Voltaire's faith in a friendly universe. Although the old anthropocentric vision had already been discarded in *Micromégas*, for example, everything still seemed to be not only in its place but also in an order. In this respect, Jacques Van der Heuvel notes: "Tous les êtes y sont rangés bien en ordre, chacun selon sa taille, et contribuent à l'harmonie générale." ³⁰⁴

This is hardly the case in *Candide* where the only order is one of consistent chaos and where the protagonist finds himself "de
trop" not only vis-à-vis society but in relation to the cosmos as well. Voltaire carefully inserts two scenes where Candide is clearly out of place, wandering to and fro, lost in a universe where he is compelled to walk "sur des membres palpitants, ou à travers des ruines" (M. XXI 142). The first scene occurs at the beginning of the second chapter immediately after Candide has been cast from the terrestrial paradise of Chapter 1. Here we find the hero roaming about:

sans savoir où, pleurant, levant les yeux au ciel, les tournant souvent vers le plus beau des châteaux, qui renfermait la plus belle des baronnettes. Il se coucha sans souper au milieu des champs entre deux sillons; la neige tombait à gros flocons. Candide, tout transi, se traîna le lendemain vers la ville voisine, qui s'appelle Valdverghofftrarpdibdorff, n'ayant point d'argent, mourant de faim et de lassitude. (M. XXI 139-140)

The second scene is equally well-placed to heighten the effect. It occurs immediately prior to Candide's entrance into Eldorado at a moment when Cacambo tries to persuade the hero to return to Europe because "cet hémisphère-ci ne vaut pas mieux que l'autre" (M. XXI 172). Candide retorts:

Comment y retourner ... et où aller? Si je vais dans mon pays, les Bulgares et les Abaras y égorgent tout; si je retourne en Portugal, j'y suis brûlé; si nous restons dans ce pays-ci, nous risquons à tout moment d'être mis en broche. (M. XXI 172)
The eighteenth century wrestled with the problem of man's place in nature and a dichotomy became apparent between that part of man which belongs to nature and that part of him which transcends nature. Robert Mauzi very concisely resumes this question by noting: "en tant qu'animal, il [l'homme] appartient à l'univers. Mais, en tant que conscience, il devient un être solitaire, presque égaré."\textsuperscript{305} Candide incarnates man as an alien, estranged from nature by his rational faculties, lost in an incomprehensible universe that in Lester Crocker's words, "has no consonance with his ideals and provides no support for his values or his hopes."\textsuperscript{306}

In the main, then, Candide is an "étranger" on both the social and cosmological planes and this double perspective can be traced from the beginning of the tale on both the literal and symbolical levels. The very first paragraph of the tale announces Candide's bastardy: "Les anciens domestiques de la maison soupçonnaient qu'il [Candide] était fils de la soeur de monsieur le baron et d'un bon et honnête gentil-homme du voisinage" (M. XXI 137). That Candide is a social outcast is therefore apparent from the onset; the fact that he is an outcast in the cosmos is driven home shortly thereafter.\textsuperscript{307}

Candide's sense of belonging to a family unit that might shield him from solitude soon falls to pieces as he is driven from his terrestrial paradise. Tempted by woman, the new Adam succumbs and is driven from the Eden of his youth and, as Camus would later phrase it, "... dans un univers soudain privé d'illusions et de
lumières, l'homme se sent un étranger" (ESS. 101). From this point onward, Candide is in social and metaphysical exile as he peregrinates continually both physically and intellectually.

Candide is not only a stranger in the Old World but in the New World as well which he explores from Chapters 14 to 18. Determined to seek out the best of all possible worlds and convinced that it is certainly not the one in which he finds himself, Candide explains: "C'est certainement le nouveau monde qui est le meilleur des univers possibles" (M. XXI 156). When Cacambo assures him a little later on that: "quand on n'a pas son compte dans un monde, on le trouve dans un autre" (M. XXI 165), they set out together.

Once again Candide is disillusioned for he is an alien in Paraguay where "Los Padres y ont tout, et les peuples rien" (M. XXI 165), and sees himself estranged from the society of the Oreillons where he discovers the tendencies of "la pure nature" (M. XXI 171). The same fate awaits "nos deux hommes de l'autre monde" (M. XXI 173) in Eldorado where their reactions prompt their host to exclaim: "Nous voyons bien que vous êtes des étrangers" (M. XXI 174).

Strangers they are once again; this time in a terrestrial paradise inhabited by a being whose nature is far different from their own.

The entire tale demonstrates that Candide is alienated from other individual men, from their fraudulence, their violence, their dissimulation, their cruelty and their will to senseless destruction as well as from the collectivity of men and its host of noxious social institutions. At the same time, ever-present on the
cosmic level, the protagonist is made to experience a vivid sense of
the hostility of the world and of his estrangement from it, for, in
a world where he had hoped to find harmony, he experiences only
discord. He discovers that the universe is at best indifferent and
often hostile, and that it is neither made for him^308 psychologically,
since it tends to frustrate his ideals, nor rationally, for it trans-
cends his mental faculties. He is lost in that universe which "he
has passed beyond in moral value, but which annihilates him and all
his work."^309

Yet, Candide is hardly the sole "étranger" in the tale
which is populated by a whole band of traveling strangers, all
social outcasts, who traverse mountains and seas, thus reinforcing
the theme of alienation which is at the heart of the conte. The
little band of outsiders encounters other outsiders from all levels
of society, from the "nègre de Surinam" (M. XXI 181) to the deposed
kings at Venice, all six of whom ironically claim that they have
come to "passer le carnaval à Venise" (M. XXI 206). Life may be a
carnival in Eldorado, but it is more of a shipwreck elsewhere for
these outcasts who find themselves stranded all over the globe.

The word "étranger" appears in the text at least twenty-
three times in reference to diverse characters who remain "égarés"
and "vagabonds" (M. XXI 179). The final garden of Candide brings
together an illegitimate child now older and disillusioned, a "fille
de joie," an ex-monk, a philosopher, a half-breed, a Manichean, the
daughter of a pope, and an ugly but excellent pastrycook, all of whom are aware not only of their social alienation but also of their cosmic bastardy.

Alienation, as Voltaire sees it, is an integral part of the human condition. So the stranger is Everyman, as he is in Camus' novel, precisely because he is a stranger. Philosopher or prostitute, king or slave, monk, frocked or defrocked, all share in the alienation that is central to the human situation. Voltaire's vague manner of naming his characters—Candide, le baron, la vieille, le vieillard, le Turc, et cetera—heightens the effect of universality rather than individuality and helps the reader to see in them the fate of Everyman.310 Candide is a modern Everyman in a morality tale that deals with the amoral workings of a malefic universe and the immoral machinations of human beings.

D. Absurdity in Candide: Metaphysical and Social

For a variety of reasons, several critics have refused to admit the presence of the absurd in Candide. Although René Pomeau has written more recently in his critical edition of Candide (1959) that: "Spontanément, de la poésie de l'imprévu se dégage une philosophie du monde absurde . . . qui n'a point été créé pour l'homme,"311 he had repeatedly insisted in his earlier La Religion de Voltaire (1956) that Voltaire's fictional universe was not an absurd one.

First of all, Pomeau asserts that the philosophy of Candide
is not the philosophy of the absurd because:

On ne meurt point dans ce monde-là. Il manque à la revue de Candide la scène capitale du monde absurde, la mort, et son complément, l'enterrement, cet effort ultime des pompes humaines pour camoufler le gouffre de l'absurde.312

Pomeau's argument here appears gratuitous for the death scene is not a prerequisite for a novel of the absurd. While it is true that the theme of death is of capital importance in the structure of L'Étranger, there is neither death nor burial scene in La Nausée. Furthermore, there are innumerable death scenes in Candide, both individual deaths and collective catastrophes, and if Voltaire's wit inclines him on occasion to bring some of these characters back to life, it is not only because they are needed so that the story might continue but because his wit and humor are weapons that he wields in the teeth of the absurd.

Pomeau's second argument is based on the notion of order in the universe:

Du point de vue limité de l'homme-souris, le monde est chaos, parce qu'il ne fut pas ordonné pour les parasites de la cale. Mais il fut ordonné; le bâtiment divin a une charpente à laquelle on peut se confier, et jamais cet univers voltairien ne sera le monde absurde.313

Here, Pomeau's attempt to refute the absurd in Candide is misleading, if not blatantly erroneous. On the one hand, it is surprising that
a critic of the stature of Pomeau could ever conclude that **Candide**'s universe has a framework that one can trust, for the world of **Candide** is clearly one of both moral and physical chaos. On the other hand, it is the point of view of man, "l'homme-souris," that counts in the evaluation of the universe. Even if Voltaire believed in an ordered universe, **Candide** demonstrates unequivocally that it is an order that man cannot comprehend. If, in 1759, Voltaire still believed that God works according to a plan, his fictional universe manifests that that plan is impervious to human reason. It is the fact that man sees chaos where he had hoped to find order, and that the divine plan, if it exists, cannot be grasped by the human mind, that creates the aura of absurdity in the tale.

Pomeau's third argument raises the thorny question of the presence of God in the Voltairian universe. According to Pomeau, Voltaire's universe cannot be that of the absurd because God is still present in it: "Dieu éloigné n'est pas supprimé. Sa Hautesse reste le maître du vaisseau."\(^{314}\) First of all, the critics are as divided as is possible on the question of God and Voltaire; our own view approaches that of Theodore Besterman and Lester Crocker. As pointed out earlier in Chapter 3, Voltaire's criticism of Pascal acknowledged the validity of the agnostic position. Elsewhere, too, he insisted that human reason alone can neither deny nor affirm the existence of God.\(^{315}\) His main arguments that favor the existence of God are generally centered around the social need for belief and
the perils of atheism, and as Besterman concludes:

The fact that he insisted so often and with so much emotion on the expediency of belief, and argued so emphatically against atheism as a danger to society, clearly indicates his own disbelief.\textsuperscript{316}

But in the final analysis, as Crocker points out—and here Voltaire is close to Camus—the question is irrelevant:

Whether one was an atheist or a deist was not necessarily crucial. Voltaire and Diderot both said that if God were a do-nothing God, if his justice was not ours, then it was the same as if there were no God.\textsuperscript{317}

One need not be an atheist or an agnostic to believe in the absurd,\textsuperscript{318} for the presence or absence of God is unrelated to the theory of absurdity. In the Camusian view of things, as \textit{Le Mythe de Sisyphe} relates: "On peut être chrétien et absurde. Il y a des exemples de chrétiens qui ne croient pas à la vie future" (ESS. 149). Voltaire's lack of faith in eternal life could qualify him, therefore, as a believer in the absurd, even if he had been a Christian, which of course he was not. John Weightman expresses our own view when he notes that the symbolism of \textit{Candide} "expresses in permanent form the emotion of the agnostic who cannot believe in the senselessness of the universe and yet cannot make sense of it."\textsuperscript{319}

Before analyzing the nature of the absurd in \textit{Candide}, it is pertinent at this point to mention one more critical comment.
Ira Wade notes that Voltaire is close to the concept of the "absurd" but for him absurdity is not an instrument for penetrating reality, it is only another quality or defect; it matters not which way we go, since absurdity, too, is a conventional attitude, a poetic fiction, a dead abstraction.\\footnote{320}

Our analysis of Candide will show that Voltaire not only approaches the absurd but implicitly projects a theory of absurdity that is very much akin to that same notion in Camus. For neither thinker is the absurd "an instrument for penetrating reality," but a declaration of the impenetrability of reality. It is not simply "another quality or defect," as it is in the Sartrian notion of the absurd,\\footnote{321} but a statement concerning the entirety of human experience in a given universe. It is not a "dead abstraction" for it is rooted in reality and since, for both Camus and Voltaire, the absurd is a starting point, it matters very definitely "which way we go" and the road indicated, in both cases, leads to action and revolt.

For the most part, "Le merveilleux" has been extirpated from Candide; no longer are there celestial beings, as there were in Zadig and Memnon, rocketed into our universe to explain and justify the workings of the Creator. If Voltaire can be accused of abdicating before the absurd in Scarmentado, or Zadig for that matter,\\footnote{322} he does not budge in Candide where the perspective of "Sa Hautesse" is abandoned in favor of the naked view of "les souris." Man is left
alone to find the key to his situation, without the aid of what amounts to faith in Providence, and the tale presents not the Creator's but man's view of the human condition.

It is man's view not only because it is based on human experience, but because it is a product of human reason.\textsuperscript{323} Just as with Camus, the absurd in \textit{Candide} is a product of the human mind; it is reason's evaluation of the human situation. Voltaire has, therefore, progressed a long way from \textit{Micromégas} which suggested that to achieve the ends of happiness and enjoyment, God has given man reason "limited, to be sure, but sufficient to penetrate his reality and his purpose."\textsuperscript{324} \textit{Candide}, on the contrary, demonstrates that the purpose of the Creator, or the design of the universe cannot be penetrated by the human mind.

Just as we found \textit{Candide} to be a metaphysical and social stranger, so, too, do we discover two forms of absurdity in the tale, the social and the metaphysical, where a divorce is apparent "entre l'homme et sa vie, l'acteur et son décor" (\textit{ESS.} 101). We noted in the previous chapter that the idea of the metaphysical absurdity in \textit{L'Étranger} differed from that of \textit{Le Mythe de Sisyphe} in that it was not founded on confrontation and divorce, but rather on the concept of death alone. The notion of social absurdity, however, paralleled that of the essay since it was clearly grounded on the juxtaposition of the protagonist and society. In this respect, \textit{Candide} mirrors perfectly the definition of the absurd, as it was promulgated by Camus, for the element of divorce and
confrontation is everpresent both on the social and metaphysical levels.

We have, therefore, in Candide, a host of confrontations, all of which are incongruous, at the social and the metaphysical levels, which might generally fall into two categories: the illusions of Candide and the reality of the world. It is the juxtaposition of these phenomena, as it was in the Camusian notion of absurdity, that creates the absurd. The world view of Candide is not of itself absurd, nor is the world of Candide absurd; the absurd is born of the confrontation of the two.

Thus, we find Candide thirsting after happiness in a world whose nature precludes the attainment of it, seeking social justice and brotherhood, but pitted against religious and political institutions that will not permit it, yearning for permanence and faced with the discontinuity of existence. 325 Candide's desire for order and harmony is eternally frustrated by a chaotic universe stripped of cause and effect where chance reigns and evil triumphs, a world that strikes Martin as "Quelque chose de bien fou et de bien abominable" (M. XXI 196) and where Candide finds nothing but "illusion et calamité" (M. XXI 198). Not only is the chaos of the world on the physical level—tempests, earthquakes and plagues—but on the moral level too, recalling Zadig, for here the wicked triumph, the good are punished and justice is incomprehensible.

At every turn, Candide attempts to unify his position in the universe, to comprehend it, to mark reality with a human seal,
to reduce it to the categories of his mind. Yet, all his efforts fail due to the absurd gap that paradoxically links him, but separates him, from the world and his thirst for clarity remains unquenched in an unjust, indifferent, incomprehensible universe. It is because of this unsatisfied desire for unity and metaphysical consolation that we find him most often in a state of emotional and intellectual bewilderment. Candide's rational exigencies are met on all sides by the irrationality of the world and, once again, it is the divorce between the rational and the irrational that creates the impression of absurdity.

E. Absurdity by Juxtaposition

When speaking of human exile in the first section of Le Mythe de Sisyphe, Camus writes "Cet exil est sans recours puisqu'il est privé des souvenirs d'une patrie perdue ou de l'espoir d'une terre promise" (ESS. 101). The absurd man, as Camus conceives him, is riveted to the present, shuns regret which is linked to the past and abandons hope which is connected with the future. For human life to be deemed absurd, as Jean Grenier points out, "c'est qu'il existe un monde par rapport auquel elle est absurde." For Meursault, this is the world where his desires would be realized, where his thirst for clarity and unity would be assuaged, where there would be no divorce between him and his setting and where he would be immortal. This world never finds its full expression in the text and can only be implied by a close study of his frustrated needs.
In *Candide*, on the contrary, the ideal world appears in the text itself on two different occasions. Human exile, as it is portrayed in *Candide*, is equally without remedy, but, in what is perhaps a much truer presentation from a psychological point of view, the protagonist is haunted by the memories of a lost fatherland and the hope of a promised land. In fact, the major structural technique in the tale for the evocation of the absurd is the juxtaposition of the ideal and the real, the harmonious and the chaotic, the structured and the desultory.

1. Westphalie or "la patrie perdue"

The tale begins with a symbolical presentation of a highly structured universe in the form of a parody of the book of Genesis. Chapter 1 is essentially a representation of the order and harmony of the terrestrial paradise of pre-lapsarian man. Although presented in burlesque fashion, the key elements are all included: solidarity, harmony, order and structure. The château symbolizes the ordered universe; the Baron Thunder-ten-tronckh, who rules it, represents the Old Testament God of thunder and lightning who created the world and structured it. While it is true that Candide lacks Adam's awareness of good and evil, he nonetheless represents Adam before the Fall and Cunégonde, the temptress, is Eve herself. Pangloss is there to spread the gospel of order and harmony in the best of all possible worlds.

Even happiness itself is categorized in this paradise and
we learn of the different degrees of felicity attainable there:

après le bonheur d'être né baron de Thunder-ten-tronckh, le second degré
de bonheur était d'être mademoiselle
Cunégonde, le troisième de la voir
tous les jours et le quatrième
d'entendre maître Pangloss, le plus
grand philosophe de la province, et
par conséquent de toute la terre.
(M. XXI 138-139)

Yet the state of bliss that the ordered universe offers
proves to be of a temporary nature, for Adam is tempted by Eve--
"elle lui prit innocemment la main" (M. XXI 139)—and when he
succumbs he is driven from paradise "à grands coups de pied dans
le derrière" (M. XXI 139). From a cozy paradise of optimistic
idealism, Candide is cast into the brutal reality of the Seven
Years' War, into a chaotic universe where he finds himself "de trop,"
into a sanguinary society celebrating a "boucherie héroïque" (M.
XXI 142). 327

The fourth chapter marks the demolition of the terrestrial
paradise and, ironically enough, it is the pedagogue Pangloss who
announces its destruction. Eve has been raped and slaughtered—
"ah! meilleur des mondes, où êtes-vous?" (M. XXI 144), sighs
Candide—and as for the château which symbolizes the ordered universe
"il n'est pas resté pierre sur pierre, pas une grange, pas un mouton,
 pas un canard, pas un arbre" (M. XXI 144). 328 Candide's dream of
belonging to a coherently structured universe has been shattered:
along with the château. The symbols of solidity, harmony and permanence now become those of transience, discord and chaos. The ramifications of the Fall are complete: the exigencies of the nature of the new Adam have caused the loss of innocence and the dissolution of that highly structured world of childhood security. The feeling of absurdity bursts forth from this carefully pieced collage formed by the world that was and the world that is, by the juxtaposition of past and present, dream and reality, peace and chaos.

2. Eldorado or "la terre promise"

The symbolic destruction of the ordered universe is followed by a series of natural and social catastrophes—a tempest, an earthquake, a shipwreck, an auto-da-fé—and by the tales of Cunégonde and la Vieille. Candide slays don Issachar and the Inquisitor and then enters into the New World. Shortly thereafter appears the major example of juxtaposition for rendering the effect of absurdity when, in the center of the tale (Chapters 17 and 18), the author introduces Eldorado, the promised land, the best of all possible worlds.

The Eldorado adventure is brilliantly couched between a chapter that deals with the cannibalistic atrocities of primitive man (Chapter 16), and one that treats the horrors of civilized man who places economic values above and beyond human dignity (Chapter 19), thus creating in four consecutive chapters a fleeting glance at
subcivilization, supercivilization and so-called civilization. The absurd springs up, therefore, from the juxtaposition of Eldorado with what precedes it and with what follows it, and the absurd in this case has both social and metaphysical ramifications. When placed next to the ideal world of Eldorado "notre globule" (M. XXI 184) appears chaotic and absurd, not only unable to fulfill man's dreams but incapable of satisfying his needs.

The main thrust of the Eldorado adventure is on the social plane and when Candide and Cacambo arrive there, they are astonished by the society that they discover. There are no courts, no prisons and no monks, for there is no need for them; gold is worth nothing and whereas Candide has almost starved todeath earlier in the tale, in Eldorado he lodges in a hotel where food has been provided by the government. There is a "palais des sciences" where the arts and sciences are cultivated and in all of Eldorado peace, freedom, tolerance, justice and happiness flourish.

The country has been cultivated for "le plaisir" and "le besoin" (M. XXI 173), and populating the land where "partout l'util etait agréable" (M. XXI 173) are "des hommes et des femmes d'une beauté singulière" (M. XXI 173), recalling the inhabitants of Rabelais' Abbaye de Thélème.

With the introduction of the Eldorado adventure, the imagery of the tale changes accordingly. The objects are bright—gold and emerald—and images of light abound in the text. Scattered on the
ground is the "matière brillante" with "pièces rondes, jaunes, rouges, vertes qui jetaient un éclat singulier" (M. XXI 173); liquors are served in "des vases de diamant" (M. XXI 175) while food is prepared in "une espèce de cristal de roche" (M. XXI 174). All these images of light contrast sharply with the preceding and succeeding images of slaughter, pestilence and death that reflect the powers of darkness.

For our purposes, the controversy between William Bottiglia and Rita Falke, as regards the key trait of Eldorado, is purely academic, for whether it is in fact, as Rita Falke maintains "tolerance as the ground of liberty," or, as William Bottiglia insists "deism as the ground of a unanimously cultivated social and practical morality which produces all the other traits," the tolerance, deism, liberty, order, harmony and beauty of the society of the land of gold serve as a model which, when compared with the discord, strife, immorality and intolerance of the other societies in the tale, produces an effect of absurdity on both the reader and the protagonist.

Metaphysical absurdity, too, is driven home by the contrast between Eldorado and the real world. Unlike the inhabitants of our world, the people of Eldorado have maintained their "innocence et félicité" (M. XXI 176). There is no evil in their universe, which is highly structured and harmonious. Cosmic order reigns there under the watchful eye of a benevolent Providence with whom the Eldoradoans have established a significant rapport which might be
vaguely labeled as deism. When Candide asks the old sage of Eldorado if they have a religion, he retorts: "Est-ce que vous nous prenez pour des ingrats? . . . nous adorons Dieu du soir jusqu'au matin" (M. XXI 176). Candide probes still further and inquires as to the manner in which one prays to God in Eldorado: "Nous ne le prions point, nous n'avons rien à lui demander; il nous a donné tout ce qu'il nous faut; nous le remercions sans cesse" (M. XXI 176).

As indicated above, the question of God is irrelevant to the absurd, but it is clear in Eldorado that because their universe is ordered, because it is a world which satisfies their needs, because they have received all that they want, the inhabitants have established a rapport of adoration and thanksgiving with the Deity they believe to be everpresent and everwatchful in their universe. The converse is true in the universe of Candide which is chaotic and malefic. When juxtaposed with Eldorado, the cosmic absurdity of Candide's universe is immediately apparent. In this respect, John Weightman's remark is sagacious:

. . . how would the people of Eldorado retain their serenity if their capital were shattered by an earthquake? The only way to justify the Eldorado chapters is to suppose that they are really a conscious or unconscious criticism of God. They occur as a sunny interlude between two series of disasters to show how happy and pious we might have been, had God not given us our ungovernable natures and put us into a world containing inexplicable evil.
Because the universe of *Candide* is unordered and lacking providential surveillance, because "Sa Hautesse" cares little for
the "souris" in the hold, the mice have responded to terrestrial
indifference with their own celestial indifference. Two priests
might have entered into Candide's garden, yet neither ultimately
does so. Cunégonde's brother was denied entrance because of his
insufferable pride; Giroflée voluntarily defrocks himself before
joining Candide and his comrades. There is no need for priests in
the final garden for no church will be erected there; nor is there
any need for intermediaries between God and man in a vineyard
dedicated solely to the cultivation of the human sphere.

What we have analyzed in reference to the Eldorado adventure
is the structural function of these two chapters in the tale. It
was found to be one of opposition and contrast which helped to
drive home the reality of the absurdity of Candide's universe. Yet
on another level, there is a slight blending, a partial bringing
together of these two disparate worlds.

As pointed out earlier, Candide and Cacambo are "étrangers"
in Eldorado where "toute la nature est d'une espèce si différente de
la nôtre" (M. XXI 175). They find themselves "de trop" in a world
where vanity is unknown, where all desires are accomplished and
where the inhabitants are wanting in nothing. After a sojourn of
a month, they become restless and decide to leave. The text
literally suggests that they depart because of a desire for power
through wealth back in Europe and because Candide hopes to find
Cunégonde. Yet Candide, in larger terms, is driven out of Eldorado for the same reason he was expelled from Westphalia, by what Lester Crocker terms, "The dynamism of his vices." In a world where there is nothing to desire, man as we know him cannot live. Jean Sareil suggests this when he speaks of "l'irrespirable atmosphère d'Eldorado," as does William Bottiglia who notes that "Imperfect man cannot successfully inhale the rarefied air of the heights of perfection."

Eldorado appears then as an imaginary country of eternal peace, social justice and human happiness, inhabited by a race quite different from our own. And it is precisely that. Should we reject Eldorado then as a pessimistic pleasure? Since man cannot live in a state of perfection which would contradict his very nature, are we condemned to find nothing positive in the entire Eldorado adventure? This is the position of Ludwig Kahn who rejects Eldorado as a false Eden where life goes on without challenge. Kahn can find nothing positive in this land of "otiosity" where there is "nothing to work for" and "nothing to live for" and consequently rejects the episode as "myth, perfect and unreal."

Kahn's analysis of Eldorado is an oversimplification. Most of Voltaire's symbols are double-edged and Eldorado is not an exception. While it is true, on the one hand, that Eldorado is an ideal world that has no existence in reality and, on the other, that man must learn to come to grips with his own world, Eldorado can
serve as a source of inspiration to man for building a better world in which to live. Eldorado certainly contains a pessimistic commentary on human nature but, despite Kahn's objection, it also functions as "a philosophical ideal for human aspiration." 342 Candide's travels have been a learning experience for him and the fact that his own garden is founded upon dynamic activity at the social level indicates that he has structured it upon the ideal land of Eldorado. The fact that man can never reach in toto the social and moral heights of the land of gold is no reason not to strive to partially attain them. Like Sisyphus, Candide has learned that: "La lutte elle-même vers les sommets suffit à remplir un coeur d'homme" (ESS. 198).

3. The Gardener's View or "la terre est ronde"

There is one final peregrination which takes Candide from Eldorado, the apex of optimism, via Paris, a city which functions as a microcosm of the absurd universe, to the final garden of Constantinople the seat of constructive realism. A new wayfarer by the name of Martin, the advocate of pessimism, accompanies Candide on this journey which is a veritable "via dolorosa." 343 Once again, it is the chaotic and immoral tableau of the present seen in the light of Eldorado, which serves as a backdrop, that renders the impression of absurdity.

Immediately after leaving Eldorado, Candide encounters the pitiable "nègre de Surinam" and endures the crooked dealings of
M. Vanderdendur (M. XXI 180). The shock of being back in the real world prompts Candide, in one of his most lucid moments, to define optimism as "la rage de soutenir que tout est bien quand on est mal" (M. XXI 180-181). When Candide passes into "une noire mélancolie" (M. XXI 182), the scene is set for the introduction of Martin into the text.

Martin, with his adherence to Manichaeism and Hobbism, brings cosmic pessimism to the forefront. So that Martin's doctrine might appear to be grounded in reality, the following scene plunges the protagonists back into the midst of war, while Candide concedes that there is in fact "quelque chose de diabolique dans cette affaire" (M. XXI 185). When the thief who stole Candide's wealth is drowned, along with one hundred seemingly innocent victims, Martin's observation mirrors his philosophical beliefs: "Dieu a puni ce fripon, le diable a noyé les autres" (M. XXI 185). It is interesting to note that the doctrine of Manichaeism functions as another example of absurdity by divorce, in this case the divorce between the forces of Good and evil, between the powers of light and darkness.

The two chapters that examine Paris—described by Martin as "un chaos, une presse dans laquelle tout le monde cherche le plaisir, et où presque personne ne le trouve" (M. XXI 186)—symbolize the futility and absurdity of human existence which is everywhere present in the book, constituting a well-defined microcosm of the world at large. Candide is fleeced piecemeal by women,
priests, judges and doctors and swindled outright by a game of chance. "Le savant" informs Candide, in terms not unlike those of Hobbes-Martin, that Paris is a veritable field of battle:

... jansénistes contre molinistes, gens du parlement contre gens d'église, gens de lettres contre gens de lettres, courtisans contre courtisans, financiers contre le peuple, femmes contre maris, parents contre parents; c'est une guerre éternelle.
(M. XXI 192-193)

All the horrors as well as the follies of humanity are compressed into these pages which compose "une peinture en abîme" of the human condition. When all the concentric social circles have been perused and Candide finally escapes with his life, he "croyait être délivré de l'enfer" (M. XXI 198).

After the Paris fiasco, the protagonists witness another war and along with it the execution of Admiral Byng, events which throw Candide into a second "mélancolie noire" (M. XXI 198). The lamentable tales of Paquette--the horrors of prostitution--and Giroflée--the tribulations of a religious life without a vocation--then precede the ironic Venetian carnival which demonstrates that kings themselves cannot escape the contingency of human destiny and the absurdity of the human predicament that casts man adrift between "les convulsions de l'inquiétude" and "la léthargie de l'ennui" (M. XXI 215).

The tale has led Candide and the other surviving members of the original château of Westphalia on a circular voyage beginning
and ending in Europe, during which Candide has learned a great deal but has resolved nothing as far as the absurdity of the human condition is concerned. The conte is a Bildungsroman inasmuch as the protagonist has been educated by his experiences, but since his intellectual expedition cannot go beyond the frontiers of the absurd—even though an antidote is prescribed—Candide’s trip has been, if not perfectly circular, then elliptic in form. The final glance from the garden of Constantinople, one that recalls "Sa Misérable Hautesse" of the Venetian carnival (M. XXI 208), reiterates the absurd circle of human destiny that has been everypresent in the tale:

On voyait souvent passer sous les fenêtres de la métairie des bateaux chargés d’effendis, de bachas, de cadis, qu’on envoyait en exil, à Lemnos, à Mytilène, à Erzeroum; on voyait venir d’autres cadis, d’autres bachas, d’autres effendis, qui prenaient la place des expulsés, et qui étaient expulsés à leur tour. (M. XXI 215)

The above image, a social transposition of a similar metaphysical view expressed elsewhere by Voltaire, recalls Pascal and is inherent in our tale: "Nous sommes tous comme des prisonniers condamnés à mort qui s’amusent un moment sur le préau, jusqu’à ce qu’on vienne les chercher pour les expédier" (Best. 11230).

* * * *

In Candide, Voltaire presents the tragic view of life,
de picting man's existence as one of suffering and death in a world
where he is unable to establish any transcendent order or meaning.
Man remains adrift "entre deux éternités qui [l] engloutissent"
(Best. 13620), in a universe which is not only fundamentally incom-
prehensible but powerfully evil. Simultaneously, the author of
Candide paints the exigencies of man's nature—the thirst for
happiness, the quest for clarity—that remain frustrated in such a
universe. The conflicting tones of this tableau create the impression
of absurdity.

Candide learns that the universe that he had been taught was
made for him is basically indifferent to his fate, and in this
universe where things happen to him, rather than for him, he is
condemned to waver between the intolerable states of anguish and
boredom. He ultimately abandons the project of comprehending and
defining his condition and throws himself into the existential
position of living out his life productively in a given situation.

The extraordinary aspect of Candide is that this tragic
view of life is essentially lyrical and "couched in the gay and elegant
prose of the eighteenth century."\(^{345}\) **Candide** is an ironic
Pilgrim's Progress in which the pilgrim evolves from naïveté to
knowledge of the absurd, but then learns that no absolute progress
is possible from that point.\(^{346}\) For in order to leap the absurd walls
to metaphysical consolation, Candide would have to sacrifice
lucidity which, for Voltaire, partially constitutes human dignity and,
for Candide, is the sole harvest of his peregrinations.

F. Thematic and Stylistic Reinforcement of the Theme of Absurdity

Despite its philosophical nature, Candide is primarily the work of an artist who uses specific literary devices to project a particular effect upon the reader. We will now study a network of convergent themes as well as structural and stylistic techniques woven together in the tale to create a dominant impression of absurdity. One of these themes, the theme of play, exists on on the social level, while others—time, puppets and passivity which are all linked with the more encompassing motif of fatality—function mainly on the metaphysical level. Others still—the theme of homo viator, the technique of pace and the style itself—help to enforce the feeling of absurdity on both levels.

1. Homo viator

The theme of travel in French literature goes back to the jongleurs of the Middle Ages and is frequently, as in Boccaccio and Chaucer, a literary pretext for the narrating of a series of tales. At times of great exploration and discovery of new worlds, the theme of travel appears frequently in different types of literature. Thus in the sixteenth century, Gargantua and Pantagruel voyage to worlds old and new, real and imaginary, and Montaigne himself utilizes tales of travelers for philosophical purposes, very often to point out how much of what we consider to be natural is in fact conventional. Later,
picaresque novels, such as *Gil Blas*, usually examine a particular country to criticize contemporary manners, customs and morals, although the criticism is often general enough to be considered universal. Then, too, tales such as *Micromégas* employ the theme of travel to insist upon the notion of relativity. *Candide* is the cosmopolitan picaro who is not there primarily to point out that "nature" is often only convention—although he does in fact do this on several occasions—but to indicate what is fundamentally static in the human condition and what is permanent in human nature. Contrary to many other picaresque novels, the criticism in *Candide* rises above the social level and assumes cosmic proportions.

It has already been mentioned in passing that the theme of travel in eighteenth century philosophical literature created a situation where the "voyageur," particularly if he were depicted as a representative of nature and opposed to a highly conventionalized society, appeared as an "étranger." Perhaps more significant still is the fact that *homo viator* can appear not only as "étranger," but as *homo absurdus* too. In any case, this is how Camus views him, as is manifest in the following remark drawn from *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*:

> A parcourir ainsi les siècles et les esprits, à mimer l'homme tel qu'il peut être et tel qu'il est, l'acteur rejoint cet autre personnage absurde qui est le voyageur. Comme lui, il épouse quelque chose et parcourt sans arrêt. (ESS. 159. Our underlining.)

Camus speaks at length of his own travels to Prague in
L'Envers et l'Endroit:

Ville dont je ne sais pas lire les enseignes, caractères étranges où rien de familier ne s'accroche, sans amis à qui parler, sans divertissement enfin ... Et voici que le rideau des habitudes, le tissage confortable des gestes et des paroles où le cœur s'assouplit, se relève lentement et dévoile enfin la face blême de l'inquiétude. L'homme est face à face avec lui-même ... Et c'est pourtant par là que le voyage l'illumine ... Ce pays me ramenait au cœur de moi-même et me mettait en face de mon angoisse secrète. (ESS. 33, 34, 38)

Not only did Camus discover that he was an "étranger" in Prague, lonely and alienated, he also perceived the absurd through the awareness of a double mirror that reflects interior and exterior unfamiliarity. Travel, ironically enough, forced him onto himself, and logically enough, afforded him a naked glance at extramental reality: both these views reflected the absurd.

Candide's journeys are a learning experience, as he himself recognizes during his stay in Eldorado: ". . . il est certain qu'il faut voyager" (M. XXI 177). His travels ultimately teach him what Camus appears to have seized in Prague. In foreign places, out of the domain of habit and routine, far from the familiar and comforting barriers that mask the absurd, Candide loses the sense of belonging to both society and cosmos. When the walls of familiarity topple over, Candide, the perplexed wayfarer, discovers his own alienation. As he peruses the world in all its nakedness, he encounters the absurd. Candide's experiences demonstrate the truth of another
Camusian observation about traveling:

Ce qui fait le prix du voyage, c'est la peur. Il brise en nous une sorte de décor intérieur. Il n'est plus possible de tricher -- de se masquer derrière des heures de bureau et de chantier. ... Le voyage nous ôte ce refuge. Loin des nôtres, de notre langue, arrachés à tous nos appuis, privés de nos masques ... nous sommes tout entiers à la surface de nous-mêmes. (ESS, 42-43)

The theme of traveling in Candide then produces the rencounter of self with self, self with other and self with nature, all three of which, as Le Mythe de Sisyphe suggested, cause the absurd to blossom forth. Homo visior discovers that he is, in effect, homo errans.

2. Time

The theme of time in Candide performs a double function: one of elucidation and one of degeneration. Le Mythe de Sisyphe indicated that through an awareness of time, man comes to a realization of the absurd and, as we shall see, it is partially due to an evolution vis-à-vis time itself that the scales finally fall from the eyes of the naive protagonist.

As in the plays of Beckett, the passing of time in Candide is rendered by the corporal degeneration of the protagonists. This can take the form of degeneration in time through work and tribulation, as in the case of Cunégonde, who, having lost her youthful beauty, appears at the end of the tale "rembrunie, les yeux éraillés, la gorge
sèche, les joues ridées, les bras rouges et écaillés . . ." (M. XXI 213-214). It can also appear as the workings of disease in time, as it does in the case of Pangloss, whose body is ravaged with the effects of syphilis. Finally, it can be the sole work of time itself as it is in the case of "la vieille" who incarnates the theme of bodily degeneration in Candide. "La Vieille," seen from this angle, is Voltaire's Belle Heaumière and her complaint, as well as her advice to Cunégonde (M. XXI 163-164), recall Villon's protagonist:

Je n'ai pas eu toujours les yeux éraillés et bordés d'écarlate; mon nez n'a pas tou-
jours touché à mon menton . . . [autrefois] ma gorge se formait; et quelle gorge!
blanche, ferme, taillée comme celle de la
Vénus de Médicis; et quels yeux! quelles
paupières! quels sourcils noirs! . . . Pour
moi, j'étais ravissante, j'étais la beauté,
la grâce même, et j'étais pucelle. (M. XXI
156-157, 158)

There are three aspects of the notion of time in Candide: the cosmological, the psychological and the absurd rectification of man in time. That time is out of joint in the absurd universe of Candide is immediately evident in the contrast between Chapters One and Two. One can certainly assume, at the end of Chapter 1, where Pangloss offers "une leçon de physique expérimentale" (M. XXI 139) to the chambermaid, that the scene takes place either in spring or summer. Yet the next day when Candide is expelled from Westphalia; "la neige tombait à gros flocons" (M. XXI 140). This illogical sequence on the first pages of the tale introduces the reader to the
physical malfunctions of the universe of Candide and prepares him
for the numerous events of the tale that will defy both logic and
verisimilitude.

In Le Mythe de Sisyphe, Camus speaks of the notion of
fleeting time, sweeping man along with it, and of human life being
oriented toward undefined moments in the future:

le temps nous porte... Nous vivons sur
l'avenir: 'demain,' 'plus tard,' 'quand
tu auras une situation,' 'avec l'âge,
tu comprendras.' (ESS. 107)

In the case of Candide, the formula is clearly "quand j'aurai
Cunégonde." Jean Sareil's comment on time in Candide is definitely
misleading:

De même que Meursault, dans l'Étranger, vit
dans un temps réduit à une dimension, ce
qui suffit à lui retirer toute vraisemblance
psychologique, de même les héros de Candide
ne connaissent que le présent. L'avenir
n'est jamais, ou presque jamais, évoqué.348

The future is constantly evoked in the tale where the protagonist's
whole existence leans in that direction. Psychologically, Candide has
time out of perspective, as he gallops toward the future that he
views as a panacea. This is particularly evident in Eldorado where
Candide refuses the advice of the sage who explains to him that
"quand on est passablement quelque part, il faut y rester" (M. XXI
178). It also merits the author's implicit criticism, evident when
he writes: "les deux heureux résolurent de ne plus l'être" (M. XXI 178).
Only at the conclusion of the tale when he finally possesses Cunégonde, who is now ugly, shrewish and unbearable, does he awake from his dream of futurity and reconcile himself to the present, thus assuming his rightful place in time. In relation to time, Candide is now the absurd man "sans espoir et conscient de l'être [qui] n'appartient plus à l'avenir" (ESS. 121). The circular vision of the gardener described above, throws Candide into an eternal present in which he and his comrades will fight the ravages of time creatively and collectively by cultivating the earth.

On the social plane, the fact that Candide's "métairie" is essentially structured on Eldorado should not lead one to believe that the garden is oriented toward the future, even though a harvest is both desirable and possible. Working is an act that can only be accomplished in the present, whereas hoping is vaguely geared to the future. The present/future rapport that Candide has incorporated into his garden incarnates Camus' notion which he announces in L'Homme révolté: "La vraie générosité envers l'avenir consiste à tout donner au présent" (ESS. 707). At the metaphysical level, Candide can proclaim along with Goethe that his field is time. These words are the absurd words par excellence, for the absurd man, as Camus defines him, is: "Celui qui, sans le nier, ne fait rien pour l'éternel" (ESS. 149).
3. Homo ludens

a.) War as Play. We return now to J. Huizinga's Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture for an historical-cultural approach to the game of war which forms the material of his fifth chapter "Play and War." It will be recalled that some of the elements of games, as Huizinga defines them, are fixed rules, costume, the orderly manner in which they proceed and the fact that they take place outside ordinary life. In addition, they can be serious and sacred and they can have material interest at stake.\(^{349}\)

All fighting does not fall under the heading of play. In the very earliest phases of culture fighting, as Huizinga points out, the whole notion of fair play was absent and the fighting was non-agonistic. At that stage, the violence of savage people expressed itself in "predatory expeditions, assassinations, man hunts, head-hunting et cetera" whether it was prompted by "hunger, fear, religion or mere cruelty."\(^{350}\) Such unannounced, rule-free killing cannot be dignified by the term "warfare." In order for organized killing to enter the play-sphere, it must be solemnly declared and bound by rules.\(^{351}\) Therefore, other forms of combat--such as "surprise, ambush, raid, punitive expedition and wholesale extermination"--while they may be subservient to an agonistic war, are by their very nature non-agonistic.\(^{352}\)

It was left to civilized man then to raise fighting to the level of war by declaring it such and thus separating it "from peace
on the one hand and criminal violence on the other."\textsuperscript{353} This declaration implied rules that both sides were obliged to obey: rules of reciprocal rights, rules of diplomatic forms and rules concerning choice of weapons and honoring of treaties.\textsuperscript{354}

War became a sacred institution, a sacred duty, "a noble game of honor" which included the "exchanging of civilities with the enemy,"\textsuperscript{355} before and after the atrocities of the game itself. Time and place became important factors as well as the notion of the "pitched battle."\textsuperscript{356} Finally, the agonistic factor became fully operative "when the war-making parties regarded themselves and each other as antagonists contending for something to which they felt they had a right."\textsuperscript{357} As with the notion of law, the concept of war includes not only the agonistic but the ritualistic, not only the play element but the sacred element too. It is based on the sacred notions of justice and honor and the idea of glory "which everybody understands [more] than any rational and intellectualist theory of economic forces and political dynamisms."\textsuperscript{358} Perhaps more than any other human quality, the waging of war is predicated upon loyalty which "has sprung direct from the aristocratic and agonistic warrior-life of archaic times. Loyalty is the surrender of the self to a person, cause or idea without arguing the reasons for the surrender or doubting the lasting nature of it."\textsuperscript{359} More importantly still as regards the sacred elements of war, the gods have always been invoked by all the participating parties.
The theme of war pervades *Candide*, a work written during the Seven Years' War. While the leitmotif of German optimism serves as an ideal dreamworld, Germanic barbarity is the reality of the opening chapters which symbolically represent the struggle between the Prussians (les Bulgares) and the French (les Abarès). Almost all the game elements of war as well as the sacred ingredients outlined by Huizinga are present.

In warfare, requirements must be met not only for the weapons utilized but for the soldiers chosen to represent the country. This explains the delight of the two Prussian recruiters when they spot Candide: "Voilà un jeune homme très bien fait," notes one of the Prussians, "et qui a la taille requise" (M. XXI 140). Just as civilities are exchanged between countries before the atrocities begin, so too between army and potential soldier. Thus, Candide is taken to dinner and treated with great honor before he is quickly transformed into a fettered automaton.

That the game of war will be waged out of loyalty and love of country is manifest in the question asked of Candide by the recruiters: "Nous vous demandons si vous n'aimez pas tendrement le roi des Bulgares" (M. XXI 140)? When the recruiters are convinced of Candide's loyalty, a final appeal is made to natural pride and the sacred notion of glory: "Vous voilà l'appui, le soutien, le défenseur, le héros des Bulgares; votre fortune est faite, et votre gloire est assurée" (M. XXI 140). Candide is thereupon inducted and immediately subjected to beatings and forced marches. Unable to figure out just how
he is a hero, Candide attempts to escape, is soon captured and
condemned to "passer trente-six fois par les baguettes" (M. XXI 141).

Just as the trial of Meursault was played out in the
"court" of justice, the game of war is waged on the "field" of
battle. Voltaire facetiously depicts the order that might precede
any game: "Rien n'était si beau, si leste, si brillant, si bien
ordonné que les deux armées" (M. XXI 141), and then ironically draws
the chaos that follows: "Les trompettes, les fifres, les hautbois,
les tambours, les canons, formaient une harmonie telle qu'il n'y en
eut jamais en enfer" (M. XXI 141). Once the game has begun, Candide,
"qui tremblait comme un philosophe" (M. XXI 142), does his best to
conceal himself from this "boucherie héroïque" (M. XXI 142).

Suddenly, the sacred is mixed with the profane, for while
"des cervelles étaient répandues sur la terre à côté de bras et de
jambes coupés," "les deux rois faisaient chanter des Te Deum, chacun
dans son camp" (M. XXI 142). The camp is a sacred ground set off
from the battle where the ritual takes place; yet there is a blending
of the agonistic factors with the ritualistic elements of the game.
First of all with the introduction of prayer, in this case the
introduction of another tongue, we have the presence of sacred
language. Far more significant still is the fact that God is invoked
and summoned with incantations to look down upon the game being
played. God is the ultimate moral arbiter of the spectacle, for, as
Huizinga phrases it, "victory proves that the cause of the victors
is favoured by the gods, and is therefore a 'just' cause."
takes advantage of this sacred interlude to escape "hors du théâtre de la guerre" (M. XXI 142).

As in any game, the notion of winning and losing is of capital importance. When one of the players does not do his utmost, no matter what position he may play, he is penalized by the members of his own team. In the case of war, that penalty is death. This is the significance of the execution of Admiral Byng—which we shall treat under the heading of torture—who is executed because "il n'a pas fait tuer assez de monde" (M. XXI 197).

Up to this point, Candide has been actively engaged in the scenes of war that we have analyzed. There is one more scene of war much later in the tale that occurs when he and Martin are sailing, ironically enough, by the Cape of Good Hope. Here they are spectators and off in the distance two ships are engaged in battle. When a strong wind brings all the ships in proximity with one another, the game atmosphere is evoked by the author who notes that "on eut le plaisir de voir le combat tout à son aise" (M. XXI 184-185). An effect of absurdity is produced by the atrocities of war and the entertainment value of the spectacle.

b.) Torture as Play. There is one form of game activity in Candide that we might call torture and execution. In the strict sense of the term, this is not play, as Huizinga defines it, for there are no competing sides, yet it is clearly a spectator sport with fixed rules, costume and order. To distinguish it from play per se,
we shall call it spectacle.

The first spectacle of this nature occurs after the earthquake in Lisbon. The leaders of the Inquisition have decided that "le spectacle de quelques personnes brûlées à petit feu, en grande cérémonie, est un secret infaillible pour empêcher la terre de trembler" (M. XXI 148). The protagonists in the ceremony will be those who have broken a set of fixed rules for moral behavior---"Un Biscayen convaincu d'avoir épousé sa commère, deux Portugais qui en mangeant un poulet en avaient arraché le lard" (M. XXI 148)--and those who hold contrary religious views---"le docteur Pangloss et son disciple Candide, l'un pour avoir parlé, et l'autre pour avoir écouté avec un air d'approbation" (M. XXI 148). The barbarities of the Inquisition, based on the notion of extermination of heretics for the glory of God, are not without analogy to an ancient concept of war found in Babylonia and Assyria, that Huizinga defines as "a divine injunction to exterminate foreign peoples to the greater glory of God." 361

Costumes are worn by the protagonists who are "revêtus d'un san-benito" and whose heads are covered by "mitres de papier" (M. XXI 149). The ceremony consists of a procession, "un sermon très pathétique" and "une belle musique en faux-bourdon." Torture and ritual combine to produce a ludicrous scene where "Candide fut fessé en cadence pendant qu'on chantait" (M. XXI 149). Pangloss is hung, the ceremony designed to prevent future earthquakes is completed; yet the same day "la terre trembla de nouveau avec un
fracas épouvantable" (M. XXI 149). Later, when Cunégonde speaks of the spectacle, at which she was present, we learn of a definite seating plan and of the provisions for half-time entertainment: "Il [M. l'Inquisiteur] me fit l'honneur de m'y inviter. Je fus très bien placée; on servit aux dames des rafraîchissements entre la messe et l'exécution" (M. XXI 152).

There is one other spectacle of this nature in Candide, the execution of the English admiral Byng. It takes place on a ship and is attended by a large group of people who assemble nearby on the shore. Voltaire describes the ceremony matter-of-factly: "...Quatre soldats, postés vis-à-vis de cet homme, lui tirèrent chacun trois balles dans le crâne, le plus paisiblement du monde..." (M. XXI 196). When Candide asks "Qui était ce gros homme qu'on venait de tuer en cérémonie," he is told that he was an admiral who did not kill enough of the enemy. In any case, continued his interlocutor, "il est bon de tuer de temps en temps un amiral pour encourager les autres" (M. XXI 197). After the execution, "toute l'assemblée s'en retourna extrêmement satisfaite" (M. XXI 196). Voltaire veils the horrors of prepared ceremonies of murder by describing them as if they were the most natural of events. It is the blending of atrocity with the tone of normality that creates an impression of absurdity.

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Candide offers a panorama of games—above all the vicious
games of war and torture—engaged in by a game-playing society that enjoys the games it has created upon the abstractions of loyalty and honor. The hero, a representative of nature, cannot adhere to these cultural atrocities in which he is continually enmeshed and from which he is forever fleeing. He rejects the notion of blind loyalty—the surrender of self—to either God or country and refuses to play the game of war. On the one hand, he cannot condone the massacre of other men for he believes in human dignity, and, on the other hand, quite bluntly, he wishes to save his own skin. The absurd here exists on the social level and is a composite result of the piecing together of the cruelty and inhumanity of the games themselves, the way in which they are accepted as normal activities, the entertainment value that they provide for the masses and the author's manner of presenting them in the text.

4. "Cette passagère et sublime marionnette appelée l'homme."

It would be difficult to misinterpret the characters of Candide and impossible to confound them with living persons. There is an unreal, mechanical quality about them; they lack the complexity of human beings. They can be seen as sticks or types, shadows or puppets, but never as men. And yet, Candide is a tale where the impression of life is continually projected, where the genius of the author: "quickens dry bones into living substances radiant with an inextinguishable phosphorescence." Voltaire, the master-showman, the incomparable practitioner
of puppetry, sits alone on the stage surrounded by lifeless dolls of all sizes and dimensions. The omnipresent and omnipotent puppeteer breathes on the loam of his creatures, instilling life into them, enabling them to move where he wishes them to go. He skillfully manipulates their strings; roam where they may, they never escape from him. Thanks to the hands that give them life, these automatons travel far and wide; they visit foreign countries and imaginary lands. Like human puppets, they are attacked by destiny in the form of pestilence, famine and earthquakes. The good drown, the bad take advantage of their misfortune. These marionettes make love and war; they contract syphilis and smallpox; they lose their eyes, their legs, even their buttocks. They are killed and "re killed," yet they all come back on stage together for a final bow before the curtain falls and they are laid to rest in the box marked "Children's Toys" that lies somewhere in the wings.

Peter Gay explains the use of marionette protagonists in Candide in the following fashion:

Voltaire draws his characters as stick figures, presents them as marionettes to be manipulated, in order to keep the reader distant and thus alert and rational. Candide is not called a philosophical tale for nothing: the reader is purged, not through pity and terror, but through reason, and hence aroused to rational action.\textsuperscript{364}

Gay's remark is judicious but the use of marionettes in the place of men also reflects the changing metaphysics of the author who is
becoming more and more aware of the limited amount of human freedom. From the late 1740s onward, we find innumerable references to man as "marionnettes de la providence" (M. XXIX 338) and:

Petits papillons d'un moment,  
Invisibles marionnettes,  
Qui volez si rapidement  
De Polichinelle au nèant.  

(M. X 603) 365

There are several scenes in Candide that explicitly depict the automatsous nature of the protagonists. The first of these is the interrupted love-making scene between Candide and Cunégonde that precipitates the expulsion from Eden. After witnessing the previous scene between Paquette and Pangloss, Cunégonde returns to the château, conveniently blushes in front of Candide, discreetly drops her handkerchief, and the mechanics begin: "leurs bouches se rencontrèrent, leurs yeux s'enflammèrent, leurs genoux tremblèrent, leurs mains s'égarèrent" (M. XXI 139). The effect of uncontrollable progression is particularly rendered by the suppression of any form of connective coordinates, by the choice of first conjugation verbs with their similar endings, thus creating a pattern of similar smoothly flowing sounds, and the insistence upon the automatic effect of their passion upon the different parts of the body. A similar scene occurs later in the tale when "la Vieille" leads Candide to Cunégonde. This anecdote constitutes an excellent parody of the then popular "scènes de reconnaissance" of
the picaresque genre. The same techniques are once again utilized by Voltaire to stress the mechanical behavior of his characters:

La force lui [à Candide] manque, il ne peut proférer une parole, il tombe à ses pieds. Cunégonde tombe sur le canapé. La vieille les accable d’eaux spiritueuses, ils reprennent leurs sens, ils se parlent; ce sont d’abord des mots entrecoupés, des demandes et des réponses qui se croisent, des soupirs, des larmes, des cris. (M. XXI 150)

When Candide is inducted into the Bulgarian army, he is immediately transformed into a fettered automaton. That Voltaire believed soldiers to be robots of the state, who yield their individual liberty to the will of the government, is immediately translated by a sentence of brilliant stylistics in which suppressed conjunctions and short clauses of one or two words produce the jerky movement characteristic of the puppet or the robot. Irons are fastened to Candide’s legs and he is led to a regiment: "On le fait tourner à droite, à gauche, hausser la baguette, remettre la baguette, coucher en joue, tirer, doubler le pas..." (M. XXI 140).

Yet corporeal gestures are not the only movements that suggest the mechanical nature of the protagonists. Clearly, Pangloss is an intellectual marionette wound up with Leibnizian terminology that he spouts forth automatically without recourse to the reality of any given situation. Pangloss is the "maître sot" in this tragi-comic metaphysical farce. Although Candide will ultimately rid himself of the optimistic delusion—he is the only character who
evolves intellectually in the course of the narrative—at the
beginning of the tale, he still appears to be intellectually
manipulated by Panglossian optimism and responds mechanically with
ready-made answers which frequently do not even answer the questions
asked of him. Such is the case in Holland when a Protestant minister
inquires: "Que venez-vous faire ici? y êtes-vous pour la bonne
cause" (M. XXI 142)? The minister, of course, is wondering whether
Candide is on the Protestant side or not; but Candide, without
thinking—and that is surely the point in question—mechanically
regurgitates the lesson of his mentor that has nothing to do with the
minister's interrogation: "Il n'y a point d'effet sans cause,
répondit modestement Candide: tout est enchaîné nécessairement, et
arrangé pour le mieux" (M. XXI 142).

The characters of Candide introduce us into a type of
puppet theater where they are manipulated by the whims of their
creator. On another level, the entire tale demonstrates that on the
stage of life, man too is a puppet subjected to the irregular,
chaotic course of destiny which may be ruled by a cosmic puppeteer
or may simply be the sole effect of chance. Like the characters
of Candide, man's life appears precarious and insignificant as he is
swept along by forces, both internal and external, that are beyond
his control, making him a victim of destiny in an absurd universe
which he cannot comprehend.

Alfred de Vigny's allusion to man as "cette passagère et
sublime marionnette appelée l'homme,"366 parallels that notion of
man inherent in Candide. "Passagère," since man is a transitory, momentary, fleeting phenomenon engulfed in the flow of time, caught in the web of history and scurried along against his will by the forces of the cosmos which lead him from being to nothingness. "Sublime," for he is aware of death and of his implacable destiny and there is dignity in that awareness which forms the groundwork, if man will let it, of his revolt.

Vigny's double-edged commentary on man takes us not only to Candide and Voltaire but further back still to the problematical pronouncements of Pascal regarding "la grandeur et la misère de l'homme" which, in their turn, lead all the way forward in time to the Camusian notion of absurdity which is always founded on paradox.

5. Passivity

The notion of passivity is not without analogy to the preceding theme of puppetry and is closely linked with the more encompassing motif of fatality. Like Meursault, Candide is fundamentally a passive individual who, until the conclusion of the tale, is more acted upon than actor, more of a witness than a participant. When he does participate, it is usually against his will or due to the force of circumstances: he is driven out of Westphalia for an action that was provoked by Cunégonde (Chap. 1); he is more or less forcibly inducted into the army and onto the battlefield (Chap. 2); he is subjected to a series of natural disasters: tempest and earthquake (Chap. 5); he is the victim of an auto-da-fé (Chap. 6); he is led off
by "la vieille" (Chap. 7); he is forced to leave Lisbon after killing
the Inquisitor and to leave Buenos Aires for the same reason
(Chaps. 9, 13); he is compelled to leave Paraguay after killing
Cunégonde's brother (Chap. 15). Most of the remaining adventures,
after the Eldorado sojourn, are prompted by the desire to find
Cunégonde and, as John Weightman points out, in the second half of
the book, "Candide has become a spectator." 367

To create an aura of passivity, Voltaire employs a specific
stylistic device: the passive voice. Much of the tale is written
in the passive voice and this technique creates an effect of
" entraînement." The most glaring examples of the use of the passive
voice occur in the chapter headings which serve to announce the
passivity of the hero: "Comment Candide fut élevé. . . . comment il
fut chassé d'icelui" (Chap. 1); "Comment Candide fut obligé de se
séparer de la belle Cunégonde et de la vieille" (Chap. 13). When
the passive voice is not used, it is still clear that either
Candide is acted upon—"Comment une vieille prit soin de Candide"
(Chap. 7)—or that things are happening to him—"Ce qui arriva sur
mer à Candide et à Martin" (Chap. 20); "Ce qui arriva en France à
Candide et à Martin" (Chap. 22).

The use of the passive voice in the chapter titles can be
partially explained by the fact that Candide is a Bildungsroman.
Gargantua, for example, which is also a "roman de formation" of
sorts, contains chapter headings of the same nature. And like
Gargantua, Candide has a series of mentors who lead him by the hand
through the labyrinth of human existence. It is essential that the reader be aware of the hero's education through experience, of the fact that the protagonist is witnessing and observing—Rastignac, who has his own set of counselors, would serve as a perfect illustration—before he determines his own course of action in a certain set of circumstances. The passive voice underscores the fact that the hero is being exposed to certain phenomena, acted upon by certain people and particular forces so that he may learn through this initiation how to function actively in a given situation.

Yet this explains only in part both the use of the passive voice and the general passivity of the hero. Before the construction of his garden at the end of the tale, there is only one occasion on which Candide, without any provocation whatsoever, initiates an action. This occurs when he voluntarily leaves Eldorado. The fact that outside forces are consistently influencing the actions of the protagonist accounts for the lack of psychology in the tale. It also explains the presence of the metaphysical, for in a universe not made for man, things do not happen for him but to him. Candide is more acted upon than actor, for, like Everyman, he is a passive victim of the malefic forces of both society and cosmos.

6. Fatality

The two themes that we have just studied, the themes of puppetry and passivity, are aspects of the larger theme of fatality which permeates the text of Candide and which includes other minor
motifs as well. As in L'Étranger, the theme of fatality is of a three-dimensional nature: interior, social and external.

The interior aspect of fatality includes the passive nature of the protagonist and the permanent qualities of human nature. For reasons already explained, we have seen that, unlike other heroes of fiction who initiate events and take charge of situations, Candide does not assert himself until the final chapter of the tale. He remains either a witness or a victim of circumstances.

Human freedom is encroached upon by the notion of human nature. Human acts are free, as Voltaire believed, but not human will which is determined by many things including man's essence. When Candide and Cacambo decide to leave Eldorado, the king tells them that "Tous les hommes sont libres" (M. XXI 178); yet, for the student of Voltaire, the sentence is ironic. The act of leaving Eldorado constitutes a free choice, yet Candide's will to seek out Cunégonde and to shine among his fellows elsewhere rather than to be like everyone else in Eldorado is determined. Vanity and love, two constants in human nature, determine the course of action of Candide. He might have chosen another act—to send for Cunégonde, for example—so the act is free but the will itself is determined. This explains why Lester Crocker judges Candide to be driven from Eldorado by the "dynamism of his vices" which is the equivalent of claiming that he is driven out by the "essence of his humanity." A belief in essence necessarily constitutes a limited concept of freedom.
Later when Candide wonders whether man can change, Martin
cuts short that illusion: "Si les éperviers ont toujours eu le
même caractère, pourquoi voulez-vous que les hommes aient changé le
leur" (M. XXI 187)? Human nature, then, as Voltaire views it, is
fixed and man is determined by that nature. Yet, whereas Martin's
views end in bleak fatalism, Voltaire affords man at least the
possibility of limited amelioration through enlightenment and work.

As regards fatality at the social level, we would have
to rewrite Candide to explain in detail all the religious, political,
national, economic and social forces to which the protagonist is
subjected. Let it suffice to say that all these institutions,
which are portrayed in somber tones in the tale, initiate vicious
games in which Candide becomes unwittingly entangled. As a result,
he is swept along by a concatenation of events which determine the
nature of his existence.

The themes of puppetry and time help to enforce the notion
of fatality on the external or cosmic plane. Yet to these themes
that we have already analyzed should be added the motif of chance
which is the foremost reason for the chaotic nature of the universe
on both the physical and moral levels. During the shipwreck at
Lisbonne, Jacques, the good-natured Anabaptist, tries to save the
life of the seedy "matelot" but ends by drowning in front of the
"matelot" who "le laissa périr sans daigner seulement le regarder"
(M. XXI 146). There is no moral order, Voltaire is implying, in a
universe governed by chance in which the good are needlessly drown
while the bad go on living. To underscore the role of chance once more during the shipwreck scene, we learn that Pangloss and Candide, the only survivors other than the "matelot," are carried to safety "sur une planche" (M. XXI 146). Later in the tale, at a moment when Candide and Cacambo are lost in the New World, Cacambo suggests: "Laissons-nous aller au courant" (M. XXI 172-173). This has been the fate of the protagonists from the first pages of the conte, for Voltaire, very realistically, has placed his characters in a chaotic universe, letting them be borne along by the currents of chance.

The interior, social and cosmic forces at work in the tale combine to give an impression of "traînement" and "enchaînement" in the fate of the protagonist. Man appears as a plaything of destiny, "une bulle de paume que le sort pousse" from one adventure to another, laden with suffering, the cause of which he cannot comprehend, in a universe that in no wise responds to his needs.

Yet, one image of human destiny stands out in Candide for it appears in the beginning and at the end of the tale and symbolizes the fate of Everyman. It is the scene of execution, of the proposed execution of Candide in the first pages of the tale and the actual execution of Admiral Byng towards the end of the narrative. Using an image that announces The Third of May 1808 by Goya, a tableau which inspired Malraux in his description of the death scene of Hernandez in L'Espoir, the scene is set for
Candide where "on lui bande les yeux; on le fait mettre à genoux" (M. XXI 141) and for Admiral Byng whom we find "à genoux, les yeux bandés" (M. XXI 196), vis-à-vis four soldiers who fire three shots apiece into his brain in the calmest manner imaginable. Here is the picture of man that has run through the entire narrative: alone, groping forward blindly and helplessly before external forces, with death his only certainty.

7. Pace

The absurd is also rendered in part by the terrific pace of the tale which is written in allegro vivace. A frenzied moment is created almost at the onset and the tale rolls along at this pace, except for a few appropriate decelerations, until the finale. The very rhythm of the narrative echoes the chaos and disorder characteristic of the Voltairean absurd universe.

The movement of the first chapter is adagio, what Dorothy McGhee labels "the ironic calm before the storm," for Voltaire carefully portrays an atmosphere of order and stability, structure and harmony, befitting the soon-to-be-demolished ordered universe of Candide's youth. From the moment that Candide is driven from paradise "à grands coups de pied dans le derrière" (M. XXI 139), the beat is measured by the structured and rhythmic spanning of the protagonist, which, through the device of reinforcement by repetition, occurs more than twenty times in the text.

For purposes of contrast, we move immediately from adagio
to presto. This pace is constant from Chapter 2 through Chapter 7 during which Candide is swept through a fictional portrayal of the Seven Years' War, a brief stay in Holland, a tempest, an earthquake, an auto-da-fé and a reunion with Cunégonde. Not only do the events move along with an unbelievable rapidity, but Voltaire's style itself, with the suppression of connective coordinates and the device of verb building, creates a velocity that leaves the reader breathless: "Candide, épouvanté, interdit, éperdu, tout sanglant, tout palpitant... Il s'en retournait, se soutenant à peine, prêché, fessé, absous et béni" (M. XXI 150).

The pace slows down from Chapters 8 through 12 with the tales of Cunégonde and "la Vieille" but it does not slacken off as much as one might expect since the tales are directed con brio. These tales, particularly the tale of "la Vieille" (Chaps. 11, 12), as Jacques Van der Heuvel notes, "reprend 'en abysme' les mêmes thèmes que ceux de Candide,"\textsuperscript{375} and by recapitulation they insist once again on the presence of evil and the absurdity of human existence. Whereas the traditional telling of tales in the picaresque genre serves as a moment of semi-relaxation to enable both the reader and the protagonists to catch their breath, here in Candide, although the pace does in fact decelerate from presto to moderato, certain devices prevent the pace from falling off too greatly. One such device is the introduction of crisp dialogue within the tale itself, as is the case in Chapter 12:
―De ma mère! m'écriai-je [la vieille].
―De votre mère! s'écria-t-il [the ennuch] en pleurant; quoi! vous serviez cette jeune princesse que j'ai élevée jusqu'à l'âge de six ans, et qui promettait déjà d'être aussi belle que vous êtes? —C'est moi-même; ma mère est à quatre pas d'ici, coupée en quartiers sous un tas de morts. (M. XXI 160)

Another is Voltaire's stylistic technique, mentioned earlier, of suppressing conjunctions and stacking verbs one after the other. One such example can be found in Cunégonde's tale (Chap. 9):
"Je me frottai les yeux, je regardai attentivement, je le [Pangloss] vis pendre; je tombai en faiblessé" (M. XXI 152); another is the tale of "la Vieille" (Chap. 12):

Il [the ennuch] m'emporta dans une maison voisine, me fit mettre au lit, me fit donner à manger, me servit, me consola, me flatta, me dit qu'il n'avait rien vu de si beau que moi. (M. XXI 159)

Finally, Voltaire intertwines two chapters that contain a great deal of swift action—Candide kills Issachar and the Inquisitor in Chapter 9 and Chapter 10 relates the flight of the protagonists to Cadix—between the stories of Cunégonde and "la Vieille."

The pace quickens from moderato to allegro (Chaps. 13-16) as Cunégonde goes off with the Spanish governor and Candide, pursued by the law, flees with Cacambo. This is followed by the reunion with and the ultimate murder of Cunégonde's brother in Paraguay, and the subsequent adventure with the Oreillons.
Then, just about midway through the tale—perfect timing on the part of the author—the pace slows to \textit{adagio}. The protagonists are given plenty of time to stroll at their leisure through the best of all possible worlds, to experience true harmony and order on both the social and cosmic planes, and to compare and contrast it to the chaos that they have experienced up to this point. After the view of Utopia, the tale resumes its normal pace as Candide passes through Surinam, is swindled by M. Vanderdendur, finds his lost sheep, witnesses the sinking of a ship and discusses metaphysics with Martin near the coast of France.

When Martin and Candide arrive in France the pace slows just a little, even though the chapter is somewhat drawn out—it is the longest chapter in the book, twice the size of any other, including the individual chapters on Eldorado and the Conclusion—because it is full of intrigue from beginning to end. This chapter constitutes a microcosm of the world at large and in it Candide is quickly victimized by priests, doctors, judges, women and gamblers.

From Paris to the final garden, the movement is a bit jerky. It picks up as Candide passes England, witnesses the execution of Admiral Byng (Chap. 23), travels to Venice and is reunited with Paquette and Girolée (Chap. 24). It then decreases greatly in velocity with the visit to Seigneur Pococurante (Chap. 25) and the episode of the six dethroned kings at the carnival in Venice (Chap. 26). The pace livens once again with the trip to
Constantinople and the series of reunions with Cacambo, Pangloss and the baron (Chap. 27). It slows down with the tales of Pangloss and the baron (Chap. 28) and the reunion with "la Vieille" and Cunégonde (Chap. 29), and finally in the conclusion, where the pace slackens still more for the purposes of evaluation, reflection and ultimate reconstruction, we return to the adagio movement of the first chapter. Yet even here in the densest chapter of the tale, when things seem to be moving too slowly, Voltaire will occasionally pick up the pace by the brilliance of his style:

C'est qu'ils virent un jour aborder dans leur métairie Paquette et le frère Giroflée, qui étaient dans la plus extrême misère; ils avaient bien vite mangé leurs trois mille piastres, s'étaient quittés, s'étaient raccordés, s'étaient brouillés, avaient été mis en prison, s'étaient enfuis, et enfin frère Giroflée s'était fait turc. (M. XXI 215-216)

Jean Sareil is correct in calling Candide "un tourbillon," for the overall impression of the pace of the narrative is one of great speed where the protagonists are whisked along across the globe, from adventure to adventure, from one absurd predicament to another, going everywhere but nowhere until they finally plant themselves in the garden of their own creation. Yet, a closer analysis reveals that there are different spirals in that whirlwind and the absurd is consequently projected by three aspects of the pace: by the chaotic pace of the absurd universe expressed by the presto movement (Chaps. 2-7), by the juxtaposition of the ordered and the chaotic—adagio/
presto (Chaps. 1-2), allegro/adagio (Chaps. 16-17), adagio/presto (Chaps. 18-19)—and finally, by the jerky movement of the last chapters (Chaps. 23, 24—Chaps. 25, 26), (Chaps. 27, 28, 29, 30) which translate the irregular caprices of destiny.

8. Style

Our analysis of L’Étranger depicted the work as a philosophical tale or conte philosophique rather than as a novel or a récit.

The term novel was rejected because the novel exacts "une durée continue, un devenir, la présence manifeste de l’irréversibilité du temps," which hardly applies to what Sartre refers to as the "succession de présents inertes qui laisse entrevoir par en dessous l’économie mécanique d’une pièce montée." 377

Despite the similarities between L’Étranger and the récit as Gide practiced it—the objective use of the first person narrative—the term récit is not applicable for several reasons. First of all, Gide’s approach is the traditional introspective, psychological one whereas Camus’ is the exterior or behaviorist manner. Then, too, the récit "explique et coordonne en même temps qu’il retrace, il substitue l’ordre causal à l’enchaînement chronologique." 378 This is not the case in either L’Étranger or Candide where no causal order replaces chronological sequence, where causal order is in fact denied. We will thus consider L’Étranger, along with Candide, as a philosophical tale of the absurd.
For all practical purposes, Voltaire invented the *conte philosophique* as we know it today and no one has surpassed him in this genre. The classic definition of the philosophical tale has been given by William Bottiglia as follows:

> a fictitious prose narrative wherein theme molds all the other component elements—action, character, setting, diction, etc.—into a stylized, two-dimensional, emotionally sublimated demonstration.

Everything is subordinate to the theme which is the *sine qua non* of the genre. The plot in both works, for example, is constructed and arranged to enforce the theme: the absurdity of the human condition, pure and simple, in *L'Étranger*, the explicit refutation of "Optimism" and the implicit portrayal of the absurdity of the human situation in *Candide*. The unity of each work is situated in the theme and other stylistic devices such as repetition, satire and irony serve as weapons of persuasion.

The theme is so important in the philosophical tale that it functions to the detriment of the psychology of the protagonists. The characters are hardly even painted on the outside, much less on the inside. They are there to embody ideas that reinforce the theme rather than to be depicted as autonomous individuals. Candide is the only personage in the tale who evolves intellectually while Meursault's evolution is a moot point. The characters of *Candide* exist as parts of the total design imposed by the author and they are consequently not probed as individuals but as component parts
of that arrangement. In the case of L'Etranger, the behaviorist style of the first part, which describes man from the exterior, defies psychological analysis by its very nature. A limited amount of individual introspection is attained in the second half of the work during Meursault's lengthy stay in prison. Haydn Mason notes, in this respect, that the following remark of John Cruickshank has relevance for a consideration of the 18th century conteur too: "characterization is alien to the absurdist novel...the motivation and analysis of human behavior are more likely to mislead than enlighten." 380

In both works the reader is deliberately kept at a distance from the protagonists. No emotional involvement is permitted so that the rational faculties of the reader, remaining perfectly intact, will immediately seize the thesis that each author is attempting to drive home. In Candide this detachment is attained by the use of the third person narrative, by the facetious stance that the author often assumes vis-à-vis his characters and by his matter of fact presentation of the atrocities to which Candide is subjected as if they were the most normal of events. In L'Etranger, which seems to illustrate Rimbaud's remarkable "'Je' est un autre," 381 Camus maintains a distance between the reader and the protagonist despite the fact that the tale is written in the first person. He achieves this by a paradoxical use of "je" which refers to both "hero" and "narrateur" who have become estranged.
In both works metaphysics prevail over psychology and the tragic view of life is depicted by an analysis of the human condition. André Malraux's remark: "Le roman moderne est, à mes yeux, un moyen d'expression privilégié du tragique de l'homme, non une éclairation de l'individu"\textsuperscript{382} is applicable not only to the modern novel but to the philosophical tale à la Voltaire which eschews the psychology of the individual in order to probe man's fate.

Much of our analysis of style as a vehicle for social and metaphysical absurdity has already been completed, for it was mandatory to give stylistic support to the elucidation of themes that contribute to the overall impression of absurdity in the tale. Thus, the very structure of the narrative was shown to portray the absurd by juxtaposition (Westphalia: reality = order: chaos; Eldorado: reality = harmony: discord). In addition, it was pointed out that the use of the passive voice very definitely creates an impression of "traînement" and fatality which, in its turn, nourishes the theme of metaphysical absurdity.

In our analysis of the pace of the tale, we observed that by a device consisting of Rabelaisian verb accumulation, the suppression of adjectives and the reduction to a minimum of connective coordinates, Voltaire creates a chaotic pace that contributes in large measure to the impression of both "traînement" and "enchaînement" which characterize the tale and reinforce the theme of absurdity. It was also indicated that this effect is often
heightened by the very alteration of the device itself.

In *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*, Camus specified that the mechanical aspects of human activity produce an effect of absurdity upon those who witness these activities (ESS. 108). Thus, in *L’Étranger* both the reader and Meursault view the absurd itself in the autonomous gestures of the "robot woman" (*T.R.N.* 1155). As we have seen, Voltaire creates the same effect in *Candide* on numerous occasions, above all in the suspended love-making scene of Chapter 1, the parody of the "scène de reconnaissances" and the scene which depicts Candide in basic training (*M.* XXI 139, 150, 140). Voltaire portrays their mechanical behavior by suppressing conjunctions and utilizing short clauses of one or two words which produce the animated effect.

In reference to the absurd, there are still other stylistic traits which need to be elucidated. Verb tense is an important aspect of *Candide*, as it is of *L’Étranger*. In the main, the tale is told in the traditional past definite tense. Yet on occasion, Voltaire switches to the historical present. William Bottiglia interprets one such example, the duel between Candide and don Issachar, as mimicry of "fast fictional action." Yet the meaning of the change in verb tense has much deeper ramifications. The change generally occurs at a moment of crisis, often when the protagonists are subjected to some form of evil: the violence inflicted upon Candide in the army, the storm at sea, the duel between Candide and don Issachar, the murder of the baron and, most
strikingly of all, the earthquake scene in which Pangloss and Candide:

sentent la terre trembler sous leurs pas,
la mer s'élève en bouillonnant dans le
port et brise les vaisseaux qui sont à
l'ancre. Des tourbillons de flammes et
de cendres couvrent les rues et les places
publiques; les maisons s'écroulent, les
toits sont renversés sur les fondements,
et les fondements se dispersent; trente
mille habitants de tout âge et de tout
sexe sont écrasés sous des ruines.
(M. XXI 147)

Philosophically speaking, the change in tense suggests the contingency of human life and the discontinuity of human existence, both, as we have seen, aspects of the absurd.

Edwin Grobe, who has written very perceptively on this theme in Candide, remarks that "every textual appearance of the tense [historical:present] serves as a stylistic rejection of Pangloss' concept of total world order." Grobe feels that in order for the past definite to realize its full potential "as an instrument of exact sequence and total integration," it "must operate in an ideal world." In our world: "the distributive function of the past definite tends to falsify the character of life by investing it with system and rigor, by lending it an air of design and necessity." It is for this reason, Grobe suggests, that many French contemporary novelists have abandoned it in favor of "non-historically oriented verbal styles. . . . For them, the past definite lacks authenticity, it is wanting in existential
force. In this respect, Grobe sees Voltaire as a distant ancestor of Camus, who totally discards the past definite in L'Étranger in which the protagonist's search for an authentic existence is mirrored by his attempt "to find a more authentic verbal aspect." By diverse stylistic devices, the gaze of the stranger too creates an impression of absurdity. Sartre noted that the 18th century also had its "étrangers"—he refers specifically to L'Ingénue, Micromégas and Gulliver's Travels—"qui, transportés dans une civilisation inconnue, percevaient les faits avant d'en saisir le sens." Candide resembles these other protagonists in the sense that he is an innocent who confronts the world itself and the world of men while his mind remains transparent to events but opaque to significance. Then, too, in the case of Candide, the glance of the stranger, virgin and undefined, forms the perspective from which both nature and society are viewed.

Yet, Candide never does grasp "le sens," he perceives only "le non-sens" and this is why the absurd bursts forth from the encounter of Candide and the world. Candide sees the whirlpool of events in which everyone is enmeshed, but he stands aside completely astonished. Voltaire uses repetition and exaggeration to depict the bewilderment of his protagonist. As a result, we find Candide: "toujours étonné," "toujours étonné de tout," "en extase," "étonnait," "étonna," "éperdu et stupéfait," "étonné" "si étourdi et si choqué," "fort étonné," (M. XXI 140, 150, 170, 177, 178, 180,
182, 188, 197, 203, 206).

In the beginning of the tale, Candide believes that he has
the answers to explain the nature of the universe. Thus, he
comments to the Protestant minister in Holland: "Il n'y a point
der effet sans cause... tout est enchaîné nécessairement, et
arrangé pour le mieux" (M. XXI 142). Yet, from the moment that
Candide begins to doubt the "optimistic" explanation until his
final affirmation: "il faut cultiver notre jardin" (M. XXI 217,
218), Voltaire switches from the affirmative to the interrogative
to indicate that Candide has discovered that there are no answers
to the questions which perplex him:

--Ah! meilleur des mondes, où êtes-vous
(M. XXI 141)?
--Si c'est ici le meilleur des mondes possibles,
que sont donc les autres (M. XXI 149)?
--Ah! que dirait maître Pangloss, s'il
voyait comme la pure nature est faite
(M. XXI 171)?
--Quelle est votre idée sur le mal moral
et le mal physique (M. XXI 184)?
--Mais à quelle fin ce monde a-t-il donc
été formé (M. XXI 186)?
--Croyez-vous que les hommes se soient
toujours mutuellement massacrés comme
ils font aujourd'hui (M. XXI 187)?
--Qu'est-ce que ce monde-ci (M. XXI 196)?

Another technique that Voltaire uses to bring forth an
impression of social absurdity is the presentation of the most
inhumane actions as if they were both normal and rational. Many of
these occur during the social games of war and torture which portray
the moral chaos of an absurd society:
Dans ce pays il est bon de tuer de temps en
temps un amiral pour encourager les autres
(M. XXI 197).

quatre soldats, postés vis-à-vis de cet homme,
lui tirèrent chacun trois balles dans le crâne,
le plus paisiblement du monde; et toute l'assem-
blée s'en retourna extrêmement satisfaite
(M. XXI 196).

Others take place during the same games and juxtapose an atrocity
with an element of entertainment value drawn from that atrocity:

Je fus très-bien placée, on servait aux dames
des rafraîchissements entre la messe et
l'exécution (M. XXI 152).

on eut le plaisir de voir le combat tout à
son aise (M. XXI 184-185).

Because it occurs just after Candide and Cacambo descend from
Eldorado where the outstanding impression is one of social
justice and tolerance, the most striking example of this device
takes place when Candide comes upon the Negro of Surinam. Upon
inquiry, Candide learns that the Negro, stretched out on the
ground and lacking his left leg and right hand, is awaiting his
master, one M. Vanderdendur:

--Est-ce M. Vanderdendur, dit Candide, qui
t'a traité ainsi? --Oui, monsieur, dit le
nègre, c'est l'usage. On nous donne un
caleçon de toile pour tout vêtement deux
fois l'année. Quand nous travaillons aux
sucreries, et que la meule nous attrape le
doigt, on nous coupe la main; quand nous
voulons nous enfuir, on nous coupe la
jambe: je me suis trouvé dans les deux
cas. (M. XXI 180)
Finally, we encounter Voltaire's stylistic device to parody the cause and effect supposedly characteristic of our ordered universe. We recall that in *L'Étranger* all cause and effect is stripped from the tale by the suppression of the connective coordinates of causality. Meursault uses temporal coordinates, when he uses any at all, and, as a result, events are presented in a succession but not in a sequence. There is no relation between sentences and this isolation of sentences reflects not only human isolation in an absurd universe, but the lack of order in that universe. In *Candide* an opposite technique achieves the same effect.

On the one hand, as we have noted, there is a great deal of suppression of connective coordinates for various reasons in the tale: to indicate mechanical gestures of the protagonists, to increase the speed of the tale, *et cetera*. Conjunctions, as Leo Spitzer has noted, are rare in Voltaire's work:

> these clumsy and unpoetic signposts to logical connections are usually eschewed by Voltaire, whose elegance of style is due, among other things, to his ability to so order the thoughts expressed that their logical connection is immediately grasped by the reader. 390

And yet in *Candide* there is a barrage of causal connectives which not only derides the "argument from design" and the whole of "optimistic idealism," but scoffs at the idea of cause and effect relationship in the universe. ("Car" appears forty times in the
"parce que," thirteen times; "aussi" in the sense of "par conséquent," four times; "par conséquent," two times; "puisque," eight times; "donc," sixteen times and "pour" used as a causal connective to introduce verb phrases, at least fifty-three times.)

Sometimes these appear isolated in what George Havens aptly terms: "the grammatically logical union of illogical absurdities":

--Monsieur le baron était un des plus puissants seigneurs de la Vestpahlie car son château avait une porte et des fenêtres.  
(M. XXI 138)

--Les nez ont été faits pour porter des lunettes, aussi avons-nous des lunettes.  
(M. XXI 138)

--[Pangloss was] le plus grand philosophe de la province, et par conséquent de toute la terre.  
(M. XXI 139)

Elsewhere they exist in groups, in "reasoned arguments," set forth by Pangloss:

Car, dit-il, tout ceci est ce qu'il y a de mieux; car s'il y a un volcan à Lisbonne, il ne pouvait être ailleurs; car il est impossible que les choses ne soient pas où elles sont; car tout est bon... la liberté peut subsister avec la nécessité absolue; car il était nécessaire que nous fussions libres; car enfin la volonté déterminée...

(M. XXI 148)

No matter how they appear, they always attack the notion of structural cause and effect relationships in a universe given over to
chance. So, just as in *L'Étranger* (ESS, 1194), when causality is introduced into the text, it is to parody cause and effect; when logic is used, it is to satirize logic. In Camus and Voltaire, stylistics are there to nourish cosmology.
CONCLUSION
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Our study has depicted significant philosophical and literary parallels between Voltaire and Camus. Coming out of an age where reason was deemed all powerful in metaphysics and psychology, Voltaire adopted the modest empirical viewpoint and wrote endlessly to indicate that reason would only be efficacious if it were linked to human experience. Camus reached the same views although he came from a heritage that had little faith left in reason.

Both Voltaire and Camus realized that reason would never fathom metaphysics or the problems of evil and human destiny. Nevertheless, they refused to have recourse to the non-material or the transcendent to solve the problem of knowledge, as did Pascal, Rousseau, Kierkegaard, Jaspers and other men they severely criticized. These thinkers had taken the leap of faith which Voltaire and Camus could not do. For them, either reason, grounded in human experience, answered the riddle of human destiny or nothing did. And, as Camus, clearly indicates, nothing did: "La raison est vaine et il n'y a rien au delà de la raison" (ESS. 124).

Due to this paradoxical metaphysical situation, Camus devised a theory of absurdity in Le Mythe de Sisyphe which is fictionally present in L'Étranger. The novel contains the two levels of absurdity already present and portrayed in theoretical detail in Le Mythe: the metaphysical and the social. The hero, Meursault, who resembles in
many ways the hero of *Le Mythe*, can be seen as the *homo absurdus* of *Le Mythe* either from the beginning of the narrative or only at its conclusion. Like the hero of *Le Mythe*, he is a stranger among men because he prefers nature to convention and in the second part of the "novel," he becomes fully cognizant of that alienation.

Unlike the hero of *Le Mythe*, Meursault is not a stranger to the universe even though he is rationally unable to order it, for he is well adapted to the cosmos and never "de trop" before nature. He resembles the hero of *Le Mythe* in that he is a stranger to himself and is also a stranger, to varying degrees, to the reader. He exemplifies "everyman" precisely because of his status as outsider.

Whereas metaphysical absurdity in *Le Mythe* is based upon the notion of divorce and confrontation, this same theme in *L'Etranger* is grounded solely in death which is responsible for the indifference and ultimately the consciousness of the absurd hero. On the level of social absurdity, however, *L'Etranger* recaptures the notion of divorce characteristic of social absurdity in *Le Mythe*, for the absurd here is neither in Meursault nor in society but in their confrontation. Nourishing the theme of absurdity in *L'Etranger*, we observe the network of interacting minor but important themes: habit and fatality on the metaphysical level and play on the social level. The brilliant style of the narrative reinforces the theme of absurdity on both levels.

*L'Etranger* resembles *Le Mythe* once again in that both books
refuse suicide in favor of life. Just as Le Mythe had proscribed the two types of suicide that a knowledge of the absurd might suggest, physical and philosophical, Meursault, "le condamné à mort (qui est) le contraire du suicide" (ESS. 139), rejects physical suicide as well as philosophical suicide that the chaplain suggests to him.392

As Le Mythe depicted, the absurd can be annulled by the destruction of reason, which, in its turn, can be suppressed by either physical or philosophical suicide. As regards philosophical suicide, it is clear that the hero will not capitulate despite the attempts of the chaplain. While Meursault never contemplates physical suicide per se, he does exclaim at a given moment: "Tout le monde sait que la vie ne vaut pas la peine d'être vécue" (T.R.N. 1204). There may seem to be ambivalence here as Meursault underlines the ultimate futility of human existence but his choice is overwhelmingly for life "... à ce moment, ce qui me gênait un peu dans mon raisonnement, c'était ce bond terrible que je sentais en moi à la pensée de vingt ans de vie à venir" (T.R.N. 1204). Later on, too, he tells the chaplain that the only future life he would be interested in, would be "une vie où (il) pourrai[t] (se) souvenir de celle-ci" (T.R.N. 1208). But Meursault believes in no future life—"l'absurde est le contraire de l'espoir" (ESS. 124)—he eschews hope and the future, sticks to his truth and does not despair.
Meursault progresses then—even if only to the reader—from the unreflective habit and the "feeling" of the absurd of the first part to the introspection and the "notion" of the absurd of the second half of the narrative. This is brilliantly portrayed by the paradoxical use of "je," referring to the hero and to the narrator of the tale.

Meursault goes to his death happy—"il faut imaginer Sisyphe heureux" (ESS, 198)—and the novel ends with the recognition that the protagonist is and has been happy. All through the work the intertwining leitmotifs of absurdity and happiness have been present. This dual presence is perhaps best exemplified when Meursault leaves the courtroom after the first day of the trial, hears the cries of the newspaper vendors, views the color of the summer sky and notes:

Le cri des vendeurs de journaux dans l'air déjà détendu, les derniers oiseaux dans le square, l'appel des marchands de san wiches, la plainte des tramways dans les hauts tournants de la ville et cette rumeur du ciel avant que la nuit bascule sur le port, tout cela recompensait pour moi un itinéraire d'aveugle, que je connaissais bien avant d'entrer en prison. Oui, c'était l'heure où, il y avait bien long-temps, je me sentais content. (T.R.N. 1192. Our underlining)

The final accent, after the visit of the chaplain, is placed upon happiness as Meursault exclaims: ". . . J'avais été heureux. . . je l'étais encore" (T.R.N. 1209).
Like Meursault, Candide is a stranger to other men and to himself; unlike Meursault, he is a stranger to the world. **Candide** depicts absurdity at both the social and metaphysical levels and conforms to the notion of divorce and confrontation inherent in the definition of absurdity outlined by Camus in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*. As in *L'Ennemi*, we find a network of thematic and stylistic devices that enforce the impression of absurdity at both levels.

There is much critical commentary as to the precise moment that Meursault becomes aware of the absurd, whether this takes place before the narrative begins or only at the conclusion of the tale. In the case of **Candide**, there is no full consciousness of the absurd until the conclusion of the conte, for **Candide** is a Bildungsroman, "un roman d'apprentissage." **Candide** is led through the world by a series of counselors, Pangloss, "la Vieille," Cacambo and Martin, all of whom introduce him to various interpretations of the universe and life in that universe. But travel and experience teach Candide too— **Candide** is also a picaresque novel of sorts—and his peregrinations help to form his ultimate view of life. At the end of the tale, the student, "qui avait été élevé à ne jamais juger de rien par lui-même" (M. XXI 203), frees himself from the indoctrination of others, rejects the optimism of Pangloss and the pessimism of Martin, thus becoming his own mentor.

When the décor ultimately crumbles and "le 'pourquoi' s'élève" before Candide, we finally witness "le mouvement de la
The conscience" of the protagonist (ESS, 107). Candide breaks the fetters of habit and like Meursault evolves to individual reflection. Surrounded by victims of fixed ideas, Candide allows reality to destroy all a priori systems, and while he had previously been intellectually docile and submissive, he now speaks up and even silences his former mentor. Finding no metaphysical answer to the questions that continue to plague him, he establishes his garden on the concrete philosophy of work hoping to "enrichir l'Ile sans avenir qu'il vient d'aborder" (ESS, 174).

"La Vieille" incarnates the obstinate will to live despite the sufferings which life imposes. In the tale, no one more than she is aware of "le caractère insensé de cette agitation quotidienne et l'inutilité de la souffrance" (ESS, 101). This is why her tenacious will to self-preservation forms such an apt commentary on human nature. Her attitude appears somewhat ambivalent, as does Meursault's 393 for she notes:

Cette faiblesse ridicule (the will to live)
est peut-être un de nos penchant les plus funestes: car y a-t-il rien de plus sot
que de vouloir porter continuellement un
fardeau qu'on veut toujours jeter par
terre? d'avoir son être en horreur et de
tenir à son être? Enfin de caresser le
serpent qui nous dévore, jusqu'à ce qu'il
nous ait mangé le coeur? (M. XXI 162)

Yet, despite the absurdity of human existence and the rampant evil in the universe, her choice is overwhelmingly for life:
j'ai vieilli dans la misère et dans l'opprobre, n'ayant que la moitié d'un derrière, me souvenant toujours que j'étais fille d'un pape; je voulus cent fois me tuer, mais j'aimais encore la vie. (M. XXI 162)

Like the absurd man of *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*: "Par le seul jeu de la conscience, [elle] transforme en règle de vie ce qui était invitation à la mort—et [elle] refuse le suicide" (ESS. 145).³⁹⁴

Whereas "la Vieille" incarnates the refusal to commit physical suicide, Pangloss does in fact commit philosophical suicide. Unlike the philosophers that Camus charges with philosophical suicide in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* who all begin with "une philosophie de la non-signification du monde" and end by finding "un sens et une profondeur" (ESS. 129), Pangloss starts with a philosophy of the "toute signification du monde" and refuses to relinquish that position even though he learns that it is false. Only a desire to remain consistent prevents "le docteur borgne" from abandoning his optimistic system:

Je suis toujours de mon premier sentiment, répondit Pangloss, car enfin je suis philosophe: il ne convient pas de me dédire. (M. XXI 213)

At the very end of the tale, Pangloss confesses that: "il avait toujours horriblement souffert; mais ayant soutenu une fois que tout allait à merveille, il le soutenait toujours, et n'en croyait rien" (M. XXI 215). Pangloss sacrifices his intellect and voluntarily
remains a prisoner of his system. Once the absurd appears on the horizon, as *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* tells us, only two one-way streets open up: "le retour inconscient dans la chaîne" (the path of Pangloss) or "l'éveil définitif" (the way of Candide) (*ESS*, 106).

Both forms of suicide surrender to the absurd and destroy the tool that formulated the absurd truth, human reason. For this, they are both condemned. This stoic attitude of Camus and Voltaire makes the very act of living lucidly a form of active revolt.

The ending of *Candide*, as René Pomeau observes, is less pessimistic than that of *Zadig*. Voltaire has traveled a long way since 1747; the sketchy and enigmatic "Mais" of *Zadig* is replaced by a form of revolt, delineated at least on the symbolic level. Despite, or perhaps because of, the recurring circle of absurdity in the tale, the conclusion betrays a slight linear progression—making the form of the entire work into an ellipse—which distinguishes the resounding: "il faut cultiver notre jardin" from both the "Eh bien! continuons" of *Huiss Clos* and the "Allons-y" of *En Attendant Godot*. In the latter two works which artistically form a perfect circle, it is a question of continuation, whereas in *Candide*, in true Bildungsroman fashion, it is a matter of recommencement from a new vantage point.

The absurd will never dissipate—the awakening, as Camus points out, is definitive—but progress can be made within the absurd. Here we encounter a striking difference between *L'Etranger*
and **Candide**, for Candide has gone far beyond Meursault by the end of the tale. In fact, he has progressed all the way into the second stage of Camus' writing: that of collective revolt. Candide is much closer, at the end of the tale, to Rieux of *La Peste* than he is to Meursault. While Meursault remains "solitaire" and practices the quantitative ethic, Candide is now "solidaire" and a practitioner of the qualitative ethic. Nor will alienation of the individual ever disappear, but there is a definite coming together, a combining of forces which symbolize human fraternity in a universe hostile to man.

Candide's garden stresses positive activity, work, the concept of limits--each worker performs an individual function--and solidarity. All attempts to explain man's situation have proven to be vain--the chaos of the world is destined to remain impervious to human reason--yet man must learn how to live in that situation. Since the gods care little for man, he must care for himself and other men. His task is to fathom the human sphere, to eradicate evil in the garden, to pull the noxious weeds so that others may grow. Candide has learned that man is his only salvation, and he turns to him, away from the skies, in an effort to eke out that small portion of happiness that may be his own.

**Candide** is an absurd work, as was *L'Étranger*, for it follows the principles of the absurd as Camus outlined them in *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*: divorce and revolt are illustrated and no hope is evoked (**ESS**, 179). On the practical level, Candide has finally
abandoned the hope he clung to so tenaciously throughout the
narrative in his quest for the ideal woman and the ideally structured
world. On the metaphysical level, no hope of another life of any
type is evoked. Purged of all hope, Candide settles down to
actively work in the present and, as Camus points out in Le Mythe:
"l'absence totale d'espoir n'a rien à voir avec le désespoir"
(ESS. 121). The garden suggests the changing seasons which introduce
the role of the cosmos and, from this angle, Candide's work parallels
that of Sisyphus, in that it is "un travail inutile et sans espoir"
(ESS. 195), for man will ultimately be destroyed by the forces of
that universe which he surpasses in both awareness and moral
dignity. On the other hand, planting in the garden suggest a
terrestrial harvest; with solidarity and tolerance man can ameliorate
his situation and achieve a limited amount of happiness.

The attitude of "La Vieille" toward life incarnates the
Camusian notion that "Le bonheur et l'absurde sont deux fils de
la même terre. Ils sont inséparables" (ESS. 197). Voltaire maintains
the absurd paradox, proclaiming the absurd on the one hand and elevating
life on the other. The positive and negative poles of human
existence are thus present in the tale, fulfilling Camus' dictum
that "Le créateur absurde a une double tâche: il doit maintenir
sa pensée 'négative' d'un côté et exalter la vie de l'autre" (ESS.
179).
NOTES

Introduction:


4. Another example of the diachronic/synchronic approach in the comparison of two literary figures separated historically by even more than two centuries is that of Maurice Lecuyer in his *Balzac and Rabelais*. Here the autonomous fictive universes of Balzac and Rabelais are analyzed synchronically but there is an effort on the part of the author to compare these works "en fonction de leur époque et de leur société." He establishes a spiritual relationship between the two periods and notes certain "rapports entre la Renaissance et le début de l'ère scientifique, entre l'humanisme et le romantisme, tous les deux mouvements de libération." Maurice Lecuyer, *Balzac et Rabelais* (Paris: Société d'Édition "Les Belles Lettres," 1956), pp. 207, 19.


Chapter I:

7 Ibid., p. 76.

8 Ibid., p. 80.


11 Ibid.


19. Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenement*, p. IX.


33. Voltaire, Les Eléments de la philosophie de Newton, Oeuvres Complètes de Voltaire (Paris: Garnier Frères, Libraires-Éditeurs, 1883), XXII, 440. The Moland edition will be systematically employed henceforth and the notes will be inserted parenthetically in the text as follows: M. Vol. No., Page No. For the correspondence, however, the newer and more complete edition of Theodore Besterman will be used (Genève, Institut et Musée Voltaire, 1953-1966). These notes, too, will be inserted parenthetically in the text as follows: Best. Letter Number.

34. See, for example, M. XVII, 56 where Voltaire lists 27 "errors" in Cartesian philosophy.


37. Ibid., p. 756.

treatment of the question, see Ira Wade's *The Intellectual Development of Voltaire*, pp. 651-693.

39 In addition, Leibniz is very often alluded to in the Correspondence, particularly during the period 1736-1760. In this respect, refer to the comments of W. H. Barber, p. 174.

40 W. H. Barber, pp. XI and 174.

41 Voltaire notes in his correspondence, as early as February 23rd, 1740 that Mme. du Châtelet "abrège tout Voltaire: c'est mettre l'univers en petit" (Best. 2044). In March of the same year, Mme. du Châtelet forwards an "abrégé précieux" to Frederick who notes that "Il fallait à notre didactique et pesant philosophe allemand le secours d'un génie vif et éclairé comme le vôtre, pour abréger l'ennui de ses répétitions et pour rendre agréable son extrême sécheresse" (Best. 2056). Mme du Châtelet and Voltaire were not in agreement as to the value of Wolff and Leibniz, for whereas Mme. du Châtelet wrote her *Institutions* in accord with Wolff's philosophy, Voltaire refuted him, along with his mentor Leibniz, on numerous occasions. In this respect see Best. Nos. 1146, 1329 and 1371.

42 Consult, for example, *Le Temple de Goût* (M. VIII, 566-67), *Discours en vers sur l'Homme* (M. IX 415), *Poème sur la loi naturelle* (M. IX 454) and *Le Siècle de Louis XIV* (M. XIV 563-64).


44 W. H. Barber, p. 194.


46 W. H. Barber, pp. 215-16.
47 Richard Brooks, p. 78.

48 He writes, for example, in Les Éléments de la philosophie de Newton, M., XXII, p. 425: "Si selon Leibnitz rien ne se fait sans une raison suffisante, prise au fond des choses, quelle raison a eue Dieu d'unir ensemble deux êtres incommensurables, deux êtres aussi hétérogènes, aussi infiniment différents que l'âme et le corps et dont l'un n'influe en rien sur l'autre?"

49 Richard Brooks, p. 82.

50 In this respect, consult W. H. Barber, p. 221.


52 Ibid., p. 680.

53 Ibid., p. 653.

54 W. H. Barber, p. 180.


56 Ibid., pp. 808-809.


Consult, for example, on this point *Le Philosophe ignorant* (M. XXVI, 65-69), *Lettres à S. A. Mgr. le prince de ...* (M. XXVI, 523-34), *Homélies prononcées à Londres* (M. XXVI 317), and *Le Système vraisemblable* (M. XXXI 167).

Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of the Enlightenment*, p. 98.


René Descartes, *Oeuvres et Lettres de Descartes* (Paris: Gallimard - Edition de la Pléiade -, 1952), p. 721. In all fairness to Descartes, we should note that these views are somewhat modified in *The Meditations*.


Norman Torrey, "Voltaire," p. 263.


See Oscar Haac, p. 808 where this idea is developed and illuminating remarks concerning Voltaire's cosmological innovations suggested.


70 John Herman Randall and Justus Buchler, p. 84.


72 Oscar Haac, p. 804.


Chapter II:


78 Henri Peyre, French Novelists of Today (New York: Oxford
Peyre's remark needs clarification. According to Marx, one must understand the real world before one can change it; one must, for example, understand the material forces which are the sole determinants of social relations and class structure. Furthermore, revolution is predicated upon a projection of the ultimate end of history. Marx asserts that the achievement of Utopia is historically inevitable and only because man knows the process of history is he justified in taking whatever measures are necessary to accelerate the achievement of that end. In a strictly philosophical context, however, Peyre's remark is justified. Peyre is probably alluding to the following extract from Marx's Theses on Feuerbach, ed. Robert Tucker, The Marx-Engels Reader (New York: W. W. Norton Co., Inc., 1972), p. 109: "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways, the point, however, is to change it." This can be construed to mean that it is "easier" to change the world than to comprehend the nature of the universe but the statement more clearly connotes that for Marx interpreting the world metaphysically is meaningless, what counts is changing it socially. Many other statements of Marx about philosophy would substantiate this view. In this respect, see in particular in the Karl Marx Dictionary, ed. Morris Stockhammer (New York: Philosophical Library, 1965), the following entries: Feuerbach (p. 89), Metaphysics (p. 160) and above all the entries under Philosophy (pp. 182-185). Marx, a materialist, would be essentially hostile to the rationalist a priori approach, but, more fundamentally still is the fact that, for all practical purposes, Marx considered metaphysics itself, from any approach, to be irrelevant.


80 Ibid., p. 78.

81 Karl Marx, Karl Marx Dictionary, p. 11.

82 André Malraux, La Tentation de l'Occident, p. 174.

Albert Camus, *Essais* (Paris: Gallimard - Bibliothèque de la Pléiade - 1965), p. 426. This edition and the accompanying volume of Camus' works: *Théâtre, Récits, Nouvelles* (Paris: Gallimard - Bibliothèque de la Pléiade - 1962) will be used throughout this study and the notes drawn from these texts will henceforth be inserted parenthetically in our text with the appropriate abbreviation (either *ESS.* or *T.R.N.* ) and the page number. As for Camus' notebooks which are not included in the Pléiade edition, reference will be made to *Carnets* (Paris: Gallimard, 1962). Notes taken from these two volumes will also be inserted parenthetically in our text with the appropriate abbreviation (*CAR. I* or *CAR. II*) and page number.


Ibid., p. 49.

Ibid.


Chapter III:


96. Mina Waterman, p. 47.

97. Blaise Pascal, p. 524.

98. Ira Wade notes, *The Intellectual Development of Voltaire*, p. 585, that Voltaire never refers to Pascal's famous remark that: "Le coeur a ses raisons que la raison ne connaît pas" and concludes that: "It is doubtful if he could by temperament understand the value of intuition."


100. Blaise Pascal, p. 524.


103. Voltaire's general criticism of Rousseau can be divided into three chronological stages. The first stage spans the years
1755 to 1759 and while the criticism leveled at Rousseau is admittedly significant, it can be neatly distinguished by a facetiousness of tone. Particularly significant during this period would be Voltaire's famous letter of August 30, 1755 which refers to Rousseau's Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité and Candide (1759) which mocks optimism and "l'état de la pure nature" (M. XXI 171). One might even see in the slamming of the door by the derviche in the face of Pangloss (M. XXI 216) an allusion to Voltaire's refusal to respond to Rousseau's Lettre sur la Providence of 1756. The second period extends from 1760 to 1763 and although the critique still maintains the playful time of the earlier period, it shows flashes of deeper personal satire. In this respect, Voltaire's Correspondence should be consulted as well as Les Lettres sur la Nouvelle Héloïse (1761). The final stage begins in 1764; here the attack is open, forceful, even vicious; Voltaire's "juste colère" seem to know no bounds. Essential to this period would be the vindictive Sentiment des Citoyens (1764) and the Correspondence where every third letter between 1764 and 1766 refers in pejorative terms to Rousseau, to his inordinate pride, his deliberate falsehoods, the contradiction between his life and his works and to his madness. There are over 30 references to his madness between No. 10924 and No. 15545 in the Besterman edition.


106 Ibid.


109 Ibid.

110 See R. A. Leigh's "From the Inégalité to Candide: Notes
on a desultory dialogue between Rousseau and Voltaire (1755-1759)" in *The Age of Enlightenment*. Studies presented to Theodore Besterman (London: Oliver & Boyd, 1967), pp. 66-92 where the author distinguishes Rousseau's brand of optimism from the "lunatic fringe of optimism," the ostrich-like optimists who buried their heads in post-Leibnizian or Popean sands in order to see or hear no evil."

111 Raymond Giraud, "Rousseau's Happiness: Triumph or Tragedy," *Yale French Studies* [No. 28], p. 75.

112 See René Pomeau's *Le Religion de Voltaire*, pp. 348-49 and 467-68 where this persistent theme is discussed.


115 Many modern critics take a completely different view of Rousseau. Starting with Derathé's *Le rationalisme de Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1948), the attempt is made to show the rational basis of Rousseau's thought. Derathé writes that "Rousseau malgré l'appel au sentiment intérieur, reste rationaliste" (p. 175). And in his conclusion he places Rousseau in the French mainstream of rationalist thought. Ernest Cassirer, in his *Question of Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1954), sees more ambiguity than Derathé and stresses the role of intuition in Rousseau's thought but holds nonetheless that Rousseau "this supposed 'irrationalist' ended up with the most resolute belief in reason" (p. 82). Peter Gay, who wrote the introduction to the English translation of Cassirer's book, agrees too with these views as does Jean Starobinski who writes in *Jean-Jacques Rousseau, la transparence et l'obstacle* (Paris: 1957), "reason appears dangerous to Rousseau only insofar as it claims to grasp the truth in a non-immediate way" (p. 50). Lester Crocker's study of this question is the most penetrating. It appears in *Nature and Culture*. Crocker points out the contradiction between theory and practice in the Rousseauistic epistemology and notes that the conscience, theoretically there to love the good, actually does discriminate and find the good, nullifying the statement in *La Profession de foi du vicaire savoyard* where Rousseau writes that the acts of conscience are not judgments but feelings (pp. 173-174).
Crocker admits too that "By and large, Rousseau's subjective ethics is one of sensibility and not of reason" (pp. 175-176). He offers a key to Rousseau's thought in the tension that he finds between two polarities which "may be diversely envisaged as nature and culture, independence and dependence, the existentially concrete and the abstract. Now one pole achieves ascendancy, now the other (with the dominant intellectual direction toward the second, the dominant emotional direction toward the first). At times there is an effort to conciliate" (p. 151).


117 Irving Babbitt, pp. 137, 145.


119 John Herman Randall and Justus Buchler, p. 83.

120 Denis Diderot and Jean D'Alembert, Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire Raisonné Des Sciences, Des Arts et Des Métiers (Paris: Briasson, David, Le Breton, Durand, 1751), XIII, 774.

121 Ibid.

122 Emmanuel Berl, in his Préface des Mélanges de Voltaire, p. xxx.


126 Ian Alexander, p. 47.


130 Ira Wade, The Intellectual Development of Voltaire, p. 769.


132 René Pomeau, La Religion de Voltaire, p. 250.


134 Denis Diderot and Jean D'Alembert, I, XLVIII.


136 In this respect, see George Haven's "Voltaire's Pessimistic Revision of the Conclusion of his Poème sur le Désastre de Lisbonne": Modern Language Notes (XLIV, 1929); pp. 489-492.


Despite Voltaire's praise of the Quakers, however, it should be noted that they are not as advanced as the Sociniens who believe only in God and the truth of Christianity while they deny the divinity of Christ and accept only what is reasonable.

See Nouvelles Considérations sur l'histoire (M. XVI 139), as well as the Discours sur l'Histoire de Charles XII. This is not the only reason why Voltaire dealt with modern history. The invention of printing, he notes elsewhere, "commence à la (l'histoire) rendre moins incertaine" (M. XVI, 136).

John Cruickshank, pp. 50-51.

Ibid., p. 50.

Ibid., p. 51.

Henri Peyre, French Novelists of Today, p. 328, and Roger Quillot - T.R.N. 1978- inform us that Paneloux's attitude as it defines itself in his first sermon was quite widespread in France during the Occupation and frequently preached at mass. Theodore Besterman, Richard Brooks and Ira Wade speak about the same phenomenon at the time of the Lisbon disaster. Brooks quotes a pastor named Elie Bertrand of the French Church in Berne, Switzerland: "The answer to the question: 'Why has God done this to this great city?' must be to show the need of our becoming better Christians; man must have greater charity, faith, meekness and remorse" (Richard Brooks, pp. 91-92).


150. David Sprintzen, pp. 5, 8.

151. Germaine Brée, p. 46.


Chapter IV:


156. Ibid., p. 48. A check of Les Carnets reveals that Camus finished *L'Etranger* in May of 1940 (CAR. I, 215) and the first part
of Le Mythe in September of the same year (CAR. I, 216), Le Mythe finally being completed on February 21, 1941 (CAR. I, 224). Both works were published by Gallimard in 1942, L'Étranger in July, Le Mythe in December.


162 Germaine Brée, p. 114.

163 Roger Quilliot, rev. of Narrateur et Narration dans L'Étranger d'Albert Camus, by Brian Fitch, La Revue des Lettres modernes (Nos. 212--16, 1969, 5), p. 186. One such critic, not discussed in our text, is Robert Champigny who wrote A Pagan Hero "to react against a conception of Meursault which was still current at the time...a likely personification of the ideas on the absurd formulated in Le Mythe de Sisyphe." (Robert Champigny, A Pagan Hero [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1969], p. 109).


165 Ibid.


168 Ibid., p. 150.


172 Jean-Paul Sartre, p. 42.


174 Another example of this type of reaction appears in Part II when Meursault, leaving the chamber of the magistrate, reflects: "En sortant, j'allais même lui tendre la main, mais je me suis souvenu à temps que j'avais tué un homme" (T.R.N. 1169).


176 Thomas Hanna, p. 53.

177 Robert Champigny, p. 10.
The question of guilt in the novel has received a great deal of attention from the critics. At one extreme is Murray Krieger who states unequivocally that: "...for Camus, there is no guilt" (Murray Krieger, 151). Other critics, however, stress, to varying degrees, the guilt of the protagonist. David Sprintzen asserts that, in Camus' view, the way of life of Meursault in the first part: "leaves something to be desired from the point of view of reflective man" (David Sprintzen, p. 23). Philip Thody notes that: "ce martyr de la vérité (Meursault) ment à tort et à travers, non pas pour sauver un 'copain,' mais pour faciliter la persécution d'une indigène qui pourrait bien être innocent" (Philip Thody, "Meursault et la critique," p. 15). Once more, Carina Gadourek affirms: "S'il ne regrette pas son acte, Meursault a pourtant conscience d'avoir commis une erreur, une faute qui consiste en la destruction de l'équilibre sur la plage" (Carina Gadourek, p. 84). Pierre Castex sees in the same assertion of Meursault dealing with the destruction of "l'équilibre du jour," an exemplification of his "amoralisme pâien," for Meursault never seems to realize that he took the life of a man (Pierre Castex, p. 88). This brings to mind the remarks of Germaine Brée: "Meursault's 'crime' recalls that of Coleridge's Ancient Mariner. Like the ancient mariner, Meursault has transgressed a natural, not a human law" (Germaine Brée, p. 115). She feels, however, that ultimately Meursault, like the ancient mariner, attains: "awareness of the beauty and, therefore, the sacredness of all living things" (Ibid.). Miss Brée is severe toward Meursault, whom she feels, out of indifference, "linked forces with violence and death" and acted "in a human situation as though human relationships do not exist" (Ibid., pp. 112, 117). Finally, in a very penetrating and original article, C. Roland Wagner maintains that where Camus intended to create "a sort of stoical hero of the pleasure principle," he in fact presents "a Kafkaesque victim of the forces of superego and id" (C. Roland Wagner, "The Silence of the Stranger," Modern Fiction Studies [Vol. XVI, No. 1, Spring 1970], p. 31). Wagner uses the psycho-analytical approach to prove that: "the work itself denies Camus' own conception of his hero as the innocent victim of society's aggression" (Ibid., p. 34). He interprets Meursault's indifference as a defense mechanism against maternal rejection, his part in the escape with Raymond's mistress as unconscious hostility coupled with a very definite desire to punish her. He also emphasizes Meursault's guilt-feelings for having sent his mother to the old age home and ultimately for her death. He explains Meursault's behavior with the law and at the trial as a hidden quest for punishment, seen in his silence, along with masochistic satisfaction with his fate culminating with a "leap of
death" -- "Meur" ... "Sault" -- into the maternal sea (Ibid., p. 39). Having rejected his mother, the protagonist contents himself now by being rejected by his fellow man, that rejection being finalized by the "cres de haine" that he desires at his execution, "pour que tout soit consommé."

180 Carina Gadourek, p. 84, notes that for Camus regret is "cette autre forme de l'espoir."

181 M. G. Barrier, L'art du récit dans l'Étranger d'Albert Camus (Paris: Nizet, 1962), p. 40. The device of objective detachment is also used in the novel for comic effect. At times when his life is virtually at stake, Meursault remains totally detached and able to analyze his situation as if he were not personally involved. Before the magistrate, who is waving a crucifix in his face, Meursault notes: "il me faisait un peu peur. Je reconnaissais en même temps que c'était ridicule parce que, après tout, c'était moi le criminal" (T.R.N. 1173). Once more, the morning of his trial, he coolly proclaims: "Et même, dans un sens, cela m'intéressait de voir un procès. Je n'en avais jamais eu l'occasion dans ma vie" (T.R.N. 1182). This is just one example of the subtle humor of L'Étranger where one finds a good deal of irony as well as other comic effects resulting from the repeated use of the first person and the passé composé. Camus noted in 1959 that humor was the aspect of his work that the critics had most neglected (ESS. 1922).

182 Brian Fitch, Narrateur et Narration dans l'Étranger d'Albert Camus, Archives des Lettres Modernes [1960, (6), 34], p. 41.

183 Robert Champigny, p. 15.

184 Serge Doubrovsky holds a contrary view. He notes in "The Ethics of Albert Camus" that: "Far from rendering life absurd, death is the element which gives it its full meaning. Life retrieves and reabsorbs death and in its very defeat triumphs, since death which denies life succeeds only in reaffirming life" (Serge Doubrovsky, "The Ethics of Albert Camus," Collection of Critical Essays [Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1962], p. 75). There appears to be something circular in this reasoning. Then, too, Camus himself notes in Le Mythe that death is one way that the
"feeling" of absurdity might be aroused. In addition, the following remark of Camus, made once again in Le Mythe, would seem to negate Doubrovsky's assertion: "L'existence humaine est une parfaite absurdité pour qui n'a pas la foi en l'immortalité" (ESS, 174, 108).


186 David Sprintzen maintains a different view of this relationship: "In a sense, the mechanical woman is his [Meursault's] complete opposite, she seeks to rationalize every moment, every movement, not to waste a move; and she is comical, thereby" (David Sprintzen, p. 121). Robert Champigny's view is more in line with ours: "The interest which this woman seems to take in Meursault can contribute to revealing his persona to him. Meursault is there on stage, but his role is that of a robot. A certain mask is fabricated for him, he is present for the purpose of having a mask affixed to his face, the mask of the guilty, the monster. The way in which this woman has struck him helps him grasp how he appears in the eyes of theatrical society" (Robert Champigny, p. 87).

187 Brian Fitch, Narrateur et Narration dans l'Étranger d'Albert Camus, p. 5.

188 Carina Gadoureka, p. 97.

189 This should not necessarily be interpreted as a negative quality in the protagonist. One recalls Camus' remarks in Le Mythe de Sisyphe: "Un homme est plus un homme par les choses qu'il tait que par celles qu'il dit" (ESS, 164).


Camus had written before the actual composition of *L'Étranger*, once again in *Les Carnets*: "Récit. L'homme qui ne veut pas se justifier. L'idée qu'on se fait de lui, lui est préférée. Il meurt, seul à garder conscience de sa vérité. Vanité de cette consolation" (*T.R.N.* 1906).


Carl Viggani, p. 122.


Ibid., pp. 165, 166, 167.

Murray Krieger, p. 147.

W. D. Redfern, 654.


Ibid., p. 78.
204 Ibid., 76, 77, 78.

205 Ibid., 76.

206 Ibid., p. 78.

207 Ibid., p. 77.

208 Ibid., p. 82.

209 As regards the sacred and the profane, refer to M. Eliade's *Le Sacré et le profane* (Paris: Gallimard, 1965).

210 J. Huizinga, p. 77.


212 J. Huizinga, p. 11.


214 Ibid., 180

215 Ibid.

216 Ibid.
217 Ibid., 182.

218 Ibid.

219 M. G. Barrier, p. 16.

220 Jean-Paul Sartre, p. 56.


222 Ibid.


225 In April of 1937, Camus noted in Carnets: "Récit. L'homme qui ne veut pas se justifier. L'idée qu'on se fait de lui, lui est préférée. Il meurt, seul à garder conscience de sa vérité. Vanité de cette consolation" (T.R.N. 1906).


227 Jean-Paul Sartre, p. 56.

228 Nathalie Sarraute claims that, unlike the heroes ofDos Passos and Steinbeck, who are painted "à distance et du dehors," Meursault is painted "du dedans, par le procédé classique de l'introspection." This is really only true of the second half of the "novel," however. She concludes by stating: "Peut-être


232 Robert Champigny, p. 81.


234 John Cruickshank, p. 160.


236 Brian Fitch, Narrateur et narration dans l'Etranger d'Albert Camus, p. 35.


239 Stephen Ullmann, p. 246.
240 Roland Barthes, p. 63.

241 Nathalie Sarraute, p. 58.

242 W. M. Frohock, pp. 93, 94, 95, 96.

243 W. D. Redfern sees Meursault's "mechanically registering and analytic eye and ear" as "basically a satirical device (which) reduces the activities of others to disconnected jerks, as in cartoons and discloses the nonsense of their utterances." W. D. Redfern, p. 655.

244 Carl Viggiani, p. 124.

245 Jean-Paul Sartre, p. 53.


247 Jean-Paul Sartre, p. 53.

248 Ibid., p. 51.

249 Victor Brombert, "Camus and the novel of the Absurd," Yale French Studies (Vol. No. 1, No. 1, Spring-Summer 1948), p. 120.

250 Jean-Paul Sartre, p. 52.

251 Ibid.


258 Ibid.

259 Ibid.

260 Ibid.

261 In this respect, see Virgil Topazio, pp. 110-124, who puts forth a cogent defense of Voltaire's poetics.


Theodore Besterman, "Voltaire et le désastre de Lisbonne," *Studies in Voltaire and the 18th Century* (II), p. 23. It is interesting to note here that Camus uses the same term to refer to *L'Étranger*. "*L'Étranger* est le point zéro" (T.R.N. 1924) he records in his *Carnets* in 1942.


Virgil Topazio, pp. 17-18.


Ira Wade, *Voltaire and Candide*, p. 296.


William Bottiglia, p. 120.
In addition, the tale by its very nature, short in length, quick in delivery and full of ideas functioned like the dictionary would a few years later: as a philosophical instrument for entertainment and instruction.


277 Ibid., p. 181.

278 Ibid., pp. 170, 200.


284 Ibid., p. 216.

285 Ibid., p. 208.

286 Virgil Topazio, p. 18.

288 According to René Groos, Ibid., 707: "probablement en novembre et décembre 1747 chez la duchesse du Maine." René Pomeau claims that it was written a few months earlier for he refers to this tale as "1'un de ceux que Voltaire lisait à la duchesse du Maine et à sa société pendant l'automne de 1747." René Pomeau, Romans et Contes, p. 93.


290 Ibid.

291 In this respect, Voltaire writes in the preface: "Tout est arrangé, tout est ordonné, sans doute, par la Providence; mais il n'est que trop sensible que tout, depuis longtemps, n'est pas arrangé pour notre bien-être présent" (M. IX 478).

292 René Pomeau, ed., Romans et Contes, p. 159.

293 René Pomeau, Voltaire par lui-même, p. 186.

294 René Pomeau, ed., Romans et Contes, p. 160.

295 Jacques Van der Heuvel, p. 234.

296 René Pomeau, La Religion de Voltaire, p. 308.

297 Theodore Besterman, Voltaire, p. 418.

299 Theodore Besterman, Voltaire, p. 419. He continues by noting: "That is why Voltaire, lest he betray himself, never discussed his stories, and did his best to pretend that they did not exist."

300 René Pomeau, Voltaire par lui-même, p. 20.

301 It should not be implied, of course, that this technique is limited to 18th century literature. Numerous examples can be found in later literature of different countries. The theme and the technique are important in Camus as well as in Melville where it is reversed; a man from society returns to a primitive community and realizes how society has corrupted nature. Melville's early exotic works—Bypee (1846), Omoo (1847) and Mardi (1849) would serve as perfect examples—utilize this technique for philosophical purposes. Then, too, a work as different as Terry Southern's Candy (1958) employs the same method. In fact, Candy, whose name recalls Voltaire's hero of 1759, can be seen, in many ways, as a female Candide.


303 Jacques Van der Heuvel, p. 79.

304 Ibid., p. 101.

305 Robert Mauzi, p. 52.


308. In this respect, René Pomeau notes: "We find here a profoundly anti-Christian philosophy, which refuses to admit that God takes any interest in man. Voltaire, and particularly in this tale of Candide, is moving in the same direction as the whole of Western civilization since the Renaissance, toward the separation of God from man. And Candide makes clear again that this movement releases human activity." René Pomeau, "Providence, Pessimism and Absurdity," Candide—A Norton Critical Edition (New York: Norton, 1966), pp. 140-141.

309. Lester Crocker, An Age of Crisis, p. 473.

310. For this reason, Haydn Mason remarks that "...these contes take on a mythic quality such as Camus himself advocated for the novel and exemplified in his own narrative works." (Haydn T. Mason, "Voltaire and Camus," Romantic Review (LIX, 3, Oct. 1968), p. 205.

311. René Pomeau, in his Candide ou l'optimisme, éd. critique, pp. 70, 72.

312. Ibid., p. 307.

313. Ibid.


317. Lester Crocker, Nature and Culture, p. 502. In this respect, Besterman's final remark on the subject is interesting: "It is my conclusion that Voltaire was at most an agnostic; and were any tough-minded philosopher to maintain that this type of agnosticism is indistinguishable from atheism, I would not be prepared to argue with him." Theodore Besterman, Voltaire, p. 223.

318. In the same manner, one need not be a Christian to believe that the universe is ordered. Peter Gay points this out in his famous refutation of Carl Becker's The Heavenly City; noting that there is "nothing specifically Christian about believing that the universe is a beautifully articulated machine designed by the Supreme Being according to a rational plan." Peter Gay, The Party of Humanity, pp. 195-196.


320. Ira Wade, Voltaire and Candide, p. 265.

321. Sartre indicated very clearly in 1945 that his notion of absurdity differs sharply from that of Camus. Whereas for Camus the absurd arises from the relation between man and the universe—rationality as opposed to irrationality—for Sartre the absurd springs from the contingency of all being, the absurd being, in fact, the unjustifiable, primordial quality of every existent. Christian Grisoli, "Entretien avec J.-P. Sartre," Paru (Dec. 1945), p. 9.

323 René Pomeau indicates that Candide is an anti-Pope for whom "Le raisonnement prend sa source dans notre orgueil" whereas Candide, who "n'a pas d'orgueil," shows that "le raisonnement naît de nos besoins et de notre misère." René Pomeau, Candide, 5d. critique, p. 61.


325 In this respect, the separations, the reunions, the interminable voyages et cetera, which might, at first glance, appear to be only parodies of contemporary picaresque novels—which, of course, they are—or allusions to the commedia dell'arte—which they might possibly be—can be interpreted as constant efforts on the part of the protagonists to attain ultimate permanence in the flux of reality. As regards the notion of discontinuity in Candide, see E. P. Grobe's "Discontinuous Aspect in Voltaire's Candide," Modern Language Notes (May 1967), pp. 334-346. The supreme example of the discontinuity of human existence is death which, despite Pomeau's objection, is a common occurrence in the malefic world of Candide. Grobe very perceptively probes into the notion of discontinuity on the physiological, psychological, ethical and environmental levels, finding the idea of discontinuity to be one of the fundamental themes of Candide.


327 Voltaire's choice of a Germanic setting is not without irony for on the one hand we have the promulgation of the German philosophy of optimistic idealism and on the other the harsh reality of the Seven Years' War.

328 As a Newtonian, as Crocker points out, "Voltaire believed that the universe, from its creation, was arranged, once and for all in an orderly way." Lester Crocker, An Age of Crisis, p. 19. Wade notes that "the magnificent thing about Voltaire's universe was its order." Ira Wade, The Intellectual Development of Voltaire, p. 720. This is, of course, hardly the case in Candide where the only order is constant disorder. In this respect, Wade continues:
"Voltaire's physical world, which was at first so marvelous, so orderly, so legal, became in time more than a little crude, disorderly, and, in many respects, illegal—seen, at any rate, from the human point of view." *Ibid.*, p. 732.

329 Rita Falke explains their presence in Eldorado strictly in terms of physical verisimilitude, noting that: "Candide n'arrive que par hasard en Eldorado, bien qu'il soit nécessaire qu'il y vienne, car c'est là seulement qu'il peut trouver le repos dont il a besoin après tant de péripéties, d'aventures, et de fatigues." Rita Falke, "Eldorado: le meilleur des mondes possibles," Studies in Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century (II, 1956), p. 31. It is true, of course, that Candide and Cacambo happen upon Eldorado but it is not by accident any more than it is by chance that the Eldorado incident appears at the center of the tale. Eldorado is central to the conte because, in order to refute Leibniz and to indicate that ours is not the best of all possible worlds, Voltaire was obliged to create that very world where "tout est bien" and to juxtapose it with a world in which "tout est mal."

330 It seems a bit disconcerting nonetheless that in the midst of this opulence we have servants in abundance.

331 Rita Falke, p. 40.


333 The act of prayer, as Voltaire viewed it, carries with it a loss of human dignity, if not a lessening of human freedom, as the following remark made in Dialogue entre un Brachmane et un Jésuite sur la nécessité et l'enchainement des choses seems to indicate: "Mon père, prier c'est se soumettre" (M. XXIV, 56).


335 William Bottiglia feels that it is clear that for Voltaire "their reasons for leaving are wrong." William Bottiglia, p. 121.
336 Virgil Topazio, p. 40.


338 William Bottiglia, p. 121.

339 Voltaire's imagery does in fact suggest Eden on several occasions during the Eldorado adventure. For this reason, Virgil Topazio's reference to Eldorado as "a parody and caricature of the Garden of Eden and Original Sin" is quite tenable. Virgil Topazio, p. 40.

340 Ludwig Kahn, "Voltaire's Candide and the Problem of Secularization," *Voltaire's Candide and the Critics* (Belmont, California: Wadsworth, 1964), p. 145. William Bottiglia objects to this notion of Kahn, stating that "The truth is that Voltaire has described, not a static, but a dynamic perfection. . . . Its inhabitants obviously can have nothing to pray for, but they do have everything to work for, to live for." William Bottiglia, p. 116.

341 Ludwig Kahn, pp. 146, 147.

342 William Bottiglia, p. 103.

343 The term is Bottiglia's. William Bottiglia, p. 168.

344 The assertion that Martin leans toward Hobbes' notion that the natural state of man is war is based on his statement: "Je n'ai guère vu de ville qui ne désirât la ruine de la ville voisine, point de famille qui ne voulût exterminer quelque autre famille" (M. XXI 184). The fact that Martin is a Manichaean is explicitly stated in the text. For a detailed study of Voltaire and Hobbes, see Leland Thielman's "Voltaire and Hobbism," *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century* (Vol. 10, 1959), pp. 237-258.

346 John Weightman draws out the entire allegory: "Candide is the human soul which, as Simone Weil says, always expects good to be done to it rather than evil. Pangloss is the intelligence, endlessly producing comic verbalizations to explain the inexplicable . . . Cunégone, after playing the part of Eve, becomes the Ideal, for which the human soul is always looking, and Candide goes in quest of it throughout the known world . . . the general lesson to be drawn is that one grows older without the essential mystery ever being solved." Ibid.

347 This is in part the significance of the chapter that deals with the savages, "Les Oreillons." "La Vieille" brings across the same point when she remarks on a different occasion: "Cette cérémonie me paraissait bien étrange; voilà comme on juge de tout quand on n'est pas sorti de son pays" (M. XXI 158).

348 Jean Sareil, Essai sur Candide, p. 89.

349 J. Huizinga, p. 48.

350 Ibid., p. 95.

351 Ibid., pp. 89, 95.

352 Ibid., p. 90.

353 Ibid.

354 Ibid., pp. 100, 101. Another form of announced combat, the duel, was highly ritualistic. Here too many regulations were fixed: the choice of weapons, of course, but also handicaps. Huizinga labels the duel "a symbolical late form of ritual blood-play" where the spilling of the blood and not the killing is what counts. The notion of honor is the key to the duel and if an
individual's honorable qualities are endangered, they "must be asserted and vindicated by agonistic action in public." Inasmuch as "a ritual act will allow of performance by a substitute," the duel was often fought by hired fighters. *Ibid.*, pp. 95, 94, 93. Modern warfare continues the practice of regulated choice of weapons—certain gases are outlawed—and theoretically at least conforms to other rules such as treatment of prisoners and civilians.


362 The analogy of marionettes is not the only analogy suggested by Voltairean critics. Ira Wade speaks of "shadowgraphs"; Gustave Lanson, of "images d'un cinématographe." William Bottiglia, p. 64. William Bottiglia discusses at length the 18th century mechanical amusements (cf. pp. 75-88) and suggests the analogy of the magic lantern: "When they [the characters of *Candide*] are projected in groups or in montage sequences, these homunculi frequently seem like magic-lantern images flicking past to produce effects of staccato, of cumulation, of transience, of rapid review and of flashing vividness, singly or in various combinations." *Ibid.*, p. 85. Ira Wade too speaks of Voltaire as "the perfect 'Lanternier', the magnificent conversationalist turning magic lantern figures into portrayals of himself through the ready use of wit and the precise but graceful arrangement of form." Ira Wade, *Voltaire and Candide*, p. 306. Wade's remark brings to mind and justifies Émile Faguet's

363 William Bottiglia, p. 52.


365 Voltaire's *Correspondence* too is replete with allusions of the same nature. On the second of January 1748, Voltaire writes: "Je ne vis point comme je voudrais vivre. Mais quel est l'homme qui fait son destin? Nous sommes, dans cette vie des marionnettes que Brioché mène et conduit sans qu'elles s'en doutent." (Best. 3221). Again on March 25, 1755, he notes: "Je vivrai et je mourrai en paix, s'il plaît à la destinée la souveraine de ce monde. Car j'en reviens toujours là. C'est elle qui fait tout, et nous ne sommes que ses marionnettes." (Best. 5559) In addition, he frequently refers to men as clocks (Best. 5209), and as machines wound up to run for only a certain period of time. (Best. 3349)


368 Virgil Topazio, p. 40.

369 Another more comical illustration of Voltaire's dichotomy between "free acts" and "free will" occurs when Candide is about to be punished for desertion: "On lui demanda juridiquement ce qu'il aimait le mieux d'être fustigé trente-six fois par tout le régiment, ou de recevoir à la fois douze balles de plomb dans la cervelle. Il eut beau dire que les volontés sont libres, et qu'il ne voulait ni l'un ni l'autre il fallut faire un choix: il se détermine, en vertu du don de Dieu qu'on nomme liberté, à passer trente-six fois par les baguettes" (M. XXI 141).
370. Voltaire, Notebooks I, pp. 519-520. There are many other images in Voltaire's work, like the following, which depict man as an insignificant creature, entirely subjected to the whim of destiny: "Vous n'avez qu'à regarder une girouette; elle tourne tantôt au doux souffle du zéphyr, tantôt au vent violent du nord: voilà l'homme" (M. XXV 272).

372. As late as 1774, Voltaire still metaphorically presents the human condition in terms of prison and execution which recall the symbolism of L'Étranger: "Nous sommes tous, dans ce monde, comme des prisonniers dans la petite cour d'une prison; chacun attend son tour d'être pendu, sans en savoir l'heure; et quand cette heure vient, il se trouve qu'on a très inutilement vécu. Toutes les réflexions sont vaines, tous les raisonnements sur la nécessité et sur la misère humaine ne sont que des paroles perdues" (Best. 18008). Very frequently the metaphor is expressed in animal imagery, often of an extremely denigrating nature: "des fourmis qu'on écrase sans cesse" (M. VII 213); "petits animaux à deux pieds et à deux mains comme les singes, moins agiles qu'eux, aussi comiques" (Best. 11045); "misérables vers de terre, appelés hommes" (M. XIX 267). Other references maintain the animal imagery and the execution which is now the slaughter: "nous sommes des moutons à qui jamais le boucher ne dit quand il les tuera" (Best. 1138); "Nous sommes dans ce monde sous la direction d'une puissance aussi invisible que forte à peu près comme des poulets qu'on a mis en mue pour un certain temps, pour les mettre à la broche ensuite et qui ne comprendront jamais par quel caprice le cuisinier les fait ainsi encager. Je parie que si ces poulets raisonnent et font un système sur leur cage, aucun ne devinera jamais que c'est pour être mangés qu'on les a mis là" (Best. 1491).


374. After the initial "coup de pied dans le derrière" (M. XXI 139) of Chapter 1, we find the "coup de pied" repeated twice in Chapter 4, twice in Chapter 7, once in Chapter 24 and once in the final chapter. In addition, we have the "coup de baton" mentioned three times in Chapter 2 and the following phrases that insist on the
same rhythmical leitmotif: "fustigé trente-six fois par le régiment," "trente-six fois par les baguettes," "quatre mille coups de baguette" (M. XXI 141), and "passer par les baguettes" (M. XXI 215). In the sixth chapter, we find the word "fessé" five times (M. XXI 149, 152, 154), "fessé en cadence" (M. XXI 149), "fessait" (M. XXI 153), and "coups de pied" (M. XXI 151).

375 Jacques Van der Heuvel, p. 257.

376 Jean Sareil, Essai sur Candide, p. 84.

377 Jean-Paul Sartre, p. 56.

378 Ibid.

379 William Bottiglia, p. 59.


386 Ibid.

387 Ibid.

388 Ibid.

389 Jean-Paul Sartre, p. 52.


Conclusion:

392 Roger Quilliot, ed., ESS. 1412 proports that Camus himself might have toyed with the idea of suicide at a time when both L'Etranger and Le Mythe de Sisyphe were forming in his mind. In this respect, he writes: "En 1936 et 1937, écarté par la maladie des objectifs qu'il avait choisis, roué à la routine des besognes alimentaires, déçu dans ses adhésions politiques, meurtri par son échec conjugal, Camus a pu être frôlé par la tentation du suicide."

393 Meursault notes, for example, "Tout le monde sait que la vie ne vaut pas la peine d'être vécue" (T.R.N. 1204), but his choice, like that of "la Vieille," is overwhelming for life. In this respect, he mentions: "ce bon terrible qu'(il) sentait en (lui) à la pensée de vingt ans de vie à venir" (T.R.N. 1204). He later tells the chaplain that the only future life he would want is "une vie où (il) pourrai(t) (se) souvenir de celle-ci" (T.R.N. 1208).
Ira Wade feels that Voltaire "experienced a Hamletian episode" but came through it "determined not to commit suicide, but to live." Ira Wade, *Voltaire and Candide*, pp. 278-279. His view is based on an interpretation of Voltaire's *Ode sur la mort de la Princesse de Bareith*. As the remark of "la Vieille" indicates--"J'ai vu... un nombre prodigieux de personnes qui avaient leur existence en exécration; mais je n'en ai vu que douze qui aient mis volontairement fin à leur misère" (M. XXI 162) --Voltaire did not believe that suicide would reach epidemic proportions. Yet he wrote often about suicide. See in particular: *Les Lettres philosophiques* (25th letter, XXX) where he defends Montaigne against Pascal on the question of voluntary homicide (M. XXII, 242); his letter to Mme. du Deffand (Best. 5059); *Homélies prononcées à Londres* (M. XXVI, 318) and *Commentaire sur le Livre des délits et des peines* (M. XXV, 567-569). In addition, refer to the fifth article of *Prix de la justice et de l'humanité* (M. XXX, 542), (M. XVIII, 89) and (M XX, 444). For a further study of the question, see René Pomeau's "En marge des *Lettres philosophiques*; Un essai de Voltaire sur le suicide," *Revue des sciences humaines* (juillet-septembre, 1954), pp. 285-294 and Lester Crocker's "The Discussion of Suicide in the 18th Century," *Journal of the History of Ideas* (XIII, 1952), pp. 47-72.

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