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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Maria Eugene Oakberg entitled "Nikos Kazantzakis and Albert Camus." I recommend that it be accepted for nine quarter hours of credit in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in French.

Major Professor

We have read this thesis
and recommend its acceptance:

Accepted for the Council:

Vice Chancellor for
Graduate Studies and Research

NIKOS KAZANTZAKIS AND ALBERT CAMUS

A Thesis

Presented to

the Graduate Council of

The University of Tennessee

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

---

by

Maria Eugene Oakberg

August 1973

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I would also like to thank my friend Paul Merchant for his translation of Kazantzakis' credo. All English translations of Camus' quotations are from publications listed in the bibliography at the end of this thesis.

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ABSTRACT

It is not without apprehension that I approach the work of two of the greatest writers of our century, Nikos Kazantzakis and Albert Camus. I chose these two writers as the subject of my thesis because I was deeply moved by their never-ending struggle to achieve happiness in their terrestrial existence. To me these two artists--for they are great artists--are superhuman figures, who tried to reach the unreachable, to bear witness to the anguished cry of man, to defy God and become free.

The purpose of this thesis is to follow Kazantzakis and Camus on their roads to freedom, in a world without a master. We shall see how two individualists--two strangers, defeated despair, conquered fear and hope, suffered in searching for the truth, became free and ascended, reaching the summit of their duty.

Odysseus, Alexis Zorbas, Captain Michales, Sisyphus, Meursault and Dr. Rieux will be the focus of this study because they reflect the deepest needs of the two authors, they express their very soul, and they finally reach the ultimate conclusion: that the duty of man is to find a meaning in his life, to struggle to

conquer fear and hope, to put death in chains and become the master of himself.

In this study we shall also see how Nature, and especially the striking Mediterranean landscape with its mystic archipelago, have influenced the heart and the spirit of both men in the most sensuous manner. Earth, sky and man become one in a divine rhythm, in what both Kazantzakis and Camus call harmony.

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INTRODUCTION

It is very important for the reader of Kazantzakis and Camus to understand how much the striking Mediterranean landscape has influenced their artistic natures. They both started their intellectual Odyssey from the sea, and it was to the sea that they always returned.

Nikos Kazantzakis was born in Crete, an island of great physical beauty and history, lying in the midst of three continents: Europe, Africa and Asia. In the village of Megalo Kastro he learned, while still very young, that the sea always wrestled with devils and angels, just like a human soul. The sea seemed to him the doorway to freedom, and like Odysseus, he set forth on his long voyages to discover the secret of God, the position of man in the universe and the relationship of man to man. Similar to Camus, he felt constantly threatened by the fear of death, by the absurd limits of man and by despair. It was necessary for him to flee. Kazantzakis calls his flight "ascent."

> "Give me a command, beloved Grandfather," he cried.
> "Reach what you can, my child."
> "Grandfather," he called more loudly, "give me a more difficult, more Cretan command."
> "Reach what you cannot!"[1]

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[1]Nikos Kazantzakis, Report to Greco, trans. P. A. Bien (New York, 1971), p. 16.

And the battle began. A Cretan once said to him that when he appeared before the heavenly gates and they failed to open, he should not take hold of the knocker to knock. He should unhitch the musket from his shoulder and fire.

> "Do you actually believe God will be frightened into opening the gates?" cried Kazantzakis astonished. "No, lad," said the Cretan. "He won't be frightened. But he'll open them because he'll realize you are returning from battle."[2]

In the same way the heavenly gates would open for Camus, for he also was a great warrior. He fought against God, against death, against human injustice, against the absurd position of man, and I like to think that he died as a happy man.

Albert Camus was born in Algeria, whose limitless sky, sea and barren land were transformed into melody in his lyrical essays:

> J'ai toujours eu l'impression de vivre en haute mer, menacé, au coeur d'un bonheur royal.[3]
>
> I have always felt I lived on the high seas, threatened at the heart of a royal happiness.

The enchanting Algerian landscape was definitely the source which nourished Camus throughout his lifetime. He lived his childhood in poverty, but it was a poverty filled with sunshine. He always said that in Africa the

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[2] Ibid., p. 293.

[3] Albert Camus, "La mer au plus près," Noces suivi de L'été (Gallimard, 1959), p. 190.

sea and sun cost nothing. His people, who did not even know how to write, taught him the most valuable and enduring lessons by their silence, their reserve and their natural sober pride. It was poverty in the appalling slums of cities, an ugly poverty without hope or sky that Camus fought against.

Similar to Kazantzakis, Camus felt a great responsibility to cling to the endless task of his duty as a man. He explains:

> Notre tâche d'homme est de trouver les quelques formules qui apaiseront l'angoisse infinie des âmes libres. . . . Naturellement, c'est une tâche surhumaine. Mais on appelle surhumaines les tâches que les hommes mettent longtemps à accomplir, voilà tout.[4]
>
> Our task is to find the few principles that will calm the infinite anguish of free souls. . . . Naturally, it is a superhuman task. But superhuman is the term for tasks men take a long time to accomplish. That's all.

Before the vastness of the undertaking, the strength of character must not be forgotten. Courage and contemplation must live in harmony. Both Kazantzakis and Camus refer to the almond tree as a symbol of strength. Camus recalls:

> Quand j'habitais Alger, je patientais toujours dans l'hiver parce que je savais qu'en une nuit, une seule nuit froide et pure de février, les amandiers de la vallée des Consuls se couvriraient de fleurs blanches.[5]

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[4]"Les Amandiers," Noces, pp. 116-117.

[5]Ibid., p. 117.

> When I lived in Algiers, I would wait patiently all winter because I knew that in the course of one night, one cold, pure February night, the almond trees of the Vallée des Consues would be covered with white flowers.

In the yellow pages of his journal on Mount Athos, Kazantzakis also mentions that:

> When completing our circle, we finally returned to Daphne on Christmas eve in order to depart, the most unexpected, most decisive miracle was awaiting us. Though it was the heart of winter, there in a small, humble orchard was an almond tree in bloom![6]

The blooming of the tree is not, of course, what fascinates both writers; it is the persistence of the flowers, in the midst of snow, rain and wind, until the bearing of the fruit. From the almond tree both writers learned to preserve their strength and courage in the midst of all misfortunes until the final victory.

To my knowledge there is no data available concerning the question whether or not Kazantzakis and Camus have influenced one another. I believe they have not. All themes treated by Camus in the thirties had already been treated in Kazantzakis' Odyssey, but the poem did not appear until after Camus' essays and other works. Moreover, this thesis will not pursue a comparative study of the two authors; rather, as I have said before, it will attempt to give an account of the writers' vision of the world, man, and God.

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[6]Report to Greco, p. 223.

From Helen Kazantzakis we know, however, that both men felt a deep respect for each other. Kazantzakis was much older than Camus. (The former was born in 1883, the latter in 1913.) In 1947 Camus read Kazantzakis' play Melissa. A generous man, Helen Kazantzakis says, Camus did not hesitate to write his elder and offer his services to help him find a theater in Paris, in order to produce the play:

> Melissa is a very beautiful play and I read it with a kind of gratitude. Nothing can be added to it or cut. And it must be performed without delay. May I see you this week?. . . At this point I want to express my gratitude to you for having let me read this superb tragedy.[7]

When Albert Camus was awarded the nobel prize for literature in 1957, Kazantzakis was the runner-up. Although gravely ill from a small-pox vaccination, he drafted a telegram for Camus on his death-bed. In the biography of her husband, Helen Kazantzakis records a letter that she received in March 1959 from Albert Camus:

> Madame, I was very sorry not to be able to take advantage of your invitation. I have always nurtured much admiration and, if you permit me, a sort of affection for your husband's work. I had the pleasure of being able to give public testimony of my admiration in Athens, at a period when official Greece was frowning upon her greatest writer. The welcome given my testimony by my student audience constituted the finest homage your husband's work and acts could have been

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[7]Helen Kazantzakis, Nikos Kazantzakis: A Biography Based on His Letters, trans. Amy Mims (New York, 1968), p. 469.

> granted. I also do not forget that the very day when I was regretfully receiving a distinction that Kazantzakis deserved a hundred times more, I got the most generous of telegrams from him. Later on, I discovered with consternation that this message had been drafted a few days before his death. With him, one of our last great artists vanished. I am one of those who feel and will go on feeling the void that he has left . . .[8]

Ten months later Albert Camus was killed in an automobile accident while returning to Paris from Lourmazin.

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[8] Ibid., p. 560.

CHAPTER I

THE WORLD

> One of the greatest pleasures man is capable of being granted in this world is to sail the Aegean in springtime when a gentle breeze is blowing. I have never been able to conceive how heaven could be in any way different. What other celestial or mundane joy could be more perfectly in harmony with man's body and soul? . . . What are Abraham's bosom and the immaterial fetches of the Christian heaven compared to this Greek eternity composed of water, rocks, and a refreshing north wind?[1]

The reader will find endless lyrical passages such as the above in all Kazantzakis' works. He says over and over again that all things in Greece,--mountains, rivers, seas, valleys, the starry sky, grapes, laurels, doves, lemon trees, the north wind, the south wind--become "humanized": they speak to man in a language which is almost human. They do not overwhelm him; they become his friends and fellow workers. Greece for him is the filter which, with great struggle, refines brute into man, eastern servitude into liberty, barbaric intoxication into sober rationality. To give features to the featureless and measure to the measureless, balancing the blind clashing forces, such is the mission, he believes, of the much-buffeted sea and land known as Greece.

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[1]Report to Greco, p. 450.

Man is part of the universe, not its master as Christian theology insists. A harmony between man and nature is necessary to maintain the divine rhythm which governs the art of living, an art that is born in regarding, loving, understanding, and giving concrete expression to the visible world around it.

All this visible world, explains Kazantzakis in the Askitiki, all this endless, rich series of phenomena is not a phantasmagoria reflecting back from our mind. Neither is it an absolute reality which lives and recreates itself independently from the power of our mind. All this visible world that we touch is just there, real and accessible to our senses. Using our senses we draw energy from nature. In return it is our duty to protect the seed in the earth, to help it free itself so that it will fructify. Here the struggle of the seed to expand and bear fruit is parallel to the striving of man to liberate the spirit, that is, to establish an order in his mind amidst the flowing anarchy of the world, caused by the two greatest powers: life and death.

Like the Greek landscape, the whole visible world evokes music. At every moment it changes slightly and yet remains the same, makes its beauty undulate, renews itself. It has a profound unity and at the same time a constantly renewed diversity. Each morning the world

rediscovers its virginity; it seems to have issued fresh from God's hands at that very instant. It has no memory. That is why its face never develops wrinkles, muses Kazantzakis. It does not recall what it did the day before nor fret about what it will do the day after. It experiences the present moment as an eternity. No other moment exists; before and behind this moment is nothing. Such comments may lead the reader to speculate about possible relationships with both Nietzsche and Bergson, something we shall explore in depth in another chapter.

The idea of man's union with the visible world and the humanization of nature are similarly expressed in Camus' youthful collection of essays Noces. While in Tipasa he writes:

> Les montagnes, le ciel, la mer sont comme des visages dont on découvre l'aridité ou la splendeur, à force de regarder au lieu de voir. Mais tout visage, pour être éloquent, doit subir un certain renouvellement . . . Je m'étais assis sur un banc. Je regardais la campagne s'arrondir avec le jour. J'étais repu. Au-dessus de moi, un grenadier laissait prendre les boutons de ses fleurs, clos et cotelés comme de petits poings fermés qui contiendrait tout l'espoir du printemps . . . Des collines s'encadraient entre les arbres et, plus loin encore, un liséré de mer au dessus duquel le ciel, comme une voile en panne, reposait de toute sa tendresse. J'avais au coeur une joie étrange celle-là même qui náit d'une conscience tranquille.[2]

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[2]"Noces à Tipasa," Noces, pp. 20-21.

> Mountains, the sky, the sea are like faces whose barrenness or splendor we discover by looking rather than seeing. But in order to be eloquent every face must be seen anew . . . I would sit on a bench, watching the countryside expand with light. I was full. Above me drooped a pomegranate tree, its flower buds closed and ribbed like small tight fists containing every hope of spring. . . . The hills were framed with trees, and beyond them stretched a band of sea on which the sky, like a sail becalmed, rested in tenderness. I felt a strange joy in my heart, the special joy that stems from a clear conscience.

Tipasa is inhabited by Gods, like the Greek archipelagos. All these deities--"the raw blue sky," the sun, the scent of absinthe leaves, the sea, "the bubbles of light among the heaps of stone"--are the supreme powers which create and nourish the human body with warmth and beauty. The great free love of nature and the sea absorbs Camus completely; it overwhelms and exalts him:

> Je comprends ici ce qu'on appelle gloire: le droit d'aimer sans mesure. Il n'y a qu'un seul amour dans ce monde. Etreindre un corps de femme, c'est aussi retenir contre soi cette joie étrange qui descend du ciel vers la mer. . . . Mer, campagne, silence, parfums de cette terre, je m'emplissais d'une vie odorante, et je mordais dans le fruit déjà doré du monde, boulversé de sentir son jus sucré et fort couler le long de mes lèvres.[3]
>
> Here I understand what is meant by glory: the right to love without limits. There is only one love in this world. To clasp a woman's body is also to hold in one's arms this strange joy that descends from sky to sea. . . . Sea, landscape,

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[3] Ibid., pp. 17-22.

> silence, scents of this earth, I would drink my fill of a scent-laden life, sinking my teeth into the world's fruit, golden already, overwhelmed by the feeling of its strong, sweet juice flowing on my lips.

The accord, the harmony of man with his world is the requisite for happiness. It is enough to live with the whole body and bear witness with the whole heart. From the Mediterranean landscape Camus derives the courage necessary for man to find his happiness on a sensual level. In Algiers man becomes a part of the earth, the sun and the sea. The scent of flowers is mingled with flesh. Desire becomes synonymous with pleasure. The truths of the race can be touched because Algiers is a creative nation, not a civilized one. Mythology, literature, ethics, or religion do not exist in this nation--only stones, flesh, stars and a passion for life. This race is indifferent to the mind. It has a cult for and admiration of the body.

The naked body is a vision of beauty for both Kazantzakis and Camus. To be naked and dive into the sea is a baptism, the sublime form of becoming one with the world. For both authors the sea becomes the symbol of life with all its hopes and uncertainties, beauty and despair. Waves come and go, carrying man on an unknown voyage with no beginning and no end. Sun and moon rise and fall in turn on the same thread of light and night.

This voyage is a race against the wind, a battle between darkness and light, an exhausting search for the path that leads to freedom and happiness. To swim in the sea is a unique experience for both writers. In Report to Greco Kazantzakis writes:

> I undressed, dove into the sea and swam. I felt the sacrament of baptism in all its deathless simplicity on that day, understood why so many religions consider water and the bath, in other words baptism, the indispensable, presupposed condition of initiation before a convert begins his new life. The water's coolness penetrates to the marrow of his bones, to the very pith; it finds the soul, and this, seeing the water, beats its wings happily like a young sea gull, washes itself, rejoices, and is refreshed. The simple everyday water is transubstantiated; it becomes the water of eternal life and renews the man.[4]

Camus also has the desire to dive into the sea, so that he can come very close to the world, to his "present wealth":

> Il me faut être nu et puis plonger dans la mer, encore tout parfumé des essences de la terre, laver celles-ci dans celle-là, et nouer sur ma peau l'étreinte pour laquelle soupirent lèvres à lèvres depuis si longtemps la terre et la mer . . . la nage, les bras vernis d'eau sortis de la mer pour se dorer dans le soleil et rabattus dans une torsion de tous les muscles; la course de l'eau sur mon corps, cette possession tumultueuse de l'onde par mes jambes--et l'absence d'horizon.[5]
>
> I must be naked and dive into the sea, still scented with the perfumes of the earth, wash them

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[4] Report to Greco, p. 460.

[5] "Noces à Tipasa," Noces, p. 17.

> off in the sea, and consummate with my flesh the embrace for which sun and sea, lips to lips, have so long been sighing . . . as I swim, my arms shining with water flash into gold in the sunlight, until I fold them in again with a twist of all my muscles; the water streams along my body as my legs take tumultuous possession of the waves--and the horizon disappears.

By the disappearance of the horizon Camus means that the world is limitless like all experiences which we derive from it.

If the young men in Algiers strip themselves bare, explains Camus, it is for a greater life (and not for another life). At least, he says, this is the only valid meaning of such expressions as "deprivation" and "stripping oneself bare." Being naked always carries a sense of physical liberty; it creates harmony between man and his loving understanding of the earth. In order to achieve happiness in our terrestrial existence, the hope for a life after-death must be denied. The only truth that exists is the world's color, its sun. The message of the gospels of stone, sky and water is that there are no resurrections. All that counts is our "present wealth". Death is a closed door; not the gateway to another life. We can go no further, concludes Camus, we are like men sentenced to life imprisonment. Kazantzakis also maintains that the present moment is the only reality that exists:

> Where are we going? Do not ask! Ascend, descend. There is no beginning and no end. Only this present moment exists, full of bitterness, full of sweetness, and I rejoice in it all.6

This world, therefore, the world that we can smell, touch, see, feel, hear with body and soul is the battlefield. Man's duty is to struggle and ascend. We are coming from an abyss, and to an abyss we are heading. Between these two abysses we must reconcile irreconcilable forces, we must conquer the fear of death, we must achieve a harmony between flesh and spirit. In the Saviors of God (the English title of the Askitiki) Kazantzakis defines the three duties of man:

The first duty of man, declares Kazantzakis, is to his mind. The mind imposes order or disorder, formulates laws, builds bridges over the two abysses and sets up rational boundaries beyond which man does not dare to go.

> The mind shouts: "Only I exist! . . . I do not know whether behind appearances there lives and moves a secret essence superior to me. Nor do I ask; I do not care. I create phenomena, and paint with a full palette a gigantic and gaudy curtain before the abyss.7

The gaudy curtain is the picture itself, behind it

6Nikos Kazantzakis, The Rock Garden, trans. Richard Howard and Kimon Friar (New York, 1963), p. 40.

7Ibid., p. 34-35.

there is only irrational chaos. Kazantzakis accepted the absurd limits of man in his knowledge of the universe, of supermen and gods--and finally found peace in the harmony of the world, "the only truth that continues" as Camus says. To see and accept the boundaries of the human mind without vain rebellion, and in these severe limitations to work ceaselessly without protest; this is where man's first duty lies.

But his second duty, continues Kazantzakis, is to the heart, which admits of no boundaries and yearns to pierce beyond phenomena and to merge with something beyond mind and matter. "I will not accept boundaries" cries the heart, "appearances cannot contain me; I choke!"[8] To live this agony profoundly is the second duty:

> A command rings out within me: "Dig! What do you see?"
> "Men and birds, water and stones."
> "Dig deeper! What do you see?"
> "I see nothing! A mute night, as thick as death. It must be death."
> "Dig deeper!"
> "Ah! I cannot penetrate the dark partition! I hear voices and weeping. I hear the flutter of wings on the other shore."
> "Don't weep! Don't weep! They are not on the other shore. The voices, the weeping, and the wings are your own heart."[9]

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[8] Ibid., p. 36.

[9] Ibid., p. 37.

The heart is the sixth power which resists and shouts: "No! No! Never acknowledge the limitations of man. Smash all boundaries! Deny whatever your eyes see. Die every moment, but say: 'Death does not exist.'" The mind begs: "Heart, naïve heart, become serene and surrender!" But the heart shouts: "I am the peasant who jumps on the stage to meddle with the course of the world!" And Kazantzakis concludes:

> "I ask and ask again, beating on chaos: 'Who plants us on this earth without asking our permission? Who uproots us from this earth without asking our permission?' I am a weak, ephemeral creature made of mud and dream. But I feel all the powers of the Universe whirling within me. Before they crush me, I want to open my eyes for a moment and to see them."[10]

In the midst of intellectual and philosophical thought, lyrical passages spring out from the lines of the two authors. Is it not because the heart rules over the mind? In what other way can man comprehend his world but through his senses? Sight, smell, touch, taste, hearing and the heart are the six powers that unite man with the cosmos. There is no way, insists Camus, that through science man can come to understand the world. Through science we can seize phenomena and enumerate them. But we cannot, for all that, apprehend the world. Even if we were to trace its entire relief

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[10] Ibid., p. 38.

with our finger, we should not know any more. All the knowledge on earth will give us nothing to assure us that this world is ours. Camus explains his thought in simple terms: The scientist, he says, describes the world to us and he teaches us to classify it. He enumerates its laws, and in our thirst for knowledge we admit that these laws are true. He takes apart its mechanism, and our hope increases. At the final stage he teaches us that this wondrous and multicolored universe can be reduced to the atom and that the atom itself can be reduced to the electron. All this is good, and we wait for him to continue. But then he tells us of an invisible planetary system in which electrons gravitate around a nucleus. In other words he explains this world to us with an image. We shall never know! So science that was to teach us everything ends up in a hypothesis. What need had we of so many efforts? And Camus ends his thought in a beautiful, lyrical note:

> Les lignes douces de ces collines et la main du soir sur ce coeur agité m'en apprennent bien plus . . . Voici encore des arbres et je connais leur rugueux, de l'eau et j'éprouve sa saveur. Ces parfums d'herbe et d'étoiles, la nuit, certains soirs où le coeur se détend, comment nierais-je ce monde dont j'éprouve la puissance et les forces? . . . Ce coeur en moi, je puis l'éprouver et je juge qu'il existe. Ce monde, je puis le toucher et je juge encore qu'il existe.

Là s'arrête toute ma science. . . .[11]

> The soft lines of these hills and the hand of evening on this troubled heart teach me much more. . . . And here are trees and I know their gnarled surface, water and I feel its taste. These scents of grass and stars at night, certain evenings when the heart relaxes--how shall I negate this world whose power and strength I feel? . . . This heart within me I can feel, and I judge that it exists. This world I can touch and I likewise judge that it exists. There ends all my knowledge . . .

Camus accepts also that the mind has limits. If the mind attempts to distinguish what is true from what is false, it will fall into a vicious circle in which the mind that studies itself will get lost in a giddy whirling. (Here Camus recalls the Aristotelian theory of "ad infinitum".) We must sacrifice the mind's deepest desire to explain all phenomena, concludes Camus, and try to watch the world's scenes, "these certainties" and be able to maintain them. Above all we must adapt ourselves to them with decency to pursue them in all their consequences. Does Kazantzakis not suggest the same thought when he says that "I recognize these limitations, I accept them with resignation, bravery, and love, and I struggle at east in their enclosure, as though I were free"?[12]

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[11]Albert Camus, Le Mythe de Sisyphe (Gaillimard, 1942), pp. 34-36.

[12]The Rock Garden, trans. Richard Howard and Kimon Friar (New York, 1963).

We must recreate the world constantly--brighter, better, more suitable to our purpose. Since we cannot change reality, let us change the eyes with which we see reality. A star-filled sky, for Kazantzakis, can be sometimes a flowering garden, sometimes a dark, dangerous sea, sometimes a taciturn face flooded with tears. Earth, sea, woman and the starry night are the four elements, which make up every one of the author's emotions and ideas. Within him even the most meta-physical problem takes on a warm physical body which smells of sea, soil and human sweat. The Word, he says, in order to touch him, must become warm flesh. Only then does he understand--when he can smell, see, and touch.

But the heart, through which we try to understand the world, often falls wounded and loses hope. So does the mind in attempting to explain the universe by reason. "The moment is ripe," exclaims Kazantzakis, "leave the heart and the mind behind you, go forward, take the third Step. Free yourself from the simple complacency of the mind that thinks to put all things in order and hopes to subdue phenomena. Free yourself from the terror of the heart that seeks and hopes to find the essence of things. Conquer the last, the greatest temptation of all: Hope.

This is the third duty."[13]

In this thesis we shall have different occasions to examine in detail what Kazantzakis and Camus mean by deprivation of hope, and the reader should not hasten to conclude that their lack of hope springs from despair. On the contrary, as Camus explains:

> De la boîte de Pandore où grouillaient les maux de l'humanité, les Grecs firent sortie l'espoir après tous les autres, comme le plus terrible de tous. Je ne connais pas de symbole plus émouvant. Car l'espoir, au contraire de ce qu'on croit, équivaut à la résignation. Et vivre, c'est ne pas se résigner.[14]
>
> From Pandora's box, where all the ills of humanity swarmed, the Greeks drew out hope after all the others, as the most dreadful of all. I know no more stirring symbol; for, contrary to the general belief, hope equals resignation. And to live is not to resign oneself.

The world is much greater than the mind, the heart, or even God. Man is an ephemeral creature who must surrender to his earth with love and pain and work unceasingly in this great vineyard. Death is the abyss. Beyond life nothing exists. To build on the abyss without hope for recompence, this is the highest goal of man. The generations of man rise from the earth and return to it. "There is no salvation"[15] declares Kazantzakis. "Le monde

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[13] Ibid., p. 40.

[14] "L'été à Alger," Noces, p. 52.

[15] The Rock Garden, p. 40.

est beau," declares Camus, "et hors de lui, point de salut"[16] "The world is beautiful, and outside it there is no salvation." In this moment of balance, when happiness springs from the absence of hope, man is filled with joy, pride and courage.

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[16]"Le Désert," Noces, p. 70

CHAPTER II

THE ROAD OF MAN

According to Kazantzakis, every man is half God, half man. He is both spirit and flesh. The human being is a centaur. His equine hoofs are planted in the ground, but his body from beast to head is worked on and tormented by a merciless cry which calls him always to ascend. He has been fighting for eons to draw himself, like a sword, out of his animalistic scabbard. He is also fighting--this is his new struggle--to draw himself out of his human scabbard. Man is a centaur because he struggles to elevate himself. If this were not the case, the world would degenerate into inertness and sterility.

There is only one road through which one can reach the sweet victory of his struggle--the road of man. This is why the mystery of Christ, for both Kazantzakis and Camus, is not simply a mystery for a particular creed; it is universal. The struggle between God and man breaks out in everyone together with the longing for reconciliation. The stronger the soul and the flesh, the more fruitful is the struggle and the richer the final harmony. Struggle between the flesh

and the spirit, rebellion and resistance, reconciliation and submission and then comes the finally supreme purpose of the struggle--union with God. This was the ascent taken by Christ, the ascent which he invites us to take as well, following in his bloody tracks. If Christ was a God, as Christianity maintains, would his sacrifice be of any worth? If we are able to follow him, we must have a profound knowledge of his conflict, we must relive his anguish, his victory over the earth, his sacrifice of all the joys of men and his ascent from sacrifice to sacrifice, exploit to exploit, to martyrdom's summit, the Cross. "In order to mount to the Cross, the summit of sacrifice, and to God, the summit of immateriality," writes Kazantzakis:

> "Christ passed through all the stages which the man who struggles passes through. That is why his suffering is so familiar to us; that is why we share it, and why his final victory seems to us so much our own future victory. Christ's nature which was so profoundly human helps us to understand him and love him and to pursue his passion as though it were our own. If he had not within him this warm human element, he would never be able to touch our hearts with such assurance and tenderness; he would not be able to become a model for our lives. We struggle, we see him struggle also and we find strength. We see that we are not all alone in the world: he is fighting at our side."[1]

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[1]Nikos Kazantzakis, The Last Temptation of Christ, trans. P. A. Bien (New York, 1971), pp. 2-3.

In L'Homme Révolté Camus also refers to the human nature of Christ, Christ's agony, he explains, would have been mild if it had been alleviated by hopes of eternity. For God to be a man, he must despair. The New Testament can be considered as an attempt to create an intercessor between God and man. Christ came to solve two major problems, evil and death. His solution consisted, first, in experiencing them:

> La nuit du Golgotha n'a autant d'importance dans l'histoire des hommes que parce que dans ces ténèbres la divinité, abandonnant ostensiblement ses privilèges traditionnels a vécu jusqu' au bout, désespoir inclus, l'angoisse de la mort. On s'explique ainsi le "Lama sabactani" et le doute affreux du Christ à l'agonie.[2]
>
> The night on Golgotha is so important in the history of man only because, in its shadow, the divinity abandoned its traditional privileges and drank to the last drop, despair included, the agony of death. This is the explanation of the "Lama sabactani" and the heart-rending doubt of Christ in agony.

The road of man is a very difficult one. Why is man condemned to death? By whom and for what crime? Camus considers the "limits" of our knowledge of death and the unexplained universe, and "limits" of the human condition as "absurd." In this unintelligible universe man's fate assumes its meaning. There is a divorce,

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[2]Albert Camus, L'Homme Révolté (Gallimard, 1951), p. 50.

explains Camus, between man and his life, like the divorce between an actor and the setting. The divorce actually is the consciousness of the absurd. Life's equilibrium depends on the perpetual opposition between our conscious revolt against the absurd and the darkness in which we struggle. Our freedom has no meaning except in relation to its limited fate. If we decide to live (and not to commit suicide), it must be because we have decided that our life has some positive value. If we decide to rebel it must be that human society has some positive value.

We have already seen that Camus sees man alone with nothing to rely upon except the compass of his own mind and heart. This presumption implies automatically that the throne of God is overturned and that the rebel realizes that it is now his own responsibility to create justice and order. For Camus rebellion is a claim motivated by the idea of a unity against all the sufferings of life and death, and a protest against the human condition for its imperfection, because of death, and its wastefulness, because of evil. The absurdity of the world by no means encourages passivity. By refusing all supernatural consolations, man engages himself in action, and then it is possible for him to experience happiness.

Le Mythe de Sisyphe is a lucid invitation to life and creation in the very midst of the desert. The author draws three consequences from the absurd which are revolt, freedom and passion. Revolt is a constant confrontation between man and his obscurity, an outgoing struggle with the absurd. It challenges the world every moment and it extends awareness to the whole of experience. Freedom is not given by God nor by any other being. "Savoir si l'homme est libre commande qu'on sache s'il peut avoir un maître."[3] writes Camus. "Knowing whether or not man is free involves knowing whether he can have a master." It is important to note here that Sisyphus, as we shall see later, does not only deny the Gods, he defies them. Depriving himself of hope, he throws the rock each time with more strength. By the privation of hope and future which the absurd implies, the individual is granted a freedom of thought and action. Passion is to exhaust that which is provided by the present moment. In an absurd universe each moment assumes a precious quality, for man is aware of his approaching death. Man must be conscious of each of his experiences, for only through his awareness can he live to the maximum. "To a man without blinders" comments André Maurois "there is no

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[3]Le Mythe de Sisyphe, p. 79.

sight more beautiful than that of the intelligence at grips with a reality greater than itself."[4] Camus rejects both suicide and hope and only in the revolt against the absurd does he find justification in living.

Sisyphus is the incarnation of the absurd hero. Sisyphus hated death and the Gods and was passionately attached to life. According to legend, he, the favored of mortals, was accused of a certain levity in regard to the Gods and as a result of his actions was condemned to Hades. Later he obtained Pluto's permission to return briefly to earth in order to chastise his wife for having cast his unburied body into the middle of the public square, but once again among the sun, the warm stones and the sea of the world, he no longer wished to return to Hades. The gods were so enraged that they sent Mercury to lead Sisyphus back to the underworld. For eternity he was condemned to roll a boulder up to the crest of a mountain from which it would crash back to the bottom.

The myth, of course, is a metaphor for human life. The gods knew, explains Camus, that the most dreadful punishment is a futile and hopeless labor. Must man resign himself to this fate, to his hopeless labour? No!

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[4]André Maurois, From Proust to Camus, trans. Carl Morse and Renand Bruce (New York, 1968), p. 327.

Man must prove superior to his fate. Sisyphus is stronger than his rock. The hero is tragic, says Camus, because he is conscious of his condition. He sees the same situation with the workman of today who works every day in his life constantly facing the same tasks. His fate is no less absurd and he also becomes a tragic figure in the rare moments when he realizes his condition.

It is the moment in which Sisyphus watches the stone roll down the mountainside that interests Camus. It is the moment in which he is ready to resume his suffering that the author imagines Sisyphus to have his hour of consciousness, the awareness of his misery, the recognition of his destiny. And he makes his hero great by turning the lucidity that is to constitute his torment into a victory. The idea that fate is a human matter, which must be settled among men, is a very important aspect of Camus' philosophy. To be able to maintain one's lucidity while striving against destiny is really a titanic achievement:

> Je laisse Sisyphe au bas de la montagne! On retrouve toujours son fardeau. Mais Sisyphe enseigne la fidélité supérieure qui nie les dieux et soulève les rochers. Lui aussi juge que tout est bien. Cet univers désormais sans maître ne lui paraît ni stérile ni futile. Chacun des grains de cette pierre, chaque éclat minéral de cette montagne pleine de nuit, à lui seul forme un monde. La lutte elle-même vers

> les sommets suffit à remplir un coeur d'homme. Il faut imaginer Sisyphe heureux.[5]

> I leave Sisyphus at the foot of the mountain! One always finds one's burden again. But Sisyphus teaches the higher fidelity that negates the gods and raises rocks. He too concludes that all is well. This universe henceforth without a master seems to him neither sterile, nor futile. Each atom of that stone, each mineral flake of that filled mountain, in itself form a world. The struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man's heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy.

As Nathan Scott points out:

> It is, to be sure, a very tragic kind of happiness, but happiness it is, nevertheless, for Sisyphus maintains an intense awareness of the grim actuality that confronts him: he is unflinching in the face of his destiny: he knows that he will never reach the summit of his hill, but he never abdicates the struggle. And, in the rugged persistence of his refusal to allow the rock to remain at the bottom of the mount, he remains faithful to that essential humanum within himself, loyalty to which will bring a man the only sort of genuine happiness that is possible for humankind--namely, the happiness that comes from not betraying the dignity that belongs to one's nature as a man.[6]

Along with Le Mythe de Sisyphe Camus' most celebrated novel L'Étranger, also appeared in 1942. Here, through the plot and the images of a work of prose fiction, we are made to experience the same sensation of the Absurd which we experienced in Le Mythe de Sisyphe. And in Meursault, the little Algerian shipping clerk, we find one of Camus'

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[5]Le Mythe de Sisyphe, p. 166.

[6]Nathan A. Scott, Albert Camus (New York, 1962), p. 28.

purest renderings of the absurd man. Both novel and essay had their origin in Camus' own personal thoughts and experiences, and the aptness with which they expressed the mood of 1942 was coincidence rather than deliberate intention on his part.

The narrative line of the novel is very simple. Meursault receives word that his mother has died in a Home for the aged. So he requests a brief leave from his business firm in order to go to her funeral in the country district in which the Home is located. At the funeral he has no sadness or regret and feels only the physical inconveniences of watching over her body under the mild stupor brought on by the summer heat. He becomes involved in a rather sordid affair with his next-door neighbor in which he shows himself as indifferent to friendship and to the purely social convention of truthfulness as he was to filial love. As a result of a series of accidents, he finds himself one day with a revolver in his hand, standing on a beach facing an Arab who is threatening him with a knife. Almost unconscious of what he is doing under the blinding sun, he shoots the Arab and then fires four more shots into his inert body.

Meursault is a man who refuses to conform to the rules of life as they are dictated by society. He acts

in a human situation as though human relationships do not exist. We are led to believe that he is completely indifferent to everything except physical sensations. He lives in a succession of presents in which all pleasures are sensual experiences. Many readers of L'étranger have accused Meursault of total apathy, but this is not really true. Actually, as Phillip Rhein explains:

> . . . he is far from totally deprived of passion, for it is his passion really which leads him to his decision to be honest to himself and to base his life on the truth of being and feeling. And it is this decision that makes him a stranger in a society whose existence depends upon everyone's concession to its codes and rituals.[7]

If Sisyphus is the proletarian of the gods, Meursault is the proletarian of society.

Meursault's failure to feel genuine sorrow for his mother's death stems from the fact that for him death has no meaning because he is not aware of the role which death will soon play in his own life. In the opening lines of the novel we see the carefree attitude with which Meursault accepts his mother's death:

> Aujourd' hui, maman est morte. Ou peut-être hier, je ne sais pas. J'ai reçu un télégramme de l'asile: "Mère décédée. Enterrement demain. Sentiments distingués. Cela ne veut rien dire. C'était peut-être hier.[8]

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[7]Phillip H. Rhein, Albert Camus (New York, 1969), p. 34.

[8]Albert Camus, L'Étranger (New York, 1955), p. 21.

> Mother died today. Or, maybe, yesterday; I can't be sure. The telegram from the Home says: "Your mother passed away. Funeral tomorrow. Deep sympathy." Which leaves the matter doubtful, it could have been yesterday.

Meursault's lack of awareness of the absurdity of death makes him an outsider to the realities of the world. The death of his mother could have occurred the day before yesterday. What does it matter when? It is clear by his lifeless monotone that the issue is of no consequence to him. He pushes all thoughts of death out of his mind, and he returns to his experiences with his mistress and with the earth. Not until he kills the Arab and is sent to prison to await his trial and eventually his execution is he able to come to terms with the absurdity of the world and accept the finality of death. Till the last pages of part one of the novel, Meursault lives in an illusionary world which is shattered when he kills the Arab and is forced to face reality:

> J'ai compris que j'avais détruit l'équilibre du jour le silence exceptionnel d'une plage où j'avais été heureux. Alors, j'ai tiré encore quatre fois sur un corps inerte où les balles s'enfonçaient sans qu'il paraît. Et c'était comme quatre coups brefs que je frappais sur la porte du malheur.[9]
>
> I knew I'd shattered the balance of the day, the spacious calm of this beach on which I had been happy. But I fired four shots more in the inert

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[9] Ibid., p. 80.

> body, on which they left no visible trace. And each successive shot was another loud, fateful rap on the door of my undoing.

During the year of his imprisonment, Meursault has to accept a position from which he cannot escape. His liberty is lost, his happiness is destroyed and death threatens his own existence. He knows that he is condemned to death because he did not weep at his mother's funeral. He is aware that society refused him the final rights of judgment and denied him his importance as an individual. He knows that the absolute religious and social values by which he was judged are conventional and outworn. But the passivity with which he has greeted all that has happened suddenly breaks down during a visit which the prison chaplain makes to him. The chaplain's offer of the consolation of another life is transferred for Meursault into a violent affirmation that this life alone is certain, and that man must give a meaning to it. He, like Sisyphus, accepts his fate, death, and pauses briefly to view his life:

> Et moi aussi, je me suis senti prêt à tout revivre. Comme si cette grande colère m'avait purgé du mal, vidé d'espoir, devant cette nuit chargeé de signes et d'étoiles, je m'ouvrais pour la première fôis 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.[10]

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[10] Ibid., p. 138.

> And I, too felt ready to start life all over again. It was as if that great rush of anger had washed me clean, emptied me of hope, and, gazing up at the dark sky spangled with its signs and stars, for the first time, the first, I laid my heart open to the benign indifference of the universe. To feel it so like myself, indeed, so brotherly, made me realize that I'd been happy, and that I was happy still.

Phillip Rhein draws a parallel between Meursault's words: "I, too felt ready to start life all over again" and Camus' thought on Sisyphus "the struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man's heart." Meursault, according to Rhein, is a representative of everyman in his search for a positive meaning to life. To fight toward the summit, requires almost a superhuman endurance.[11] Here I may also add Kazantzakis' words: "Every man worthy of being called a son of man bears his cross and mounts his Golgotha. . . . The cross is the only path to resurrection. There is no other path."[12]

Meursault's awareness of death and also his recollections of the eternal Algerian summer echo Camus' own thoughts in Noces:

> Je pense alors: fleurs, sourires désirs de femme, et je comprends que toute mon horreur de mourir tient dans ma jalousie de vivre. . . . On peut être là, couché un jour, s'entendre dire: "Vous êtes fort et je vous dois d'

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[11]Phillip Rhein, p. 35.

[12]Report to Greco, p. 9.

> être sincere: je peux vous dire que vous allez mourir"; être là, avec toute sa vie entre les mains, toute sa peur aux entrailles et un regárd idiot. Que signifie le reste: des flots de sang viennent battre à mes tempes et il me semble que j'écraserais tout autour de moi. Mais, les hommes, meurent malgré eux, malgré leurs decors. On leur dit: "Quand tu seras guéri . . .", et ils meurent. Je ne veux pas de cela . . . Pour moi, devant ce monde, je ne veux pas mentir ni qu'on me mente. Je veux porter ma lucidité jusqu' au bout et regarder ma fin avec toute la profusion de ma jalousie et de mon horreur.[13]

> Then I think of flowers, smiles, the desire for women, and realize that my whole horror of death lies in my anxiety to live. . . . You can be lying in bed one day and hear someone say: "You are strong and I owe it to you to be honest: I can tell you that you are going to die"; you're there, with your whole life in your hands, fear in your bowels, looking the fool. What else matters: waves of blood come throbbing to my temples and I feel I could smash everything around me. But men die in spite of themselves, in spite of their surroundings. They are told: "When you get well . . ." and they die. I want none of that. . . . As for me, here in the presence of this world, I have no wish to lie or to be lied to. I want to keep my lucidity to the last, and gaze upon my death with all the fullness of my jealousy and horror.

Sisyphus and Meursault have chosen the road of man. They have clung to their destiny with human dignity. Camus has refused to draw the nihilistic conclusion that because the world is irrational, the irrational is the only logical principle of conduct.

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[13]"Le vent à Djémila," Noces, p. 32.

Man will be destroyed by his revolt, if his conduct exceeds life's absurdity. In Caligula, a play published two years after L'Étranger and Le Mythe de Sisyphe, but written in 1938, Camus demonstrates that happiness is impossible, if man ignores his human limits and tries to enthrone the impossible. In L'Étranger Camus depicted a man who, once he had accepted the absurdity of the world, realized that he had experienced happiness. In contrast to this novel, in Caligula he presents a main character who feels that the absurdity of life has destroyed his only hope for happiness.

The young Caligula, emperor of Rome, is overwhelmed by the death of his sister Drusilla, for whom he has conceived an incestuous love. His emotions, however, are not simply those of grief, but also of rage, anger and indignation. He decides to use his power in an attempt to overcome the limitations of life, in other words its essential absurdity. He realizes that the absurd universe where death is ever present does not allow for happiness, and he stresses that men die unhappy. It must be noted here that in the beginning of the play, we learn that Caligula is a man who is considered by most of his subjects to be a perfect emperor, a man who speaks of love, justice and friendship. It is the loss of his sister that precipitates him into the Absurd and makes him

try to reach the impossible. He organizes a campaign against creation, partly in order to bring home to men the real facts of their condition in this world, and partly as an act of revenge against a remote and criminal deity. His method is the method of terror: he confiscates the property of both the rich and the poor; he murders the children and the parents of his friends, he humiliates and tortures distinguished patricians; he mercilessly decrees executions; he arbitrarily curtails food supplies for the populace; until finally, his malevolence reaches such insane proportions as to make it obvious that no one is safe. In reality Caligula becomes, as Scott describes him, "a kind of missionary on behalf of the Absurd; deciding that the service he shall render Rome will be that of making known the metaphysical anarchy that dominates existence: he will wear 'the foolish, unintelligible face of a professional god'."[14] The vision that Caligula has of existence is that:

> Je ferai à ce siècle le don de l'égalité. Et lorsque tout sera aplani, l'impossible enfin sur terre, la lune dans mes mains, alors, peut-être, moi-même je serai transformé et le monde avec moi, alors enfin les hommes ne mourront pas et ils seront heureux.[15]

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[14]Scott, pp. 38-39.

[15]Albert Camus, Caligula (Gallimard, 1958), Acte I, p. 42.

> I shall make this age of ours a kingly gift--the gift of equality. And when all is leveled out, when the impossible has come to earth and the moon is in my hands--then, perhaps, I shall be transfigured and the world renewed; then men will die no more and at last be happy.

What insanity! How can justice and injustice, love and hate, life and death be equal? The power of his rule surpasses human endurance. Man is in danger when he fails to recognize the limits that are imposed upon human action. These limits, which are part of man's nature, forbid any excessive actions which ignore the rights of others. Man wants to be secure and happy. It is his duty to destroy all elements that threaten the happiness of all men. Cherea, another character in the play becomes the spokesman for Camus:

> J'ai le goût et le besoin de la sécurité. La plupart des hommes sont comme moi. Ils sont incapables de vivre dans un univers où la pensée la plus bizarre peut en une seconde entrer dans la réalité--où, la plupart du temps, elle y entre, comme un couteau dans un coeur. . . . Parce que j'ai envie de vivre et d'être heureux. Je crois qu'on ne peut être ni l'un ni l'autre en poussant l'absurde dans toutes ses conséquences.[16]
>
> I like, and need, to feel secure. So do most men. They resent living in a world where the most preposterous fancy may at any moment become a reality, and the absurd transfix their lives, like a dagger in the heart. . . . What I want is to live, and to be happy. Neither, to my mind, is possible if one pushes the absurd to its logical conclusions.

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[16] Ibid., Acte III, pp. 112-113.

Caligula will not die before he realizes that he has followed the wrong path. He admits his failure. His hour of death is also his hour of truth:

> Je n'ai pas pris la voie qu'il fallait, je n'aboutis à rien. Ma liberté n'est pas la bonne.[17]
>
> I have chosen a wrong path, a path that leads to nothing. My freedom isn't the right one. . .

Rhein observes that "man is doomed, but through his suffering he becomes aware of a higher order of greatness which surpasses him. He realizes that even though this world has no hierarchy of metaphysical values, it does have bonds which govern and limit his selfish ambitions."[18]

What Camus calls "the Absurd" Kazantzakis calls "Necessity." Similar to Camus, the Greek author recognizes that man is directed by invisible forces, but in his own world within the world of Nature, he is the arbiter of his own destiny, the master of his own fate. Odysseus, the hero of his great epic poem The Odyssey, declares:

> I think man's greatest duty on earth is to fight his fate, to give no quarter and blot out his written doom. This is how mortal man may even surpass his god![19]

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[17]Ibid, Acte IV, p. 154.

[18]Rhein, p. 48.

[19]Nikos Kazantzakis, The Odyssey, A Modern Sequel, trans. Kimon Friar (New York, 1969), p. 114.

Absolute despair and suicide are rejected here as in Camus' works. Necessity must be accepted with joy. Kazantzakis gives value and dignity to the human condition by asserting that man himself, with passionate affirmation, may create the structure of his life and work on the abyss itself. This work and this life become more precious and more worthy than any other comparable structure built on illusion, hope and dream, whether of heavenly recompense or personal or earthy immortality. Odysseus always keeps death before him as a stimulant, not to make every pleasure more acrid or every ephemeral moment more enjoyable in its brevity, but to whet his appetite for life, to make him more capable of embracing and of exhausting all things. Kazantzakis also had a passion for life and a horror of death:

> Oh how I had yearned for that moment when I would confront the ravenous beast of the celestial jungle, confront Him face to face without the brazen visible world intervening and leading me astray. When I would confront the invisible, the insatiable, the simple Hearted Father who devours His children and whose lips, beard, and nails drip with blood. I would speak to Him boldly, tell Him of man's suffering and the suffering of bird, tree, and rock. We were all resolute in our desire not to die. In my hand I held a petition signed by all trees, birds, beasts and humans: "Father, we do not want you to eat us." I would give Him this petition, I would not be afraid.[20]

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[20] Report to Greco, pp. 15-16.

Kazantzakis, too, accepted the truth that the human being cannot support absolute freedom, for such freedom leads to chaos. He says that man is able to bear working only in a fixed, circumscribed arena. Man has to submit to this human incapacity if he wishes to surpass it. Man should not interfere with the eternal laws. He recalls a simple story which for years weighed heavily on his conscience: Once he had detached a chrysalis from the trunk of an olive tree and placed it in his palm. Inside the transparent coating he discerned a living thing. It was moving. The hidden process must have reached its terminus, he thought; the future still enslaved butterfly was waiting with silent tremors for the sacred hour when it would emerge into the sunlight. It was not in a hurry. Having confidence in the light, the warm air, in God's eternal law, it was waiting. But the author was in a hurry. He wanted to see the miracle hatch before him as soon as possible and to see how the body would surge out of its tomb and shroud to become soul. Bending over, he began to blow his warm breath over the chrysalis. Soon a slit appeared on the chrysalis' back, the entire shroud gradually split from top to bottom, and the immature, bright green butterfly appeared, still tightly locked together, its wings twisted, its legs glued to its abdomen. It squirmed gently and kept coming more and more

to life beneath his warm, persistent breath. One wing as pale as a "budding poplar leaf" disengaged itself from the body and began to palpitate, struggling to unfold along its entire length, but in vain. It stayed half opened, shriveled. Soon the other wing moved as well, toiled in its own right to stretch but was unable to. The wings ceased to move, drooped down stiff and lifeless. "Because I had dared to transgress an eternal law," concludes Kazantzakis, "I had killed the butterfly. . . . A divine rhythm. Seeds in the ground, birds, stars, all obey. Only man lifts his hand in rebellion and wants to transgress the law and convert obedience into freedom. This is why he alone of all God's creatures is able to sin."[21]

In order not to sin against creation, man must recognize the boundaries of his freedom. But within those limits, freedom must be achieved because it represents the eternal struggle of mankind. Alexis Zorbas, the incarnation of freedom in Kazantzakis' celebrated novel, identifies freedom with man. When the author asks him to play the santuri, Alexis declares his terms:

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[21] Ibid., p. 449.

> "If I am in the mood, I'll play. I'll even sing . . . but I tell you plainly from the start, I must be in the mood . . . as regards those things, you must realize, I am a man."
> "A man? What do you mean?"
> "Well, free!"[22]

Zorba, an actual figure, greatly impressed Kazantzakis with his vitality, his poetical conception of life, his delight in the pleasures of the flesh, his wonder at the mystery of the universe, his ability to give a warm, beloved, living body to the abstract ideas which shiver inside every man. Zorba, like Sisyphus, held a mocking scorn for God, because he has placed man in an incomprehensible world, he is deaf to the suffering of man, he humiliates man by taking away his freedom. Zorba has invented a fabulous story of the creation of man which he relates to his boss (Kazantzakis) while they were in Crete together. I will record it here in Zorbas' own words, so that the reader can grasp the simplicity and the earthy manner in which this gigantic Macedonian explained everything about the world:

> "Do you know," he said, "how God made man? Do you know the first words this animal, man, addressed to God?"
> "No. How should I know? I wasn't there."
> "I was!" cried Zorba, his eyes sparkling.
> "Tell me then."
> Half in ecstasy, half in mockery, he began

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[22]Nikos Kazantzakis, Zorba the Greek (New York, 1969), p. 20.

inventing the fabulous story of the creation of man.
"Well, listen, boss! One morning God woke up feeling down in the dumps. 'What a devil of a God I am! I haven't even any men to burn incense to me and swear by my name to help pass the time away. I've had enough of living all alone like an old screech-owl. Ftt!' He spat on his hands, pulled up his sleeves, put on his glasses, took a piece of earth, spat on it, made mud of it, kneaded it well and made it into a little man which he stuck in the sun. Seven days later he pulled it out of the sun. It was baked. God looked at it and began to split his sides with laughter. 'Devil take me,' he says, 'it's a pig standing upon its hind legs! That's not what I wanted at all! There's no mistake, I've made a mess of things!'
So he picks him up by the scruff of his neck and kicks his backside.
'Go on, clear off! All you've got to do now is to make other little pigs; the earth is yours! Now, jump to it. Left, right, left right. . . . Quick march . . .' But you see, it wasn't a pig at all! It was wearing a felt hat, a jacket thrown carelessly across its shoulders, well-creased trousers, and Turkish slippers with red tassels. And in its belt - it must have been the devil who'd given it that - was a pointed dagger with the words: 'I'll get you' engraved on it. It was man! God held out his hand for the other to kiss, but man twirled up his moustache and said: 'Come on, old' un, out of the way! Let me pass!'"
Here Zorba stopped as he saw me bursting with laughter. He frowned.
"Don't laugh!" he said. "That's exactly what happened!"
"How do you know?"
"That's how I feel it happened, and that's what I'd have done if I'd been in Adam's place. I'd wager my head being chopped off if Adam acted any different. And don't you believe all the books tell you. I am the one you should trust."
He stretched out his big hand without waiting for an answer and started playing the santuri once more.[23]

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[23] Ibid., pp. 173-174.

Later on, Zorba started dancing, so that he could express the hundreds of things he had to say to his boss, but which his tongue just could not manage. He leapt into the air and his feet and arms seemed to sprout wings. As he threw himself straight in the air against that background of sea and sky, he looked like an old archangel in rebellion. "For Zorba's dance was full of defiance and obstinacy. He seemed to be shouting to the sky: What can you do to me, Almight? You can do nothing to me except kill me! Well, kill me, I don't care! I've vented my spleen, I've said all I want to say; I've had time to dance and I don't need you any more!"[24]

I think that Zorba's dance resembles Sisyphus' attempt to throw his rock higher. In both men there exist a pride and agility deriving from the astonishing endurance they possess. They express the fantastic effort of man to overcome his weight and with a tragic joy they write on earth the demoniac history of mankind.

Odysseus is the most characteristic of Kazantzakis' heroes of the Absurd, but before we focus our attention on him, it would be useful to devote one or two paragraphs to this magnificent poem The Odyssey of

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[24] Ibid., p. 323.

33,333 lines. In creating Odysseus, Kazantzakis has, of course, derived many of his hero's qualities and adventures from the early Greek epic, but in essence, as Dr. Stanford believes, "his Odysseus is an avatar of Dante's centrifugal hero, and derives from the tradition which leads from Dante through Tennyson and Pascoli to the present day."[25] Throughout this poem Kazantzakis explores all meanings of freedom. Odysseus cuts all strings, by freeing himself from everything--religions, philosophies, political systems. He destroys old civilizations, he builds new ones. He destroys old Gods, he builds new ones until in the end he frees himself even from salvation and with dignity he gives up his soul. Kazantzakis explained once in a letter that for him The Odyssey is an epical-dramatic attempt of the modern man to find deliverance by passing through all the stages of contemporary anxieties and by pursuing the most daring hopes. He does not know what deliverance is as he starts out, but he creates it constantly with joys and sorrows, with his successes and failures, with his disappointments, always fighting. He believes that this is the anguished struggle, whether conscious or subconscious, of the modern man.

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[25]The Odyssey, p. X.

In the first half of the poem, God is Odysseus' constant companion locked within his body. Odysseus appears to be a man of action, he struggles for spiritual achievements and he is very much involved in the effort to purify his vision of God.

In Book XV Odysseus builds his ideal city. On the new city's foundations six cocks and six hens are slain as symbols of the passing of the twelve Olympian Gods. The people are separated into three groups of ascending rank--the craftsmen, the warriors, the intellectuals, and a socialist state is created (from various elements in Plato's Republic, St. Augustine's The City of God and More's Utopia[26]). Marriage is outlawed, children are to be held in common and educated away from their parents, old and uselss persons are to be allowed to die. But Odysseus could not find the foundation law of his thought until one day he saw a flock of termites mating in the air. He saw that as soon as the bridegrooms had performed their one function, they fell expiring to earth, gobbled up immediately by birds, beetles, scorpions and snakes. With fierce joy, Odysseus embraces this as a ruthless law of necessity and survival in nature. He sees a vision of God as

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[26] Ibid., p. 798.

Commander In Chief, and all men as co-workers in the great battle where man must learn both to obey and to command. Each must act as though the entire salvation of the work depended on himself alone, but as though it did not matter whether he won or lost, for all that mattered was the struggle itself. One day he watches with horror as a troop of blind black ants devour a baby camel and then a human infant. Forever after he keeps this vision before him as the destructive power behind all nature and human endeavor, the void that awaits us all. Odysseus is overwhelmed by the tragic necessity of life. He tells his people of the dread law of survival and existence, and that the new God they are to worship is not a protective and almighty God, but no weaker and no stronger than they themselves. Odysseus looks with pride on his city where he believes the good life may finally be attained. But, alas, fate has chosen otherwise! As Odysseus dances to celebrate the inauguration of the city, the earth shakes and roars. The volcano on the mountain erupts, smoke and lava destroy the city, and the children die. As Prevelakis points out: "the sense of the Absurd (absurdum) is the frightful discovery which consumes Odysseus more than

the volcano's fiery rain."[27] The blind force which ruins his city drives him into solitude. He utters a cry of complaint and terror:

> Never shall I forgive and bend down to that vain that senseless dark which blots the holy light of man![28]

He thrashes out with rage against his ruthless God:

> You fool, how in your greatest need can you abandon most glorious man who lives and fights to give you shape? You fill our hearts with cries and vehement desires, then sink your ears in silence and refuse to listen; but man's soul will fight on, you coward, without your help![29]

Odysseus looks with compassion on man's futile efforts to escape suffering. His best friend Kentaur is crushed in the ruins as he tries to save some children. Odysseus realizes the horror of death and once more he raises his voice against God:

> If you had any shame you'd honor mankind's sweat! This poor world issued from your hands dishonest, sick, child of old parents, brainless, smutched, an outcast tramp, until we came to perfect what you so badly shaped! You shaped the boundless sea, but we the cleaving ship, you shaped the raging river- and we the steadfast bridge, you shaped the savage horse, and we the rein and bit. You let death loose on earth - but, fool, what can he do? - we shape our sons, you murderer, and they sack his strength! Smash us with flames

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[27]Pantelis Prevelakis, Nikos Kazantzakis and His Odyssey, trans. Phillip Sherrard (New York, 1961), p. 105.

[28]The Odyssey, p. 484.

[29]Ibid., p. 485.

> and thunderbolts, we'll find some cure and if your blade pierce to the bone, it'll not go further![30]

This is the Rebel's voice against the injustice of God. He no longer seeks God. Like Meursault he turns to the senses, the earth, he abandons himself to the cult of being and tries to find a self-knowledge in asceticism. As Kimon Friar says, "he now becomes the Lone Man. It is when he turns ascetic that Odysseus becomes most materialistic."[31] He enters into a mystic communion with insects, fruits, streams and stones and all growing things. He comes to an acceptance of life as it is, and at the same time he transcends it with joy. Then he blesses his five senses for their omnivorous and unslaked desire to know the entire universe because only through them may a man apprehend the world directly. He destroys the image of God and frees himself from every hope. Now before death, he passes beyond arrogance and guilt and finds himself saved even from the need of salvation. Stooping with humility and homage, he kisses Mother Earth and accepts the universe in all its aspects, both evil and good. Odysseus, at last, embraces the nude body of life, stripped of all illusions, for he knows

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[30] Ibid., p. 489.

[31] Ibid., p. VXII.

that at bottom all is a dark abyss and oblivion. The earth, the visible world is all that exists and he rejoices in the thought of being a man. He spies Death in the form of an old companion awaiting him under the shadow of a fig tree. He speaks to him:

> Ah friend, you wait for me in shadow astride your horse, you hold the reins of my gray steed with your one hand and with your other shade your eyes and search the road. Push on toward the blue sea, O slayer! I'll greet you there![32]

Odysseus begs Death to follow seven paces behind him until he can reach the edge of the continent and there build himself a skiff in a shape of a coffin, so that he may return once more to the sea, "to that vast womb". Once more he presses his ear against Mother Earth and listens with care. He cries out that the universe for each man is valid only in so far as a man is there to apprehend it, and when he sniffs Death approaching, he suddenly stretches out a still-unsated hand and clutches the Earth:

> He licked his mouth, then cupped his hands against his eyes for high in a deep hollow by some wild fig trees he saw an ungleamed honeycomb of monstrous size that hung above the waste sea, slowly melting drop by drop, hushed useless, fading in the dark abyss of night.[33]

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[32] Ibid., p. 585.

[33] Ibid., p. 679.

At dawn Odysseus leaps up erect. He hears a sweet sound rising from the green sea's dark and tranquil depths and leans his ear against the deck. The waves quiver like a lyre's impassioned strings. The Lone Man shakes to his heart's root with overflowing joy:

> I've said, and say again - I've no quarrel with the world, and if the mind, at my last breath, grows suddenly weak and start to curse, don't listen, Life, the wretch is mad; may you be blessed with all your laughter, all your tears! Ah, could I mount in sun a thousand, thousand times, I'd start the pitiless ascent once more, O Life, the wails, the wars with wily gods and stupid men.[34]

Odysseus sweet lamentation echoes Meursault's deep desire to start his life all over again. Man's will to keep the flame burning a while longer express Camus' and Kazantzakis' heroic affirmation of life.

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[34] Ibid., p. 683.

CHAPTER III

MANKIND

In the previous chapter we have seen that individual happiness is possible once man recognizes his own limits within the world, accepts the finality of death with dignity and frees himself from any hope of salvation. But the struggle does not end here. Man's spirit is only a part of the spirit of all humanity, which is also to be liberated. In order to free it, each man must consider himself solely responsible for the salvation of the world, make a movement towards human solidarity and share a common suffering with all men. He must transcend his ego and plunge into the races of all mankind and suffer their agony in the common struggle against social injustice and despotism. The only way that happiness for the majority can be accomplished is through revolt, but then personal happiness must be sacrificed.

The eternal struggle of Crete against the Turks, the Russian Revolution and the Second World War have had a great influence on the works of Kazantzakis and Camus. There is no wonder why the reader often detects a pessimistic view towards man expressed by the two authors.

In the story of creation of man which Zorba related to his boss, we saw that Adam was dressed as a Turk. For a Cretan - and a Greek after four hundred years under the Ottoman despotism - a Turk was a wild, man-eating beast. Kazantzakis was born while Crete was still struggling to achieve freedom. From the day of his birth he inhaled this terrible visible and invisible battle in the very air he breathed. He saw Christians and Turks cast fierce glances at each other and twist their mustaches in furor; he saw Christians barricade their doors with curses as the musket-armed occupation troops patrolled the streets; he heard the old men tell about wars, massacres, heroic deeds, about freedom, about Greece, and he lived all this deeply, mutely, waiting to grow up and understand what it all meant. What first truly stirred his soul was not fear or pain, nor was it pleasure or play; it was the yearning for freedom! Behind light and God was Crete; behind evil, behind darkness and the devil was Turkey. "Thus," he writes, "through the accident of being born a Cretan at a critical moment when Crete was fighting for its freedom, I realized that this world possesses a good which is dearer than life, sweeter than happiness - liberty!"[1]

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[1]Report to Greco, p. 62.

When he was still a boy, he realized with horror that liberty is born of blood. Once there was a great massacre in Megalokastro. The Turks were in the streets cursing, threatening, breaking down doors and slaughtering Christians. The boy heard the barking of the dogs, the screaming of women, and the death moaning of the wounded. He sensed that in the space of just a few hours he had begun to change abruptly from a child into a man. At the end of the day the Turks hanged three men on the plane tree in the little village square. The next morning the father took his son by the hand and brought him to the place of execution.

> "Look!" he said, pointing with his hand . . . "As long as you live - do you hear - may these hanged men never be out of your sight."
> "Who killed them?"
> "Liberty, God bless it!"[2]

The only way in which the Cretans could become free was through killing. One of the captains in Kazantzakis' latest novel, Freedom or Death declares that "Blood is never shed in vain. . . . Don't you know that freedom is a grain of seed that needs blood in order to sprout? So we are sprinkling the seed now, and it's certain that one day the plant will come up . . ."[3]

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[2] Ibid., p. 83.

[3] Nikos Kazantzakis, Freedom or Death, trans. Jonathan Griffin (New York, 1956), p. 328.

But why should killing become a necessity? Zorba confesses his complaints to the author. He wonders what sort of madness comes over man to make him throw himself at another man, when he has done nothing to him, and bite him, cut his nose off, tear his ear out, and at the same time call on the Almighty to help him! Does he expect the Almighty to go cut off noses and ears and rip people up? His boss has read many books. Perhaps he can help him:

> ". . . There is one thing, though, I'd like to ask you. . . . There's a sort of miracle happening here, boss. A funny sort of miracle which puzzles me. All that business - those lousy tricks, thefts and that slaughter of ours - I mean of us rebels all that brought Prince George to Crete. Liberty!"
> He looked at me with his eyes wide open in amazement. "It's a mystery," he murmured, "a great mystery! So, if we want liberty in this bad world, we've got to have all those murders, all those lousy tricks, have we? I tell you, if I began to go over all the bloody villainy and all the murders we did, you'd have your hair stand on end. And yet, the result of all that, what's it been? Liberty! Instead of wiping us out with a thunderbolt, God gives us liberty! I just don't understand!". . .
> "Do you understand?" he asked me with anguish.
> Understand what? Tell him what? Either that what we call God does not exist, or else that what we call murders and villainy is necessary for the struggle and for the liberation of the world . . . I tried hard to find for Zorba another, simpler way of explaining it.
> "How does a plant sprout and grow into a flower on manure and muck? Say to yourself, Zorba, that the manure and muck is man and the flower liberty."
> "But the seed?" cried Zorba, striking his fist on

> the table." For a plant to sprout there must be a seed. Who's put such a seed in our entrails? And why this seed doesn't produce flowers from kindness and honesty? Why must it have blood and filth?
> I shook my head.
> "I don't know," I said.
> "Who does?"
> "No one."[4]

In the above pessimistic dialogue, Kazantzakis seems to accept the bitter realization that liberty can be achieved only by killing. The killing, of course, is justified once the miracle is performed. In Freedom or Death, a novel of a heroic scale, Kazantzakis reveals the ruthless reality that for the sake of gaining freedom, every personal happiness, love, and above all life itself must be scarificed. He also demonstrates what he wrote in the Askitiki about the duty which man must perform for his race: Man is not one--he is a body of troops. The race of men from which we come is the huge body of the past, the present and the future. It is the face itself; we are a passing expression. Myriad invisible hands hold our hands and direct them. When we rise in anger, a great grandfather froths at our mouth; when we make love, an ancestral caveman growls with lust. All our ancestors cry to us to finish the work. We are

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[4]Zorba the Greek, pp. 28-29.

a leaf on the great tree of our race. We must feel the earth mounting from dark roots and spreading out into branches and leaves. What is our goal? To struggle and to cling firmly to a branch, either as a leaf or flower or fruit, so that within us the entire tree may move, breathe and renew itself.

The tree was Crete and the goal its liberation. A man made sons and then he died for Crete. His sons made sons and then they died for Crete. And this is how it was. Freedom or Death tells the story of the 1889 revolt of the suppressed Cretans against their Turkish oppressors. It likewise depicts a tragic love intrigue in which the two Cretan heroes, the captains Michales and Polyxigis, fight both with each other and with the noble Turk Nuri Bey about the same Circassian woman. Half of the time the action takes place in the city of Megalokastro (nowadays Heraclion), the major seaport of Crete, and the other half on the mountains. No power lifts a finger to help the Christians. The Cretans stand alone and with their rifles they call to God. But God has changed faith, and has taken the side of the Turks.

In order to illustrate the unmatched heroism of the Cretans, Kazantzakis uses a real event which had

taken place in a previous rebellion. For two days and nights 200 rebels and 65 monks defended their monastery Arkadi against 15,000 Turks. When the enemy finally rammed in the gate of the monastery, a young fighter fired pistols into the open barrels of an underground powder vault, where 600 women and children were hiding. They all perished together with the hundreds of defenders and attackers inside the crumbling walls.

Captain Michales, a savage, a wild beast, had taken and kept the oath that he would never smile until Crete was free. He lived only to die for his country. Both Christians and Turks were afraid of him. He never cursed his destiny or bewailed it. He would come to terms with neither the devil, nor God nor the Sultan. If necessary he would blow himself sky-high like Arkado. The devil played a bad trick on him. He saw a woman and lost his mind. The woman liked him, too. She was Captain Polyxigis' fiancé whom he had stolen from the Turkish Bey, and whom he was to marry soon. Captain Michales felt a great passion for her. But would he allow anything or anyone to stand between him and Crete? He drew his dagger, flashed it in the air and plunged it to the hilt into the white bosom of the woman. He had never touched her. Several days later he confessed his

crime to Captain Polyxigis who heard the news with despair. He explained to the latter that he did it for Crete. It was a critical moment for their struggle. The Great Powers had refused help, Greece was weak, the Franks had no honor, the Sultan had the power. Captain Michales had to kill either Captain Polyxigis or the woman. But Crete needed the Captain since he was a good fighter. God could leave Crete in the lurch if He pleased - Captain Michales would not:

> "Since the hour I lost hope, Captain Polyxigis," Captain Michales went on, "I've had the feeling, by the soil on which we trod, that I am immortal. Who can do anything to me now? What can death do against me? Even if all the Turks come storming at me, my ear lobe won't twitch. I am like Arkadi; my clothes, hair and guts are full of powder, and when I see that there's nothing else for it I'll blow myself sky-high. Do you understand?"[5]

Captain Michales was full of defiance and pride, and Captain Polyxigis understood. Crete came first. He said:

> I cannot sleep in the same house with you, Captain Michales, nor do I want us to kill each other as long as our country is at war, nor will I desert you in danger. But we two will have our reckoning as soon as Crete is at peace again. For you have turned my heart to ashes, Captain Michales.[6]

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[5] Freedom or Death, p. 344.

[6] Ibid., p. 344.

Solidarity triumphed, and the two captains fought side by side in the hopeless struggle against the enemy.

The uprising was destined to fail. The captains one by one left the mountains and came down to Megalokastro. Crete needed them for another rebellion. But Captain Michales decided to stay and with his nephew and five more companions was fighting the heathens hand-to-hand. One by one they all perished. A Turk slaughtered his nephew and threw his head to the Captain's face.

> Captain Michales raised the severed head by the hair like a banner. A wild light haloed his face, which was filled with an inhuman joy. Was it pride, godlike defiance, contempt of death? Or limitless love for Crete? Captain Michales roared: "Freedom or. . ." and did not finish. A bullet went through his mouth. Another pierced his temples. His brains spattered the stones.[7]

Here again we see man's undaunted acceptance of death on an island whose light and beauty urge him to live and his will to build heroically upon the abyss without hope and without fear. Captain Michales' blood nourished the flower of liberty which was to come soon to Crete. It was the heroism alone of the brave men which inspired all Cretans to plunge into the struggle and finally achieve freedom. A man's struggle gradually

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[7] Ibid., p. 433.

becomes one with a people's struggle, whose fate, in return, is identified with the fate of the individual. For if there is a Cross for each man, there is a Cross for each nation. Years later, Kazantzakis saw a new crucifixion in the face of Russia. Despite his disappointment in the course that the revolution took much later, the author always had great compassion for the struggle of the Russian people to annihilate the inhumanity of Czarist despotism. From Prevelakis we know that Kazantzakis was never a man of action, a truth that the author acknowledged and deeply regretted. All his energy was drawn to his poetic creation, The Odyssey, which occupied sixteen years of his life. Odysseus and Kazantzakis had turned ascetic together. In Report to Greco, however, he devotes a chapter to Russia and its struggle towards freedom, indicating his deep concern for the political problems of his times.

Similar to Kazantzakis, Camus also reveals the essential idea that the human individual is involved in the family of mankind. In L'Homme Révolté he tells us that man acts in the name of certain values which are common to himself and all men. It is for the sake of every man in the world that the slave asserts himself when he comes to the conclusion that a command has

infringed on something in him which does not belong to him alone, but which is common ground where all men have a natural community. Thus when a man rebels, he identifies himself with the others and so surpasses himself. We are because I rebel, believes Camus.

Camus' rebel is indeed in a difficult position, for he cannot find peace. He knows what is good and, despite himself, does evil. Camus recognized that, the world being as it is, were the rebel absolutely to refuse to kill or lie, he would be renouncing his rebellion and accepting, once and for all, evil and murder. But no longer can the rebel agree to kill and lie, since the reasoning which would justify murder and violence would also destroy the reasons for his insurrection. Hence he suggests the idea that is most basically involved in the logic of rebellion, the idea of "measure," of balance, of moderation. Camus rejected Ivan Karamazov's nihilistic freedom that "everything is permitted," and condemned Stalinism. On the other hand, he is not a conventional pacifist who adhers to the idea "Thou shall not kill". By measure or moderation, Camus refers to that attitude of mind which opposes and is contrary to excess of any kind. To illustrate this meaning, he points to the deification of history

by modern political revolutionaries as an example of such extremism. These revolutionaries have failed precisely because they ignored the essential element of measure.

A preoccupation with the morality of rebellion may be seen in Les Justes, a play which was produced in Paris in December of 1949 and which is modeled very closely in Boris Savinkov's account of socialist terrorism in Moscow in 1905. The particular movement with which Savinkov was affiliated was the Organization for Combat of the Socialist Revolutionary Party, and the focal point of his book is his narrative of the group's plot against the Grand Duke Sergei Alexandrovitch. Camus mentions the event earlier in "Les meurtriers delicats" within L'Homme Révolté. As King notes "Les Justes is the story of the fastidious assassins, the Russian revolutionaries of 1905, whom Camus praises in L'Homme Révolté for the purity of their revolt."[8]

Savinkov describes how Kaliayev, a member of the group of idealistic terrorists, at first failed in his attempted murder because the Grand Duke was accompanied by two children (his niece and his nephew), eventually succeeded in throwing the bomb that killed the Duke,

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[8] Adele King, Camus (London, 1964), p. 97.

and finally was executed by the state for his action. Camus acknowledged his historical sources not only in the theater program notes and in an article in the December 20, 1949 issue of Combat, but also in the Preface to the American edition of the play. Camus stated that all events recounted in Les Justes are historical, even the surprising interview between the Grand Duchess and her husband's murderer. So he thought that one should judge merely the extent to which he managed to give plausibility to what was true. Camus was inspired by the Savinkov account of the 1905 revolutionary apostles. It is needless to say that Camus did not recreate the past for a dramatic presentation of a historical record. He had just witnessed the oppression of the German Occupation, he was deeply concerned with the political atmosphere of Paris at this time and wanted to give a lesson to the contemporary world: that if a man was to overcome injustice, he had to be willing to fight for the cause of justice for all men. As Camus has Voinov say in Les Justes:

> J' ai compris qu'il ne suffisait pas de dénoncer l'injustice. Il fallait donner sa vie pour la combattre. Maintenant, je suis heureux.[9]

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[9]Albert Camus, Les Justes (Gallimard, 1950), p. 28.

> I realized that just to denounce injustice wasn't enough. One must give one's life to fighting it. And now I'm happy.

Kaliayev, the main character in the group who call thesemves The Just, rejects the momentary happiness and warmth of the world in order to revolt against the Czarist despotism which has placed the Russian people in misery. The only way that he and his comrades can free their people is to assassinate the despots, yet at the same time they know that the only way they can justify their act is by their willingness to die themselves. Of course, they sacrifice their own freedom and happiness for the freedom and happiness of the majority. Kaliayev's motivation for murder is one of love rather than hate. He is an agent of justice and carries out his conviction that:

> Et puis, nous tuons pour bâtir un monde où plus jamais personne ne tuera! Nous acceptons d'être criminels pour que la terre se couvre enfin d'innocents.[10]

> When we kill, we are killing so as to build up a world in which there will be no more killing. We consent to being criminals so that at last the innocent, and only they, will inherit the earth.

Kaliayev is the one selected to toss the bomb into the carriage of the Grand Duke as he drives to the

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[10] Ibid., p. 46.

theatre. But as the carriage passes the spot where Kaliayev is stationed, he could not bring himself to do it because there are two children in the carriage. When he reports his failure to his comrades, Stepan, a revolutionary whose passion for an abstract justice and an abstract future has destroyed all his scruples about means, protests that there are no limits in a revolution. But this is a fanatical ruthlessness that horrifies Kaliayev who insists:

> . . . tuer des enfants est contraire à l'honneur. Et, si un jour moi vivant, la révolution devait se séparer de l'honneur, je m'en détournerais. Si vous le décidez, j'irai tout à l'heure à la sortie du théâtre, mais je me jetterai sous les chevaux.[11]
>
> Killing children is a crime against a man's honor. And if one day the revolution thinks fit to break with honor, well I'm through with the revolution. If you decide that I must do it well and good, I will go to the theater when they're due to come out - but I'll fling myself under the horse's feet.

It is precisely the idea of the "measure" of the limit, beyond which a man of honor does not trespass, that Camus reveals through the character of Kaliayev. As Scott points out, Kaliayev "refuses to brutalize his fellow man . . . and though sometimes he

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[11] Ibid., p. 89.

must take the part of assassin, he will not be a murderer."[12]

In a second attempt, Kaliayev succeeds in killing the Duke. He is then arrested and condemned to death. Like Meursault, he rejects any renunciation of the deed. The police chief promises him amnesty for information concerning the fellow conspirators, and the Grande Duchess invokes the dogmas of the Christian faith and begs him to accept his crime as it is, without any justification. Kaliayev remains faithful to his comrades and to the cause of the revolt to the very end when he must pay for his crime with his life. His only justification rests with death. To ask for grace would mean to betray his comrades and consequently isolate himself from them. To bargain with God would mean a final separation from his fellow creatures on this earth. He accepts his death with dignity and almost an exaltation, for there lies the whole meaning of his life, the completion of his duty:

> Rien, sinon que je vais être heureux. J'ai une longue lutte à soutenir et je la soutiendrai. Mais quand le verdict sera prononcé, et l'exécution prête, alors, au pied de l'échafaud, je me détournerai de vous et de ce monde hideux

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[12]Scott, p. 79.

> et je me laisserai aller à l'amour qui m'emplit.[13]
>
> I shall soon be happy, gloriously happy! An ordeal lies before me, but I shall see it through. Then, when the sentence has been pronounced and all is ready for the execution - ah, then at the foot of the scafford, I shall turn my back on you and on this loathsome world forever, and at last my heart will flood with joy, the joy of love fulfilled.

This love, is the "strange form of love" that Camus speaks of in the final chapter of L'Homme Révolté. Rebellion, he says, cannot exist without this love. It is the real grandeur of the world, and it is from this love that man derives the joy which helps him to live and die. In "La pensée de midi" he writes:

> Le mouvement le plus pur de la révolte se couronne alors du cri déchirant de Karamazov: s'ils ne sont pas tous sauvés, à quoi bon le salut d'un seul![14]
>
> The most pure form of the movement of rebellion is thus crowned with the heart-rendering cry of Karamazov: if all are not saved, what good is the salvation of one only?

Camus was to give the greatest lesson of solidarity in his best-known novel, La Peste, where man discovers that he is no longer alone, and, through knowledge of the fact that all men are oppressed equally, he can resist - if not transform - the world.

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[13] Ibid., p. 172.

[14] L'Homme Révolté, p. 364.

In La Peste Camus presents the fight of a minority against a purely external enemy. As Camus has explained in a letter to a friend, it represents the transition from an attitude of solitary revolt to the recognition of a community whose struggles must be shared.

The setting of La Peste is the Algerian coastal town of Oran, whose inhabitants begin to notice one day an increasing number of rats in their houses. Before long rats are tumbling out of every hole and cranny and dying by the thousands in the streets. The town authorities hesitate to apply the necessary prophylactic measures and to impose the rigorous discipline, essential to prevent the plague from spreading. When the number of victims reaches thirty a day for the second time, they finally decide to act. A state of siege is declared, Oran is separated from the rest of the world, and, with the closing of the gates, its people are shut in upon the long ordeal of isolation and suffering with which they will have to live for a year.

When the book appeared in 1947, it was at first supposed to be a rendering of the experience of the German Occupation. But as Scott states "so narrow a construction of its meaning is . . . possible only if the novel is read without regard for the major consistencies of Camus' thought. Seen in this large

perspective, we cannot fail to discern that the plague itself is really an emblem of everything that twists and betrays and otherwise outrages the human spirit in this uncongenial place. The dilatoriness of the epidemic's progress is the massive inertia of the world, and its murderous malevolence is the disastrous irrationality of the Absurd itself."[15]

It is important to note that in the very early days of the plague, the people of Oran are concerned with their little individual lives and actions, whereas immediately after the plague is officially declared, they begin to take an interest in what interests everyone else. The second part of the book begins with the statement that:

> À partir de ce moment, il est possible de dire que la peste fut notre affaire à tous.[16]
>
> From now on, it can be said that the plague was the concern of all of us.

All men of good will must unite in a revolt against the evil of a cruel fate. This is the attitude that Camus presents in three of his characters in the novel: Rieux, Tarrou and Rambert. Each of them sacrifices his own happiness, in the case of Tarrou even his

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[15]Scott, p. 83.

[16]Albert Camus, La Peste (Gallimard, 1947), p. 54.

own life, so that one day the majority - the people of Oran - may regain their happiness and freedom.

At the beginning of the novel one of the principal themes of La Peste is the torment of separation. Dr. Rieux, the central figure of the story and also the narrator, says good-bye to his wife, who suffers from tuberculosis and must leave for a cure in the mountains. The outcome of the plague in Oran will cut her off from him. Rambert, a young journalist, also finds himself trapped in Oran. He is separated from the Parisian girl he loves and revolts against the isolation he is forced to accept. He does not want to give up his personal happiness and makes plans to escape. When Rambert learns that Rieux, too, is separated by the plague from the person he loves, the former joins the doctor's plague-fighting organization until he finds a way to leave. In the final stage of his development, Rambert decides to remain in the plague-stricken city because he discovers as Scott tells us "that no man is an island and that he himself is diminished with suffering."[17] The journalist says that he would be ashamed if he left. Rieux tells him that there is nothing to be ashamed of in preferring happiness:

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[17]Scott, p. 57.

> "Oui, dit Rambert, mais il peut y avoir la honte à être heureux tout seul."
> Tarrou . . . fit remarquer que si Rambert voulait partager le malheur des hommes, il n'aurait plus jamais de temps pour le bonheur Il fallait choisir.
> "Ce n'est pas cela, dit Rambert. J'ai toujours pensé que j'étais étranger à cette ville et que je n'avais rien à faire avec vous. Mais maintenant que j'ai vu ce que j'ai vu, je sais que je suis d'ici, que je le veuille ou non. Cette histoire nous concerne tous."[18]

> "Certainly," Rambert replied. "But it may be shameful to be happy by oneself."
> Tarrou . . . now remarked, that if Rambert wished to take a share in other people's unhappiness, he'd have no time left for happiness. So the choice had to be made.
> "That's not it," Rambert rejoined. "Until now I always felt a stranger in this town, and that I'd no concern with you people. But now that I've seen what I have seen, I know that I belong here whether I want it or not. This business is everybody's business."

It is, however, Tarrou and Rieux who carry the heaviest burden of the novel's meaning. In a world where God is absent, Camus offers us an image of the virtue and holiness that are possible for man. It is clear in this novel that this virtue consists of a certain kind of resistance against an evil. Tarrou tells Rieux the story of his childhood. The son of a public prosecutor, he was exposed to the horror of the death penalty at the age of seventeen when one day his father took him to the court with him. He left his home and

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[18] La Peste, pp. 166-167.

became a political militant, but then he realized that in his militancy he himself became a plague-bearer. In his struggle against society, one day he came upon a new form of plague. In witnessing an execution in Hungary, he experienced exactly the same horror that he had experienced in the courtroom. Tarrou now wishes to purge himself of all evil and find peace of mind. The plague for him is the death penalty. He knows that from the moment in which he refused to kill, he condemned himself to a definite exile. The only thing that interests him is to know how one becomes a saint without God. Rieux tells him that sainthood does not appeal to him, that he really prefers to be a man, to which Tarrou replies, with a certain irony, that he is less ambitious.

Dr. Rieux is the narrator of the novel and the spokesman for Camus. He sacrifices personal happiness in his duty as a physician. His wife dies away from him. But his devotion in the plague-stricken city is not in the form of heroism. To Rambert he says that it is a matter of common decency. Common decency for Rieux is to do his job well and fight against death. When Father Paneloux, who sees the plague as a punishment from God, tells the doctor that they are both together in working for the salvation of man, Rieux replies:

> "Le salut de l'homme est un trop grand mot pour moi. Je ne vais pas si loin. C'est sa santé qui m'intéresse, sa santé d'abord."[19]
>
> "Salvation's much too big a word for me. I don't aim so high. I'm concerned with man's health; and for me his health comes first."

It is clear that Rieux's revolt is man-centered, without any appeal to the supernatural. In the series of characters whom Camus creates to carry the meaning of the book, we are presented with a variety of responses to the crisis. The only character who "benefits" from the plague is Cottard. He has committed some kind of crime and is wanted by the police. Once the plague takes over the city, Cottard is temporarily free from the pursuit. Since it brings him a kind of deliverance, it is natural that he wishes to co-operate with the plague. His suffering now is not a solitary one, but this kind of togetherness, of course, gives him only a temporary reprieve. The only real way not to be separated from others is as Tarrou says, to have a clear conscience.

Camus' message in La Peste can be compared to Kazantzakis' words: "Love man because you are he."[20] The city of Oran could be Megalokastro, and the plague could be the Turks. For both Kazantzakis and Camus,

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[19]Ibid., p. 175.

[20]The Rock Garden, p. 225.

every struggle always has the same opponents: Light, good and life against darkness, evil and death. Of all the characters in La Peste, I believe Captain Michales is closest to Dr. Rieux because for both heroes the struggle is a matter of duty. However, Kazantzakis has Captain Michales die so he can put the halo around his head. Would we have any doubts what the answer would be if Tarrou had asked Kazantzakis whether sainthood is possible without God?

What makes both writers humanists, I think, is that they evaluate a human being purely according to his qualities without allowing any personal prejudice to interfere. Zorba says that we must not say this is a Turk and this is a Greek, but rather this is a good man, this is a bad man. In Freedom or Death Captain Michales' irreconcilable enemy, Nuri Bey, is described by Kazantzakis with the same admiration as the captain. Even the Greek reader forgets that the Bey is a Turk and can only see the nobility, honor, generosity and bravery of a man, who was destined only by birth to be an enemy. It seems that here again we see the law of moderation and honor that Kaliayev talks about in Les Justes. Captain Michales and Nuri Bey would never hit each other on the back. So Ivan's "everything is permitted" does not have any ground

here either. When Captain Michales goes to kill Nuri, he realizes that the latter is sick and very weak. He shakes hands with him and runs away.

Camus' compassion for man is also demonstrated in La Peste. Although there is no doubt that Cottard is an unattractive figure, the author wants us to have sympathy for him. As Scott points out:

> "When one recalls Camus' disenchantment about the conventional machinery of social justice, as it was expressed, say, in 'Réflexions sur la guillotine' or as it is expressed in La Peste by Tarrou, one also suspects that perhaps he would even prefer us to accord a certain limited sympathy to this poor wretch who chose finally to be shot by the police rather than surrender."[21]

The purpose of analyzing actions of the characters discussed in this chapter was, of course, to show the ideas of both authors on revolt, freedom and happiness. Man must overcome his ego, go beyond his race and plunge into the realm of mankind, simply because he is a part of it. Only in a common brotherhood, collectively, can we meet competently the challenge of our troublesome century and try to save it. This idealistic thought reminds us of another great poet of our times, Kahlil Gilbran who writes:

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[21]Scott, pp. 54-55.

> I love my native village with some of my love for my country; and I love my country with part of my love for the earth, all of which is my country; and I love the earth with all of myself because it is the haven of humanity.[22]

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[22]Kahlil Gibran, Tears and Laughter (New York, 1947), p. 82.

CHAPTER IV

GOD

A limitless love for the visible world, the emphasis on man's strength and abilities and the uncertainty of a life after death contributed to Camus' and Kazantzakis' absolute rejection of any supernatural deity. Both authors felt that every religion which promises to fulfill human desires is simply a refuge for the slave, and unworthy of a true man. Christ's story was not, after all, as it should be, the way to man's salvation; it became a well-organized fairy tale promising paradise and immortality with immense cleverness and skill, so that the faithful Christian would never be able to learn if this paradise was anything more than the reflection of his own thirst. For how can we really determine this, since no one has, or ever will, return from the land of the dead to tell us? The faith most devoid of hope seemed to both writers not the truest, perhaps, but surely the most valorous. As we have seen already, they considered metaphysical hope an alluring bait which true men do not condescend to nibble. Contemporary man has not debased only himself, but also Christ. He supports a crafty religion

in order to transplant rewards and punishments into the future life as a comfort for cowards and the enslaved and aggrieved, making them bow patiently before their masters and endure this earthly life without groaning, the only life of which man is sure! "What a jew-higgling Table of the Lord" wonders Kazantzakis, "this religion is where you lay out a farthing in this life, and collect immortal millions in the next! What simplicity, what cunning, what usury! No, the man who either hopes for heaven, or fears hell cannot be free."[1] It is man's responsibility to take upon himself the full administration of the world and receive into his breast all struggles and all hopes without God's help.

Both writers were influenced by Nietzsche's affirmation of the sovereignty of the individual. Instead of relying on future optimistic theories, man must mobilize all the energy of mind and heart and try to put an order in this world, so neither God nor devil will have a chance to ridicule him for his naivité and cowardice. Camus and Kazantzakis repeatedly show their anger with the clergy who try to present man as naïve. The clergy has brought the Church of Christ to the state where Christians seem to be panic-stricken sheep leaning

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[1] Report to Greco, p. 318.

against one another and stretching out their necks to lick the hand and knife that are slaughtering them. They present God as a merciless murderer. But let us go for a minute to Oran and hear how Father Paneloux explains the terror of the plague in his first sermon.

> La première fois que ce fléau apparaît dans l'histoire, c'est pour frapper les ennemis de Dieu. Pharaon s'oppose aux desseins éternels et la peste le fait alors tomber à genoux. Depuis le début de toute histoire, le fléau de Dieu met à ses pieds les orgueilleux et les aveugles. . . . Les justes ne peuvent craindre cela mais les méchants ont raison de trembler. Dans l'immense grange de l'univers, le fléau implacable battra le blé humain jusqu'à ce que la paille soit séparée du grain. Il y aura plus de paille que de grain, plus d'appelés que d'élus. . . . Dieu qui, pendant si longtemps, a penché sur les hommes de cette ville son visage de pitié, lassé d'attendre, déçu dans son éternel espoir, vient de détourner son regard. Privés de la lumière de Dieu, nous voici pour longtemps dans les ténèbres de la peste! . . . Voyez-le, cet ange de la peste, beau comme Lucifer et brillant comme le mal lui-même, dressé au-dessus de vos toits, la main droite portant l'épieu rouge à hauter de sa tête, la main gauche désignant l'une de vos maisons. A l'instant, peut-être, son doigt se tend vers votre porte, l'épieu résonne sur le bois; à l'instant encore, la peste entre chez vous, s'assied dans votre chambre et attend votre retour . . . Vous savez maintenant ce qu'est le pêché, comme l'ont su Caïn et ses fils, ceux d'avant le déluge, ceux de Sodome et de Gomorrhe, Pharaon et Job et aussi tous les maudits.[2]
>
> The first time this scourge appears in history, it was wielded to strike down the enemies of God.

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[2] La Peste, pp. 77-79.

> Pharoah set himself up against the devine will, and the plague beat him to his knees. Thus from the dawn of recorded history the scourge of God has humbled the proud of heart and laid low those who hardened themselves against Him. . . . The just man need have no fear, but the evildoer has good cause to tremble. For plague is the flail of God and the world is His threshing-floor, and impacably He will thresh out His harvest until the wheat is separated from the chaff. There will be more chaff than wheat, few chosen of the many called. . . . For a long time God gazed down on this town with eyes of compassion; but He grew weary of waiting, His eternal hope was too long deferred, and now He has turned His face away from us. And so, God's light withdrawn, we walk in darkness, in the thick darkness of this plague. . . . See him there, that angel of the pestilence, comely as Lucifer, shining like Evil's very self! He is hovering above your roofs with his great spear in his right hand, poised to strike, while his left hand is stretched toward one or other of your houses. Maybe at this very moment his finger is pointing to your door, the red spear crashing on its panels, and even now the plague is entering your home and setting down in your bedroom to await your return. . . . Now you are learning your lesson, the lesson that was learned by Cain and his offspring by the people of Sodom and Gomorrah, by Job and Pharoah. . . .

Dr. Rieux revolts against an unjust God and against a universe which permits so much suffering for innocent people. Later in the hospital after the death of a child, the doctor says to Paneloux:

> "Ah! celui-là, au moins, était innocent, vous le savez bien!" . . .
> "Je comprends, murmura Paneloux, Cela est révoltant parce que cela passe notre mesure. Mais peut-être devons-nous aimer ce que nous ne pouvons pas comprendre."
> Rieux . . . regardait Paneloux avec toute la force et la passion dont il était capable, et secouait la tête.

> "Non, mon pére, dit-il. Je me fais une autre idée de l'amour. Et je refuserai jusqu'à la mort d'aimer cette création où des enfants sont torturés."[3]

> "Ah! That child anyhow was innocent, and you know it as well as I do!"
> "I understand," Paneloux said in a low voice, "That sort of thing is revolting because it passes our human understanding. But perhaps we should love what we cannot understand."
> Rieux . . . gazed at Paneloux, summoning to his gaze all the strength and fervor he could muster against his weariness. Then he shook his head.
> "No, Father, I've a very different idea of love. And until my dying day I shall refuse to love a scheme of things in which children are put to torture."

Zorba likewise reacts against the suffering of children. He claims at one point that everything that happens in this world is unjust. Why do the young die and the old wrecks go on living? Why do little children die? He had a boy once - Dimitri he was called - but lost him when the boy was three years old. He will never forgive God for that! It is also through Zorba that Kazantzakis expresses his disappointment of the clergy. "Who's to say," asks Zorba, "I'm not more like God himself than old Papa-Stephenos, who spends his days and nights on his knees, and collecting money?"[4]

While in Jerusalem, the Greek writer tells us

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[3]Ibid., p. 174.

[4]Zorba the Greek, p. 263.

that the Catholic, Orthodox and Armenian priests crossed one another's paths without exchanging greetings, and that in their hands the Christian banner had degenerated to "a flag of hate". (We should be careful not to condemn Camus and Kazantzakis for generalizations. Throughout their books, they often presented and praised good priests for their compassion and true love for man.)

Of all the characters whom Kazantzakis met or created, it is Zorba whom he admires most because of his open mind and his primitive boldness which were never corrupted by religion, school, or philosophical theories. The author says that Zorba cuts through all complicated problems as if with a sword, like Alexander the Great cutting the Gordian knot. It is difficult to miss his aim because his two feet are well planted on the ground. To illustrate his comment, Kazantzakis tells us of a tribe of African savages who worship the serpent because its whole body touches the ground and it must, therefore, know all the earth's secrets, the only secrets there are. All the rest are ghosts. Zorba believes only in himself, not, he says, because he is better than others, but because he is the only thing he has in his power, the only one he knows. When he dies,

everything will die with him. Zorba is what Kazantzakis would like to be, but, alas, he is only a "pen-pusher" as the former ironically calls him. The writer always loses every argument with this primitive man, and he always feels ashamed in front of him. After a visit to the very poor but God-fearing Anagnosti family, the author expresses his desire to open people's eyes, but Zorba tries to explain to him that these people are happy in their false hopes and blind faith to God:

> "Just go now and teach them that women have equal rights with men . . . and that it's simple lunacy to give thanks to God because he's got everything while you're starving to death! And what about all the other Anagnostides in the world? They've managed pretty well up to now; they have children, and even grand-children. God makes them deaf or blind and they say: 'God be praised.' They feel at home in their misery . . . Let people be boss; don't open their eyes. And supposing you did, what'd they see? Their misery! Leave their eyes closed, boss, and let them go on dreaming! . . . Unless when they open their eyes you can show them a better world than the darkness, in which they're gallivanting at present. . . . Can you?"[5]

No, he could not. Neither could Camus. At the end, dissolusioned by both religions and human insurrections, the two writers always ended up like two good Christians, preaching love and solidarity.

I believe that the greatest driving force of Camus' and Kazantzakis' atheism derives from Christianity's

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[5]Ibid., p. 73.

demand that man be humiliated. We have seen how Sisyphus, Odysseus, Meursault, Zorba, Kaliayev, Captain Michales and even Dr. Rieux refused to become sheep and also how they revolted against a God who always likes to trick people with cheap bargains. Such is the selfishness of God in the Old Testament that he demands Abraham to slaughter his own son in order that the poor man bend his head like a slave and prove his faith. In the chapter entitled "Jerusalem" of Report to Greco, Kazantzakis relates his own version of Sodom and Gomorrah : God makes the decision to kill and commands Abraham to take his sheep, camels, dogs, wife and servants and leave. God is sick with people. They behave as though they were immortal. They build houses of stone and iron, they equip themselves with furnaces, make fires, melt down metals, irrigate the desert and transform it into a garden. In other words they have eaten from the Tree of Knowledge. They must be punished. Abraham begs God to spare the innocent, why should he kill all of them? God replies that he shall kill all of them because he is omnipotent. The old man protests that an omnipotent God cannot be just. God is angry with the slave's impudence, he calls him a worm, made out of dust and destined to return to dust. God orders him not to start wailing in order to touch his

heart. God has no heart. He is as rigid as a solid piece of black granite. He has arrived at his decision: he will burn Sodom and Gomorrah and transform them into a Dead Sea. Abraham agrees that he is made of dust, but reminds God that when he breathed upon him, the dust and water produced a soul, so he will speak up!

And so God's voice wrestles with the voice of man, and finally the Lord decides to spare Abraham's nephew Lot. Not, however, the Lot of the Old Testament, the slave. This is Kazantzakis' Lot, a Rebel who refuses to obey God's command to flee and save himself. Instead, he pities the charming, sinful cities and, of his own free will, throws himself into the fire to burn and perish with them.

> "Tell him I'm not leaving!" he cried to Abraham. "I am Sodom and Gomorrah - tell him that - and I'm not leaving. Doesn't he say (and boast about it no less) that he created me free? Well then, I do as I please. I'm not leaving!"
> "I wash my hands of it, rebel. Good bye."
> "Good bye, you old well of virtue; good bye, lamb of God! And say to your boss, 'greetings from old Lot.' Tell him something else too: that he isn't just, isn't good. He is omnipotent. Only omnipotent, nothing else!"[6]

Similar to Camus' Sisyphus, Lot scorns the will of God and shapes his own destiny without fear or hope.

After rejecting the Christian version of God,

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[6]Report to Greco, p. 240.

Camus and Kazantzakis maintained that God is the creation of man. In book XII of the Odyssey, Odysseus tells his troops that all adventures and all experience lead to further revelations of God, that God grows as man grows, changes with man's environment and culture, for it is man who feeds him. When people are starving, he explains, they are led by the God of Hunger--that is by social justice. In Apollonian Greece he wears white linen cloth with grace, but in Africa he grows ferocious, wears bronze rings in his wide ears and nostrils, tall plumes on his head and sweats like a Negro. God needs us, he concludes, not out of love, but because we are the flesh through which he lives and grows. What Odysseus says is that we give shape to God according to our needs and our heritage. In other words as Joseph Campbell puts it:

> . . . the human mind in its polarity of the male and female modes of experience, in its passages from infancy to adulthood and old age, in its toughness and tenderness, and in its continuing dialogue with the world, is the ultimate mythogenetic zone - the creator and destroyer, the slave and yet the master, of all the gods.[7]

But what then is God for Kazantzakis and Camus? Here is where Nietzsche and Bergson enter the scene. For Nietzsche, God is the "Eternal Recurrence" for Bergson

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[7]Joseph Campbell, The Masks of God: Primitive Mythology (New York, 1959), p. 472.

the "Élan vital," for Kazantzakis "the divine rhythm" and for Camus "the present moment". In The Rock Garden Kazantzakis writes:

> All Earth is a seed planted in the coils of my mind. Whatever struggles for numberless years to unfold and fructify in the dark womb of matter bursts in my head like a small and silent lightning flash . . . let us gaze intently on this lightning flash, let us hold it for a moment . . . Let us transfix this momentary eternity which encloses everything, past and future . . .[8]

In L'Homme Révolté Camus also expresses the responsibility of man to preserve the present living moment:

> La vraie générosité envers l'avenir consiste à tout donner au présent.[9]
>
> Real generosity toward the future lies in giving all to the present.

According to Kazantzakis there is a great explosive "élan" in life's every molecule, as though each molecule had compressed into it the impetus of life in its entirety, ready to explode at every collision.

Both Greek and French authors have devoted several pages to Nietzsche, and what Camus wrote in L'Homme Révolté and Kazantzakis in Report to Greco can be summarized in the commentary:

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[8]Report to Greco, p. 189.

[9]L'Homme Révolté, p. 365.

Man is a king who carries his realm with him and advances. In the ephemeral moment of his life, man is capable of becoming immortal because he collaborates with the harmony of an immortal rhythm. Every individual, whether he knows it or not, collaborates with the entire cosmos. He bows before the eternity of the species and to the inevitable laws of nature. The only truth that exists is the world in which man must live and find salvation. The world has no end and no beginning. It spins around eternally; destiny is not governed by reason; religion and great ideas are worthless consolations, good only for cowards. Nietzsche denies all consolations - gods, fatherlands, moralities and truths. Man, remaining apart and companionless, using nothing but his own strength, begins to fashion a world which would not shame his heart. He must always choose the most dangerous road and have before his eyes the great abyss to which he is headed.

Nietzsche rejects Christianity because, he says, it is born of weakness and breeds weakness, while making war on those who are better. It is the revolt of failures of every kind: of slaves against master, of unfree minds against freethinkers, of the mediocre against the exception. Christianity has corrupted even the strongest by teaching men to consider the supreme values of the spirit

as something sinful, as temptations. In choosing the road of man without God's help, the rebel is ready to accept the price--suffering and despair in an absurd, unjust world. Kazantzakis heard Nietzsche's cry of anguish and pain and called him a martyr. He discovered that the Antichrist struggles and suffers the same as Christ does, and that sometimes in their moments of distress, their faces look the same. "The rebel," writes Kazantzakis of Nietzsche, "had a mysterious fascination. His words were a seductive spell which dizzied and intoxicated; they made your heart dance. Truly, his thought was a Dionysiac dance, an erected paen raised triumphantly at the most hopeless moment of the human and superhuman tragedy . . ."[10] As Camus explains, the earth-god Dionysos represents the agonizing beauty that coincides with suffering. The Dionysian in Nietzsche's early works represents uncontrolled passion, the expression of all instincts as opposed to Christian theology's negation of any happy life on earth. The Dionysian view of life is despairing in that it makes man constantly aware of his fatalism, and, at the same time, it is joyous because it enables man to discover the delights of his true world.

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[10] Report to Greco, p. 306.

The ideal art for Nietzsche, Kazantzakis informs us, was the Greek tragedy, where the two gods, Dionysos and Apollo, became friends, after a great combat, in which neither could subdue the other. An unbridled God, Dionysos led men and women in frenzied dances, in ecstatic motions, inspirations, adventures, dauntless suffering and mystical intoxication. But Apollo, the God of aesthetics and serene beauty, of logical order and philosophical calm, dreamt of the world's harmony, beauty and order. To unite these two antitheses in a totality was the Greek ideal. But then, Kazantzakis continues, tragedy disappeared with Socrates' logical analysis and dialectics. The Apollonian sobriety and Dionysian intoxication were replaced with the Socratic Spirit and then by the Alexandrian scholar of science. And now Nietzsche comes in the nineteenth century to try to resurrect Aeschylus and start a new tragic civilization springing from Germany. But it was a heart-breaking anguish, for he was not only a poet; he was also a philosopher. He could not synthesize his analytical and critical intellect with his creative drive. Hence the will to live was dominated by the will to dominate, and his Superman was born. But we leave Nietzsche here and turn to Bergson's theory of Creative Evolution.

Bergson's concept of life is the "élan vital," the impetus of life itself, a constant movement for creative action, of which every individual and every species is an experiment, in short, the constant re-creation of the world.

Kazantzakis wrote in his treatise on his professor:

> According to Bergson, life is an unceasing creation, a leap upwards, a vital outburst, an elan vital. . . . All the history of life up to man is a gigantic endeavor of the vital impulse to elevate matter, to create a being which would be free of the inflexible mechanism of inertia. . . . Two streams, that of life and that of matter, are in motion, though in opposite directions: one toward integration and the other toward disintegration. Bergson thinks of the élan vital as a seething stream which in its ebullition distills into falling drops. It is these drops which constitute matter."[11]

It is precisely this unceasing creativity that Bergson calls God. In Chapter III of his Creative Evolution he concludes that God and Life are one.

> God thus defined, has nothing of the already made; he is unceasing life, action, freedom. Creation, so conceived, it is not a mystery; we experience it in ourselves when we act freely.[12]

In order for the world to achieve harmony of the

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[11] The Odyssey, p. XVI.

[12] Henri Bergson, Creative Evolution, trans. Arthur Mitchell (New York, 1911), p. 248.

opposing forces, instinct and mind must be in perfect collaboration, only then the "élan vital" finds its supreme expression. Bergson and Kazantzakis explain that instinct knows things, enters in the very essence of life, but cannot express itself. Intellect knows the relationship between things and tries to understand their essence. Here we repeat briefly what we have already discussed in the first chapter in relation to Kazantzakis' philosophy concerning man's duty to his heart and mind, which is nothing else but an exploration of the unceasing antagonism of the Apollonian and Dionysian forces.

Similar to Camus, Kazantzakis was not a systematic philosopher. He had, however, Zorba's charisma to be able to grasp the meaning of everything through his senses and explain it with astonishing simplicity and clarity. He says that life is what inspiration is to a poem. The words obstruct the flow of inspiration, but nevertheless they express it. Only the human mind can dissect words, or unite them, or delineate them grammatically. But if we are to comprehend the poem, something else is needed. We must plunge into its heart, we must enter into rhythmical harmony with the poet himself, for only then may the words lose their rigidity and inflexibility,

or may the current rush out once more and the poem seethe in us with its true essence--something which a strictly grammatical analysis can never discover. In the same way, in order to comprehend the "élan vital," the analytical human mind is necessary. Through scientific examination the history of the earth and the living things on it are described, measured, and classified, but this is not enough. Just as both grammar and inspiration are required to understand a poem, both the mind and heart are needed in order to comprehend life.

It was a great struggle for Kazantzakis to search for God, until he finally realized that God must be "the curtain embroidered with blossoms, birds and men."[13] He had been seeking God all these years only to find Him suddenly in front of him, just like the fiancé, he says, who thinks he has lost his engagement ring, searches anxiously for it everywhere, and does not find it because he is wearing it on his finger:

> Solitude, silence, and the Aegean were secretly, compassionately collaborating with me. Time passed above me, it too one of my collaborators, and ripened the seed in my entrails. Together with the birds and stars I yoked myself to the eternal wheel and for the first time in my life, I believe, felt what true liberty is: to place oneself beneath God's - in other words harmony's - yoke.[14]

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[13] Report to Greco, p. 452.

[14] Ibid., p. 452.

Similarly in Camus' lyrical essays we find innumerable passages which express the author's awareness of being one with the world and his desire to help preserve its harmony:

> Que d'heures passées à écraser les absinthes, a caresser les ruines, à tenter d'accorder ma respiration aux soupirs tumultueux du monde! Enfoncé parmi les odeurs sauvages et les concerts d'insectes somnolents. J'ouvre les yeux et mon coeur à la grandeur insoutenable de ce ciel gorgé de chaleur. Ce n'est pas si facile de devenir ce qu'on est, de retrouver sa mesure profonde. . . . J'apprenais à respirer, je m'intégrais, et je m'accomplissais . . . Non, ce n'était pas moi qui comptais, ni le monde, mais, seulement l'accord et le silence qui de lui à moi faisait naître l'amour. Amour que je n'avais pas la faiblesse de revendiquer pour moi seul, conscient et orgueilleux de le partager avec toute une race, née du soleil et de la mer, vivante et savoureuse. . . .[15]

> How many hours have I spent crushing absinthe leaves, caressing ruins, trying to match my breathing with the world's tumultuous sighs! Deep among wild scents and concerts of somnolent insects, I open my eyes and heart to the unbearable grandeur of this heat-soaked sky. It is not so easy to become what one is, to rediscover one's deepest measure . . . I was learning to breathe, I was fitting into things and fulfilling myself . . . No, it was neither I nor the world that counted, but solely the harmony and silence that gave birth to the love between us. A love I was not foolish enough to claim for myself alone, proudly aware that I shared it with a whole race born in the sun and sea, alive and spirited. . . .

In the above lyrical lines, Camus expresses not only his love for the earth, but also his clear

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[15]"Noces à Tipasa," Noces, pp. 15-22.

consciousness derived from the knowledge that he has not disturbed the bond that unites man with the world, and man with man. For what is happiness really, he asks, if not the simple harmony between man and the life he leads? He has played his part well. He has heard the endless sighs of the sea, he has felt the beauty of the sky, mingled with tears and sunshine, he has seen the tears of the stars and he has synchronized his own breathing with the sound of the world in its constant dynamic recreation. It is the feeling which the actors have, he explains, when they know they have played their part well, in other words, when they have made their own gestures coincide with those of the ideal character they embody, having entered in some way into a prearranged design, bringing it to life with their own heart beat.

Camus too felt that uneasy creativity, the constant reproduction of the world, which he called "the song of the earth":

> Dans cette grande respiration du monde, le même souffle s'accomplissait à quelques secondes de distance et reprenait de loin le thème de pierre et d'air d'une fugue à l'échelle du monde. Chaque fois, le thème diminuait d'un ton: à le suivre un peu plus loin, je me calmais un peu plus. Et parvenu au terme de cette perspective sensible au coeur, j'embrassais d'un coup d'oeil cette fuite de collines toutes ensemble respirant et avec elle comme le chant

de la terre entière.[16]

> As the world thus filled and emptied its lungs, the same breath ended a few seconds away and then, a little further off, took up again the theme of a fugue that stone and air were playing on a world-scale. Each time, the theme was repeated in a slightly lower key. As I followed it into the distance, I became a little calmer. Reaching the end of so stirring a vision, with one final glance I took in the whole range of hills breathing in unison as they slipped away as if in some song of the entire earth.

It is man's profound duty, concludes Kazantzakis, to save God - in other words to collaborate with the harmony of the world in all its manifestations. We must adjust, as much as we can, the rhythm of our small and fleeting lives to the rhythm of God's march. In this way we mortals can achieve immortality, because we collaborate with One who is deathless. We have seen, continues Kazantzakis, the highest circle of spiraling powers and named this circle God. We could have given it any other name - Abyss, Mystery, Absolute Darkness, Absolute Light, Matter, Spirit, Ultimate Hope, Ultimate Despair, Silence - but we have named it God because only this name, for primordial reasons, can stir our hearts profoundly. Our God is not an abstract thought; he is modeled with our flesh and blood. He is not male or female; he is both man and woman. He is not Almighty;

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[16]"Le Désert," Noces, p. 70.

he struggles, trembles and stumbles in every living thing. He is not All-holy; he is merciless and without compassion. He loves things for a moment, then smashes them and passes on; he is dreadful as an erotic wind. Our God is not All-knowing; he struggles without certainty for nothing in the universe is certain. God cries for help. He will not save us. It is we that will save God. It is our duty, on hearing his cry, to run by his side, to be lost or to be saved with him.

> We are one. From the blind worm in the depths of the ocean to the endless arena of the galaxy, only one person struggles and is imperiled: You. And within your small and earthen breast only one thing struggles and is imperiled: the Universe. . . . The essence of our God is struggle. Pain, joy and hope unfold and labor within this struggle, world without end.[17]

It was with sadness that both Kazantzakis and Camus realized that the harmony of the world was in great danger in our century. Nietzsche was tragically misunderstood, and his dream for the ideal superman gave birth to ambitious, ferocious tigers who led Europe to chaos. Rebels ignored nature and beauty and insulted the common dignity of man. Christians were crucifying their fellow men. Absolute freedom of the few destroyed the freedom of the individual. Inhuman

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[17] Report to Greco, p. 206.

excesses denied the real grandeur of life. A ferocious age. Courtesy, harmony, balance, happiness, justice, life's sweetness, in short the Appollonian vision of the world was lost and the anarchical chaos, Dionysos, was let loose.

Kazantzakis nostalgically recalls the age-old battle between man and the bull depicted on the walls of Knossos, an ancient palace of the old pre-classical Minoan civilization of Crete. Kazantzakis calls this graceful battle the "Cretan Glance," and he explains it in several pages of Report to Greco. The Bull-God symbolizes the terrible earthquakes of Minoan Crete. The two men and the woman play with the bull and dance gracefully. As the bull lowers his head with the charge, the dancer grasps his horns and uses the upward thrust of the bull's head as the force to catapult him backward over the bull. The man is strong, the woman graceful. The dancers do not kill the bull out of love, in order to unite with him as in oriental religions, or because they are afraid of him. They do not kill the bull at all. On the contrary, they gaze at him without hate. This battle whets the Cretan's strength, cultivates his bodily grace, the fiery precision of movement, the discipline of will, the valour to measure his strength against the beast's fearful power without being overcome

with panic. Without the bull, the body of the dancers would not have become so flexible and strong, the soul so valiant.

But the Bull was loose now. The supreme synthesis was destroyed, the transitions of the modern world were violent. "Our epoch" writes Kazantzakis, "is a savage one; the Bull, the underground Dionysian powers, has been unleashed; the Apollonian crust of the earth is cracking . . ."[18]

Camus also expressed his pessimism in L'Homme Révolté, but at the end of the book he sends a hopeful message:

> Au bout de ces ténèbres, une lumière pourtant est inévitable que nous devinons déjà et dont nous avons seulement à lutter pour qu'elle soit. Par-delà le nihilisme, nous tous, parmi les ruines, préparons une renaissance.[19]
>
> At the end of this tunnel of darkness, however, there is inevitably a light, which we already divine and for which we only have to fight to ensure its coming. All of us, among the ruins, are preparing a renaissance beyond the limits of nihilism.

And also in Noces he writes:

> Nous avons à recoudre ce qui est déchiré, à rendre la justice imaginable dans un monde si évidement injuste, le bonheur significatif pour des peuples empoisonnés par le malheur du siècle . . .[20]

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[18]The Odyssey, p. XX. [19]L'Homme Révolté, p. 365.

[20]"Les amandiers," Noces, pp. 116-117.

> We must mend what has been torn apart, make justice imaginable again in the world so obviously unjust, give happiness a meaning once more to peoples poisoned by the misery of the century . . .

As we have seen in this chapter, it was because of love for man that both writers passed judgment on God. Neither of them was a militant atheist. In no respect did they try to change the world, or man's faith in God. The important thing for them was to find or create a purpose congruent with their own selves, and thus, by following it, reel out their particular desires and abilities to the farthest possible limit. For then only they would be collaborating harmoniously with the world.

The idea of oneness is the prevailing theme in both Camus' and Kazantzakis' works. In Noces, as the title of the book implies, Camus describes the nuptuals of the earth and the sky, of the mountains and the sea, of man with stones. And in Report to Greco Kazantzakis recalls the story which he once told his friend and Greek poet Angelos Sikelianos: how the queen bee flies into the air on her marriage day followed by an army of drones who try to catch her, but only the bridegroom succeeds. He mates with her and all the rest fall to the ground and die:

> "All the suitors die contented," I said to him, "because they all feel the bridegroom's joy at the nuptials, as though all had been united into one."
> But my friend simply burst into thunderous laughter.
> "I don't understand what you say at all. The bridegroom has to be me, me and no one else!"
> "The spirit is not called Me, it is called All of us," I replied with a laugh. And I reminded him of the words of a beloved Mystic: "I think I am being crowned, whereas others are the victors" . . .
> Both of us knew with certainty that the soul was omnipotent, with the single difference that he thought this of his own soul, I of the soul of mankind.[21]

The soul of mankind is God. Each individual's responsibility is to preserve and treasure this unity. If one man is imperiled, the whole Universe is imperiled. And this is why God always cries for help. Stones, plants, animals, men, all become steps on which God marches and ascends.

I would like to end this chapter with Kazantzakis' Credo, the "magic exorcism" as he himself calls it:

> I BELIEVE IN ONE GOD, AKRITAS, DIGENES, MILITANT, SUFFERING, MIGHTY, NOT ALMIGHTY, WARRIOR ON THE FARTHEST BOUNDARIES, EMPEROR AND COMMANDER OF ALL SHINING HOSTS, VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE.
> I BELIEVE IN THE NUMBERLESS, EPHEMERAL MASKS WHICH GOD HAS ASSUMED THROUGH THE AGES AND RECOGNISE BEHIND HIS ETERNAL IMPETUS AN INDISSOLUBLE UNITY.
> I BELIEVE IN HIS VIGILANT WEIGHTY STRUGGLE, WHICH TAMES AND FERTILIZES MATTER, THE LIFE-GIVING FOUNTAIN OF PLANTS, ANIMALS AND MEN.

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[21] Report to Greco, p. 182-183.

I BELIEVE IN THE HEART OF MAN, THE EARTHEN THRESHING-FLOOR WHERE AKRITAS WRESTLES DAY AND NIGHT WITH DEATH.
"HELP!" YOU CRY, LORD. "HELP!" YOU CRY, LORD, AND I LISTEN. WITHIN ME MY ANCESTORS AND DESCENDANTS AND ALL RACES, THE WHOLE EARTH, WE LISTEN WITH FEAR, WITH JOY, TO YOUR CRY.
BLESSED ARE THEY WHO LISTEN, AND WHO RUSH TO SAVE YOU, LORD, AND SAY: "YOU AND I. ALONE WE EXIST."
BLESSED ARE THEY WHO SAVE YOU, WHO MINGLE WITH YOU, LORD, AND SAY: "YOU AND I ARE ONE."
AND THRICE BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO CARRY UNBOWED ON THEIR SHOULDERS THE GREAT, SUBLIME, AND TERRIFYING SECRET: AND THIS UNITY DOES NOT EXIST![22]

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[22]Nikos Kazantzakis, Askitiki (Athens, 1971), passage translated by Paul Merchant.

EPILOGUE

At the beginning of this thesis, I stated that my intention was not to make a comparative study of Kazantzakis and Camus. My only purpose was to talk about these two writers. Now, after having plunged into their works, I cannot help noticing how similar they are in style and thought, a fact which explains why I have been so enthusiastically drawn to their artistic creations since my years in high school. I remember how happy and yet how sad I felt when Camus was awarded the Nobel Prize. Happy because Camus was given the honor and sad because Kazantzakis, despite all nominations, was never granted what he equally deserved. But both writers were modest and kind-hearted. We have seen how the Greek author expressed his sincere joy to Camus, while the latter confessed a kind of apology to him.

It is not surprising that their books have been translated in so many countries. There is one tongue that can speak directly to man's heart: the human language, and the language of the sea, the birds and the wind. It is thanks to this charisma, with which the two poets were blessed, that their books have so

much appeal to both believer and atheist, Christian and Moslem, oriental and westerner, scholar and ordinary man.

Despite their experiences with poverty and illness (Camus suffered from tuberculosus and Kazantzakis from leukemia), their appetite for life never decreased. They accepted all tragic manifestations of life and the inevitability of death with the dignity of the true man and made their works a hymn to life. Love of life, they maintained, could not exist without despair of life. And, indeed, who can conceive of happiness which is not associated with suffering? Bourgeois happiness bored and terrified them. They turned their back to all materialistic possessions, which add one more slavery to man, and welcomed the bareness of nature as one of the true riches of this world. The Mediterranean, wild or peaceful, bright or dark, friendly or hostile, sweet or menacing, was the single inspiration that gave shape to the images, sounds, and melodies in their work. Often strangers in their societies, they turned to the solitude of nature; but they would go back to the cities, for they felt that it was their duty to clasp hands with every man in the great struggle of humanity for justice and happiness.

Kazantzakis was mercilessly persecuted by his own

people. The Greek Orthodox Church excommunicated him for having depicted the unchristian priest, the right-wing Greeks condemned him because of his sympathy for the Russian Revolution, his communist friends abandoned him for his lack of fanaticism, and the Athenian aristocracy laughed at his laic language, the demotic language of the peasant and the fisherman. Unlike Camus, he spent little time defending himself and chose the road of exile, traveling, like Odysseus, in all directions of the globe. His innate asceticism caused him the painful parting from dear friends and especially from his beloved Greek poet Sikelianos, with whom he had trodden the holy Mount Athos. Sikelianos was searching for laurels and glory and had the romantic idea to become God. Indeed he once entered the realm of the absurd by trying to resurrect a dead man. In vain Kazantzakis told Sikelianos that he had done a wonderfully brave thing in wishing to overstep human boundaries, but that it should also be a wonderfully brave thing to acknowledge those boundaries fearlessly and without despair:

> "We are going to beat our heads against the bars, then beat them some more; many heads will be smashed to pieces, but one day the bars will break."
> "The head that breaks them must be mine - that's what I want," he declared . . . "mine" he shouted "mine and no one else's?"
> I smiled. This mine, mine, and me, me was my friend's terrible prison, a dungeon without windows or doors.

> "Do you know the highest peak a man can reach?" I asked in an effort to comfort him. "It is to conquer the self, the ego. When we reach this peak, and only then, Angelos, we shall be saved."[1]

It was precisely this peak that Albert Camus reached at the end of L'Homme Révolté. While he begins with, "I revolt, therefore I exist," he ends with "I revolt, therefore we exist." He states that:

> Le révolté veut être tout, s'identifier totalement à ce bien dont il a soudain pris conscience et dont il veut qu'il soit, dans sa personne, reconnu et salué - ou rien, c'est à dire se trouver définitivement déchu par la force qui le domine.[2]
>
> The rebel himself wants to be "all" - to identify himself completely with this good of which he has suddenly become aware and by which he wants to be personally recognized and acknowledge - or "nothing" in other words, to be completely destroyed by the force that dominates him.

The emphasis on fraternity is always associated with action which often is symbolized by the image of the sun. For the last chapter of L'Homme Révolté, in which Camus urges the people of Europe, as we have seen, to step beyond nihilism and prepare a Renaissance among the ruins, the author chose the title "La pensée de midi." The hour of the high noon, of maximum light, is the hour

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[1] Report to Greco, p. 186.

[2] L'Homme Révolté, p. 27.

of the deed, of energy.

In the Prologue of The Odyssey, Kazantzakis also opens the poem with an invocation to the sun, the image of which is going to illuminate the hero's life with light and fire, until finally it will set behind the horizon upon Odysseus' death:

> O Sun, great Oriental, my proud mind's golden cap, I love to wear you cocked askew, to play and burst in song throughout our lives, and so rejoice our hearts . . . Great Sun, who pass on high yet watch all things below, I see the sun-drenched cap of the great castle-wrecker . . . O Sun, my quick coquettin eye, my red-haired hound, sniff out all quarries that I love, give them swift chase, tell me what you have seen on earth, all that you've heard, and I shall pass them through my entrails secret forge till slowly, with profound caresses, play and laughter, stones, water, fire, and earth shall be transformed to spirit, and the mud-winged and heavy soul, freed of its flesh, shall like a flame serene ascend and fade in sun.[3]

The sun, element of the sky, is antithetical to the sea, element of the earth, but in synthesis the two opposed forces produce life. Such dualities, resulting in synthesis, are eminent throughout the works of Kazantzakis and Camus. Apollo would look anemic without Dionysos, passion for life is born from the reality of death, extreme happiness springs out of despair, ultimate hope out of void, light out of darkness. In book X, Odysseus exclaims:

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[3]The Odyssey, p. 1.

> "If only I could fight with both my friends and foes, join in my heart God, anti-God, both yes and no, like that round fruit which two lips make when they are kissing!"[4]

Both writers were tormented by dualities, by the complexity of the Universe and especially by the inevitability of death. But they came to the brave conclusion that if man cannot conquer death, he must then conquer the fear of death.

Both believed in man's strength to stand against destiny and shape his fate to the best of his ability. Inner freedom can be achieved only by liberating oneself from all fears and hopes. Man should not turn his back to all that constituted his life - religion, philosophies, culture - out of despair, but out of his own strong will. Then in a desert, free from all idols, past or future ones, he must start building his life anew, in the full anguish of his thirst.

Both were Dionysian, earth-driven men; both placed instincts and heart above the more ordered deductions of the mind, although they both found the Apollonian vision of balance and order necessary for the harmony of the world. Both celebrated the primitive origins of the human spirit and turned to the earth in search of God.

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[4] Ibid., p. 311.

Both extolled struggle and sacrifice and saw in Christ the summit of human suffering; both placed the primitive man of nature above the man of letters in the city. In nature man has everything he needs, because his desires can take the measure of his riches; everything can be seen, and is known the very moment it is enjoyed; there are no secrets, no deceptions, no lies; all truths are naked, like nature itself.

Both cherished friendship and women; both gave value and dignity to the human condition by claiming that man himself, with an heroic will, may create the structure of his life and work on the abyss itself.

It was both writers' deepest ambition to embrace the world with all its good and harm, light and evil, tears and laughters, joy and sorrow. Kazantzakis says:

> All wood is from the true cross because all wood can be made into a cross. Similarly, all bodies are sacred because all bodies can be made into a bow. My entire lifetime I was a bow in merciless, insatiable hands. How often those invisible hands drew and overdrew the bow until I heard it creak at the breaking point!"[5]

And this is how Albert Camus ends L'Homme Révolté:

> A cette heure où chacun d'entre nous doit tendre l'arc pour refaire ses preuves, conquérir, dans et contre l'histoire, ce qu'il possède déjà, la

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[5]Report to Greco, p. 494.

maigre moisson de ses champs, le bref amour de cette terre, à l'heure où naît enfin un homme, il faut laisser l'époque et ses fureurs adolescentes. L'arc se tord, le bois crie. Au sommet de la plus haute tension va jaillir l'élan d'une droite flèche, du trait le plus dur et le plus libre.[6]

At this moment, when each of us must fit an arrow to his bow and enter the lists anew, to reconquer within history and in spite of it, that which he owns already, the thin yield of his fields, the brief love of this earth, at this moment when at last a man is born, it is time to forsake our age and its adolescent furies. The bow bends; the wood complains. At the moment of supreme tension, there will leap into flight an unswerving arrow, a shaft that is inflexible and free.

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[6]L'Homme Révolté, p. 367.

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