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HOPE: AN EXPLORATION OF CAMUS, MARCEL AND  
INTIMACY.

The University of Oklahoma, Ph.D., 1973  
Philosophy

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The University of Oklahoma  
Graduate College

HOPE: AN EXPLORATION OF  
CAMUS, MARCEL, AND  
INTIMACY

A Dissertation  
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY  
Field of Philosophy  
by  
Albert B. Randall, Jr.  
Norman, Oklahoma  
1972

Hope: An ~~Ex~~ploration of  
Camus, Marcel, and  
Intimacy

A Dissertation

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To Jeanie: Whose gift of intimacy has been and is the source which undergirds all my hope, and in whom I find the very meaning of human hope and promise of the future.

For Albert: Whose life-long struggle with the absurd taught me the meaning of human integrity and honesty. As the struggle came to an end during the writing of this dissertation, the absurd fell victim to his quiet and humble courage.

And for June: In whose love one man found the strength to confront absurdity and the nurture to continue the struggle.

## Acknowledgments

I should like to express my appreciation to the members of my dissertation committee for their assistance and willingness to enter such a venture into the meaning of hope: to Dr. Jitendra Mohanty and to Dr. Carelton Berenda. I especially wish to thank Dr. William Horosz and Dr. Kenneth Merrill for their effort and time in the writing of not only this dissertation, but also for their aid in the writing of my master's thesis, which began the exploration of hope. I wish to express much more than just warm gratitude to Dr. Robert Shahan for his willingness to chair the dissertation committee, for past time and effort in my journey of understanding, and, most importantly, for the empathy of his humanity. Lastly, I wish to express my thanks to many whose encouragement contributed most emphatically to my understanding of hope and intimacy: Jeanie, Jaimie, and Alicia; Albert and June; Tom Boyd, Duane Forderhase, and James Carroll.

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## INTRODUCTION: HOPE--AN EXPLORATION

The subject of this dissertation is hope. Present literature in religion, philosophy, and psychology evidences a growing interest in the nature and the dynamics of hope. If one of the developments of this dissertation bears out, then this interest should not be surprising, for hope in an atomic age is truly an existential concern. Perhaps as nothing in the history of mankind, the Bomb reveals the dreadful contingency of human life. In a time when "future shock" becomes a problem, hope becomes a concern. In an age of plastic anonymity, the intimacy of hope offers a promise of (at least, a momentary) salvation. Thus, in this writer's thinking, the relevance of a dissertation concerned with hope needs no justification beyond what has been briefly said, for life in the twentieth century is the justification.

For practical purposes the content of this study will be limited to five major concerns: Gabriel Marcel's understanding of hope; Albert Camus' understanding of hope; a comparison and contrast of Camus and Marcel on hope; outline of a physical theory of hope; and, a discussion of the relation between hope and intimacy. The study has

been limited to these five areas because no dissertation could adequately begin to consider all the facets of hope. For this reason some justification should be offered for selecting these five concerns out of so many, and to that task I now turn.

First, Gabriel Marcel and his thoughts on hope were selected because he is literally the philosopher of hope. No other philosopher has written as systematically or as passionately on the nature of hope. As will be indicated in Chapter One, hope is not just a concept in his philosophy, but is the focus around which his philosophy revolves. His metaphysic of hope in Homo Viator is the outstanding phenomenological analysis of hope in all of philosophic literature. Thus, Marcel was selected as a foundation for this study. While the dissertation will branch out in several directions from Marcel, with one exception, a theory of hope on the level of sensation, it will never substantially leave the foundation he has laid.

Second, Albert Camus was originally selected for this study as a contrast to Marcel, as the philosopher of no hope, i.e., as the author of The Myth of Sisyphus. As the second chapter will show, this standard understanding of Camus is incomplete, at best, or incorrect. Camus and Sisyphus should not be identified; and with this recognition came a change in this study, for Camus could not be

developed as the polar opposite to Marcel. However, rather than raising the problem of including Camus in this dissertation, the value of his contributions became even more significant, for Camus offers a contrasting option, many similarities, and several new insights into the nature of hope. It is Camus' willingness to struggle with Sisyphus and the promise that this shared struggle holds that contribute to the study of hope more than any other factor in this dissertation.

Third, in considering the best methodological strategy for developing the research connected with this dissertation, I considered two options that offered promise: to develop by comparison and contrast correlative concepts in Marcel and Camus; or, to develop each man's understanding of hope as an independent whole. The second option is employed because, in my judgment, it offers the best strategy for systematic understanding. When one considers (a) that each philosopher may use the same words in different ways and (b) the additional problem of relating Sisyphus to the Rebel in Camus, as will be done in Chapter Two, the second option is more promising for philosophical clarity. Such a procedure requires a later independent consideration of the contrasts and comparisons between Camus and Marcel and is undertaken in Chapter Three.

Four, since Chapter One develops Marcel's understanding of hope, Chapter Two develops Camus' understanding of hope, and Chapter Three discusses the differences and similarities between the two using the preceding chapters as interpretative data, there is a need for critical evaluation. The method selected for critical evaluation is comparative; i.e., a comparison of Chapter Three with my own thesis on the nature and dynamics of hope. In comparison, the two significant parts of my thesis are the development of a doctrine of hope on the level of sensation and an analysis of the relation between hope and intimacy. Such is the content of Chapter Four.

Following the Vita there are three appendices. Appendix A and Appendix B represent what might be called the raw data for Chapters One and Two, respectively. Appendix C outlines a possible insight of Camus concerning the nature of alcoholism and, in so doing, offers a valuable tool for understanding a serious contemporary problem.

Before turning to Chapter One, I want to mention two other considerations appropriate to the introduction: the philosophical method of Camus and Marcel and their general philosophical relationship; and the question of French, in which both men originally wrote.

Marcel and Camus can generally be grouped together as existential phenomenologists, or, for short, existentialists. This statement, however, is adequate only as long as it is maintained as loose and open-ended. One of the factors which complicates such an attempt to relate the two is that both Camus and Marcel deny such a grouping. In a certain sense, both men deny that they have any philosophical system and, thus, cannot be grouped within any philosophical method. Marcel writes that he is not an existentialist, but a "Neo-Socratic." Camus states that The Myth of Sisyphus, often considered a central book in existential literature, is an attack upon the position called existential. Furthermore, both philosophers were often severely critical of the other. Nevertheless, there is more similarity of method and interest than difference, and such is all any attempt at grouping should claim. Also, in fairness, it should be stated that, perhaps the strongest objection each had to being called an existentialist was that Sartre was a world-renowned leader in the movement: Marcel objected to Sartre's caustic anti-theism (anti-transcendentalism); Camus objected to Sartre's apparent lack of empathy for his fellow man.

It is, nonetheless, accurate to say that Camus and Marcel employed a common method, existential phenomenology,

and shared a common concern, the meaning and value of life.

What is the existential phenomenological method? While there are many different definitions of this method and several variations, the following statement by Peter Koestenbaum may be considered adequately representative:

All knowledge and all truth depend on the careful and accurate description of first-person human experience, exactly as that experience manifests itself to us. In other words, to know the truth and to achieve accuracy and reliability in any knowledge whatever, I must focus--or bracket--my relevant experience, detach myself from any immediate involvement in it, and then observe, analyze, abstract, and describe that experience . . . such as happiness, depression, the future, the anticipation of death. . . . The descriptions must be of precisely these experiences as they present themselves. . . .

Existentialism is merely the assiduous application of the phenomenological technique to the human situation. This effort has led to a theory of man based on sensitive and elaborate descriptions of how it feels to be a human being in the world.<sup>1</sup>

Both Marcel and Camus utilize this descriptive method on the same concern: what it means and "how it feels to be a human being in the world." To this extent they are existentialists. But, they also depart from the standard phenomenological method by denying that any man can detach himself from immediate involvement; thus, Marcel and Camus deny the bracketing mentioned by Koestenbaum. This is to

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<sup>1</sup>Peter Koestenbaum, Philosophy: A General Introduction, pp. 304-5.

say that the existential phenomenologist differs from the ordinary phenomenologist at precisely this point: the possibility of bracketing. The concern is, however, the same for both, and this is what makes them phenomenologists: ". . . first person human experience, exactly as that experience manifests itself to us." The reliability of these comments should be evident in reading Chapters One and Two. I now turn to a consideration of the language problem.

There are two linguistic concerns relevant to this dissertation: First, in both Marcel and Camus, there are two uses of the word "hope." One of these is an ordinary, non-philosophical, usage of the word found in such statements as the following: "I hope the sun shines tomorrow"; "I hope to see you Saturday"; etc. The second usage is the philosophical one, where "hope" is meant to express a philosophical relation. As indicated in Appendix B, the demarcation between the two uses is not as clear-cut in Camus as it is in Marcel. The concern of this dissertation is the philosophical usage of "hope."

Second, the works, philosophical or dramatic, of both Camus and Marcel were originally written in French and later translated into English. The question that arises is: What significance does this have for the study? The answer is--little, if any. Two justifications can be

given. The significant works for determining the understanding of hope on the part of both philosophers have been translated into English--Appendices A and B should substantiate such a claim. However, this would not be justification for practically ignoring the French were it not for the second justification: There is no dispute or problematic difficulty in the English word "hope" as a translation of the French word "espérance." The question as to the meaning of "espérance" in Camus or Marcel is not a semantical or lexicographical one, but a philosophical problem. The same statement is also true of the verbal uses of "hope" by both men. "To hope" as an English verb and "espérer" as a French verb offer no semantical or lexicographical problems, only philosophical ones. Thus, with two exceptions which pose not a semantical problem but a language aid, translation problems will not enter in this study. I now turn to the exceptions.

"Espérance" is feminine in gender. In French, nouns of the feminine gender usually fall into one of six classes: nouns representing females, fruits, countries, sciences, nouns expressing dimension or capacity, or nouns ending in ance. "Espérance" falls into these last two classes: nouns expressing dimension or capacity and ending in ance. Philosophically, the former of these two classes is most appropriate, for hope is a capacity or a dimension



of the human being. "I hope" (j' espère) is always used by Marcel in the present indicative, which coincides with his emphasis that hope is a way of participating in the future while living in the present. Chapter One will develop this.

Camus, in contrast to Marcel, has six uses of espérer in tenses other than the present indicative:

<u>The Plague:</u>	<u>espérèrent sans raison</u>	p. 90
	<u>être trop espère</u>	p. 195
<u>The Fall:</u>	<u>j' esperais</u>	p. 38
	<u>j' avais espéré</u>	p. 100
<u>Exile and the Kingdom:</u>	<u>j' esperais</u>	p. 55
<u>The Possessed:</u>	<u>j' esperais</u>	p. 134

Four of these uses are imperfect indicative, one is pluperfect indicative, and one is present passive. Chapter Two and Appendix B will show that these six exceptions are philosophically insignificant, i.e., they serve the literary purpose of emotional description. Thus, Camus and Marcel are in agreement as to the philosophical importance attached to "espérer" in the present indicative. This importance is seen by considering the uses of the present indicative in French:

1. To denote an action in the entire carrying out;
2. To denote a state or action in progress without considering either its duration or its beginning and end;

3. To indicate that the state or action expressed by the verb in the present is always true or at least usually so;
4. To denote a state or action as beginning in the past and still in progress (especially to denote an immediate past or immediate future).

"J' espère," as used by both Marcel and Camus, is a combination of 2 and 4. The substantiation of this usage is to be found in the first two chapters, to which I now turn.

CHAPTER ONE: HOPE AND THE  
MYSTERY OF BEING

The subject of this dissertation is the nature of hope, especially the place of hope in the intimacy of human relationships. Many men--philosophers, theologians, psychologists, journalists, etc.--have written about hope. As indicated in the introduction, this study will be limited to a consideration of hope in the thought of Albert Camus and Gabriel Marcel as well as a provisional development of my own views on the topic.<sup>1</sup> Marcel develops a consistent metaphysic of hope; Camus' thoughts on hope are dispersed throughout his writings. Thus Marcel is truly the philosopher of hope, and it is his philosophy of hope that this chapter will explore.<sup>2</sup> As indicated in the introduction, Camus' thoughts on hope will occupy Chapter Two.

In any study of hope Marcel is the natural place for the philosopher to begin because hope is not just a topic upon which he writes--hope plays a central and a dominant role in his thought. Its central significance can be easily seen by examining Appendix A: with few exceptions

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<sup>1</sup>These views will be developed in the final chapter and will constitute the major criticism of Marcel and Camus.

<sup>2</sup>Most of the content of this chapter will come from a revision of the first chapter of my masters thesis: Albert B. Randall, Jr., The Central Structure of Hope in Marcel, unpublished Master's thesis, The University of Oklahoma, Norman, 1970.

Marcel relates hope to every significant concept in his philosophy--Being, mystery-problem, primary-secondary reflection, the body, the soul, life, participation, communion, transcendence, love, faith, creative fidelity, death, despair, freedom, humility, prayer, choice, et al. Marcel himself has recognized the central significance of hope to his thought, as is shown by the following words from his speech of acceptance of the Peace Prize of the Borsenverein des Deutschen Buchhandels, September 20, 1964:

If there is a concept in all my work dominating all others, it is without doubt that of hope, understood as mysterium, a concept, as I have previously stated, that is enlivened as though from within through ardent anticipation. 'I hope for us for You,' I have written, and that is still today the only formulation which satisfies me.

We can say still more accurately, I hope for You, Who are the living peace, and for us, who are still fighting with ourselves and each other, that one day it will be granted us to enter You and share your completeness.

With this wish and prayer I conclude my reflections.<sup>3</sup>

Having indicated the significance of hope in his philosophy, I want next to consider the following: Where, or with what, does Marcel begin his reflections or thoughts? The answer is a phenomenological one: with first-hand personal experience. In one's own experience lie the truth or denial of hope. So Marcel says: let us look at those experiences of immediate involvement. If we do,

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<sup>3</sup>Gabriel Marcel, Philosophical Fragments, p. 19.

according to Marcel, we will find an intrinsic property of all those experiences in which I am involved: mystery. Thus, to understand Marcel one must understand what he means by mystery.

The best way to understand his use of mystery is to contrast it with the problematic, as Marcel so often does. One such contrast is as follows:

. . . there can only be a problem for me where I have to deal with facts which are, or which I can at least cause to be exterior to myself; facts presenting themselves to me in a certain disorder for which I struggle to substitute an orderliness capable of satisfying the requirements of my thought. When this substitution has been effected the problem is solved. As for me, who devote myself to this operation, I am outside (above or below, if you like) the facts with which it deals. But when it involves realities closely bound up with my existence, realities which unquestionably influence my existence as such, I cannot consciously proceed in this way. That is to say, I cannot make an abstraction of myself, or, if you like, bring about this division between myself on the one hand and some ever-present given principle of life on the other; I am effectively and vitally involved in this reality . . . mystery . . .<sup>4</sup>

A problem I can detach from myself because it is external to me; a mystery cannot be so detached because I am deeply involved in it--in fact, according to Marcel, I live it. Thus, a problem is basically an epistemological concern that admits, at least in principle, of solution; mystery is an ontological concern to which the category of

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<sup>4</sup>Gabriel Marcel, Homo Viator, pp. 68-9.

solubility is inapplicable.<sup>5</sup> According to Marcel, one of the grave dangers in contemporary philosophy, especially analytic philosophy, is the reducing of mysteries to problems. When this happens, as it often does in a society dependent upon technology and technological thinking, man becomes dehumanized and in danger of becoming a naked ape, a tool-maker, a producer, a complicated cybernetic robot.<sup>6</sup> To correct this dehumanizing tendency it is necessary to reintroduce mystery into the human situation, and one may understand the whole of Marcel's thought as such an attempt.

Hope is a mystery for Marcel. Another way to say the same thing is: Hope is a way of living in the mystery of being, as this chapter title indicates: "Hope and the Mystery of Being." The remainder of this chapter will be a spelling out of just how hope is a way of living in the mystery of being. The next step is to explore Marcel's meaning of "Being," because his thought concentrates upon man's experience of Being.

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<sup>5</sup>In Chapter Two it will be noted that Camus claims that the absurd is not a problem. Chapter Three will compare mystery and the absurd.

<sup>6</sup>An excellent study of Marcel and the Problem of dehumanization is to be found in a dissertation: Harold Baldwin Hoyt, The Concept of the Dehumanization of Man in the Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, unpublished dissertation, The University of Oklahoma, Norman, 1970.

It should be clear from the preceding discussion that "Being is a mystery," what Marcel calls the "ontological mystery." The relation that Marcel is concerned with is the relation between human existence and Being, as Ronald Grimsley has pointed out:

The basic effort of his thought is to grasp the relation between the 'existing' individual, seized in his concrete singularity and actively striving towards self-realization, and the presence of Being by which he is encompassed. He is interested in the call of Being to the individual soul.<sup>7</sup>

Marcel is, thus, not interested in an abstract metaphysic of Being, but in the concrete experience of Being, of which hope is one such experience.

What is Being? Or more accurately, what does it mean to say that Being is a mystery? First, Being cannot be defined since to define Being would be to treat it as a problem. Only once in all his writings does Marcel attempt anything like a definition, and he admits that it is not a definition but a suggestive pointer:

As for defining the word 'being,' let us admit that it is extremely difficult (if not impossible). I would merely suggest this method of approach: being is what withstands-- or what would withstand--an exhaustive analysis bearing on the data of experience and aiming to reduce them step by step to elements increasingly devoid of intrinsic or significant value.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Ronald Grimsley, Existential Thought, p. 194.

<sup>8</sup>Gabriel Marcel, The Philosophy of Existentialism, p. 14.



Second, Being as a mystery is necessary and not contingent. That which could be exhausted by the analytical procedure described above would be contingent. But Being withstands the process and is, according to Marcel, both eternal and inexhaustible. Third, Being as both an eternal and inexhaustible mystery excludes the possibility of non-Being. In words which echo the Greek past, non-Being cannot be. The denial of Being is, not non-Being, but Having. In keeping with the dichotomy, Having is a problem, for to have something is to control it, either through abstract reasoning, power, or technology; but mysteries cannot be controlled, they can only be accepted. The category of Having coincides with that of the problematic: Having is always an external relationship; Being is an internal one. I cannot not-be, but I can deny Being by reducing myself to a series of functional categories (i.e., a series of "haves"): I have a body, I have a mind, I have a wife, I have . . . etc. The danger of this reduction is that I become my summation of "haves" and in so doing deny the call and depth of Being. In regard to the topic of this dissertation, to sell out to the world of Having is to lose the potentiality and the possibility for hope. Fourth, this dual possibility for life, Being or Having, raises a problem for Marcel: Since the temptation to have (which

is the same as that to control, manipulate, own) is so strong, how can I concretely experience Being, or in Marcel's terminology, participate in being?<sup>9</sup>

In answer Marcel states that there are three levels (or modes, ways, avenues) of existence at which man participates in Being. They are (1) hierarchical and (2) interdependent in relation: the second level is richer than the first, but dependent on it. The third is similarly related to the first and second: sensation, actualized through incarnation; communion, actualized through love, hope, and fidelity; and transcendence, actualized through prayer, prophetic hope, and creativity. Most of the rest of this chapter will be a developing of these levels and their relation to hope.

While this has not answered the question, "what is being?" it has hinted at what Marcel means by the term, and, in the final analysis, the question cannot be answered because Being is a mystery. However, the following can be concluded: Being, for Marcel, can be said to

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<sup>9</sup>In Marcel's thought there is a definite value judgment involved in this problem, which is really the question of the relation between Being and existence: the value (or authenticity) of life is directly proportionate to the extent (or depth) of one's participation (or involvement) in Being. While Being can be denied by Having, it is done so only at the loss of the richness of lived experience and the reduction of human possibilities.

be the primary ontological, epistemological, and ethical category of human existence, and mystery is Being's dominant characteristic. It is Being that gives ontological weight to human existence. The structure of knowledge is itself grounded in Being, as Marcel states in The Existential Background of Human Dignity: ". . . there is a mystery of knowledge which is of the ontological order."<sup>10</sup> Truth for Marcel, then, becomes a dynamic feature of the ontological order imbedded in human existence: ". . . truth, far from being defined as a logical form, is a function of what can be called potential experience."<sup>11</sup>

Using discussions of mystery and Being as background, I shall now discuss the three levels of participation in Being, with the emphasis lying on the place of hope in these levels of participation.

### Sensation as a Mystery

Marcel, as an existential phenomenologist, begins with "what is immediately given," and uses his descriptive methodology to draw out the implications and meanings of this given. Sensation is this immediate given, and as immediate it is not a problem to define, but a mystery, as Pedro Adams has pointed out:

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<sup>10</sup>Gabriel Marcel, The Existential Background of Human Dignity, p. 80.

<sup>11</sup>Gabriel Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, p. 29.

. . . sensation is not a problem, but a mystery; it is strictly immediate and in it reality is immediately given to me, and I am immediately present to the world, rather than being fenced in a subjective world of appearances. Sensation is a mode of participation . . . [in] the world as lived in its intimate communion with myself . . .<sup>12</sup>

It is because sensation is immediately given that it is a mystery for Marcel, which is to say that sensation cannot be reduced to a neurological problem--or an epistemological one either.

It is the nature of sensation that it is always "sensation of," i.e., sensation is intentional. The base intention is the sensation of "my body," expressed by Marcel as "I am my body." This primary sensation provides the basis for the unity of human experience. Whatever I experience, it is related to me through my body; hence, my body becomes the central existential referent for every actual experience. The recognition of this intention of "bodyness" leads directly to a significant concept in Marcel--"incarnation."

Marcel begins with an immediate given sensation and finds that it is intentional, i.e., I am my body. But to be tied-to-a-body means to be in a particular-concrete-now situation. Conceptually, to be tied-to-a-body, or to be in a particular-concrete-now situation, is to be

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<sup>12</sup>Pedro Adams, "Marcel, Metaphysician or Moralist," Philosophy Today, vol. 10 (Fall, 66), pp. 184-5.

incarnate. Incarnation brings particularity, concreteness, and temporality to human existence. It is incarnation that underlies the formation of the personality, as Marcel indicates in Homo Viator: ". . . the personality is only realized in the act by which it tends to become incarnate. . . . Because it participates in the inexhaustible fullness of the being from which it emanates."<sup>13</sup> Thus, sensation, which becomes experience via incarnation (I am my body), is a mode of participation in Being, but it is a primitive and limited mode. This limitation is especially important for the concern of this dissertation--hope. Incarnation of the body experienced through sensation is limited to the here and now, the present. Hope, on the other hand, while affecting the present, is not limited to it, but mysteriously participates in the future. This is to say that, at the level of sensation, hope is not possible, as Marcel states in Homo Viator:

. . . experience seems to establish that hope is able to survive an almost total ruin of the organism. . . . the principle must be laid down that any physical theory of hope, [a theory of hope based on sensation], is absurd and . . . contradictory; perhaps we might be justified in maintaining that hope coincides with the spiritual principle itself.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Gabriel Marcel, Homo Viator, p. 26.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 36.

In this denial of the impossibility of a physical theory of hope, I find an inconsistency and a major point of disagreement. The inconsistency occurs because Marcel tries to hold the following two positions: (1) sensation is a mystery, and (2) hope is impossible at the level of sensation. An analysis of these two statements and their incompatibility will be taken up in the fourth chapter. My major point of disagreement is that I think Marcel is wrong in his denial. In other words, a theory of hope can be developed on the level of sensation. The fourth chapter will devote considerable space to this. However, before I continue with the present development, it might be of value to discuss briefly what a theory of hope on the level of sensation might be. There are, I think, two possibilities. First, a theory of hope can be developed which relates hope to the instinct for survival. Chapter Four will develop such a position. Second, Marcel's use of the levels of sensation and communion place the existence and the concerns of the solitary ego (i.e., man in the absence of a communal relation) in the level of sensation. From this perspective a theory of hope can be developed as the will turned inward--hope without a communal relation. Chapter Four will also develop this position.

Following the recognition of incarnation and its significance for personality development and the nature of man, Marcel proceeds with a phenomenological analysis of incarnation which reveals two further elements: what might loosely be called "thinking" or "reflection," and the mysterious union of soul and body. The former incarnate discovery, thinking, leads Marcel into a discussion of primary and secondary reflection, which, while it is a most provocative discussion, is not needed to develop his metaphysic of hope, and it will be omitted here. The latter incarnate discovery, union of soul and body, is most significant because of the relation of soul and hope.

The union of soul and body is, according to Marcel, a mystery. The how of this union is unknown. The why is also unknown, except that it is the soul of man that responds to the call of Being. Just what the soul is, remains a mystery. However, since the how, why, and what of the soul and body remain unanswered, Marcel does write that there are some characteristics of the soul that we can know. In his words: "The soul lives by hope alone; hope is perhaps the very stuff of which our souls are made. . . . To despair of a man--is not this to deny him a soul?"<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Gabriel Marcel, Being and Having, p. 80.

. . . there is the closest of connections between the soul and hope. I almost think that hope is for the soul what breathing is for the living organism. Where hope is lacking the soul dries up and withers, it is no more than a function, it is merely fit to serve as an object of study to a psychology that can never register anything but its location or absence. It is precisely the soul that is the traveller; it is of the soul and of the soul alone that we can say with supreme truth that 'being' necessarily means 'being on the way' (en route).<sup>16</sup>

But the characteristic of the soul which is present and at the disposal of others is that it cannot think in terms of cases; in its eyes there are no cases at all.<sup>17</sup>

These passages indicate at least four characteristics of the soul: first, the soul is that part of man which responds to the call of Being through hope; second, the soul is the traveller, Homo Viator; third, the soul by its very nature denies the power of induction; fourth, it is the soul of man that is open to the existence of other men, which brings us to communion and to the first possibility for hope.

However, before I begin a discussion of the nature of communion, a problem in two of the preceding quotations needs explication. Is Marcel speaking literally about the soul and hope, or metaphorically? It is not an easy question to answer; indeed, any definitive answer may be

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<sup>16</sup>Gabriel Marcel, Homo Viator, pp. 10-11.

<sup>17</sup>Gabriel Marcel, The Philosophy of Existentialism, p. 41.



impossible. To see the difficulty of the problem compare the following two statements: ". . . hope is perhaps the very stuff of which our souls are made. . . ," and ". . . there is the closest of connections between the soul and hope." Taken literally, the two statements may be inconsistent since the first seems to identify the soul and hope and the second makes no such identification. But, does the first identify hope and the soul? Any answer is most problematic, for it depends upon the meaning of "very stuff" and the force of "perhaps." I do not think any definite conclusion can be reached about these words. In accordance with these considerations my evaluation is as follows: Based upon intuition and the possible inconsistency (dependent upon meaning and force in the above) in a literal interpretation, Marcel is speaking metaphorically in these passages. Such a judgment does not, however, claim any absolute certitude.

#### Communion as a Mystery

Because the soul of man is an incarnated soul, the existence of (and possibilities for fellowship with) other men is no problem for Marcel, but is firmly established in the mystery of sensation. In fact, the basic sensation, I am my body, points immediately to the existence of the other; as Marcel observes in Being and Having and Homo

Viator:

Not only do we have a right to assert that others exist, but I should be inclined to contend that existence can be attributed only to others, and in virtue of their otherness, and that I cannot think of myself as existing except in so far as I conceive of myself as not being the others; and so as other than them. I would go so far as to say that it is of the essence of the other that he exists. I cannot think of him as other without thinking of him as existing.<sup>18</sup>

We might say . . . that my relationship to myself is mediated by the presence of the other person, by what he is to me and what I am for him. But it is of capital importance for our subject that we see at the same time this spiritual interconnection . . . invariably appears as veiled in mystery to him who is conscious of having a part in it. . . .<sup>19</sup>

It is accurate, then, to say that, for Marcel, "to be" always means "to be with." In Creative Fidelity he comments on just how closely being with determines even our ability to communicate when he writes: ". . . I communicate effectively with myself only insofar as I communicate with the other person. . . ." <sup>20</sup>

Marcel has, at this point, merely established the existence of other men; in his terms, the existence of "the Other." His existence, while raising the possibility of communion, does not guarantee it. Experience does,

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<sup>18</sup>Gabriel Marcel, Being and Having, p. 104.

<sup>19</sup>Gabriel Marcel, Homo Viator, p. 49.

<sup>20</sup>Gabriel Marcel, Creative Fidelity, p. 34.

however, indicate that others do not always remain distant. Sometimes human beings move into a relationship of intimacy, and when this occurs communion is realized. In Marcel's language, in communion the Other becomes present as a "Thou." But what brings about this change from a face lost in the multitude to the sharing of intimacy? Any answer that Marcel might give would be related to the mystery of Being, for communion is a mode of participation in Being and thus, there is no definitive (complete, adequate) answer for Marcel. But, there is a partial answer whose roots lie in the sharing of lived experiences. Marcel writes that

. . . what brings me closer to another being and really binds me to him is not the knowledge that he can check and confirm an addition or subtractive I had to do for my business account; it is rather the thought that he has passed through the same difficulties as I have, that he has undergone the same dangers, that he has had a childhood, been loved, that others have been attracted to him and have had hope in him; and it is also means that he is called upon to suffer, to decline and die.<sup>21</sup>

The realization that the Other and I are fellow travellers creates the potential for communion--the establishing of a bond of intimacy between us. Communion may then be defined as that intimate immediacy in which the Other becomes present to me as a Thou and I become present to him as a Thou. For Marcel the presence of a Thou is

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

immediate and mysterious. The presence is immediate because the Thou becomes a part of me, and even death cannot remove the presence of the person who is a Thou.<sup>22</sup> The presence of a Thou in communion is a mystery because the possibility and the actuality of communion are grounded in the mystery of Being.

It is at the level of communion that hope first becomes possible because, for Marcel, hope is always a relationship of presence, an actualization of communion, and thus, a participation in Being. Marcel explicitly points this out when he writes that hope is

. . . only possible on the level of the us, or we might say of the agape, and that it does not exist on the level of the solitary ego, self-hypnotized and concentrating exclusively on individual aims . . . . we must not confuse hope and ambition, for they are not of the same spiritual dimension.<sup>23</sup>

Since hope is only possible on the level of communion, it follows that hope cannot exist on the level of sensation because it is limited to the solitary ego. Marcel writes that everything ". . . goes to show that hope does not bear upon what is in me, upon the region of my interior life, but much more on what arises independently of my possible action, and particularly of my action on myself . . . ." <sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>The writings of Marcel abound with the living influence on his life of a Thou who died while he was a child: his mother.

<sup>23</sup>Gabriel Marcel, Homo Viator, p. 10.    <sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 41.

These two considerations then lead to Marcel's well known statement of hope:

"I hope in thee for us," such is perhaps the most adequate and elaborate expression of the act which the verb 'to hope' suggests in a way which is still confused and ambiguous. 'In thee--for us.' between this 'thou' and this 'us' which only the most persistent reflection can discover. . . .<sup>25</sup>

"I hope in thee for us." There is a serious danger of misunderstanding the meaning of this statement: the danger of over-emphasizing the significance of the first person pronoun, I, as Marcel writes in The Existential Background of Human Dignity: ". . . the subject of 'I hope' is not reducible to the ego which is the subject of desire, or, in other words, that the subject of 'I hope' excludes all claims."<sup>26</sup> The subject "I" can make no claims because the hope mentioned is independent of "I." This independence and claimlessness of hope lead to what Marcel calls the silent modesty of hope:

When we said that hope was the very opposite of pretension or defiance, we were ready to recognize that it is essentially silent and modest, that it bears the mark of inviolable timidity except where it develops in the department of the us, that is to say in fellowship. We talk to each other of our common hope but hate to express it before those who do not share it, as if it were

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>26</sup>Gabriel Marcel, The Existential Background of Human Dignity, p. 142.

really--and perhaps it is indeed--a secret. If hope is not a defiance, perhaps it is nevertheless conscious of appearing defiant or provocative in the eyes of those who claim that they are established on the firm rock of experiences.<sup>27</sup>

By saying that hope is dependent on more than the "I that hopes," Marcel is suggesting that hope is involved in something much bigger and more inexhaustible than the "I"--Being. Hope is possible only in communion (in the I-Thou relationship) which participates in Being.

Another way to understand the relation between the "I" and the "I that hopes" is to explore Marcel's distinction between desire (which belongs to Having) and hope (which belongs to Being). First, hope is an affirmation of Being because it is one of the ways in which communion becomes actualized. In this sense hope is internal to the "I," not belonging to it but becoming the "I." Desire, on the other hand, is a denial of Being because desire belongs to the realm of Having. Desire is always the external directedness of an "I" for the possession of an object. For desire there is no thou (as in hope), only an it to be possessed. Second, hope is possible only on the level of intersubjectivity, the level of "us." Desire, on the other hand, is egocentric; there is only the "I" of possession. Third, desire is

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<sup>27</sup>Gabriel Marcel, Homo Viator, pp. 50-1.

limited to the present: desire is for now. Hope, on the other hand, looks and waits on the future.

The difference between hope and desire leads Marcel to another, more provocative, distinction: that between suicide (on the level of desire) and sacrifice (on the level of hope), which turns out to be a further exemplification of the original difference between Being and Having. Marcel illustrates this difference in Being and Having and Presence and Immortality as follows:

The difference between sacrifice and suicide rests upon hope . . . entirely depends on hope. There is not, and there cannot be, any sacrifice without hope, and a sacrifice that excluded hope would be suicide.<sup>28</sup>

At the root of absolute sacrifice, we find so to say not only an 'I do,' but a 'you: you shall not die.' Or, again, 'because I die, you shall be saved. . . .' Actually, it seems that sacrifice takes on its meaning only in relation to a reality that is susceptible of being threatened, that is, a reality that is historically given and consequently exposed to the forces of destruction which are brought to bear on what endures.<sup>29</sup>

This last passage from Presence and Immortality brings Marcel's development of hope to two further points: first, what might be called the necessary conditions (if logical terminology is applicable) for hope--and thus, sacrifice; and, second, the integral union of hope with

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<sup>28</sup>Gabriel Marcel, Being and Having, p. 88.

<sup>29</sup>Gabriel Marcel, Presence and Immortality, p. 46.

love which forms the basis for Marcel's final move from communion as a mystery to transcendence as a mystery.

According to Marcel, love and hope cannot be separated; they cannot exist apart from one another. In the passage just quoted, Marcel has defined love as the power to deny death. This power is available because love like hope is a response to Being and participates in Being. Similar to the above, in volume II of the Mystery of Being, Marcel defines love in the following manner: ". . . to love a being is to say, 'Thou, thou shalt not die'."<sup>30</sup> It would seem then that death, which love has the power to conquer, is one of the significant (necessary?) conditions for the possibility of hope. Such seems to be the intent of this passage from Presence and Immortality:

. . . the only essential problem is posed by the conflict between love and death . . . a world deserted by love can only be swallowed up in death. But it is also true that, where love persists, where it triumphs over whatever seeks to degrade it, death cannot but be definitely vanquished.

It is essentially in this perspective that the reflections on hope which I made some time ago and which are in reality at the heart of my entire work must be seen. It is indeed no coincidence that I developed this phenomenology of hope during the war years. . . .<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Gabriel Marcel, The Mystery of Being, vol II, p. 109.

<sup>31</sup>Gabriel Marcel, Presence and Immortality, p. 230.



The necessity of death (there are many kinds of death, living as well as non-living) as a condition for the possibility of hope will be discussed at a later point. The important thing to notice in this passage is the linking of hope, death, and love into a relation by Marcel. Love is never an abstract concept in Marcel; it is always a relationship and possible only as communion (the I-Thou presence). Love literally implies hope for Marcel, as he points out in the following:

. . . to love one's brothers is above all to have hope in them, that is, to go beyond that in their conduct which almost always begins by bruising or disappointing us. And on the other hand experience undeniably shows that the hope which we put in them can help to transform them while, inversely, if by our thought we enclose them in what strikes us as their nature, we contribute to stopping their spiritual growth.<sup>32</sup>

It is this building of hope on the ground of human love within the realm of communion as a mystery that leads Marcel to make a major philosophical move in his thought: the move from communion to transcendence, as evidenced clearly in these words from Being and Having:

Hope . . . is not only a protestation inspired by love, but a sort of call, a desperate appeal to an ally who is Himself also Love. The supernatural element which is the foundation of Hope is as clear as its transcendent nature, for nature, unillumined by hope, can only appear to us the

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<sup>32</sup>Gabriel Marcel, The Existential Background of Human Dignity, p. 148.

scene of a sort of immense and inexorable book-keeping.<sup>33</sup>

It is in those experiences which actualize communion--love, hope, and a third not yet introduced, fidelity--that man experiences his transcendent ally, Being. It is, in fact, Being which makes the three means of communion possible, according to Marcel: "Human beings can be linked to each other in a real bond only because, in another dimension, they are linked to something that transcends them and comprehends them in itself."<sup>34</sup>

The final, and culminating, mode of man's participation in Being is transcendence as a mystery, which I shall now discuss.

#### Transcendence as a Mystery

A discussion of transcendence as a mystery raises two problems. First, one internal problem concerning the relation in Marcel's work between the Christian God and his transcendent Being--other phrases which Marcel uses are "Absolute Thou," "Transcendent Thou," "Infinite Being." Second, one external problem significant to this dissertation--the difference between Marcel's understanding of transcendence, i.e., the transcendence of

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<sup>33</sup>Gabriel Marcel, Being and Having, p. 79.

<sup>34</sup>Gabriel Marcel, Man Against Mass Society, p. 194.

Being as a mystery, and Camus' understanding of transcendence, if he has any. This latter, Camus' understanding of transcendence, is most problematic since he is not prone to use the word, and at least one of his works, The Myth of Sisyphus, denies the possibility of any transcendent relationship to man. This will be discussed among the comparisons in Chapter Three.

The former problem mentioned above, i.e., the relation between the Christian God and Marcel's Absolute Thou, need not be definitively answered to develop the concern of this dissertation, hope; for whether the Absolute Thou be a synonym for the Christian God or not, the relation of hope to a transcendent ground of Being is unaffected. Personally, I think that there is no doubt as to the relation: for Marcel, the Christian God is the Absolute Thou, the ground of Being.

For Marcel, communion (i.e., intersubjective love, hope, and fidelity) foreshadows transcendence, for in the intimacy of communion man becomes conscious within himself of a need for transcendence. Donald McCarthy, in Philosophy Today, has summarized this communion-transcendence relation in these words:

Thus it develops that intersubjective love on a purely human level is but a shadow of the I-Thou relation with the Absolute Thou, or a preliminary condition for the full establishment through faith. The ontological question, 'What

am I?' can thus only be answered by an Absolute Thou. An ontological need . . . shows the need of a change of axis. . . . The Absolute Thou is more completely within the self than the self itself.<sup>35</sup>

This places Marcel face to face with the relation between hope and what he calls the "ontological mystery," i.e., the relation of hope to Being as a mystery. In his words:

We have now come to the center of what I have called the ontological mystery. . . . To hope against all hope that a person whom I love will recover from a disease which is said to be incurable is to say: It is impossible that reality in its inward depth should be hostile or so much as indifferent to what I assert is in itself a good. It is quite useless to tell me of discouraging cases or examples: beyond all experience, all probability, all statistics, I assert . . . that reality is on my side willing it to be so. I do not wish: I assert. . . .<sup>36</sup>

In this passage, by the "inward depth of reality" Marcel means Being, the Absolute Thou. This passage refers to one of the reasons for the mystery of hope: its refusal to be limited to the verification of experience and the laws of probability. The other reason is also given: hope draws upon the empathy of a mystery, Being. The empathy of Being experienced by man establishes for

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<sup>35</sup>Donald McCarthy, "Marcel's Absolute Thou," Philosophy Today, 10 (Fall, 66), p. 178.

<sup>36</sup>Gabriel Marcel, The Philosophy of Existentialism, p. 28. It is possible that William James' The Will to Believe develops a similar understanding.

Marcel the ontological basis of hope:

This is what determines the ontological position of hope--absolute hope, inseparable from a faith which is likewise absolute, transcending all laying down of conditions, and for this very reason every kind of representation whatever it might be. The only possible source from which this absolute hope springs must once more be stressed. It appears as a response of the creature to the infinite Being to whom it is conscious of owing everything that it has and upon whom it cannot impose any condition whatsoever. . . . Indeed, seen in this perspective, what is the meaning of despair if not a declaration that God has withdrawn himself from me?<sup>37</sup>

The grounding of hope in an infinite Being once again refers to the humility of hope, for in hoping, "I appeal to the existence of a certain creative power in the world, or rather to the actual resources at the disposal of this creative power."<sup>38</sup> This leads, then, to transcendent hope as the hope of salvation: ". . . all hope is hope of salvation, and it is quite impossible to treat of the one without treating of the other."<sup>39</sup> To say that hope is hope of salvation is also to say that hope is prophetic, i.e., pointing to future

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<sup>37</sup>Gabriel Marcel, Homo Viator, pp. 46-47. This is one of many passages in which Marcel uses the word "God" rather than Absolute Thou, Infinite Being, etc. These passages are the reasons for my conclusion of identity, but one may read Marcel without any need to make such an identity, and this is a mark of the versatility of his work.

-- <sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>39</sup>Gabriel Marcel, Being and Having, p. 75.

fulfillment through participation in Infinite Being.

There is, then, the closest of connections between hope (living in Being) and prayer (talking with Being):

"The zone of hope is also that of prayer."<sup>40</sup> Another way to say the same thing is to say that there is the closest of connections between hope (living in Being) and miracles (sharing in the creative power of Being): ". . . hope is possible only in a world where there is room for miracles. . . ."<sup>41</sup> This relation between hope and the miraculous grows out of hope's total indifference to induction and probability, as mentioned earlier.

A theory of hope, developed in this manner as grounded in an Infinite Being to whom man the creature becomes conscious of owing all and depending upon drawing from that Being's creative resources, might suggest passivity: for what could man do but sit back and wait for that which is the content of his prayer, i.e., wait for Being to react to his petitionary communication? But, Marcel warns, just the opposite is true: hope is an activity, a disposition to act, a way of life committed to the depth of experience--to participation in the depth of Being: "Between active waiting and Hope there is, if

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 75.

not identity, at least the closest proximity."<sup>42</sup> In Homo Viator, Marcel states that hope is always a lived activity:

. . . to hope . . . is to live in hope instead of anxiously concentrating our attention on the poor little counters spread out in front of us which we feverishly reckon up over and over again without respite, tormented by fear of being foiled or ruined.<sup>43</sup>

Implicit in this passage is a "working" definition of what Marcel considers to be the opposite of hope, the possibility of despair.

Every man, in his day-to-day lived experience--i.e., in his existential situation--is confronted by and confronts such things (absurdities?) as illness, separation, loneliness, strangeness, death, etc. It is in these encounters that man becomes open in the deepest way to deny Being--to despair--or to affirm Being--to hope. It is, thus, when there is the greatest danger to despair, that the greatest hope can emerge. In fact, for Marcel, it is despair itself which offers to man the possibility of hope. In his words: "The truth is that there can strictly speaking be no hope except when the temptation to despair exists. Hope is the act by which this temptation is actively or victoriously overcome."<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>Gabriel Marcel, "Desire and Hope," Readings in Existential Phenomenology, p. 281.

<sup>43</sup>Gabriel Marcel, Homo Viator, p. 38. <sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 36.

The significant word is "actively": hope produces activity, struggle, fight, change; despair, on the other hand, cripples action, as the following passage points out:

To despair would be to say, 'I have been disappointed so many times there is every reason to expect that I shall be disappointed again today'; it would be to declare the wound incurable, this wound which not only is inflicted by separation but which is separation. 'I shall never again be anything but the wounded, mutilated creature I am today. Death alone can end my trouble; and it will only do so by ending me myself. That is all that destiny can do for me--destiny, that strange doctor which can only cure the disease by killing the sufferer.'<sup>45</sup>

To live in despair is, then, to close oneself off into the actual world of inductive experience and the possible world of probability and statistics. Such a closing is predictably to do two things: First, it is to deny mystery, (i.e., there is no place for mystery in the world of inductive inquiry, or, to say the same thing, it is to affirm a world of problems), which is to deny any personal, empathetic Being (or reality); and second, it is to close time into the past (i.e., by induction the past determines the present and future). In The Philosophy of Existentialism, Marcel describes the former limitation in these words:

I believe that at the root of despair there is always this affirmation: 'There is nothing in

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 42.



the realm of reality to which I can give credit--no security, no guarantee.' It is a statement of complete insolvency.

As against this, hope is what implies credit. . . . Hope consists in asserting that there is at the heart of Being, beyond all data, beyond all inventories and all calculations, a mysterious principle which is in connivance with me, which cannot but will what I will, if what I will deserves to be willed and is, in fact, willed by the whole of my being.<sup>46</sup>

The latter limitation brought on by despair is the reduction of time to the categories of the past, as the following two passages illustrate:

despair . . . seems to be above all the experience of closing or, if you like, the experience of time plugged up. The man who despairs is the one whose situation appears to be without exit.<sup>47</sup>

. . . despair is in a certain sense the consciousness of time as closed or, more exactly still, of time as a prison--whilst hope appears as piercing through time; everything happens as though time, instead of hedging consciousness round, allowed something to pass through it. . . . one cannot say that hope sees what is going to happen; but it affirms as if it saw . . .<sup>48</sup>

The preceding discussion completes the description of the movement of Marcel's phenomenology of hope from

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<sup>46</sup>Gabriel Marcel, The Philosophy of Existentialism, pp. 27-8. The word "deserves" is crucial, for it shows once again that hope is an ethical category for Marcel. Thus, Being could not be called upon to aid in the hope of Camus' Just Assassins: to murder the Grand Duke.

<sup>47</sup>Gabriel Marcel, "Desire and Hope," op. cit., p. 281. The despair, or hopelessness, of being without exit has been dramatically presented by Jean-Paul Sartre in No Exit.

<sup>48</sup>Gabriel Marcel, Homo Viator, p. 53.

sensation through transcendence. A number of metaphysical and epistemological questions have been deliberately omitted, since the task of this first chapter was descriptive rather than critical. Questions and criticisms will follow in Chapter Four.

Before proceeding to the next chapter, an analysis of Camus' position on hope, I shall discuss two other items. First, several elements in the previous examination of hope will be related in a new manner--barriers to hope, conditions for hope, the temporal order, possibility, and a definition of hope. Second, a brief summary statement of Marcel's systematic phenomenology of hope will conclude this chapter.

There are many barriers to hope, and all belong to the world of Having. For twentieth-century man the major barrier is technology because of its metaphysical thrust. That thrust is toward the problematic, i.e., the reduction of mysteries to problems, problems for which solutions can be proposed. In effect, the world of technology reduces the potentiality of experience to a category of probability, i.e., to a category of induction; thus, it closes experience to the categories of the past. Hope cannot emerge from the world of calculation and induction; it can, literally, only die from the terminal illness of having a zero probability coefficient. It is

this world of technology and problems, our world, that Marcel as a philosopher of hope decries when he writes:

The capacity to hope diminishes in proportion as the soul becomes increasingly chained to its experience and to the categories which arise from it . . . to the world of the problematical.<sup>49</sup>

. . . a world where techniques are paramount is a world given over to desire and fear; because every technique is there to serve some desire or some fear. It is perhaps characteristic of Hope to be unable either to make direct use of any technique or to call it to her aid.<sup>50</sup>

It is this kind of world--of techniques and problems, of inductive probability and predictability--that, to use Marcel's words, "plugs up time," and forces man into the captivity of the past. As one of Marcel's heroines puts it--this is a broken world:

Don't you feel sometimes that we are living . . . if you can call it living . . . in a broken world? Yes broken like a broken watch. The mainspring has stopped working. Just to look at it, nothing has changed. Everything is in place. But put the watch to your ear, and you don't hear any ticking. You know what I am talking about, the world, what we call the world, the world of human creatures . . . it seems to me that it must have had a heart at one time, but today you would say that the heart has stopped beating.<sup>51</sup>

Life in this broken world is a life overwhelmed by captivity and its resulting despair, a world of no exits.

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<sup>49</sup>Gabriel Marcel, The Philosophy of Existentialism, p. 43.

<sup>50</sup>Gabriel Marcel, Being and Having, p. 76.

<sup>51</sup>Gabriel Marcel, The Mystery of Being, vol. I, p. 27.

From this discussion of the broken world of technology it might seem that hope is impossible--that it went out when the steam engine came in. But at this point Marcel makes a fascinating philosophical move: without man's experience of captivity and despair, hope is not possible, as the three following passages point out:

. . . the less life is experienced as a captivity the less the soul will be able to see the shining of that veiled, mysterious light, which . . . illumines the very center of hope's dwelling place.<sup>52</sup>

It may be that we are capable of hoping only insofar as we start by realizing that we are captives . . . at the back of hope lies some sort of tragedy. To hope is to carry within me the private assurance that however black things may seem, my present intolerable situation cannot be final; there must be some way out.<sup>53</sup>

It remains true . . . that the correlation of hope and despair subsists until the end. . . . while the structure of the world we live in permits--and may even seem to counsel--absolute despair, yet it is only such a world that can give rise to an unconquerable hope.<sup>54</sup>

The significance of the word "only" in the last two passages will be clarified in later discussion. The

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<sup>52</sup>Gabriel Marcel, Homo Viator, p. 32.

<sup>53</sup>Gabriel Marcel, The Mystery of Being, vol. I, p. 179.

<sup>54</sup>Gabriel Marcel, The Philosophy of Existentialism, p. 28.

significance of captivity and despair for the possibility of hope should be clear from these passages.

It is difficult to arrive at Marcel's understanding of time, and it is a long analytical procedure which I do not propose to undertake here.<sup>55</sup> What will be offered is a simplified analysis sufficient for the purpose of showing that, for Marcel, hope relates to the quality of existence in time and not to the quantity of existence in time. Another way of saying this is: qualitative time belongs to the realm of Being whereas quantitative time belongs to the world of Having. This is to say that there are two temporal orders operative in Marcel's theory of hope.

First, there is the time in the world of Having, the quantified time that underlies induction, probability, and predictability; the time which Marcel says can get plugged up--closed time. This is the time of despair and of death, as is metaphorically pointed out in Being and Having: "Time is like a well whose shaft goes down to death--to my death--to my perdition. The gulf of time: how I shudder to look down on time! My death is

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<sup>55</sup>A good study of Marcel's understanding of time and its relation to existence is to be found in a dissertation: J. V. Vigorito, Time in the Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel, University of Colorado, 1968.

at its bottom and its dank breath mounts up and chills me."<sup>56</sup> This time is of a kind similar to the Greek time called chronos, the time of quantity--even, undisturbed, homogeneous. It is a universal time, the same for all men. It should, then, be clear from the characteristics that chronos time is the time by which man is a captive in the broken world--it is technological time. Thus, chronos time is one of the prior conditions for hope, as Marcel implies in the following passage:

It seems to me that the conditions that make it possible to hope are strictly the same as those which make it possible to despair. Death considered as the springboard of an absolute hope--a world where death was missing would be a world where hope only existed in the larval stage.<sup>57</sup>

Chronos--quantified time--is the time of that ultimate event of captivity and despair: death.

Second, there is another kind of time that is a part of man's existence, what Marcel calls open time:

" . . . we cannot but think of hope as an expansion: it implies an open time as opposed to a closed time. . . ."<sup>58</sup> Open time is the time of Being, it is qualified time, the time of hope, love and fidelity, the time of communion and transcendence. It is similar to the Greek

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<sup>56</sup>Gabriel Marcel, Being and Having, p. 80.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p. 93.

<sup>58</sup>Gabriel Marcel, The Mystery of Being, vol. II, p. 181.

time called kairos. It is uneven, disturbed, heterogeneous. It is personal, subjective, existential, different for all men. It is a time that cannot be used to predict by induction, for it is the time that participates in the mystery of Being. Kairos time is ontological time. It refuses to deal with probabilities, problems, as Marcel indicates in Being and Having:

It implies a kind of radical refusal to reckon possibilities, and this is enormously important. It is as though it carried with it as postulate the assertion that reality overflows all reckonings; as though it claimed, in virtue of some unknown secret affinity, to touch a principle hidden in the heart of things, or rather in the heart of events, which mocks such reckonings.<sup>59</sup>

For kairos time there is no past, only a present and a future; and, because this time refuses to predict--to reckon inductive possibilities--it mysteriously breaks down any strict distinction between present and future. Therefore, hope as actualized in kairos time brings present and future together as a way of life, active waiting. Indeed hoping may be said to be a way of actively living in the future.

This understanding of hope and time serves as a basis for examining the relation between hope and possibility and predictability. In fact, the preceding passage from Being and Having implies the relation: hope

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<sup>59</sup>Gabriel Marcel, Being and Having, p. 79.

denies the future efficacy of predictability because predictability builds upon chronos time. Hope also denies the inductive determination of future possibilities of the past and chronos time. To relate the word "possibility" to hope one must use it in a different manner. By possibility is usually meant "a good probability." Remove this inductive element from the word, and it can be applied to hope in the sense of "undetermined possibility," or "limitless possibility."

Before I examine a definition of hope, one final concern issues from the discussion of hope and time: does Marcel speak of necessary conditions for hope? Explicitly, he does not, and this should not come as a surprise, for "necessary condition" is a logical term as well as an inductive term. But there is a sense in which Marcel does speak of necessary conditions for hope. In a passage quoted earlier, Marcel indicated such conditions in these words: "We are capable of hoping only in so far as we start by realizing that we are captives. . . ." "Only" in this passage, in my understanding, indicates a necessary relation. There are, in Marcel, two necessary conditions for hope: the experience of captivity and chronos time.<sup>60</sup> The former,

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<sup>60</sup>The question of a sufficient condition for hope is explicitly lacking in Marcel. At the level of sensation and communion such an absence is not problematic, but at



the experience of captivity, includes many human experiences: pain, loneliness, strangeness, lostness, inferiority feelings, anxiety, despair, fear of death, etc. The latter, chronos time, is the time of common day-to-day experience, of chronological age, and thus, serves as a springboard, a necessary condition, for the emergence of kairos time which changes the boredom of the every day into an excitement and liveliness.

In his writings, Marcel offers three different passages which might be considered definitions of hope, if one keeps in mind that no adequate definition can ever be given of a mystery:

To pray implies a refusal to treat the present situation as a case that is capable of occurring a second time. . . . Religious thought is . . . exercised on the present. . . . So prayer is renewal, it is so to speak an active negation of experience. Moreover, the religious soul knows no precedents. The religious soul is forever calling everything back into question; there is no such thing as an established possession--and this is only an indirect way of defining hope.<sup>61</sup>

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the level of transcendence such is not the case. Consider the transcendent experience of Marcel's Absolute Thou: could man have such an experience, i.e., be assured of such a reality, and fail to live in hope? It would seem difficult in the face of such an assurance for man to despair. Thus, is transcendence a sufficient condition? It is an open question. In Chapter Four I will develop the position that mystery must be an ontologically sufficient condition for hope and criticize Marcel for failing to recognize this.

<sup>61</sup>Gabriel Marcel, Metaphysical Journal, p. 266.

. . . the idea of inert hope seems to me a contradiction in terms. Hope is not a kind of listless waiting; it underpins action or it runs before it. But it becomes degraded and lost once the action is spect. Hope seems to me . . . the prolongation into the unknown of an activity which is central--that is rooted in being. Hence it has affinities, not with desire, but the will. The will implants the same refusal to calculate possibilities. . . . Could not hope therefore be defined as the will when it is made to bear on what does not depend on itself?<sup>62</sup>

Hope is essentially . . . the availability of a soul which has entered intimately enough into the experience of communion to accomplish the transcendent act--the act establishing the vital regeneration of which experience affords both the pledge and the first-fruits.<sup>63</sup>

It is this third "definition" which Marcel seems to consider most important, for it captures what is included in the first two: hope, as an activity of the human will (perhaps, will to live), becomes possible first at the level of communion and then, with the experience of love (i.e., the denial of separation, even the separation of death), accomplishes the experience of transcendence. As a man lives in hope, he lives in Being. Thus, the value and depth of existence is in part determined by hope, since hope is a way of participating in the mystery of Being.

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<sup>62</sup>Gabriel Marcel, The Philosophy of Existentialism, p. 33.

<sup>63</sup>Gabriel Marcel, Homo Viator, p. 10.

To sum up: hope is both an entree' and a reponse' to Being. These two French words in their English meanings capture every significant element in Marcel's understanding of hope.

Hope is an entree' into Being:

1. Entrance (opening)--Hope is an entrance into Being. In Marcel's terminology, it is through communion, actualized in hope, that man participates, enters into, is open to, Being;
2. Availability--Through hope the resources of Being become available to him who hopes and he who hopes becomes himself available to relationships at the levels of communion and transcendence;
3. Beginning--He who lives in hope begins again, is no longer captive to the categories of the past and their predictable implications.

Hope is a reponse' to Being:

1. Response--Hope is a response to the power and influence of Being. This is why the word "call" is often used by Marcel: Hope is a response to the call of Being as heard by man in his lived experience;
2. Sympathy (fellow-feeling)--Hope is possible only at the level of intersubjectivity, i.e., the level of fellow-feeling that Marcel calls communion, which can advance to transcendence.

Hope, for Marcel, is, then, both an entree' into and a reponse' to Being.

#### Recapitulation

Marcel began with sensation as the phenomenological given. The first discovery about this "given" was that

sensation was intentional, and the most primitive (basic) intention was "I am my Body." This intention implied individuation that was based also upon the unquestioned existence of the Other. The existence of the Other, implicit in the phenomenological given, led to communion via incarnation, where the Other became present as a Thou. The actualization of communion through hope, love, and fidelity foreshadowed man's experience of the transcendent Being, in which communion and sensation as well as transcendence were grounded. The principal nature of this Being was developed as mystery, and to the extent that man through sensation, communion, and transcendence experienced Being, these modes of participation in Being themselves became mysteries. This movement from sensation to transcendence represented an ascending order of participation in, and awareness of, Being. Its ascendance was ethical as well as ontological and epistemological. At every level of participation man had the opportunity to deny Being: First, at the level of sensation, he could reduce himself to the summation of a series of haves; second, at the level of communion, he could reduce the Thous present to him through love, hope, and fidelity, to Its, things to be possessed through desire; and third, at the level of transcendence, he could sell out to despair, to the insolvency or indifference of Being.

In this metaphysic of Being and existence, hope became an entrance into Being, a way of experiencing the availability of Being and becoming available, a continually new beginning freed of the past, a response to the call and power of Being, and a sharing of fellow-feeling grounded in Being. In short, hope is both an entree' into and a réponse to Being.

This completes the discussion of hope and the mystery of Being, i.e., an examination of Marcel as a philosopher of hope. The next chapter will consider hope and absurdity--the thoughts on hope by Albert Camus, a man often (and mistakenly) called the "Philosopher of No Hope." The third chapter of this dissertation will be a critical comparison and contrast.

CHAPTER TWO: BETWEEN THE PLAGUE  
AND EXILE--ABSURDITY AND  
HOPE

In the first chapter, the thought of a philosopher who has been called the "prophet of community and hope" was discussed. This second chapter was originally to serve as a contrasting (opposing) viewpoint by discussing the thought of Albert Camus, a philosopher of pessimism (or worse, sometimes a philosopher of nihilism), the man who wrote the "Gospel of No Hope" (The Myth of Sisyphus). But several months of study into most of Camus' writings have convinced me that Camus is not a "prophet of no hope and of solitude," but a man who shares much, though not all, with the prophet of community and hope. Thus, the content of this chapter has come as a surprise, for few writers on Camus have captured this side of the man. Indeed, it might be said that Meursault, Sisyphus, the ending paragraph of The Plague, and Clamence have mistakenly overshadowed the relationship between Rieux and Tarrou, the Rebel, and the man who once again picks up that rock of Sisyphus in the Brazilian jungle, D'Arrast. Perhaps this is to say that there is a tension in Camus between solitude and community, nihilism and value, hope and hopelessness, and impotence versus creativity in the face of the absurd. In the discussion which is to follow, I shall establish

this tension by concentrating on these polar concepts. To summarize the strategy implied in the preceding discussion, the purpose of this chapter, by virtue of the tension and overshadowing just described, is twofold: first, to develop Camus' thoughts on hope; and second, out of this development to correct the view of Camus as a philosopher of no hope, i.e., to show how Sisyphus rejoins the community of man and re-discovers "the gentle stirrings of hope."

Before taking a summary look at the tension in Camus' thoughts on hope, I want first to clear up a question--one that was missing from the consideration of Marcel. Marcel's literary works played a very small part in developing his views of hope because his "philosophical writings" provided the definitive passages. Indeed, while his philosophical writings (far more numerous than Camus') strike right at the heart of contemporary existence, his plays seem almost Victorian in their plots and dialogues. Such is not the case with Camus for at least two reasons: First, Camus, unlike Marcel, does not develop an explicit metaphysic (theory) of hope; and thus, his writings, both literary and philosophical, must be considered in broader detail to analyze his thoughts on hope. Second, Camus' literary characters and situations are as much vehicles of his philosophical understandings



as are his philosophical works. Thus, before proceeding to the task of this chapter, an examination of Camus' thoughts on hope, one must first have an understanding of his view of art, his use of symbolism, and the relation which Camus has to his literary characters--to that task I now turn.

The place to begin in understanding Camus and his art is with Camus' own words. There are many places in which Camus writes of the artist and his works, but nowhere does the responsibility and commitment of art, artist, and the fellowship of man ring more clearly than in his acceptance speech for the Nobel Prize for literature in 1957:

I cannot live as a person without my art. And yet I have never set that art above everything else. It is essential to me, on the contrary, because it excludes no one and allows me to live, just as I am, on a footing with all. To me art is not a solitary delight. It is a means of stirring the greatest number of men by providing them with a privileged image of our common joys and woes. . . . Because his vocation is to unite the greatest possible number of men, it cannot countenance falsehood and slavery, which breed solitudes wherever they prevail. Whatever the frailties may be, the mobility of our calling will always be rooted in two commitments difficult to observe: refusal to lie about what we know and resistance to oppression.<sup>1</sup>

Camus is saying that the artist and his art cannot be separated from the world of human joys and frustrations.

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<sup>1</sup>Albert Camus, "The Acceptance of the Nobel Prize," The Atlantic Monthly, vol. 201 (May, 1958), pp. 33-4.

They are of the world, are shaped by the world, speak for the world, are responsible to the world--the world of humanity. Therefore, in considering Camus' philosophical insights, one cannot ignore his short stories, novels, and drama--i.e., his art. Indeed, for purposes of this exploration into hope, Camus' art is especially important, as his short description of the tragic climate in an essay entitled "On the Future of Tragedy" points out: the "tragic climate. . . [is] torn between absolute hope and final doubt."<sup>2</sup>

The relation of Camus to his characters will, I think, always prove puzzling, for he is none of them and he is all of them. For example, Camus is not to be identified with Clamence in The Fall; yet, neither Camus nor any of us can disassociate ourselves from Clamence or from his lack of innocence. This puzzlement of being and not being his characters is most clearly posed in analyzing The Plague: Who is Camus? Rieux? Tarrou? There is no definitive answer because, as Hazel Barnes in her book Humanistic Existentialism has noticed:

Perhaps the truth of the matter is that Tarrou and Rieux represent two aspects of Camus himself; One the one hand, there is the thirst for purity of heart and the feeling that it is wrong to compromise with any society or with any

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<sup>2</sup>Albert Camus, "On the Future of Tragedy," in Lyrical and Critical Essays, p. 307.

party which permits the sacrifice of individuals for the good of the majority; on the other hand is the realization that preoccupation with one's own innocence and retreat from the world form one more way of consenting to the evils which already exist. If men are to be saved there must be rebellions . . . In The Plague . . . Rieux and Tarrou recognize their differences, but each of them sympathetically comprehend what the other wants; each feels that the other's path is right for him.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, Camus is his characters while not being any one of them. Is not the same true of all men: am I not Rieux and Tarrou? Do I not suffer from Clamence's inner plague as well as have the potential for D'Arrast's act of human brotherhood in the jungle? Germaine Bree, in "Albert Camus and the Plague," further clarifies the identification:

Camus' point of view does not change throughout the novel. The dilemma of his characters is his dilemma, their reactions within the situation are his reactions. The movement of his characters within the outer pattern of events he sets for them is what reveals the direction of his concern.<sup>4</sup>

To understand Camus philosophical thoughts on hope one must give serious attention to his literary works, as I shall do throughout this chapter.

Another factor in the literary works that makes them so integrally significant to the philosophical ones is the symbolism Camus employs. In Camus we find a twentieth-

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<sup>3</sup>Hazel E. Barnes, Humanistic Existentialism: The Literature of Possibility, pp. 246-7.

<sup>4</sup>Germaine Bree, "Albert Camus and the Plague," Yale French Studies, vol. 8 (1951), p. 97.

century adaption of the Greek (especially Platonic) emphasis on myth and symbol as philosophical tools for understanding the world and man. Emily Zants, writing in "Camus' Deserts and Their Allies," has cogently summarized the meaning of Camus' symbolic universe:

Much of Camus' preoccupation with death is explained on a symbolic level. By his use of murders, wars and plagues he restates in contemporary terms Odysseus' temptation on Calypso's island to remain either in perpetual confrontation with the absurd or to succumb to one of its terms, anything but the revolt which would carry the individual away from her island of debauchery back to man. It is the artistic attempt to bring the stranger back from such islanacy to the harmonious seashore where the balance prevails between men's ideals and their individual lives that forms the nucleus of Camus' symbolic universe.<sup>5</sup>

There are many symbols in Camus' work: the sun, the sand, the sea, the rocks, the wind, the night, etc. Of all, however, the one which I consider most significant for understanding Camus is the sea.

The sea has many attributes in Camus, but above all it is ambiguous, i.e., the sea is first one thing, then another. It is never what it was--the sea. At times the sea is a place of love and friendship, of immediate joy. At other times the sea is the place of anguished silence. The rocks are also a place of silence

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<sup>5</sup>Emily Zants, "Camus' Deserts and Their Allies, Kingdoms of the Stranger," Symposium, vol. 17 (Spring, 1963), p. 40.

in Camus, but it is a different place of silence, as Emily Zants has noted:

The silence of the sea is different from that of the rocks: the latter is the silence of an impossibility of communication whereas the former is that of a mutual understanding. . . . The friendship of the sea demands a constant rebirth of its pleasures. . . . It exists in its entirety at a present moment. It is in this sense also that indifferences, tranquility and permanence are attributes of the sea.<sup>6</sup>

It is the sea that is Camus' birthright and, in a spiritual sense, his resting place. We shall come back to the sea often in Camus--indeed, many times in the development of this chapter will the ambiguity of the sea haunt the dream for philosophical clarity, for Camus is the sea! And human hope is of the sea for Camus, as shall be shown.

Having briefly glimpsed the ambiguity of the sea and the possible importance of such a symbol for the thought of Camus, I now turn to an analysis of Camus' understanding of that symbol.

In his Nobel acceptance speech Camus alludes to the ambiguity of man and the world by referring to the tension of life and the elusiveness of truth and freedom, saying:

. . . having extolled the mobility of the writer's calling, I should show him as he is, with no other rights than those he shares with his fellow fighters; vulnerable but stubborn, unjust and

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

eager for justice, constructing his work without shame or pride within sight of all, constantly torn between pain and beauty, and devoted to extracting from his dual nature the creations he obstinately strives to raise up in the destructive fluctuation of history. Who, after that, could expect of him ready-made solutions and fine moral codes? Truth is mysterious, elusive, ever to be worn anew. Liberty is dangerous, as hard to get along with as it is exciting.<sup>7</sup>

In fact, the most concise statement of the ambiguity of man and of the human situation is found in one of Camus' most often quoted statements: "Man is the only creature who refuses to be what he is."<sup>8</sup> Above all, the plague, that spectral myth that haunts the human situation, is a myth of ambiguity, as Roger Quilliot has noted:

. . . the plague appeared and disappeared like the devil in Germanic legends. Its epidemic character requires that a state of plague be decreed. Thus Oran cut off from the world takes on an aura of strangeness. Forebodingly distant like Moses or Meursault in his prison, nonetheless it, like them, remain curiously close to us.

This combination of familiarity and mystery confer on the myth of the plague an ambiguity which gives it its value.<sup>9</sup>

The same ambiguity is evidenced in The Fall, for no one is innocent--no one is guilty. Thus, who can judge?

The ambiguous, sea-like situation of man leads to the same difficulty in trying to understand Camus' thoughts

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<sup>7</sup>Albert Camus, "Nobel Speech," op. cit., p. 34.

<sup>8</sup>Albert Camus, The Rebel, p. 11.

<sup>9</sup>Roger Quilliot, The Sea and Prisons, p. 136.

on hope. A quick glance at Appendix B should show the problem clearly: Of the passages indexed, there are 73 passages (25 in Sisyphus alone) in which Camus denies the authenticity of hope and 52 passages to the contrary. What is one to make of this? Has Camus changed his position? Or, is there evidence of an evolution in his thought? The answer to both is a definite No, for the ambiguity involved (i.e., the tension between these two different views on hope) is continuous from early to later writings. The next question is: Is Camus, then, inconsistent? It would seem on the basis of what has been said that Camus is maintaining ( $p \sim p$ ), i.e., denying the principle of noncontradiction. One may, I suppose, accuse him of inconsistency, but the charge would be either trivial or irrelevant. This affirming and then denying the possibility of hope rises naturally out of the ambiguity of the world-situation in which a man finds himself. Therefore, if one wants to charge Camus with inconsistency, fine; but he must then at bottom so charge man himself and his situation.

To see the tension just discussed, consider and compare the following passages from Camus:

And carrying this absurd logic to its conclusion, I must admit that that struggle implies a total absence of hope. . . A man who has become conscious of the absurd is forever bound to it. A man devoid of hope and conscious of

being so has ceased to belong to the future.<sup>10</sup>

There was no room in any heart but for a very old, gray hope, that hope which keeps men from letting themselves drift into death and is nothing but a dogged will to live.<sup>11</sup>

To begin with, I feel a solidarity with the common man. Tomorrow the world may burst into fragments. In that threat hanging over our heads there is a lesson of truth. As we face such a future, hierarchies, titles, honors are reduced to what they are in reality: a passing puff of smoke. And the only certainty left to us is that of naked suffering, common to all, intermingling its roots with those of a stubborn hope.<sup>12</sup>

In a more dramatic manner, the ambiguity in Camus' position on hope can be evidenced by comparing the two following passages from approximately the same period of time:

He who despairs of events is a coward, but he who has hope for the human lot is a fool.<sup>13</sup>

I have always thought that if the man who has hope for the human condition is a fool, he who gives up all hope is a coward.<sup>14</sup>

"Well," I can imagine the reader inquiring, "is hope possible, or not?"<sup>15</sup> Just what does Camus have to say

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<sup>10</sup>Albert Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus, pp. 23-4.

<sup>11</sup>Albert Camus, The Plague, pp. 226-27.

<sup>12</sup>Albert Camus, "The Wages of Our Generation," in Resistance, Rebellion and Death, p. 183.

<sup>13</sup>Albert Camus, Notebooks, 1942-1951, Sept. 1, 1943, p. 80.

<sup>14</sup>Albert Camus, Actuelles I, Chroniques 1944-1948, p. 179.

<sup>15</sup>See Appendix B.



about it?" An answer to the first might be: yes or no. Why? Because truth is fleeting, elusive, mysterious. Because man is like the sea. Thus hope for Camus is both possible and foolish (i.e., to be rejected by the rational man). Surely such an answer will not satisfy the logical metaphysician, but for now it will have to do and will have to rest on the intrinsic ambiguity of the world and the human situation. An answer to the second question will occupy much of the remainder of this chapter.

Before exploring Camus' thoughts on hope, I shall make two further comments: First, I shall develop Camus' thoughts concerning the rejection of hope by concentrating on two heroes: Meursault and Sisyphus. Having then given his "gospel of no hope," I shall show how Meursault and Sisyphus are only the first stages in life's way and grow into the Rebel and D'Arrast by way of Rieux and Tarrou. This will be to argue for a development in Camus' thought, but against any change, evolution, or inconsistency. The very use of such charges would, I think, result from a misunderstanding of and an over-emphasis upon Meursault and Sisyphus. Such misunderstanding and over-emphasis are, sadly, well-documented in the philosophic literature on Camus. Second, because of such misunderstanding, the procedure followed throughout this chapter will be more exegetical than eisegetical.

This is to say that primary quotes will abound, with the main interest being to let the passage speak rather than to develop any critical commentary on the passage. This latter will constitute a major portion of both Chapters Three and Four.

I now turn to an examination of hope and the absurd--the "gospel of no hope": Meursault and Sisyphus.

#### The Gospel of No Hope: Meursault and Sisyphus

The place to begin an exploration of such a gospel is with an analysis of the absurd, for it is absurdity that renders hope impotent. The Myth of Sisyphus might well have been titled The Logic of Absurdity, and, therefore, I shall rely heavily upon this text in the discussion which follows. I shall also show Camus' thoughts on absurdity from other writings and then relate absurdity and hope.

The notion--feeling, experience--of the absurd was something which grew not from the quiet study, but from the very ambiguity of Camus' life. The most well-known experiences of the absurd for Camus are the ambiguities of his life-death struggle with illness and the second World War with its occupation of France. There were many other such formative experiences in his life. Roger Quilliot, the biographer and commentator who most

intimately knew Camus, discusses the ambiguity in Camus' world of human relationships:

He maintained the same ambiguous relationship with people. He entered into marriage with Simon Hie', fascinated by this young woman's dazzling youth given over to the artificial paradise of narcotics. These two very young people were united by the same intuition of the ineluctable, by the same hope of being cured. Each was for the other a living example of the absurd.<sup>16</sup>

In June of 1938, Camus made an entry in one of his notebooks which shows the acumen of Quilliot in viewing his marriage as a passionate attempt to fight the absurd through love:

The misery and greatness of the world: it offers no truths, but only objects for love. Absurdity is king, but love saves us from it.<sup>17</sup>

Not only with love, but also with a zest for life did Camus fight his confrontation with the absurd. An entry in the Notebooks during September of 1939, shows this:

The war has broken out. But where is it? Where does this absurd event show itself, except in the news bulletins. . . . It's not in the blue sky over the blue sea, in the chirring of grasshoppers. . . .

We want to believe in it. We look for its face and it hides. . . . The world alone is being. . . .

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<sup>16</sup>Roger Quilliot, The Sea and Prisons, p. 12.

<sup>17</sup>Albert Camus, Notebooks, 1935-42, p. 93.

We have lived hating this beast. Now it stands before us and we can't recognize it. So few things have changed. Later on, certainly, there will be mud and blood and an immense feeling of nausea. But today we find that the beginning of war is like the first days of peace: neither the world nor our hearts know they are there. . .<sup>18</sup>

The essential absurdity of this catastrophe does not alter the fact that it exists. It generalizes the rather more essential absurdity of life itself. . .<sup>19</sup>

The "later-on certainty" of the war and its absurdity gave Camus an intuition of what happens when absurdity and power become linked. On March 15, 1942, he jotted down the following thought: "The Absurd and Power--develop (cf. Hiller)."<sup>20</sup>

Thus, we can surely conclude that the absurd was not a thought; it was something through which Camus lived. It should not be surprising, then, to find that Camus' characters also live through the absurd. In Act I, *Caligula* gives one of the most dramatic, emotional descriptions of the absurd in all of Camus' writing:

Men weep because . . . the world's all wrong. . . I knew that men felt anguish, but I didn't know what that word anguish meant. Like everyone else I fancied it was a sickness

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., pp. 137-8.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., pp. 138-9.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 190.

of the mind--no more. But no, it's my body that's in pain. Pain everywhere, in my chest, in my legs and arms. Every skin is raw, my head is buzzing, I feel like vomiting. But worst of all is this queer taste in my mouth. Not blood, or death, or fever, but a mixture of all three. I've only to stir my tongue, and the world goes black, and everyone looks horrible. How hard, how cruel it is, this process of becoming a man.<sup>21</sup>

After the plague has abated, Rieux faces the most serious, impotent confrontation with the absurd, the death of Tarrou:

And thus, when the end came the tears that blinded Rieux's eyes were tears of impotence; and he did not see Tarrou roll over, face to the wall and die with a short hollow groan. . . .  
The next night was not one of struggle but of silence. . . .<sup>22</sup>

Having shown how the absurd played a significant part in the life of Camus and in the lives of his characters, I now will consider the question: What is the absurd? To give a definitive answer to this question we must turn to The Myth of Sisyphus--the study of the absurd. First, I want to quote an entry from the Notebooks made in November of 1943, a few months after the French publication of Sisyphus, for the meaning of the absurd rests upon what Camus writes there and is nothing but a drawing out of the implications of the passage:

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<sup>21</sup>Albert Camus, Caligula and Three Other Plays, p. 15.

<sup>22</sup>Albert Camus, The Plague, p. 252.

"The greatest saving one can make in the order of thought is to accept the unintelligibility of the world and to pay attention to man."<sup>23</sup> This basic unintelligibility of the world--sometimes referred to as indifference--results in a strangeness for man, who is a creature seeking both intelligibility and value. This strangeness between man and the world is explored in the following passages from the Myth of Sisyphus, the definitive passages on the absurd:

A world that can be explained even with bad reasons is a familiar world. But, on the other hand, in a universe suddenly divested of illusions and lights, man feels an alien, a stranger. His exile is without remedy since he is deprived of the memory of a lost home or the hope of a promised land. This divorce between man and his life, the actor and his setting, is properly the feeling of absurdity. All healthy men having thought of their own suicide, it can be seen, without further explanation, that there is a direct connection between this feeling and the longing for death.<sup>24</sup>

Tomorrow, he was longing for tomorrow, whereas everything in him ought to reject it. That revolt of the flesh is the absurd.

A step lower and strangeness creeps in: perceiving that the world is 'dense,' sensing to what a degree a stone is foreign and irreducible to us, with what intensity nature or a landscape can negate us. At the heart of all beauty lies something inhuman . . . the primitive hostility of the world rises up to

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<sup>23</sup>Albert Camus, Notebooks, 1942-1951, p. 86.

<sup>24</sup>Albert Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus, p. 5.

face us across millennia... The world evades us... It draws at a distance from us... Just one thing: that denseness and that strangeness of the world is the absurd.<sup>25</sup>

Hence, the intelligence, too, tells me in its way that the world is absurd. Its contrary, blind reason, may well claim that all is clear; I was waiting for proof and longing for it to be right. But despite so many pretentious centuries and over the heads of so many eloquent and persuasive men, I know that is false... In... lucidity, the feeling of the absurd becomes clear and definite. I said that the world is absurd, but I was too hasty. The world in itself is not unreasonable, that is all that can be said. But what is absurd is the confrontation of this irrational and the wild longing for clarity whose call echoes in the human heart. The absurd depends as much on man as on the world. For the moment it is all that links them together. It binds them one to the other as only hatred can weld two creatures together...<sup>26</sup>

... man stands face to face with the irrational. He feels within him his longing for happiness and reason. The absurd is born of this confrontation between the human need and the unreasonable silence of the world. This must not be forgotten.<sup>27</sup>

The absurd is essentially a divorce. It lies in neither of the elements compared; it is born of their confrontation... I can therefore say that the absurd is not in man... nor in the world, but in their presence together.<sup>28</sup>

Here then are Camus' thoughts on the absurd. So much has been written that I do not plan to explore these

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

passages analytically or critically. Rather, I will draw out several implications and results of the absurd relevant to hope and later comparison to Marcel, and in so doing I shall again make references to other works.

First, the absurd has a way of overwhelming man, e.g., Rieux's feelings of impotence in trying to save Tarrou. One might say that the rule of the absurd is an inductive rule, i.e., all things are determined. This is to say that man, confronted by the absurd, has no choice. In October of 1949, Camus wrote in a notebook: "The absurd implies an absence of choice."<sup>29</sup> This leads to the second point built on induction.

Second, the inductive determinism of the absurd closes the contingency of the future, as Camus writes in Sisyphus: "The absurd enlightens me on this point: there is no future."<sup>30</sup> At first glance it may seem to be inconsistent to say both of the following: There is no future, and induction rules. Surely induction has to do with the future, and the present is always the future of some past. Therefore, what sense does it make to speak of no future and assert the power of induction? The

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<sup>29</sup>Albert Camus, Notebooks, 1942-1951, p. 221.

<sup>30</sup>Albert Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus, p. 68.



answer is, I think, to be found in the word "contingency": The absurd surely cannot do away with the future, for it will arrive. Rather, the inductive determinism of the absurd reduces the future to the categories and possibilities of the past, i.e., closes the contingency of the future. This leads to an immediacy of the present that I shall take up later.

Third, another result of the absurd power of induction is the cancelling of the realm of the miraculous. In an essay titled "On a Philosophy of Expression by Brice Parain," Camus wrote of miracles and the absurd:

The essential in any case is not yet to know which to choose: miracles or absurdity. The important thing is to show that they form the only possible choice, and that nothing else matters.<sup>31</sup>

. . . it is certain that, whether we turn toward miracles or toward absurdity, we shall do nothing without those virtues in which human honor lies-- honesty and poverty.<sup>32</sup>

Fourth, another result of the inductive nature of the absurd is to rule out the absolute and all that goes with it: God, immortality, miracles, and transcendent values and meaning. This is also to place man only within the relative, as Camus clearly indicates in a passage from the Notebooks, 1942-1951, October, 1942: "Torn

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<sup>31</sup>Albert Camus, "On a Philosophy of Expression by Brice Parain," Lyrical and Critical Essays, p. 239.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 241.

between the world that does not suffice and God who is lacking, the absurd mind passionately chooses the world. Id: Divided between the relative and the absolute, it leaps eagerly into the relative."<sup>33</sup> Fifth, as indicated earlier, the absurd places man into the immediacy of the present. If life is mortal, if there is no transcendent meaning and value, if there is no future, if induction rules, then the best course of life is to exhaust oneself in the immediacy of the present. This emphasis on the present, a sensuous present, permeates Camus' writings. At a later point in this chapter, I shall show how this effect of the absurd leads to a possibility Marcel denies: a physical doctrine of hope.

Sixth, the absurd makes the search for truth a very problematic task and the achievement of truth a most uncomfortable position for Camus, who writes:

Let's imagine a thinker who says: 'There, I know that is true. But in the end I dislike the consequences and withdraw.' Truth is unacceptable even to the one who finds it. This represents the absurd thinker and his constant discomfort.<sup>34</sup>

Seventh, the absurd, in confronting man, confronts him with the challenge of a contradiction: the contradiction between life and value. In Camus' words: "The

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<sup>33</sup>Albert Camus, Notebooks, 1942-1951, pp. 45-6.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 62.

absurd is, in itself, contradiction. It is contradictory in its content because, in wanting to uphold life, it excludes all value judgments, when to live is, in itself, a value judgment.<sup>35</sup> This statement from The Rebel leads to the final implication of the absurd and one that has been missed in much of the literature: that the absurd is just a point of departure.<sup>36</sup>

Eighth, the absurd is only a springboard, a stage on life's way, a point of departure that leads to rebellion. In an article titled "Pessimism and Courage" in Combat, September, 1945, Camus indicated the coming of the Rebel, whose relation to Sisyphus would best give his understanding of man and lead to a new stage on life's way, where hope could become part of a life-style:

We believe that the truth of this age can be found only by living through the drama of it to the very end. If the epoch has suffered from nihilism we cannot remain ignorant of nihilism and still achieve the moral code we need. No, everything is not summed up in negation and absurdity. We know this. But we must first posit negation and absurdity because they are what our generation has encountered and what we must take into account.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Albert Camus, The Rebel, p. 8.

<sup>36</sup> Those who have failed to recognize that Sisyphus was only a stage on life's road have mistakenly called Camus a pessimist and nihilist. As an example of such a failure see the article in the Bibliography by Roudiez, "To Him Sisyphus Symbolized Man."

<sup>37</sup> Albert Camus, Resistance, Rebellion and Death, p. 45.

This completes my discussion of absurdity in Camus. The points which I have made were done in a brief and uncritical manner. Evaluation will follow later. Before moving to the next step--hope and the absurd--, I wish to identify two further manifestations of the absurd, which play a significant role in Camus' writing: plague and exile.

In an entry dated August, 1942, Camus indicates the two major myths of absurdity:

Plague. Impossible to get away from it. Too many elements of 'chance' this time in the composition. I must cling closely to the idea. The Stranger describes the nakedness of man facing the absurd. The Plague, the basic equivalence of individual points of view facing the same absurd.. . . In addition The Plague shows that the absurd teaches nothing.<sup>38</sup>

The plague, like the absurd, cancels out the contingency of the future and stands silent before the agonized cry of men: Why? Early in the novel, the then unknown narrator Rieux comments:

How should they have given a thought to anything like plague, which rules out futures, cancels journeys, silences the exchange of views. They fancied themselves free, and no one will ever be free so long as there are pestilences.<sup>39</sup>

A few days later, the narrator links plague and exile to the resulting separation of the absurd in the following

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<sup>38</sup>Albert Camus, Notebooks, 1942-1951, p. 24.

<sup>39</sup>Albert Camus, The Plague, p. 32.

two passages: ". . . the ache of separation from those one loves suddenly became a feeling in which we all shared alike and--together with fear--the greatest affliction of the long period of exile that lay ahead . . ."<sup>40</sup>

Thus the first thing that plague brought to our town was exile . . . the feeling of exile--sensation of a void within which never left us, that irrational longing to hark back to the past or else to speed up the march of time, and those keen shafts of memory that stung like fire . . . In short, we returned to our prison-house, we had nothing left us but the past, and even if some were tempted to live in the future, they had speedily to abandon the idea . . .<sup>41</sup>

I now turn to a consideration of the following three topics: Hope and the Absurd; Hope and the Plague; Hope and Exile. Following a discussion of these three relations, I shall explore several other topics: Hope as an Evasion; Hope and Time; Hope and Freedom; Hope and the Body--as given to the absurd man (Sisyphus and Meursault).

Hope and the Absurd: Very simply, the absurd cancels out hope or the possibility of hope. The two major reasons why hope cannot exist in confrontation with the absurd have already been discussed: an inductive universe rules out hope, for everything is lucidly given, i.e., possibility is ruled out; and the absurd does away

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>41</sup>Albert Camus, The Plague, p. 61.

with the contingent future, i.e., reduces it to the present. As early as December, 1938, four years before Sisyphus, Camus was clear on hope and the absurd:

On the absurd?

There is only one case in which despair is pure: that of the man sentenced to death . . . A man driven to despair by love might be asked if he wanted to be guillotined on the following day and would refuse. Because of the horror of the punishment? Yes. But here, the horror springs from the complete certainty of what is going to happen. . . . Here the absurd is perfectly clear. It is the opposite of irrationality. It is the plain and simple truth. What is and would be irrational is the fleeting hope, itself already near death, that it is all going to stop and that this death can be avoided. . . .<sup>42</sup>

In Sisyphus, Camus utilizes this insight to show that the logic of the absurd rejects hope: ". . . carrying this absurd logic to its conclusion, I must admit that the struggle implies a total absence of hope (which has nothing to do with despair). . . ." <sup>43</sup>

It is again to Sisyphus, the Logic of the Absurd, that one must turn to understand the twofold rejection of hope by the absurd man. The first rejection of hope by way of the inductive power of absurdity is itself two-pronged. First, the absurd universe denies hope through the inductive reduction of the possible to the given, as Camus indicates in these words:

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<sup>42</sup>Albert Camus, Notebooks, 1935-1942, pp. 115-16.

<sup>43</sup>Albert Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus, p. 23.

The absurd man thus catches sight of a burning and frigid, transparent and limited universe in which nothing is possible but everything is given, and beyond which all is collapse and nothingness. He can then decide to accept such a universe and draw from its strength, his refusal to hope, and the unyielding evidence of a life without consolation.<sup>44</sup>

He recognizes the struggle, does not absolutely scorn reason, and admits the irrational. Thus he again embraces in a single glance all the data of experience and he is little inclined to leap before knowing. He knows simply that in alert awareness there is no further place for hope.<sup>45</sup>

Thus, "everything is given," "he embraces in a single glance all the data of experience"--the absurd man would be a fool to hope, for hope is of the possible. This leads to the second inductive rejection--that of consciousness or lucidity. In Camus' words, "This absurd, godless world is, then, peopled with men who think clearly and have ceased to hope."<sup>46</sup> Later Camus speaks of the heroic character of Sisyphus in consciously rejecting any foolish hope:

If this myth is tragic, that is because its hero is conscious. Where would his torture be, indeed, if at every step the hope of succeeding upheld him? . . . Sisyphus . . . knows the whole extent of his wretched condition: it is what he thinks of in his descent. The lucidity that was to constitute his torture at the same time crowns his victory. There is no fate that cannot be surmounted by scorn.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 44.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 68.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., pp. 89-90.

Second, the absurd rejects hope by rejecting the future. As Camus says: "One has to pay something. A man who has become conscious of the absurd is forever bound to it. A man devoid of hope and conscious of being so has ceased to belong to the future. That is natural. . ."<sup>48</sup>

It is thus that the absurd cancels out the possibility of hope, and this fact of the absurd is what lies at the bottom of the many charges of pessimism and nihilism leveled at Camus. Granting the givenness of the absurd, Camus is, I think, correct. Those who use the absurd to characterize Camus or Sisyphus, to characterize his understanding of man, are either ignoring his later work or ignorant of the fact that the absurd man is only a stage on life's way--although a necessary stage to the Rebel.

Hope and the Plague: It has already been observed that the myth of the plague is a manifested form of the absurd. Commenting in the Notebooks, Camus, in two passages dated October, 1942, and January 15, 1943, several years before The Plague was published, indicated the death of hope in the confrontation with the plague:

The first stage of the plague produced unity through suffering and thus, 'They still had

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<sup>48</sup>Ibid., p. 24.



hope. The second phase really began when they could no longer think except in terms of the plague. . . , ' when hope was dead.<sup>49</sup>

The separated people perceive that in reality they have never ceased, in the first phase, hoping for something: that letters would arrive, that the plague would end, that the absent one would slip into the city. It's only in the second phase that they no longer hope.<sup>50</sup>

In State of Siege, a more allegorical-drama form of The Plague, Nada, the town drunk and cripple, announces the abandonment of hope in the face of the plague:

Nada: I have told you already, my son, that we are in it already, up to the neck. So abandon hope, the comedy is starting. In fact I've only just time enough to hurry to the market and drink a bottle to the triumph of death.<sup>51</sup>

Thus far, hope and the plague sound exactly like hope and the absurd; but, in The Plague, while it is true that Rieux in facing the plague is confronted with the same challenge as Sisyphus in facing the absurd, there is a significant difference: Sisyphus has only the rock, but Rieux has Tarrou. Though the plague is Rieux' absurd, he has something in addition to Sisyphus in the struggle, Tarrou; and the relation of intimacy with Tarrou becomes a first step from pessimism and nihilism

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<sup>49</sup>Albert Camus, Notebooks, 1942-1951, p. 53.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>51</sup>Albert Camus, "State of Siege," in Caligula and Three Other Plays, p. 433.

to hope. The place of Tarrou and its meaning for hope will be developed later.

Hope and Exile: Several passages already quoted have adequately shown the relation between the absurd and exile, i.e., the plague and exile. Just as the plague is a form of the absurd, so also is exile. When the narrator of The Plague describes the setting of the plague, he is also cogently describing the setting of exile: ". . . in a setting so hopelessly remote."<sup>52</sup> Sisyphus knows the ultimate exile, the ultimate absurdity, which Camus describes in these words:

. . . in a universe suddenly divested of illusions and lights, man feels an alien, a stranger. His exile is without remedy since he is deprived of the memory of a lost home or the hope of a promised land. This divorce between man and his life, the actor and his setting, is properly the feeling of absurdity.<sup>53</sup>

The ultimate exile, the ultimate absurdity, is then, according to Camus, the total negation of any salvation. The strongest and most persistent feeling of exile, absurdity, is strangeness. It is this that Sisyphus shares with Meursault, The Stranger, this aloneness of exile. However, here again the exile of Rieux is different from the exile of Meursault and Sisyphus, and that difference is Tarrou, to whom we shall return.

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<sup>52</sup>Albert Camus, The Plague, p. 157.

<sup>53</sup>Albert Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus, p. 5.

This concludes the discussion of hope and the absurd in Camus. Before I take up the question of stages in moving from Sisyphus to the Rebel, several additional aspects of hope limited by the absurd will be briefly discussed for purposes of later comparison with Marcel.

Hope as an Evasion: In The Myth of Sisyphus, Camus writes about the evasive futility of trying to live on hope for the absurd man: ". . . men who live on hope do not thrive in this universe where kindness yields to generosity, affection to virile silence, and communion to solitary courage."<sup>54</sup> Later on, the heroic character of Sisyphus in confronting the absurd is linked to the futility of the hopelessness and the hopelessness of the futility he endures: "They had thought with some reason that there is no more dreadful punishment than futile and hopeless labor."<sup>55</sup> Several years later in an essay titled "Summer in Algiers," Camus wrote of hope as an evading resignation, a sin against the immediacy of life:

. . . if there is a sin against life, it lies perhaps less in despairing of it than in hoping for another life and evading the implacable grandeur of the one we have. . . . For hope, contrary to popular belief, is tantamount to resignation. And to live is not to be resigned.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 82.

<sup>56</sup>Albert Camus, "Summer in Algiers," in Lyrical and Critical Essays, pp. 91-2.

For the absurd man, hope is a temptation he must be on the alert for because of its power over the human heart and because of its illusory character: "There is so much stubborn hope in the human heart the most destitute men often end up by accepting illusion."<sup>57</sup>

Eluding is the invariable game. The typical act of eluding, the fatal evasion that constitutes the third theme of this essay, is hope. Hope of another life one must 'deserve' or trickery of those who live not life itself but for some great idea that will transcend it, refine it, give it a meaning, and betray it.<sup>58</sup>

In another passage in Sisyphus, Camus relates absurd art and the illusion of hope:

I can perform absurd work, choose the creative attitude rather than another. But an absurd attitude, if it is to remain so, must remain aware of its gratuitousness. So it is with the works of art. If the commandments of the absurd are not respected, if the work does not illustrate divorce and revolt, if it sacrifices to illusions and arouses hope, it ceases to be gratuitous.<sup>59</sup>

Finally, in Sisyphus, Camus states that, if the absurd man hopes, then he is lying to himself:

I can understand only in human terms. What I touch, what resists me--that is what I understand. And these two certainties--my appetite for the absolute and for unity and the impossibility of reducing this world to a rational and reasonable principle--I also know that I cannot reconcile them. What other truth can I admit without lying, without bringing in a hope I lack and which means nothing within the limits of my condition?<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup>Albert Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus, p. 76.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., p. 7.      <sup>59</sup>Ibid., p. 75.      <sup>60</sup>Ibid., p. 38.

In closing these thoughts on hope as an evasion, I should like to say one final word concerning the essential part of the "condition" referred to above: solitude. It is the solitude of absurdity, i.e., the aloneness of both Meursault and Sisyphus from the world, God, and the community of man, that makes hope an evasive and futile illusion. Indeed, what stands out about both Sisyphus and Meursault is their respective aloneness.

Hope and Time: Those experiences in human life that bring a consciousness of time are those of pain and death. Camus knew both well and put down these thoughts on March 9, 1943:

The sensation of death that is henceforth familiar to me; it is deprived of the aid of pain. Pain clings to the present; it calls for a struggle that keeps one busy. But foreseeing death from the mere sight of a handkerchief filled with blood is being plunged suddenly and effortlessly into time in a dizzying way: it is fear of what's ahead.<sup>61</sup>

Such a fear is a kind of luxury in which pain, dying, or the plague (the absurd) take away both past and future, plunging one dizzily into the present. Meursault, from prison, echoes the absurd rejection of the past: "I have never been able really to regret anything in all my life. I've always been far too much absorbed in the present moment, or the immediate future, to think back."<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>Albert Camus, Notebooks, 1942-1951, p. 67.

<sup>62</sup>Albert Camus, The Stranger, p. 127.

In two passages from his Notebooks Camus speaks of the plague and its reduction of time to the present (November, 1943, and October, 1942): "The plague leaves no time."<sup>63</sup> "Moral of the plague: it was of no use to anything or anyone. Only those who were touched by death directly or in their families learned something. But the truth they have arrived at concerns only themselves. It has no future."<sup>64</sup> However, for the absurd man, this erasing of the future and of hope has, according to Camus, a constructive, as well as destructive, side. The latter is the limitation of man to the present, the immediate, which Camus puts in these words: ". . . man . . . has forgotten how to hope. This hell of the present is his Kingdom at last."<sup>65</sup> The former involves man's availability and freedom: "Now if the absurd cancels all my chances of eternal freedom, it restores and magnifies. . . my freedom of action. That privation of hope and future means an increase in man's availability."<sup>66</sup>

Hope and Freedom: Mention has already been made of Camus' notion that denial of the future leads to a freedom

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<sup>63</sup>Albert Camus, Notebooks, 1942-1951, p. 88.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>65</sup>Albert Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus, p. 39.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., p. 42.

of the present. Also, many of the preceding quotations have implied this same idea in his thought. A critical discussion and evaluation of this relation between freedom and hope and the future will be undertaken in both Chapters Three and Four. Before moving on to the last part of this section of the chapter, Hope and the Body, I want to give one additional example of freedom coming from the absurd man's rejection of hope. The passage is from The Stranger, Meursault's final words during early morning before his sunrise execution:

With death so near, Mother must have felt like someone on the brink of freedom, nearly ready to start life all over again. No one, no one in the world had any right to weep for her. 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 . . . for the first time . . . I laid my heart open to the benign indifference of the universe. . . .<sup>67</sup>

Hope and the Body: There is an ambiguity in Camus' thoughts on hope and the body, i.e., on whether a physical doctrine of hope is possible. At this point I shall develop those thoughts that deny such a possibility and shall discuss later in the chapter those passages which indicate the possibility of a physical doctrine of hope. As might be expected from the discussion of the absurd man, Sisyphus denies such hope. But Meursault poses a

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<sup>67</sup>Albert Camus, The Stranger, p. 154.

puzzle, for there is one passage in The Stranger which opens the interpretative door to a physical doctrine of hope and would seem to deny his response to the following (the Chaplain to Meursault):

'Have you no hope at all? Do you really think that when you die you die outright, and nothing remains?'  
I said: 'Yes!'<sup>68</sup>

Sisyphus would certainly agree here with Meursault:  
"Death is the only reality. After death the chips are down. I am not even free, either, to perpetuate myself, but a slave, and above all, a slave without hope of an eternal revolution. . ."<sup>69</sup> Camus, in his Notebooks, during August, 1938, wrote down some thoughts on the way in which the body itself denies any possibility of hope:

Thought is always out in front. It sees too far, farther than the body, which lives in the present.  
To abolish hope is to bring back thought to the body. And the body is doomed to perish.<sup>70</sup>

The significant point here is that it is the body's limitation to the present and the fact of its corruptibility that negate any possibility of hope on a bodily level. Camus commented on this negation in an essay entitled "The Desert":

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<sup>68</sup>Ibid., p. 147.

<sup>69</sup>Albert Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus, p. 42.

<sup>70</sup>Albert Camus, Notebooks, 1935-1942, pp. 105-6.



What they have expelled from these faces moulded for eternity is the curse of the mind: at the price of hope. For the body knows nothing of hope. All it knows is the beating of its own heart. Its eternity consists of indifference. . . . The impassiveness and the greatness that man shows when he has no hope, the eternal present, is precisely what perceptive theologians have called hell. And hell, as everyone knows . . . consists of bodily suffering.<sup>71</sup>

This concludes the study of The Gospel of No Hope.

Most of what has been done is to report and to clarify Camus' thought on the relation between hope and the absurd. Critical questions and evaluations of the discussion will be undertaken in the following chapters. The next task before turning to the Camus of hope is to substantiate the claim made earlier: that Meursault and Sisyphus (the absurd heroes) represent only a first stage along life's way; that Rieux and Tarrou (the absurd comrades) represent the second and middle stage; and that the Rebel and D'Arrast (the men of hope) represent the achievement of the final stage.

From the Absurd to Hope: From Sisyphus to D'Arrast

The considerations of this section of the paper once again raise the question of consistency on Camus' part in moving from the solitary hopelessness of Sisyphus to the

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<sup>71</sup>Albert Camus, "The Desert," in Lyrical and Critical Essays, pp. 94-5.

hopeful "we-ness" of the Rebel.<sup>72</sup> As stated earlier, I understand this change as a further development of his position and not as an inconsistency. I will also offer textual evidence that Camus so recognized the relation between Meursault and Sisyphus and the Rebel.

In thinking through this development in Camus, I found it helpful to characterize Meursault and Sisyphus. Roger Quilliot has done an excellent job of summarizing Sisyphus and his world (and thus Meursault and his) in these words:

Le Mythe de Sisyphe thus offers us the decor of a world emptied of the divinity, the eternity, and of the hope they engender. Within it, a personality evolves, a stranger to himself, to his fellow men, to the universe and, at the same time, quite close to them, if only through his longing. A character who senses that he was made for happiness, eternity, and dialogue, and who by the feebleness of his intellect, his physical and moral strength, is condemned to anguish, frailty, and uncertainty. Bound to the living world by intertwining desire and disgust, he has to admit that contradiction is his true nature and that no dialectic whatever can free him from it. From the intuition of the absurd we have come to the tangible evidence of the absurd: all true knowledge is impossible.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>72</sup>There have been many such charges made. As an example see the article in the Bibliography by Herbert Hochberg, "Albert Camus and the Ethics of Absurdity." Hochberg has at least recognized the tension between Sisyphus and the Rebel, but in claiming inconsistency he has, I think, failed to realize that Sisyphus is but a stage on life's way leading to the Rebel.

<sup>73</sup>Roger Quilliot, The Sea and Prisons, pp. 100-01.

The overriding trait in Sisyphus' world, and in that of Meursault, is strangeness--to himself, to the community of man, and to the world. He is alone, and thus, without hope. Mistakenly, some commentators have taken this view of man--as a stranger totally alone--and generalized it in Camus. That the absurd man was not the whole picture was evident at least as early as 1944, when Camus wrote in the preface to Caligula, a play about another absurd hero:

But, if his truth is to rebel against fate, his error lies in negating what binds him to mankind. One cannot destroy everything without destroying oneself. This is why Caligula depopulates the world around him and, faithful to his logic, does what is necessary to arm against him those who will eventually kill him. Caligula is the story of a superior suicide. It is the story of the most human and most tragic of errors. Unfaithful to mankind through fidelity to himself, Caligula accepts death because he has understood that one cannot be free at the expense of others.<sup>74</sup>

About one year later, Camus made the following entry in a notebook during November of 1945, two years before the publication of The Plague: "What balances the absurd is the community of men fighting against it."<sup>75</sup> Here, then, is the indication of the movement of the absurd hero from futile hopelessness to hope in the community of man that

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<sup>74</sup>Albert Camus, "Caligula," in Caligula and Three Other Plays, p. vi.

<sup>75</sup>Albert Camus, Notebooks, 1942-1951, p. 126.

culminates in the Rebel and D'Arrast, but with an intermediate stage found in Rieux and Tarrou or The Plague. That Camus planned such a development is clear from his own statements. In an interview with Gabriel d'Aubarede published in Les Nouvelles Letteraires, May 10, 1951, Camus responded to the question:

Question: To what extent should we look upon your books . . . as symbolic translations of the philosophy of the absurd?

Answer: . . . If we assume that nothing has any meaning, then we must conclude that the world is absurd. But does nothing have a meaning? I have never believed that we could remain at this point. Even as I was writing The Myth of Sisyphus, I was thinking about an essay on revolt that I would write later on, in which I would attempt, after having described the different aspects of the feelings of the Absurd, to describe the different attitudes of man in revolt.<sup>76</sup>

In a letter to Roland Barthes, almost four years later, January 11, 1955, Camus still feels the need to correct those who would limit him to the absurd situation of Meursault, Caligula, and Sisyphus:

Compared to The Stranger, The Plague does, beyond any possible discussion, represent the transition from an attitude of solitary revolt to the recognition of a community whose struggles must be shared. If there is an evolution from The Stranger to The Plague, it is in the direction of solidarity and participation.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup>Albert Camus, "Interview," in Lyrical and Critical Essays, p. 365.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., p. 339.

As has been stated earlier, Rieux and Sisyphus, in facing the same absurd, do so in a different way. Sisyphus faces it in the courageousness of solitary hopelessness; Rieux faces the plague in the intimacy of friendship. Thus, the struggle with the absurd has moved from solitary courage to the creative bond of intimate friendship (i.e., the beginning of hope). Camus describes this creative revolt against the absurd in a midnight swim in The Plague:

'Do you know,' he said, 'what we should do for friendship's sake?'

'Anything you like, Tarrou.'

'Go for a swim. It's one of these harmless pleasures that even a saint-to-be can indulge in, don't you agree?' Rieux smiled again, and Tarrou continued: 'With our passes, we can get out on the pier. Really, it's too damn silly living only in and for the plague. Of course, a man should fight for the victims, but if he ceases caring for anything outside that, what's the use of his fighting?'

'Right,' Rieux said. 'Let's go.'

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Once they were on the pier they saw the sea spread out before them, a gentle heaving expanse of deep-pitted velvet... Before them the darkness stretched out into infinity. Rieux could feel under his hand the gnarled, weather-worn visage of the rocks, and a strange happiness possessed him. Turning to Tarrou, he caught a glimpse on his friend's face of the same happiness, a happiness that forgot nothing, not even murder.

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They dressed and started back. Neither had said a word, but they were conscious of being perfectly at one, and the memory of this night would be cherished by them both. When they caught sight of the plague watchman, Rieux guessed that Tarrou, like himself, was thinking that the disease

had given them a respite, and this was good, but now they must set their shoulders to the wheel again.<sup>78</sup>

But, it would be "their shoulders" that they set to the wheel. They had made themselves available to one another, and in this availability lay both the hope and the strength of their rebellion against the absurd. The next stage would then be the Rebel's availability not only to a friend, but to mankind. However, before considering the Rebel, we must look at one other character who stands between Sisyphus and the Rebel--D'Arrast, the man who picked up the old stone of Sisyphus and carried it for, and with, a friend. In the Brazilian jungle, he finds a struggling Sisyphus--the cock:

The cook advanced again with his jerky trot, not like a man who wants to progress but as if he were fleeing the crushing load, as if he hoped to lighten it through motion. . . The man trembled; the saliva began to trickle from his mouth again, while the sweat literally spurted from all over his body. He tried to breathe deeply and stopped short. He started off again, took three steps, and tottered. And suddenly the stone slipped onto his shoulder, gashing it, and then forward onto the ground, while the cook, losing his balance toppled over on his side. . . .

Leaning over him, D'Arrast with his bare hand wiped the blood and dust from his shoulder, while the little man, his face against the ground, panted.. . . D'Arrast grasped him around the waist and raised him up . . . After a moment, the cook, bloody and caked with earth, detached himself.. . . He staggered toward the stone, which the others

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<sup>78</sup>Albert Camus, The Plague, pp. 222-24.

were raising a little. But he stopped, looked at the stone with a vacant stare, and shook his head. Then he let his arms fall at his sides and turned toward D'Arrast. Huge tears flowed silently down his ravaged face. He wanted to speak, he was speaking, but his mouth hardly formed the syllables. 'I promised,' he was saying. And then: 'Oh, Captain! Oh, Captain!' and the tears drowned his voice . . . the cook, weeping, collapsed . . . defeated, with his head thrown back.

D'Arrast looked at him, not knowing what to say. . . . Suddenly he tore the cork mat from the hands holding it and walked toward the stone. He gestured to the others to hold it up and then he loaded it almost effortlessly. His head pressed down under the weight of the stone, his shoulders hunched, and his breathing rather hard, he looked down at his feet as he listened to the cook's sobs. Then with a vigorous tread he started off on his own. . . .

The stone weighed painfully on his head now and he needed all the strength of his long arms to lighten it. His shoulders were already stiffening. . . . He hastened his pace, finally reached the little square where the cook's hut stood, ran to it, kicked the door open, and brusquely hurled the stone onto the still glowing fire in the center of the room. And there, straightening up until he was suddenly enormous, drinking in with desperate gulps the familiar smell of poverty and ashes, he felt rising within him a surge of obscure and panting joy that he was powerless to name.

When the inhabitants of the hut arrived, they found D'Arrast standing with his shoulders against the back wall and eyes closed. . . . Whereupon the brother led the cook up to the stone, where he dropped on the ground. The brother too sat down, beckoning to the others. . . . Standing in the darkness, D'Arrast. . . . joyfully acclaimed his own strength; he acclaimed once again, a fresh beginning in life. . . . The brother moved a little away from the cook and, half turning toward D'Arrast but without looking at him pointed to the empty place and said: "Sit down with us."<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>79</sup>Albert Camus, "The Growing Stone," in Exile and the Kingdom, pp. 207-13.

Thus, from the Sisyphean task of sharing the keeping of a promise, it is but one step (stage) further to "sitting with us,"--i.e., to the rebellion for the community of man, to The Rebel.

Early in The Rebel, Camus definitively relates the act of rebellion to the community of man:

In absurdist experience, suffering is individual. But from the moment when a movement of rebellion begins, suffering is seen as a collective experience. Therefore the first progressive step for a mind overwhelmed by the strangeness of things is to realize that this feeling of strangeness is shared with all men and that human reality, in its entirety, suffers from the distance which separates it from the rest of the universe. The malady experienced by a single man becomes a mass plague. In our daily trials rebellion plays the same role as does the 'cogito' in the realm of thought; it is the first piece of evidence. It founds its first value on the whole human race. I rebel--therefore we exist.<sup>80</sup>

There is, at the base of rebellion, a knowledge of the solidarity of suffering and a love that Camus describes in these words:

. . . rebellion cannot exist without a strange form of love. Those who find no rest in God or in history are condemned to live for those who, like themselves, cannot live: in fact, for the humiliated. The most pure form of the moment of rebellion is thus crowned with the heart-rending cry of Karamazov: if all are not saved, what good is the salvation of one only.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>80</sup>Albert Camus, The Rebel, p. 22.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., p. 304.



The relation between hope and rebellion will be explained in the final section of this paper, as well as the relation between rebellion and "we."

This concludes the section on the stages of life's way in Camus: the lonely strangeness of Meursault has given way, first, to the sharing of that strangeness in the friendship of Rieux and Tarrou, and, then to the rebellion for all men against that strangeness. The lonely struggle of Sisyphus with the rock of futility has given way, first, to the sharing of that stone by D'Arrast, and, then, to the eventual bearing of the stone of mankind by the Rebel. It is thus that we come to man as Camus would have him: to the hope (rebellion) of the Rebel.

"A title: The hope of the world."<sup>82</sup>

As might be suspected from the preceding discussion, hope first makes its appearance in the second stage, that stage between Sisyphus and the Rebel, in the plague. Indeed, it is only in the midst of plague that hope can begin to emerge, for there is a relation between these two, according to Camus. In an essay written during the war years, "The Wages of Our Generation," Camus indicated the relation between hope and danger, and there is no doubt that the danger he writes of is the plague called war:

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<sup>82</sup>Albert Camus, from an entry dated March, 1936, in Notebooks, 1935-1942, p. 16.

". . . nevertheless, I should not want to change eras, for I also know and respect the greatness of this one. Moreover, I have always thought that the maximum danger implied the maximum hope."<sup>83</sup> In the stageplay about the plague, State of Siege, Camus indicated that, when the absurdity of the plague strikes the community of man, hope is the only strength left him, the only weapon with which to face the plague:

Chorus: Yes, but is hope waiting for us at the end of the road?

Diego: Cease talking of despair! Despair is a gag. And today the thunder of hope and a lightning flash of happiness are shattering the silence of this beleaguered city. Stand up, I tell you, and act like men! . . . leave the ranks of fear, and shout your freedom to the four winds of heaven!

Chorus: We are dispossessed and hope is our only riches--how could we live without it? Yes, brother, we will fling away these gags. . . . Hope buoys us up like a great wave. . . .<sup>84</sup>

In this context hope might be understood as the first act of rebellion against the absurd. Camus must have considered hope to be just this, "a rebellion against the absurd," in The Plague, for it is hope that ends the reign of the plague. In the words of the narrator, Rieux:

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<sup>83</sup>Albert Camus, "The Wages of Our Generation," in Resistance, Rebellion and Death, p. 189.

<sup>84</sup>Albert Camus, "State of Siege," in Caligula and Three Other Plays, pp. 210-11.

"The change, no doubt, was slight. Yet however slight, it proved what a vast forward stride our townsfolk had made in the way of hope. And indeed it could be said that once the faintest stirring of hope became possible, the domain of the plague was ended."<sup>85</sup> Several days later Rieux, speaking of himself, wrote that love and hope were those creative acts of rebellion that negated the exile enforced by absurdity:

As to what exile and that longing for reunion meant, Rieux had no ideas . . . he was thinking it has no importance whether such things have or have not a meaning; all we need consider is the answer given to man's hope. Henceforth he knew the answer. . . . if there is one thing one can always yearn for and sometimes attain, it is human love.<sup>86</sup>

These thoughts bring us to The Rebel, for hope is an act of rebellion against the plague. Hope in relation to the plague is, therefore, only an initial, incomplete act of rebellion; for it is an act against, and the most authentic hope is always an act for.

Hope and the Rebel: What stands out in the hope of the Rebel as compared to the hope of Rieux is its direction: the Rebel's hope is always for us. This direction stands out most clearly in the quotation on page 96,

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<sup>85</sup>Albert Camus, The Plague, p. 235.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., p. 261.

which ends in these words: "It founds its first value on the whole human race. I rebel--therefore we exist."<sup>87</sup> The rebel acts for--for the "whole human race." It is in this sense that rebellion and hope merge, for the rebel acts in hope; to rebel is to hope--to hope is to rebel.

In a letter to an Algerian rebel, M. Aziz Kessous, Camus makes reference to the hope that he shares with his brother rebel--it is a hope for unity in the midst of a plague, the bitter plague of French-Algerian hate:

Nevertheless, you and I, who are so much alike--having the same background, sharing the same hope, having felt like brothers for so long now, united in love for our country--know that we are not enemies and that we could live happily together on the soil that belongs to us. . . .

You have said it very well, better than I can say it; we are condemned to live together. . . .<sup>88</sup>

Less than one year later, midst the continuing hatred between Algeria and France and in frequent violence, in a lecture given in Algiers, the hope of a rebel made an "Appeal for a Civilian Truce":

Reason clearly shows that on this point, at least, French and Arab solidarity is inevitable, in death as in life, in destruction as in hope. . . .

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<sup>87</sup>In chapter three I shall compare this statement of Camus, "I rebel--therefore we exist," with one of Marcel, "I hope in You for Us." These two statements, in my understanding, are almost identical.

<sup>88</sup>Albert Camus, "Letter to an Algerian Militant, M. Aziz Kessous" (first appeared in October, 1955, in the newspaper edited by Kessous, Algerian Community), in Resistance, Rebellion, and Death, p. 94.

. . . there is also a community of hope that justifies our appeal. That common hope is firmly based on realities over which we have no control. On this soil there are a million Frenchmen who have been here for a century, millions of Moslems . . . who have been here for centuries, and several vigorous religious communities. Those men must live together at the crossroads where history has put them. They can do so if they will take a few steps toward each other in open confrontation. . . .

. . . we may hope someday to break altogether the block of hatreds and crazy demands in which we all are caught.<sup>89</sup>

The hope of the rebel lies in the solidarity of human suffering in the "community of hope," rebelling for collective humanity. Camus did more than just write about the Rebel, for he was himself a Rebel; and thus, he was a man of great hope--indeed, hope for the world.

A Rebel and His Hope for the World: The purpose of this section of the chapter is to show the hope that Camus held for the human world. That hope would first begin in those solitary acts of rebellion in the name of all, as Camus indicated in a lecture given at the University of Uppsala and titled "Create Dangerously":

Great ideas, it has been said, come into the world as gently as doves. Perhaps then, if we listen attentively, we shall hear, amid the uproar of empires and nations, a faint flutter of wings, the gentle stirrings of life and hope. Some will say that this hope lies in nations, others, in a man. I believe rather that it is awakened, revived, nourished by millions of solitary individuals whose

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<sup>89</sup>Albert Camus, "Appeal for a Civilian Truce," in Resistance, Rebellion, and Death, pp. 101, 103.

deeds and works everyday negate frontiers and the crudest implications of history. As a result, there shines forth fleetingly the ever threatened truth that each and every man, on the foundation of his own sufferings and joys, builds for all.<sup>90</sup>

In the "gentle stirrings of life and hope" of rebels here and there, rebelling in the hope of human community, lies the real power to overcome the nihilism of the 20th century, as Camus makes clear in the essay "The Wages of Our Generation":

Europe (and France) has not yet emerged from fifty years of nihilism, but the moment people begin rejecting the mystifications on which that nihilism is based then hope is possible. The whole question is to know whether or not we shall develop faster than the rocket with a nuclear warhead. . . . This is the wager of our generation. If we are to fail, it is better, in any case to have stood on the side of those who choose life than on the side of those who are destroying.<sup>91</sup>

These are not the words of a nihilist. Certainly Camus, as any rational man, knew that the wager might fail, but that was no excuse for failing to work to beat the bomb, to create dangerously a world where liberty and justice will be the rules of life. Indeed, this is the rebel's hope, the hope of his rebellion: a life of liberty and justice, which Camus defined in a January 10, 1944 essay

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<sup>90</sup>Albert Camus, "Create Dangerously" (lecture, 1957, at University of Uppsala), in Resistance, Rebellion and Death, pp. 208-9.

<sup>91</sup>Albert Camus, "The Wages of Our Generation," in Resistance, Rebellion and Death, pp. 187-8.

in Combat:

We shall call . . . justice a social state in which each individual receives every opportunity at the start, and in which the country's majority is not held in abject conditions by a privileged minority. And we shall call liberty a political climate in which the human being is respected for what he is as well as what he expresses.<sup>92</sup>

These were words of hope written by a rebel--a rebel speaking out against the evils of Nazi control in France. Seven months later, August 24, 1944, the eve of Paris' liberation, in an essay in Combat, all the passionate hope for liberty and justice of a rebel came burning to the press:

Yes, their reasons are overwhelming. They are as big as hope and as deep as revolt. They are the reasons of the future for a country that others tried so long to limit to the gloomy rumination of her past. Paris is fighting today so that France may speak tomorrow. The people are under arms tonight because they hope for justice for tomorrow. . . . And this is why, despite the blood and wrath, despite the wild bullets, we must utter, not words of regret, but words of hope, of the dreadful hope of men isolated with their fate.

This huge Paris, all black and warm in the summer heat, with a storm of bombers overhead and a storm of snipers in the streets . . . is bursting with all the fires of hope and suffering; it has the flame of lucid courage and all the glow, not only of liberation, but of tomorrow's liberty.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>92</sup>Albert Camus, essay in Combat, January 1, 1944, translated and included in Emmett Parker, The Artist in the Arena, pp. 90-91.

<sup>93</sup>Albert Camus, "The Blood of Freedom" Combat, August 24, 1944, in Resistance, Rebellion, and Death, pp. 28-9.

Now, a sceptic might say that it was easy enough to speak of hope on the eve of liberation, but what about hope during the long siege of the plague? What hope is to be found in that darkness? Where are Camus' hopes in that sickness? The answer is that Camus spoke often of hope even in the midst of that plague. Many statements already quoted show this hope, but it is most clearly evidenced in letters written to a German friend during the siege of the Nazi plague. In a letter dated July, 1943, Camus wrote:

I believe that France lost her power and her sway for a long time to come and that for a long time to come she will need a desperate patience, a vigilant revolt to recover the element of prestige necessary for any culture. But I believe she has lost all that for reasons that are pure. And this is why I have not lost hope. This is the whole meaning of my letter.<sup>94</sup>

Five months later, December, 1943, Camus wrote of his love and hope in France: ". . . as I have already told you, if at times we seemed to prefer justice to our country, this is simply because we wanted to love our country in justice, as we wanted to love in truth and in hope."<sup>95</sup> Again, in April, 1944, Camus spoke of the hope he had for Europe to the same German friend: "During all

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<sup>94</sup>Albert Camus, "Letters to a German Friend," in Resistance, Rebellion, and Death, pp. 7-8.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., pp. 9-10.



the time we were obstinately and silently serving our country, we never lost sight of an idea and a hope, forever present in us--the idea and the hope of Europe."<sup>96</sup>

The preceding are all examples of the hope with which a rebel fought the plague of absurdity within his own country. But a rebel knows no single homeland, for he is a brother of all who rebel against the absurd plague called tyranny. The two following passages are the words of Camus for his brother rebels in Hungary and in East Berlin:

I hope with all my strength that the mute resistance of the Hungarian people will continue, grow stronger, and, echoed by all the voices we can give it, get unanimous international opinion to boycott its oppressors. And if that opinion is too flabby or selfish to do justice to a martyred people, if our voices are also too weak, I hope that the Hungarian resistance will continue until the counter-revolutionary state collapses everywhere in the East under the weight of its lies and its contradictions. . . .

The Hungarian workers and intellectuals, beside whom we stand today with so much impotent grief, realized that and made us realize it. This is why, if their suffering is ours, their hope belongs to us too. Despite their destitution, their exile, their chains, it took them but a single day to transmit to us the royal legacy of liberty. May we be worthy of it!<sup>97</sup>

June 7: There are riots in East Berlin: 'When a worker somewhere in the world raises his bare fists in front of a tank and cries out that he is not a slave, what are we, then, if we remain

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<sup>96</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>97</sup>Albert Camus, "Kadar Had His Day of Fear," Franc-Fireur, March 18, 1957, in Resistance, Rebellion, and Death, pp. 118-123.

indifferent?<sup>98</sup>

These are not the words of an isolated, weary, hopeless Sisyphus treading the mill of absurdity, but of a rebel who, even midst the plague and exiles of his world, puts his hope and activity into the community of man.

Certainly this rebel is a realist, but no pessimist.

This concludes the section on a rebel and his hope for the world. In Chapter Three, the relation between this hope and a doctrine of salvation will be discussed. All that remains of this chapter is a brief discussion of four additional dimensions of hope in Camus and the consideration of one additional problem regarding community and transcendence.

Dimensions of Hope: First, A Physical Doctrine of Hope: Several passages have already been cited in which Camus denies a physical doctrine of hope, i.e., that the body can know anything of hope. As shown in Chapter One, Marcel would agree with him. But there are other passages in Camus which suggest the possibility of such a physical hope. When one puts these together with those passages that deny the same, no defensible position on Camus can be reached, except to say that he is ambiguous

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<sup>98</sup>Albert Camus, from a speech given in Paris in defense of East Berlin workers in rebellion, quoted in Roger Quilliot, The Sea and Prisons, p. xxi.

on the matter. However, I will indicate the supporting passages to establish the ambiguity and for critical use in Chapter Four. The first place that the possibility of a physical hope appears is, surprisingly, in The Stranger, in a conversation at the visitors' room between Meursault and Marie:

. . . Marie was shouting to me that we musn't lose hope.

'Certainly not,' I answered. My gaze fell on her shoulders, and I had a certain longing to squeeze them, through the thin dress. Its silky texture fascinated me, and I had a feeling that the hope she spoke of centered on them, somehow.<sup>99</sup>

The other two passages that might suggest a physical hope are both statements of Rieux as narrator of The Plague:

. . . the rising wind of hope, after all these months of endurance and depression, had fanned impatience to a blaze and swept away their self-control. They were seized with a sort of panic at the thought that they might die so near the goal. . . . the first thrill of hope had been enough to shatter what fear and hopelessness had failed to impair.<sup>100</sup>

Hope had returned and with it a new zest for life.<sup>101</sup>

The only claims that can be made are the following: First, these quotations only suggest the possibility of a physical doctrine of hope. Second, the position of Camus on

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<sup>99</sup>Albert Camus, The Stranger, p. 92.

<sup>100</sup>Albert Camus, The Plague, p. 230.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid., p. 244.

such a doctrine cannot be decided since there are passages that both support and deny a physical hope. It is possible that many of the statements in The Rebel concerning the solidarity of human suffering would support such a doctrine. This possibility will be considered in Chapter Four.

Second, Hope and Induction: In another section of this chapter, it was stated that one of the ways in which the absurd destroyed hope was through its rule of induction. It follows from this, as Marcel has stated, that for hope to exist it must reject induction. In one of his notebooks, Camus put down some thoughts on the human power to deny inductive determination:

There is one fatality which is death, and outside this all other fatality disappears. In the space of time between birth and death, nothing is predetermined. You can change everything, you can stop the way and even maintain peace, if you want to do so intensely, and for a long time.<sup>102</sup>

There are two passages in The Plague in which Camus indicates that hope is irrational (i.e., denies the reason of induction) and that hope proceeds regardless of any inductive denial (regardless of "being unavowed"). In Rieux's words:

Thus each of us had to be content to live only for the day, alone under the vast indifference of

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<sup>102</sup>Albert Camus, Notebooks, 1935-1942, p. 142.

the sky. This sense of being abandoned . . . began sapping to the point of futility. . . . at the mercy of the sky's caprices . . . [all] suffered and hoped irrationally.<sup>103</sup>

. . . this new development [the decrease in the death roll and the appearance of healthy rats] was the talk of the town, and people began to nurse hopes none the less heart-felt for being unavowed.<sup>104</sup>

Further discussion on induction and hope will follow in both Chapters Three and Four.

Third, Hope without God: Camus' denial of any transcendent reality is well known. However, this does not mean that he is anti-religious or hostile to religious groups. Rather, it means that he does not accept any divine being. For the typical westerner this means that he rejects the Christian God. The main reason for this rejection lies in the existence of the absurd, or, in theological language, in the problem of evil, as he indicated in a lecture to the monks at the Dominican Monastery of Latour-Maubourg, in 1948:

. . . the world of today needs Christians who remain Christians. . . . I don't like priests who are anticlerical any more than philosophers who are ashamed of themselves. Hence I shall not . . . try to pass myself off as a Christian. . . . I share with you the same revulsion from evil. But I do not share your hope, and I continue to

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<sup>103</sup>Albert Camus, The Plague, pp. 64-5.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid., p. 233.

struggle against this universe in which children suffer and die.<sup>105</sup>

Thus Camus does not renounce the Christian, only the Christian God. The Christian may be a brother-rebel with Camus, and he would rejoice in their brotherhood of suffering and hope. What Camus cannot tolerate in the Christian faith is its escapism into eternal realities and the consequent irresponsibility and unconcern for this world of men. The hope of eternity so often becomes for the Christian a rejection of this world of humanity, an excuse from rebelling against the plagues of tyranny and prejudice. This worldly cowardice and irresponsibility Camus cannot abide. For the Christian whose transcendent relationship plunges him into this "worldly" rebellion, Camus is his brother, for they are both about the task of building a church in this world--one a church with a God and one a church without a god. It is the building that is significant, for the building is an act of hope, regardless of whether it has a transcendent ground or not. What then is this world church? It is a community where liberty and justice are sacred rights of each individual, and that is the Rebel's hope for the world.

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<sup>105</sup>Albert Camus, lecture at the Dominical Monastery of Latour-Maubourg, 1948, in Resistance, Rebellion, and Death, p. 53.

Fourth, Hope and Despair: This final consideration of Camus' thoughts on hope is included for later comparison with Marcel. Marcel is very clear about the opposite of hope: despair. Camus makes no statement as to what is the opposite of hope. He considers despair and rejects it in The Myth of Sisyphus in these words: "Being deprived of hope is not despairing."<sup>106</sup> He also raises the possibility that the absurd might be the "contrary" of hope, and then rejects it. Therefore, no conclusion can be reached as to what Camus considered the opposite of hope.

Community and Transcendence: Evidence has already been offered to show that Camus rejects any transcendent relationship for man. Within Christianity, this has been interpreted to mean that he rejects the Christian God as an ontological reality. Such a rejection is a result of the awareness of absurdity. However, it is possible to interpret this rejection by Camus as epistemological rather than ontological. This is to say that absurdity pushes man into the epistemological position of agnosticism. For Camus, though, epistemological agnosticism has the same practical effect as ontological atheism: For the day to day problems of life, agnosticism does not

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<sup>106</sup>Albert Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus, p. 67.

differ from atheism because in neither case does the individual have a transcendent relationship.

If these thoughts are correct, then a problem occurs in Camus: What is the source of community? This is a problem that does not plague Marcel because his transcendent Ally is the source of community. As either agnostic or atheist, this transcendent Ally cannot be the source for Camus. The source is courage. What binds the human community together in the face of absurdity--which counsels dissolution--is nothing more and nothing less than courage. This is why Camus can become a brother Rebel with a man who has a different hope (i.e., a transcendent Ally): They can unite their courage in the struggle against the destructiveness of absurdity.

Final Remarks: The discussion has, I think, achieved the two purposes initially designated. First, the thoughts of Camus on the nature of hope have been explored and evidence has been given of a development in his thought from Sisyphus to the Rebel. Second, evidence has shown that Camus is not the nihilist and pessimist that many claim, but rather, a man of hope--a rebel setting out to build a church without a god, i.e., a community of hope where liberty and justice are the rules of life.

The groundwork has now been laid to compare a rebel who would build a church without a god and a prophet of hope building a church with his God.



. CHAPTER THREE: HOPE: A REBELLION  
AGAINST ABSURDITY

My purpose in this chapter is to compare and to contrast Marcel and Camus, or, more precisely their respective views on hope. But, in trying to do so, I encounter two problems: First, which Camus is to be compared to and contrasted with Marcel? The Camus of Sisyphus? Of The Plague? Of The Rebel? Second, the success of any comparison, or any contrast, lies in the ability to relate the language and conceptual frame of one man to the different language and conceptual frame of the other. Even where common words are utilized by both, there is no guarantee that the words have the same, or similar, meanings in each conceptual frame.

In regard to the first problem I shall attempt to utilize all three stages in Camus for comparison to Marcel rather than limit the task to one stage. One of the merits of this approach lies in comparing Sisyphus and Marcel; for, contrary to the standard analysis of Sisyphus, Camus and Marcel do agree in several important respects on the relation between Sisyphus and hope. Another merit lies in the comparison and contrast between The Rebel and Marcel. As stated in Chapter Two, The Rebel is a stage grounded in hope, and one might then suspect

that Camus' Rebel and Marcel share much in common. But it is at this stage that the most significant difference appears. Thus, the comparison and contrast will seek an overall view of Camus in relation to Marcel.

In regard to the second problem I shall, where possible, attempt definitive and rigid comparisons or contrasts, and where ambiguity rules out such well-defined comparisons or contrasts, leave the relation open-ended. I shall point out, for example, both the common elements and the different elements in Marcel's use of mystery and Camus' use of absurdity, without drawing any final conclusions.

The structural procedure for this chapter will be as follows: First, a discussion of the significant contrasts between Camus and Marcel; second, an examination of the questionable contrasts (i.e., those relations that because of both similarities and differences must remain definitively ambiguous, open); and third, an exploration of many similarities between these two philosophers.

#### Contrasts (Definitive Differences)

Four areas of difference will be discussed: the contrast between Sisyphus and Marcel (a general discussion); contrasting views on transcendence (this point must also be discussed in the next section on questionable,

open-ended contrasts); the absurd and miracles; and hope and despair.

One might expect to find in this section on contrasts a discussion on the difference between absurdity and mystery, for they are certainly contrasting concepts. Indeed, the significance of each concept could not be overestimated, for Camus' thought can be understood as an attempt to trace out the implications of absurdity and Marcel's that of mystery. Why then is a discussion of the difference between these two basic concepts omitted? Because, while contrasting concepts, they have in common many features; and thus, while it is accurate to say that absurdity and mystery are not to be equated, it is also accurate to say that they are in some ways similar concepts. For these two reasons I leave a discussion of absurdity and mystery to the second section of this chapter--open-ended contrasts.

Superficially, one of the clearest contrasts between the thought of Marcel and Camus is to be found in relating Homo Viator and Sisyphus. Homo Viator is a man of hope; Sisyphus is a prophet of no-hope. What is philosophically characteristic of Sisyphus, of the absurd man, is his clear-sighted refusal to hope in a world where possibility is reduced to actuality and alienness is the dominant relation between man and the world. Sisyphus, as the

absurd man, knows a universe that is limited, transparent, and frigid--in other words, a universe that is nothingness--(see page 79). In this kind of a universe Sisyphus has two options: he can hope, which is really a refusal to accept the universe--a delusion; or, he can refuse to hope, which is a rational acceptance of the universe.

As discussed in Chapter Two, it is the conscious power of induction, i.e., the reduction of possibility to actuality, that results in what might be called a "logic of no hope," or as Camus puts it, an "absurd logic":

". . . carrying this absurd logic to its conclusion, I must admit that the struggle implies a total absence of hope. . . ."<sup>1</sup> Marcel's man, Homo Viator, on the other hand, is never ultimately without hope, i.e., limited to the horizon mapped out by induction and forever lost in a strange world. Homo Viator in hoping denies both the power of induction and alienness; for, in Marcel's words, hope

. . . consists in asserting that there is at the heart of Being, beyond all data, beyond all inventories and all calculations, a mysterious principle which is in connivance with me, which cannot but will what I will, if what I will deserves to be willed and is, in fact, willed by the whole of my being.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Albert Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup>Gabriel Marcel, "Desire and Hope," Readings in Existential Phenomenology, p. 281.

In trying to understand the contrast between Sisyphus and Homo Viator outlined in the preceding paragraph, one must note that the word "superficially," which began the discussion, is most significant. At first glance the two positions seem decided opposites on the human condition. But there are many points of similarity between Sisyphus and Homo Viator that will be discussed shortly. The differences and the similarities may be understood as issuing from the differences and similarities between absurdity and mystery. For this reason I shall leave the contrast between Sisyphus and Homo Viator, only to return to it from several vantage points in what is to follow.

It is in considering their respective views on transcendence that one comes to the most critical contrast between Camus and Marcel, and yet, at the same time, to a point of agreement. To understand this seemingly contradictory statement--that Camus and Marcel agree and disagree on transcendence--it is helpful to ask the question: What kind of transcendent relationships, if any, are open to man? It seems to me that two possibilities are logically available: First, man may have the possibility of a relationship to the human community that could be described as transcendent, i.e., the human community may be considered as a reality that is more

than a numerical collection of individuals; and second, man may have the possibility of a relationship to a reality that is supra-human (excluding the human community), i.e., to an empathetic natural reality (nature), or to a supernatural being (ghost?), or to an Absolute Thou (a ground of Being, a God). In a nutshell, Camus and Marcel find some points of agreement in admitting both the reality and the value of transcendence in the first sense, but they heartily disagree on any transcendent relation in the second sense. I shall consider only the contrast in this section of the paper, leaving the comparison of transcendence and the human community for the next section.

As has been stated, one of the primary differences between Sisyphus and Homo Viator is the possibility of hope--for Sisyphus there is no hope and for Homo Viator hope is a life-style. To answer the question, "Why?" about both, is not too difficult. Why can Sisyphus find no hope? Because he has no transcendent source to draw upon, no empathetic Being to lean upon--he has only an indifference to face. Another way to say the same thing is that Sisyphus can find no hope because there is no mystery in his lonely world, i.e., there is no reality that transcends his existence--which is also to say that there are no possibilities beyond the actualities of his

absurd situation. For Homo Viator the situation is much different, as is indicated in the following, which brings us to the heart of the most significant contrast between Camus and Marcel: For Homo Viator there is a reality in whose "inward depth" he can find an ally--indeed, reality is on his side, willing what he most deeply wills or hopes (see page 36). It is this reality that makes hope as a mystery possible for Homo Viator. In other words, it is this reality that allows Homo Viator to assert a truth that goes ". . . beyond all experience, all probability, all statistics" (see page 36). That truth is the empathy of reality and the denial of induction. For Sisyphus there is no "inward depth" to reality and there is no available source of empathy. While reality is not "hostile" for him--since to be hostile would necessitate some kind of will (activity) in the world--reality is "indifferent," uncaring, and inert. (See page 36). This is also to say that there is nothing "beyond all experience, all probability, all statistics" for Sisyphus. There is, then, no possibility (beyond that of infantile escapism into self-deception) for Sisyphus to have a transcendent relation with reality (or the world, or nature, or a God). The world is indifferent, inert, dead to will, and determined. Man, even for Sisyphus, is caring, active alive to will, and a fighter for freedom



amidst determinism. Mutual exclusion rules out any relationship other than rebellion, which I shall take up later and which is not a transcendent relationship in the sense under consideration.

It is the lack of any mystery in Sisyphus' world--and Rieux's and the Rebel's, for that matter--that rules out transcendence in this sense. Camus and Marcel would probably agree that because of the lack of such mystery, and the consequent loss of any transcendent reality, no hope is possible. There will be more on this in the last section on comparisons. Another way to see the contrast between the total Camus and Marcel is to consider the relation between hope and miracles, which is a restatement of hope as a denial of the power of induction. Marcel speaks of the relation in these words: ". . . hope is possible only in a world where there is room for miracles. . . ." <sup>3</sup> Camus would, I think, agree with Marcel that hope is possible only in a world where miracles occur. Put in other words, a world where induction rules out the miraculous, i.e., a world where possibility is reduced to actuality, is one in which hope can be only an illusion. The disjunction, either miracles or not miracles, is exclusive, as Camus indicated in an essay

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<sup>3</sup>Gabriel Marcel, Being and Having, p. 75.

titled "On a Philosophy of Expression by Brice Parain": "The essential in any case is not yet to know which to choose: miracles or absurdity. The important thing is to show that they form the only possible choice, and that nothing else matters."<sup>4</sup> As Camus stated: absurd logic rules out hope for Sisyphus. One of the reasons is that absurdity and miracles are mutually exclusive.

Thus Camus and Marcel offer contrasts as to the nature of the reality (world) in which man finds himself: for Marcel it is a reality that admits of miracles; for Camus it is a reality whose absurdity excludes the miraculous at the level of relationship under consideration--that of the possibility of a transcendent relationship with the supra-human. Camus' view rules out hope while for Marcel hope is a potential life-style. However, at a different level of relationship--that which Marcel calls communion and that explored by Camus in The Rebel--both men speak of hope. This comparison will occupy the final part of this chapter.

Before moving to a consideration of open-ended contrasts we must consider one additional contrast. Marcel states clearly that the opposite of hope is despair, in

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<sup>4</sup>Albert Camus, "On a Philosophy of Expression by Brice Parain," Lyrical and Critical Essays, p. 239.

his words:

I believe that at the root of despair there is always this affirmation: 'There is nothing in the realm of reality to which I can give credit--no security, no guarantee.' It is a statement of complete insolvency.

As against this, hope is what implies credit. . . .<sup>5</sup>

From this vantage point one might expect that Sisyphus, the man without hope, would know despair. But Camus will not agree to such: Despair is crippling; something for the weak and cowardly. Sisyphus does not hope, but he does not despair, as Camus indicates in the following two statements from The Myth of Sisyphus: ". . . carrying this absurd logic to its conclusion, I must admit that the struggle implies a total absence of hope (which has nothing to do with despair) . . . ."<sup>6</sup> "Being deprived of hope is not despairing."<sup>7</sup> What, then, is being deprived of hope for Camus, i.e., what stands in opposition to hope for him? There is no answer to this question: On only one occasion does Camus raise the question as to what is "contrary" to hope--page 26 of The Myth of Sisyphus, in a discussion centering on the thought of Chestov. In that discussion he poses the absurd as the opposite of

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<sup>5</sup>Gabriel Marcel, The Philosophy of Existentialism, p. 42.

<sup>6</sup>Albert Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus, p. 23.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 67.

hope, and then rejects such an opposition. Thus, there is no answer to the question. One thing does seem clear to me: Camus rejected despair as the opposite of hope because despair is crippling, and man (as Sisyphus, Rieux, the Rebel) has within himself the sources to grapple with absurdity without selling out either to the "hoping" illusion that he has a transcendent ally, or to despair. For Marcel that ally underlies the whole of the human situation. Yet, as far apart as these two positions may seem, there are many similarities, to which I now turn.

#### Open-Ended Contrasts (Comparisons)

This section brings us to the most important contrast and comparison for any attempt to relate Marcel and Camus: the relation between mystery and absurdity. Absurdity and mystery are not to be identified, but the elements they have in common make any attempt to treat them as only contrasts philosophically indefensible. Mystery and absurdity spring from the same situational source--what might, generally, be called the "ambiguity of the human situation." Two points may be made about this inherent ambiguity: First, the evidence for the ambiguity lies in what we loosely call the "human feelings," which is to say that ambiguity is a concept once removed

from the situational experiences to which it refers--a concept whose purpose is situational description and understanding. Second, there are two levels on which this ambiguity is operative--an epistemological one and an ontological one. I now turn to a development of this ambiguity.

As stated, the human situation is inherently ambiguous: Marcel develops this ambiguity in terms of mystery; Camus develops it in terms of absurdity. To say exactly what this means for each existentialist is most problematic because ambiguity is elusive. Thus, rather than attempt a definitive statement, I shall concentrate on the evidence for such ambiguity and the contrasting as well as comparative implications each philosopher draws from the human situation.

The primary evidence for the ambiguity of the human situation is to be found in the human feelings. Marcel and Camus agree on this point. Human feelings are never static. There are ups and downs, joys and sorrows, confidence and fear, strangeness and belonging. These feelings provide for both human solidarity and individuality: solidarity because joy and sorrow are common to all men; individuality because the intensity and understanding of my joy and my sorrow are mine alone. It is true that all human experiences and feelings may be shared,

but never in completeness. From this perspective the dynamic character of the human feelings offers evidence for the existential emphasis on the becoming of man, which is a common point of agreement I shall consider later.<sup>8</sup>

There is a dynamic ambiguity to the nature of human experience. In other words, for both Marcel and Camus, there is an indefinable element in the nature of man, his world, and his responses to that world. It must be emphasized that the immediate evidence for this indefinable element lies in the responses, and both men agree that some responses (feelings) are more formative for pointing out the nature of the human situation. These feelings are: strangeness, lostness, hopelessness, meaninglessness, loneliness, anxiety, etc. The feelings that accompany a confrontation with what Camus calls absurdity and Marcel calls captivity.<sup>9</sup> It is not the

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<sup>8</sup>Becoming, as opposed to being, is a process of ambiguity. If man is never complete, never capable of being captured by an adequate definition, then just who man is, where he is going, and what he will be are questions that cannot be answered except in the open-ended activity of living.

<sup>9</sup>The third section of this chapter will offer a comparison of absurdity and captivity. Absurdity is a concept which does double duty in Camus, and this accounts for its comparison to both mystery and captivity.

feeling of happiness or joy that rocks the complacency of man, but the feelings arising from the experience of absurdity or captivity. Both Marcel and Camus agree up to this point: that the human situation is ambiguous; that man himself and his world are ambiguous; that the human feelings as responses to the human situation are the primary evidence for such ambiguity; and that the feelings which most clearly point out the nature of the human situation are the feelings that accompany a confrontation with absurdity or captivity. But from these agreements they take off in different directions: Camus develops the human situation in terms of the ambiguity of absurdity, i.e., the divorce between man and an indifferent world; Marcel moves from the experience of captivity to the ambiguity of mystery as that which describes the relationship of man to his world.

What Marcel means by mystery and Camus by absurdity have been developed respectively in Chapters One and Two, and it is not my intent to duplicate that work here. Instead, using the work of those two chapters as a starting point, the following comparisons are possible.

First, as has been stated, the source of both mystery and absurdity is to be found in the human situation, especially the situational relationship between man and his world. This ambiguity experienced as absurdity

leads to the divorce that Camus speaks of between man, who is a caring and valuing creature, and the indifference and silence of an inert world. The implications of this ambiguity of divorce are many: it determines the response of man to the world of absurdity--rebellion; it destroys any hope built upon a transcendent relation to this world because no such relation is possible; and it reduces possibility to actuality through the conquering power of induction. This ambiguity experienced as mystery leads to a potential relation between man and his world, what Marcel calls the "ontological mystery." The ambiguity of the relation leads to hope and the denial of induction.<sup>10</sup>

Second, both Marcel and Camus agree that the ambiguity of mystery and of absurdity are most deeply established in the feelings of strangeness, or captivity; the feelings that time and possibility are "plugged up"; and the feelings that something is wrong with the world, or with man, or with their relationship. A natural place to find expressions of these feelings of ambiguity in the work of both men would be in their drama, and such is the

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<sup>10</sup>Although Marcel and Camus seem to be apart on the meaning and the implications of ambiguity as absurdity or mystery, such may not be the whole case. The conclusion to this chapter will be a synthetic attempt to show that for both men hope is a rebellion against absurdity.



case. The following words of Marcel's Christiane could just as well have come from the mouth of Camus' Caligula, which also follow (the reverse would also be accurate):

Don't you feel sometimes that we are living . . . if you can call it living . . . in a broken world? Yes, broken like a broken watch. The mainspring has stopped working. Just to look at it, nothing has changed. Everything is in place. But put the watch to your ear, and you don't hear any ticking. You know what I am talking about, the world, what we call the world, the world of human creatures . . . it seems to me that it must have had a heart at one time, but today you would say that the heart has stopped beating.<sup>11</sup>

Men weep because . . . the world's all wrong . . .  
 . . . . .  
 . . . I knew that men felt anguish, but I didn't know what the word anguish meant. Like everyone else I fancied it was a sickness of the mind--no more. But me, it's my body that's in pain. Pain everywhere, in my chest, in my legs and arms. Even my skin is raw, my head is buzzing, I feel like vomiting. But worst of all is this queer taste in my mouth. Not blood, or death, or fever, but a mixture of all three, I've only to stir my tongue, and the world goes black, and everyone looks horrible. How hard, how cruel it is, this process of becoming a man.<sup>12</sup>

Certainly Caligula's statement is much stronger than Christiane's; but this should not be surprising, for

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<sup>11</sup>Gabriel Marcel, The Mystery of Being, vol. I., p. 27.

<sup>12</sup>Albert Camus, "Caligula," Caligula and Three Other Plays, p. 15. Both of these quotations appear earlier in the dissertation: see page 43 for the quote by Christiane and pages 68-69 for the quote by Caligula. Both are repeated here for three reasons: for the dramatic effect of proximity; for the convenience of the reader; and for facile comparison.

Caligula is the virile emperor, Christiane the timid socialite. Both do, however, in their expressions, confront the ambiguity of their life situations, and Camus and Marcel do agree as to one human response to such a confrontation.

Third, at the epistemological level, absurdity shares several characteristics with mystery: First, there is no solution to absurdity; therefore absurdity cannot be reduced to the problematic. The same distinction as between mystery and problem holds between absurdity and problem. Second, absurdity and mystery as epistemological concepts place a limitation on human knowledge and human truth. Absurdity limits knowledge and truth to the relative and the present, a limitation that Camus finds most discomforting. In his Notebooks Camus writes that truth becomes "unacceptable" to the "absurd thinker" who finds it, and the result for the thinker is a "constant discomfort" (see page 74). Absurdity, then, limits knowledge and truth to the inductive actual, which excludes intuition, value, and the realm of the improbable, especially that realm of the improbable called the miraculous. It is a limitation that at bottom is contradictory, for it says that knowledge and truth are inductive facts which ultimately eliminate knowledge and truth from human life, for, as Camus says, ". . . to live

is, in itself, a value judgment."<sup>13</sup> Mystery also limits human knowledge and truth, but in a different manner than absurdity. Absurdity limits what we may call knowledge and truth to the inductively determined; mystery limits man's capacity to capture truth since truth is truth because it participates in Being, and Being is always hidden, at least in part, for Being is a mystery. In absurdity the universe is transparent, but truth and knowledge are matters of factual indifference; in mystery the universe is opaque, and man must be satisfied with only brief snapshots of the whole picture. Knowledge and truth in absurdity are clear cut and definite, but strange and contradictory to man; knowledge and truth in mystery are diffuse and indefinite, but supportive and value-giving to man. Thus, both absurdity and mystery place limitations on knowledge and truth, but they are different kinds of limitations.

Fourth, at the ontological level, absurdity and mystery are both alike and different. First, as stated earlier, both find their source in ambiguity. Second, both concepts are relational ones. Absurdity is not something which is found in the world or in man, but is the relationship between the two. Mystery shares this same status, for while it may not be Being that is a

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<sup>13</sup>Albert Camus, The Rebel, p. 8.

mystery, it is Being that is a mystery to man. It is because man participates in Being that Being is a mystery to man, and that man is a mystery to himself. But this point has already been made from an epistemological perspective. Third, mystery may have an ontological reality that absurdity lacks: while it is true to say that mystery is a relation between man and Being and man and himself, an epistemological relation, mystery may possibly point to an ontological reality, i.e., at bottom, because of the limit on knowledge and truth that mystery imposes on man, Being may be ontologically mysterious, or a mystery to itself. Thus, mystery, unlike absurdity, may be something in reality, but man could never know one way or the other.

What can be concluded from this discussion? Only the modest claim that absurdity and mystery are not identical concepts, but neither are they exclusive ones.

Before proceeding to a discussion of comparisons, I shall consider two additional open-ended contrasts: the possibility of a physical theory of hope and the hope of salvation.

Marcel is quite clear on the possibility of a physical theory of hope: hope is ". . . only possible on the level of the us. . . it does not exist on the level of the solitary ego, self-hypnotized and concentrating

exclusively on individual aims. . . ."<sup>14</sup> Later in Homo Viator Marcel states categorically: ". . . the principle must be laid down that any physical theory of hope {a theory of hope based on sensation} is absurd and . . . contradictory. . . ."<sup>15</sup> Camus' position is not as unequivocal. As developed near the end of Chapter Two, to which I refer the reader, there are both passages in Camus which seem to rule out a theory of hope based on sensation and passages which suggest a physical theory of hope. Thus, no unambiguous contrast or comparison between Marcel and Camus is possible on this point: perhaps they agree; perhaps not.

In considering the relation between hope and salvation, Marcel and Camus come to another point of agreement with difference. Camus agrees with Marcel that ". . . all hope is hope of salvation, and it is quite impossible to treat of the one without treating of the other."<sup>16</sup> Marcel agrees with Camus that what is important is not the salvation of the individual but of the community, the focal point of hope and rebellion. As Camus puts it,

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<sup>14</sup>Gabriel Marcel, Homo Viator, p. 10.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 36. Marcel is, I think, incorrect on this point. A part of the thesis which is to be developed in Chapter Four will be a physical theory of hope, i.e., one developed on the level of sensation.

<sup>16</sup>Gabriel Marcel, Being and Having, p. 75.

quoting Karamazov, if only one is saved, what good is salvation (see page 96)? The comparison between hope in Marcel and rebellion in Camus implied in this discussion will be more fully developed in the final section of this chapter. While Camus and Marcel do agree on the relation between hope and salvation, as stated in the preceding, they part ways over this question: For what kind of salvation may man hope? This difference is determined by their views on transcendence. For Camus the hope of salvation lies only within the level of communion, i.e., only within the possibilities and limits of human community. Marcel agrees up to a point, but then proceeds one step further: the hope of salvation lies also, and ultimately, in the Absolute Thou, i.e., the transcendent realm of Being.

These thoughts on hope and salvation conclude the second section of this chapter on open-ended contrasts. I now turn to the many similarities to be found in the understandings of Marcel and Camus.

#### Comparisons (Similarities)

A natural place to begin this section on comparisons is with the similarity that Marcel and Camus share on the nature of man, a similarity they share with many philosophers. Man is not a finished being; he is always in the

process of becoming. Man is always on the way--Homo Viator, as Marcel puts it. The clearest examples of this common understanding by Marcel and Camus are passages that speak of the soul. Marcel writes that the soul is the "traveller," the "being on the way" (see page 24). In a passage in the Notebooks Camus writes the following: "If there is a soul, it is a mistake to believe that it is given us full created. It is created here, throughout a whole life. And living is nothing else but that long and painful bringing forth."<sup>17</sup> The common thesis in these two statements is the on-going process of human life. While Marcel writes of the actual existence of the soul, Camus writes of only the possibility; this difference, however, does not negate the common acceptance of becoming and process as the nature of man. From another perspective the development of stages in the thought of Camus in Chapter Two is a substantiation of this similarity with Marcel, as Germaine Bree has pointed out: ". . . To speak of stages in reference to Camus is not artificial; he himself speaks of his work in this way . . . unlike Sartre, he is still making his way through the chaos that confronts us. He has not arrived."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Albert Camus, Notebooks, 42-51, entry dated October 1949, p. 224.

<sup>18</sup>Germaine Bree, "Camus and the Plague," Yale French Studies, vol. 8 (1951), p. 93.

The second comparison to be considered is the similarity between absurdity and captivity, with special emphasis on the temporal dimension of each. The similarity between captivity and absurdity has already been partially explored in this chapter. It is the feeling of captivity that Christiane speaks of in terms of a "broken world"; it is this same captivity under the name of absurdity that Caligula speaks of in terms of the "cruel . . . process of becoming a man." Captivity and absurdity are known in the feelings of alienness, loneliness, meaninglessness, lostness, etc. The captivity of the absurd man is the captivity of exile; the captivity of Homo Viator is the absurdity of death and despair. Captivity and absurdity result in the same effect on time. Captivity for Marcel "plugs up," closes time; it points to temporal finitude--to death at the bottom of time. Absurdity for Camus also plugs up time: "The plague leaves no time."<sup>19</sup> Thus, both men agree on the effects of captivity and absurdity on man's relation to time, as they also do on the possibility of struggling with and overcoming captive absurdity. This struggle takes the form of hope for Marcel and rebellion for Camus, which are the same act, as I shall shortly show.

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<sup>19</sup>Albert Camus, Notebooks, 42-51, entry dated November 1943, p. 88.



The third point of comparison involves the relation between hope and the solitary ego. Both Camus and Marcel agree that on the level of the solitary ego no hope is possible. This is one of the implications of Marcel's rejection of a theory of hope based on sensation. He writes that hope is "only possible on the level of the us" (see page 28). This is to say that no hope is possible at the level of the solitary ego, i.e., or the level of sensation. The evidence for Camus' rejection of hope on the level of the solitary ego is less direct, and it is also dependent upon his rejection of a physical theory of hope, which is an open question. However, granted this rejection, an analysis of the situation of Sisyphus points out the impossibility of hope on the individual level. Of all the experiential elements in the plight of Sisyphus it is the element of aloneness that is most destructive of the possibility for hope. Sisyphus is clearly and tragically alone. He has no one to draw upon for strength and comfort. This is why there is no hope possible for him. As the Second Chapter points out, Camus only begins to speak of hope in the relation between Rieux and Tarrou. This last statement hints at another comparison between Marcel and Camus: both agree that hope first appears on the level of communion, granted that Camus rejects a physical theory of hope. I shall explore

this comparison shortly.

A fourth point of comparison is to be found in the consideration of hope as an act of defiance against the power of captivity or absurdity. For neither philosopher is hope as an act of defiance a boasting, proud act, but rather a quiet personal way in which one struggles with absurdity. In an essay titled "The Wager of Our Generation," Camus writes of hope as a defiance of "maximum danger": ". . . the maximum danger implied the maximum hope" (see page 98). That danger for Camus would, I think, be nihilism, what Marcel calls despair in these words:

It remains true . . . that the correlation of hope and despair subsists until the end. . . . while the structure of the world we live in permits--and may even seem to counsel--absolute despair, yet it is only such a world that can give rise to an unconquerable hope.<sup>20</sup>

A comparison of these two positions reveals an additional agreement: captivity ("absolute despair"), or absurdity ("maximum danger"), is a necessary condition for the advent of hope, which leads to a fifth comparison.

Fifth, hope, for both Marcel and Camus, is more than a struggling defiance of absurdity (captivity);--it has the power to conquer, to overcome captivity (absurdity).

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<sup>20</sup>Gabriel Marcel, The Philosophy of Existentialism, p. 28.

This power of hope is evidenced in Marcel by its opening of time, by its cancelling of the inductive reduction of possibility to actuality, by its freeing of the personality from the categories of the past, and by its working relation to love. As Marcel says: to love someone is "above all to have hope in them" (see page 33). For Camus the power of hope is evidenced when he writes that hope ended the plague: ". . . once the faintest stirring of hope became possible, the domain of the plague was ended."<sup>21</sup> Hope can end the plague: that is evident for both philosophers. A further analysis of the preceding passages brings into focus another agreement regarding the nature of hope.

Sixth, both Marcel and Camus are aware of a common distortion that might be called an "escapist hope." Hope can be, and has been regarded as, a passive means of escape from accountability. This understanding is often echoed in the words: "Well, all we can do is sit back and hope." But such is not the case, for hope is an activity; as Marcel writes: "Between active waiting and Hope there is, if not identity, at least the closest proximity."<sup>22</sup> For Marcel, hope is not an isolated feeling

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<sup>21</sup>Albert Camus, The Plague, p. 235.

<sup>22</sup>Gabriel Marcel, "Desire and Hope," Readings in Existential Phenomenology, p. 281.

but an active engagement in the community of man, as Camus also indicates in these words from The Rebel: "Real generosity toward the future lies in giving all to the present."<sup>23</sup> This sense of hope as an active waiting was expressed by Camus in July, 1943, in a letter to a German friend when he spoke of the need for a "desperate patience" and a "vigilant revolt," for France to recover from the war. This patience and this revolt became for Camus a source of hope (see page 104). Active waiting, desperate patience, vigilant revolt, engagement, and action are not matters of the human mind or human heart, but the will, a fact which brings us to another comparison.

Seventh, it is the will of man that is stubborn, defiant, and the human capacity behind activity. It is the will that may refuse to give in to absurdity or sell out to captivity; and thus, for both Marcel and Camus, there is the closest of connections between hope and the human will. In a rare passage in The Philosophy of Existentialism--rare because it is one of only three passages in all his work that offers a definition of hope--Marcel relates hope and the will:

. . . the idea of inert hope seems to me a contradiction in terms. Hope is not a kind listless waiting; it underpins action or it runs before it.

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<sup>23</sup>Albert Camus, The Rebel, p. 304.

. . . Hence it has affinities . . . with the will. The will implants the same refusal to calculate possibilities. . . . Could not hope therefore be defined as the will when it is made to bear on what does not depend on itself.<sup>24</sup>

In The Plague Camus recognizes the same relation between hope and the will when Rieux as the narrator speaks of an "old, gray hope" which is nothing more than the "dogged will to live" (see page 64). From these two selections the agreement should be clear, but they also indicate a difference. For Marcel hope is the will when turned upon that which does not depend on it, i.e., on the resources of Being; for Camus hope is the will when it is turned in upon itself in the "dogged will to live," or turned upon the human community. This he indicates in "The Wages of Our Generation" when he writes of "a solidarity with the common man" and the "stubborn hope" which grows out of this solidarity (see pages 64-65). That "stubborn hope" is the human will made to bear upon the situation of the human community, which brings this chapter to its final comparison.

Eighth, hope as a defiance, as active waiting, and as a capacity of the will is, for both Marcel and Camus, an authentic activity of the human community. In other words, what undergirds and strengthens hope is the love

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<sup>24</sup>Gabriel Marcel, The Philosophy of Existentialism, p. 33.

that is always integrated with it. One cannot separate love of one's brothers from hope in one's brothers, as Marcel indicates in the numerous passages where he relates hope and love (see Appendix A). Camus makes a comparable point when he writes of love as a basis and support for rebellion (see pages 96-97). For Marcel, to love one's brothers is to have hope in and with them; for Camus, to love one's brothers is to rebel for and with them. This comparison is a first step in reaching the conclusion toward which this chapter has been moving: that hope and rebellion are one and the same act, i.e., that to hope is to rebel and that to rebel is to hope. In other words, hope is a rebellion against captivity; hope is a rebellion against absurdity. Hope as a rebellion is an act on the level of communion for both Marcel and Camus. The clearest comparison of this common understanding is to be found in Marcel's Homo Viator and Camus' The Rebel, in the following words: "I hope in thee for us" (see page 29); and "I rebel--therefore we exist" (see page 96). The conclusion of this chapter--based on Chapter one, Chapter two, and the preceding contrasts and comparisons of this chapter--is that these two statements mean the same thing. Marcel could just as well have written: "I hope--therefore we exist." Camus could just as well have written "I rebel in thee for us," with "thee"

meaning the human community. In other words, hope, for both Marcel and Camus, is a rebellion against absurdity. On the level of communion--remembering that Camus' Rebel does not have the possibility of a transcendent relation other than possibly to the human community--Marcel's Homo Viator (Hoper) is the same man as Camus' Rebel. The restriction in dashes is important: the Rebel does not have the same transcendent grounding as Homo Viator. But the restriction does not damage the conclusion: Camus' Rebel and Marcel's Homo Viator are the same man on the level of communion. In other words: Hope Is a Rebellion Against Absurdity.

These reflections conclude this chapter on contrasts and comparisons. The fourth and final chapter will offer a critical evaluation, apart from comparison or contrast, of the positions on hope of Marcel and Camus. The major tool for this critical evaluation will be a development of my own thesis on the nature of hope--a thesis which suggests the following chapter title: "The Intimacy of Hope."

CHAPTER FOUR: THE INTIMACY OF  
HOPE



The purpose of this concluding chapter as indicated in the Introduction is twofold: first, a development of my own thesis on the nature of hope is to be given within certain limitations; and second, a critical commentary on both Camus and Marcel is to be offered mainly through development of the former purpose. The limitations just mentioned will be explained in the following summary of my agreements and disagreements with Camus and Marcel.

Marcel spoke of three levels of participation in Being: sensation, communion, and transcendence. First, as discussed in the earlier chapters, Marcel denied any theory of hope on the level of sensation, and Camus evidenced enough possible ambiguity on a physical theory of hope to make any comparative judgement problematical. I shall argue for a doctrine of hope on the level of sensation and for the necessity of such a doctrine for the appearance of any hope on the level of communion. Such a doctrine will then be a criticism of Marcel and possibly a criticism of Camus. In respect to Marcel it will also be a critical comment on an inconsistency in his rejection of a physical doctrine of hope and his thesis that sensation is a mystery, not a problem.

Second, both Marcel and Camus agree on the creative possibility of hope on the level of communion and partially agree on the nature of hope at this level. My thesis will be basically in agreement with the common points of both men but will at times more closely approach one or the other. I do not find much to argue with in either philosopher on this level, but my thesis on hope at the level of communion will emphasize a new perspective--the place that pain plays in the development of communal hope--and offer two elements that neither Marcel nor Camus discusses: the maturation of hope in human growth and the cultural factors in hoping. In addition, my view on the relation between the will and hope will be a synthesis of Marcel and Camus.

Third, the real heart of the difference between Camus and Marcel is their disagreement on transcendence. Other than to make a few comments on this disagreement that might be characterized as pragmatic, I shall omit the question of transcendence from this chapter, after having justified such omission in relation to Chapter Three.

This chapter will then conclude in a statement with which, most probably, both Marcel and Camus would agree, but one which neither has explicitly developed in his own understanding of hope: intimacy is a definitive

characteristic of hope, and hope is a definitive characteristic of intimacy. In other words, without intimacy there is no hope, and without hope there is no intimacy.

### A Physical Theory of Hope

Both Marcel and Camus are sensitive to that human phenomenon which is indicative of some connection between hope and sensation: suicide. Marcel considers this phenomenon and concludes two things: that the absence of hope is the prior condition for suicide (i.e., a necessary but not sufficient condition), and that such a negating relation is evidence for rejecting hope on the level of sensation. He is, according to the thesis to be developed, correct in regard to the former and incorrect in regard to the latter. Camus considers the same relation and concludes two things: that it is the absence of hope that makes suicide a serious existential problem (especially for Sisyphus), and that lack of hope is no justification for suicide. Camus is, I think, correct on both points, but fails to explicitly see that both lead in the direction of a physical doctrine of hope.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>As noted in the second chapter, the two places where Camus comes closest to a physical doctrine of hope are: Marie's visit to Meursault at the visiting room in the jail, and Rieux's comments on hope and the will to live, near the end of the plague.

I concur that there is some relation between suicide and hope, i.e., the lack of hope. This is to say that the absence of hope--what we might call hopelessness (or, what Marcel calls despair)--may be finalized in the destruction of sensation, i.e., suicide. As evidence for this related finality, consider the following poem written just before the suicide of a sixteen-year-old girl:

I wandered the streets,  
I was lonely; I was cold.  
Weird music filled the air.  
It grew louder and louder  
There was no other sound--  
Only weird, terrible music.

I began to run as though I were being chased:  
Too terrified to look back,  
I ran on into the darkness,  
A light was shining very brightly, far away.

I must get to it.  
When I reached the light,  
I saw myself.  
I was lying on the ground.  
My skin was very white.  
I was dead.<sup>2</sup>

One could characterize the situation--physical, psychological, and environmental--which confronted this girl in any number of ways: captivity, absurdity, hopelessness, etc. The nomenclature is insignificant. What is significant is the relation between such a condition and the

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<sup>2</sup>Karl Menninger, The Vital Balance, p. 267.

resulting destruction of sensation, and to leave open the judgment as to whether such a relation rules out a physical doctrine of hope. It would seem reasonable to conclude that if the situation of hopelessness is a necessary condition for suicide, then there must be some relation between hope and the continuance of physical life. Karl Menninger, who personally knew the sixteen-year-old just mentioned, has also noticed the same connection and put it in these words: that in hope we see ". . . another aspect of the life instinct, the creative drive which wars against dissolution and destructiveness."<sup>3</sup> Camus comes close to this view when he relates hope to the "dogged will to live" and a "new zest for life." But he stops short by concurring with Marcel in relating hope to the will alone, although such a conclusion in regard to Camus may be inaccurate, for any attempt to distinguish between a "dogged will to live" and a "life instinct" could be most problematic. Therefore, I will shortly argue with more direct evidence than suicide that hope is related to both instinct and will, and that it is mistaken to separate instinct and will at the level of sensation.

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 385.

Suicide as evidence for a physical doctrine of hope is, at best, only an indirect evidence. The direct evidence lies in understanding the meaning and function of pain. However, before turning to such a direct development, I shall consider two examples relating lack of hope to suicide on the level of sensation, i.e., hopelessness to the cancelling of the life-instinct. This last statement does raise a problem: what justification can be offered for speaking of instinct on the level of sensation? The justification is a relative one, i.e., relative to this dissertation. If one is to speak of three levels of existence (sensation, communion, and transcendence), then by elimination instinct is a sensual phenomenon. This is also to say that the justification, at this point, is a metaphysical one. At a later point I will offer a pragmatic justification.

The following discussion points to one conclusion: that hope is an aspect of a life-instinct, i.e., that hope does function on the level of sensation. Consider, for instance, the number of voodoo deaths, in which no apparent cause of death can be found. This suggests that hopelessness in man cancels out the life-instinct. This is not to deny that many other existential phenomena may overcome the life-instinct. Many philosophers and psychologists consider meaninglessness the central feature

in suicide. But meaninglessness is not the problem in the voodoo deaths mentioned above, nor I think in all cases of suicide by terminal patients. Rather, hopelessness is what is central to suicide. In other words: hopelessness is a necessary part of any experience of meaninglessness which leads to suicide, but the reverse is not true. One might feel that his life is meaningless, but still hope that somehow it may be overcome. This hope, however small, will, I think, negate the need for ending it all. Any coroner is familiar with such cases, as Richter indicates: ". . . Dr. R. S. Fisher, coroner of . . . Baltimore, told me that every year men die after suicidal attempts when the skin has scarcely been scratched or only a few aspirin tablets have been ingested."<sup>4</sup> These cases lead, I think, to the same point: hope is an aspect of the life-instinct. However, since such a statement is an interpretation, and, thus, only an indirect justification, I now turn to the most significant and direct evidence for hope on the level of sensation: Pain.

Before developing an argument relating pain and hope, I shall clarify two points: the nature of pain and the relation between physical and mental pain. In an article

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 311.

in The American Handbook of Psychiatry Thomas Szasz summarizes the nature of pain in these words: "Pain is a sensation. By this is meant that there is a relatively constant and predictable relationship between sensory input, or stimulus, and the resultant pain sensation which it is thought to invoke. The structures to which pain points as a referent is the body as a physio-chemical machine."<sup>5</sup>

"Pain is a sensation" whose "referent is the body as a physio-chemical machine." Such seems to be the standard way of understanding the nature of pain. It is, as I hope to show, mistaken. It may be true that pain is a sensation; but, if so, it is also much more. In other words, that pain and the body are related is unquestionable. But, just what that relation is, is very hard to say! To state that the relation is a sensual one is, first, simplistically mistaken; and, second, ultimately rests upon either dualistic assumption or a reductive monism (i.e., materialism).

There seems to me to be an ambiguity that is intrinsic to what we call pain that refutes any attempt to limit it to a sensual nature. Pain is not merely a sensation, it is an experience (i.e., an existential one): thus,

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<sup>5</sup>Thomas Szasz, "Language and Pain," The American Handbook of Psychiatry, vol I, ed. by S. Arieti, p. 984.



the intrinsic ambiguity. Put another way, the existential ambiguity of pain-experience is the result of the failure to ever bracket it (using Husserl's terminology). Or, in Marcel's terms, pain is a phenomenon that participates in Being. Perhaps in this sense for Marcel pain is "a mystery." This is to say that pain is, in part, a sensation, but more. A better way to see this is to return to the relation between pain and body: it can be said that the relation is a necessary one but not sufficient, and it is lack of sufficiency that leads to the ambiguity. That sensation is necessary for the pain-experience is certain, but its sufficiency is questionable as the problem of pain-blindness, or pain in a missing limb, shows (I will take up these two phenomena in a later context).

Szasz seems to be partially aware of this ambiguity when he writes:

Pain is an affect. By this it is meant that the personal, including the social, characteristics of the individual experiencing pain are regarded as the most important . . . data. For example, even in the case of physical pain . . . the experiencing ego's orientation to the body is the conceptual framework for the understanding of pain. The object to which pain points is the body as a psychological object . . . personal object. . . .<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 986.

The crucial statements for observing this ambiguity are: "The structures to which pain points as a referent is the body as a physio-chemical machine" and "The object to which pain points is the body as a psychological object. . . ." The "structures" are necessary for the pain-experience, but the significant question is: Are they sufficient? I think not, for to state that they are assumes a dualism, or monism, to which I shall shortly turn. Consider, for example, a two- or three-year-old child who has cut his finger. That the neurological structures are necessary for the pain-experience is clear. But are these structures sufficient for examining the nature of the pain-experience? Definitely not! It is more than a neurological experience for the child; it is an existential one. The child's psychological and cultural frame of reference clearly enters into the totality of the experience, even to the point of determining, in part, the intensity of the pain (often considered only a neurological problem concerning the pain-threshold). Put in other words: existential anxiety is as integral to the experience as neurological structure. Consider an adult with the same cut, and basically the same neurological structures, but with a markedly different psychological and cultural frame of reference: his pain-experience is of a much different quantity (intensity)

and quality (anxiety).

Such considerations are, I think, sufficient evidence for refusing to accept pain as a merely neurological phenomenon. They are also sufficient for treating pain as an existential experience and accepting the inherent ambiguity that follows.

The position I have taken is similar to that of F. J. J. Buytendijk in the two following quotations:

The nature of pain contains its significance. 'Vitaly' speaking, it is without sense, nor has it any bearing on psychic functions. Its purpose is fulfilled in the attitude which the man who is afflicted by it adopts to his own bodily existence, to himself and the ground of his being in the world. Pain is the touchstone of what is actual and deepest in man. This is . . . the person, living through his intentional acts and becoming visible to himself in them.<sup>7</sup>

My view can be simply put: I consider pain a phenomenon intimately connected with the reality of human nature. A deeper insight into this reality teaches us that it is characterized by an ambiguous relationship between the subject and his body. This is 'rationally' incomprehensible. We are in a certain way our body and we have a body. As Gabriel Marcel has said, we cannot identify our self-being completely with our body and we cannot completely distinguish our 'self' from our body. I believe this French philosopher has spoken truly that: 'The site of pain appears to be the zone where having emerges into being.'<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>F. J. J. Buytendijk, Pain, Its Modes and Functions, p. 132.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 171.

For Marcel, what leads to his thoughts on the ambiguity of the pain-experience is his position that sensation participates in mystery, i.e., sensation cannot be reduced to a neurological problem. Buytendijk's position, without introducing the category of mystery, seems very close to that of Marcel. That I agree in rejecting the neurological reduction should be clear. The agreement, however, concerns only that conclusion in regard to Marcel, for he fails to follow the logic of his position.

Marcel's view that sensation is a mystery, coupled with his statement that the union of mind and body is a mystery (it is a mystery for many reasons, one of which is the union of substances so different), evidences an inconsistency. The inconsistency can be summarized as follows: Sensation is a way of participating in Being, and this accounts for its quality of mystery. The same statement can be made regarding hope and the mind-body union. It would seem, then, that to maintain all three of these positions, Marcel could not argue against a doctrine of hope on the level of sensation without being inconsistent. In other words, to argue against a physical doctrine of hope Marcel would have to give up either the mystery of the mind-body union (i.e., he could maintain both by Cartesian dualism) or the mystery of sensation (i.e., he could maintain it in one of two ways: argue for

sensation as mystery and for a physical doctrine of hope or argue against both). Marcel cannot maintain these contradictions: mystery of mind-body union and denial of bodily hope; mystery of sensation and mystery of hope and denial of hope on the level of sensation; or, mystery of hope and mystery of mind-body union and denial of bodily hope. Thus, Marcel can argue against a physical doctrine of hope only by denying the nature of sensation as mystery or assuming a Cartesian dualism between mind and body. Another way to state this argument is: the presence of mystery is a metaphysically sufficient condition for the possibility of hope. Marcel fails to see the nature of this sufficiency at the level of sensation and this results in his inconsistency. He cannot maintain mystery in sensation and also deny a doctrine of hope on that level.<sup>9</sup>

Stated in terms of my own position, the argument is as follows: To hold that pain is an existential experience (i.e., that it is irreducible to a neurological

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<sup>9</sup>At this point an observation from Chapter One should be offered which poses a problem for the argument of sufficiency. Mystery is, for Marcel, also a necessary condition. But captivity is as well a necessary condition. If there are two necessary conditions the problem is: how can one of them be sufficient? An answer to this puzzle lies, I think, in recognizing that it is the awareness of mystery and captivity that are necessary conditions, i.e., they are epistemologically necessary. But, from a metaphysical (ontological) perspective mystery alone is sufficient.

problem) is to deny an actual division between mental pain and physical pain. Or, the pain-experience is a unified experience in which the physical and the mental merge beyond anything other than a virtual distinction.<sup>10</sup> However, to be honest, this position rests upon a questionable assumption to which I now turn: the rejection of any mind-body dualism.

First, any so-called solution to the mind-body relation is usually a disguised inference at best and a disguised assumption at worst. Recognition of this will affect the nature of criteria for judging any position on the relation.

Second, it seems to me that only if one accepts the possibility of "absolute bracketing" to the extent of the mental completely effacing the physical can any dualism be maintained. In agreement with both Camus and Marcel concerning the ambiguity of the human situation (which includes the mind-body relation), I reject any such bracketing.

Third, I consider the work of Gilbert Ryle (and others following his lead) as prima facie evidence for questioning any dualism. As prima facie evidence it is

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<sup>10</sup>By virtual I mean a distinction whose basis lies in the operation of the intellect rather than in reality. By actual I mean a distinction whose basis lies in reality independent of the intellect.

not sufficient for rejecting, but for questioning both the accuracy and adequacy of a dualistic view.

Fourth, that experience we call pain seems to be the most direct evidence that the mental and the physical cannot in actuality be separated (I refer back to the discussion of infant pain). However, with deference to logic, there is a certain circularity in this fourth argument. It is a circularity which is, I think, inevitable in any position taken on the mind-body relation. This is to say that, to establish a dualistic conclusion, one must begin with an implied dualism in the conceptual framework of the premisses. The same would apply to any unified position. It is for this reason and for that in the second point that I would prefer to call any position on the mind-body relation an "inferential assumption," i.e., an assumption with some evidence but no absolute certitude--a result of the failure of bracketing.

Fifth, if one starts with the "inferential assumption" that the unity of the mind-body relation precludes any actual, though not virtual, dualism, then many of the philosophical problems of dualism can be avoided. This is not to say that no problems occur, but the most problematic one disappears: e.g., in dualism, how can substances so different have any causal relation?

To conclude: I shall from this point continue on the assumption of a mind-body unity; I shall further develop the significance of pain as an existential experience removing the traditional bifurcation between physical and mental pain on the level of actuality, but holding on to the value of a virtual distinction; and I shall add additional evidence for positing the possibility for a doctrine of hope at the level of sensation, realizing that to speak of a separate level of sensation is possible only on the basis of a virtual distinction.

The best direct evidence for hope on the level of sensation is to be found in the relation between pain and survival: survival is dependent on pain. This is to say that both pain and hope are functions of the life instinct. Buytendijk summarizes the importance of such functions when he writes: "The importance of any human function lies in its ability to fulfill the aim of the organism: namely to be, to resist destructive change from within and without."<sup>11</sup> To illustrate this requires little more than reference to pain-blind people, i.e., people who have no receptors or faulty ones for pain stimuli; thus, they feel no pain. Related to survival, the primary function of pain is the warning of danger ahead, as Szasz

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<sup>11</sup>F. J. J. Buytendijk, op. cit., p. 148.



points out: ". . . First, pain indicates the danger of the disruption of the continuity of the body and the danger of losing a part of the body. . . . Secondly pain is a reaction to and a warning against the danger of excessive stimulation."<sup>12</sup> Any person with a neurological fault blocking the bodily awareness of pain is in grave danger, such that there are recorded instances of death resulting from third-degree sunburn. It is thus that pain functions as an aspect of the life instinct and as a source for hope on the level of sensation.

Another way to understand pain as a source of physical hope lies in considering the dynamics of persistent pain. There are two considerations: First, persistent pain may function as hope, or, in Szasz's words, as reassurance:

. . . the general meaning of persistent pain seems to be that of a reassurance that the body part in question still hurts, and is, therefore, still present. The pain is on a more unconscious level, a denial of, and a reassurance against, the danger of bodily loss. . . .

. . . if we are anxious, this affect not only means that we are afraid of something, but also tells us that we are prepared and vigilant, and therefore, unafraid.<sup>13</sup>

The pain that an amputee feels in the missing member is the hope that it is still there, i.e., the activity of the

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<sup>12</sup>Szasz, Handbook of Psychiatry, vol. 1, p. 986.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., pp. 992-93.

life instinct struggling with the destructive effect of despair over the missing member. Second, persistent pain may not only function as a source of hope (reassurance), but may, when near or at the threshold of tolerance, function to overcome the life instinct, i.e., lead to destructive despair. Such would be the case in regard to suicide: the life instinct has fallen to the onslaught of persistent pain--to the despair of suicide. When this threshold is reached, the life instinct functions as hope on one or both of two actually integrated but virtually distinct levels: sensation and consciousness. In the latter, which is not a concern at this point, the life instinct becomes actualized in the hope of a way out. In the former, the life instinct may be actualized in the amputee's hope just mentioned or in the short-circuiting of the pain process, i.e., the temporary experience of pain-blindness--the temporary loss of pain sensation. This temporary pain loss can be accomplished by drugs as well as by persistent pain above the threshold of tolerance.

The conclusion to be drawn from these considerations is the following: On the basis of an understanding of the dynamics of pain in relation to the life instinct, a doctrine of hope on the level of sensation can be justified. This is to conclude many things in terms of this dissertation: First, Marcel is incorrect when he rejects

a theory of hope on the level of sensation. Second, Camus comes close to agreement with the thesis I have outlined when he discusses hope as "the dogged will to live" and as a "new zest for life." Third, that any rejection of hope on the level of sensation and acceptance of such on a psychic level must, as an assumption, make the Cartesian mistake of a mind-body dualism. Fourth, to develop a physical doctrine of hope is to emphasize the unity of the human being, i.e., to deny, except virtually, any mind-body division. Fifth, to develop hope on the level of sensation is also to provide a basis for hope on the level of communion, which leads to the final point. Sixth, hope on the level of sensation is a way of stressing the physical element in any relation of intimacy.

Before taking up a discussion of "Hope on the Level of Communion," I must make several additional comments regarding the postulating of a life-instinct. These comments can be best stated by relating them to two objections which can be raised about such a postulate. First, there is no justification given for the life-instinct postulate. Surely philosophical license cannot be stretched this far? This objection seems, to me, to carry little weight. To suppose that an organism struggles for survival is almost analytic. To further suppose that it is a life-instinct that wages the struggle seems a reasonable inference. It

is, however, a circular one because of the near synonymy between organism and life. This is to say, then, that the circularity is not decisive; rather, it is intrinsic to the problem. These considerations lead to another, more difficult objection.

Second, granted that there is a life-instinct which is operative in survival, of what explanatory value is it, i.e., is it vacuous? In other words, what is the philosophical value of saying that organism A strives for survival because he (it) has a life instinct? This is a difficult objection to answer on a priori grounds. Indeed, there may be no unproblematic answer. However, on the empirical level of life-behavior the situation is different. The postulating of a life instinct on this level has one major advantage: from such a postulate suicide must be judged to be abnormal behavior. In judging the advantages versus the problems of this postulate I give precedence to this consequence regarding suicide.

In relationship to this dissertation there are two further advantages for the postulate: First, the relating of hope and life-instinct on the level of sensation has the advantage of unifying the human being by providing continuity between hope on this level and that of Communion; second, the postulate and its relation to hope will reappear in discussion of the physical element in intimacy.

### Hope on the Level of Communion

As pointed out on the first page of this chapter, I am in basic agreement with both Marcel and Camus on the nature of communal hope. I shall develop my thesis on this level by summarizing some of the areas of agreement and emphasizing the new elements or different perspectives I have to offer. The best way to begin this task is by relating this section of the chapter to the preceding one.

To summarize the relation the following should suffice: The hope of communion lies in pain. Asenath Petrie, in the article "Pain," in The Encyclopedia of Mental Health, states the thesis as follows:

A man pursues his aims and goals at least in part because of the . . . pain that he experiences when he has not yet reached these goals. . . . It is thus difficult to conceive of man 'acting justly and loving mercy' if unfair and cruel actions never caused him mental pain. . . .

The survival of any social group depends . . . on concern for the pain of another.<sup>14</sup>

Marcel and Camus hold the same thesis that the hope (one could also say the survival as well as the quality) of communion (thus, community) lies in pain. Marcel speaks of the change in relation from a nameless it to an intimate Thou as based in the knowledge that he too passed this

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<sup>14</sup>Asenath Petrie, "Pain," The Encyclopedia of Mental Health, Vol. 4, ed. by A. D. Deutsch and H. Fishman, p. 1345.

way, knew the same joys and sorrows, etc. Camus writes that the initial awareness prior to rebellion is the recognition of the solidarity of human suffering. I heartily concur with both men, but add the claim that my thesis offers a stronger case for the hope of community lying in pain by providing for continuity in regard to hope from sensation to communion. Marcel and possibly Camus, on the other hand, are committed to an unnecessary discontinuity.

I agree with both Marcel and Camus that, on the level of communion, hope is a rebellion against absurdity, and that the quality of communion (the maturity and health of a community) is determined by the vision of those who rebel. I also agree with both that hope is related to the human will. Marcel writes that hope is the will turned out, i.e., when it is made to depend upon a source other than itself. Camus writes that hope is the will turned inward to draw upon the creativity of human sources. Their respective views on transcendence are what account for this difference. My thesis on the relation between hope and the will is a synthesis: hope is the will turned first inward, then outward. To understand this I remind the reader, in consistency with past developments, that the will cannot be limited to a psychic actuality, as is usually done.

One way to see this is to examine two possible meanings of Camus' phrase "the dogged will to live." Clearly this phrase may indicate a conscious effort to bring all one's individual resources to bear upon the task of survival. In this sense the will operates not on the instinctive level of sensation but on that of conscious activity. Such a "dogged will" may muster physiological allies in the struggle, but the effort is consciously directed. However, there is another legitimate use of this descriptive phrase, and one that functions on an instinctual level. Within a clinical situation it is not uncommon to find in a comatose state what could be called a bodily will to live, i.e., the body musters its allies in the struggle for survival apart from consciousness. As a part of the ambiguity of that human capability designated by the term "will," this comatose example seems to me to be as viable as attributing will to the former conscious example.

To put this discussion in another perspective we return to the mind-body (physical-mental pain) distinction. The "dogged will to live" is an integrated movement of the human being that further evidences the union of mind-body. Indeed, these considerations about the will could have been offered as a sixth point for rejecting any dualism of mind-body.

An additional reference to "hope on the level of sensation" is in order at this point: If a doctrine of hope on a sensual level has been established, as I think it has, then this level is the primary example of hope as the will turned inward. In other words, hope as the will turned inward is an example of what Marcel denies: hope at the level of the solitary ego. Apart from these considerations there are certainly examples of men and women who have turned their will inward to gird up their individual psychic and bodily abilities in a heroic struggle for survival. Granted the struggle is of a different order when the will (hope) can be turned outward to community, but this illustrates another relation between hope on the two levels: sensation (will inward--solitary ego) and communion (will outward).

The relation between hope on these two levels can best be described as one of reciprocal dependency. The dependency from sensation to communion is one of continuity. The dependency from communion to sensation is one of solidarity. Perhaps the best way to see this reciprocity is to return to the relation between pain and hope. As developed earlier pain is an existential phenomenon which points to both solitude (in that I must experience and endure my own pain) and to community (in that my understanding of pain is a factor in its endurance,



and this understanding is within a communal context--I shall have more to say on this shortly).

First, my understanding of another's pain is dependent upon my own understanding of pain. But this latter is built within and upon the communal understanding of pain.<sup>15</sup> Here the reciprocal dependency stands out. Unless I have known pain--(in the existential sense)--on the level of sensation, i.e., unless, within my own solitary ego, I have grappled with pain, then the task of understanding another's pain is bound to fail. I may gain a conceptual understanding but never an existential one. In other words, pain as an experience of the solitary ego provides the necessary continuity for the experience of pain at a communal level. But as already stated, the struggle with pain of the solitary ego is already a struggle integrated with the communal understanding of pain; and thus, the necessary solidarity of the pain-experience is evidenced. In other words, pain on the level of sensation and on the level of communion share the same reciprocal dependency that hope on both levels indicates.

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<sup>15</sup>This statement is a development of the discussion regarding the existential character of pain. However, it can be supported from another quarter, for it is a consequence of Wittgensteins' argument against the possibility of a private language in the Philosophical Investigations.

Second, any hope for growth or intimacy to occur on the level of communion depends upon the pain of empathy, i.e., unless the suffering of another empathetically becomes my suffering, I will make no communal act of rebellion. The pain of empathy develops out of pain on the level of the solitary ego and pain on the level of communion. In other words, empathy could be defined as that experience where community pain and individual pain merge, i.e., where solidarity and solitude come together. To summarize: the hope of community, for continuity, depends upon the hope of the individual (i.e., hope as the will turned inward); and the hope of the individual (i.e., the will turned outward), for solidarity, depends upon the hope of community.

In concluding this section of the chapter, I would like to briefly develop two aspects of hope on the level of communion that Marcel and Camus are either unaware of or fail to develop: the maturation of hope and the cultural factors in hoping.

First, it is possible to speak of a maturation of hope. Two factors enter this maturation: individual maturity and the individual environment. In regard to the first factor, to speak of a maturation of hope is to speak of hope as a part of the developmental process and, thus, to acknowledge that hope grows and changes according to

the developmental level reached by the individual. From this perspective hope is a part of the goal-setting process, a way of active-waiting (to use Marcel's words) on the future, and as such is an important motivator for fulfillment. It would not be incorrect to say, rather lyrically, that hope is a way of living in the future--this I will explore at the end of this chapter in considering the intimacy of hope. Hope as a part of the goal-setting process undergoes a maturation, a maturing. While the internal dynamics of hoping may not substantially differ between child and adult, the content of hope changes, grows, and matures. For example, a child's hopes are mostly ego-centered, i.e., evidence the will turned inward; an adult's hopes may mature to branch outward. Maturity brings a change in the locus of hope--a change that leads to hope on the level of communion. Hope as a rebellion for us is a mature act of rebellion and not a childish tantrum. Indeed, I would agree with both Marcel and Camus that one of the following would be representative of the most mature act of hope: "I hope in You for Us" or "I hope; therefore, We are."

In regard to the second factor, individual environment, I would agree in part with both Marcel and Camus that one's situation-in-the-world (individual environment) plays a significant role in the dynamics of hoping. They

are correct in identifying the part that captivity, or absurdity, plays in hoping; but both philosophers ignore the significance of cultural factors, to which I shall turn shortly. The individual environment, as Marcel puts it, may counsel despair, or become the groundwork for the growth of hope. In the latter case it is the maturity of the individual, i.e., the maturation level of hope, that provides the source from which hope may arise. In this sense the individual builds upon those past hopes which have become integrated into his lifestyle. It is, thus, that hope becomes a rebellion (an active way of grappling with the present situation) against captivity and an opening of the future freed of the limitations of the present captivity. This consideration, then, brings up the question of the relation between the individual dynamics of hoping and the cultural situation.

Second, the best way to see that cultural factors play a significant role in the maturation of hope is to return to pain. The thesis concerning pain, hope, and culture can be stated as follows: An individual's cultural and racial background affects the way in which he experiences and interprets pain, and, thus, affects the maturation of his hope. The raw data for such a thesis come from a study by Mark Zborowski, under a grant from

the U. S. Public Health Service, and reported in The Journal of Social Issues under the title "Cultural Components in Responses to Pain." The setting for this study was the Kengsbridge Veterans Hospital in Bronx, New York. The techniques for data collection were mainly two: (1) observation of patients during times of pain, and (2) interviews with doctors, nurses, and patients about such pain after and, where possible, during the experience. In addition to the patients, healthy members of the same ethnic and cultural background were interviewed to compare attitudes and reactions to pain in order to test the following hypothesis: that the attitudes and reactions to pain of patients and of healthy members of the same ethnic and cultural background would be similar, and that sickness would only bring them into sharper focus. According to the conclusions of those conducting the study under Zborowski's leadership, the hypothesis was justified. This is to say that pain behavior, i.e., pain response and understanding, is, in part, learned behavior. The basic groupings for the study were as follows: Old American (members of the melting pot society, i.e., those whose cultural mixing lost any basic identity other than American), Italian, Irish, and Jewish. The findings of the study pointed to definite cultural determinants in the way a person reacts

to and understands his pain.

A summary of the results in the Zborowski study is as follows:<sup>16</sup>

1. The Italian and Jewish groups were very emotional about their pain, and tended to exaggerate the pain they were experiencing. On the other hand, the old Americans were almost the opposite, wanting to minimize the pain when possible.
2. While the Italian patients seemed to be mainly concerned with the immediacy of the pain experience, the Jewish concern was more centered on the meaning of the pain for the future. . . .
3. The Italian patient quickly calls for pain-reducing drugs, and forgets the pain when it has been masked by the drug; the Jewish patient is reluctant to accept any drug, worrying about its future impact on his health.
4. [To sum up:] The Italian attitude is characterized by a present-oriented apprehension with regard to pain, while the Jew tends to manifest a future-oriented anxiety as to the symptomatic and general meaning of the pain experience.
5. There is little emphasis on emotional complaining with the Old American.
6. The Old American desires to be alone when in severe pain while the Italian and the Jew desire company.
7. [To sum up:] . . . the Old American attitude toward pain is disturbance over the symptomatic aspects of pain and concern over the incapacitating aspects of pain, but the future is viewed in optimistic terms with confidence in science and the doctor.

Other variants in one's attitudes toward pain found in the study were the factors of individual environment: occupation, education, family, sexual image, etc.

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<sup>16</sup>Mark Zborowski, "Cultural Components in Responses to Pain," The Journal of Social Issues, Vol VIII, No. 4 (1952), pp. 22-25.

In terms of the concern of this dissertation, and with reference to Zborowski's study, the following can be concluded: Since cultural and racial backgrounds affect the way that a person experiences and interprets pain, the same also affect his capacity to hope, i.e., the maturation level of his hope. It should not, then, come as a surprise that the Jewish capacity to hope has reached a high maturation level, for what culture has more deeply known the absurdity of captivity? Nor should it be surprising that the technological pragmatism of America is decried by Marcel as a danger to the hoping process, i.e., why the suicide level seems to increase in direct proportion to the technological level of advancement. The thesis is, I think, substantiated.

#### Hope on the Level of Transcendence

The question of transcendent relationships is a most problematic question, as has been evidenced in Chapters One, Two, and Three. It is the question over which Marcel and Camus show the widest divergence. It is also a question which I shall leave undeveloped since the main concern of this dissertation is hope on the levels of sensation and communion. The justification for omitting a discussion of transcendence in this chapter is a pragmatic one, and one that has already been implied in

the comparison of the Rebel and Homo Viator: On the level of communion the Rebel and Homo Viator are the same man. In other words, on the level of communion an act of hope is a rebellion and a rebellion is an act of hope. At the ideological level the Rebel and Homo Viator would offer different reasons (justifications) and draw upon different sources for their communal activities. The difference would rest upon the question of transcendence. But from the pragmatic standpoint, i.e., concern over the functional consequences of actions, the Rebel and Homo Viator would be found engaging in the same activities. For this reason I consider the question of transcendence an insignificant one for the worldly community; it is not, however, insignificant for the individual. The individual who believes in transcendence is a member of two communities. But, from the standpoint of this dissertation, the other-worldly community is significant only to the extent that it directs human motivation in the worldly community. In other words, for community it is a person's actions that are significant, not his justifications for those actions, except in those instances where the justifications lead to irresponsibility in the worldly community.



### The Intimacy of Hope

The conclusion to this fourth chapter can be stated as follows: On both the level of sensation and the level of communion the characteristic most definitive of hope is intimacy. On the level of sensation this should be easy to understand, for a man's relation to his body is certainly intimate--so much so that one can conclude with Marcel, "I am my body," while also maintaining with him that I also am not my body. In other words the relation is one of intimacy because I cannot identify myself with my body, nor can I completely distinguish myself from my body. On the communal level of personal relationship hope is the most intimate act two people can share. This is to say that hope as intimacy contains two elements: sensation and communion.

The first step in substantiating the intimacy of hope is to define "intimacy." Webster defines "intimacy" as the activity or "instance of being intimate."<sup>17</sup> "Intimate" in turn is defined in the following terms:

1. Intrinsic; innermost; hence, very personal, private.
2. Characterized by or arising from close union, contact . . . as intimate friends . . . .
3. Closely personal.. . .<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, p. 441.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

In a book titled Intimacy, Gina Allen and Clement Martin discuss intimacy as follows:

The psychological need for meaningful contact with another human being is as great, and possibly greater, than the physical. It can't be relieved without a partner. Unrelieved, it spells anxiety, loneliness, and despair.

Physical union devoid of a caring component is no remedy for these psychological ills. . . . The inmost man is still left a beggar at the feast. He is nourished only when emotion is joined to physical passion, and spirits as well as bodies are allowed to touch in affection and mutual affirmation. That is intimacy.<sup>19</sup>

What emerges from these considerations is that intimacy is a relation where sensation and communion become integrated into a unity. In regard to the individual this unity is often expressed as the union of mind and body-- a most intimate union, so intimate that any distinction between body and mind is merely a virtual one. In regard to personal relationships intimacy is the definitive characteristic of those where sensation and communion are unified in closeness. As Allen and Martin put it, ". . . spirits as well as bodies are allowed to touch in affection and mutual affirmation." Such touching in intimacy has a sacred quality for those involved, and this quality results in the privacy mentioned by Webster. Marcel is sensitive to this same quality in hope, for hope shared has a precious quality that approaches secrecy.

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<sup>19</sup>Gina Allen and Clement Martin, Intimacy, p. 3.

This way of defining intimacy raises a problem: intimacy seems to require touching, but cannot intimacy exist without touching? For discussion, the meaning of the touching element in intimacy should be broadened to refer to any sensual element. Thus, intimacy seems to require a relation at the level of sensation as well as communion. The problem can now be restated: can intimacy exist apart from the level of sensation? Or, can intimacy exist where the sensual relation is absent or lacking? At first glance the answer seems to be a definite yes. But I wonder? Does it make sense to consider intimacy possible where the sensual relation is absent. I will consider two possible examples.

What about intimacy at long distance? Is it not possible? My answer is yes and no, depending upon the distinction between the sensual relation being absent or completely lacking. It is a common experience for lovers who have become physically separated to maintain the spiritual intimacy of their relationship and the memory of the sensual intimacy. Such experiences seem to be behind such a thought as: "Absence makes the heart grow fonder." The crucial distinction is that the sensual element is not lacking; it is absent. If it were lacking, then memory would be unable to recall it. But since the element is merely absent, not only can it be recalled, but

memory may serve as the source for the hope of sensual communion in the future. It is certainly true that one may think of sensual communion with someone he (or she) has never actually seen (the dream girl or man, the movie star), but this is not hope or intimacy; it is fantasy. To conclude: this example shows the need for a sensual element in this relationship of intimacy. Absence does not negate intimacy, but the lack of a sensual element does not allow intimacy even a beginning.<sup>20</sup>

What about the intimacy of athletics? The level of sensation is certainly evident here. It is quite often not a gentle element, but nonetheless present. In fact, the growth of spiritual intimacy builds upon the closeness (intimacy?) of the physical relation among the team members.<sup>21</sup> However, athletics point out that sensation is not sufficient for intimacy, but is possibly necessary. Necessity (or possible necessity) is the position I am taking. As in the case of parted lovers, intimacy may continue between departed team members. In this case,

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<sup>20</sup> It is true that people have occasionally held the position that intimacy could develop through something like letter exchanges. I have two responses: first, if intimacy can occur in such a situation it is certainly the exception rather than the rule; and, second, the use of "intimacy" in this context may be a misuse.

<sup>21</sup> The traditional act of "butt-slapping" in this interpretation can be understood as a form of intimate address.

memory often serves to recall the past sensual and communal relationships, and, in so doing, to renew the intimacy. Those individuals who were not a sensual part of the intimacy will, I think, always remain outsiders to the full comradeship of the situation.

The conclusion to which these examples lead is as follows: Intimacy is that relation in which sensation and communion merge in "affection and mutual admiration."

Taking the discussion of this chapter into account, I state the conclusion to this study to be: intimacy is a definitive characteristic of hope, and hope is a definitive characteristic of intimacy. In other words, without intimacy there is no hope, and without hope there is no intimacy. Where hope is shared, intimacy is present and basic to the relationship, for there is nothing more precious and personal to any man than his hope, his dreams. One's hopes are guarded and protected; they are shared only where deep trust underlies the relationship, i.e., only in a relationship of authentic intimacy, a relationship of "affection and mutual affirmation." On the other hand, where intimacy exists in a relationship, hope undergirds it. Authentic intimacy involves two temporal relationships: through sensation, a shared living in the present and memory of the past in the present; and through communion, a shared living of the

future in the present, i.e., a non-temporal living because it does away with the standard present-future distinction. In other words, a relationship of intimacy is a shared, active waiting on the future, i.e., bringing the "as yet unborn" of the relationship into the possibility of present experience. Real intimacy knows no limits to the relationship, and, thus, it is a denial of induction. It is an inner readiness to bring into being deeper and more varied depths to the relationship. Intimacy is never concerned with the past as past but always with the fruitfulness of what lies ahead and the way in which the future can be built upon remembered communion. All of this is to say that where intimacy exists, it exists in hope. Where hope exists, it exists in intimacy. Thus, in hope I conclude this explanation!

## CONCLUSION: HOPE--A

### NEW EXPLORATION

If the analyses, contrasts, comparisons, and evaluations of the nature and dynamics of hope offered in this dissertation have been accurate, then the following conclusions seem to be justifiable:

(1) Gabriel Marcel is the metaphysician, the phenomenologist, of hope. His phenomenological description of the nature of hope and the dynamics of the hoping process stands out in the literature on hope for both its systematic adequacy and descriptive depth. Hope for Marcel is not a facet of life; it is a way of life. His analysis of captivity as a necessary source for the growth of hope offers an insight most relevant to the growing despair and impotence many men face in today's anonymous world of technology. Marcel's insistence on the formative place that hope plays on the level of us offers a needed insight into the dynamics of human love as it struggles in the modern jungle of human conflict that exists in the home, the communities, the nation, and the world. Marcel's insistence on the transcendental

ground which underlies all that hope implies, offers to the contemporary theist, Christian or otherwise, a keen phenomenological description of a depth in his experience that is heading toward communal salvation.

Apart from what Marcel's understanding of hope has to offer, the development of his thought in Chapter One is a concise and systematic analysis of hope as the central focus of his philosophical thinking. Related to Appendix A, this initial chapter offers the reader the best research tool for understanding Marcel and his view of hope.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the first chapter not only gives an analysis of hope in Marcel's thought, but from the common vantage point of a central concept, hope, gives a view of his total thought.

(2) Albert Camus is an often misunderstood thinker. The temptation to identify Camus and Sisyphus is amply substantiated by reference to philosophical literature. Such an identification, however, represents only a partial view of Camus. Sisyphus is but a stage on life's

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<sup>1</sup>There is a dissertation by N. L. Butler, A Theory of Hope Based upon Gabriel Marcel with Implications for the Psychiatrist and the Ministry; see Appendix D. This is an excellent study, but it does not approach the concept of hope in relation to the entirety of Marcel's thought. Also its interests lie more within the psychology and theology of hope, whereas Chapter One in this dissertation is a philosophical enterprise.



way for Camus--a first stage. The lonely struggle with the absurd in which Sisyphus is engaged gives way to the brotherhood of Rieux and Tarrou, and D'Arrast and the cook. This struggle of brothers against the absurd is but an intermediate state that culminates in an act of rebellion, and the Rebel undertakes a struggle in brotherhood for all of humanity. Thus, it is correct to say that Camus is all of the following: the absurd heroes--Caligula, Meursault, and Sisyphus; the brothers--Rieux and Tarrou, and D'Arrast and the cook; and the Rebel. One of the contributions which Chapter Two makes to philosophical literature is a systematic development of all the stages in Camus; and, thus, Chapter Two offers a philosophical corrective to a widespread mistake.

The contribution which Camus has to make to the understanding of hope is to be found in the absurd: Hope for Camus is a rebellion against absurdity. The greatest strength in Camus' thoughts on hope as a rebellion is the tender empathy which underlies such an act. Here is his importance for our contemporary struggle with absurdity: his call to all men to join in the fight. Camus, without a God, extends a challenge to all men, whatever their religious stances, to join in the effort to remake the future, i.e., to actively live in hope. An additional contribution which the second chapter makes is

its development of this understanding of hope in Camus; it is a contribution because there are no other studies of hope in Camus.

(3) Both Camus and Marcel, without agreeing as to the existence of transcendence, offer a promising view of hope on the level of community. On this level, absurdity and captivity reduce to the same thing. The understanding of hope as an activity of the present in response to absurdity and captivity has much to offer modern man. It is a call for work, for brotherhood, for vision, and for courage. It is an indictment of escapism in any form--alcohol, drugs, Having, concern for merely the individual salvation of the soul. It is a call which offers no guarantees, but it is a call which does not lead to nihilism. While it is a call that offers no guarantees, and thus, requires courage, it is a call with a promise: WE! Because each man stands at a different situational perspective in hearing and responding to the call--Marcel as a man supported from without by a transcendent ground of Being; Camus as a man without a transcendent ally who must look within for support--the two offer a united call for hope as active work to all, and any, man, whatever his situational perspective.

The significant contribution of Chapter Three is to be found in its presentation of this united call, and, as such, it is original in the philosophical field concerned with Marcel and Camus.

(4) The relation between pain and hope is, as yet, an unexplored relation. One of the reasons for this is the Cartesian hangover of mind-body dualism resulting in the mental-physical pain dualism. This latter bifurcation has resulted in the standard limitation of the pain-hope relation to the mental pain-hope relation. Chapter Four offers a corrective to this kind of thinking. Because the relating of hope to a total view of pain is somewhat novel, especially any consideration of a theory of hope on the level of sensation, one of the values of this chapter is suggestive and exploratory. Much additional data, consideration, and analysis are needed before any definitive statements can be made concerning a theory of physical hope. A theory of hope on the level of sensation offers two additional possibilities beyond a corrective on the nature of pain: an integrated view of the individual as a unity (i.e., hope as an aspect of the life instinct) and an insight into both the nature and the value of human empathy for the growth of community.

(5) The relation between hope and intimacy, while not an unknown or unconsidered relation, is one which has yet to be given explicit treatment in philosophical literature. This is the second contribution which the fourth chapter makes. As developed in that final chapter, hope and intimacy turn out to be the same facet in the human confrontation with the absurd. We live in a time when intimacy has become a serious need, and, thus, a time in which explorations into the nature and dynamics of human intimacy have just begun. It is hoped that the brief development of intimacy and hope will make a contribution to this exploration--an exploration of utmost importance today.

(6) Man is a being who is always on the way. This insight brings us to the final concluding remark--one which is implied in the title to this brief conclusion: "Hope--A New Exploration." To say that man is a being who is always on the way is to say two things in relation to this study: First, if man is a being on the way, then hope is a necessary part in such a journey, if man is to help make himself and his future world. This is to say that in the process of the journey, it is hope, more than any other factor, that determines the journey's direction. This is the importance of hope. Second, any inquiry into

the nature of hope must always conclude with modesty; for if man is always on the way, so must be any study of hope. Thus, this "Exploration of Hope" must always give way to a "New Exploration of Hope" with the empathetic hope that the present study has offered a small victory to the united struggle with absurdity which lies ahead.

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## DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

This dissertation is to explore the nature of hope and the dynamics of hope from five perspectives: Gabriel Marcel's understanding of hope; Albert Camus' understanding of hope; comparison and contrast of Marcel and Camus; development of a theory of hope on the level of sensation; and, consideration of the relation between intimacy and hope.

Marcel states that there are three levels of human participation in Being: sensation; communion; and transcendence. Sensation does not admit a theory of hope. It is at the level of communion that hope first becomes possible, for hope exists only on the intersubjective level of "Us." At this level hope becomes a force in the authenticity and depth of personal relations, and in its most authentic form issues into the formula: "I hope in thee for us." Hope at the level of communion foreshadows a more significant relation: relation to the Absolute Thou at the level of transcendence. Hope at this ultimate level becomes the hope of salvation--the power to overcome captivity, to deny induction, and to actively wait on the future.

Camus has often been called the philosopher of "no hope." Such stereotyped understanding of Camus results from identifying him with Caligula, Meursault, and Sisyphus. This identification is incorrect, for Sisyphus is but a first stage for Camus. The heroic and lonely struggle of Sisyphus with the absurd gives way in Camus to a second and intermediate stage: the shared struggle against the absurd by Rieux and Tarrou of The Plague, and the cook and D'Arrast of "The Growing Stone." This intermediate stage gives way in turn to the shared struggle with absurdity on the part of the Rebel for the benefit of all men: "I rebel; therefore, we exist." The Rebel is a man of hope, and his rebellion is the alpha and omega of such hope.

The differences between Marcel and Camus seem much greater than the similarities. However, this is not true. At the level of communion, Marcel's Homo Viator and Camus' Rebel are one and the same man rebelling (hoping) against absurdity (captivity), and "I hope in thee for us" is seen to be the same as "I rebel; therefore, we exist."

Hope is seen to have an integrated relation to pain as an aspect of the life instinct. On the basis of this relation a theory of hope on the level of sensation is developed. In considering the meaning of human intimacy and the nature of hope, what emerges is a necessary

relation between these two, such that: where hope is lacking intimacy is impossible, and where intimacy is not shared hope cannot be a part of the relationship; thus, hope is a definitive aspect of intimacy, and intimacy is a definitive aspect of hope.

FROM WINTER

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## Appendix A

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\*Appendix A first appeared in an unpublished thesis written for the University of Oklahoma: Albert B. Randall, Jr., The Central Structure of Hope in Marcel, 1970.



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Total Number of Passages Listed: 83 passages

## Appendix B

### Index to Albert Camus' Passages on Hope

Note: The appendix which is to follow was constructed mainly as a research tool for Chapter Two. As such it will be seen to differ in many ways from Appendix A while accomplishing the same purpose: location in Camus of passages on hope. The significance of these differences has already been discussed as well as the chronological order of the following. The first date of publication will be in parentheses beside each title. The two collections, Lyrical and Critical Essays and Resistance, Rebellion and Death, will occur as the last two entries in this appendix, with the years spanned by their contents in parentheses. The following guide will be utilized:

- \* Passages where Camus (according to the interpretation of this reader) denies that hope is possible for man;
  - \*\* Passages where Camus . . . affirms the possibility of human hope;
- Passages where ambiguity or suspension of judgment do not permit the preceding characterization, or, passages where the use of hope is a borderline philosophical usage, *i.e.*, where the usage may be colloquial and philosophically trivial.

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Totals (including The Myth of Sisyphus):

*	:	73 passages
**	:	52 passages
—	:	37 passages

Totals (excluding The Myth of Sisyphus):

*	:	48 passages
**	:	52 passages
—	:	37 passages

Total Number of Passages Listed: 162 passages

## Appendix C

### Alcohol and the Absurd

The purpose of this appendix is merely suggestive: to suggest a possible theme in Camus that has not been recognized and which, in this writer's mind, opens a door for understanding a modern "plague"--alcoholism. It would seem that there is psychological as well as empathetic merit in viewing alcoholism as one "escapist" response to the absurd. That this connection was considered by Camus I shall now illustrate.

The absurd--as discussed in Chapter Two--is a many-faceted concept in Camus. One of the effects of a man's confrontation of the absurd is the feeling of being condemned by his own impotence to change the "silence of the world." Drinking, alcohol, then can be utilized to "forgetfully struggle" with this impotence. Camus, in an entry dated October, 1946, in his Notebooks, shows an awareness of this connection: ". . . Why does one drink? Because in drink everything assumes importance, everything takes its place on the highest plane. Conclusion: one drinks through impotence and through condemnation."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Albert Camus, Notebooks, 1942-1951, p. 147.

Camus emphasized that the absurd arises out of the confrontation of a conscious mind and an indifferent world. Thus, one way to protect oneself from the anxiety-producing confrontation is to dull or cloud the mind with alcohol. Dr. Rieux, in his early role as unknown narrator, spoke of "heavy drinking" as a response to the plague (of absurdity):

The cafes, thanks to the big stocks accumulated in a town where the wine and liquor trade holds a pride of place, were equally able to cater for their patrons. And, to tell the truth, there was much heavy drinking. One of the cafe's had the brilliant idea of putting up a slogan: 'The best protection against the infection is a bottle of good wine'. . . .<sup>2</sup>

The dulling or clouding of the mind by alcohol accomplishes not only the well-known erasing of past and present plagues, but also erases in the mind any consciousness of the future, that is, the erasing of one's "tortured" hopes to be rid of the absurd. This isolating effect of alcohol on the absurd is known by Clamance when he speaks of his personal struggle in The Fall: "At a certain degree of lucid intoxication, lying late at night between two prostitutes and drained of all desire, hope ceases to be a torture. . . ."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Albert Camus, The Plague, p. 68.

<sup>3</sup>Albert Camus, The Fall, p. 102.

That Camus recognized a connection between the escapism of alcohol and the confrontation of the absurd is, I think, shown in the preceding. It is a fertile connection for both the understanding and perhaps "the beginning of a cure." How fertile? That, the reader will have to decide.