

John Oswald

Constructions of Europe in the fictional and  
political works of Albert Camus

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Philosophy.

Department of French, School of Modern Languages

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In accordance with Regulation A7.2 of the Regulations for Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Degree of Master (by research) of the University of Stirling (1997/98), I hereby declare that I have composed this thesis, that the work it embodies is my own, and that it has not been included in any other thesis.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Oswald', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

John Oswald

## Abstract

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Little of the vast literature on Albert Camus has been devoted to his ideas of Europe. Existing material is either biographical criticism or portrays Camus as pioneer and visionary of modern-day European integration. Though useful, these interpretations do not do justice to the complex plurality of Europe in Camus's *œuvre*, which appears in several of his works. It is depicted in differing and intriguing ways, for example as a sombre, divided continent of despair (in the fictional works) or as an aspiration towards European unity as a means of preventing future war (in the political journalism). This thesis examines these manifestations with three aims. The first is to situate Camus's political discourse of Europe (his calls for European integration and related matters) within the history of ideas of Europe, highlighting his negotiation with and adoption of Europeanist discourses. Secondly, the thesis analyses Camus's fictional inscription of an imaginary Europe of fault lines and division using a space in literature approach and a Barthesian understanding of the antithesis. Thirdly, instances of dialogue within the *œuvre* between his fictional and political discourses of Europe will be examined. The epistemological grounding for this is provided by Bakhtin's theories of the novel: Europe is conceived of as a multiplicity of overlapping discourses with which Camus relates dialogically, and between whose works there exists a similar dialogue of Europe. Such an approach offers both a new way of reading Camus's treatment of Europe and, potentially, of reading the history of the idea of Europe itself.

*To Dorothy Harrison*

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## Abbreviations

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- I      *Théâtre, Récits, Nouvelles*. Textes établis et annotés par Roger Quilliot. Bibliothèque de la Pléiade. Paris: Gallimard, 1962.
- II     *Essais*. Textes établis et présentés par Roger Quilliot et Louis Faucon. Bibliothèque de la Pléiade. Paris: Gallimard et Calmann Lévy, 1965.
- C1     *Carnets: mai 1935 - février 1942*. Paris: Gallimard, 1962.
- C2     *Carnets: janvier 1942 - mars 1951*. Paris: Gallimard, 1964.
- C3     *Carnets: mars 1951 - décembre 1959*. Paris: Gallimard, 1989.
- MH     *La Mort heureuse*. Introduction et notes de Jean Sarocchi. Cahiers Albert Camus 1. Paris: Gallimard, 1971.
- CORR   *Correspondance 1932-1960*. Avertissement et notes par Marguerite Dobrenn. Paris: Gallimard, 1981. (Correspondence with Jean Grenier)
- CAC3   *Fragments d'un combat, 1938-1940, Alger Républicain*. Édition établie, présentée et annotée par Jacqueline Lévi-Valensi et André Abbou. Cahiers Albert Camus 3. Paris: Gallimard, 1978, 2 vols.

# Introduction

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## Fictional and political

Et cette Europe qui offre ici un de ses visages les plus constants s'éloigne sans arrêt de la beauté. C'est pour cela qu'elle se convulse et c'est pour cela qu'elle mourra si la paix pour elle ne signifie pas le retour à la beauté et sa place rendue à l'amour. (C2, 92, 1943)

Written in Saint-Étienne during World War Two, this passage is symptomatic of Camus's relationship with Europe. On a personal and intellectual level, he did not like Europe. His most lyrical works (Noces, L'Été) celebrate Algeria and the Mediterranean fringe; his most critical and hostile (L'Homme révolté) focus on philosophical and moral problems he saw at the heart of Europe. Camus's move to Europe, his experience of Occupation and Resistance in wartime France, and the post-war politico-intellectual debates constitute a sort of loss of innocence: 'It is clear from the books which he wrote after he had left North Africa behind him that he never again knew the complete happiness and perfect harmony with the world which he had expressed in Noces' (Thody 1964, 28). Sure enough, in Briançon in 1947, Camus wrote: 'Le soir qui coule sur ces montagnes froides finit par glacer le cœur. Je n'ai jamais supporté cette heure du soir qu'en Provence ou sur les plages de la Méditerranée' (C2, 191). One could surmise that Algeria was 'royaume' and Europe 'exil'. Indeed, for many critics, Camus was Mediterranean man, his mode of thought similar to that of many intellectuals of European origin in 1930s Algeria in that he conceived of the Mediterranean as the cradle of civilisation, the true centre of the world, the home of unity and beauty. To such critics, he incarnated 'Mediterranean' virtues of modesty and passion, far more at home among the olive trees of the warm south than the pines of the mountainous and misty north, often coterminous with Europe, especially in later works. For Camus the Algerian, *Mitteleuropa* (geographically speaking the area he refers to as 'north') was as remote as it is for a European of the Western or Celtic fringes.

Yet despite the relative paucity of work on Camus and Europe, the latter is one of the thematic (geographical) continuities in the *œuvre*, as omnipresent as, for example, Algeria and Spain. Algeria is present in political and literary works, from the 1938 series 'Misère de la Kabylie' and his support for the Blum-Violette proposals to his call for a 'trêve civile' in the 1950s, in addition to L'Exil et le royaume (1957) and Le Premier homme (1994). His concern with Algeria was deeply personal, reflected in the persistence with which he wrote about it, and with which he sought, as is typical of Camus's politics, a 'third way' which would satisfy the demands of partisans of *Algérie française* and of independence. Whatever the faults of such an approach, and there are many, the consistency of his concern is evident.

The other 'constant' is Spain.<sup>1</sup> Camus never visited mainland Spain, only once went to the Balearics (in 1935), and had an elementary grasp of the language. He nevertheless considered Spain a sort of spiritual homeland. Psycho-criticism might have much to say on the fact that Camus's mother was Spanish, indeed Todd tantalisingly remarks that 'il soutient [L'Espagne républicaine] comme il défendrait sa mère' (1996, 197). In his Algiers journalism, shortly after the Spanish Civil War, he supported republicanism, and co-wrote Révolte dans les Asturies with the 'Théâtre du travail'. He wrote five Combat editorials on Spain in 1944-5,<sup>2</sup> stating that since World War Two effectively began with the Civil War, the post-war settlement should not ignore the existence of the Franquist regime.<sup>3</sup> In his preface to L'Espagne libre in 1946 he was indignant that Europe could claim to have fought

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<sup>1</sup> For more on this well-documented aspect of Camus's life, see II, 1789-91, Guereña 1986, and especially Lévi-Valensi's exceptionally detailed accounts (1968, 1985).

<sup>2</sup> 7 September, 5 October, 21 November, 10 December 1944, and 7 January 1945 (II, 1502).

<sup>3</sup> 'Cette guerre européenne qui commença en Espagne, il y a huit ans, ne pourra se terminer sans l'Espagne' (Combat 7-9-1944).

for liberty while ignoring Franco; unceasingly critical of French non-intervention in 1936, he considered Franquist Spain as a wound within Europe with dangerous implications for democracy: 'Méprisée en un lieu, elle [democracy] est menacée tout entière' (II, 1608). Throughout the 1940s and 1950s he gave speeches, used his influence to help republican refugees, and publicly opposed Franquist Spain's admission to UNESCO, all of which earned him the Medal of Liberation of the Spanish republicans. His understanding of the Cold War was influenced by the fact that to some, defence of Spanish republicanism was an *ipso facto* defence of communism. On a more mythical level, Camus believed that the Iberian peninsula incarnated a style of life that could only enrich Europe:

Toute l'intelligence européenne se tourne, elle aussi, vers l'Espagne, comme si elle sentait que cette terre misérable détient quelques-uns des secrets royaux que l'Europe cherche désespérément à formuler, à travers tout un luxe de guerres, de révolutions, d'épopées mécaniques et d'aventures spirituelles. Que serait la prestigieuse Europe, en effet, sans la pauvre Espagne? (II, 1607)

Europe's difference with Algeria and Spain is that, despite its omnipresence in his *œuvre*, Camus remained constantly ambivalent towards it, which is reflected differently depending on the kind of discourse in which it appears.

In his political writing, he often evokes the goal of European unity, including ideas of a supranational politico-economic federation, and the nature of the political order that should prevail in a united Europe. This is problematised in his fictional work, in which there exists an antagonism between seemingly opposing areas of an imaginary construction of Europe, between a sombre and angst-ridden north and a vivacious, attractive south. In these texts, Europe is perceived differently by the protagonists according to their geographical position within it: in the northern areas they become moody and ill at ease; in the southern areas they return, as if restored, to a sense of joy and well-being. Even when the protagonist is in

one area and evoking another, it is with emotions similar to those actually felt when physically present in the evoked area. Camus's fictional Europe is thus split along an antagonistic fault-line between two mythical imaginary spaces. This seems at odds with his support for political Europeanism: there is clearly more than one discourse of Europe operative in the *œuvre*. In L'Homme révolté there emerges a further split within Europe along a north/south fault line of philosophy, which Camus tries to sublimate in 'la pensée de midi', the final chapter of the work. This constitutes another discourse of Europe.

It is perhaps surprising that Camus scholars have seemingly ignored the following long passage written in 1937, which could function as an allegory for Camus's Europe:

Il s'enfonçait tous les jours dans la montagne et en revenait muet, les cheveux pleins d'herbes et couvert des égratignures de toute une journée. Et chaque fois c'était la même conquête sans séduction. Il fléchissait peu à peu la résistance de ce pays hostile. Il arrivait à se faire semblable à ces nuages ronds et blancs derrière l'unique sapin qui se détachait sur un crête, semblable à ces champs d'épilobes rosâtres, de sorbiers et de campanules. Il s'intégrait à ce monde aromatique et rocheux. Parvenu au lointain sommet, devant le paysage immense soudain découvert, ce n'était pas l'apaisement de l'amour qui naissait en lui, mais une sorte de pacte intérieur qu'il concluait avec cette nature étrangère, la trêve qui s'établit entre deux visages durs et farouches, l'intimité de deux adversaires et non l'abandon de deux amis. (C1, 60-1)

The passage inscribes a view of Europe as a 'pays hostile' and 'nature étrangère', with which the narrator clearly feels no concordance, and yet with which he is able to come to an understanding, a 'trêve' between hostile parties. It reflects the constancy of Camus's engagement with Europe, as well as his ambivalence towards it. It suggests that despite his preoccupations and unceasing efforts to examine Europe's political problems, he never arrived at an entente, only attaining a fragile sense of co-existence.

This thesis, then, proposes a Bakhtinian reading of the overlapping, contradictory and ambivalent nature of these discourses, which have been noticed by Camus criticism but not extensively commented upon. It shows how Europe in Camus is multiple and how he

constructs several ‘voices’ of Europe in order to explore the subject and articulate his ambivalence.

## Review of literature

Since the 1950s, Camus scholarship has produced a constant flow of between one and two hundred monographs and articles per year.<sup>4</sup> There exist two editions of the complete works, edited respectively by Roger Quilliot and Roger Grenier; Gallimard has published the Cahiers Albert Camus series since 1971, and there have been many colloquia, including the well-known 1982 Cérisy conference Albert Camus: œuvre fermée, œuvre ouverte? The Société des Études Camusiennes was founded in 1982, and now has about 300 members.<sup>5</sup> Most themes of Camus’s œuvre have been explored and there are few gaps left in his biography. Roeming’s Camus: A Bibliography includes nearly 9000 items, a high proportion of which deal with what have become other constants of Camus scholarship: studies of major works, the ideas of the absurd and of revolt, and the question of Algeria.

During the same period, Camus’s reputation has, however, taken many turns.<sup>6</sup> Opinion was against him during the deepening Algerian crisis in the 1950s, but there was a flood of favourable press coverage surrounding his Nobel Prize nomination in 1957 and death in 1960.<sup>7</sup> Despite constant popularity with a general readership ever since, evinced by high sales figures, many translations, and a constant presence on school curricula, his standing sank low in French intellectual circles: in 1970, for example, Jean-Jacques Brochier published Albert Camus philosophe pour classes terminales (re-edited in 1979), an acerbic

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<sup>4</sup> See Chronological index in Roeming 1997.

<sup>5</sup> Bulletin d’information of the Société des Études Camusiennes, 17<sup>ème</sup> année, No. 51, avril-juin 1999, p. 42.

<sup>6</sup> For an excellent overview of Camus’s shifting reputation, see Smets 1985b; Lévi-Valensi 1999. For the position in 1970, see Lévi Valensi 1970. See also Judt 1998, 87-93.

<sup>7</sup> In 1957, 335 items were published about Camus, compared with 150 the previous year. In 1960, 612 were published compared to 176 in 1959 (Roeming 1997).

attack on Camus's reputation. In a climate of a return to Camus in the light of events in Eastern Europe in 1989-90 that seemed to vindicate him, Catherine Camus saw fit to publish the unfinished Le Premier homme in 1994 (Camus c1995). It has sold extremely well and has been translated into several languages. Part of this return to Camus, also shared recently by some Algerian writers (Chaulet-Achour 1999), was the publication of Olivier Todd's 1996 biography, which picked up where Herbert Lottman's left off in 1979. This signals a revival of academic interest in France: in the 1970s and 80s, much Camus scholarship was the preserve of North American and British academics. Furthermore, La Chute was introduced to the 'Baccalauréat lettres' programme in 1998, leading to the publication of at least a dozen new critical editions.<sup>8</sup>

As a result of these new publications and the reawakening of interest in Camus, new domains of scholarship have opened up, and critics have reappraised older ones. The issue of (neo)colonialism has been re-examined in the light of Le Premier homme, complementing the critiques of O'Brien (1970) and Said (1993).<sup>9</sup> The place of women and sexuality in Camus's works has also recently come into sustained focus.<sup>10</sup>

A significant new scholarly domain developing in the late 1980s and mid 1990s has been the place and meaning of Europe in the Camusian *œuvre*, an area until recently largely overlooked by Camus scholars. In Quilliot's accompanying notes to Camus's complete works, there is one reference to the idea of Europe in Camus: 'Les articles d'Alger Républicain et plus tard de Combat témoignent de l'attachement de Camus à l'idée d'une

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<sup>8</sup> See Bulletin d'information of the Société des Études Camusiennes, 16<sup>ème</sup> année, No. 46, janvier 1998, pp. 14-15.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Dunwoodie 1998; Dunwoodie and Hughes 1998; Wood 1998.

<sup>10</sup> See Rizzuto, Anthony: Camus: Love and Sexuality. Gainesville, University of Florida Press, 1998.



Europe unie' (II, 1467). Grenier also only briefly refers to the European idea in the Lettres à un ami allemand: 'on remarquera que la troisième est consacrée à une défense de l'ideal européen [...]' (1987, 165). This lacuna can perhaps be explained by the fact that Camus did not write a single extended work on the subject; however, as seen above, the theme appears regularly in a variety of forms, and has attracted the attention of a newer generation of Camus scholars, such as Jeanyves Guérin, and Paul-F. Smets. Raymond Gay-Crosier, Jacqueline Lévi-Valensi and Jean Sarocchi, three more established Camusians, have also published articles on it. In total, there are seven articles, one book chapter and one short monograph on the idea(s) of Europe in Camus, few indeed compared to the thousands on, for example, L'Étranger.

The first of these seven articles was Walter Jens's 'Camus l'Européen' (1963), a short, uncritical retrospective which praises Camus's style. Jens describes the Mediterranean in Camus as 'le lieu où se décide le destin de l'Europe' (1963, 148), and evokes L'Homme révolté when he himself writes of Europe: 'Ce ne sont pas les aspirations faustiennes qui ont modelé le visage de l'Europe, mais la détermination à la prudence, la faculté farouche de s'arrêter' (1963, 149).

Three articles published by Guérin between 1985 and 1994 develop a more systematic and less impressionistic treatment of the question. 'L'Europe dans la pensée et l'œuvre de Camus' (1985) is a chronological tracing of Camus's references to Europe. Guérin begins with passages from L'Été which describe Europe as the antithesis of Algeria: in Europe, '[c]'est la mort qui gagne en fin de compte. L'Afrique reste saine, pure: les forces de vie y sont les plus fortes' (1985, 58). Guérin nevertheless points out that for Camus, the Mediterranean was a more important tie than Africa and that his cultural references were

European (1985, 59). Noting the opposition between differing ideas of Europe in the Lettres à un ami allemand, Guérin states that for Camus, ‘L’Europe de 1945 [...] doit se désintoxiquer, se débarrasser de ses vieux démons idéologiques’ (1985, 62). He foregrounds Camus’s critique of totalitarianism, reading it as a critique of Europe itself, also highlighting Camus’s desire for European unification: ‘Il s’est prononcé plusieurs fois pour l’unification de [l’Europe] autour de l’idée démocratique’ (1985, 67).

Guérin’s ‘Mythe et réalité de l’Europe dans l’œuvre de Camus’ (1993a) reworks the 1985 article, offering new viewpoints, one of which is the observation that ‘un réseau d’images négatives et toute une thématique tragique se laissent deviner à l’arrière-plan de l’Europe camusienne’ (1993a, 168). Slightly more reserved than in 1985, Guérin criticises Camus’s idea of the Mediterranean as essentialist (1993a, 172), and is careful to distinguish Camus’s ideas from post-war Christian-Democrat Europeanism (1993a, 173). Importantly, Guérin highlights Camus’s internationalism: European unity would be a stage towards a global society.

‘Camus, Sartre et Aron devant l’unification européenne’ (1994), Guérin’s third article, is a comparative study, which uses a similar analysis to that of previous articles to relate Camus’s ideas to those of Sartre and Aron vis-à-vis European reconstruction in the context of the Cold War and the choice between Stalinism, alliance with the USA or neutralism. Guérin’s monograph, Albert Camus: Portrait de l’artiste en citoyen (1993b), contains an important chapter on ‘L’Europe du mythe à la réalité’ (1993b, 189-204), which summarises observations found in Guérin’s other articles. It is the first such chapter in any book-length study of Camus.

Important though it is, Guérin's work is rather uncritical and tends to weave together disparate quotations from different places and times. Apart from the 1994 article, it rarely refers to other thinkers and does not systematically situate Camus in wider intellectual or historical contexts. More seriously, it becomes almost historically determinist, viewing ideas through the prism of modern day European integration. In 1994, for example, Guérin judged Camus, Sartre and Aron's position by the realities of the European Union, concluding that history proved Sartre wrong and Camus and Aron right. In 1985, he wrote that Mitterrand's foreign policy 'est conforme aux principes chers à Camus. J'incline à penser qu'il l'eût approuvée' (1985, 68); and of one of Camus's pronouncements: 'Jean Monnet eût pu le signer' (1993a, 175).

In 1990, the Société des Études Camusiennes hosted a colloquium in Strasbourg on 'Albert Camus et l'Europe' (Abbou 1990).<sup>11</sup> The contributions most germane to the present work were given by Smets, Sarocchi and Lévi-Valensi. Smets's Le Pari européen (1991) is a short 87-page monograph tracing almost every mention of Europe in the Camusian *œuvre*, and beginning with a bold assertion: 'Le destin de l'Europe et son insertion dans un nouvel ordre démocratique international a constamment préoccupé Albert Camus dès le début de la deuxième guerre mondiale' (1991, 15). Like Guérin, Smets weaves a tapestry of diverse quotes, mainly from Camus's political writing, but also from lyrical material (L'Été, L'Envers et l'endroit) and other sources (Carnets, Journaux de voyage and the Jean Grenier Correspondence). Wherever it is found, Smets reads Camus's mention of Europe as a coherent vision of 'une Europe différente' (1991, 23). Camus's support of Gary Davis and the Groupes de Liaison Internationale in the 1940s is read as part of his Europeanism, as are his references to Spain and occasionally Britain.

Smets's work, like Guérin's, imposes a dubious continuity and unity on Camus's work. It also raises in more extreme form the problem of historical determinism: Smets reads Camus's texts as precursors to the Treaty of Rome and even Gorbachev's 'maison commune européenne' (1991, 39, 41, 79). Both he and Guérin tend to read the texts as if in a vacuum, with little attempt to contextualise. Their work, in the end, constitutes a *post ante* invention of a potential intellectual source for modern day European integration that is not grounded in solid analysis. Furthermore, Smets, like Guérin, conflates Camus's literary and political writings, seeing the Europe in both as identical.

In contrast to Guérin and Smets, Sarocchi offers a critical and provocative analysis of Camus's idea(s) of Europe in 'L'Europe, Exil ou Royaume?' (1992), understanding it as representing both 'exil' and 'royaume'. He thus distinguishes two Europes, a Northern one and a Mediterranean one, in Camus's 1937 *Maison de la Culture* lecture in Algiers: 'Il semble bien que l'Europe qui ne serait pas exil, pour Camus, s'arrête, vers le Nord, à Lourmarin et à Vérone, disons plus simplement, à la limite de l'olivier' (1992, 156). He sees Camus's Europeanist Lettres à un ami allemand as anomalous in an *œuvre* which frequently denounces Europe, but nevertheless states that 'Camus est europhile *et* europhobe, c'est ainsi' (1992, 160). For Sarocchi, Camus 'se fait européen' in L'Homme révolté and Discours de Suède, but his fiction, especially L'Envers et l'endroit, La Chute, L'Été and L'Exil et le Royaume betrays a negative reaction to Europe: 'sa *libido* le pousse ailleurs' (1992, 160). Sarocchi does justice to the differences between Camus's fictional and political Europes, but his approach remains fundamentally biographical.

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<sup>11</sup> See Le Monde 2 November 1990, 22; 16 November 1990, 28.

In ‘L’Europe dans les œuvres de fiction d’Albert Camus’ (1990b), Lévi-Valensi also studies the Europe of Camus’s fiction, beginning, as she has elsewhere, with his myths of Spain (Lévi-Valensi 1968, 1985). She then examines La Mort heureuse and the elaboration of a ‘mythe des origines [...] à la fois amorcé et éludé dans “La Mort dans l’âme”’ (1990b, 89), concluding from Mersault’s journey that in Camus’s fiction European identity and the nature of Europe are at stake, not European history. Like Sarocchi, Lévi-Valensi sees the fictional Europe as distinct from the political; her article is a useful counterpoint to Smets and Guérin, and she follows Sarocchi in stating that Camus entertained an ambiguous relationship with Europe: ‘À une nature qu’il aime, et à une culture qu’il revendique – celles de l’Espagne, de la Grèce ou de la Méditerranée – Camus oppose, dans son univers imaginaire, “La Vieille Europe”, ses péchés historiques et idéologiques’ (1990b, 93).

Gay-Crosier’s ‘Albert Camus: pour une culture européenne sans eurocentrisme’ (1995) differs from the other articles examined here in that it neither examines Camus’s literary Europe nor his Europeanism *per se*. Instead, it analyses Camus’s ‘esprit synthétique’ (1995, 305) and his belief in the inseparability of politics and culture. This parity of the cultural and the socio-political, Gay-Crosier argues, shows an acceptance of cultural diversity already inherent in the ideals of ‘révolte’, ‘limites’, justice and liberty. Camus’s post-war internationalism represents for Gay-Crosier a relativisation of European culture and a critique of aspirations towards cultural supremacy. The article closes, however, with a useful, if exaggerated, summary of Camus’s view of a united Europe: ‘Son concept opérationnel d’une Europe trouvant son unité dans la diversité est fondé sur une alliance de patrimoines intellectuels et culturels et non pas sur une alliance de nations’ (1995, 316).

## Aims and methodology

These critics' analyses form two schools of thought on the nature and place of Europe in Camus. Guérin and Smets highlight a constant aspiration towards European unification, whatever the genre of the text considered. Lévi-Valensi and Sarocchi are more nuanced, seeing Europe as ambiguous and multiple. Both approaches offer points of entry into the study of Camus's Europe, but suffer from the methodological difficulties underlined above and, ultimately, a certain confusion.

This thesis seeks to make a contribution to this area of study through a sustained analysis of 'Europe' in Camus which is conscious of the plurality of the meanings of the term depending on the genre of writing in which it is discussed. It aims to develop more rigorous tools of analysis and thus give a clearer picture of the place and nature of Europe in the *œuvre*. The first, and most important, point of departure is that it would be erroneous to presume that there is one distinct 'Europe' in all of Camus's work. Rather, there is a multiplicity of Europes, depending on the literary or political discourse that frames it. La Mort heureuse, for example, postulates an imaginary description of Europe and reactions to it, whereas the Combat editorials argue for a united Europe in order to prevent war. Given this difference between discourses, it follows that it would be equally erroneous to approach them using the same tools of analysis. Merely biographical criticism, finally, will be eschewed (there is much literature on this, which will be signalled where appropriate). The aim is not primarily to elucidate Camus's personal relationship with Europe, even though the question will arise at certain points, but to examine its differential inscription in his works.

The thesis therefore has three aims. The first is to use a historical-comparative method to examine Camus's espousal of ideas on the political (re)construction of Europe. This aspect of his journalism and other political writings will be situated within the context of wider debates on Europe. The second aim of this thesis is to elucidate the previously cited antagonism in the fictional space of Europe between north and south using a theory of the construction of space in literary texts. This dual approach does not implicitly posit a value scale, criticised by cultural materialists and new historicists, according to which literature is fundamentally distinct from political writing. Neither does it seek to privilege the literary texts 'as a form of expression outside the realms of society or politics or history' (Brannigan 1998, 21). Indeed, even though it is of little use directly to compare or conflate descriptions of Prague with reflections on federalism, the two discourses are never totally separate.<sup>12</sup> Whence the third aim of the thesis, which is to assess whether the apparent contradiction between Camus's fictional and political Europes is an inherent given in Camus's *œuvre*, or whether some of his writing can be read as an attempt to reconcile the two. A Bakhtinian epistemological approach will therefore be developed in order to examine the inter-relations between the two discourses, particularly in texts such as Lettres à un ami allemand and L'Homme révolté. This is dependent on an understanding of the genre of each text, since the idea of Europe appears to differ from one genre to another. Europe in Camus will be understood as a heteroglossia of different discourses which enter into dialogue with and opposition to each other.

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<sup>12</sup> See Judt 1998, 185: '[...] the line between fiction and nonfiction in Camus's work is at best a convenience; the short stories, the famous early novels (L'Étranger, La Peste), the didactic plays, and the last full-length work published in his lifetime (La Chute) were intimately related to the themes of his journalism, essays and books and should be read in juxtaposition to the latter.'

## What is Europe? A historical-comparative approach

Any analysis of the idea of Europe has to address a vital question: what is Europe? This precedes the whole discourse of Europe and Europeanism, and is of the utmost relevance to Camus's political writings on European unity. The overview provided here will form the background to the analysis in later chapters.

In general terms, Europe can have a geographical, an ethnographic, or a historical meaning (Boxhoorn 1996, 134). Morgan distinguishes between the idea of Europe and the idea of political unity, showing how historians such as Pegg (1983) conflate them, a conflation analogous to Guérin and Smets's examined above (Morgan 1996, 33). Wilson and Van Der Dussen see the history of the European idea as threefold; it presumes that there is something called 'Europe', that Europeans have a European self identity, and that history reveals schemes for European unity (1995, 9). Often, these three questions, in themselves problematic, are also conflated.

Denis de Rougemont's Vingt-huit siècles d'Europe (1994 (1961)) is typical of one approach to the idea of Europe, which sees the continent as an organic entity evolving through history towards the culminating point of whatever form of European integration is operative at the time of writing. As Bance (1992, 1) remarks, however, the similarity between many ideals of European unity and post-1945 construction of Europe is by no means certain: historians like Milward (1992) point out the pragmatic nature of post-war integration as a strategy to protect the nation state.<sup>13</sup> De Rougemont's work makes highly problematic assumptions about Europe. The first is that Europe predates its component nations. Geographically this is undeniable, but De Rougemont understands Europe in this

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<sup>13</sup> For an overview of schools of thought on the motives of European integration see Spiering 1996, 99-103.



context as an organic politico-cultural entity: ‘L’Europe est beaucoup plus ancienne que ses nations. Elle risque de périr du fait de leur désunion et de leur prétensions – toujours plus illusoires – à la souveraineté absolue’ (1994, 487). The second assumption is eurocentric in the extreme: ‘L’Europe a exercé dès sa naissance une fonction non seulement universelle, mais, de fait, universalisante. Elle a fomenté le monde, en l’explorant d’abord, puis en fournissant les moyens intellectuels, techniques et politiques d’une future unité du “genre humain”’ (1994, 487; 1965, 11, 37). The third establishes the idea of Europe as the preserve of an elite: ‘L’Europe unie n’est pas un expédient moderne, économique ou politique, mais c’est un idéal qu’approuvent depuis mille ans tous les meilleurs esprits, ceux qui ont vu loin’ (1994, 487). Paradoxically, De Rougemont further suggests that the best way to find Europe is to expand it: ‘Et il s’agit bien moins de la délimiter dans le temps de l’histoire et l’espace terrestre, que de renouveler sans cesse le rayonnement de son génie particulier, qui se trouve être, justement, universel’ (1994, 488).

In response to these views, Duroselle writes, ‘Je ne pense pas que Dieu ait créé l’Europe, pas plus qu’il n’a créé la France ou l’Allemagne. La France, l’Allemagne, l’Europe sont des inventions des hommes, et l’invention de l’Europe comme unité politique est singulièrement plus récente que celle de la France ou de l’Allemagne’ (1965, 18). He sees the construction of Europe as an essentially post-1945 enterprise inspired by the ruins of the war, and identifies various historical understandings of the term ‘Europe’ from the Ancients onwards: ‘L’Europe étant une construction de l’esprit humain à partir d’une réalité géographique mal délimitée, il y a eu, depuis que les hommes y réfléchissent, une immense

variété d'Europes' (1965, 25).<sup>14</sup> More recent writers such as Delanty (1995) have developed this view: 'Europe as an idea [...] has forever been in a process of invention and reinvention as determined by the pressure of new collective identities' (Delanty 1995, 1-2). The idea has always been a construction born of adversity from within and without: European history is as much a history of fault lines and division as common themes and similarities (1995, 3; Davies 1997, 18; Treanor c1999).

Ideas of Europe are therefore based as much on exclusion and construction of difference as on unity and integration; critics see them as hegemonic constructions of Self and Other (Delanty 1995). An idea of Europe grew, for example, during the crusades against the threat of Islam, and during the Cold War against the threats of Communism and American economic hegemony. These ideas of exclusion of mythical Others and universalising culturalism have been labelled 'eurocentric' by critics such as Amin (1989).

The problematic debate on the geographical limits of Europe goes back to Antiquity, when Europe was part of a Greek tripartite division of the known world between Europe, Asia and Africa, a distinction which continued in early biblical exegesis (Den Boer 1995, 15-26). From the sixteenth century to the present day, a pressing problem has been the place of Russia, added to the post-1989 problem of the inclusion of the former Communist Eastern bloc countries, a question of much contemporary debate within the European Union (Davies 1997, 10-14; Wintle 1996, 59-63).

The problem of boundaries is more than simply geographic, but brings into play cultural, linguistic and religious factors. 'Europe' became coterminous with Christendom during the crusades; indeed, without Islam, it is doubtful that 'Europe' would have gained self-

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<sup>14</sup> Duroselle, however, puts forward ideas redolent of De Rougemont in his controversial Europe: A History

consciousness at that time (Davies 1997, 257-8). The word Europe came into more frequent usage by the fifteenth century, before acquiring the humanist connotations of the *respublica litteraria* a century later. The development of a European balance of power led to wide acceptance of the term, which began to be used in eighteenth century treatises on peace and union. Seventeenth and eighteenth-century visual representations of 'Europe, queen of the continents' reflect the generally held belief that Europe was intrinsically superior to all other continents (Wintle 1996, 80-85). As the nation states developed in the nineteenth century, Europe was synonymous with progress, superiority and civilisation, an idea, of course, severely undermined by World War One.

During and after World War One the idea of Europe became almost coterminous with calls for European unity as a politico-economic attempt to overcome the internal threats of extreme nationalism, bolstered by war propaganda, and the continuing Franco-German dispute. It also aimed at reasserting European prestige and superiority, destabilised by the war, against the external threats of newer economies such as the USA and Argentina, and the rise of Bolshevik Russia. Many doom-laden titles were published, notably Oswald Spengler's The Decline of the West (1918) and Albert Demangeon's Le Déclin de l'Europe (1920).

Between 1919 and 1924, however, there was relatively little press coverage of the European idea, and only two or three Europeanist monographs were published per year, doubtless due to the tense climate of the French occupation of the Ruhr. However, the idea was gaining some respectability in intellectual and political circles among those frequented by Count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi, who enjoyed contact with and influence over

politicians and statesmen in a number of countries (Kajima *et al* 1971; White 1989). In 1923 he established the Paneuropean Union to propagate his plans for the peaceful re-organisation of the world developed in his many books and articles on European unity.<sup>15</sup> Of the twelve organisations founded to campaign for a united Europe during the 1919-1939 period,<sup>16</sup> this was one of the three most influential, quickly developing branches all over Europe.

Support continued through 1925 in the atmosphere of Locarno, German membership of the League of Nations, and Aristide Briand's foreign policy, based on a view that French security depended upon European security. In 1925 the European Customs Union was established, developing branches in every European country. The *Fédération pour l'entente européenne* was established in 1926, as were other organisations such as Emile Mayrisch's Franco-German Committee for Information and Documentation. The first congress of the Paneuropean Union in Vienna in October 1926 made a considerable impression. 1925-6 marked the peak of discussion on the European idea: in addition to newspaper articles, twelve monographs and eleven journal articles dealing with the European idea were published in 1925. In 1926 this rose to 23 monographs and 24 articles, in 1927 22 monographs and 21 articles (Chabot 1978, 14). The European idea, however, was less popular in Germany, preoccupied with reparations and economic reconstruction. Briand, Painlevé and Herriot were treated with suspicion; with the exception of Stresemann, the Chancellor, German politicians believed the European idea to be a front for French hegemonic ambitions. In spite of the efforts of organisations, politicians and writers, the European debate was too personality-driven and elitist; once Stresemann and Briand had

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<sup>15</sup> See the bibliography in Pegg 1983, 194, 204, 216.

<sup>16</sup> The years between 1923 and 1927 saw the establishment of most of the Europeanist organisations.

left the political scene there was neither political nor mass support (Bance 1992, 5; Brugmans 1965, 56; Chabot 1978, 32-4, 486-7; Wilson and Van Der Dussen 1995, 105).

Between 1928 and 1929, support waned in the face of protracted reparations debates and the difficult adoption of the Briand-Kellogg pact into the League of Nations charter. It revived briefly following Briand's speech on European Unity to the League Assembly in 1929 but declined again with the demise of his Memorandum on European Union, which received little support from other European governments before quietly disappearing in the short-lived League of Nations Commission of Inquiry for European Union.<sup>17</sup> In Europe's political turmoil in the wake of the 1929 stock market crash and the growing power of the National Socialists in the German parliament, followed by Hitler's arrival in power in 1933, plans for European unity faded.

Despite its demise, the 1920s Europeanist debate left an important body of literature which is increasingly explored by historians of the European idea (Chabot 1978, Muet 1997, Pegg 1983). Some nascent ideas of this period reappear in the late 1930s, and in the post-World War Two period. The term Europeanist debate, however, glosses over its diversity of views: the 1920s debate was as diverse as any other over the centuries. Different groups sought different forms of integration, from loose economic cooperation to industrial cartels to customs unions. Some advocated federalism, others inter-state cooperation, a contradiction inherent in the Briand Memorandum.<sup>18</sup> Opinions were divided as to whether establishing a European regional grouping would be beneficial or detrimental to the running of the League of Nations. Writers argued variously for European armies,

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<sup>17</sup> For the text of the Briand memorandum, see Harryvan and Van der Harst 1997, 28-33. Briand was by this stage honorary president of the Paneuropean Union and enjoyed the support of other Europeanist organisations.

common currency and supranational institutions. Nauman's rehabilitation of the concept of *Mitteleuropa* and the revival of the idea of Anschluss vexed Coudenhove's German branch of the Pan-European Union (Morgan 1996, 41). In reality there were several ideas of Europe in the 1920s and not one European movement. Viewing this debate as unified is therefore historically inaccurate, and suggests a search for historical precedents to the post-1945 establishment of the European institutions.

The 1920s debate resurfaced in the late 1930s as a pacifist reaction to the approach of war. New organisations were established in the UK and US, including Federal Union in London in 1938, their ideas filtering into journals and the mainstream press. Coudenhove-Kalergi's continuing activity evinces a certain continuity of ideas from the 1920s onwards, but after the Anschluss in 1938, he argued in Europe Must Unite for European unification around France and Britain, demonstrating a shift in his views: when the Paneuropean Union was founded, Britain was not considered part of Europe (Shlaim 1978, 21). He founded the British Paneuropean Committee in 1939 with Duff Cooper as president, and with Churchill's support. Federal Union attracted prominent academics, and the movement enjoyed a rapidly increasing membership (Shlaim 1978, 23-4). It published many books and pamphlets, notably W. B. Curry's influential The Case for Federal Union (1939), which attacked economic nationalism, arguing for a world, rather than purely European, federation based on liberal values. The book also acted as an introduction to Clarence K. Streit's Union Now (1938), representative of a federalist-influenced interventionist current of opinion in the US (Chabot 1978, 328).<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Which itself tried to disguise the French concern to 'provid[e] an international guarantee of French security against Germany' by using European unity as a front (Morgan 1996, 43-4).

<sup>19</sup> Federal Union's activities were and are better known in the rest of Europe than in Britain: the movement is known in Italy as the Anglo-Saxon Federalist School (Bance 1992, 5).

When war broke out, the idea of a European federation figured prominently in unofficial discussions of British war aims. Attlee and Chamberlain both made speeches reminiscent of the 1920s debate with phrases such as ‘Europe must federate or perish’ (Shlaim 1978, 24-6; Lipgens 1982, 159). More pragmatically, in 1940 Churchill made his famous call for a Franco-British union with common citizenship, a proposal which inspired much of the Europeanist debate in the clandestine Resistance press in several European countries.

From 1942-3 onwards, the idea of European unity gradually began to figure in the French Resistance movements’ reflection on the post-war political order in France and elsewhere in Europe, in opposition to the Nazi New Europe. There was a struggle over the European discourse itself between the non-communist Resistance movements (the communist Resistance movements maintained a patriotic line of argument and did not raise the issue of European unity) and Nazi propaganda, in which Camus played an important part, as will be seen in Chapter Two. The Resistance idea of unity was ‘le fruit des réflexions de la base’ (Halin 1967, 18), never imposed from above, unlike the elitist 1920s debate, with which it nevertheless shared many objectives and motivations. Since Camus was involved with the Resistance movement ‘Combat’, it is important to give greater detail on Europeanism in the French Resistance.

In the occupied zone, movements like ‘Défense de la France’ debated European unity, (Lipgens 1985, 286-7) joined by ‘Résistance’, and even the conservative, largely ex-army, ‘Organisation Civile et Militaire’ (Halin 1967, 27; Lipgens 1982, 51). In the southern zone, all three major movements, ‘Combat’, ‘Libération-Sud’ and ‘Franc-Tireur’, published Europeanist articles in their journals, in the case of Libertés, a tributary of ‘Combat’, as early as 1941 (Lipgens 1985, 285). Henri Frenay was one of the first Europeanists; talking

about a Europeanist remark in Les Petites Ailes, he wrote: ‘Cette petite phrase, sur l’Europe, écrite au printemps 1941, marque le point de départ d’une réflexion qui sera partagée par la plus grande partie de la Résistance non communiste’ (1973, 91). He also wrote about the European idea in Vérités and especially in Combat, notably in its 1942 manifesto, as well as in articles written in Algiers after his appointment to the Comité de Libération National (Lipgens 1985, 284-6, 291-3, 341-2, 342-3). Similarly Europeanist articles can be found from 1943 onwards in journals of two other major southern movements, as well as the smaller ‘Libérer et Fédérer’ (Halin 1967, 20-1; Lipgens 1985, 293-5, 308-13, 339-40, 346). The united non-communist Resistance movement’s journals also carried Europeanist articles, an example of which is the Mouvement de Libération Nationale (MLN) manifesto (Lipgens 1985, 353-4).

In addition, resisters from nine European countries managed, remarkably, to meet in Geneva in 1944 to discuss the European idea. The prime movers in this venture were two founders of the Italian Resistance movement Movimento Federalista Europeo (MFE), Ernesto Rossi and Altiero Spinelli. While held in captivity in 1941 on the island of Ventotene by the Mussolini government they composed what came to be known as the Ventotene Manifesto, a detailed programme for future European unification (Lipgens 1985, 471-84). During the winter of 1943-44 they contacted representatives of other Resistance groups to organise a conference with the aim of drafting a common declaration. The general secretary of the World Council of Churches, W. A. Visser’t Hooft, hosted four secret meetings between March and July 1944. At the 20 May meeting a draft declaration (known as the Geneva Declaration) was drawn up and distributed (Lipgens 1982, 56-57, 108-117; 1985, 660-5; Visser’t Hooft 1973, 177-81). A Comité Provisoire pour la Fédération



européenne was also established, which published an edition of L'Europe Fédéraliste, before becoming the Centre d'action pour la Fédération européenne and publishing the anthology L'Europe de demain in 1945.

Although one of the first major Resistance historians devotes a small section to the European idea in the clandestine press (Michel 1962, 420-5), it only began to receive systematic historical attention in the mid-1980s in the publications of Walter Lipgens of Saarbrücken University (1982, 1985). His Documents on the History of European Integration (1985) is a monumental collection of Resistance documents, meticulously referenced and researched.

It is important to bear in mind, however, the political motivation of these works. For one reviewer, 'Lipgens was [...] representative of a certain group of Germans for whom, because of their experiences, commitment to the European idea was the touchstone of existence.'<sup>20</sup> According to another, Lipgens originally wanted his colleagues on the project to subscribe to a declaration on the desirability and inevitability of a united Europe.<sup>21</sup> Lagrou considers Lipgens's method to be 'trop débordant de bonne volonté politique et de naïveté historique pour être vraiment pris au sérieux' (1997, 159). This is harsh, but does signal Lipgens's partisan views and sometimes hasty remarks following the theme of the 'forward-looking Europeanists struggling against unimaginative officialdom'.<sup>22</sup> Although neglected for a long time, the European idea in the Resistance has perhaps been over-researched, as Frank suggests, in order to legitimise current European integration (1997, 71). This seems plausible, given Lipgens's European Commission funding and work at the

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<sup>20</sup> William Paterson, review of Lipgens (1982) in Political Studies, 33, no. 2, June 1985, 346.

<sup>21</sup> D. Cameron Watt, review of Lipgens (1985) in International Affairs, 66, no. 2, April 1990, 392.

<sup>22</sup> John W. Young, review of Lipgens (1982) in The Historical Journal, 26, no. 2, June 1983, 513.

European University Institute in Florence, directed for many years by Europeanist historian Henri Brugmans. This is not to deny the place of Europeanist thought in the Resistance: much material exists and the idea did play an important role in Resistance debate. It is important, however, to maintain a sense of historical perspective.

Additionally, within the Resistance movements, Europe represented different things to different groups. There was consensus on the basic goals of avoiding war, maintaining Europe's prestige and establishing democracy and the rule of law, but ideas differed on how to go about this. Furthermore, the ideas of 1941 could not be expected to match those of 1945. Frank adds that in the clandestine press the idea of a united Europe was more than counterbalanced by the strong wish to return to normality and the former position of individual states: 'Spontanément, le sentiment national prime' (1997, 72). Although important, the European idea was often a secondary goal. It nevertheless spread after World War Two from being a preoccupation purely of intellectuals to wider sections of society.

The logic of internal and external threats applies particularly well to ideas of European integration in the immediate post-war period and the beginnings of the Cold War. The internal threats were similar to those of the 1920s and of World War Two, despite the dramatic change in the German question, but the superpowers' growing influence created major external pressure for economic restructuring, political realignment, and the preservation of European identity. With Marshall aid, the Prague coup and the Berlin blockade, Europe became polarised and the idea of uniting Europe was identified with an American-influenced project conceived in opposition to Soviet expansionism. Though motivated by the same ideal of unity, early steps towards unity represented by the Schumann declaration, the Coal and Steel Community, Euratom and the Treaty of Rome.

were seen as technocratic by the sections of society who had supported European unity during the war and immediately afterwards. Finally, the European debate was tied to the divisive issue of neutralism, which emphasised the polarised nature of European societies, especially that of France, which had a strong communist party and many fellow travellers.

This brief survey of the history of the European idea(s) bears out Duroselle's observation that there are several Europes, constructed in response to a combination of internal and external threats: Europe has never signified the same things to the same groups and has continually been reinvented. The aim therefore of historical-comparative chapters in this thesis is not to place Camus within the context of *the* European idea, as Guérin and Smets have done, but to place his writings within the context of *ideas* on Europe and European (political) unity which were part of the *air du temps* in which Camus moved. The thesis embraces the plurality of the European idea at each stage in its history. In line with the above survey, the analysis will highlight what Europe signifies to Camus in his 1930s journalism for Alger Républicain and Le Soir Républicain, his Resistance writing on Europe in Lettres à un ami allemand, and his post-war Combat editorials and other political writings. It will elucidate the myths of unity Camus employs, the nature of the internal and external threats, contextualising Camus's use of concepts such as federalism, and addressing questions such as his 1930s Mediterraneanism and 1940s espousal of *mondialisme*. Hitherto unpublished and as yet unstudied correspondence will be examined in order to evaluate Camus's involvement in Europeanist organisations.

## Space in literature

This thesis also aims to analyse Camus's fictional, imaginary Europe, which often includes 'real' regions and towns, for example Silesia, Prague and Vienna. Filtered and reconstructed through fictional texts, they become new imaginary spaces, filtered in turn through the imaginary spaces of textual protagonists. These new spaces are, furthermore, organised by the recurring trope of an antagonistic spatial opposition of north versus south.

A theory of space in literature accounting for this construction of imaginary European spaces therefore needs to be developed. A term widely used in many critical discourses from sociology to education and, of course, geography, the term 'space' must be separated at the outset from its physical connotations:

Space is simultaneously objective and subjective, material and metaphorical, a medium and outcome of social life; actively both an immediate milieu and an originating presupposition, empirical and theorisable, instrumental, strategic, essential. (Soja 1996, 45)

Relating Soja's definition to Camus's fictional Europe, space is 'objective' and 'material' in its existence as geographical referents of signifiers of place and name. It is also 'subjective' and 'metaphorical', reconstructed by Camus's texts. It is an 'immediate milieu' (the décor for fictional events) and an 'originating presupposition' (forming the origin of the fictional description). In Camus's fiction it is 'instrumental' to imaginary reconstruction, 'strategic' in the way it is constructed, and part of the 'essence' of his fictional Europe. This distinguishes geographical from imaginary space. Issacharoff makes a further distinction between two spaces in literature: geographic and textual. Textual space is the physical text or book itself; geographic space has nothing to do with 'real' space, but with the way in which literature constructs *imaginary* spaces (1978, 118).

A theory of space in literature will contribute to an understanding of Camus's fictional Europe at three levels. The first is the basic construction of fictional spaces. According to Frank, literature equates with linear narration: its language consists of a succession of temporally linked words (1945, 223). In contrast, the visual arts are necessarily spatial, offering simultaneous juxtaposed depictions. In Flaubert and Joyce, however, Frank discerns a shift away from the temporal towards the spatial:

For the duration of the scene, at least, the time-flow of the narrative is halted: attention is fixed on the interplay of relationships within the limited time-area. These relationships are juxtaposed independently of the progress of the narrative; and the full significance of the scene is given only by the reflexive relations among the units of meaning. (1945, 231)

Foregrounding of space implies elaboration of forms impossible to convey temporally, as Gershman also recognises: 'l'enchaînement linéaire, chronologique, est rompu en faveur d'une juxtaposition spatiale [...] insistant sur la simultanéité visuelle des composants et réléguant le temps à un rôle secondaire' (cited in Issacharoff 1976, 11). These critics, nevertheless, do not take into account how space is perceived by the reader; for them, 'une maison réelle et sa représentation ont tendance à se confondre' (Issacharoff 1978, 118). Wixon, however, takes analysis of space further: 'Critical use of the term *space* means the visualisation and structuring of a formal or concrete universe, as opposed to the more purely descriptive notion of background or setting' (Wixon 1981, intro.). Instead of understanding geographical references as mere backdrop, the extension of or prelude to temporal narration, theories of space in literature read them as the elaboration of *sui generis* realities of new worlds and myths, described by Frank as the creation of a 'timeless world of myth' (1945, 653). In a similar way, Robbe-Grillet wrote of the 'univers de significations' created by words and images (cited in Fortier 1977, 15).

Space in literature ‘n’existe qu’en vertu du langage. [L’espace], évoqué par la seule entremise de mots imprimés, se construit comme objet de la pensée’ (Weisgerber 1978, 10-11). Fortier also recognises this centrality of language: ‘Nous croyons que les traits connotatifs des mots et des images forment, eux aussi, des ensembles servant également à produire un effet esthétique’ (1977, 14-15). This linguistic mediation of spatial constructions is directed to the reader: ‘Le paysage, visuel ou verbal, n’existe en fait que grâce à la participation d’un destinataire. On verra que le récit combine deux espaces imaginaires: celui de l’auteur, celui du lecteur. Chez le lecteur, le résultat est un espace double: celui qui est évoqué par le texte verbal, celui de sa propre imagination, lequel, naturellement, peut être tout à fait distinct de l’espace décrit par l’écrivain’ (Issacharoff 1978, 13).

A further element of analysis is therefore needed in order to account for the linguistic mediation of Camus’s constructions of imaginary European spaces. Most germane is Barthes’s method elaborated in *S/Z* (1994), in which he splits Balzac’s ‘Sarrasine’ into ‘lexia’, extracting references to five codes or categories forming threads of an analysis based on the plurality of potential meanings. Barthes’s semic code will frequently be used in the analysis of Camus’s fiction in order to tease out recurrent semes in his imaginary spaces. Of particular interest will be those semes that connote differently depending on the imaginary space in which they are found. As Benveniste has said, ‘Deux systèmes peuvent avoir un même signe en commun sans qu’il en résulte synonymie ni redondance [...] Il n’y a pas de signe trans-systématique’ (cited in Issacharoff 1978, 119-20).

In addition to the construction of space itself, study of literary space focuses on the rapport between spaces, the decor, the action and the characters of the novel (Weisgerber

1978, 14). The second level of the theory of space in literature employed here, then, is the way space is experienced. The present study examines the way characters in the texts relate to the fictional European spaces in which they are placed. In a similar way to the 'real' world, literary space is a structuring ensemble which organises life: 'Le monde du récit constitue, tout comme celui où nous vivons, un ensemble spatio-temporel où lieux et instants de l'action s'interpénètrent' (Weisgerber 1978, 9). This echoes Matoré's definition of the 'espace vécu', a 'dynamically charged space' (Wixon 1981, 9), which takes into account the fact that 'l'homme vit à l'intérieur de deux espaces: un espace géographique (le lieu d'habitation) et un espace social (celui où l'homme exerce ses activités économiques, techniques, etc.)' (cited in Wixon 1981, 9). Literary space can also incorporate 'des représentations mentales, le milieu psychique – illimité en théorie – des songes, des passions et de la pensée, et d'autre part, des sensations et perceptions occasionnées par un monde physique dont la finitude est d'ordinaire aussi évidente que celle du sujet qui s'y meut' (Weisgerber 1978, 12). Wixon has usefully refined these concepts, proposing a typology of space within the literary text. The present study will use two of these, geophysical and intrapsychic, in order to evaluate the relationship of Camus's characters to their space. The geophysical consists of representations of protagonists' physical worlds, in other words the imaginary construction of fictional European spaces mentioned above. Intrapsychic space refers to characters' emotional and physical reactions to their geophysical space, the effect the latter has on them. Daunais's study of L'Exil et le royaume illustrates this. For her, 'Les "états" d'exil et de royaume peuvent [...] être définis par le rapport qu'entretient le personnage avec l'espace' (1993, 47), in other words intrapsychic response to geophysical space. Concordance of the two occurs when 'le lieu qu'occupe le personnage et celui qu'il veut atteindre ne forment plus qu'un' (1993, 47).

The third level of space in literature relating to Camus's Europe is the expression of spatial oppositions within and between geophysical spaces. The analysis will highlight spatial oppositions such as closed/open, inside/outside, high/low, and especially north/south (Issacharoff 1978, 119). As Lotman has said, 'the concepts "high-low," "right-left," "near-far," [...] prove to be the material for constructing cultural models with completely non-spatial content and come to mean "valuable-not valuable," "good-bad"' (1977, 218). Spatial oppositions connote ethical and moral values, and in the context of the present analysis connote aspects of the imaginary spaces in question. Daunais considers that space in Camus's work incorporates some of these oppositions, to which can be added 'celle de la précision et de l'ambiguïté qui d'ailleurs englobe toutes les autres' (1993, 49). This is not the case in Camus's imaginary Europe, in which the principal opposition is the antagonistic north/south relation, reminiscent of Lotman's conceptualisation of the boundary: 'The boundary divides the entire space of the text into two mutually non-intersecting subspaces. Its basic property is impenetrability. The way in which the boundary divides the text is one of its essential characteristics' (1977, 229-30). This thesis will analyse Camus's fictional separation of northern and southern spaces in Europe and its consequences. Barthes's explanation in *S/Z* of the function of the antithesis in a text develops this concept of boundary, offering a tool of analysis which will be used to elucidate the north/south antagonism in chapters on Camus's fictional Europe. For Barthes, the antithesis constitutes a mode of entry into the symbolic code of the text, the 'lieu propre de la multivalence et de la réversibilité'. A rhetorical figure, it divides and separates opposite figures and fixes their irreductibility, pitting one term against the other in a 'combat de deux plénitudes, mises rituellement face à face comme deux guerriers tout armés' (Barthes 1994, 572).



Barthes breaks the antithesis down into component elements. Firstly there may be an introductory unity: the announcement of the antithesis itself. In *Sarrasine*, this is when the narrator at the ball announces that he is ‘assis dans l’embrasure d’une fenêtre’, between the cold of the garden and the warmth of the salon (Barthes 1994, 596). Secondly, there may be announcements of one of its terms, for example when the narrator describes looking into the garden (1994, 596). There may be, thirdly, a passage from one term to the other (when the narrator says ‘puis, en me retournant de l’autre côté’ (1994, 570)) followed by, fourthly, announcements of the second term of the antithesis. Lastly, there may be a résumé of the antithesis, an example of which is the narrator’s description of his spatial position: ‘Ainsi à ma droite, la sombre et silencieuse image de la mort; à ma gauche, les décentes bacchantales de la vie: ici, la nature froide, morne, en deuil; là, les hommes en joie’ (1994, 571). Passage from one term to the other can be purely rhetorical, embedded in the discourse, or, alternatively, a physical act (on the part of a narrator, protagonist, or object) of crossing the boundary between the two terms, what Barthes terms ‘mitoyenneté’, the median position.<sup>23</sup> The narrator of ‘*Sarrasine*’ thus enters the median position when describing the cold exterior and the warm interior while sat in the windowsill. For Barthes, this position is an addition to the text, ‘un élément de trop’ which dangerously upsets the eternal opposition of the antithesis (1994, 573). When a narrator or protagonist occupies it, the body becomes the place of transgression and the two irreconcilable terms of the antithesis are brought together with disastrous consequences: ‘il est dit que [...] l’Antithèse [...] ne peut se transgresser impunément: le *sens* est une question de vie ou de mort: de la même façon, en copiant la Femme, en prenant sa place par-dessus la barre des sexes, le castrat transgressera la

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<sup>23</sup> In Millar’s English translation of *S/Z* (New York: Hill and Wang 1974, ‘mitoyenneté’ is translated as ‘mediation’ (p.28). In the following chapters, I will retain the original term ‘mitoyenneté’.

morphologie, la grammaire, le discours, et de cette abolition du sens, Sarrasine mourra' (1994, 599). For Barthes, the wages of transgression are death.

This three-level theory of space in literature, its construction, its effects and the antithetical relationship between spaces, must also be applied to drama; Camus's fictional Europe also features in the plays Le Malentendu and L'État de Siège. The concept of space is more evident at first sight in the theatre than in prose since a play is a visual experience: 'the theatrical text is defined and perceived above all in spatial terms' (Elam 1980, 56). From entering the space of the theatre itself, to assimilating and 'reading' the details on stage, to observing the actors' movements during the performance, the experience is spatial. Even if one 'banish[es] from a play various elements, such as movement, gesture, or even dialogue, the element that must remain constant and be retained in any script written for performance, is [...] space' (Issacharoff 1989, 55).

Most analyses, however, focus on the visible spatial relations of the stage itself.<sup>24</sup> All that is available for analysis of Camus's plays is the script, a purely textual evocation of space. Issacharoff's analysis of theatre space begins by dividing it into theatre space, stage space and dramatic space. The latter, dynamic and unpredictable, is the least well-defined, and is the only relevant space for the present analysis since the only source from which it can be studied is the written text. A key point in Issacharoff's analysis is the division of dramatic space into onstage and offstage, essentially a visible/invisible, mimetic/diegetic dichotomy. Mimetic space is shown onstage, and includes decor, props, costumes and the actors themselves. Diegetic space consists of what is described, evoked and referred to in

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<sup>24</sup> Hall has approached theatrical space in terms of proxemic relations (Elam 1980, 62-3), others have analysed kinesic factors of corporeal communication, and Ubersfeld (1977) has elaborated a Peircian semiotics of space, understanding the spatial sign as an iconic representation.

dialogue and is therefore most germane to analysis of Camus's plays (Issacharoff 1989, 57-8). A further point is that diegetic space is mediated only by language, raising the question of reference. Issacharoff describes four kinds of referent: nonvisible (referred to in the dialogue, but invisible, offstage and imaginary), partly visible (synechdochical or metonymic), visible (referred to in the stage directions), and visible *and* mentioned in the dialogue (in this mode, an object in the mimetic space is foregrounded through dialogue) (1989, 59).

Since diegetic space is contingent on explicit reference in theatrical dialogue, it dovetails with the above analysis of space in literature: both are constructed and mediated through language and thus form Frank's 'timeless world[s] of myth'. The performance dimension does not, in the end, affect diegetic space, since what is evoked through dialogue is as invisible to a spectator as it is to the reader of the script. It may be affected by such variables as the actors' tone of voice and the atmosphere created by the *mise en scène*, but not to a significant extent. One more consideration is the question of didascalía (stage directions), which contribute to the understanding of diegetic space by describing the atmosphere in which it may be constructed, and nuance the reading of the dialogue by describing how it is to be delivered (e.g. 'with growing apprehension', 'joyfully' etc.).<sup>25</sup>

In chapters on Camus's fictional Europe, the three elements of literary space outlined here will be applied: description, rapport with characters, and antithetical structures. European spaces evoked will be examined and recurrent semes teased out, with special reference to those semes used in different spaces to different effect. At the same time, the

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<sup>25</sup> For a typology of four sorts of didascalía see Issacharoff 1989, 19-23.

characters' relationships with their space will be discussed using the Barthesian model of the antithesis, and the nature of the north/south antagonism explored.

### A Bakhtinian epistemology

A third aim of this thesis is to examine the inter-relation between the different discourses of Europe in the works analysed. It has already been established that there is more than one Europe in Camus's writings and more than one idea of Europe in the general literature. This grounding observation has led to the elaboration of two different approaches to Camus's *œuvre*. With the historical-comparative method, the tools are ready for an examination of how, in his political writing, Camus negotiated with existing discourses on Europe from a number of sources in order to articulate his own. With the space in literature approach a method is established for apprehending the fictional construction of Europe in the imaginary writings. Positing the existence of contemporaneous and often conflicting ideas of Europe in Camus, and indeed in the literature on the idea of Europe, leads to the observation that Europe can be imagined as a series of multiplicities, of intersecting and sometimes conflicting discourses including varied aspirations towards unity.

Later chapters therefore seek to analyse the intersections and oppositions of Camus's Europes, highlighting the dialogue between them. This will be undertaken using a Bakhtinian epistemology, already implicit in the preceding analysis of the idea of Europe. Bakhtin was concerned with the novel, the epic and poetry, as well as with questions of genre and carnival, and his epistemological grounding has much wider potential applications: 'Dialogism [...] resists being confined to any exclusively "literary" application. Indeed, the fixity of boundaries between "literary" and "extra-literary" discourse is precisely what it questions even in those of [Bakhtin's] works that seem most

conventionally “literary” (Holquist 1990, 107).<sup>26</sup> As previously stated, it is precisely this division between literary and political that this thesis seeks to explore. Two approaches have been adopted because the Europe of the fiction seems, *a priori*, far removed from the political exhortation towards federalism. But an analysis of dialogue between ideas in the *œuvre* as a whole will show how Camus’s ideas overlap.

As Todorov has shown, Bakhtin’s work contains a particular epistemological paradigm, which posits a distinction between natural sciences and human sciences. For Bakhtin, (Western) natural sciences are directed at objects, seeking to describe and understand, positing a clear-cut subject/object hierarchy. By contrast, the human sciences are more complex, since they involve examination by subjects of other subjects, leading to the study of discourses and texts. If natural sciences are monologic, focusing on one object as a given, the human sciences are dialogic, studying subjects mediated by texts (Todorov 1981, 27-48):

Les sciences exactes sont une forme monologique du savoir: l’intellect contemple une *chose* et parle d’elle. Il n’y a ici qu’un seul sujet, le sujet connaissant (contemplant) et parlant (énonçant). Seule une *chose sans voix* se trouve en face de lui. Mais on ne peut percevoir et étudier le sujet en tant que tel comme s’il était une chose, puisqu’il ne peut rester sujet s’il est sans voix; par conséquent, sa connaissance ne peut être que *dialogique*. (Cited in Todorov 1981, 33-4, emphasis in original)

Study of idea(s) of Europe can be conceived of in a similar way : there is no fixed notion of what Europe is or should be, no distinct object, merely a series of textual constructions and overlapping discourses. Analysis of the idea of Europe, then, should be discourse analysis, highlighting dialogic interaction with a multiplicity of other texts. Such a study is obviously beyond the scope of this thesis, but on a smaller scale, Camus’s different discourses of Europe constitute a similar multiplicity, intracting with other texts.

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<sup>26</sup> Lodge makes a similar point: ‘Bakhtin’s thought is so many-sided and fertile that he is inevitably open to

These observations reflect Bakhtinian thought on the nature of words in general. In his 1935 essay, 'Discourse in the novel', Bakhtin develops a poetics of the novel dealing with representations of speech. He takes the specific historical utterance as the locus for his understanding of the life of language in a socio-ideological reading in which the utterance constitutes the point of interaction between the individual and the social, '[a] mediator linking structural models to cultural (historical) environment [...]' (Kristeva 1980, 66). The utterance is always part of a wider linguistic system, which Bakhtin conceives of as a tension between unitary language and heteroglossia: 'Unitary language constitutes the theoretical expression of the historical processes of linguistic unification and centralisation, an expression of the centripetal forces of language' (Bakhtin 1981, 270). The unitary ensures that language is understood universally, but is set against heteroglossia, what Bakhtin terms the centrifugal forces of disunity and decentralisation within language, idioms and dialects working within unitary language but pulling away from it. For Bakhtin, both are essential, and the utterance constitutes the point where centralisation and decentralisation meet: 'And this stratification and heteroglossia, once realised, is not only a static invariant of linguistic life; but also what ensures its dynamics: stratification and heteroglossia widen and deepen as long as language is alive and developing' (Bakhtin 1981, 272). Obviously Bakhtin's concepts describe the complex architecture of language itself; but as a subset of this, it is possible to consider the discourses of Europe as operating within a similar tension between unitary and heteroglossic. The unitary discourse would be the overarching, generally accepted view of Europe; the heteroglossic the strands of thought working within it.

This view of language, and indeed of the idea of Europe, as in constant tension means that each individual utterance is always dialogic, open to both speaker and listener and part of the language of both. When speaking, one unavoidably uses words that have already been used; since these are part of a dynamic interplay of discourses within a language, each individual utterance is shot through with a multitude of meanings and histories: 'The living utterance, having taken meaning and shape at a particular historical moment in a socially specific environment, cannot fail to brush up against thousands of living dialogic threads, woven by socio-ideological consciousness around the given object of an utterance; it cannot fail to be a participant in social dialogue' (Bakhtin 1981, 276). Speaking and writing are dialogic, threading a path through pre-existent discourses and words. Equally, the history of the idea of Europe, and *a fortiori* of Camus's Europe, is made up of a dynamic interplay between different threads which must be teased out. It is this epistemology which will be deployed in the following analysis, which does not attempt to follow Bakhtin's strongly socio-ideological focus – his theory of language is preoccupied with representations of social discourses, what he defines as 'speech genres' which connect the history of society to the history of language (Dentith 1995, 39). His social preoccupation also informs his analysis of the novel. Indeed, his theoretical stance was designed to strike a balance between (Russian) formalism and Marxist ideologism, hence his focus on the utterance, the contact between language and the social and the embodiment of dialogue between actual social beings. The novel thus became for Bakhtin the art form which best exploits the heteroglossic tendencies of language (Dentith 1995, 54), and his analysis thereof celebrates the centrifugal, anti-dogmatic and carnivalesque forces of language over official culture.

The next area of Bakhtinian thought concerning the aims of this thesis is the application of these theories to the novel, which introduces another of Bakhtin's dichotomies: monologic and polyphonic. Elaborated through analyses of Dostoevsky, this distinguishes between a novel in which the narrator or author holds the final word, and one in which individual characters are allowed their own thoughts in the absence of a strong authorial voice. At one level, the distinction echoes Barthes's *lisible/scriptible* opposition, but once again, Bakhtin views the polyphonic as permitting fictional representation of social heteroglossia, allowing social speech to direct the flow of the novel, in which the author renounces the final word. An obvious difficulty with this is the fact that the absence of authority can just as easily be the author's final word – a novel is always a construction. The point nevertheless remains: the notion of polyphony permits the expression of multiple viewpoints relating dialogically. This thesis adopts the epistemology behind these observations, but restricts itself to the expression within Camus's *œuvre* of a heteroglossic vision of Europe. The approach might be termed the 'novelisation' of Camus's discourses of Europe, since novelistic and heteroglossic increasingly become synonymous in Bakhtin's analysis (Dentith 1995, 54). In Kristeva's words, the thesis analyses the 'literary word', or Europe, as 'an intersection of textual surfaces rather than a point (a fixed meaning), as a dialogue among several writings: that of the writer, the addressee (or the character), and the contemporary or earlier cultural context' (Kristeva 1980, 65). Viewing Camus's works as a Bakhtinian 'novel' permits the concept of dialogism to be deployed in two ways:

[C]e dialogue peut s'établir *in absentia*, c'est-à-dire entre le style homogène de l'œuvre et les autres styles dominants de l'époque (c'est une hétérologie extérieure); ou bien *in praesentia*, à l'intérieur de l'œuvre, qui contient donc l'hétérologie en elle même [...]. (Todorov 1981, 119)



The analysis of Camus's different, inter-relating discourses of Europe will therefore oscillate between interior and exterior heteroglossias, or the dialogue of Camus's ideas of Europe with other (contemporaneous) ideas and sources and with each other.

A crucial question for this is genre, understood not as Bakhtinian speech genres but as more conventional genres of writing. Bakhtin's analysis of genre forms part of his conception of monologism and polyphony, and posits in one case the novel as polyphonic in opposition to the monologic epic. The preceding discussion of the theoretical approach of this thesis posits two genres in which ideas of Europe are constructed: the journalistic writings are considered 'political' and the imaginary writings 'fictional'. This observation proceeds from the forms of language used: the 'political' writings are factual; intended to argue a case, they either report on events or offer an opinion designed, through linguistic techniques, to persuade the reader that the cause espoused is legitimate and desirable. A more appropriate generic term for this type of writing would therefore be 'persuasive writing'. The imaginary writings, however, are not factual, even if biographical details can be observed: '[...] literature, even when it purports to be realistic *mimesis*, in "copying nature" or "representing reality", is actually "making" what I have called "*poetic realities*"' (Widdowson 1999, 100). The works examined construct *sui generis* realities in a process of aesthetic fashioning of imaginary spaces (1999, 102). They are thus 'literary' texts, conforming to accepted definitions thereof. The idea of 'literariness' is, however, contentious and fraught with difficulty, raising as it does the problematic definition of 'literature'.<sup>27</sup> Widdowson's useful definition incorporates two strands of thought. First is the Russian Formalist tenet that a text is literary because of certain constructed features of

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<sup>27</sup> For an historical and critical overview of the terms 'literature' and 'literariness', see Eagleton 1983, 1-53; Widdowson 1999.

its language that depart from ‘normal’ use. The special property of the ‘literary’ is, then, its foregrounding of rhetorical devices which ‘defamiliarise’ the reader. Second is a historico-ideological definition, holding that a text becomes literary through convention, aesthetic appreciation and those who declare it to be ‘literature’. This is an extrinsic definition relating to the largely discredited idea of the canon, and it recognises that a text can *become* literary over time. Widdowson’s definition thus treads between these two views:

[...] the crucial point is that the “special” *function* of “the literary” – that which distinguishes it from other kinds of cultural production – does indeed seem to lie in its *formal* “making” of newly perceptible “*poietic* realities”, in its textualised defamiliarising “moments of vision”, and in the “patterns” or “sense of subject” “knowably” inscribed in its linguistic texture. (1999, 119)

While accepting the intrinsic features of the literary text, Widdowson states that the criteria are not absolute, and may evolve. Bakhtin’s thought also adopts a similar middle ground between formalism and ideologism, but aims to shift the study of genre towards a social analysis. Bakhtin/Medvedev writes, for example: ‘La véritable poétique du genre ne peut être qu’une sociologie du genre’ (cited in Todorov 1981, 124).

A further consideration in the ‘literariness’ of a text is its belonging to recognised literary genres. In Fowler’s Saussurian definition of genre, the latter constitutes the ‘langue’ and the individual work the ‘parole’ (1982, 20), postulating the necessity for the definition of the literary to encompass the sender and receiver of the literary ‘message’. The sender is the writer, who chooses to write within accepted norms of poetry, drama or prose, the receiver the reader, conscious that what they are reading is ‘literary’ (Widdowson 1999, 96). Thus, La Mort heureuse is literary because it describes itself as a ‘roman’ (MH, 12) and Le Malentendu is a ‘pièce en trois actes’. In Genette’s term, therefore, these works are *constitutively* literary, that is, consciously declared literary through belonging to established

genres. A text is *conditionally* literary when, retrospectively, formal traits are found in it. It thus *becomes* literary, as has happened to certain works of history in recent years, such as The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (Guillén 1994, 17-18).

The question of the genre of the texts to be studied in following chapters is thus crucial in evaluating the intercrossings of their conceptions of Europe. The notion of generic indeterminacy in such texts as Lettres à un ami allemand and L'Homme révolté will permit the breaking down of some of the seemingly watertight distinctions between the political idea of European unity and the fictional construction of imaginary European spaces, allowing dialogue between different 'voices' of Europe.

The chapters proceed as follows. The first three foreground Camus's political voices of Europe, using the historical-comparative analysis. Chapter One examines his late 1930s journalism for Alger Républicain and Le Soir Républicain, showing the development of his political Europeanism, a political construction of Europe largely based on certain key sources. Chapter Two charts Camus's full adoption of Europeanism in his Resistance writing, especially Lettres à un ami allemand (1943-4). It reads his construction of a historical idea of Europe as a re-appropriation of discourse, in tandem with many other Resistance writers, and highlights his involvement in a Resistance Europeanist committee. Chapter Three shows how this wholehearted adoption of Europeanism falls away with the beginning of the Cold War, and Camus's growing ambivalence in his Combat editorials and other political texts. This chapter also examines Camus's Europeanism through hitherto unpublished correspondence. Chapter Four shows one of the aspects of his ambivalence: an opposing fictional voice of Europe in La Mort heureuse (1936-8), 'La Mort dans l'âme' (1938) and Le Malentendu (1944), divided along a north/south fault line. Chapter Five

reads Lettres à un ami allemand, La Peste (1947) and L'État de siège (1948) as sites of resolution of the two distinct voices of Europe of the fictional and the political, a generic indeterminacy allowing dialogue between voices. Chapter Six, however, demonstrates the development of a further voice of Europe in L'Été (1950) and L'Homme révolté (1951), a history/nature antithesis incorporating many elements of the other voices and prolonging the ambivalence. La Chute (1957) is analysed in Chapter Seven as the definitive expression of these Camusian voices of Europe.

# I. Emerging Europeanism

## Alger Républicain and Le Soir Républicain, 1939-40

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In November 1939, only three months after World War Two had begun, and with the full horrors of 1940-45 still unimagined, Camus sketched out some proposals to deal with the eventual end of hostilities in Europe:

Droit des peuples de disposer d'eux-mêmes; internationalisation économique, fédéralisme, désarmement, assistance mutuelle, modes de solution pacifique de différends internationaux, et quelques autres généreux principes sont envisagés et énoncés comme devant être les bases de cet *ordre nouveau*. (CAC3, 646, emphasis in original)

Lévi-Valensi and Abbou describe these proposals, resolutely Europeanist in tone, as 'les lignes essentielles d'un programme à la fois large et précis; sous la diversité des sujets abordés, derrière la multiplicité des signatures, la cohérence et l'unité de la pensée sont indéniables' (CAC3, 621). The aim of this chapter is to chart the development of this Europeanist discourse in Camus's journalism for Alger Républicain and Le Soir Républicain. Joining the 1930s resurgence of Europeanism, Camus relates dialogically with a series of different sources, adopting various elements and building his own vision of Europe in what Todorov describes as dialogue *in absentia*, i.e. between the style of one work and that of other, exterior sources (1981, 119). His discourse is more problematic than Lévi-Valensi and Abbou suggest: his voice is mixed with those of the sources he quotes and refers to in extremely multi-voiced articles. It does become clear, however, that from initial enthusiastic reporting, a Camusian political Europe emerges in a way suggestive of Bakhtin's concept of the internally persuasive word: 'When someone else's ideological discourse is internally persuasive for us and acknowledged by us, entirely different possibilities open up. Such discourse is of decisive significance in the evolution of individual consciousness: consciousness awakens to independent ideological life precisely in a world of alien discourses surrounding it, and from which it

cannot initially separate itself [...]’ (Bakhtin 1981, 345). After a brief introduction to Camus’s activities in Algiers in the 1930s, this chapter outlines those articles containing nascent Europeanist ideas, enumerates several points of dialogue, then examines each of Camus’s proposals in turn, showing his growth to a Europeanist consciousness through adoption of exterior discourses from a number of sources.

When Camus was recruited by Pascal Pia to write for Alger Républicain, he had just left the Parti Communiste Algérien (PCA), and for some three years had taken an active role in left-wing political and cultural activities in an increasingly right-wing Algiers municipality.<sup>1</sup> With the PCA, he had founded the *Théâtre du travail*, which became the *Théâtre de l’équipe* after he left the Party, and the *Maison de la Culture*, of which he was secretary-general. He had written L’Envers et l’Endroit (1937), material for Noces (1939), a first version of Caligula, and La Mort heureuse (1936-38). The theme of L’Etranger (1942) had emerged in his Carnets (CAC3, 26).

Since the demise of the Front Populaire in April 1938, the Left had been in decline. The only Algerian newspaper to defend *frontiste* ideas was Oran Républicain, which inspired Jean-Pierre Faure and Paul Schmitt to launch a similar venture in Algiers: Alger Républicain was launched on 6 October 1938, six days after the signing of the Munich agreements. Faure recruited Pia as editor from the Communist Ce Soir in Paris, and Pia brought in Camus in September 1938 just before the actual launch. Describing itself as a ‘quotidien d’information honnête et non équivoque’ (CAC3, 33), and a ‘journal des travailleurs’ (CAC3, 34) with no links to government, administration or elected politicians, the paper’s statutes forbade the simultaneous exercise of political

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<sup>1</sup> See CAC3, 19-25. For Camus’s ‘entrée en politique’ see Lévi-Valensi (1986); Todd 1996, 80-109, 120-170; Lottman 1981, 77-105, 120-136, 147-176; Planche 1999, 27-34; Gallisot 1984.

functions and journalistic input; the list of shareholders was published to prove its independence. It defended *frontiste* ideas, opposed fascism, anti-Semitism, Franco and the excessive powers of industry, finance and agriculture. Supportive of the 1938 Blum-Violette proposal, it argued for equality for all Frenchmen and political equality for the Algerian Muslim population (CAC 3, 31-94; Lottman 1981, 189-217; Parker 1966, 3-54; Pia 1990; Todd 1996, 171-220).

Despite its noble proclamations, however, Alger Républicain 'prêchait déjà un peu dans le désert' (CAC3, 35): potential Muslim readers were attracted to Jacques Doriot's Parti Populaire Français (PPF), and Europeans, increasingly aware of the limited political options in 1939, considered Alger Républicains's stance as an impasse – the causes it stood for had either been voted out or abandoned (McCarthy 1982, 107). When war broke out, Pia, faced with considerable problems, relaunched Alger Républicain as Le Soir Républicain, a cut down version on two pages rather than eight. Camus (now editor in chief) and Pia henceforth had editorial control and were practically the sole contributors, though Camus used a variety of pseudonyms (Jean Mersault, Zaks, Irénée, Liber, Néron and Marco) to suggest the contrary (CAC3, 615-18). Opposed to official 'bourrage de crâne', Le Soir Républicain printed information from, among other sources, the BBC, and devoted a page to assessment of news from diverse sources under the headline 'Sous les éclairages de guerre' (CAC3, 59). In this series, Camus did not adopt a strict line of argument, but rather analysed what was being said in different quarters, a position unique in its reserve in a climate of propaganda and misinformation (Todd 1996, 218). Le Soir Républicain ceased publication on 10 January 1940 with a dwindling paper stock and a government publication ban. Unable to find work and pursued by unpaid newspaper workers, Camus left for Oran, and then Paris, where Pia found him a post at Paris-Soir (Grenier 1987, 362; Planche 1999, 37-8).

Camus had made his reporting début at Alger Républicain with the series ‘Misère de la Kabylie’ (CAC3, 227-336; also II, 905-40), and much of his work consisted of reports on court cases which also discussed the general political atmosphere in Algiers. Many of his articles attacked Auguste Rozis, the right-wing mayor of Algiers who had banned his play Révolte dans les Asturies. It was mainly in 1939-40, during the final months of publication of Alger Républicain and the short life of Le Soir Républicain, that Camus focused on the turbulent politics of Europe, gradually adopting Europeanist ideas: a total of nine articles, mostly in the ‘Sous les éclairages de guerre’ series, mention or develop themes relating to Europe.

The first two, signed Albert Camus, appeared in Alger Républicain in the 25 April and the 24 May 1939 issues (CAC3, 625-8, 628-30). The first was an enthusiastic review of M. R.-E. Charlier’s lecture ‘Contre l’impérialisme’, given under the auspices of the Union fédérale des étudiants.<sup>2</sup> The second reviewed another Charlier lecture, ‘Pas de guerre’, this time under the auspices of the Ligue des mères et des éducatrices pour la paix. Two 6 November 1939 articles also raised Europeanist issues: ‘Considérations inactuelles’ (CAC3, 637, signed Néron) discussed the idea of ‘indépendance’, and the editorial ‘Notre Position’ (CAC3, 720-3 (also II, 1378-80), signed Le Soir Républicain) summarised the paper’s stance on the European situation. On 11 November 1939 ‘Les Conditions d’une collaboration’ (CAC3, 638-41, signed Irénée) reviewed British pacifist views, as did ‘Comment aller vers un ordre nouveau’ (CAC3, 642-8, signed Irénée). ‘Recherche du possible’ on 30 December 1939 (CAC3, 650-2, signed Marco) examined Germany’s future and the wishes of European peoples. The New Year’s Day

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<sup>2</sup> ‘Par l’abondance et la précision des vues apportées, par l’importance et le caractère immédiat des problèmes que l’orateur ne craignit pas d’engager, cet exposé aurait mérité d’être entendu par tous ceux que la situation actuelle empêche de choisir entre un fatalisme sans réactions et un chavinsisme de mauvais aloi’ (CAC3, 625).



1940 editorial ('1940', CAC3, 735-6 (also II, 1383-4), signed *Le Soir Républicain*) looked at some underlying problems in Europe. Finally, the unpublished 'Profession de foi' (CAC3, 726-9 (also II, 1384-7), signed Albert Camus and Pascal Pia) restated many ideas from previous articles. Found after *Le Soir Républicain*'s demise, this article was intended as a riposte to attacks from the Doriotist *L'Émancipation Nationale*; the crux of the argument is the question of Europe as described in 'Notre position', which *L'Émancipation Nationale* had criticised as utopian.

## Influences and sources

The subject matter of these and similar articles points to the sources of Camus's Europeanist ideas at this stage. This chapter will demonstrate dialogue with and incorporation of a series of sources, which it is necessary to briefly outline. The SFIO leader and former Front Populaire Prime Minister, Léon Blum, was an important influence. Some of Camus's pronouncements on political tension in Europe can be traced to Blum's articles in *Le Populaire*. *Alger Républicain* was of course a *frontiste* paper, and Charlier's proposal in his lectures of semi-autonomy for colonial peoples echoed the Blum-Violette proposals. An important source is the Charlier lectures, themselves *frontiste*, whose ideas filter into later articles, illustrating how Camus incorporated them into his own views. Charlier was a law professor at the University of Algiers in 1939, before working in Paris, and Camus remained in contact with him for some time afterwards.<sup>3</sup> Another possible source was the Bulletin of the Ligue internationale des mères et des éducatrices pour la paix, the organisers of the second Charlier lecture. The eighth (November 1939) issue of the Bulletin explores possibilities

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<sup>3</sup> Interview with Jeanyves Guérin, Université de Marne-La-Vallée, 20 January 1999. The IMEC holds personal correspondence between Camus and Charlier, who generally wrote to thank Camus for sending him signed copies of his books.

for European peace and unity, one contributor opening with the declaration ‘Cette paix ne sera assurée que si l’Europe se construit sur le plan politique, sur le plan économique, sur le plan intellectuel et moral’ (Eidenschenk-Patin 1939, 1).

Camus was also influenced by the resurgence in the late 1930s of the Europeanist debate, which, as shown in the introduction, had been dormant since 1933. It is possible, although unprovable, that Camus had read Streit’s Union Now in translation,<sup>4</sup> but the Bulletin of the Ligue internationale des mères et des éducatrices pour la paix quoted from a series of articles in The Times on British war aims in September and November 1939, including speeches by Attlee and Halifax on a future European federal order. These reflected the ideas of Federal Union in London, and Camus refers directly to the Times articles in ‘Recherche du possible’ (CAC3, 651), ‘Profession de foi’ (CAC3, 727), ‘Mise au point’ (CAC3, 723-5) and indirectly in ‘Les Conditions d’une collaboration’ (CAC3, 638). Their influence on Camus can be traced to the Nouveaux Cahiers, which quoted extensively from The Times. On 28 November 1938, he reported the launch of Reflets, ‘[qui] semble s’attacher à une formule (lancée déjà par les Nouveaux Cahiers), d’examen objectif des réalités de l’heure par la confrontation impartiale des opinions et des faits. Rien ne saurait être plus utile dans ces années de démenace’ (CAC3, 716). In two articles in the 7 November 1939 issue of Le Soir Républicain, Camus welcomed the November issue of the Nouveaux Cahiers, which had been forced to cease publication in September: ‘Et le numéro 51 des Nouveaux Cahiers nous apporte tout ce qu’il était possible de désirer. Des collaborateurs très différents [...], des catholiques, des techniciens, des juristes, y traitent de l’Europe de

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<sup>4</sup> French edition Union ou Chaos, Paris: Médicis 1939, preface by Firmin Droz (Chabot 1978, 327).

demain. Et il est consolant de voir la concordance de vues où se retrouvent les esprits libres de ce pays' (CAC3, 751).<sup>5</sup>

The Nouveaux Cahiers sprang from a discussion group established in 1936 by the industrialists Auguste Detoef, Guillaume de Tarde and Jacques Barnaud to discuss social reform in the light of the 6 February 1934 riots (Pétrément 1973, 169-80; Julliard and Winock 1996, 1078). Before the 1936 elections, they contacted people of diverse professional, political and social backgrounds, meeting at the Café de Flore in Paris. According to Pétrément, 'Tout ce qu'on demandait aux participants était d'aborder les problèmes sans esprit de parti ni de classe, sans prévention ni défiance à priori' (1973, 170). Simone Weil was a regular participant after October 1937; Detoef, administrator of the Alsthom group of electrical constructors, had found her the job she chronicled in La Condition Ouvrière.<sup>6</sup> According to Louis Armand, Detoef, the leading light of the group, 'prônait des synthèses; celle de la science et de la technique, celle du travail intellectuel et du travail manuel, de l'industrie et de la culture classique' (Pétrément 1973, 18). The first issue of the fortnightly journal Nouveaux Cahiers was published on 15 March 1937. Its mission statement read thus:

Défendre et développer la liberté de pensée; – réunir et confronter des hommes d'action et des hommes de pensée; – offrir une tribune à des opinions libres et professionnellement autorisées, – telle est en résumé la raison d'être des NOUVEAUX CAHIERS. On comprend toute la portée d'une telle entreprise dans les circonstances sociales et politiques où nous sommes.

Its many well-known contributors included Jacques Maritain, Denis de Rougemont, Weil, and Boris Souvarine, founder of the respected journal La Critique Sociale.<sup>7</sup> Its

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. No. 51, 1<sup>er</sup> novembre 1939, p. 3: 'Les Nouveaux Cahiers ne sont pas parus en septembre. Leurs rédacteurs étaient dispersés, leur imprimerie fermée, les correspondants désorganisés.'

<sup>6</sup> Camus of course edited most of Weil's work for Gallimard after the Liberation. See 'Simone Weil et Camus' (II, 1699), and Chapter Six, pp. 246-7.

<sup>7</sup> For more on this, see Achour *et al* 1985 and Roche, Anne (ed.) 1990: Boris Souvarine et 'La Critique Sociale' Paris: La Découverte.

largely right-wing, although unconventional and technocratic, focus is not unlike aspects of Vichy corporatism, as is the Nouveaux Cahiers desire to rise above conventional political division in France's best interests. It regularly dealt with European foreign policy and the onset of war in articles examining reforms of the League of Nations and other necessary measures to ensure peace. Issue 51, a good example of the late 1930s Europeanist resurgence, was devoted to 'L'Europe de demain', containing studies by A.-P. Valentin on the conditions for peace, Georges Scelle on 'Le problème d'une paix permanente', Lucien Laurat on winning the peace after war and Jacques Maritain on moral renewal. This issue also highlighted the British war aims debate.

In Camus's articles, there is an increasing sense of acceptance of Europeanist federalist opinion. He describes in 'Les conditions d'une collaboration' British ideas as 'un ensemble de propositions que, pour ma part, je crois utiles et justes' (CAC3, 638). In 'Comment aller vers un ordre nouveau' he writes: 'Pour ma part, j'accueille avec joie cette annonce d'un *ordre* réellement *nouveau* et réellement basé sur la *coopération* et l'*indépendance des peuples*' (CAC3, 646, emphasis in original). The way Camus adopts elements of the Charlier lectures, repeating them in later articles, also demonstrates his developing Europeanism.

The following analysis charts the progress of these ideas through the nine Alger Républicain and Le Soir Républicain articles mentioned above, using the historical-comparative approach outlined in the introduction. Breaking them down into themes, the analysis begins with a section on Camus's perception of the problems facing Europe. It then examines, firstly, short-term proposals Camus developed as potential responses to these problems. Secondly, longer-term solutions, based around a new League of Nations, will be examined. The discussion aims to show how each of

Camus's ideas develop, comparing them to pronouncements in the series of influences enumerated above, in order to situate them in the immediate context of the European idea in the late 1930s.

## Europe's problems

Although Camus's ideas on European unity sprang from interaction with a number of different discourses, they also arose from his own observations of Europe's problems in 1939-40. In his Carnets in September 1939, he wrote:

Cette haine et cette violence qu'on sent déjà monter chez les êtres. Plus rien de pur en eux. Plus rien d'inappréciable. Ils pensent ensemble. On ne rencontre que des bêtes, des faces bestiales d'Européens. Ce monde est écœurant et cette montée universelle de lâcheté, cette dérision du courage, cette contrefaçon de la grandeur, ce déperissement de l'honneur. (C1, 170)

Doubtless a response to the onset of war itself, to war propaganda or to the degradation of the press, this is a damning condemnation of Europe, which betrays despair and exasperation. Moreover, Camus further lost confidence in politicians after the collapse of the Front Populaire, and under Daladier's government by decree.<sup>8</sup> In the first Charlier article in April 1939, Camus had supported Charlier's view that the international tension should not be left in the hands of 'les politiciens qui nous gouvernent' (CAC3, 627), with all the negative connotations of 'politicien'. As will be seen shortly, he was sceptical about the idea of politicians representing peoples, and wanted to see a reconstructed League of Nations composed of peoples rather than their leaders, a 'société des peuples'.

Perhaps inevitably, the League of Nations came in for Camus's criticism for not preventing the build up to another war – it was a commonplace at this time to criticise the Geneva institution, which effectively lost its bearings in 1933 when Hitler came to

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<sup>8</sup> For a detailed analysis of Camus's attitude towards French politicians, see Guérin 1986b.

power. In the May 1939 report on Charlier's second lecture, Camus had written that the League failed not because of 'la fragilité de ses principes, mais par la lâcheté des hommes et des puissances qui la trahirent' (CAC3, 629). This echoes Blum's comments in his speech in the Chambre des Députés in October 1938, reproduced in Le Populaire of 5 October: 'si la crise dont nous sortons à peine prouve quelque chose, c'est la nécessité d'une communauté internationale, c'est l'effrayante erreur des hommes qui ont trahi et réduit à l'impuissance la Société des Nations' (Blum 1965, 225).

In Camus's analysis, a raft of difficulties across Europe in addition to politicians' perceived failures prevented the exercise of the virtue of independence, which signifies free thought stripped of prejudice. In 'Considérations inactuelles' (6-11-39),<sup>9</sup> he attacked the links between political ambition and high finance: 'L'indépendance est [...] une vertu difficile à maintenir. Il y a contre elle, l'intérêt, l'ambition, le mensonge et la paresse. Cette coalition est redoutable. On peut la voir à l'œuvre aujourd'hui sur l'Europe entière' (CAC3, 637). Determined to avoid hasty conclusions, he was concerned that such thinking was starting to dominate in Europe.

Camus further described this 'Europe déchirée et sanglante' (CAC3, 735) on 19 December 1939 in an article on the Russian offensive in Finland: 'Mais nous pensons que pour punir un impérialisme, il les faudrait punir tous, ce qui n'est guère facile dans une Europe où ce péché est le fait de toutes les nations' (CAC3, 650). As in the first Charlier article, which condemned imperialism as a conquering, cavalier attitude to other countries, he expresses consternation at a state of mind prevalent across Europe which, to him, was making peace more remote.

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<sup>9</sup> The title of the French translation of Nietzsche's Thoughts out of Season (from the German Unzeitgemasse Betrachtungen).

Yet despite these observations, Camus wrote in 'Profession de foi' (c.1940): 'Nous nous refusons à suivre les entraînements de la haine ou à aider, par notre silence, à pousser l'Europe et ses nations dans l'abîme' (CAC3, 728). He had elaborated by this time a series of ideas aiming to tackle these problems; of the new Europe they would represent, Camus wrote: '[...] nous pensons que cette Europe peut être acquise à moins de frais qu'elle ne l'est en ce moment' (CAC3, 728).

## First principles

In Camus's tableau of the disastrous European political situation, he argued for maintaining certain basic attitudes, which essentially underpin and constitute the first principles of his proposals for a new League of Nations.

The first was the need to defend democracy and liberty even in war, an idea developed in the two Charlier articles.<sup>10</sup> Charlier, and Camus with him, argued that 'la démocratie, il faut la réaliser d'abord à l'intérieur de nous-mêmes et de nos partis. Elle s'imposera ensuite à ceux qui aujourd'hui l'étranglent pour la mieux défendre' (CAC3, 630). Camus believed that the wrong way to fight fascism was to temporarily suspend democracy in one's own country; he displays a strong faith in the power of democracy and free speech behind which it is easy to see a critique of the Daladier government.

In 'Notre Position' (6-11-39), Camus continues Charlier's critique of the abandonment of liberties, referring to the legality of conscientious objection in Britain: 'Nous tirons de ce fait la justification de notre premier principe: l'opinion et l'expression libres, toutes les expressions libres (la censure sur les renseignements militaires étant admise)' (CAC3, 720). In 'Les conditions d'une collaboration' (11-11-

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<sup>10</sup> In the first Charlier article, Camus writes: 'C'est une politique [...] qui ne peut s'accomplir à coup de décrets-lois, mais suivant le libre consentement d'une nation rendue à ses libertés' (CAC3, 627).

39), a report on a series of ideas he has found in a number of different British and French sources, he continues: ‘Le respect de la démocratie, de la liberté des individus, de leur dignité et de leur bien-être, au sein de la nation armée, de l’appareil militaire et des hostilités’ (CAC3, 638). Democracy and liberty constitute the necessary basis of Camus’s ideas for a new League of Nations. He writes of ‘[l]e souci de défendre, là où elles font défaut, la démocratie, les libertés des individus et des institutions civiles, économiques et sociales qui fassent régner les avantages de la liberté dans tous les domaines de l’existence collective et notamment dans les domaines des rapports de travail et de la répartition des richesses’ (CAC3, 638). While admirable principles for a future international order, in wartime they are more problematic, perhaps too motivated by Camus’s own opinion of the French government than by clear thinking on their consequences.<sup>11</sup>

Another first principle informing Camus’s views on the future of Europe is the virtue, mentioned above, of independence extolled in ‘Considérations inactuelles’ (6-11-39). Linked with his defence of democracy and liberty, it is an individual virtue offering liberation from prejudice. Camus states that an independent person will fight to maintain this virtue against oppression. He clearly has as much faith in independence as democracy, also writing that it must not be sacrificed in war: ‘Les forces d’asservissement ont tellement conscience du pouvoir infini de l’indépendance que l’affirmation raisonnée de celle-ci agit sur elles comme un chiffon rouge déployé devant un taureau [...] l’esprit d’indépendance ne peut être touché, ni par la prison, ni par les sanctions honteuses’ (CAC3, 637).

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<sup>11</sup> His comparison of press freedoms in France and Britain, for example, ignored the fact that the latter operated a system of pre-censorship, thus avoiding direct censorship of opinion such that Le Soir Républicain experienced: ‘This system operated so effectively on a day-to-day basis that many observers were unaware that a compulsory pre-censorship was in fact operating and it helps to explain why



Despite the threats posed towards such values in the ‘Europe déchirée’ mentioned earlier, Camus maintained a strong sense of the power of persuasion; with the right arguments, one could always persuade, or simply communicate with, other people: ‘On revalorise [...] l’humanité d’un peuple en lui tenant un langage humain’ (CAC3, 629). Past errors, by which he implicitly means inter-war diplomacy and the treatment of Germany in the Versailles treaty, could be overcome through reasoned dialogue, an opinion which would inform much of his later political activity. In the second Charlier article, Camus reports: ‘Chez les êtres les plus farouches il y a encore quelque chose qu’on peut fléchir par le raisonnement et la loyauté’ (CAC3, 629). In maintaining that nothing is too late, even in late 1939, however, he betrays an almost desperate refusal to believe that war is inevitable, or that it cannot be halted by sufficiently reasonable peace negotiations. He declares in some articles that he is not a fatalist; in defending independence he attempts to show that war is not inevitable, a position probably inspired by Charlier, who in his first lecture stated: ‘notre sort est entre nos mains’ (CAC3, 626). This reflects the SFIO position at this time. The 27 December 1938 edition of Le Populaire published Blum’s motion for the party’s December 1938 Montrouge Congress on foreign affairs, in which he wrote: ‘Pas plus qu’il [le socialisme français] n’admet la fatalité de la guerre, il n’admettra la fatalité de situations internationales qui peuvent engendrer la guerre’ (Blum 1965, 258; Colton 1967, 331-2). In ‘Notre position’ (6-11-39), two months after the French and British declaration of war, Camus maintained his critique of fatalism: ‘Nous ne croyons en effet qu’à une fatalité dans l’histoire, celle que nous y mettons’ (CAC3, 723).

Another first principle enunciated in Camus’s articles is that of the common interests shared by European countries. Although difficult to see how they could be observed in

mid to late 1939, the idea shares with Camus's condemnation of fatalism its nature as a last attempt to undermine the notion that war was inevitable. As with other ideas, the notion of common interests stems from the first Charlier lecture on the close links between countries' interests whether they act aggressively or peacefully: '[L]es destins des peuples sont inséparables et on peut tenir pour certain que l'appétit de pouvoir entraîne l'appétit de pouvoir, que la haine suscite la haine [...]'(CAC3, 625-6). Common interests between states should, Camus suggests, lead to greater cooperation, and, quoting from various sources in 'Les Conditions d'une collaboration' (11-11-39), he proposes that, after the war, countries

[...] devront de toute façon, et quelles que soient leurs compositions et leurs institutions, collaborer pleinement sur le plan économique et administratif (par exemple de la santé et de l'assistance publiques etc.). Pour cela: une coopération de leurs services publiques, la mise en commun de leurs richesses, des matières premières et vivres, des moyens de communication, des débouchés, des méthodes et efforts pour la production et l'échange, l'accomplissement en commun des grandes tâches [...]. (CAC3, 639)

A monumental list of potential areas of cooperation, it illustrates well the idea of peoples' inseparable destinies, and shows in what ways Camus considered how common interests could work to engender unity and avoid future aggression between states. It echoes Blum's ideals in a Le Populaire article of 29 July 1939, which also provides a source for further Camusian Europeanism in other articles:

À quoi tend notre action d'aujourd'hui ? À barrer la route à la guerre qui menace l'Europe et le monde. À créer les conditions d'une paix stable, c'est-à-dire d'une paix fondée sur la liberté et l'égalité des peuples, sur leur sécurité collective, sur le règlement juridique des conflits qui pourraient surgir entre les États, sur le désarmement hors duquel aucun système d'arbitrage et de sanctions n'est efficace, sur une coopération économique qui permette entre les nations des échanges loyaux, une distribution raisonnable des matières premières, une judicieuse division du travail orienté vers le progrès et le bien-être commun. (Blum 1965, 342)

Camus's article also reflects the ideas of a November 1939 The Times article, 'The Foundations of Federalism': 'We have been slow to grasp that in the congested highly

organised modern European community it is no longer realistic to think in terms of a sharp division between domestic and foreign affairs, or between politics and economics.’ Camus’s idea of common interests, both in terms of war and peace, seem to evoke the thinking in the same article, which recognised that ‘the war, which even the belligerents recognise as in some sense a European civil war, has brought to a head the question of giving effective political and economic expression to the unity of the European community of nations, already clearly expressed in their civilisation’ (3-11-39, 9). There is a clear continuity also with the 1920s Europeanist debate. Camus is two levels removed from the ideas he expresses, since they come from other sources, but they are nevertheless extraordinarily prescient in view of post World War Two European integration.

A further aspect of the common interests argument is an idea of collective responsibility in ‘Comment aller vers un ordre nouveau’ (16-11-39): ‘[D]es voix autorisées ont reconnu que la situation [...] qui a conduit à la guerre actuelle, est née des fautes commises *de part et d’autre* par tous les États, si bien que les responsabilités sont partagées’ (CAC3, 643-4, emphasis in original). This forcefully reinstates the point raised above on unity being evident in war. The ‘voix autorisées’ perhaps include that of the Archbishop of York, who declared in October 1939 that ‘Notre première démarche dans le sens d’un juste règlement doit donc être la reconnaissance loyale de nos torts et de nos échecs passés’ Camus had read this in the Nouveaux Cahiers (No. 51, 20), and cited it again in the article ‘Mise au point’ (7-11-39).

The principal motivation behind much of the 1920s Europeanist debate, Franco-German reconciliation notwithstanding, was economic disorder and tariff competition, also an important, although not preponderant, aspect of Camus’s observations on the European situation. In this, Camus is representative of the 1930s European debate,

which shifted focus towards peace over economics. The economic argument is very simple, stating that either the European economies were so tightly bound that union was the only sensible option, or that unity would prevent war.

The first type of argument is present in the first Charlier lecture, where Charlier made a call to ‘adapter notre monde aux exigences d’une économie devenue seule internationale parmi les nations de plus en plus fermées sur elles-mêmes’ (CAC3, 627). A similar formulation appears in ‘Notre position’ (6-11-39), which proposed to ‘rajuster la politique des nations à une économie devenue internationale’ (CAC3, 722-3). In ‘Comment aller vers un ordre nouveau’ (16-11-39), however, the argument shifts: Camus proposes ‘internationalisation économique’ (CAC3, 646), which perhaps reflects the problem of the inter-war years, in that although countries’ economies were interlinked, their governments often refused to acknowledge it, leading to tariff competition and eventually the 1930s depression. Economic nationalism was one of the principal targets of the 1920s debate. Similar propositions to Camus’s can be found in a Valentin article on peace in Europe in the Nouveaux Cahiers in 1938. After examining aspects of potential French foreign policy in the post-Munich climate, the article explores the idea of economic collaboration as a means of overcoming conflicts between European nations and the system of alliances. Economic cooperation, argued Valentin, would be the root of understanding between peoples, and peace would come through two conditions: ‘[L]e règlement général de la paix comporterait deux parties: 1) Liquidation de questions encore litigieuses: 2) Entente sur un programme économique commun lié à un arrêt des armements’ (Valentin 1938, 20).

Camus, however, ignores an aspect of future economic organisation which the Nouveaux Cahiers had raised in issues 40 and 48 (1-5-39, 3; 1-7-39, 1-2). This was the fact that ‘par une incroyable faiblesse d’esprit’, the French feared the end of the war.

and the possibility of economic collapse, more than the war itself. The Nouveaux Cahiers tried to formulate economic proposals that would counter this risk. They are much more detailed than Camus's, and include economic measures to pre-empt massive unemployment through the reduction in arms production, involving opening borders to increased intra-European trade. The Le Soir Républicain articles, while recognising the principle of economic cooperation, did not go beyond it to elaborate precise terms and forms of cooperation.

## Short-term solutions

Observations on European problems, added to principles of democracy, liberty, independence, persuasion, fatalism, and common (economic) interests, form the platform for Camus's proposals on reorganising Europe to prevent future war. These proposals fall into two categories: short-term ideas on how to stop the war; and longer-term plans for establishing a new European post-war order, largely through a new League of Nations-inspired structure.

The first short-term proposal Camus advocates is what he terms 'la paix dans la guerre'. Based on a point made in the first Charlier lecture, the idea offers a way of standing up to an aggressor while maintaining at least a moderate pacifist stance. Charlier, reported Camus, argued that the use of force must be restricted to being a means to end war and not prolong it. In opposition to the idea of non-violence, the policy of peace in war would ensure that peace remained possible at all times. He proposed that aggression towards the actions of another country should always be accompanied by a peace proposal curtailing the use of force. As Camus reports, 'Le "jusqu'aboutisme" est une absurdité si l'on veut bien croire que ni la guerre ni la victoire ne sont en elles-mêmes des solutions' (CAC3, 626).

Camus re-states the proposal in 'Notre position' (6-11-39): 'Nous demandons que cette paix définie, plébiscitée par le peuple français, soit proposée sans trêve, au milieu même des combats, tous les jours s'il le faut' (CAC 3, 721). Peace in war would aim to ensure that war was not considered an end in itself. On 10 July 1939, the New Statesman and Nation had written:

Il faut que le peuple allemand *sache* que le front de la paix est solide; et deuxièmement, il faut qu'il sache que ce front est raisonnable. Ce front ne doit pas seulement représenter la résistance à l'agression, mais une contre-politique constructive où l'on fera tous les efforts pour assurer les malheureux sujets des États totalitaires que leur prétention à une juste part dans la communauté mondiale sera équitablement satisfaite une fois qu'ils auront renoncé à l'agression. (cited in Valentin 1939a, 1)

Camus's concern is the same in ensuring that war did not obscure the real goal of peace, thus showing in this article how he adopts the motivations of the British debate.

Camus's arguments for a 'trêve civile' in 1950s Algeria are well known as his last attempt to make his opinions heard on an intensely polarised debate. It is interesting to observe, however, that in two articles in Le Soir Républicain he proposed a similar truce. 'Comment aller vers un ordre nouveau' (16-11-39) argues for a truce to liberate Czech and Polish territories, and to institute international arms control. During the truce, other institutions would peacefully resolve conflict, ensuring that peace would be based on equality of former warring nations, and not on a situation of winners and losers. A method of engendering cooperation through compromise, the truce would lay foundations for a future Europe based on equality and compromise. These ideas on a cessation of hostilities constitute a progression from the idea of peace in war, as if Camus were searching for a way of making the end of conflict more realistic by providing forms of mediation. Nevertheless, the idea appears even more desperate than the peace in war proposal in its goal to somehow halt war, and of course prefigures the June 1940 Armistice in France in its motivation if not its detail.

The idea of a truce reappears in 'Recherche du possible' (30-12-39). Warring nations, Camus writes, must recognise the wishes of their populations:

Il faudrait que les États en conflit, et tous les autres, prennent conscience et reconnaissent ouvertement que, dans l'ensemble et au moins confusément, leurs peuples veulent tous la même chose et ont tous un même idéal général de liberté et de collaboration pacifique, amicale, fructueuse, assurant à tous l'immense 'espace vital' que devrait constituer leur communauté entière. (CAC3, 652)

Read today, this observation of the European state of mind in 1939 seems extraordinarily naïve. Even though it illustrates Camus's belief in dialogue it simply reads as idealistic wishful thinking.

Ideas of the truce and of peace in war would, Camus hoped, lead to an international conference at which the causes of conflict could be worked through towards a peaceful solution. Clearly predicated on his belief in dialogue, the idea of the conference is articulated in both Charlier articles. In the first, the idea is briefly evoked as a possible method of opening up certain countries' economies: 'une conférence internationale [...] qui décongestionnera l'économie bouchée de ces nations' (CAC3, 626). The second Charlier article develops the idea towards the proposal that such a conference should constitute a decision-making organisation, avoiding the potential damage of diplomatic secrecy. Following the observation that 'L'Europe actuelle prépare la guerre pour sauver la paix' (CAC3, 628), Charlier had stated that this was the only way to express a wish for peace:

[L'Europe] accumule les cartes économiques et les cartes stratégiques. Mais cela ne peut sauver la paix que si cette volonté de salut s'exprime aussi par des actes dont le premier serait une conférence internationale où les gouvernements viendraient après avoir renoncé à leurs égoïsmes nationaux. (CAC3, 629)

But like the idea of the truce, this proposal seems at odds with the actual international situation in 1939; it is hard to imagine how a conference would have been possible at which governments would have lain aside national interests.

The next mention of the international conference idea is in 'Recherche du possible' (30-12-39), which links it to a renewed call for a truce. In the climate thus created, Camus writes, 'à la faveur de la paix, au moins élémentaire et superficielle, qui aurait ainsi été rétablie, une conférence internationale, où toutes les catégories de toutes les populations de tous les pays seraient représentées, précise ces principes et en fasse sortir une paix profonde et durable [...]' (CAC3, 652). The conference would thus be a state of passage between the truce and the establishment of a new, peaceful European political order.

Blum's opposition to the fatalism of preparations for war (his articles on foreign policy never ceased to call for disarmament, despite the fact that the Blum administration allocated more of its budget to military spending than any other inter-war administration) also leads him to propose an international conference aiming to resolve various contentious issues between European nations. His words echo strongly in Charlier's lecture:

Il [le socialisme français] ne s'oppose nullement aux conversations directes avec les dictatures totalitaires, sous la seule condition qu'elles soient dirigées vers l'éclaircissement et le règlement d'ensemble des problèmes européens. Mais ce qu'il souhaite et appelle de toute son énergie [...], c'est la réunion d'une vaste conférence internationale symbolisant par elle-même l'indivisibilité de la paix, où toutes les nations auraient le même accès, qui se saisirait de tous les litiges, qui envisagerait librement toutes les solutions susceptibles de conduire à l'entente politique et à la coopération économique des peuples. (Blum 1965, 258)

The November 1939 issue of the Bulletin of the Ligue internationale des Mères et des Éducatrices pour la paix provided much detail on 'La conférence qui mettra fin à la guerre', and Camus reflects its tone in his remarks about the composition of the conference, an issue addressed by the bulletin, in which Eidenschenk-Patin advocated the inclusion both of different social groups and of all the European states (1939, 1).

One major assumption behind Camus's idea of a conference was that the various claims made by the totalitarian countries consisted of 'un ensemble de revendications



fondées et de prétentions absurdes' (CAC3, 626). The international conference would grant the former and reject the latter: 'Ne rien céder d'injuste et céder tout ce qui est juste' (CAC3, 627). First noted in the first Charlier article this idea led Camus to write:

Le rôle de la France, à cet égard, est nettement défini. Si elle a le sentiment que les revendications qu'on lui présente contiennent des choses justes, qu'elle les accorde immédiatement. Non pas par la voie de la diplomatie secrète, mais à la face du monde. Et si la justice à cet égard ne suffit pas, alors qu'on use de générosité. Mais pour ce qui est injuste, il faudra le repousser avec la même netteté. (CAC3, 629)

Although Camus writes about France, it is clear from subsequent articles that a similar principle would inform the international conference. This desire for clarity in European diplomacy, present in many articles, doubtless stemmed from the equivocations of the period of appeasement before the declaration of war, and the diplomatic machinations of the inter-war years.

In 'Notre Position', although Camus repeats his insistence that totalitarian demands contained a mix of legitimate and absurd claims, his view is more nuanced. He writes that Europe must 'accorder tout ce qui est juste en refusant tout ce qui est injuste, reviser Versailles en réclamant la Tchécoslovaquie et la Pologne', but continues:

Nous pensons encore: 1) qu'il y avait dans les revendications hitlériennes un mélange assez curieux de revendications légitimes et de prétentions injustifiées; 2) que la politique internationale de ces dernières années a consisté, par un paradoxe non moins curieux, à refuser les premières et à accorder les secondes, et pour le reste à donner sous la menace ce qu'on n'avait pas su céder à temps. (CAC 3, 722)

He recognises here that it was too late to consider the legitimacy or otherwise of Hitler's claims; the tone is consequently more reserved. However, moving on from the ideas of peace in war, the truce and international conference, further solutions Camus proposed in Le Soir Républicain were longer-term in scope, aiming at 'une Europe remaniée' (CAC3, 638).

## Long-term solutions

After the international conference based on a truce, he argued for a remodelled League of Nations, embodying different principles and ideals to its inter-war incarnation, to act as an efficient European ruling body. This new League would be based upon a policy of plebiscites, which, as with many of Camus's ideas on the new order in Europe, first appears in the first Charlier lecture in a programme of international relations. Charlier considered these too important to be left to elected politicians, in as much a critique of Daladier's administration as a plea for increased democracy:

[Charlier] est d'avis, et nous en sommes d'accord, qu'une telle politique ne peut être remise entre les mains des politiciens qui nous gouvernent. C'est une politique que seule la volonté généreuse d'un peuple peut vivifier, qui ne peut s'accomplir à coup de décrets-lois, mais suivant le libre consentement d'une nation rendue à ses libertés. (CAC3, 627)

The idea of plebiscites relates to Charlier's conception of the body politic in the same lecture: 'un peuple ne constitue pas une monnaie d'échange, mais une personne morale qu'il s'agit de consulter' (CAC3, 627). Once more showing his distrust of politicians, in 'Notre Position' (6-11-39), where he developed the peace in war idea, Camus wrote that the peace proposal ought to be 'plébiscitée par le peuple français' (CAC3, 721), thus lending the peace proposal more credibility.

Camus seems to resurrect Woodrow Wilson's Versailles-era ideas on self-determination in 'Les conditions d'une collaboration' (11-11-39), in an argument in favour of national self-determination based on plebiscites. He advocated populations' rights to decide their own frontiers and internal organisation:

La répartition des populations en États distincts reposera désormais uniquement sur les volontés de ces populations, consultées par des plébiscites en application du principe 'libertaire' et démocratique *du droit des peuples à disposer d'eux-mêmes*. Maîtresses de leurs réunions et sécessions, de leurs unités et de leurs frontières, de leurs institutions et gouvernements, les populations se donneront les régimes et les chefs qu'elles voudront en matière constitutionnelle, administrative, judiciaire, linguistique, confessionnelle, culturelle, scolaire. (CAC3, 638-9, emphasis in original)

He went as far as envisaging the possibility of population transfers in case of contradictory territorial aspirations, but only as a last resort, to be avoided if possible. The aim was to pre-empt grievances by ensuring that each country had an internal order carrying its people's consent.

This principle of self-determination echoes Valentin's article in the Nouveaux Cahiers November 1939 issue: 'Il s'agit [...] de la cohabitation sur les territoires contigus, et parfois sur le même territoire, de races différentes, sans que l'une domine les autres. Chacun tient à sa culture, à ses habitudes, à sa langue, à sa religion; mais chacun, pour vivre, doit travailler avec les autres, échanger ses produits ou services, coopérer' (Valentin 1939b, 5). Here, Valentin argues for the same outcomes as Camus: ensuring that European populations are satisfied with their internal organisation in order to permit effective cooperation.

In the first Charlier article, Camus reported on a proposal for a new League of Nations aimed at a 'reconstruction internationale pour consolider la paix', part of the criticism of the old League. A new League would signify an *ipso facto* abandonment of sovereignty: 'Une nouvelle S.D.N., si elle abandonnait la forme contractuelle et l'égoïsme des nations, pourrait prendre naissance' (CAC3, 629). In 'Notre Position' (6-11-39) Camus takes up his own defence of this idea, writing that international entente remains worthwhile: '[O]n a beaucoup critiqué la S.D.N. et, par contrecoup, le principe de l'entente internationale. Nous pensons que la S.D.N. n'avait rien à voir avec ce principe et que ce dernier garde toute sa force [...] La S.D.N. est à refaire' (CAC3, 721-2). Although not mentioned explicitly in 'Les conditions d'une collaboration' (11-11-39), the new League would presumably assist in the implementation of this article's programme of cooperation and common pooling of resources. In 'Recherche du possible' (30-12-39), he continued to argue for institutions to enforce international law,

‘institutions internationales chargées d’appliquer et de réviser ces lois sans troubles, sans déchirements, d’après les exigences de l’intérêt général des peuples’ (CAC3, 652).

A major aim of this new League would be the protection of peoples, once again seen as the prey of dishonest politicians: ‘On me dira que les gouvernements représentent les peuples. Mais nous lisons tous les jours dans les journaux que ce n’est pas vrai pour certain pays. Et pour les autres on me permettra de sourire d’une façon discrète’ (CAC3, 649). Convinced that the European peoples did not want war, Camus writes of Hitler, for example, in unusually direct language, ‘Méprise la vie commode et même la vie tout court, *pour toi*, si tu le veux! Mais si tu as quelque action sur le sort des peuples, ne *leur* impose pas *ton* renoncement: aie souci de leurs vies, de leur bien-être. Ne fais pas l’héroïsme par procuration en les envoyant à la bataille’ (CAC3, 643, emphasis in original). The new League, therefore, would not be a body composed of leaders but peoples, as Camus argues in ‘La Société des peuples’ (15-12-39) and ‘Les Conditions d’une collaboration’ (11-11-39): ‘Dans ces instances internationales, représentation et action, non pas des gouvernements, mais des peuples, dans l’intérêt et pour la liberté, la sécurité et le bien-être desquels elles fonctionneront’ (CAC3, 639). In the Nouveaux Cahiers Valentin expressed similar ideas about the representation of social groups other than heads of state: ‘sans doute serait-il nécessaire [...] de prévoir au contraire la représentation des diverses classes sociales, agricoles et industrielles’ (Valentin 1939b, 5). Eidschenk-Patin also argued for this method in relation to the composition of the international conference charged with post-war negotiations.

A further important aspect of Camus’s proposals on a new League was disarmament: ‘Désarmement de tous les Etats. Etablissement d’organes et procédures internationaux pour la solution pacifique de tous les conflits entre Etats’ (CAC3, 639). In ‘Recherche du possible’ (30-12-39) Camus elaborates on this, talking about the creation of an

international disarmament commission made up of ‘représentants, civils et militaires, de tous les ex-belligérents et des ex-neutres, qui, surveillant toutes les situations militaires, assureraient un commencement de désarmement général’ (CAC3, 652). In the Nouveaux Cahiers Valentin stated that disarmament was the first condition for the peaceful construction of the world after the war (1939b, 4). The Times also argued this point, although in the less categorical terms of an ‘[i]nternationally supervised *limitation* of armaments’ (3-11-39, 10, my emphasis). Eidenschenk-Patin considered this a task for the international conference.

Behind the idea of the League is a notion that international relations should be governed by international rule of law. In the second Charlier article, Camus writes: ‘M. Charlier unit le sort de la paix à une reconstruction du droit international’ (CAC3, 629). The theme continues in ‘Les conditions d’une collaboration’, which argues that the rule of law would be accompanied by a system of enforcement:

Interdiction de la guerre, interdiction rendue effective par une police et une justice internationales et par l’assistance mutuelle généralisée. Abdication des souverainetés nationales – instruments juridiques des impérialismes – devant la loi internationale et l’autorité des instances internationales formulant et appliquant cette loi. (CAC3, 639-40)

This resembles a Times article which proposed ‘to add to the armed forces contingents from ex-neutral and ex-enemy countries in order to have an international organ of government with an international police force at its disposal’ (3-11-39, 9). Eidenschenk-Patin also asked: ‘Y aurait-t-il lieu de créer, au moins transitoirement, une police internationale?’ (1939, 1).

A measure of flexibility would, however, be built in to this system of law: ‘[Charlier] n’envisage pas d’organisme international sans un organisme parallèle qui assouplirait les règles de droit existantes et qui en ferait un vêtement vivant à la mesure du corps mouvant de l’histoire’ (CAC3, 629-30). Camus here recognises that in evolving

political situations any international order would have to take change into account, a theme also of 'Les conditions d'une collaboration' (11-11-39): 'Organisation effective de la possibilité de réviser et améliorer à tout moment toutes les situations internationales que l'expérience ou les circonstances nouvelles feraient apparaître' (CAC3, 640). Contributors to The Times, as well as British political leaders, agreed on the general principle of respect of the rule of law. Attlee, for instance, cited it among Labour's peace aims (The Times 9-11-39, 9).

A small but significant reference in three of Camus's articles is to federalism, part of the set of ideas he proposes (CAC3, 639, 646, 651). One example is the list of potential areas of cooperation between countries in 'Les Conditions d'une collaboration' (11-11-39) quoted earlier, which ends on a federalist note:

La mise en commun des richesses, des matières premières et vivres, des moyens de communication, des débouchés, des méthodes et efforts pour la production et l'échange, l'accomplissement en commun des grandes tâches, selon des formules *fédérales*. (CAC3, 639, emphasis in original)

The new League would be organised on federal lines, which would overcome the 'égoïsme des nations' and the 'forme contractuelle' Camus denounces in the second Charlier article (CAC3, 629). As with economics, Camus does not go into much detail on the subject of federalism, but nonetheless reflects a significant current of opinion. Attlee and Halifax had both made speeches advocating European federal organisation in November 1939 (The Times 8-11-39, 9; 9-11-39, 9), and the 3 November article explored the subject in some depth. In the Nouveaux Cahiers in February 1938, René Cassin saw a role for federalism in his ideas for League reform, as did Scelle in November 1939: 'Pour que la S.D.N. devienne réellement vivante, on devra, s'inspirant des principes du fédéralisme, faire une place aux représentants de chaque peuple et aux collectivités déjà internationalisées d'industriels, d'ouvriers, d'agriculteurs, de croyants,

d'intellectuels, de philanthropes, etc.' (Cassin 1938, 6). Although in far less detail, Camus hints at these proposals in his idea of a 'société des peuples'.

In the debate on the treatment of Germany in the event of an Allied victory federalism was also invoked. According to Valentin, it was generally held that Germany had to be either occupied or dismembered after the conflict, hence an evocation of the federalist solution, which would permit devolved control. This was thought a more effective way of dealing with aggressive nations than the Versailles or Poincarist approach: 'Une occupation militaire [of Germany] [...] a l'inconvénient de ne pouvoir être temporaire et de cesser au moment où le pays vaincu s'étant relevé, redevient précisément dangereux' (Valentin 1939b, 5). Camus adds to this observation, foreshadowing the Lettres à un ami allemand, that there should be 'Nulle haine contre le peuple allemand, ni d'ailleurs contre aucun peuple' (CAC3, 638). He reflects Blum's ideas in Le Populaire in October 1939: 'We Socialists want a solution whereby Germany would be integrated in a European organisation [...] We always come back to the same formulae and the same conclusion: independent nations in a federal and disarmed Europe' (cited in Lipgens 1985, 277). He also echoes what had been quoted in the Nouveaux Cahiers of the war aims articles in The Times, especially a piece by Norman Angell first published in September 1939: 'Nous croyons, selon les termes du message royal, que nous combattons pour l'ordre et la paix du monde, pour la sécurité de la justice et de la liberté parmi les nations, y compris la justice et la liberté *pour la nation allemande* (No. 51, 19-20, my emphasis).

## Conclusion

This chapter has shown how Camus came to adopt a series of long-term and short-term Europeanist ideas and propositions as a reaction to Europe's descent into war. Based on liberal, democratic first principles, these ideas included such proposals as a truce, an

international conference and a programme of disarmament leading to the establishment of a new League of Nations based on plebiscites, federalism and the rule of law. The chapter has, in addition, showed how these ideas evolved between April and December 1939 during Camus's brief editorship of Le Soir Républicain. Camus is so close to his sources that the voices intermingle in a transparent process of adoption of internally persuasive ideas from a series of exterior sources. The period 1939-40 thus constitutes a Europeanist apprenticeship, the gradual development of Camus's own politico-ideological view on Europe, which increasingly signifies for Camus a long-term political objective of peace and unity. They also develop Camus's journalistic 'voice', which will resurface in 1944 at Combat. The next chapter will show how Camus hones a polyphony of Europeanist discourses into his own Europeanist consciousness in his wartime resistance writing.



## II. Resistance Europeanism: re-appropriating Europe

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### Lettres à un ami allemand, 1943-44

The previous chapter charted the beginnings of Camus's Europeanism in the early Algiers journalism. His Resistance writing, particularly the Lettres à un ami allemand, demonstrates a more concrete adoption of the discourse of Europe through a struggle to define it in complex circumstances. The third letter, the principal focus of this chapter, constructs, in fact, two Europes, equating to a Nazi/collaborationist outlook and a French Resistance vision, in order to defend the latter. Camus's Europeanism in this letter is impassioned, subjective and mythical, less based on the politico-economic ideas of Le Soir Républicain than on a more personal desire to defend European history and tradition from the Nazis.

This reflects itself in the nature of the voices represented in the text. Where in the Algiers journalism there was a polyphony of voices and sources, in the letters Camus represents different discourses of Europe which almost echo Bakhtinian speech genres; indeed a major aim of this chapter is to show how these ideas represent the ideological conflict over the term between resisters and collaborators in occupied France. The Lettres à un ami allemand can be thought of as a dialogue of Europe between two discourses which relate in turn to external discourses.

The dialogic form this takes is a conversation mediated through a narrative voice. Far from constructing a polyphonic chorus of speech genres, however, Camus monologically manipulates the dialogue, through stylisation and parody, in order to privilege one particular discourse: Resistance Europeanism. This was dictated by circumstance, of course: the Lettres à un ami allemand are clandestine texts with a particular rhetorical function. Camus's aim is therefore not to step back and allow

carnavalesque polyphony but rather to construct an antithesis between two visions with the rhetorical end of re-appropriating the discourse of Europe. Nevertheless, within the wider polyphony of discourses of Europe in the *œuvre* as a whole, the Lettres à un ami allemand are generically uncertain, and indeed are pivotal to the internal dialogue of Camus's Europes, a question raised in Chapter Five.

This chapter begins with a little contextualisation, then examines both discourses of Europe and their antithetical opposition. Then, using Ian Higgins's analysis of Resistance poetry as an effort to re-appropriate language, Camus's letters are read through the prism of his largely ignored 1944 review of works by Brice Parain, demonstrating how Camus's text effects such a re-appropriation. Using hitherto unpublished correspondence, the chapter documents how Camus's Europeanism led him to join the Comité Français pour la Fédération Européenne, an exclusively Europeanist Resistance movement.

After leaving Algeria in 1940 after the collapse of Le Soir Républicain, Camus worked as a typesetter for Paris-Soir in Paris. Joining the exodus south in June, he then spent time in Clermont-Ferrand and Lyons, returning to Algeria after losing his Paris-Soir job. For health reasons, he returned to France in 1942 to recuperate at Le Chambon-sur-Lignon in the Massif Central. By 1944 he had published L'Étranger, Le Mythe de Sisyphe, had written Le Malentendu, and was working on La Peste (Lottman 1981, 218-98; Todd 1996, 236-331). Having made some Resistance contacts at Le Chambon,<sup>1</sup> he

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<sup>1</sup> For instance Francis Ponge, Pierre Lévy, Raymond-Léopold Bruckberger, René Leynaud. See Lottman 1981, 269-83; Todd 1996, 318-31. Maber, however, suggests that Camus was totally unaware of the extent of the resistance activity and sheltering of Jews in Le Chambon itself (1991, 75-6).

joined 'Combat' in 1943-44.<sup>2</sup> By the Liberation of Paris in August 1944, Camus was editor-in-chief of the newspaper Combat, whose post-war editorials increased the status as *intellectuel engagé* Camus had begun to accrue from his role in the Resistance.<sup>3</sup>

Although relatively late in joining the Resistance, he made a significant contribution to the clandestine press. In 1943 he wrote 'L'Intelligence et l'échafaud', an article on the French novel, for René Tavernier's Confluences, 'Portrait d'un élu' for Cahiers du Sud, and 'Les Exilés dans la peste', from early drafts of La Peste, on the breakdown of human relationships during the Occupation, for the Geneva-based Éditions des Trois Collines. In 1944, in addition to two clandestine Combat articles attributable to him,<sup>4</sup> he wrote 'Sur une philosophie de l'expression' on Brice Parain for Poésie 44, and 'Tout ne s'arrange pas', on the execution of Pierre Pucheu, for Les Lettres Françaises. Prefiguring his later condemnation of the death penalty, this article caused controversy with more hardline 'Comité National des Écrivains' (CNE) members, resolute in their condemnation of Pucheu (Lottman 1981, 324-5).<sup>5</sup>

Camus's most important clandestine publications were the Lettres à un ami allemand, published by Gallimard in a single volume in 1945. Four polemical letters to an imaginary German interlocutor, they examine the divergence of the writer and the German's paths.<sup>6</sup> The first letter, originally 'Lettre à un allemand qui fut mon ami', was written in July 1943 and published in the second issue of 'Franc-Tireur's' Revue Libre

<sup>2</sup> For the circumstances of this see Lottman 1981, 299-312; Todd 1996, 332-48. For an analysis of Camus's response to the outbreak of war and its development, see Rioux 1986. For an evaluation of Camus's part in the Resistance which takes issue with Brisville's early description of Camus as a 'résistant de la première heure' (1959, 12), see Lottman 1981, 305 and McCarthy 1982, 174-6.

<sup>3</sup> The Europeanist aspect of these editorials will be discussed in Chapter Three.

<sup>4</sup> 'À guerre totale, résistance totale' (March) and 'Pendant trois heures ils ont fusillé des français' (May) (II, 1949).

<sup>5</sup> See the disclaimer next to Camus's article in Les Lettres Françaises, no. 16, May 1944, 4.

<sup>6</sup> See Chapter Five for an analysis of the German's (non) identity, p. 205. See Grenier (1987, 165) on Camus's use of the device of an imaginary letter.

in 1943 (Todd 1996, 797, n. 47; Grenier 1987, 164). An examination of extreme nationalism, it opposes two world-views proceeding from a position of nihilism. One leads to fighting for Germany's glory above all else; the other defends ideals such as justice before that of nation. It gives a near-mythical account of France's recovery from defeat, confident in its new approach to the war: 'l'esprit uni à l'épée est le vainqueur éternel de l'épée tirée pour elle-même' (II, 224).

The second letter, continuing these themes, was first published in the Cahiers de la Libération in early 1944 as 'Lettre à un allemand', signed Louis Neuville. In the July 1944 issue of Les Lettres françaises, Georges Adam wrote: 'Conscience, engagement... *Louis Neuville* nous donne un éclatant exemple dans sa "Lettre à un allemand"' (1944, 7, emphasis in original).

Originally written for the Revue Libre, the third letter was published in the 5 January 1945 issue of the weekly Libertés (No. 58, pp. 3, 6). Attached to the movement *Ceux de la Résistance* (CDLR), Libertés was a broadly revolutionary socialist clandestine journal founded by Charles Torelli, (1909-1991, known as Pierre Rimbart), a type-setter at the Pariser Zeitung, whose offices it occupied along with Combat and others at the Liberation. Rimbart ran Libertés practically alone, but was helped by Roger Grenier and several pseudonyms. Since Combat and Libertés shared the same offices, the two teams often met; after Grenier published an article defending Camus against attacks in L'Aube, Camus recruited him for Combat (Lottman 1981, 337).<sup>7</sup> The main focus of this chapter, the third letter examines antithetical ideas of Europe.

Also destined for the Revue Libre but only published in the 1945 collected volume, the fourth letter continues the debate, describing in more metaphysical terms the

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<sup>7</sup> I am very grateful to Roger Grenier for providing me with these details. Letter to the author, 21 November 1999.

opposition between Camus and his interlocutor, standing between Le Mythe de Sisyphe and L'Homme révolté. At the outset it echoes the point of departure of the former: 'Nous avons longtemps cru ensemble que ce monde n'avait pas de raison supérieure et que nous étions frustrés. Je le crois encore d'une certaine manière. Mais j'en ai tiré d'autres conclusions que celles dont vous me parliez alors et que, depuis tant d'années, vous essayez de faire entrer dans l'Histoire' (II, 240). Camus's reply to his interlocutor's nihilistic relativisation of good and evil contains the germ of the L'Homme révolté argument: '[J]e sais que quelque chose en lui [ce monde] a du sens et c'est l'homme, parce qu'il est le seul à exiger d'en avoir' (II, 241).

In 1947, when the Lettres à un ami allemand were published in Italy, Camus added a preface explaining that 'vous' in the letters denoted 'vous autres Nazis', and 'nous', 'nous autres européens' (II, 219). However, as the original texts were written in 1943-44, this later preface will be ignored, written as it was for a population who might not, if it is to be believed, have grasped Camus's original intentions. The preface acknowledges a problem in the letters, namely the fact that they constitute appalling history. In their Manichean world, there are only Frenchmen, Europeans, and Nazis. The complex shades of the Occupation are totally elided; there are no collaborators, let alone collaborationists, and Vichy has no place. Neither is the limited nature of Resistance mentioned. But this should not lead to condemnation of the letters, which in any case were not intended as history. They are masterful examples of Resistance rhetoric, emotive and effective counter propaganda 'munitions of the mind' (Taylor 1990) constructing myths against Nazi propaganda, including one of Europe.

## The Antagonistic Europes of the third letter

Written at the height of the non-communist French Resistance movements' adoption of the European idea, the third letter is representative of its ideological climate. As demonstrated in the introduction, after initial rejection, the goal of European unity was adopted as a future foreign policy aim in the non-communist clandestine press. This involved negotiating with the fact that European unity was also a theme of Nazi, Vichy and collaborationist thought. In Camus's letter, behind an illusory veil of dialogue (illusory because of the obvious non-existence of the interlocutor), Camus constructs two opposing notions of Europe, which characterise the ideological background of the resisters' slow adoption of the European idea: the Nazi/Vichy fascist discourse of a hierarchical German-dominated Europe versus a Resistance ideal of unity based on equality, liberty, and other republican values. Camus's description of a fascist Europe is thus a prelude to its rejection, throwing into relief the Resistance Europe he elaborates, anticipating and answering the criticism, examined later, that Europe was merely a Nazi idea. This strategy features in contemporaneous Resistance texts, for example Lecroix's 1943 article 'Europe':

La propagande hitlérienne a constamment ce mot à la bouche: Europe. On nous parle d'années européennes, de révolution européenne, etc., etc.... Mensonge! L'Allemagne veut, c'est entendu, réaliser l'unité de l'Europe, mais non pas pour faire du continent une grande entité majeure, susceptible d'avoir une existence libre; ce qu'elle veut, c'est asservir au germanisme les peuples non allemands. (Lipgens 1985, 299)<sup>8</sup>

Camus's strategy, while in essence resembling Lecroix's, is less direct and more concerned with personalising the antithesis between discourses. All four Lettres à un ami allemand describe the narrator's struggle to come to terms with war in a context of a shared sense with the German friend of the poverty of religious and moral explanations

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<sup>8</sup> Lipgens's work gives English translations of all documents. Original language documents are provided in microfiche form. For this quote see microfiche 3, 87/1.

of the world. The narrator justifies the Resistance struggle by claiming that humans have inviolable characteristics that must be defended; this provokes a break with the interlocutor, who has put the values of his nation above humanity. An element of dialogue, analysed in Chapter Five, lends authenticity through depiction of a deeply personal struggle presented as exemplary in which the author illustrates his return to basic values, of which Europe is one, after struggling with this absence of meaning.

Camus begins his caricature of the fascist Europe in language both subtler and more lyrical than Lecroix's, but just as polemical. The many ways in which the third letter constructs the antithesis can be categorised by the essential differences between each vision's understandings of 'patrie' and humanism.

### 'Patrie'

A notion of belonging to Europe depends on underlying conceptions of homeland. The third letter postulates two antithetical views; the Nazi view glorifies the Volk above all else; the Resistance view places humanist ideals before such concepts as race or nation. A recurring theme is Camus's portrayal of France's struggle to reconcile its ideals with the necessity to fight Germany. 'C'est beaucoup que de se battre en méprisant la guerre, d'accepter de tout perdre en gardant le goût du bonheur, de courir à la destruction avec l'idée d'une civilisation supérieure' (II, 222). In the first letter, Camus writes that for the German interlocutor: "La grandeur de mon pays n'a pas de prix. Tout est bon qui la consomme" (II, 221). Camus dismisses the consequent Nazi Europeanism, which consists of subordinating all to the glory of Germany: 'L'Europe est pour vous cet espace [...] où l'Allemagne joue une partie, dont son seul destin est l'enjeu' (II, 324), and demarcates the Nazi concept of 'patrie' from his own:

Les mots prennent toujours la couleur des actions ou des sacrifices qu'ils suscitent. Et celui de patrie prend chez vous des reflets sanglants et aveugles, qui me le rendent à jamais étranger, tandis que nous avons mis dans le même mot la flamme d'une

intelligence où le courage est plus difficile, mais où l'homme trouve du moins tout son compte. (II, 233)

These strong images suggest that the Nazi conception of 'patrie' leads only to violence, implying that to love one's country in this way is *ipso facto* to hate outsiders. 'Sanglants' connotes inherent violence, and with 'aveugle', describes Nazi Volk-worship as blind and unbridled, untempered by understanding. In opposition, the signifier 'flamme' connotes warmth, light and purity, suggestive of completeness; 'reflets' are a poor substitute for the original, authentic 'flamme', and illustrate how Camus's Resistance concept is constructed as source and origin. This image contrasts 'intelligence' with 'aveugle'; Camus suggests that courage is facile but with a 'true' conception of what 'patrie' ought to be, intelligence, although difficult, is more fulfilling. This echoes the first letter's evocation of the temptation to resemble the Nazis and abstain from the constant struggle to maintain ideals of justice and liberty. In addition, the phrase 'où l'homme trouve [...] son compte' signifies that the Nazi idea of 'patrie' does not satisfy human needs in the way the Resistance idea does.

Devoid of the values of the Resistance idea, the Nazi understanding of 'patrie' ignores notions of justice, inherent in Camus's defence of Europe: 'Je ne puis croire qu'il faille tout asservir au but que l'on poursuit. Il est des moyens qui ne s'excusent pas. Et je voudrais pouvoir aimer mon pays tout en aimant la justice' (II, 221). In response to the correspondent's quip 'Allons, vous n'aimez pas votre pays', Camus replies: 'Non, je ne l'aimais pas, si c'est ne pas aimer que de dénoncer ce qui n'est pas juste dans ce que nous aimons, si c'est ne pas aimer que d'exiger que l'être aimé s'égale à la plus belle image que nous avons de lui' (II, 221).

Throughout the letters, the interlocutor's homeland is always and exclusively Germany, which in the third letter is portrayed as a limited sense of 'patrie' as compared to the Resistance vision. Above the notion of 'patrie', for Camus, is Europe, 'ma plus



grande patrie' (II, 236), and an ideal above the nation, 'notre meilleur espoir' (II, 234). This clearly restates the struggle to maintain ideals, of which Europe is one, tempering excessive nationalism, even while conducting a war, and further reinforces the sense of nobility of the Resistance struggle.

Camus elucidates what he considers the ideal of Europe to represent for the Nazis and resisters: 'Vous parlez de l'Europe mais la différence est que l'Europe, pour vous, est une propriété tandis que nous nous sentons dans sa dépendance' (II, 234). This further underscores conflicting notions of 'patrie', showing that the Nazis seek to dominate while the resisters seek to serve. A Nazi Europe would be a supply dump for further conquest, a purely utilitarian view of Europe as a resource to be exploited, suggesting materialism and absence of appreciation: 'L'Europe est pour vous cet espace cerclé de mers et de montagnes, coupé de barrages, fouillé de mines, couvert de moissons, où l'Allemagne joue une partie, dont son seul destin est l'enjeu' (II, 234). Everything in this vision relates to industry or the land, providing the wherewithal to feed a people and fight, reinforced in another description: 'Vous dites Europe mais vous pensez terre à soldats, grenier à blé, industries domestiquées, intelligence dirigée' (II, 234). The ultimate expression of a Nazi militarist Europe is Camus's dismissal of '[...] cette tâche colorée que vous avez annexée sur des cartes provisoires' (II, 235).

## Humanism

The second area of radical divergence between the two visions of Europe, and indeed a major focus of all four Lettres à un ami allemand, is the idea of humanism. The Resistance vision of Europe is constructed as the embodiment of humanist ideals in opposition to Nazi barbarity. Margaret Atack offers an analysis of humanism in the context of Resistance fiction, giving the following definition:

Humanism posits a common universal humanity in which each unique individual partakes, and respect for the individual is a recognition of the value of this human quality. To criticise Nazism in human terms is therefore to present it as a negative image which rejects the notions of the individual in the name of the collective outside which the individual has no worth and rejects the universal in the name of the national. (Atack 1989, 61)<sup>9</sup>

Criticism ‘in human terms’ captures the essence of the Lettres à un ami allemand: the third letter systematically posits humanist values in opposition to the interlocutor’s understanding of ‘patrie’. Atack suggests that in much Resistance fiction, the human/inhuman dichotomy coincides with national frontiers, i.e. the French/German border, leading to the attribution of universal humanist ideals to one country (France) and not the other. The third letter differs in its attribution of humanist values to all of Europe, opposing the anti-humanism of the errant Nazi Germany in its midst.

Some humanist ideals Camus defends in the third letter are displayed in the notion of ‘patrie’ examined above, especially in ideas of intelligence and courage. These ideas underpin much of his portrayal of the French struggle to accept the necessity of war; they consequently signify intellectual rigour and moral rectitude in defence of justice and humanity. As McCarthy writes: ‘he extols intelligence because it is a relative value – scrupulous and cautious’ (1982, 177). The idea reappears twice in the third letter. Writing of a European tradition, Camus extends these virtues to all of Europe in masterful rhetoric demonstrating the idea of an inevitable victory:

[L]orsque je me laisse aller à penser que mon pays parle au nom de l’Europe et qu’en défendant l’un nous les défendons ensemble, moi aussi, j’ai alors ma tradition. Elle est en même temps celle de quelques grands individus et d’un peuple inépuisable. Ma tradition a deux élites, celle de l’intelligence et celle du courage. (II, 235)

Understanding the war as the defence of the entire continent, Camus posits the idea of Europe as the true goal after defeating Germany. The virtues he defends therefore

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<sup>9</sup> Although Atack’s focus is Resistance fiction, her analysis is just as germane to other written forms of Resistance, including the present analysis.

underpin Europe as much as France. The second reprise of the ideal of intelligence is in a particularly direct dismissal of Nazi Europeanism: '[V]otre Europe n'est pas la bonne. Elle n'a rien pour réunir ou enfiévrer. La nôtre est une aventure commune que nous continuerons de faire, malgré vous, dans le vent de l'intelligence' (II, 235). Europe is united in communitarian language, implicitly recognising others as equally worthy of the 'aventure commune', and portrays intelligence as a quasi-mystical force reminiscent of the Biblical account of the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

The idea of intelligence is also mentioned in an attack on the Nazi concept for its 'intelligence dirigée' (II, 234), which connotes authoritarianism and absence of free thought, the antithesis of the Resistance ideal. A virtue that echoes those of intelligence and courage is defended in a statement which encapsulates the struggle over conflicting discourses in occupied France examined later in the chapter:

Ce qu'on souffre le plus durement, c'est de voir travestir ce qu'on aime. Et cette idée de l'Europe que vous avez prise aux meilleurs d'entre nous, pour lui donner le sens révoltant que vous aviez choisi, il nous faut toute la force de l'amour réfléchi pour lui garder en nous sa jeunesse et ses pouvoirs. (II, 233)

The idea of Europe is thus considered almost as noble as humanist virtues already praised in the letter, debased by the barbarism that can only give it a 'sens révoltant'. Interestingly, Camus uses the word 'pouvoirs' and not 'puissance', a hint of legality, and an encoded *clin d'œil* at the notion of the rule of law of the Le Soir Républicain articles along with other Resistance texts, which tempers what might have been an excessively emotive plea to national sentiment. Love and reason are intertwined, implying that 'true' Europeans love their country but approach it reflexively, without excessive zeal and, of course, with intelligence. Other humanist ideals inform and limit the idea of Europe; indeed intelligence and reflection have led to the French 'retard': 'Il nous a fallu tout ce temps pour aller voir si nous avions le droit de tuer des hommes, s'il nous était permis d'ajouter à l'atroce misère du monde' (II, 223).

Inherent in the humanist ideal of respect for the individual is respect for difference, implied in Camus's evocation of Europe's diversity, which he defends against a characterisation of a hierarchy of nations following an authoritarian Germany:

[L]orsque vous dites Europe, même à vos meilleurs moments, lorsque vous vous laissez entraîner par vos propres mensonges, vous ne pouvez vous empêcher de penser à une cohorte de nations dociles menées par une Allemagne de seigneurs, vers un avenir fabuleux et ensanglanté. (II, 234)

Camus here introduces a philosophical element: the Nietzschean idea of a race of supermen, antithetical to his previous glorification of intelligence and courage.<sup>10</sup> The signifier 'sang' reappears, reinforcing the portrayal of Nazi barbarity, and suggesting that its future is not peaceful understanding but perpetual conflict. Dismissive of a conception so heavily based on conquest, Camus describes it as 'fabuleux', a mere attempt to re-enact a mythical tale. In response, he constructs a Europe of equality and diversity through reference to Europe's topography:

Il m'arrive quelquefois [...] de penser à tous ces lieux d'Europe que je connais bien. C'est une terre magnifique faite de peine et d'histoire. Je recommence ces pèlerinages que j'ai faits avec tous les hommes d'Occident: les roses dans les cloîtres de Florence, les bulbes dorées de Cracovie, le Hradschin et ses palais morts, les statues contorsionnées du pont Charles sur la Vltava, les jardins délicats de Salzbourg. Toutes ces fleurs et ces pierres, ces collines et ces paysages où le temps des hommes et le temps du monde ont mêlé les vieux arbres et les monuments! Mon souvenir a fondu ces images superposées pour en faire un seul visage qui est celui de ma plus grande patrie. (II, 235-6)

In contrast to 'nations dociles', these places inspire respect and reverence through use of a religious idea of 'pèlerinages'. This construction constitutes a diverse yet unified, culturally and historically rich, homeland of beauty, inspiration and unity, evoking a long European cultural and artistic tradition. In contrast to the polyphony of voices in the Le Soir Républicain articles, the phrase 'ma plus grande patrie' suggests Camus's individual acceptance of the idea of Europe, a personal adoption of the discourse.

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<sup>10</sup> The underlying reference to Nietzschean ideas prefigures Camus's guarded defence of Nietzsche in L'Homme révolté against Nazi abuses of his thought, an idea which will be explored in more detail in Chapter Six, p. 250-1.

The passage, furthermore, encodes the late 1930s political situation in Poland and Czechoslovakia; the Europe of history, culture and diversity elides any East/West division and praises a common civilisation united in its struggle. This proves the exception to a rule highlighted by Tadeusz Wyrwa (1987), who has decried the abandonment of Eastern Europe in the Munich Agreements and the post-war period, an abandonment also criticised by Tony Judt in relation to French intellectuals' double standards towards Eastern Europe in the 1950s (1992, 275-92).<sup>11</sup>

Europe's unity is further deepened through signifiers linking it to a long sweep of history. The passage above describes Europe as 'une terre magnifique faite de peine et d'histoire', an emotive, subjective understanding of European history, constructing a mythical Europe plunging roots far back into history and now constituting a unique and superior civilisation. Camus refers to it as 'cette terre où tant de siècles ont laissé leurs exemples' (II, 234), and 'la plus vieille des terres' (II, 236), a collection of diverse influences and an historical entity without precedent, developed in a dramatic evocation of Europe's unequalled universal history and culture:

Mais elle [Europe] est pour nous cette terre de l'esprit où depuis vingt siècles se poursuit la plus étonnante aventure de l'esprit humain. Elle est cette arène privilégiée où la lutte de l'homme d'Occident contre le monde, contre les dieux, contre lui-même, atteint aujourd'hui son moment le plus bouleversé. (II, 234)

Once more, the concept of many centuries of history is mustered in the 'vingt siècles', a small phrase which could incorporate the Greek, Roman and Christian traditions, Paul Valéry's famous post World War One definition of Europe (Valéry 1957, 1007-14), as well as a multitude of other aspects. Along with many references to history in the third letter, not to mention the superlatives 'la plus étonnante aventure' and 'le plus bouleversé', this phrase constructs permanence, continuity and roots, counteracting the

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<sup>11</sup> Wyrwa's analysis is not without its problems. See Atack's book review in Journal of European Studies, 19, no. 1, March 1989, 72-3.

Nazi conception. The signifier 'arène' suggests that the world is looking on in awe at the European cradle of civilisation itself, echoing Valéry's 'cerveau d'un vaste corps' (1957, 995). On one level this is an extremely problematic assertion of culturalist eurocentrism, but this is not the point – the aim is rhetorically to isolate the Nazi idea as a lapse within a long tradition that predates it, thus sapping its legitimacy. This is also attempted in less subtle ways, such as the adjective 'révoltant' in relation to the Europe of the Nazis, whose presence is described elsewhere as a shadow: '[...] sur cette face énergique et tourmentée, votre ombre, depuis des années, s'est posée' (II, 236). In the same way that the Nazi idea of 'patrie' is described as 'reflets' in relation to a 'flamme', the 'ombre' is merely a deformed reproduction of a primordial completeness, in addition to the common image of the Nazis as a shadow of evil. Interestingly, Europe and 'l'Occident' (mentioned on three other occasions in the third letter) are coterminous, signifying the universalising nature of the Resistance Europe Camus constructs, and re-appropriating the idea of 'Occident' from its more habitual collaborationist uses.

In addition to these ideas, the passage above subscribes to a basic conception of humanity. Briefly sketched are ideas of the progress of humanity's understanding of the world, struggles against oppression and the advance of individualism and democracy. Humanity acting to change and develop itself and the world in a struggle against its condition is resonant of the myth of Prometheus developed in L'Homme révolté.

Culture is the final aspect of Camus's Resistance vision, through reference to 'quelques grands individus' (II, 235) and 'les grandes ombres de l'Occident' (II, 236), a different kind of shadow to that cast by the Nazis. This idea of a centuries-long tradition of European thinkers and artists adds to Camus's construction of European history, and, like the other concepts mustered in the Resistance view of Europe, is brought to bear against a Nazi view in the third letter:

[V]ous m'avez dit [...]: 'Don Quichotte n'est pas de force si Faust veut le vaincre.' Je vous ai dit alors que ni Faust ni Don Quichotte n'étaient faits pour se vaincre l'un l'autre, et que l'art n'était pas inventé pour apporter du mal au monde. Vous aimiez alors les images un peu chargées et vous avez continué. Il fallait selon vous choisir entre Hamlet ou Siegfried. À l'époque, je ne voulais pas choisir et surtout il ne me paraissait pas que l'Occident fût ailleurs que dans cet équilibre entre la force et la connaissance. Mais vous vous moquiez de la connaissance, vous parliez seulement de puissance. (II, 235)

In the Nazi view, culture is annexed in militaristic terms as a tool of war; its sole purpose is to inspire and represent war. The Resistance vision counters this, defending a humanist ideal of culture as a shared, life-enriching pursuit.

### The place of Germany

The question of Germany's place in Camus's Resistance Europe is omnipresent. In a humanist Europe such as this, it would be inconsistent to defend universal values while excluding a geographical component of the space in which they are seen to flourish. Yet, at times the letters give the impression that they defend the fight against Germany using German strategies, referring to history and humanism as a front for a deeper exclusion. This question is important in the light of the wider Resistance debate over the response to the Nazi occupier and the German people in general. Some condemned the German race as being *de facto* guilty of Nazi crimes; others adopted a more nuanced view of ordinary Germans as innocent victims as much as the French. For some, Germany was devoid of culture and morality, ready ground for nazism, which thus became the latest manifestation of the hereditary enemy, 'l'éternelle Allemagne' (Michel 1962, 86-90; 208-17). For others, nazism was the latest manifestation of the Bismarckian militarism of the 1870-71 war, worlds apart from the 'other' Germany of Goethe and Bach, which André Gide saw as culturally on France's side (Atack 1989, 57-60). Resistance discourse was therefore split between those who saw Germans as universally Nazi, and those who made a distinction: in both cases the Nazis were seen as irredeemably evil, but with more or less indulgence towards the civilian population.

The Lettres à un ami allemand make, *a priori*, no distinction; the pronoun remains ‘vous’, never explained except in the 1947 preface. In the first letter, Camus writes: ‘Je vous aimais alors, mais c’est là que, déjà, je me séparais de vous’ (II, 221). This distancing peaks during the war: ‘Il y a cinq ans de cela, nous sommes séparés depuis ce temps’ (II, 221), separation which becomes final: ‘Nous nous reverrons bientôt si cela est possible. Mais alors, notre amitié sera finie. Vous serez plein de votre défaite et vous n’aurez pas honte de votre ancienne victoire, la regrettant plutôt de toutes vos forces écrasées’ (II, 221-2). The third letter closes menacingly with: ‘il y a désormais en nous une supériorité qui vous tuera’ (II, 237), the fourth with ‘adieu’ (II, 243).

This *a priori* condemnation of Germany is, however, nuanced in the fourth letter; indeed the nuance is beneath the surface of each letter. Camus’s explanation of France’s choice and acceptance of the need to fight is crucial, as is his statement that France has had to learn to resemble Germany in order to fight. As said earlier, the central theme of the Lettres à un ami allemand is the identical nihilistic point of departure of both France and Germany. The Germans have based their conduct on despair, seeing no difference between good and evil; France sees humanity’s intrinsic worth, and fights for justice. In the fourth letter, Camus states that the true point at which France and Germany separated was when Germany ceased to reflect on these philosophical problems: ‘C’est qu’en chemin vous avez abandonné la lucidité et trouvé plus commode (vous auriez dit indifférent) qu’un autre pensât pour vous et pour des millions d’Allemands’ (II, 240). This point, the beginning of the separation between France and Germany, is the arrival of Hitler. In a subtle way, then, Camus condemns not Germany, but the Nazi Reich. Indeed as the fourth letter continues, Camus recognises the contradiction between defending humanist ideals and fighting a war, stating that he cannot logically wish for the destruction of Germany: ‘Pour être fidèles à notre foi, nous sommes forcés de



respecter en vous ce que vous ne respectez pas chez les autres' (II, 242). Camus, then, views the war as a temporary stage: after the defeat of nazism, France and Germany will return to the European ideals he describes. The Lettres à un ami allemand are therefore anti-Nazi, not anti-German.

In this, Camus aligns himself with Resistance texts proposing reconciliation with a de-nazified Germany within the framework of European cooperation. Jacques Maritain, for example, wrote:

La solution fédérale consentie à la fois, après la liquidation sanglante des rêves hitlériens, par l'Europe et par les peuples d'Allemagne délivrés du nazisme et de l'esprit prussien, en d'autres termes une pluralité politique d'États germaniques conformes à la diversité des héritages culturels, et engagée dans une fédération européenne dont tous les États participants admettent pareillement les diminutions de souveraineté requises par une coopération organique institutionnelle. (Lipgens 1985, 276)<sup>12</sup>

Frenay, writing in Combat in March 1944, wrote: 'Nous ne concevons pas l'Europe sans l'Allemagne et la Russie' (Lipgens 1985, 341).<sup>13</sup>

Camus's position vis-à-vis Germany can therefore be read as a resolution of the antagonism between visions of Europe. Although one vision is rhetorically presented as superior to the other, it is nevertheless presented as encompassing the source of the opposing vision, and accepts the incorporation of Germany within a united Europe.

## A Certain idea of Europe: Resistance vs. Collaboration

As said above, Camus's Resistance idea of Europe is, on one level, highly problematic: its eurocentrism passes over the wars and divisions of European history. But this is not the point, which is rather to create a myth, a rallying point to unite people in a wider struggle. Indeed the conflict in the Lettres à un ami allemand between opposing ideas of Europe is broadly representative of the situation in occupied France, where the idea of

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<sup>12</sup> Original French on microfiche 3, 77/2.

<sup>13</sup> Original French on microfiche 3, 104.

Europe was one locus of ideological struggle between Resistance and collaborationist thought. The antithesis between ideas of Europe in the letter represents a wider antithesis between humanism and militarism, and illustrates the fact that the European idea is often a superficial ideal adopted by thinkers of radically different political persuasion. This section will give the background to this ideological conflict, and situate Camus's antithetical vision of Europe within it, showing how he represents the 'speech genres' of opposing discourses of Europe.

The idea of Europe in occupied France illustrates the point made in the introduction on the diverse politico-philosophical horizons from which advocates of European unity came; the inter-war debate, viewed retrospectively, united thinkers whose paths would diverge to an extraordinary extent in 1940. The European idea rapidly became part of the discourse of collaboration in the aftermath of the Armistice of 22 June 1940. Pétain declared that he would open 'la voie de la collaboration' and would seek to keep France's place in the New Europe (Pétain 1974, 549-50). A similar sentiment was prevalent at early collaborators' meetings: 'le seul chemin qui mène la France aujourd'hui vers une nouvelle Europe, c'est une étroite collaboration avec l'Allemagne' (Werner Von Rheinbaden 1941, 10). Nazi propaganda also made occasional use of this discourse, declaring that the European countries would have to work together with Germany in the creation of a European New Order. Commentators read such declarations as pragmatic uses of existing discourses for purely propaganda purposes, and consider that there was never any concrete Nazi vision of what Europe would consist of under their domination, other than as a hierarchy of nations submitting to the German leader-race (Salewski 1985; Bell 1992, 261). While undoubtedly true, this does not detract from the adoption by the Nazis of the discourse of European unity, so

popular in the inter-war years.<sup>14</sup> Raymond Aron wrote in 1941 that ‘on essaye [...] de gagner ceux qui, sensibles aux idéologies internationalistes, avaient été jadis partisans de la fédération européenne’ (1990, 98). Indeed, some of the participants in the inter-war debate came to new prominence as collaborationist intellectuals, pursuing the Europeanist debate of previous years.<sup>15</sup> Pierre Drieu La Rochelle, author of Le Jeune Européen and Genève ou Moscou in the 1920s, converted to fascism after the February 1934 riots and joined Doriot’s PPF. Alfred Fabre-Luce, another 1920s and 1930s Europeanist, glorified authority, race and power in his Anthologie de la Nouvelle Europe in 1942, and Francis Delaisi, a highly influential author in the 1920s debate, also collaborated and wrote about the future of a Reich-led Europe in La Révolution européenne, published in 1942 (Muet 1997, 64; Veillon 1984, 371-3). The journal L’Europe Nouvelle in the 1930s carried articles by Drieu and Fabre-Luce alongside those of Maritain and Beuve-Méry, who both became pro-European resisters, illustrating how the goal of European unity covers otherwise divergent views.

The collaborationist economic arguments for European integration were thus similar to the 1920s debate. In the Cahiers de l’Emancipation Nationale, Roger Vauquelin, leader of the youth wing of the PPF, developed a complete programme for economic unity, including exchange, employment, currency and politics:

Les barrières douanières seraient remplacées par une libre circulation. La surproduction serait absorbée par des débouchés qui ont toujours existé, mais dont il suffirait d’ouvrir les accès ou auxquels il faudrait donner un pouvoir d’achat suffisant. Le chômage serait orienté vers les centres d’absorption du travail, et l’on ne verrait plus, d’un côté d’une frontière, un chantier travaillant insuffisamment faute de bras, tandis que, de l’autre côté, des chômeurs resteraient désespérément en quête d’embauche. Harmonisation de la production, harmonisation des échanges, amèneraient automatiquement l’harmonisation de la monnaie. L’ensemble serait basé sur une harmonisation politique. (Vauquelin 1942, 107)

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<sup>14</sup> A point not lost on John Laughland (1997), who aims to expose the fascist ‘origins’ of the European idea. His work is reductionist, subordinated to a particularly 1990s British Eurosceptic agenda.

<sup>15</sup> The term ‘collaborationist’ is used to distinguish the largely Parisian ideological collaborators from the Vichyite proponents of ‘Collaboration d’État’ (Ory 1976, 10; Durand 1993, 25-6).

In a similar way, Ramon Fernandez, a leading PPF intellectual and leader of its intellectual offshoot, the Cercles Populaires Français wrote:

[S]i le monde moderne est économiquement solidaire, à *fortiori* cela est-il vrai dans l'Europe, dont les peuples et les richesses sont resserrés dans un petit espace. La distribution, l'exploitation et la circulation des richesses atteindront leur plein rendement dans la mesure où le mécanisme des ententes entre les différentes nations européennes sera plus régulier et plus efficace. (1942, 134)<sup>16</sup>

To Vauquelin's proposals for economic unity, Fernandez adds the theme of the European economy being too interdependent for nations to survive alone. By 1942 of course, these themes were common currency in intellectual circles; Europeanist economic arguments had been well rehearsed since World War One.<sup>17</sup>

The question of Europe was, however, bound up in the politics of collaboration. As with many other ideological matters, there was confusion within collaborationist circles, especially over reconciling the nationalism of Mein Kampf with an ideal of unity. While expressing practically identical politico-economic ideals to those of Coudenhove and Briand in the 1930s, then, the collaborationists' articles brought into relief an ideal of dominance, hierarchy and fascism, praising German might and recognising that without it, Europe would cease to exist (Ory 1976, 161-4).

Hierarchy and authority, then, feature heavily in Vauquelin's article quoted above, which continues, 'L'ensemble serait basé sur une harmonisation politique réalisée par la hiérarchie et l'autorité permettant aux responsables des Etats de faire appliquer les mesures nécessaires à l'imbrication de toutes les activités européennes' (Vauquelin 1942, 107). Nazi Germany would lead a hierarchy of European nations, as Jacques de Lesdain argued in L'Illustration: 'C'est à l'Allemagne que le rôle de conducteur est

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<sup>16</sup> For an analysis of Fernandez's role in the PPF, the creation of the Cercles Populaires Français and its activities, see Kidd 1987.

<sup>17</sup> See also Aron's 1942 analysis of Déat's economic arguments for collaboration (1990, 180-1).

dévolu; d'abord parce que la conception européenne lui est due; ensuite, parce qu'elle est mieux équipée que toute autre nation; enfin parce que la gloire de ses armes lui confère un prestige devant lequel tous les hommes de bonne foi doivent s'incliner' (cited in Durand 1993, 27). Collaborationist articles also argued that peoples needed a strong leader: 'La première condition d'une entente entre deux peuples, c'est que chacun possède un chef qualifié pour parler en son nom' (Petitjean 1942, 143). Fabre-Luce, despite his post-war return to more liberal values (Bonneville 1961, 107-10), argued for an aristocratic society run by an elite chosen through natural selection, and in whom individuals would find liberty (Fabre-Luce 1942, xv-xvii). A collaborationist Europe, then, signified a strong Germany leading a hierarchy of authoritarian states.

The collaborationists also glorified power. In 1941, Drieu La Rochelle commented in the re-launched collaborationist Nouvelle Revue Française: 'L'égalité ne fut jamais de ce monde, mais la vie sort de l'inégalité. L'intelligence du plus fort est la seule justice connue' (cited in Fabre-Luce 1942, 255). After a visit to Nazi Germany in 1942, Drieu stated: 'j'aime trop la force, j'ai trop admiré son déploiement dans mon pays à ses belles époques, et trop désespérément souhaité sa renaissance, pour ne pas la saluer là où elle est et tâcher d'en ramener sur les miens les avantages dont nous ne sûmes plus nous faire les initiateurs' (Drieu La Rochelle 1942, 109).

Another theme was an exclusivist fascist ideology that rejected liberal values. Vauquelin dismissed political liberalism as Europe's enemy; Maurice-Ivan Sicard vehemently rejected democracy in a 1942 critique of Briand and Stresemann: 'Ce rapprochement franco-allemand [...] ne reposait que sur le système démocrate, c'est-à-dire que [*sic*] des mensonges' (1942, 202). The collaborationist understanding of nation, and by extension Europe, was based on blood, race and soil, *ipso facto* exclusive, and directed especially against Jews, but also freemasons and communists (Doriot 1942,

476-8). Jacques de Lesdain stated that the European bloc ‘ne sera formé que par des hommes de même sang, ayant recouvré le génie propre que leur a légué le long travail des siècles. Pour atteindre ce but, nous devons admettre la nécessité d’un racisme de sauvegarde et agir en conséquence’ (Durand 1993, 31). Camus’s ideas of ‘terre à soldats, grenier à blé, industries domestiquées, intelligence dirigée’, or ‘une cohorte de nations dociles menée par une Allemagne de seigneurs’ (II, 234) clearly illustrate the stylisation in the third letter of Nazi/collaborationist ideology.

For the resisters, Carnus among them, these notions of authoritarianism, hierarchy, race and dominance came to constitute the very meaning of ‘Europe’, seen as ‘la négation des principes du projet de Briand et une vaste prison dont l’Allemagne serait le geôlier’ (Michel 1962, 420). Their initial rejection of collaborationist Europeanism was unambiguous, with exceptions such as Frenay, quoted in the introduction. As Guérin highlights, Sartre declared after the war: ‘l’Europe était un mot qui faisait horreur, il signifiait servitude’ (Guérin 1993b, 194; Sartre 1949, 26). Edgar Morin criticised the Resistance federalist movements, writing: ‘Je voyais dans la vieille Europe le foyer de l’impérialisme et de la domination plutôt que celui de la démocratie et de la liberté. Je distinguais, non la vérité du discours sur l’humanisme, la raison et la démocratie européenne, mais son mensonge’ (Morin 1987, 9). Stating that he had been pro-European before the war, he writes elsewhere: ‘Dans la mesure où je voyais dans l’Europe unie un mythe qui recouvrait la domination Nazie, j’étais devenu anti-européen’ (Centre Européen de Culture 1984, 198). This rejection of the European idea is no surprise: the discourse was a tributary of the general language of collaboration, inextricably linked with ideas of defeat and complicity with the occupier, which was unequivocally rejected. Yet by 1944, many of the non-communist Resistance movements had adopted the European idea in their statements on future French foreign

policy goals. It is significant, also, that Camus wrote the Lettres à un ami allemand this same year. There was a growing perception of a need for explicit internal and foreign policy aims; and the idea of Europe, as in the 1920s debate, seemed to offer a means of avoiding future European conflict.

The tone and economic focus of many Europeanist articles in the clandestine Resistance press seems *prima facie* to resemble the collaborationist Europeanism of such writers as Fernandez.<sup>18</sup> But, as with every other aspect of Resistance activity, their adoption of the European idea was in direct opposition to Nazi/Vichy notions of hierarchy and a strong Germany, once more illustrating the point made earlier that thinkers of differing ideological persuasion can subscribe to the idea of Europe. Beneath the goal of politico-economic unity lie the political philosophy which governs it and the perceived nature of the polity. Thus, Resistance texts passionately rejected collaborationist ideology, as seen in Camus's letters, and elaborated different ideals diametrically opposed to collaborationism. By 1942, the Resistance movements had condensed Vichy, the German Occupation, and repressive authoritarian politics into one idea of collaboration, 'for the purposes of opposition' (Kedward 1978, 159). This opposition was made up of historical precedents for revolutionary action, for example 1793 and the Commune, and 'the idea of Republic, the idea of Socialism, and the idea of Nation' (Shennan 1989, 37). Resistance Europeanism thus defended traditional French republican values of equality, liberty and democracy, added to federalism, the rule of law and an idea of progressive, socialist government. An example of this is the 1942 Combat manifesto: 'Au lieu d'une Europe, non pas unie, mais asservie sous la

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<sup>18</sup> A contributor to Liberté in 1941 wrote: 'L'Europe est le continent où la densité de la population est la plus élevée, le plus petit, 28 nations s'y entassent. Avec la division internationale du travail qui a rendu chaque nation dépendante des autres, avec le développement des moyens de transport, ces frontières sont devenues insupportables' (Michel 1962, 421).

schlague d'une Allemagne ivre de sa force, nous ferons avec les autres peuples une Europe unie, organisée sur la base du droit dans la *Liberté, l'égalité et la fraternité*' (Michel and Mirkine-Guetzévitch 1954, 145). A July 1942 *Libérer et Fédérer* article contained similar ideas: 'Gagner la paix; c'est réaliser l'idéal de justice et de liberté pour lequel les peuples se battent en ce moment et unir les nations européennes pour créer les conditions d'une paix durable' (Michel and Mirkine-Guetzévitch 1954, 142). Lecroix, quoted earlier, wrote of the need for a democratic revolution and the creation of a super-state, which would 'empêcher partout le retour de l'esprit de domination et de guerre, assurer à tout homme, quel que soit le sol où il est né, quelles que soient sa religion et sa race, la sécurité d'une vie vraiment humaine' (Lipgens 1985, 300).<sup>19</sup>

A constant theme was the call for the limitation of national sovereignty; for the resisters, all-powerful nations were a cause of war and not a possible outcome of it: 'La limitation et l'abandon des souverainetés nationales conduisent naturellement à substituer au système des forces nationales au service d'un Nationalisme ou d'un Impérialisme, le système des forces internationales au service d'un organisme internationale de souveraineté supérieure aux souverainetés nationales' (Michel and Mirkine-Guetzévitch 1954, 395-6). The idea of nation was thus subordinated to higher principles. This was accompanied in many publications by calls for an egalitarian European federation, often based upon the Swiss or US model. *La Marseillaise* argued for 'une Europe libre politiquement et économiquement; une confédération où les États, grands et petits soient sur un plan d'égalité, comme la confédération helvétique' (Lipgens 1985, 352).<sup>20</sup> Finally, Resistance Europeanism often saw peace as not merely a European problem: many wished to see a World federation established after the war; an

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<sup>19</sup> Original French on microfiche 3, 87/2

<sup>20</sup> Original French on microfiche 3, 110.



integrated Europe was seen as path towards this and not an end in itself. Paul Bastid wrote in Les Cahiers Politiques in 1943:

Nous ne sommes pas capables, par nos propres moyens, de refréner les appetits de domination qui, d'âge en âge, se réveillent dans le peuple allemand. Il faut, pour les tenir en respect, la présence réelle de l'Amérique, sans laquelle nous n'aurions pas gagné la guerre de 1918 [...] si une organisation européenne se révélait possible, malgré les oppositions présentes, devrait-elle s'articuler avec l'organisation de la Société mondiale. (Michel and Mirkine-Guetzévitch 1954, 392, 4)

The Comité Français pour la Fédération Européenne declaration and the Mouvement de Libération Nationale programme both talked about European federation as being an 'étape vers la Fédération mondiale des peuples', or as a way to 'entraîner les peuples de la terre vers une organisation fédérale du monde' (Lipgens 1985, 350;<sup>21</sup> Michel and Mirkine-Guetzévitch 1954, 399).

It is clear that the resisters and collaborators did not believe in the same Europe. Underlying world-views showed that European integration was a secondary ideal, part of a series of deeper political motivations. The presence, in 1944, of two opposing discourses of Europe sharing similar aims of unity is encapsulated in Camus's remark 'Notre Europe n'est pas la vôtre' (II, 233). Allowing for hostility towards the idea of Europe and explaining the initial rejection, he defends a Resistance conception through explicit demarcation from collaborationist notions: 'Pendant tout ce temps où nous n'avons servi obstinément, silencieusement, que notre pays, nous n'avons jamais perdu de vue une idée et un espoir, toujours présents en nous, et qui étaient ceux de l'Europe. Il est vrai que depuis cinq ans nous n'en avons pas parlé, mais c'est que vous-mêmes en parliez trop' (II, 233). This process can be conceptualised as a re-appropriation of the Europeanist discourse: in order to use the term 'Europe' in clandestine publications, and to avoid comparison with the Vichy/Nazi idea, initial re-appropriation had to be

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<sup>21</sup> Original French on microfiche 3, 108/2.

undertaken. Camus's third letter is representative of Resistance rejection of collaborationist ideas of Europe and of subsequent re-appropriation of the discourse using opposing values. If his focus is less on notions of federalism and limitation of sovereignty, common themes of Resistance Europeanism, the process is the same in his construction of a myth.

The concept of re-appropriating discourse is part of the wider problematic of Resistance writing, and has been usefully examined by Ian Higgins in his analyses of Resistance poetry. Higgins highlights a line in 'Octobre 41' by Pierre Seghers, 'la fausse parole', which, he argues, exemplifies the problem faced by the clandestine press.<sup>22</sup> Once-familiar terms, including 'patrie' and 'Jeanne d'Arc', had been used by the occupiers and by Vichy in order to connote concepts alien to the nascent Resistance movements, hence Resistance poems dealing with the theme of the Frenchman coming to terms with living in what seemed like a foreign country. In such a climate, the Resistance and *contrebande* poets decided that they could not remain silent and instead sought to reinvest misappropriated words with meanings akin to the growing Resistance struggle and the idea of France they wished to develop. Thus was born a Resistance mythology of terms and ideas: '[E]xemplary figures from the past like Joan of Arc, or exemplary events like Valmy, or exemplary songs like the *Marseillaise*, all of which are often referred to in Resistance poetry, become an "intoxicating legend" used as a counter-poison to Nazi and Vichy myth' (Higgins 1985b, 47).<sup>23</sup> An example of a word used in this way is Joan of Arc: 'Used by Vichy as the exemplary enemy of the English, she is

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<sup>22</sup> 'Ils ressusciteront vêtus de feu dans nos écoles/ Arrachés aux bras de leurs enfants ils entendront/ Avec la guerre, l'exil et la fausse parole/ D'autres enfants dire leurs noms' (Higgins 1982, 160).

<sup>23</sup> Higgins quotes here from Louis Aragon's 'De l'exactitude historique en poésie', and his notion of the 'légende enivrante'.

used by Resistance poets as the exemplary enemy of the Invader' (Higgins 1985b, 47-8; also 1982, 18-19).

Higgins' analysis of Resistance poetry can also be applied to the idea(s) of Europe Camus develops in the third of the Lettres à un ami allemand. The above analysis showed how Camus elaborated two opposing concepts of Europe representative of the wider ideological struggles in occupied France, in order to defend a Republican, humanist Resistance ideal of European harmony. In so doing, Camus divests Europe of its fascistic connotations and creates another myth in its place in order to inspire the struggle and to revalorise an ideal perceived to have been tarnished.

Exemplified in the third letter, this concept of re-appropriation was a key element of Camus's wartime thought. An examination of other texts Camus wrote for clandestine publications affords a better understanding of his conception of language in occupied France, and more precisely of how the idea of Europe embodies these. 'Sur une philosophie de l'expression' is a review of Parain's essays Recherches sur la nature et les fonctions du langage and Essai sur le logos platonicien, both published in 1942.<sup>24</sup> Camus's essay was itself published in Seghers' Poésie 44 and is thus contemporaneous with the writing of the Lettres à un ami allemand; it is possible to view the letters as a practical working out of the conclusions of 'Sur une philosophie de l'expression', a text which Camus criticism generally passes over.<sup>25</sup>

Parain's work displays his conviction of language's autonomy, arguing that we are situated within language, and spoken by it, while also positing God's existence as its guarantor (France 1995, 597-8). The works Camus reviews constitute a history of

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<sup>24</sup> Parain's theories of language had preoccupied and impressed Camus for a number of years. See C2, 34-5, 95-6, 110, 113, 153, 155, 184 and Quilliot's introduction to 'Sur une philosophie' in II, 1671.

<sup>25</sup> See Todd 1996, 480; Lottman 1981, 274, 294-5. The most complete analysis of the article, relating Camus's reading of Parain to his understanding of Greek philosophy, is in Archambault (1972).

philosophy through its engagement with the question of language itself. After his examination, Camus writes, Parain refuses to conclude, remaining faithful to the essential paradox of language: ‘Mes paroles déforment peut-être ma pensée, mais si je ne raisonne pas, ma pensée s’évanouit’ (II, 1678). It is an almost Camusian mediation between extremes, which, like Camus’s exhortation of virtues such as intelligence and courage, argues that the correct approach to using language is honesty: ‘L’idée profonde de Parain est une idée d’honnêteté: la critique du langage ne peut éluder ce fait que nos paroles nous engagent et que nous devons leur être fidèles’ (II, 1679).

Camus’s object is to highlight the relevance of Parain’s work for wartime France. Thus, the Resistance becomes for Camus a fight over the meanings of words, and the very nature of language itself. In a phrase redolent of Le Mythe de Sisyphe, he wrote: ‘il suffit que le langage soit privée de sens pour que tout le soit et que le monde devienne absurde. Nous ne connaissons que par les mots. Leur inefficacité démontrée, c’est notre aveuglement définitif’ (II, 1673). This suggests that the way in which France has been overrun prefigures total breakdown of previously held truths, reflecting the feeling highlighted by Higgins that the resisters felt isolated in a foreign land. Abuse of language is inherent in Camus’s assimilation of Parain’s thought to the whole Resistance struggle: ‘Il semble bien [que notre époque] manque d’un dictionnaire. C’est une chose, du moins, qui paraît évidente à ceux qui espèrent pour ce monde, où tous les mots sont prostitués, une justice claire et une liberté sans équivoque’ (II, 1671-2). The vocabulary echoes Resistance verse, for example Pierre Emmanuel, who declared: ‘Ce régime ne pouvait vivre qu’en pervertissant les mots: mais qui blesse le langage, blesse l’homme’ (cited in Higgins 1985b, 49). Camus’s condemnation is similar: ‘[N]ous ne donnons pas le même sens aux mêmes mots, nous ne parlons plus la même langue’ (II, 233).

After acknowledging the dangers of language abuse, Camus's review interprets Parain's work as an exhortation to the Resistance to wrest back the vocabulary which the Vichy regime and the Nazis had appropriated: what was needed was a set of fixed and determined meanings around which people could unite, myths and stories to inspire the struggle. Camus shares the motivations Higgins writes of, seeking to re-appropriate elements of discourse and use them against the occupiers:

La situation dans laquelle se trouvait Socrate n'est pas, en effet, sans analogie avec la nôtre. Il y avait du mal dans les âmes parce qu'il y avait contradiction dans les discours, parce que les mots les plus courants étaient munis de plusieurs significations, contrefaits, détournés, du simple usage qu'on leur imaginait. De semblables problèmes ne peuvent pas nous laisser indifférents. Nous aussi, nous avons nos sophistes et nous réclamons quelque Socrate, puisque ce fut la tâche de Socrate que de tenter la guérison des âmes par la recherche d'un dictionnaire. Si les mots justice, bonté, beauté, n'ont pas de sens, les hommes peuvent se déchirer. (II, 1673-4)

Language is of capital importance in Camus's analysis. If words have no set and understood meanings, then everything is permitted; a situation not far removed from Ivan Karamazov's 'tout est permis', cited in L'Homme révolté (II, 465-71). Indeed, Parain's argument was that language had to answer the same questions as God himself: without language nothing exists (II, 1673). The Resistance's Socratic task was to elaborate this new unequivocal dictionary against the Nazi/Vichy 'sophistes'.

Anterior to the re-appropriation of language was the recognition of the work of the 'sophistes' and the fact that language was slipping in the first place. This was Camus's point in 'Tout ne s'arrange pas' (1944), in which he accused Pierre Pucheu less of betraying France than of lacking imagination: 'Il [Pucheu] a cru [...] qu'un gouvernement de défaite était un gouvernement comme les autres et que les mots ministre, pouvoir, lois, condamnation, ne changeaient pas de sens quand la France elle-même changeait de visage' (II, 1468). Thus, those who did not recognise that words no longer meant what they used to were guilty of naïveté and poor imagination; under a different regime, language *ipso facto* underwent more or less subtle changes. Towards

the end of 'Sur une philosophie de l'expression', Camus reflects on the urgency of the task of re-appropriation in a thinly-veiled description of the tense situation of France in 1944:

Ce qui caractérise notre siècle, ce n'est peut-être pas tant d'avoir à reconstruire le monde que d'avoir à le repenser. Cela revient en fait à lui donner son langage. [...] Aujourd'hui où les questions que nous pose le monde sont bien plus pressantes, nous cherchons nos mots avec encore plus d'angoisse. Les lexiques qu'on nous propose ne peuvent nous convenir. Et il est naturel que les meilleurs parmi nos esprits forment une sorte d'académie passionnée à la recherche d'un dictionnaire français. (II, 1680-1)

The quote contains a clear rejection of Nazi/Vichy use of language, portraying the Resistance as an academy re-appropriating language and denying its 'wrong' uses. The 'meilleurs parmi nos esprits' echoes the 'meilleurs d'entre nous' of the third letter (II, 233), indicating the commonality of both texts' preoccupations.

The third letter therefore consists of a working-out of the principles of 'Sur une philosophie de l'expression'. The antithesis of the letter can be read as a device used to re-appropriate 'Europe' and situate it instead in the 'dictionnaire français' of words reclaimed from their fascist uses. The contents of each conception of Europe have already been examined, and the contrasts between them made clear. But it remains to show what their antithetical relationship adds to this. As said earlier, Camus opens the third letter with the statement 'Nous ne parlons plus la même langue [...] notre Europe n'est pas la vôtre' (II, 233). This is the radical point of departure, underpinning Camus's view that Europe does not and should not signify what the Nazis believe it to signify. The suggestion of speaking different languages signifies an almost insurmountable difference and inscribes from the start an idea of a fundamental breakdown in communication, permanently separating the Resistance concept from the Nazi concept. As a result of this rhetorical separation, nothing in Camus's Resistance concept can reflect fascistic connotations. Further statements in the third letter attribute authenticity to the Resistance concept against Nazi inauthenticity, for example in the phrase '[le

langage] que je vous tenais avant 1939, c'est celui que je vous tiens aujourd'hui' (II, 233). This demonstrates Camus's continuity and consistency; his ideas are shown to predate the others. It rhetorically inscribes, furthermore, the idea of honesty highlighted in 'Sur une philosophie de l'expression'. Consistency also reinforces authenticity. When Camus writes 'c'est que vous-mêmes en parliez trop fort' (II, 233), the Nazi concept is dismissed as cynical, inauthentic expediency because of its excessive emphasis (Methinks the lady doth protest too much). In contrast, the Resistance Europe is presented as an idea and a hope that never die.

Camus writes about the purity of the Resistance idea of Europe, 'le sens pur qu'il ne cesse pas d'avoir pour nous' (II, 234), further underlining its authenticity; all else is automatically impure and inauthentic. In addition to the authentic/inauthentic split, finally, the antithesis of the third letter constructs an idea of a permanent (Resistance) idea of Europe against a transient (Nazi) conception, inscribed, as seen above, in a construction of European history. The inscription, however, goes deeper than this: Camus links the Resistance concept with nature itself in metaphors plunging the 'true' Europe into an eternity which even further excludes the Nazi vision: '[J]e sais [...] que tout dans l'Europe, le *paysage* et *l'esprit*, vous nie tranquillement' (II, 236; my emphasis). Culture (*esprit*) and nature are inextricably linked both with each other and with Europe, leaving no room for a concept excluded from them. The Nazi concept is therefore rhetorically stripped of legitimacy, excluded from this mythical 'true' idea of Europe. It is left as 'une version odieuse et ridicule' (II, 234). 'Tranquillement' suggests the superiority of the Resistance concept; since it is linked with the earth itself it has nothing to fear. Victory is therefore as inevitable as the changing seasons:

Les armes dont l'esprit européen dispose contre vous sont les mêmes que détient cette terre sans cesse renaissante en moissons et en corolles. La lutte que nous menons a la certitude des victoires puisqu'elle a l'obstination des printemps. (II, 236)

Further to the idea of victory, the passage carries out a re-appropriation of the word 'terre', so often used in Nazi and Vichy propaganda to connote a simple peasant ideal or an exclusive homeland. The third letter constructs Nazi Europe as 'cet espace cerclé de mers et de montagnes' but of Resistance Europe as 'terre de l'esprit' (II, 234); 'terre' is thus implicitly linked to the humanist ideals examined earlier.

The permanence/transience antithesis subtly adds to the reconciliation mentioned earlier: Nazism grew in Europe but is shown to be a brief phenomenon which has not 'understood' the history of Europe and which is thereby doomed to failure. The Nazi idea's very transience shows that the German correspondent has suffered, to borrow a phrase, a momentary lapse of reason, only to fall back in with the long European tradition in the future. Camus closes the letter with the phrase 'L'Europe sera encore à faire. Elle est toujours à faire. Mais du moins elle sera encore l'Europe' (II, 236).

### The Comité Français pour la Fédération Européenne (CFFE)

The Lettres à un ami allemand show Camus passionately defending a vision of European culture, history and unity, in a far more developed way than the nascent Europeanism of Alger Républicain and Le Soir Républicain, and demonstrative of personal acceptance of the idea. He was less concerned with politico-economic details of European integration than with contributing to a Resistance struggle to re-appropriate the very discourse of Europe. That Camus's wartime Europeanism, however, was also concerned with practical questions is shown by his participation in the Europeanist Resistance and post-Liberation Comité Français pour la Fédération Européenne (CFFE). As well as demonstrating another facet of Camus's political activity, which has only



ever been briefly mentioned in the literature,<sup>26</sup> this episode shows Camus's concrete incorporation of Europeanism into his own outlook.

By mid 1944, Spinelli and Rossi's Movimento Italiano per la Federazione Europea (MFE) was well-established in clandestine circles. The theses of the MFE founding conference and the Geneva Declaration would have been reasonably well known, and many Resistance movements in the former southern zone were now publishing Europeanist articles in their clandestine journals. In June 1944, Camus was one of three MLN resisters who founded the CFFE with a clandestine 'Déclaration' (repr. in Lipgens 1985, 347-50).<sup>27</sup> The others were Gilbert Zaksas and André Ferrat. Ferrat, a former Communist, had been involved with the journal Que Faire? before the war, joining the Resistance in 1942 in 'Franc Tireur' (Lefebvre 1993, 240; Maitron and Pannetier 1986). Zaksas was a member of the Europeanist Resistance movement 'Libérer et Fédérer'. Pia was also involved with the CFFE; Ferrat later stated that he had founded the 'Comité clandestin pour la fédération européenne' (probably a predecessor of the CFFE) with Pia, Jacques Baumel, Maurice Guérin 'etc.' (cited in Lefebvre 1993, 240). Camus's membership of the CFFE can be corroborated by reference to unpublished correspondence. In 1946, Francis Gérard, secretary of the Comité international pour la fédération européenne (CIFE), as the CFFE would soon be renamed, wrote to Camus: 'Nos membres ont exprimé, à différentes reprises, le désir d'entendre celui [Camus] dont le nom figure sur les statuts comme celui du fondateur du Comité international pour la fédération européenne'.<sup>28</sup>

Its declaration opened by situating the CFFE within the Europeanist current of Resistance thought, the foundation of the MFE, the Geneva Declaration and the

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<sup>26</sup> In Lipgens 1982, 124; 1985, 348; Smets 1991, 38 n. 1.

<sup>27</sup> Original French on microfiche 3, 108/1-108/2.

clandestine debates. It then enumerated seven goals. Denouncing the problems posed by so many frontiers in Europe, it exhorted European countries to form a federation, more solid than the League of Nations, to which would be conferred responsibility for economic, military and foreign relations, and colonial and citizenship questions. The declaration stated that nations would continue to exist, but only to administrate in areas appropriate to that level; the goal of European federation must take priority over all others to avoid nations gaining too much power and autonomy in post-war reconstruction. It closed with a call for support from other organisations. The MFE sent the CFFE a 'lettre ouverte' in August 1944 sending greetings and encouragement, noting the similarity between the two movements' aims (Lipgens 1985, 691-3).

Shortly after the Liberation, Gérard became secretary of the CFFE, which acquired temporary offices on the rue des Pyramides in Paris and began organising a conference to be held in Paris. In March 1945, before the conference, the first issue of the Cahiers de la fédération européenne was published, reprinting the MFE and CFFE programmes and the Geneva Declaration, thus making them available to the general public for the first time. Invitations to the conference were sent to a number of different personalities. Camus, on behalf of the organising committee, invited Spinelli; in his letter, he wrote that the conference would be held '[a]fin de réunir les expériences des fédéralistes des différents pays et de confronter leurs points de vue pour élaborer une politique fédéraliste commune'.<sup>29</sup> According to the list of 'personnalités invitées à la conférence pour la fédération européenne', annexed to Camus's letter, 52 people were invited, including Auriol, Baumel, Guérin, Mayer, Philip, Rebeyrat, Verneyras and Zaksas from the Consultative Assembly. Delegates were also invited from Britain, Switzerland, Italy,

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<sup>28</sup> IMEC: Fonds Camus: Letter from F. Gérard to Albert Camus, 5 December 1946.

<sup>29</sup> HAEC: AS 7: Letter from Camus to Spinelli, 19 March 1945, repr. in appendix.

Spain, Holland, Germany, Austria and the USA.<sup>30</sup> The conference took place at the Maison de la Chimie from 22 to the 25 March 1945. Camus was present as editor of Combat with other editors such as Emmanuel Mounier of Esprit, Michel Collinet of Volonté and Ferrat of Lyon Libre. Also present were members of other European Resistance groups and Socialist party representatives. Spinelli attended using the cover-name Antonelli seen in the list of invitees, as is confirmed in a letter from his wife Ursula to Camus, which also proves that Spinelli and Camus met:

Je cueille [*sic*] l'occasion pour vous saluer de la part de mon mari. Vous vous rappelez peut-être de nous. Nous étions en France pour une des premières manifestations fédéralistes internationales, en printemps 1945, sous le nom d'Antonelli, étant encore illégaux en Italie.<sup>31</sup>

The main speeches at the conference, drafts of which were published in the Cahiers de la fédération européenne, were made by Ferrat and Spinelli. A five-part manifesto was drawn up on the basis of the conference conclusions, covering various aspects of European integration including the place of domestic policy and the idea of world federation. It closed with a plan to rename the CFFE the 'Comité Internationale pour la Fédération Européenne' (CIFE), with a central committee including Camus, Baumel, Ferrat, Zaksas, Robert Verdier, Guérin, John Hynd, Spinelli and Willi Eichler. The Committee aimed to make contact with parties and movements across Europe and inform them of federalist ideas, prepare for a federalists' congress of delegates from movements all over Europe, and organise federalist propaganda.<sup>32</sup>

A week before the Paris conference, Spinelli had written at length to Camus about his ideas on European integration: 'je vais essayer de vous exposer [...] quelques-unes de

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<sup>30</sup> Auriol, Frenay and Verdier were unable to attend but agreed with the resolutions of the conference (Lipgens 1982, 127, n. 80).

<sup>31</sup> IMEC: Fonds Camus: Letter from Ursula Spinelli to Albert Camus, 1949.

<sup>32</sup> HAEC: ER: 'Compte-rendu de la conférence fédéraliste de Paris, 22-25 mars 1945'. See also Lipgens 1982, 126, n. 80, 129-30.

mes idées à propos de notre travail commun'. The letter begins with a few details on Spinelli's life, his membership of the Communist party followed by his arrest and internment on Ventotene. It then goes into some detail on Spinelli's conception of history and politics and his ideas on a European federation.<sup>33</sup>

It is thus clear that Camus's Europeanism, as well as being a feature of his writing, led him to lend his support to the organisational efforts of the Resistance movements for European unity. Clearly he had now adopted the European idea as part of his political outlook, in both his writing and political activity.

## Conclusion

The term Europe was one word which Camus, along with the Resistance movements, sought to re-appropriate in the clandestine press. The third letter is an extended battle over meanings. Beginning by clearly stating that Europe bears strikingly different connotations depending on one's ideological stance, Camus ridicules its Nazi incarnation through a process of caricature and impassioned denunciation. This rhetorically distills and 'purifies' the discourse of Europe of its fascistic connotations. This done, Camus is then able to invest the idea with profoundly Republican and typically Resistance ideals of future harmony, mutual respect and 'true' love for one's country.

Representative of Resistance Europeanism and of the Resistance struggle over discourse, the third letter demonstrates Camus's evolving Europeanism, further evinced by his militancy in the CFFE/CIFE. Compared to the Europeanist articles in Alger Républicain/Le Soir Républicain, the third letter shows a deeper understanding of the

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<sup>33</sup> IMEC: Fonds Camus: Letter from Altiero Spinelli to Albert Camus, 18 March 1945. There is also a copy of this letter in the HAEC, AS 7.

questions facing Europe, at least within the context of occupied France. As comparison with French Europeanist wartime texts, Resistance and collaborationist, has shown, Camus does not seek to elaborate a programme for the politico-economic reorganisation of Europe in the third letter, rather defending a European republican, humanist tradition and reappropriating the discourse itself of Europe. The political objectives were instead a part of the activity of the CFFE/CIFE, although it is impossible to evaluate Camus's input to the elaboration of its principles. The wartime discourse of Europe, then, constitutes a different 'voice' of Europe within Camus's polyphonous treatment of Europe. Within the limited context of the third letter, it acts monologically, using superficial dialogism as a means of privileging one particular discourse over another. Camus's individual sense of Europeanism, clear from the text, relates dialogically with a stylised collaborationist ideological stance, and in so doing, engages with both collaborationist and Resistance texts.

### III. From Post-war to Cold War

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#### Europeanist journalism and *engagement*, 1944-1960

By 1945 it becomes clear that Camus has adopted the idea of European unity as a significant element of his political outlook. Chapter One demonstrated how he used a number of sources in order to construct plans for European unity in the face of war. Chapter Two focused on his emotive defence of Europe against the Nazi threat, his re-appropriation of Europeanist discourse and construction of a humanist, republican ideal, less concerned with politico-economic integration than with a certain view of what Europe represents.

This chapter examines the evolution of Camus's Europeanism from the Liberation of Paris in 1944 until his death in 1960 in his journalism, occasional political writing and political activity. This is a much longer time-frame than the two years of journalism analysed in Chapter One and the two years of resistance writing in Chapter Two, but the rationale is this: Camus's post-war attitude to Europeanism settled within roughly two years. By the time he wrote 'Ni victimes ni bourreaux' in 1946, his political stance vis-à-vis European unity was largely established. The same can be said for his political activity by 1948.

After a lull in interest between 1944 and 1946, the European idea became part of the discourse of neutralism in the early Cold War. It developed further within Cold War logic after the 1947 Marshall Plan effectively restricted European unity to Western Europe, and during the debate over the European Defence Community (EDC) before its rejection in 1954 by the French parliament. The establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957 also changed the nature of debate on the European idea. The discourse of Europe, then, shifted in new directions after its previous manifestations, illustrating its constantly changing nature depending on internal realities and external threats. This chapter

situates Camus in the context of this shifting European discourse in the post-war to cold-war period. It begins by examining Europeanist aspects of Camus's editorials for the former Resistance newspaper Combat, showing how the idea of European unity gradually faded from focus. It then follows Camus's political activities, demonstrating how his conception of *engagement* evolved after the Liberation, and how his Europeanism fits (or does not) into this. Finally, the chapter analyses 'Ni victimes ni bourreaux', the series of articles Camus wrote for Combat in 1946, viewing them as a shift in Camus's discourse of Europe away from political vicissitudes towards first principles, a guiding philosophy of Europe. The chapter highlights throughout Camus's growing ambivalence vis-à-vis Europe, which manifests itself in various ways, as well as a shift from Europeanism towards *mondialisme*. This in turn leads to gradual abandonment of the both the European idea and the idea of world unity, evinced by an almost total absence of articles on either in the 1950s.

### The Combat editorials, 1944-45

The history of Combat is well known.<sup>1</sup> One of the most original Resistance newspapers, it quickly gained a reputation as a 'journal d'analyse et d'idées' and for its well-known contributors (Martin 1990, 11). Although broadly left wing, representing classic Resistance narratives of hostility towards the Third Republic and *épuration*, it did not develop any one political stance, but encouraged diversity of opinion. Financial difficulties and a printers' strike in 1947 led the Combat team, already battling with personal and professional difficulties, to leave the title to its original founder Claude Bourdet, who sold it to Henri Smadja.

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<sup>1</sup> See Ajchenbaum 1994; Desmouliers 1990; Grenier 1987, 217-36; Guérin 1990; Smets 1987; Viallaneix 1985. For the general background of the press at the Liberation, see Mottin 1949 and Bellanger *et al* 1975, 273-321.

Between August 1944 and September 1945, Camus contributed some 138 editorials and articles on a range of issues, some of them unsigned.<sup>2</sup> The following section examines his Europeanism, situating it in the context of the Liberation, and showing its debt to Resistance ideals. It begins with an analysis of his idea of wartime European solidarity constituting the basis of future European cooperation. It then looks at politico-economic issues, highlighting differences with and similarities to the Algiers journalism. An important element is Camus's growing shift away from Europeanism towards a goal of world peace and unity.<sup>3</sup>

### Renewal based on European solidarity

In common with most resisters, Camus viewed the end of the war as an opportunity for a fresh start in Europe's political, social and economic life, encapsulated in Combat's subtitle 'De la résistance à la révolution'. Many of Camus's editorials focus on transforming the French economy, on preventing the leaders who had agreed to the Armistice from returning to power, and on bringing former collaborators to justice. This desire for total renewal also included the reorganisation of Europe:

The European resistance movements had anticipated a *tabula rasa* in Europe at the end of the war, with the nation-state discredited by war and defeat and literally erased in the Nazi New Order, which would favour the installation of a European federal system and preempt the recovery of the nation-states. (Morgan 1996, 45)

An emotive example of this *tabula rasa* thinking is the 4 November editorial responding to attacks on an article by Jean Guéhenno:

Ce pays est pauvre et nous sommes pauvres avec lui. L'Europe est misérable, sa misère est la nôtre. Sans richesses et sans héritage matériel, nous sommes peut-être entrés dans une liberté où nous pouvons nous livrer à cette folie qui s'appelle la vérité. (II, 280)

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<sup>2</sup> Quilliot has established as far as possible which are his. Camus published a selection, alongside later political writing in Actuelles I in 1950. Quilliot selected others for publications in the second volume of the Pléiade edition in 1965. For the full list, see II, 1949-54. Others are printed in Stokle (1970), a sometimes inaccurate volume, and Desmouliers (1990). In this chapter, where no reference is given other than the date of the article, the original edition of the newspaper was consulted. My thanks to M. Kamara of the Salle des Microformes, Institut d'Études Politiques de Paris.

<sup>3</sup> Referred to as *mondialisme* in this chapter, thus avoiding the more politically charged term internationalism. For a wider analysis of Camus's politics at the Liberation, see Becker 1986, and for an interesting comparison of themes of Camus's journalism and fictional works during this period, Lévi-Valensi 1990a.



Camus sought to defend ideals against realism, arguing that Europe had been given its last chance to put its energies into rebuilding following new principles.

On a more concrete level, his 29 November 1944 editorial defended the right of countries such as Belgium, Italy, Poland and Greece to renew their own institutions according to the plans of their internal resistance movements, and criticised the Allies, who were blocking such a fresh start: ‘toutes ces crises européennes se ressemblent. De vieilles équipes revenues au pouvoir n’accordent pas leur politique aux aspirations que la misère et l’oppression ont fait naître chez les peuples’ (Desmouliers 1990, 115). He reiterates this on 9 December 1944, commenting on Greece’s problems after the November general strike in Athens, the December riots, Churchill’s defence of British intervention, and the imposition of Papandreou:

Les nations européennes veulent un ordre social qui tienne compte de leurs souffrances passées. Leurs exigences sont proportionnelles à leurs misères. Le peuple grec a connu l’une des misères les plus longues et les plus atroces qu’une nation ait connue pendant ces quatre ans. L’idée qu’on lui donnera satisfaction avec le ministre d’un roi imposé par deux dictateurs, avec des mesures qui visent au maintien des milices policières créées par la dictature grecque est une idée puérile. (Combat 9-12-1944)

This quotation shows Camus’s concern that the principle of complete renewal based on the rights of the resistance movements be applied across Europe: the French situation was representative of Europe, which had forged, as many wrote in the clandestine press, new solidarity in common struggle, illustrating the basic Combat premise: ‘Pour la France comme pour l’Europe, le drame est d’avoir à mener en même temps une guerre et une révolution’ (Desmouliers 1990, 115). European, and indeed global, solidarity is an important theme of the 18 December editorial:

La paix est le bien de tous les peuples. Nous savons, aujourd’hui, que les nations du monde ont des destins communs, que la gifle donnée à un Tchèque de Prague se répercute sur la vie de ce bourgeois de Fontainebleau, de ce kholkozien d’Ukraine, ou de ce fermier du Texas. (Desmouliers 1990, 116)<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Camus’s used a similar phrase to this on a number of occasions: see ‘La Crise de l’homme’ (Camus 1996, 21); ‘Ni Victimes ni bourreaux’ (II, 341) and the South American lecture ‘Le temps des meurtriers’

This solidarity was also present in victory, as Camus underlined after the cessation of hostilities in Europe:

Dans toutes les capitales de l'Europe et du monde, des millions d'hommes, à la même heure, hurlaient la même joie [...] [C]e qu'ensemble ils célébraient, c'est la force que donnent aux hommes libres la conscience de leurs droits et leur amour forcené de l'indépendance. (Combat, 9-5-1945)

This classic Resistance ideal of solidarity born of suffering and common struggle, leading to a new beginning, implies a certain view of who has the right to undertake such a renewal. It is clear from previous quotations that for Camus, the Resistance movements' struggle conferred on them this unique right, which he states openly in November 1944: 'La résistance européenne, même si elle le fait maladroitement, exprime l'espoir et l'exigence des peuples européennes' (Desmouliers 1990, 115). This ideal was, of course, overshadowed by the rapid fragmentation of the Resistance, its failure to unite as a coherent political movement, and the rapid return of established political parties, especially the PCF, alongside new movements such as the MRP. In November, sensing these difficulties, Camus viewed Minister of Information P. H. Teitgen's proposal to reduce the paper allowance for former resistance newspapers as an attack on the validity of their political opinions:

De bons esprits nous diront que nous défendons seulement les intérêts d'une fraction. Cela est vrai. Mais nous pensons que les intérêts de cette fraction sont ceux du pays tout entier. [...] En France comme dans toute l'Europe libérée, l'offensive contre la résistance est commencée. Mais cette offensive est aussi celle des forces de réaction contre la volonté populaire de rénovation. (Combat 30-11-1944)

In addition to his defence of the Resistance's unique right to decide matters after the Liberation, and in common with many resisters, Camus argued forcefully for France's role in determining Europe's future. A pressing concern in De Gaulle's fight to win Allied recognition of the provisional government and France a place in post-war negotiations, this question arises in three 1944 editorials (14, 15 and 17 October):

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(Bartfeld 1995, 65-6). The same idea is present in the 3 December 1944 editorial: 'Nous savons maintenant que nous sommes solidaires, dans la vie et dans la mort' (Combat, 3-12-1944).

La paix de la démocratie ne peut se passer de notre voix, pas plus que de celle d'aucun des peuples qui feront l'Europe de demain [...] La France est loin d'être tout en Europe, mais il est bien certain qu'on ne pourra pas faire l'Europe sans elle. (Combat, 17-10-1944)

Camus does not specify the nature of 'l'Europe de demain', but the phrase is no less significant, being the title of the resistance Europeanist anthology published in 1945 by the Centre d'Action pour la Fédération Européenne. Similarly, 'faire l'Europe' was a common slogan in the clandestine press, and indeed echoes 'l'Europe sera toujours à faire' of Lettres à un ami allemand.

Motivations behind this desire to see France leading the construction of European unity doubtless include a Gaullist idea of 'grandeur', of France regaining its status in the global order, and a hope for Franco-German reconciliation, the cornerstone of 1920s Europeanism and of crucial importance during and after World War Two. It becomes explicit in Camus's editorials on Germany's future in Europe, which move from pessimism to guarded hope in the months following Liberation. On 18 September he is stunned by an attitude which many observed in Germany in the final stages of war: 'Le peuple allemand dort. Il dort d'un sommeil traversé de cauchemars et d'angoisses, mais il dort' (Combat 18-9-1944). This echoes the view expressed in Lettres à un ami allemand that the German people had acquiesced in Hitler's regime to avoid difficult decisions: '[C]e régime hitlérien qui lui enlevait le bonheur et la dignité, l'honneur et la vie personnelle, il l'a accepté parce que, pour finir, il y trouvait ce sommeil de l'esprit dont il avait toujours rêvé' (Combat 18-9-1944). This bitter and rather crude national psychology illustrates, between the lines, Camus's view of citizenship as full participation in a country's governance, but betrays frustration with the German people, emphasised by ominous vocabulary: 'Et lui [the German people] dont on a attendu le réveil si longtemps, continue à *se taire* derrière ses frontières entamées, *massif, obstiné, muet* sur les crimes qu'on a commis en son nom, *résigné* aux terribles blessures qui tombent sur ses villes' (Combat 18-9-1944, my emphasis). He seems to give up on

Germany in his closing rhetorical question: ‘Avec le plus grand cœur du monde, qui pourrait encore plaider pour un peuple qui refuse d’élever la voix pour sa propre défense?’ (Combat 18-9-1944). Dialogue, the foundation of the Algiers journalism, is seemingly impossible.

In his 19 October editorial, however, when the composition of the Allied military government of occupation (AMGOT) had been decided, Camus was less pessimistic. Satisfied that France would form a part of this government, he warned against an attitude of reprisal: ‘Il est juste que la loi imposée à l’Allemagne soit dure. [...] Mais cette dure loi bien clairement définie, nous aurons à l’observer strictement pour faire la preuve, devant ce peuple égaré, que la force peut s’accommoder de la justice’ (Desmouliers 1990, 113). In its echo of the ‘esprit uni à l’épée’ theme of his Resistance writing, Camus’s editorial shows hope in Europe’s future, as well as Germany’s. Recognising that Germany could not be ruled indefinitely by the Allies, he stated: ‘il faudra un jour que l’Allemagne reprenne la place qui lui revient’ (Desmouliers 1990, 113). He does not expand on this, although one can assume he means a position among equals within Europe; he describes one of the functions of the Allied occupation as reawakening the German people – the occupation ‘doit seulement nous servir à mieux connaître ce peuple et à essayer de réveiller en lui ce qui peut l’être encore pour l’intérêt de l’Europe’ (Desmouliers 1990, 113). Camus is more guarded than other resisters such as Claude Bourdet, who had argued for complete reintegration of Germany into a united Europe,<sup>5</sup> but circumstances were different after the Liberation: public opinion was in favour of occupation, if not emasculation of Germany, and De Gaulle’s original policy in 1945 was ‘political detachment’ of key areas such as Rhineland-Westphalia and Silesia (Young 1990, 25-7). Franco-German reconciliation is nevertheless prominent in

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<sup>5</sup> See Bourdet’s article ‘Future Allemagne’ in Lipgens 1985, 342-3.

Camus's editorial, which closes thus:

Que la France en Allemagne reste égale à cette pure mission qui doit être la sienne et quelque chose du moins aura été sauvé dans cette Europe déchirée par le meurtre et la folie. (Desmouliers 1990, 113)

Camus reflects another resistance preoccupation in his editorials: Britain's role in building European unity. Churchill's proposal in 1940 for Franco-British union inspired many Europeanist resisters, despite its obvious expediency. Reference to it was also an obvious counterpoint to the Vichy myth of 'la perfide Albion'. Camus's editorials thus celebrate Britain's role in the war, underlining France's debt and underlining the countries' common struggle (Desmouliers 1990, 110). Camus's 23 September 1944 editorial, furthermore, demonstrates continuity with his Algiers journalism, in which he praised Britain's defence of democracy even while at war, describing Britain as 'un pays arrivé à l'extrémité de son destin et qui laiss[e] cependant intacte la démocratie dont il vi[t]' (Desmouliers 1990, 110).<sup>6</sup>

### Politico-economic aspects of unity

Besides general remarks on Europe just examined, more specific Europeanist arguments surface regularly in the editorials, in terms reminiscent of the Algiers journalism in their focus on the economic situation of post-war Europe and on possible European union. In an editorial written as De Gaulle and Stalin were negotiating the Franco-Soviet pact, he declares:

La politique ne se fait plus aujourd'hui sans l'économie. Or, il n'est pas un seul problème économique du moment qui ne soit international. Tous les pays d'Europe dépendent étroitement les uns des autres dans leur production comme dans leur consommation. (Combat, 3-12-1944)

If there is nothing particularly original in this observation, which echoes so clearly the 1920s debate and remarks made by Camus before the war, it does demonstrate

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<sup>6</sup> A point heavily nuanced by the nature of British wartime propaganda, as noted in Chapter One, p. 54.

continuity from 1939 Algiers to 1944 Paris. Writing of world political re-organisation on 18 December 1944, Camus repeats almost *verbatim* from Le Soir Républicain:

Une économie internationalisée, où les matières premières seront mises en commun, où la concurrence des commerces tournera en coopération, où les débouchés coloniaux seront ouverts à tous, où la monnaie elle-même recevra un statut collectif, est la condition nécessaire de cette organisation. (Desmouliers 1990, 116)<sup>7</sup>

The continuity, then, of Camus's Europeanism is clear, all the more so from a statement in the 9 February 1944 editorial, in which the only difference with the same programme in 1939 is the events in between:

Depuis six mois, conscients de la contradiction où s'étrangle un monde pris entre une économie désormais internationale et des politiques obstinément nationalistes, nous réclamons une fédération économique mondiale, où les matières premières, les débouchés commerciaux et la monnaie seront internationalisés et prépareront ainsi *la fédération politique qui empêchera les peuples de s'égorger tous les vingt ans*. (II, 1551, my emphasis)

The European and world integration Camus proposed would be a process involving several phases, an element of many clandestine Resistance plans, and a goal of the 1944 CFFE declaration, which stated that European federation would be an 'étape vers la Fédération mondiale' (Lipgens 1985, 350).<sup>8</sup> Camus outlines some phases in editorials covering the Franco-Soviet pact negotiations in December 1944, arguing that it was too early to discuss unity, but that international dimensions of European problems should be on the table (Combat, 3-12-1944). The signing of the pact prompted him to outline on 18 December the phases he thought necessary to organise world peace. The first would be the Franco-Soviet alliance, apropos of which Camus reflected 'c'est une marque de grande sagesse politique que d'avoir souligné qu'elle n'était pas exclusive' (Desmouliers 1990, 116). The next phase would be a system of complementary alliances within a system 'à la fois solide et souple' (Desmouliers 1990, 116), a phrase which echoes Charlier's call in 1939 for a peaceful organisation capable of adapting to

<sup>7</sup> See CAC? 639 and Chapter One, p. 56.

<sup>8</sup> Original French on microfiche 108.2.

changing circumstances. The final stage, wrote Camus, would be a world organisation in which nations would abandon sovereignty in favour of the programme of integration developed in other editorials.

Although continuity is apparent between Le Soir Républicain and Combat, Camus's Europeanism appears to be eclipsed by a nascent *mondialisme*. The metaphor of the Czech and the Texan of the 18 December 1944 editorial cited earlier is revealing, all the more so for its repetition three times in Camus's post-war writing, of his sense of *de facto* solidarity of class and interests throughout the world beyond Europe. It is, of course, an obvious point considering the global nature of World War Two – in a real sense, Hitler's occupation of Czechoslovakia did indeed lead to the mobilisation of Texans. But it demonstrates an evolution from the Algiers journalism: Camus now argues that unity must henceforth be global and not simply European. A further factor in this evolution was the recurrent theme of European unity leading to world unity in phases. The 18 December editorial is the clearest statement of Camus's *mondialisme*:

[L]'étape définitive [...] ne pourra être qu'une organisation mondiale où les nationalismes disparaîtront pour que vivent les nations, et où chaque État abandonnera la part de souveraineté qui garantira sa liberté. (Desmouliers 1990, 116)

In claiming that nations will gain liberty only by uniting in a world organisation, the statement is oxymoronic, at least to the logic of national sovereignty, but constitutes a representative exhortation towards abandonment of sovereignty typical of pre-war and wartime Europeanist debate. An editorial reaffirming the Combat editorial stance on 9 February 1945 again highlights the goal of world unity: 'Nous n'avons jamais cessé d'affirmer que la politique des alliances ne suffisait pas et que notre seul but était une organisation mondiale qui assure enfin la paix des peuples' (II, 1550). In the same way that Versailles informed the Algiers journalism, a major influence on Camus's growing *mondialisme* was the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, leading him once more to consider the organisation of world peace:

Mais nous nous refusons à tirer d'une aussi grave nouvelle autre chose que la décision de plaider plus énergiquement en faveur d'une véritable société internationale, où les grandes puissances n'auront pas de droits supérieurs aux petites et aux moyennes nations. (II, 292)<sup>9</sup>

Continuity with the Algiers journalism is again evident in this view of diplomacy and international relations, although the remark shows Camus's persistent lack of understanding of diplomatic machinations. His defence of smaller countries' interests and the idea of a 'société internationale' reinforces the sense of continuity, calling to mind the 'société des peuples' of Le Soir Républicain, which re-surfaces, unchanged, in a previous editorial: 'La Société des Nations qu'on tente de refaire sera une Société des Peuples ou ne sera rien' (Combat 17-10-1944). Marcel Gimont had pursued a similar line in an article entitled 'Société des Nations et Société des Peuples':

C'est à eux qu'il appartient de mettre au service de l'Europe libérée par la destruction des puissances du mal une organisation qui ne déçoive ni les petits ni les grands, ni les vainqueurs ni les vaincus. Faute de quoi nous finirons une fois de plus par avoir deux classes, deux groupes, deux Sociétés des Nations: la société des satisfaits et la société des mécontents. Et l'on sait où cela nous menerait. (Combat 29-8-1944)

This shift towards *mondialisme* seems to be in tension with the Europeanism of other editorials. The signing of the Franco-Russian alliance, for example, prompted a Europeanist response on the 3 December 1944 and a *mondialiste* one on the 18 December. Both approaches can, however, be seen as complementary. A European organisation may, in Camus's thinking, have formed one of the 'alliances complémentaires' which would feed into world organisation, an attitude consistent with the Europeanist Resistance 'stages' view of European federation leading to world organisation. Guérin suggests that Camus's Europeanism can be considered part of a system of concentric circles, both organisations overlapping.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Roger Grenier highlights the fact that Camus was among the first journalists or commentators to underline the gravity of the existence of the atomic bomb (1987, 229).

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Jeanyves Guérin, Université de Marne-La-Vallée, 20 January 1999.



In the Combat editorials in 1944-5, then, Camus shows continuity with the Algiers journalism in his preoccupation with the idea of European unity, as expressed in the twin goals of future cooperation and political unity based on an understanding of European solidarity. However, his Europeanism tends to be increasingly subordinated to an ultimate goal of world unity. Furthermore, in their tenor and formulation, his ideas owe a great deal to the clandestine resistance press, arguably more than even the Lettres à un ami allemand, which constructed a highly lyrical ideal of Europe sometimes quite different to the politico-economic focus of other clandestine documents. Sadly, although Combat's resistance-style rhetoric is no great surprise in view of its history, Camus's ideas on Europe were increasingly out of step with the political climate of the Liberation. This is perhaps indicated by the fact that Camus refers neither to the CFFE nor to its March 1945 conference in which he was involved. It is also significant that André Ferrat, another active CFFE member, makes no mention of Europeanist issues in his 1945 La République à refaire. These omissions are indicative of the general eclipsing of the European idea during this period, dominated by the complex politics of the Liberation and the foreign policy negotiations of the Provisional Government under De Gaulle. These difficulties, from the purges to the enormous economic problems, are well documented, and will not be outlined here, other than to note that they were far more pressing than the building of European unity as a means of ensuring future peace.<sup>11</sup>

To understand the overshadowing of the Europeanist debate, it is, however, essential to examine the Provisional Government's foreign policy. The French approach to the post war settlement was outlined in 1943-44 by De Gaulle and his government in exile, along with an Inter-Allied Committee for the study of an armistice. Ideas examined included a policy of dismemberment of Germany and international control of the

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<sup>11</sup> See Kupferman 1985; Rémond 1976, 1993; Rioux 1980.

Rhineland and the Ruhr, and a goal of cooperation with smaller countries of the future Benelux. The government in exile's plans 'shared with the Metropolitan Resistance (albeit in a more "realistic" form) the ideal of a Western European group united by cultural and social values, where national independence could give way to far-reaching cooperation' (Young 1990, 14). In March 1944, however, the Russians complained that they had not been consulted about ideas of a European bloc, and America and Britain also expressed reservations. After the Liberation, the idea of a western European bloc was an issue likely to alienate the Big Three and the PCF.

Relations with the Big Three were difficult, due mainly to the non-recognition of De Gaulle's government until October 1944. France also battled for a place on the European Advisory Commission on the future of Germany, eventually granted in November. Further strain on relations arose in 1945 during the crises in the Levant and in Val D'Aoste. European unity was no longer an issue as France tried simply to maintain and develop a role alongside the Big Three (Young 1990, 21). In October 1944, De Gaulle openly criticised the western bloc idea in order to placate Russia, with whom he wanted to negotiate the alliance signed in November 1944. Despite support for European unification among some members of the socialist party and the MRP, as evinced by foreign policy debates in the Consultative Assembly, De Gaulle was firmly in charge of actual foreign policy, dominated by the above concerns (Lipgens 1982, 214-30).

The reconstruction of domestic politics also overshadowed potential debate on European peace and unity: a new constitution had to be drawn up, a government formed, and internal order restored. The non-communist Resistance consensus on European unity was lost in the demise of Resistance unity once political parties were re-established, and is shown in the drafting in 1943-44 of the CNR common charter for France and Europe. Despite the Europeanism of some earlier drafts, the final version

made no mention of European unity (Andrieu 1984, 37-51, 140-2, 154-9), which did not make much sense in a context of rebuilding the French economy, communications and general infrastructure.

Unsurprisingly, then, the enthusiasm for European unity built up in 1943-4 largely dissipated in the aftermath of the Liberation. In 1946, a Dutch federalist journal carried an article stating: 'in recent months a marked lull has come about in the activity of federalist groups throughout Europe ... The Italian MFE has had to cease publication of its weekly *L'Unità europea*. Money is running short. The CIFE in Paris is no longer active. These are distressing facts to admit' (cited in Lipgens 1982, 269). The idealism of the Europeanist strand of the French Resistance, and of the few Europeanist politicians withered in the chaos of the immediate post-war years.<sup>12</sup> Organisational activity did, however, continue in attenuated form, re-deploying after Churchill's Zurich speech in 1946 (Gouzy 1975). But Europeanism at this stage was subordinated to different ideological agendas than in the Resistance movements during the war.

### Political activity, 1946-60

After 1945, Camus ceased to write regularly for Combat, contributing 'Ni victimes ni bourreaux' in 1946 shortly before the paper was bought out. While maintaining a Europeanist/*mondialiste* position in his editorials, he had grown increasingly ambivalent towards Europeanism by 1946. This is part of a more general shift in Camus's political activities, away from Resistance-era ideals and towards a position dictated by Cold-war realities, in which Europeanism became a particular *parti-pris* of neutralism, which he flirted with but never fully endorsed. In addition, Camus's growing fame, both as writer and *intellectuel engagé* led to a flood of invitations from many organisations and individuals seeking his support, illustrated by his enormous archive of correspondence.

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<sup>12</sup> For a summary of reasons, see Lipgens 1982, 270-4.

That Camus felt the pressures of fame is familiar from the ‘solitaire ou solidaire’ dilemma of ‘Jonas’ in L’Exil et le royaume (I, 1652). Less well known is his remark to Jean Grenier that ‘Je ne vois que les gens qui me plaisent. J’use avec cynisme ma maladie pour ne voir presque personne’ (Grenier 1991, 103). In 1947, pressure of mounting correspondence led him to employ a secretary, who modified different letter templates according to requirements (Todd 1996, 442). Forced to be selective in lending support, constant themes of Camus’s negative responses were the pressure of his writing, which came before political action, and his health.

He nevertheless remained politically committed throughout. Quilliot has distinguished three phases in Camus’s *engagement* in the 1940s. In 1944-5 he sought to ‘prolonger la résistance en révolution’ through his Combat journalism. From 1945 to 1948 he battled with the concept of *engagement*, seeking limits to political action and developing a theory of violence best illustrated in Les Justes but also clear in ‘Ni victimes ni bourreaux’. From 1948, his attention was focused on the struggle for peace through world cooperation (II, 1571). This evolution is best encapsulated in two remarks made by Camus at different moments. In 1946, he wrote in his Carnets: ‘J’aime mieux les hommes engagés que les littératures engagées. Du courage dans sa vie et du talent dans ses œuvres, ce n’est déjà pas si mal. *L’écrivain s’engage quand il le veut*’ (C2 180, my emphasis). Camus clearly sought not to become involved in as many causes as possible, but to select those he felt most sympathy with and to which, presumably, he felt he could contribute most effectively. In the 1950s, however, his conception changes. In his ‘Réponse à Domenach’, defending his preface to Konrad Bieber’s 1954 L’Allemagne vue par les écrivains de la résistance française, he wrote: ‘Mais elle [la résistance] est pour moi, au contraire, une expérience toujours vivante, un moment privilégié de *la longue lutte, toujours en cours, pour la libération des hommes*’ (II, 1487-91; 1752, my emphasis). This implies consistent, ongoing ideological

*engagement*, and reflects the tension of the Cold War. His defence of dialogue and democracy goes hand-in-hand with denunciation of totalitarianism, shown in his political activity by a limited, behind the scenes support for small peace movements: ‘Seuls ont mon adhésion aujourd’hui les mouvements pour la paix qui cherchent à se développer sur le plan international’ (II, 384).

He conceived of *engagement* in the context of the Cold War as a continuation of the resistance in occupied France; his activities became increasingly ‘clandestine’ after his initial high profile involvements in the late 1940s, and he avoided the honorary positions which many organisations offered him. This was especially clear after an episode in 1950 with the Société Européenne de Culture (SEC), whose president Umberto Campagnolo asked Camus to write for their publication Comprendre, stating that he had always sought his support. Established in October 1946 at the first ‘Rencontres Internationales de Genève’ on ‘L’Esprit européen’, the SEC was supported by intellectuals including Aron, Barrault, Benda, Breton, Cocteau, Gide, Merleau-Ponty and Sartre. Its goal was European dialogue across the growing East/West divide.<sup>13</sup> Although Camus – through his secretary – declined the invitation to write for the SEC, he did agree to join, obviously agreeing with the movement’s basic premise.<sup>14</sup> However, he left in 1952, ostensibly over the issue of dialogue with communists (the SEC had invited Éluard to join), towards whom these years see a hardening in his position, but also over the question of honorary positions:

J’ai toujours su qu’il valait mieux ne pas adhérer à un groupement lorsqu’on ne pouvait y participer personnellement... Au début, j’avais fait une exception pour la SEC, à cause des amis que j’y comptais. Mais aujourd’hui l’activité de votre société s’étend et se précise et je me trouve devant des textes et des appels que j’aurais préféré discuter avant de les ratifier. (Grenier 1991, 179)

<sup>13</sup> For the 1952 SEC manifesto and a critical exegesis of it, see Aron 1952.

<sup>14</sup> IMEC, Fonds Camus, Letter from Umberto Campagnolo to Albert Camus, 22 January 1950, from Camus [secretary] to Campagnolo, 30 January 1950.

His growing anti-communism is reflected in a statement to Grenier which refuses even dialogue with communists: 'l'on sait bien que les communistes ne peuvent entrer dans une société qu'avec une consigne: donc, pas de possibilité d'entente' (Grenier 1991, 123). In 1948, Camus was involved in a project with Koestler, Fisher, Silone, Franz Berkenau, Richard Wright and Gide to write a collective volume on experiences with the communist party.<sup>15</sup> Although Camus had to abandon his contribution, his anti-Communism played a large part in higher profile incidents in the 1950s. He reacted strongly against the government repression in Greece in the 1950s, supported the riots in East Berlin in 1953, and the Hungarian protests in 1956, and demanded the reprieve of a number of political prisoners throughout the 1950s (II, 1765-5, 1768-70). Camus was also distantly involved with such overtly anti-communist journals as La Table Ronde and Preuves, one offshoot of the 1950 Congress for Cultural Freedom in Berlin. He never fully adhered to either, however, quickly withdrawing from La Table Ronde's editorial board after publishing 'Les Meurtriers délicats' in the first issue (Lottman 1981, 441), and only contributing two articles to Preuves. His most significant expression of anti-communism remains L'Homme révolté, and not any participation in anti-communist political movements.<sup>16</sup>

A further influence on his sense of *engagement* and an element of his anti-Communism was Camus's long-standing, if problematic, links with revolutionary syndicalism, also bound up in his relationship with Spain. Obviously, many Spanish republicans were anarchists, and Camus's anarchist leanings were evident as early as his Algiers journalism. Dunwoodie (1993) has catalogued instances of the support of groups such as Révolution prolétarienne for Camus's work, and vice-versa, and shows

<sup>15</sup> The volume, entitled Le Dieu des ténèbres was published by Calmann-Lévy in 1950 (II, 1571).

<sup>16</sup> On La Table Ronde, see Winock 1997, 476-80. On Preuves see Chebel d'Appollonia 1991, 79-88; Grémion 1989; Winock 1997, 486-9. Despite his limited contribution, the Preuves circle greatly admired Camus (Birchall 1990, 138-9).

how Camus's rapport with the Left in France in the 1940s and 1950s was based on a syndicalist or trade unionist outlook.<sup>17</sup> A significant element of Camus's response to criticism of L'Homme révolté is his indignation at critics' perceived elision of this non-communist but nevertheless revolutionary stratum of the book's argument. Birchall (1990) takes a more nuanced view of Camus's links with revolutionary syndicalism, highlighting contradictions between, for example, Camus's criticism of Lenin in L'Homme révolté and his preface for Alfred Rosmer's Moscou sous Lénine in 1953. The tenor of Birchall's argument is that Camus used revolutionary syndicalism as a convenient fig-leaf: 'It is hard to avoid the conclusion that what he is presenting [in L'Homme révolté] is an argument in defence of reformism – but slipping in a covert signal to his leftist friends to assure them he is really on their side' (1990, 151). Birchall nevertheless observes the same continuity of Camus's *anarchisant* tendency as Dunwoodie. In spite of its problems, this element of his political involvement also helps to explain his shifting conceptualisation of *engagement* – the move towards smaller, more limited groups reflects the ethos of the 'organisation par en bas' of anarchism, as well as an echo of Resistance in occupied France (Dunwoodie 1993, 85).

### Europeanism and *mondialisme*

On the question of Europeanism, *mondialisme* and the Cold War, Camus's *engagement* follows this pattern of avoidance of honorary positions, support for smaller groups and anti-communism. Mirroring the shift in his Combat writing towards *mondialisme*, Camus's Europeanist political activity ceased. In December 1946, the CIFE secretary Francis Gérard invited Camus to speak at a CIFE meeting the following month. Camus replied:

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<sup>17</sup> See also Dadoun 1986.

Les idées fédéralistes n'ont pas cessé d'avoir ma sympathie, et je suppose que cela se sent dans les quelques articles que j'ai pu publier, mais je suppose que vous comprendrez la nécessité où je suis d'économiser un peu mes forces et mon temps.<sup>18</sup>

A certain ambivalence is clear in this rather dismissive comment, following nearly two years during which there is no correspondence, at least in the Camus archive, connected with the CIFE. Later, in 1947, Henri Vautrot unsuccessfully tried to meet Camus to inform him of the CIFE's activities; according to his letter, Camus had regularly been sent Le Document Fédéraliste, but without responding. In 1949, after moving headquarters, the CIFE had to renew its records; Vautrot wrote to Camus:

[J]e vous serais reconnaissant d'apposer votre signature, comme étant celle d'un membre du bureau initial. Je me permets de vous rappeler que vous faisiez partie du bureau du CIFE devenu le CFEM [Comité pour une Fédération Européenne et Mondialiste]. avec Zaksas, J. Baumel etc.

Camus's reply effectively broke his link with the movement: 'Je vous retourne la documentation que vous avez bien voulu me faire parvenir en vous signalant que ma décision est de me retirer de toute entreprise où je ne peux pas jouer un rôle actif.'<sup>19</sup> It is more likely that Camus no longer *wanted* to play an active role, and his withdrawal signals the end of his Europeanist political militancy begun during the war. This is also reflected in a letter to Emmanuel Mounier, in which he writes: 'Je ne veux pas faire partie du Comité d'Échanges avec l'Allemagne Nouvelle. Trop de responsabilités signifie pas de responsabilité du tout'.<sup>20</sup> Mounier, with David Rousset, Bourdet, Roure and Vercors, founded this committee in 1947 after a series of Esprit articles (Chebel d'Appollonia 1991, 203-4). Camus's Combat editorials and other political articles nevertheless attracted the interest of many federalists and Europeanists, to whom Camus was on the whole unwilling or unable to lend support. It is, however, interesting to note the interest he generated among major names in the European movement.

<sup>18</sup> IMEC, Fonds Camus. Letter from F. Gérard to Albert Camus, 5 December 1946; letter from Camus to Gérard, 17 December 1946.

<sup>19</sup> IMEC, Fonds Camus. Letters from Henri Vautrot to Albert Camus, 12 November 1947, 3 April 1949; letter from Camus to Vautrot, 5 May 1949.

<sup>20</sup> IMEC, Fonds Camus. Letter from Albert Camus to Emmanuel Mounier, 5 November 1948.



In 1948, Camus was invited to a 'Congrès de l'Europe' in The Hague held by the Comité International de coordination des mouvements pour l'unité européenne, aiming to 'affirmer avec éclat l'urgente nécessité d'une plus grande unité entre les pays d'Europe'.<sup>21</sup> Since no reply exists, one must assume Camus did not attend. In 1949, the Mouvement Européen, its honorary presidents including Blum, Churchill, De Gasperi and Spaak, invited Camus to join a cultural commission to prepare for a forthcoming 'Conférence Culturelle Internationale' in Lausanne, aiming to contribute to uniting Europe 'en dégagant les valeurs communs qui sont à la base de la vie européenne'. Camus's reply revealed a certain sympathy, but also a clear statement on his political activity, demonstrating a decision to avoid organisational work: 'Je suis touché et honoré de la proposition que vous me transmettez, mais je regrette d'avoir à la décliner pour d'assez nombreuses raisons. En effet, j'ai décidé de me tenir à l'écart de tout mouvement politique, même sympathique'.<sup>22</sup>

In 1952 Altiero Spinelli wrote again to Camus in a style suggesting they had recently met and discussed: the letter begins 'mon cher ami' and refers to a previous conversation. Spinelli intended to organise a manifesto signed by European intellectuals declaring the necessity for a federation of France, Italy, Germany, Belgium and Holland, and denouncing the problems besetting Europe at this time: 'j'ai suspendu cette opération quand, *après notre conversation*, j'ai pu espérer de faire non pas un manifeste italien pour la fédération européenne mais un manifeste international partant de la France, et écrit par vous.'<sup>23</sup> It is doubtful that Camus wrote this manifesto. Neither historians of the European idea nor Camus scholars make reference to it. Nor is there a reply to Spinelli's letter in the archives. Although Camus remained in contact with

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<sup>21</sup> IMEC, Fonds Camus, Tract for Congrès de l'Europe, sent by J.H. Retinger to Albert Camus, 1948.

<sup>22</sup> IMEC, Fonds Camus, Letter from Jacques Enock to Albert Camus, 25 July 1949; letter from Camus to Enock, 6 September 1949. See also letter from Max Richard of Fédération: revue de l'ordre vivant (12 September 1949) asking to meet Camus in order to talk about the Lausanne conference.

<sup>23</sup> IMEC, Fonds Camus, Letter from Altiero Spinelli to Albert Camus, 8 July 1952. my emphasis.

Spinelli since the 1945 Paris conference, he obviously no longer aligned himself with Spinelli's ideas.

Another 'founding father' of the European communities who contacted Camus was Paul-Henri Spaak, Belgian premier and an honorary member of the European Movement. In 1953 he was heavily involved in elaborating the European Political Community, an ill-fated complement to the ECSC, and invited Camus to a conference in The Hague in its support: 'Nous sommes persuadés que le poids de votre intervention en faveur de nos travaux peut être déterminant auprès d'une partie de l'opinion publique qui vous considère, avec raison, comme un guide de sa pensée et de son action.' Camus, unable to attend, was on a 'voyage organisé depuis un an', and there is no indication in the reply of his support or otherwise for Spaak's work.<sup>24</sup>

Camus's many letters of refusal to requests and invitations from *mondialiste* movements demonstrate, however, slightly more support than those to Europeanist movements, even if it remains purely verbal. This illustrates the shifting alignment highlighted earlier. One example is his reply to an invitation to the forthcoming congress of the World Movement for a World Federal Government in 1950. Camus's secretary wrote that he was ill, but sent the 'souhais qu'il forme pour la réussite de votre entreprise'.<sup>25</sup>

Three years after his discussion at the House of Commons on the 'Dieu des ténèbres' project noted above, Camus was contacted twice in 1951-2 by the Parliamentary Committee for World Government, which aimed to build a system of world government integrating economic resources in order to aid underdeveloped areas. Camus was invited to take a leading role in the London Parliamentary Conference for World

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<sup>24</sup> IMEC, Fonds Camus, Letter from P.-H. Spaak, 28 August 1953; letter from Camus [secretary] to Spaak, 5 September 1953.

<sup>25</sup> IMEC, Fonds Camus, Letter from World Movement for World Federal Government, 13 September 1950; letter from Camus [secretary] to World Movement, 3 October 1950.

Government, but was unable to attend. His secretary wrote: 'il m'a priée de vous dire qu'il était sensible à votre pensée et à votre invitation, mais que malheureusement aux dates que vous indiquez, il sera en voyage'.<sup>26</sup>

Vautrot wrote again in 1955, this time as secretary general of the Union Fédéraliste Mondiale, an umbrella organisation including the Union des Citoyens du Monde, asking if Camus would join the UFM's Comité de Patronage or send a message of support to the movement's July 1955 congress. Camus's reply to Vautrot's rather obsequious letter, although announcing that he would be unable to attend, is effusive in comparison to the terse replies to other movements: 'je ne veux pas tarder à vous dire mes sentiments de solidarité [...] je forme des vœux chaleureux pour la réussite de votre congrès et, à plus longue échéance, pour la conquête des institutions mondiales qui garantiront l'avenir d'un monde libre.'<sup>27</sup> This indicates Camus's sympathy for *mondialiste* groups over Europeanist ones, even though he was not prepared to become actively involved. The UFM contacted Camus again in 1956 and in 1957, inviting him to meetings in Clermont Ferrand and The Hague respectively. Despite the fact that he never attended any of their meetings, the UFM thought highly of Camus, writing: 'vous êtes un des pionniers du Mondialisme en France'.<sup>28</sup>

Camus's sympathy for *mondialisme* is also illustrated in his reply to an invitation from the World Movement for a World Federal Government in 1956 to become an honorary advisor. While refusing, Camus wrote: 'je me sens pourtant d'accord réellement avec vos buts [...] Si vous aperceviez un moyen pour moi de vous aider,

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<sup>26</sup> IMEC, Fonds Camus, Letter from Albert Camus [secretary] to Lord Boyd-Orr, 21 June 1951. See also letters from R.H.S. Crossman to Camus, 1 July 1948, 1951 [undated], from Boyd-Orr to Camus, 9 June 1951, and from Fenner Brockey to Camus, 16 May 1952.

<sup>27</sup> IMEC, Fonds Camus, Letters from Henri Vautrot to Albert Camus, 28 April 1955, 1 June 1955; letter from Camus to Vautrot, 10 June 1955.

<sup>28</sup> IMEC, Fonds Camus, Letter from Jerry Bourgeois [UFM] to Albert Camus, 1956 [undated]; from Vautrot to Camus 22 May 1957; from Camus [secretary] to Bourgeois, 11 April 1956, to Vautrot 3 June 1957.

selon mes faibles moyens, je le ferais, soyez-en sûr. D'ici-là, je serai toujours intéressé par des informations sur votre activité et vos travaux.'<sup>29</sup> The reply also demonstrates Camus's conception of *engagement*: 'J'ai pris pour règle de ne jamais accepter de fonctions purement honorifiques. Une des choses qui nuisent le plus au fonctionnement de notre société c'est l'action sans responsabilité directe'. He appears to be applying lessons learned from the SEC episode seen earlier.

### Other organisational involvement

Camus's shift from Europeanism to *mondialisme*, as well as from high-profile to lower key *engagement* is also illustrated by his more well known activities in the late 1940s, which also show his brief incursion into a neutralist form of Europeanism.

Published in *Esprit* in November 1947, the 'Premier appel à l'opinion internationale' was an attempt by disillusioned French left-wing intellectuals to trace the contours of a neutralist Europe. The manifesto argued for a strong, self-sufficient Europe capable of administering its own affairs and no longer a battleground between the superpowers, each keen to establish itself within Europe in 1947. It aimed to find a middle ground between becoming a third party in the geopolitical tension between the US and the USSR, and a position of fragmentation. Recognising the total destruction likely to result from another war, it made clear that it was not pacifist but anti-war, reminiscent of Camus's 'Ni victimes ni bourreaux' examined below:

C'est la suppression des intérêts capitalistes et des barrières douanières qui peut seule entraîner la suppression de nos conflits intérieurs. C'est la suppression de ces conflits et la réalisation de l'unité économique qui peuvent seules donner à l'Europe une indépendance relative et le gouvernement d'elle-même. Divisée, l'Europe peut être à l'origine de la guerre; unie, à l'origine de la paix [...]. (Various 1947, 795)

The manifesto stressed, in a socialist internationalist optic, that European unity should spread to other areas of the world: '[...] nous la considérons comme le point de départ

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<sup>29</sup> IMEC, Fonds Camus, Letter from Ralph E. Lombardi to Albert Camus, 21 April 1956; from Camus to Lombardi, 1956.

d'un mouvement qui devrait s'étendre au prolétariat du monde entier [...] Notre appel ne s'adresse donc pas seulement ni surtout aux Français, mais par-delà les frontières, à toutes les forces démocratiques et sociales du monde' (Various 1947, 796). Twenty-three signed the manifesto, including Camus, de Beauvoir, Sartre, Bourdet, Domenach, Mounier, David Rousset and Georges Altmann. According to Lottman, the movement was beset by internal dispute over the death penalty: Camus and Breton wanted the manifesto to call for its abolition for political crimes while others believed that political crimes should be punishable by death (1981, 439-40).

### *Rassemblement Démocratique Révolutionnaire (RDR), 1948-49*

Following a second 'Appel à l'opinion internationale', Altman and Rousset planned a third way political movement reflecting the concern of the 'appels', and contacted Sartre for his support. The aim was a non-communist left-wing group in favour of a socialist Europe independent of the two superpowers, ideas close to Sartre's at this time. The Rassemblement Démocratique Révolutionnaire (RDR) was founded in early 1948.<sup>30</sup> Its 'comité d'initiative' included Sartre, among other left-wing intellectuals, four parliamentarians and six trade-unionists. It was intended as a 'rassemblement' and not a party, aimed at the 'Survivants de l'enfer, rescapés de la Résistance, militants, sympathisants ou compagnons de route des grands mouvements qui se réclament de l'émancipation sociale' (Sartre, cited in Cohen-Solal 1985, 392).<sup>31</sup> It was therefore representative of the malaise among the socialist-communist fringe in France in the late

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<sup>30</sup> For more details on this movement, see Burnier 1966, 63-75; Chebel d'Appollonia 1991, 110-6; Cohen-Solal 1985, 390-405; Contat and Rybalka 1970, 193-205.

<sup>31</sup> For the full text of the 'Appel du Comité pour le Rassemblement Démocratique Révolutionnaire' see Contat and Rybalka 1970, 197-9.

1940s, and attracted much initial support and a respectable number of militants, despite its lack of a clear programme (Chebel d'Appollonia 1991, 113).<sup>32</sup>

The RDR held regular meetings in 1948-9. Camus began to show support by publishing 'Réflexions sur une démocratie sans catéchisme' in the RDR's bi-monthly journal La Gauche RDR.<sup>33</sup> But his biggest gesture of support was his participation in the 13 December action day in the Salle Pleyel in Paris in favour of 'L'Internationalisme de la pensée'. An impressive cohort of intellectuals was involved in this major gathering, which attracted a crowd of 4000.<sup>34</sup> Camus gave the lecture 'Le Témoin de la liberté', denouncing the climate of fear in Europe, the influence of the superpowers, and the demise of dialogue and persuasion.<sup>35</sup> He also expounded his vision of the artist's role in society as overcoming disorder through creation, viewed in parallel with political activity, which also seeks unity in chaos.<sup>36</sup> The artist/politician bears witness to what he does not necessarily agree with, and defends his opponent's right to his opinions. In essence, 'Le Témoin de la liberté' develops the same argument as texts such as 'La démocratie, exercice de la modestie' (1948) and 'Ni victimes ni bourreaux'.

Aside from such politico-aesthetic remarks, Camus comes close to alignment with RDR-style socialist neutralism in another 1948 article in Franc-Tireur:

Je veux, comme tout le monde, la liberté et la justice sociale et je crois que, si ces notions contradictoires peuvent se rejoindre dans un compromis plus souple, c'est en Europe que cela se fera. Mais si même l'Europe était aujourd'hui une force égale en puissance aux empires qui se menacent, je ne voudrais pas que, pour triompher, elle passât par le chemin d'une troisième guerre. (II, 1586)

<sup>32</sup> Sartre and Rousset elaborated on many of the political motivations of the RDR in their Entretiens sur la politique (Paris: Gallimard 1949), one of which was first published in Les Temps Modernes in 1948. The 1949 book ran to twenty editions within two years (Khilnani 1993, 200 n.27).

<sup>33</sup> La Gauche RDR, No. 4, juillet 1948.

<sup>34</sup> Alongside Sartre, Rousset, Altman, Bourdet, Rosenthal were Camus, André Breton, Richard Wright, Carlo Lévi, Théodore Plievier, Jef Last etc. (Cohen Solal 1985, 398).

<sup>35</sup> Published in La Gauche RDR in December 1948. In Actuelles I, Camus wrongly states that the meeting was in November (II, 399).

<sup>36</sup> Camus rarely used the word 'écrivain', preferring 'artiste'.

Camus's at least partial adoption of RDR ideals is apparent, and it is an open question whether or not his support would have continued had the RDR remained active. As it happens, the 13 December meeting was the 'premier et dernier sursaut avant l'effondrement' (Cohen-Solal 1985, 398). Despite its initial successes, well-publicised meetings, petitions, and fairly widespread support, it soon disintegrated. Sartre ceased to attend meetings in January 1949 – for him, Rousset was leaning too far towards the US and becoming too anti-Communist – and left in October. The RDR soon disappeared entirely, never managing to unite its supporters: 'Tirillés entre Moscou et Washington, les intellectuels du RDR sont à la jonction de deux plaques qui s'entrechoquent et ils culbutent à chaque secousse' (Chebel d'Appollonia 1991, 115-6).<sup>37</sup>

### *Gary Davis and the 'Citoyens du Monde', 1948-49*

Camus's support for American pilot Gary Davis is well known, and probably contributes to the fact that the episode, although minor in the history of the Cold War, is still evoked. It overlaps with his involvement with the RDR; Davis tore up his US passport in front of the UN building in Paris in September 1948, demanding world citizenship and founding the movement 'Citoyens du monde'. Camus's support demonstrates his *mondialisme*, attenuating the apparent neutralism of his RDR involvement, but also his increasing dislike of high profile *engagement*. On Davis's 'comité de solidarité' alongside Breton, Mounier and Richard Wright, Camus gave a press conference on 11 November, and his article 'Je réponds', published in La Patrie mondiale in December 1948, recorded his statements at the 3 December meeting in the Salle Pleyel. He bears witness both to his frustration with facile ideological assumptions

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<sup>37</sup> Sartre's own account of the RDR is extremely brief (Sartre 1964, 223-5), and he wrote afterwards: 'Je ne suis pour rien dans la fondation du RDR, œuvre de David Rousset et d'Altman. Pour sa dislocation, c'est autre chose. D'ailleurs, le RDR n'était qu'un petit groupuscule échappant aux grandes lois de l'évolution historique. Un jour ou l'autre, des conflits personnels auraient de toute manière divisé ses quelques milliers d'adhérents' (Cited in Contat and Rybalka 1970, 204-5). This judgement is harsh, in view of the initial successes of the movement.

typical of the Cold War, and to his growing anti-Communism. Replying to a PCF objection (Chebel d'Appollonia 1991, 118) 'Ne voyez vous pas que Davis sert l'impérialisme américain?', Camus replied:

Davis, en abandonnant la nationalité américaine, se désolidarise de cet impérialisme-là comme des autres. Cela lui donne le droit de condamner cet impérialisme, droit qu'il me paraît difficile d'accorder à ceux qui veulent limiter toutes les souverainetés, sauf la soviétique. (II, 1587)

The movement's high point was the 9 December 1948 meeting at the Vélodrome d'hiver with a crowd of 20,000 people. Camus was there, with Paulhan, Breton, Vercors, Altman, Rousset and l'abbé Pierre. In an article in Combat in December 1948, he defended Davis's aims, and elucidated some of his own. On the UN, he wrote: 'Il [Davis] a dit ce que tout le monde pense, que le seul organisme qui soit chargé de la paix du monde est stérilisé par le raidissement des souverainetés' (II, 1594). As shown below, this was part of Camus's thinking in 'Ni victimes ni bourreaux, and is revealing of his reasons for associating himself with Davis. He considered that even though Davis was a voice in the wilderness, he was at least trying to show what the principles behind a true international society should be. As Chebel d'Appollonia puts it, 'Camus espérait-il vraiment que le mouvement de Davis déboucherait sur des résultats concrets? Sans doute pas, mais cela lui permet d'exprimer des idées qui lui tiennent à cœur' (1991, 118-9).

Davis's movement faded fast after the Salle Pleyel meeting, as did Camus's support; in a letter to the critic René Lalou, he explained that Davis's action was not the only potential reaction to the international climate, stating that those fighting against 'le retour de la peste' had to choose the best means day by day: 'Rien n'interdit de penser [...] que de nouveaux moyens plus efficaces finiront par se rencontrer' (cited in Todd 1996, 454). This bears out the above analysis of Camus's political activity: he avoided movements claiming to offer complete solutions, seeking instead to support small, limited movements which represented what he saw as the main issues. It is a clear sign



of Camus's shifting conception of *engagement* towards lower-key, more pragmatic action. In addition, Camus's correspondence with Davis is markedly ambivalent. Davis held Camus in high esteem, and judging by his letters was grateful for his support. But Camus's replies were either cursory ('Cher Monsieur, D'accord et bon courage') or reveal his irritation at becoming too involved: 'Je n'ai pas pu assister aux réunions du Comité de Solidarité, (sans gros remords d'ailleurs, car vos amis m'ont fait beaucoup travailler.)'<sup>38</sup> In February 1949, Jean Rillon of 'La Fédération, centre d'études institutionnelles, équipes d'action fédérale' wrote to Camus asking for a meeting, writing of his interest in Camus's involvement with Davis. Camus's reply, via his secretary, is an interesting disclaimer: 'il [Camus] ne lui est pas possible de vous rencontrer, et de toutes manières, M. Camus me prie de vous dire qu'il a assisté *la personne* de M. Gary Davis, non son mouvement, et qu'il tient à rester sur le plan de l'écrivain'.<sup>39</sup> With the second letter to Davis, this remark shows Camus's frustration with the movement and the time he spent on it. It contradicts his impassioned defence of Davis from previous weeks, and confirms that Camus's involvement would only go so far.<sup>40</sup>

### *Groupes de Liaison Internationale (GLI), 1948-50*

A lesser known, but extremely significant episode in Camus's post-war political activity is his participation in the Groupes de Liaison Internationale, committed to helping refugees and denouncing totalitarianism. Since the GLI was active between, roughly,

<sup>38</sup> IMEC, Fonds Camus, Letters from Gary Davis to Albert Camus, 28 March 1949 and 30 November 1949. Letters from Camus to Davis, 15 November 1948, 19 January 1949.

<sup>39</sup> IMEC, Fonds Camus, Letter from Jean Rillon to Albert Camus, 24 January 1949; Letter from Albert Camus [secretary] to Jean Rillon, 2 February 1949, emphasis in original.

<sup>40</sup> A letter from 1952 shows the impact of Camus's support for Gary Davis; the Groupement des Citoyens du Monde de Neuchâtel invited Camus to give a series of lectures in the 1952-3 season, which Camus declined to give for the usual reasons. IMEC, Fonds Camus, Letter from Marc Eigeldinger (Groupement des Citoyens du Monde de Neuchâtel) to Albert Camus, 24 April 1952; letter from Camus to Groupement, 2 May 1952.

autumn 1948 and autumn 1950, Camus was involved for much longer than with either the RDR or Gary Davis, both short-lived episodes.<sup>41</sup>

The GLI was founded in response to an appeal published in Révolution prolétarienne in August 1948 from a group of radical left-wing American intellectuals rejecting the cold war dichotomy and calling for ‘une nouvelle “gauche” qui soit indépendante à la fois des gouvernements soviétique et américain’. They sought ‘la libre communication entre intellectuels américains et européens – c’est-à-dire l’instauration de ce que Albert Camus appelle une “communauté de dialogue”’ (Vanney 1999, 186-7). This reference to a phrase in ‘Ni victimes ni bourreaux’ came from the involvement of Italian critic Nicola Chiaromonte, whom Camus had helped escape occupied France via Oran in 1942. Another article published at the same time revealed that the American intellectuals had formed ‘Europe-America Groups’ (EAG), gathering funds for European intellectuals who would respond to the appeal. In Autumn 1948 Camus and fifteen other French intellectuals and professionals signed ‘le manifeste des GLI’, announcing ‘Nous sommes un groupe d’hommes qui, en liaison avec des amis d’Amérique, d’Italie, d’Afrique et d’autres pays, avons décidé de réunir nos efforts et nos réflexions pour préserver quelques-unes de nos raisons de vivre’ (Vanney 1999, 160).<sup>42</sup> The focus was wider than the EAG manifesto, and abandoned the bilateral frame of reference, but remained anti-totalitarian, evoking ‘de cruelles idéologies de domination, religions qui prétendent asservir la totalité de l’esprit humain’. The manifesto and the preface to the first Bulletin d’information des GLI (the latter written by Camus) are both representative of Camus’s 1946 articles examined below in their rejection of totalitarianism and plea for dialogue. Nevertheless, the GLI material

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<sup>41</sup> The most complete study of the GLI is Vanney 1999, which uses archival evidence and the accounts of members of the GLI. The following section is based on this analysis. The use of the singular despite the plural ‘Groupes’ is due to the fact that the only GLI in existence was Camus’s grouping in France.

<sup>42</sup> The signatories included four women.

manifests a certain *parti pris* towards the superpowers, condemning Stalinism and reserving more sympathy for the US. The manifesto claimed that ‘technolâtrie américaine’ was not totalitarian, but ‘elle est totale parce qu’elle a su, à travers les films, la presse et la radio, se rendre indispensable psychologiquement et se faire aimer’ (Vanney 1999, 188). The US is described as ‘le moindre mal’, but even so, ‘nous n’avons pas à choisir le mal, même le moindre’.

Camus sought to distance the GLI from the EAG, calling on the GLI to be independent, hence the vocabulary of ‘entraide’ and ‘liaison’.<sup>43</sup> The aim was, firstly, to give ‘une entraide matérielle, mais non bureaucratique [...] spécialement réservée aux victimes des tyrannies totalitaires’. The second objective was to establish an information service which would ‘faire connaître en Europe l’existence des non-conformistes américains et des opposants russes, de peser sur l’opinion publique des États-Unis pour qu’il soit bien distingué entre les dirigeants soviétiques et le peuple russe lui-même’ (Vanney 1999, 165-6). In these limited aims, the GLI was conceived of as a pseudo-Resistance group seeking to elaborate a system of values. Camus described the GLI in a letter to Charlier, who had played such a key role in Camus’s pre-war Europeanism, as ‘une entreprise volontairement modeste orientée sur la génération présente, et sur elle seule’, continuing: ‘Je souhaite que vous partagiez les points de vue exprimés par notre texte et que vous soyez l’animateur d’un groupe Marseille-Aix qui pourrait servir de chaînon intermédiaire entre les groupes italiens en formation’.<sup>44</sup> It seems that many GLI were planned, but in the end the Paris GLI was the only one.

In practice, the GLI aided refugees encountering difficulties in France, mainly Spanish republicans and Eastern Europeans. It supported various causes, notably David

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<sup>43</sup> Camus was undoubtedly keen to avoid taking funds from an American organisation.

<sup>44</sup> IMEC, Fonds Camus, Letter from Albert Camus to R.E. Charlier, 30 March 1949. There is no reply from Charlier, at least in the IMEC dossier.

Rousset's investigation of the Soviet labour camps. It also published four editions of the Bulletin d'information between March 1949 and April 1950, which Vanney compares to Le Soir Républicain, in the way it brought together articles from different sources with the common goal of exposing the evils of totalitarian systems. In October 1950, after Camus had been absent from Paris for a number of months,<sup>45</sup> the members of the GLI decided to end their activities, unsuccessful in their aim of establishing a series of movements across the world: 'il est donc resté une activité d'aide et d'information, dont le caractère international était évident, mais à l'intérieur d'un cadre purement français' (Vanney 1999, 174).<sup>46</sup>

The GLI was never intended as a high profile venture with the large public meetings of the RDR or for Gary Davis, but worked instead behind the scenes in modest fashion reminiscent of anarchist movements. It is indicative of this focus of Camus's *engagement* that he spent much longer working for the GLI than he did for other causes during 1948-50; it embodied Camus's view of commitment as a form of resistance. Indeed the formation and actions of the GLI are redolent of the development of the *maquis*, the Bulletin d'information of the clandestine press. La Peste led to him conceptualising any evil, Nazi or Communist, in the same way:

Pour Camus, la Résistance ne s'arrête pas avec la libération du territoire national. La lutte contre le nihilisme nazi se poursuit dans celle contre le communisme car les deux idéologies vont vers les mêmes extrêmes: terreur, camps de concentration et personnes déplacées. (Vanney 1999, 177)

A comment in 1951 to Jean Grenier is revealing:

Une évidence est née pour moi de l'Occupation: rien n'est possible ni valable dans un pays occupé; la résistance est nécessaire. La position neutraliste serait la meilleure si elle était tenable. Elle ne l'est pas en fin de compte. À l'occupation russe, il faudrait résister. (cited in Grenier 1991, 104)

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<sup>45</sup> Camus had always been considered the 'animateur' of the GLI.

<sup>46</sup> Despite its relative failure, Vanney sees the GLI as in many ways the precursor of the subsequent rise of non-governmental organisations such as Amnesty International (1999, 177-80).

Camus clearly considered 1950s Europe to be as occupied as France had been, and increasingly saw the communists as the enemy. The quotation also shows that after the short-lived RDR Camus considered neutralism an impasse.

The shifting geopolitical situation as the Cold War developed, added to Camus's reconceptualisation of *engagement* meant that the political idea of European unity no longer played a significant role in his thought after roughly 1949, reflecting the position of many other French intellectuals. As Camus suggested to Grenier, neutralism was no longer truly neutral after Marshall Aid in 1947. Henceforth, European integration, in its 1950s institutional form with the establishment of the ECSC, the EEC and the debate over the EDC, was restricted to Western Europe. With his sympathies for Eastern Europe expressed in his anti-communist protests in the 1950s, Camus could not realistically align himself with a Western European bloc, essentially the creation of technocrats and Christian-Democrat politicians. Left-wing intellectuals such as Camus therefore lost interest in a form of technocratic European integration focused on economic agreements and technical trade issues, effectively subordinated to American policy of containment. The European idea in the 1950s was more or less the preserve of those responsible for actual international agreements and treaties, among them MRP, socialist and radical politicians (Gerbet 1975), supported by pressure groups such as the European Movement (Gouzy 1975). Support from a dwindling circle of intellectuals was alienated further by the polarised and sometimes violent debate surrounding the parliamentary ratification of the EDC in 1954.

### A shifting discourse of Europe, 1946-50

While ambivalent towards Europeanism, Camus did, however, remain sympathetic to vaguer goals of world peace and unity, developing proposals for world unity and supporting *mondialisme*. This ambivalence is shown in a shift in discourse from political Europeanism to deeper questions on the nature and conscience of Europe,

concerned with its weak and politically unstable position in the global jostling of the superpowers. In France, widespread fear of a third world war and turbulent internal politics mirrored external tension, especially in 1947, ‘l’année où le monde a tremblé’ (Desanti 1976). As Europe became a battlefield between totalitarian discourses, Camus sought, typically, to find a middle way. His political writing from 1946-50 displays these twin currents of *mondialisme* and a European crisis of conscience. The 1947 ‘Préface à l’édition italienne’ of Lettres à un ami allemand, for example, in which he explains the ‘nous’ and ‘vous’ of the letters, is cognisant of Europe’s difficulties while arguing for wider unity: ‘je sais que la France ni l’Italie ne perdraient rien, au contraire à s’ouvrir à une société plus large. Mais nous sommes encore loin du compte et l’Europe est toujours déchirée’ (II, 219).

This interest in deeper issues attracted the interest of colloquia exploring similar themes. Camus was unable, for example, to attend the first ‘Rencontres Internationales de Genève’ (RIG) in September 1946, which had ‘une triple intention: d’abord la volonté de diagnostiquer certains aspects du monde moderne entré dans l’ère de l’atome, de provoquer ensuite au sein de l’élite intellectuelle une remise en question fondamentale des valeurs de la civilisation occidentale [...] d’insuffler enfin des perspectives nouvelles à l’avenir de l’Europe [...]’ (Ackermann 1989, 68).<sup>47</sup> In 1947, Camus was invited by Georges Guy-Grand of the Union Pour la Vérité to speak at a conference on ‘la civilisation occidentale’. Also invited, among others, were Guéhenno, Aron, de Rougemont and Malraux. Camus was unable to attend due to difficulties at Combat, but wrote ‘j’aurais voulu répondre sans réserve à votre proposition.’<sup>48</sup>

<sup>47</sup> IMEC, Fonds Camus, telegram from Albert Camus to RIG, 1 July 1946. See Ackermann 1989 for an account of the first of the RIG. The texts from the conference are published as L’Esprit européen (Neuchâtel: La Baconnière 1947).

<sup>48</sup> Guy-Grand took over from Paul Desjardins as organiser of the Union Pour la Vérité after the war. IMEC, Fonds Camus, Letter from Georges Guy-Grand to Albert Camus, 7 January 1947; letter from Camus to Guy-Grand, 15 January 1947.

He did, however, engage with issues concerning the European conscience in his lecture tour of the USA in 1946. A letter to the Ministère aux affaires étrangères in December 1945 contains titles supplied by Camus for this tour; one of them was 'plaidoyer pour l'Europe'.<sup>49</sup> Another, the only remaining text from the tour, was 'La Crise de l'homme', an important text in his break with political Europeanism. Given at Columbia University in New York City in 1946, it opens with a powerful statement of his concerns: '[...] le théâtre, la philosophie, la recherche et le travail intellectuel d'un peuple tout entier ne sont que le reflet d'une recherche fondamentale et d'une lutte pour la vie et pour l'homme [...]' (Camus 1996, 9).<sup>50</sup> His ensuing reflections, based on experience of political tension in the 1930s and of occupied France borrow heavily from the 1945 'Remarque sur la révolte' (II, 1682-97) and anticipate L'Homme révolté. He describes initial revolt in terms of the 'no' which implicitly affirms a 'yes', and echoes La Peste in his argument that all are responsible for the crisis:

Il est trop simple de s'en tirer en accusant Hitler, et de se dire que désormais le serpent a été écrasé, que son venin a disparu: parce que nous savons parfaitement que le venin n'a pas disparu, que nous le portons tous dans nos cœurs, comme on peut le voir à la rage que les nations, les partis, les individus continuent à mettre dans leurs affrontements. (Camus 1996, 13)

This rather bleak view functions as a commentary on Europe, signalling Camus's ambivalence through its change in tone from political Europeanism. He talked of 'cette répugnante maladie qui a défiguré l'Europe' and 'une Europe détruite dans la douleur', describing the struggles of 1946 as 'l'humble révolution que nous sommes en train de vivre, en France et en Europe' (Camus 1996, 13, 25, 27). This revolution, in Camus's

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<sup>49</sup> IMEC, Fonds Camus, letter from Ministère aux affaires étrangères (Direction générale des relations culturelles) to Albert Camus, 5 December 1945; letter from Albert Camus to Direction générale, 11 December 1945.

<sup>50</sup> For details on Camus's three-month American tour, see Lottman 1981, 378-95; Quilliot in Camus 1978b, 7-13; Todd 1996, 399-415. Camus's own impressions are contained in Journaux de voyage (Camus 1978b, 17-52). See also his 1947 article, 'Pluies de New York', in Formes et couleurs (II, 1829-33). The original text of the 1946 lecture is lost, but an English translation was published in Twice a Year, also in 1946. It was also published in 1972 as "'The Human Crisis" by Albert Camus, présenté par Peter C. Hoy' in Revue des Lettres Modernes, 6, no. 315-322, 156-176. (Albert Camus 5: Journalisme et politique: l'entrée dans l'histoire (1938-1940)). In 1996 a French translation by Jean-Marie Laclavetine was published in the Nouvelle Revue Française (Camus 1996).

analysis, should consist of a reorientation of political and moral goals, affirming the individual's liberty over the collective. He wished to move away from subordination to History, which, to him, had only resulted in the triumph of efficiency and moral relativism over deeper values. Disturbed by the breakdown of dialogue and persuasion so vaunted in the Algiers journalism, Camus declared that Europeans were considered not as humans but as abstractions working in the name of an idea. In language redolent of the resistance writing, he described how he and others went to war as nihilists, but came to believe in liberty and justice. He exalts truth and honesty, calling for an end to political equivocation and lying. Aside from questions of politico-economic unity, then, Camus now seeks values beneath the surface, asking penetrating questions about Europe's *raison d'être*. In his lecture tour of South America in 1949 he continued these themes in such statements as: 'Le vieux continent porte beaucoup de cicatrices qui lui font le visage patibulaire' (Bartfeld 1995, 50).<sup>51</sup> Further evidence of his ambivalence towards Europe can be found in a reflection common to many on the contradiction between European humanism and the recent atrocities committed in World War Two.

Once more, L'Homme révolté is not far off:

Car elle [Europe] est considérée comme la terre de l'humanisme et cela est juste dans un sens. Mais depuis quelques années, elle est autre chose: la terre des camps de concentration et de la destruction froide et scientifique. Comment la terre de l'humanisme a-t-elle produit le camp de concentration et une fois la chose faite comment les humanistes eux-mêmes se sont arrangés des camps de concentration, voilà les questions qui sont de la compétence des hommes de ma génération [...]. (Bartfeld 1995, 51)

### 'Ni victimes ni bourreaux', 1946-48

That Camus sought at the same time to develop *mondialiste* solutions is evident in the series of articles 'Ni victimes ni bourreaux', written for Combat in November 1946 to boost sales figures.<sup>52</sup> They comprise 'Le siècle de la peur', 'Sauver les corps', 'Le

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<sup>51</sup> See Bartfeld 1995 for an exhaustive account of this tour, organised, like the 1946 US tour, by the French government. Bartfeld also meticulously transcribes some of Camus's lectures. Camus's recollections can be found in Journaux de voyage (Camus 1978b). 'La Pierre qui pousse' in L'Exil et le royaume is inspired by events in South America.

<sup>52</sup> Hereinafter referred to as 'Ni victimes'.



socialisme mystifié’, ‘La révolution travestie’, ‘Démocratie et dictature internationales’, ‘Le monde va vite’, ‘Un nouveau contrat social’ and ‘Vers le dialogue’. Reference will also be made here to the two replies to Emmanuel D’Astier de la Vigérie (1948), the 1948 articles ‘La Démocratie exercice de la modestie’, ‘Le Témoin de la liberté’ and ‘L’Embarras du choix’, and the 1949 interview ‘Dialogue pour le dialogue’.

‘Ni victimes’ shares with the lectures examined above a distinct shift away from the discourse of the 1944-5 Combat editorials. Henceforth, the focus is not events – there is little mention of actual political developments – but first principles. The articles – they were not written as editorials – examine the European politico-intellectual climate but are almost a-historical, emphasised by their republication without modification in Caliban in 1947. There are no facts or figures, and opinions are rarely related to political events. Nevertheless, the articles belong in their climate: Camus’s goal was to find a new moral paradigm to challenge the *logique des blocs*. In so doing, he anticipates many issues raised in L’Homme révolté: ends and means (II, 336-7), legitimisation of murder (II, 333-5), theoretical and historical revolution (II, 338), technological progress undermining Marxism (II, 339, 357-8) and the re-definition of the word ‘revolution’ (II, 341). As in ‘La Crise de l’homme’, a new discourse of Europe emerges; Camus tackles what he considers the roots of Europe’s problems, notably the demise of dialogue and the question of world peace. Certain phrases recall the opening of Le Mythe de Sisyphe (‘Il n’y a qu’un problème philosophique vraiment sérieux: c’est le suicide’ (II, 99)): in ‘Le siècle de la peur’, lamenting a perceived breakdown of the European humanist tradition of persuasion and mutual understanding, Camus writes: ‘Voilà le premier problème politique d’aujourd’hui’ (II, 333). This is a significant about-turn; where before he argued that dialogue and persuasion were always possible, even with dictators, he now states:

Quelque chose en nous a été détruit par le spectacle des années que nous venons de passer. Et ce quelque chose est cette éternelle confiance de l’homme, qui lui a toujours fait croire

qu'on pouvait tirer d'un autre homme des réactions humaines en lui parlant le langage de l'humanité. (II, 331)

Continuing the observations of 'La Crise de l'homme', he relates breakdown of dialogue to Cold War tension, showing its effects on the expression of opinions:

'Vous ne devez pas parler de l'épuration des artistes en Russie, parce que cela profiterait à la réaction.' 'Vous devez vous taire sur le maintien de Franco par les Anglo-Saxons, parce que cela profiterait au communisme.' Je disais bien que la peur est une technique. (II, 332)<sup>53</sup>

He deplores the way a climate of fear has rendered communication politically loaded and dialogue quasi-impossible, criticising the notion that ideologies, in the form of the two dominant Cold War discourses, could be considered absolute truth:

Nous étouffons parmi les gens qui croient avoir absolument raison, que ce soit dans leurs machines ou dans leurs idées. Et pour tous ceux qui ne peuvent vivre que dans le dialogue et dans l'amitié des hommes, ce silence est la fin du monde. (II, 332)

For Camus, the dominant Cold War narratives were the antithesis of normal debate, and thereby destructive. In 'Le Témoin de la liberté', he states: 'il n'y a pas de vie sans dialogue' and 'il n'y a pas de vie sans persuasion' (II, 401, 402). Yet he argued that confrontation of such absolute beliefs led to legitimising murder. He thus finds himself in an impasse, adopting a similarly reductionist account to those he criticises, when, for example, he relates strong beliefs to concentration camps:

[...] la conjonction de ces bonnes volontés aboutit à ce monde infernal où des hommes sont encore tués, menacés, déportés, où la guerre se prépare, et où il est impossible de dire un mot sans être à l'instant insulté ou trahi. (II, 334)

In the late 1940s, Camus's political thought is dominated by this assimilation of extreme opinion and legitimate murder.<sup>54</sup> Replying to D'Astier, who criticised 'Ni victimes' after its 1947 republication, accusing Camus of defending non-violence,

<sup>53</sup> See also the 1948 article 'L'Embarras du choix', which develops this theme: 'Les communistes interprètent tout désir de paix [...] comme une aide objective apportée aux Américains. *Le Rassemblement* [De Gaulle's virulently anti-Communist RPF founded in 1947] vous expliquent sans délai que, objectivement encore, cette prudence naïve sert l'impérialisme russe' (II, 1584). It also echoes 'Je réponds' on Gary Davis seen above.

<sup>54</sup> As is also illustrated in a conversation recorded in the *Carnets*: 'Vous êtes marxiste maintenant? [...] Vous êtes donc un meurtrier. [...] Écoutez, Tar [...] je vous défendrai toujours contre les fusils d'exécution. Vous, vous serez obligé d'approuver qu'on me fusille' (C2, 188-9).

Camus stated that violence was ‘inévitabile et injustifiable’, arguing that ‘il faut lui garder son caractère exceptionnel et la resserrer dans les limites qu’on peut’ (II, 355). A further significant remark shows Camus’s growing ambivalence towards Europe because of the clash of ideologies: ‘l’intelligence européenne, trahissant son héritage et sa vocation, a choisi la démesure par goût du pathétique et de l’exaltation’ (II, 362). Forced to reply to a second attack by D’Astier, Camus began to revise his Resistance-era belief in an illustrious European tradition, and to confront what he named in L’Homme révolté ‘l’orgueil européen’ (II, 361, 420).

Faced with breakdown of dialogue and *ipso facto* legitimisation of murder, Camus proposes a ‘pensée politique modeste’ (II, 335). He argues that, after its August-September 1946 conference, the Socialist Party was forced to choose between legitimising murder or rejecting Marx, in another reductionist assimilation of Marxism and murder: ‘Ou bien, ils admettront que la fin couvre les moyens, donc que le meurtre puisse être légitimé, ou bien ils renonceront au marxisme comme philosophie absolue, se bornant à en retenir l’aspect critique, souvent encore valable’ (II, 338). This remark shows that to Camus, refusal to legitimate murder in Europe would herald the end of absolute utopias and ideologies, leaving room for ‘une utopie, plus modeste et moins ruineuse’ (II, 338), one aspect of which would be the rehabilitation of dialogue in a more modest, new style of politics in Europe. He develops this in ‘La Démocratie exerce de la modestie’. Re-stating the essential themes of ‘Ni victimes’, he ventures a definition of democracy in opposition to absolute ideologies: ‘La démocratie ne défend pas un idée abstraite, ni une philosophie brillante, elle défend des démocrates, ce qui suppose qu’elle leur demande de décider des moyens les plus propres à assurer leur défense’ (II, 1582).

Camus’s observations on democracy and dialogue lead to the major solutions of world organisation and peace developed in ‘Ni victimes’. His understanding of the

tensions of 1946 reinforces his notion of the interdependence of European economies, which he applies to the idea of revolution. He argues that, in its typical form of a minority seizure of power and change in ownership, revolution is romantic nonsense doomed to failure in the face of its probable consequences vis-à-vis the superpowers:

[...] nous ne sommes pas libres, en tant que français, d'être révolutionnaires. Ou du moins nous ne pouvons plus être des révolutionnaires solitaires parce qu'il n'y plus, dans le monde, aujourd'hui, de politiques conservatrices ou socialistes qui puissent se déployer sur le seul plan national. (II, 339)

He states that a revolution in France would incur either the flight of American capital or an ideological war, disastrous in the context of the atom bomb. He also refutes the notion that the end of capitalism would bring an end to war; rather, to bring an end to capitalism would involve war on a massive scale (II, 360). In a similarly reductionist argument to that against political murder, he states that revolution can only be global in scale: '[...] nous ne pouvons parler que de révolution internationale. Exactement, la révolution se fera à l'échelle internationale ou elle ne se fera pas' (II, 339). Since revolution in 1946 can only lead to war, it is inappropriate to mention it, unless its signification is changed:

Ce que le mot contient *aujourd'hui* doit être accepté en bloc ou rejeté en bloc. S'il est accepté, on doit se reconnaître responsable conscient de la guerre à venir. S'il est rejeté, on doit, ou bien se déclarer partisan du *statu quo*, ce qui est l'utopie totale dans la mesure où elle suppose l'immobilisation de l'histoire, ou bien renouveler le contenu du mot révolution, ce qui présente un consentement à ce que j'appellerai l'utopie relative. (II, 340-1, emphasis in original)

This is an element of his 'pensée politique modeste', and anticipatory of the conclusion of L'Homme révolté. Camus further suggests that building a peaceful world order would give meaning to this idea of revolution: 'Au bout de ce long effort, le mot de révolution reprendra son sens' (II, 366).

Camus returns to the theme of obsolete national borders, repeating the metaphor of the Czech and the Texan (already used in 'La Crise de l'homme' and Combat (II, 341)) in a *mondialiste* optic:

[..] aucun problème économique, si secondaire apparaisse-t-il, ne peut se régler aujourd'hui en dehors de la solidarité des nations. Le pain de l'Europe est à Buenos Aires, et les machines-outils de Sibérie sont fabriquées à Detroit. Aujourd'hui, la tragédie est collective. (II, 341-2)

One wonders if Soviet machine tools did indeed come from Detroit in 1946; the slip shows a potential lack of understanding of the new global realities. Even if they did, Camus extrapolates too much from the observation, which suggests that economic necessity implies latent desire to cooperate, patently untrue of the superpowers in 1946. Nevertheless, the quotation shows determination not to succumb to the logic of the two blocs: since economic realities transcended frontiers, so should political solutions. Arguably they already did within the Soviet Union, and soon within Schuman plan Western Europe, but Camus's focus is wider. He has left behind the ideal of European unity and seeks a solution to tension and conflict through global cooperation, stating that all problems are contingent on the establishment on a peaceful international order: 'cet ordre universel est le seul problème du moment et qui passe toutes les querelles de constitution et de loi électorale' (II, 342). Written as the twenty-one victor states discussed the post-war order, this bears a certain frustration with their abilities to grasp the necessity of peace negotiated on a higher level: 'l'on voit le monde s'acharner aujourd'hui à régler des problèmes de frontières quand tous les peuples savent que les frontières sont aujourd'hui abstraites' (II, 344).

For him, the international order to be instituted ought to ensure the distribution of '[..] les ressources en hommes, les matières premières, les marchés commerciaux et les richesses spirituelles [...]' (II, 342), and 'la libération sociale et la dignité ouvrière' (II, 360). The similarities with the Algiers journalism abound once more, but the move to a more abstract, global level is new, reflecting Camus's views on the global nature of war, and the form of international peace he saw as necessary. In 1946, he saw a global order coming about in one of two ways: by war, for, he argues, the USSR and the USA each had the means of unifying the world but under their own hegemony, or by international

democratic cooperation, 'la démocratie internationale'. The latter would be based on the opinions of peoples, consulted and represented through global elections and a world parliament. Since, to Camus, the world was inhibited by a 'dictature internationale', which is how he considered the nascent United Nations, whose legal system could be adjusted by national governments (II, 343),

[l]a seule façon d'en sortir est de mettre la loi internationale au-dessus des gouvernements, donc de faire cette loi, donc de disposer d'un parlement, donc de constituer ce parlement au moyen d'élections mondiales auxquelles participeront tous les peuples. (II, 343)

Adding that the first article of an international code of justice would be 'l'abolition générale de la peine de mort', a constant theme of his post-war thought, he further states that national issues are merely matters of internal administration, the real problem being the establishment of an international order.<sup>55</sup> He describes in a vague and circular fashion the way such a peaceful world order would be instituted:

Le mouvement pour la paix [...] devrait pouvoir s'articuler à l'intérieur des nations sur des communautés de travail et, par-dessus les frontières, sur des communautés de réflexion, dont les premières, selon des contrats de gré à gré sur le mode coopératif, soulagerait le plus grand nombre possible d'individus et dont les secondes s'essaieraient à définir les valeurs dont vivra cet ordre international, en même temps qu'elles plaideraient pour lui, en toute occasion. (II, 348)

Communities would be expected to reassure (soulager) the greatest number of people, and the international reflection groups would be expected to argue for an international order, the principles of which they themselves would have to define. Arguably, the idea reflects Camus's suspicion of elected politicians and his *anarchisant* sensibilities, and is interesting in its anticipation of Camus's involvement with the GLI (see above), but it is weak as a proposal for world peace and governance. Camus's argument is also undermined by the nature of the global order he posits in a proposal to extend world government:

Dans dix ans, dans cinquante ans, c'est la prééminence de la civilisation occidentale qui sera remise en question. Autant donc y penser tout de suite et ouvrir le Parlement mondial

<sup>55</sup> In 'Réflexions sur la guillotine': '[L]'abolition solennelle de la peine de mort devrait être le premier article du Code européen que nous espérons tous' (II, 1061).

à ces civilisations [colonisées], afin que sa loi devienne vraiment universelle, et universel l'ordre qu'elle consacre. (II, 345)

Non-western civilisations are added almost as an afterthought in a statement of back door colonialism, catching and disciplining other civilisations before they threaten Western authority. It is interesting to note that Camus has to spell out the involvement of 'non-western' countries, as if the international order he describes does not automatically include them. This problem, significant in itself, is part of a wider ideological flaw in 'Ni victimes ni bourreaux'. Camus argues that Europe must not be taken over by the superpowers or their ideologies, without himself recognising that a universal democratic order based on the rule of law could hardly be value neutral. Camus is, in other words, calling for a universalising system in a series of articles purporting to critique the very basis of universalising thought, represented for Camus by Marxism and liberalism. When he writes 'il est bien évident qu'il ne s'agirait pas d'édifier une nouvelle idéologie' (II, 348), the contradiction is apparent.

The pattern of Camus's relationship with Europe continues throughout the 1950s after settling as shown in the late 1940s. He alludes to the European idea only on rare occasions, and never directly to the new European institutions, although at a colloquium in Greece on 'L'Avenir de la Civilisation Européenne' in 1955 he spoke of the need for common institutions and the preservation of Europe's pluralism (Matala 1990, 29).<sup>56</sup> A speech in March 1957 on the Hungarian crisis, refers to 'l'Europe enfin unie' (II, 1784). It is uncertain, however, whether he refers to the signing of the Treaty of Rome the same month, or to a nebulous idea of the (future) unity of intellectuals and artists against tyranny and oppression, in solidarity with their Hungarian counterparts. Similar

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<sup>56</sup> Matala considers that, according to Camus's view on it, the conference could be more appropriately titled 'L'Espoir d'une Renaissance en Europe'. She notes that Camus was critical of the conference's remit: 'Avenir? Peut-être. Civilisation? Peut-être. Européenne? Peut-être' (1990, 26-7). Camus describes it as 'ma conférence controversée' (CIII, 158, avril 1955).

uncertainty is to be found in 'Réflexions sur la guillotine' (1957), when Camus writes of 'L'Europe unie de demain' without commentary (II, 1061). It can be surmised, however, that the Treaty of Rome did not constitute a move towards European unity, since in December 1957 in Stockholm, he declared:

*Si nous arrivions à faire les États-Unis d'Europe, vous auriez devant vous un homme heureux. Mais quant aux États-Unis du monde, je trouve que c'est une limite que nous pouvons nous fixer dans l'avenir et dans l'idéal. À franchement parler cette limite me paraît utopique à l'heure actuelle. Je ne vois pas comment nous arriverions à concilier les points de vue de N. Kroutchev et de D. Eisenhower, pour le moment, n'est-ce pas? Ça va s'arranger, sûrement. (II, 1571, my emphasis)*

His *mondialisme* clearly remains, albeit complemented by a dose of realism not present in 'Ni victimes'. A further fleeting reference to Europeanism appears in the interview with Demain in October 1957, in Camus's reply to the question 'cette Europe de l'esprit vous apparaît-il comme une réalité?' Stating that it does, he elaborates: 'J'ai donc appris, aussi naturellement qu'on apprend à respirer, que l'amour de la terre natale pouvait s'élargir sans mourir. Et finalement, c'est parce que j'aime mon pays que je me sens européen.'<sup>57</sup> Camus's questioning of the European conscience also continues in the 1950s, for example at the Greek colloquium in 1955:

*Il y a une Europe bourgeoise, individualiste, celle qui pense à ses frigidaires, à ses restaurants gastronomiques, qui dit: 'moi, je ne vote pas', c'est l'Europe bourgeoise, c'est vrai. Celle-là ne peut pas vivre. Elle dit sans doute qu'elle veut vivre, mais elle a mis la vie à un niveau si bas qu'elle n'a pas la chance de se prolonger dans l'histoire, elle végète, et aucune société ne végète pour longtemps. (Cited in Matala 1990, 28)*

But such references to Europe are increasingly rare in the 1950s, and are significant for their absence of commentary on actual European integration, which one might have expected from a writer who had been a convinced Europeanist in 1945.

## Conclusion

Despite the quite considerable ideological problems highlighted above, by 1948

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<sup>57</sup> A reformulation of the phrase in the preface to Lettres à un ami allemand 'J'aime trop mon pays pour être nationaliste' (II, 219).



Camus's discourse of Europe has shifted considerably from Europeanism in the Combat editorials, largely unchanged from the Algiers journalism, to *mondialisme*, reflecting a certain ambivalence towards Europe reflected in a growing focus on politico-philosophical fault lines. He gradually extricates himself from active Europeanism, as shown in his unwillingness to support Europeanist groups, and avoids neutralism as it developed in the 1950s after the RDR episode, thus negotiating with the evolution of the European idea in the Cold War, settling on low-key involvement with ideas of world peace and unity. The ambivalence Camus feels towards Europe is, however, not new, as the following chapter will show in an analysis of his fictional writing between 1936 and 1944.

## IV. A Fictional north/south antagonism (1936-44)

La Mort heureuse, 'La Mort dans l'âme', Le Malentendu.

If the Lettres à un ami allemand vaunted a united, culturally diverse, harmonious 'plus grande patrie', Camus's fiction constitutes another discourse of Europe altogether. The texts analysed in this chapter, written before and during Camus's work as a journalist in Algiers and his convalescence in France in the early 1940s, seriously problematise the constructions of unity in his persuasive writing and demonstrate his clear sense of ambivalence towards Europe. Camus's wartime and post-war Europe comprises towns and areas all over the continent; his fiction posits an almost irredeemable antagonism between Camus's north – Prague and Silesia (actually part of the narrator's 'plus grande patrie' in Lettres à un ami allemand) – and his south of Europe: Vicenza and Genoa.

This chapter analyses the construction of Europe in Camus's fiction, applying the theories of space in literature elaborated in the introduction to two earlier texts, La Mort heureuse (1936-8) and 'La Mort dans l'âme' (1937), and to the play Le Malentendu (1943-4). The earlier texts describe a journey through, and sojourns in, European countries, at first sight recounting the same journey from Prague, through Czechoslovakia, Germany and Austria, to Italy. Each, however, gives different emphasis to particular places. In La Mort heureuse, Camus's unpublished first novel written between 1936 and 1938, the main protagonist Patrice Mersault spends a few days in Prague before crossing Europe by train, passing through Silesia, various Czech and German towns, and stopping in Vienna.<sup>1</sup> After a week he heads south to Genoa in

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<sup>1</sup> Published posthumously in 1971 (MH), with a useful article by Jean Sarracchi on its genesis and rapports with L'Étranger (pp. 7-19). See also Grenier 1987, 73-89. On its similarities with Dostoevsky's Crime and Punishment, see Dunwoodie 1972.

northern Italy. Of this thirty page section, the Prague episode takes up fifteen, the journey to Vienna five, Vienna itself three and Genoa five. In 'La Mort dans l'âme', a nine-page (in the Pléiade edition) meditative short story from L'Envers et l'endroit, the narrator, like Mersault, spends some time in Prague before travelling through Moravia, Silesia, Bautzen and Vienna, arriving in northern Italy, where he passes through Venice and stops in Vicenza. Prague takes up six pages, the journey south half a page and Vicenza three pages.<sup>2</sup> The European sojourn in La Mort heureuse constitutes an important phase in the narrative: afterwards, Mersault lives alone by the sea, falls ill and dies happy, having discovered that happiness must be willed. 'La Mort dans l'âme' bases a reflection on mortality on the European experiences.

Camus wrote Le Malentendu while convalescing at Le Chambon, before beginning La Peste and the Lettres à un ami allemand.<sup>3</sup> Added to the fact that there exist slightly different versions of the play, he seems unsure of dates; in his *prière d'insérer* he claims that it was written in 1941 (I, 1785); in the preface to the American volume Caligula and three other plays this changes to 1943 (I, 1728). It first appears in the Carnets in April 1941; according to Quilliot, 'Si l'on en juge par les notes de décembre 1942, la pièce est fort avancée' (I, 1780). Some of Camus's resistance comrades read the text (Todd 1996, 321, 324). The present analysis is based on the 1958 edition as published in the Pléiade edition, but there is little substantial difference between this and the previous versions,

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<sup>2</sup> First published in Algiers in 1937. See Grenier 1987, 55-64; II, 1169-80.

<sup>3</sup> For the genesis of the play see CII, 35, 45, 59, 63-5, 91, 95; Grenier 1987, 149, 157-60; I, 1780-3. For theories on the inspiration behind it see I, 1780; Abbou 1970; Gay-Crosier 1967, 101; Grenier 1987, 155-6. See Freeman 1971, 70-2; Gay-Crosier 1967, 123-32; Guérin 1992 for an evaluation of the success or otherwise of Camus's attempt to create a 'tragédie moderne' in Le Malentendu. Camus explained the principles of this dramatic form in another lecture in Athens in 1955 (I, 1699-1709). Despite a well-known cast, Le Malentendu did not go down well at the première, (Todd 1996, 352-3; Grenier 1987, 161-2), for reasons pertaining to dialogue, atmosphere, and superficial characters who enounce too transparently Camus's philosophical preoccupations. Critics have written that there is little intrigue in the play: it is obvious from the beginning what will happen (Bronner 1999, 61-2; Gay-Crosier 1967, 130-1). Freeman highlights ambiguities in the action and dialogue which complicate the play and undermine Camus's own interpretation of it (1971 56-75).

and practically none concerning the European décor of the play.<sup>4</sup> Reference will, however, be made to previous versions where appropriate. Unlike the other texts Le Malentendu does not describe a journey through Europe. The play is instead entirely set in Czechoslovakia, a backdrop Camus uses to construct a sombre portrait of Europe. The impression of a wider geographical area comes from the character Jan, the prodigal son who returns home to mother and sister who later kill him. He frequently describes his adopted southern homeland which contrasts with the impression of Czechoslovakia.

The two earlier works can be read biographically as an account of Camus's 1937 holiday with first wife Simone Hié and friend Yves Bourgeois (Lottman 1981, 111-19; Todd 1996, 110-19). Both biographers describe Camus's feelings during the trip through reference to Mersault and the narrator of 'La Mort dans l'âme'. Peška (1983) views the Prague experience as the root of the mood of L'Envers et l'endroit, and as the genesis of the concept of the absurd. The original title of Le Malentendu, Budejovice, is a town Camus may have visited during the 1937 trip (C1, 157, 229). Camus himself explains the sombre atmosphere of the play through reference to his experience of occupied France in both the *prière d'insérer* and the preface: 'Le Malentendu est certainement une pièce sombre. Elle a été écrite en 1943, au milieu d'un pays encerclé et occupé, loin de tout ce que j'aimais' (I, 1785). On another level, the texts illustrate the classic Camusian dichotomies of 'exil' and 'royaume', 'la mer et les prisons' (Quilliot 1970) and 'soleil et ombre' (Grenier 1987).

This chapter, however, focuses purely on the construction of a fictional Europe through the description of journeys and spaces in the three works, examining the

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<sup>4</sup> Quilliot notes that 'de l'édition de 1944 à celle de 1947 il y a peu de variantes' (I, 1780). Camus edited it three times after the 1944 première: there exist the original 1944 script, a 1947 reworking, a slightly modified television version with scenic notes, and the definitive 1958 script, published with Caligula. Shortly before his death, Camus was considering another reworking (I, 1784; Freeman 1971, 62-3; Grenier 1987, 160-1).

antagonism between a sinister, malevolent north, represented by Czechoslovakia, and the sumptuous, vital south of Italy and Jan's evocation of his adopted homeland. 'North' perhaps seems a misnomer for Central Europe, but is used here figuratively to denote Camus's construction of a mythical north. Michel Butor has written about the journey in its relation to space in terms which will help frame the following analysis:

L'espace vécu n'est nullement l'espace euclidien dont les parties sont exclusives les unes aux autres. Tout lieu est le foyer d'un horizon d'autres lieux, le point d'origine d'une série de parcours possibles passant par d'autres régions plus ou moins déterminées. (1969, 57)

On a superficial level this is true of the journeys across Europe represented in La Mort heureuse and 'La Mort dans l'âme'. One place or area is defined in relation or opposition to another; Prague is on the horizon of Genoa and vice versa. From Prague, Mersault decides to leave one space and move into another. In Vienna, the narrator of 'La Mort dans l'âme' decides to head to Italy. In a similar way, both spaces are constantly juxtaposed in the dialogue in Le Malentendu. Thus, spaces lead into each other, and in a geophysical sense there are no demarcation lines, only a flux. Butor continues:

Mais lorsque le voyageur est loin de chez lui, qu'il est retenu dans ces îles dont il rêvait, c'est de sa patrie qu'il rêve alors, elle lui manque et lui apparaît sous des couleurs toutes renouvelées. A partir du moment où le lointain devient proche, c'est ce qui était proche qui prend le pouvoir du lointain, qui m'apparaît comme encore plus lointain. (1969, 50)

This idea of nostalgia for a lost homeland is, again on a superficial level, present in the texts. Mersault is nostalgic for the south when in the north, as is the narrator of 'La Mort dans l'âme', and Jan is nostalgic for home when duty brings him north. All are far from home in unfamiliar surroundings, in one sense illustrating the classic theme of the traveller dreaming about his homeland from afar.

These statements are, however, undermined by a Barthesian analysis of the north/south antagonism as antithesis. There is a distinct separation between the two halves of the antithesis. Even if Mersault and the narrator can move fluidly between

them, and Martha and Jan inhabit the same hotel, the two spaces are not interrelated: on an intrapsychic level the two spaces are mutually exclusive, mitigated only by the 'mitoyenneté' of intermediate spaces and reactions. Butor's 'espace vécu' well and truly *is* the Euclidian space whose parts are mutually exclusive. Europe, in its inscription in the texts examined here, is radically split between mutually exclusive terms. Not only is this the case in the description of the two extremes but it is reinforced by an idea of transgression. When a character moves from a 'home' space (the south) into the 'hostile' space (the north), the consequence is death.

The works will therefore be examined simultaneously in an analysis following the categories Barthes assigns to his understanding of the antithesis, which will demonstrate these assertions that there is more to the north/south antagonism than at first appears. The first section examines the construction of north and south in turn, elucidating the nature of each space by teasing out recurrent semes, and analysing the characters' relationship to their spaces, i.e. the rapport between geophysical and intrapsychic. It also studies spatial oppositions other than the north/south split. The next section applies Barthes's notion of 'mitoyenneté', looking at its implications, and the third section applies the idea of transgression. Where relevant, shorter sections relate the constructions of Europe to wider contexts, for example the literature of 'Magic Prague' and the ideology of the *École d'Alger*. This will show that Camus's fictional voice of Europe, like the political, is created through dialogic interaction with external sources.

## Barthes's Antithesis (i): The north/south antagonism

### North

Barthes's classification of the antithesis begins with the announcements of its terms, or halves. In La Mort heureuse these announcements are very simple: the coming description of Prague is announced in Mersault's opportunity to visit Prague ('une

situation exceptionnelle lui était offerte en Europe centrale' (MH, 89-90)) and in his actual departure, when '[il] eut un violent accès de fièvre et sauta dans un train pour Prague' (90). This announcement sets the mood for the negative description of Prague which follows, beginning with Mersault's arrival, and announced by his request in German for a hotel room and by his gaze towards 'la petite rue de Prague' (95).

Three recurring semes characterise the textual construction of the mythical north of La Mort heureuse. The first is the signifier of the wall. Arriving in his Prague hotel room, Mersault notices that the window 'donnait sur une arrière-cour avec lavoir et sur des murs troués de petites fenêtres' (97).<sup>5</sup> The description is striking in that Mersault notices not the windows as such, but the fact that they are small and appear as an afterthought. The walls thus gain more signifying force, connoting oppression. There is a similar idea in the description of the Jewish cemetery: 'Devant une petite grille dans un mur épais, recouvert de caractères hébreux, il comprit qu'il était dans le quartier juif' (103). The wall is not only broken by a small grill, but it is now thicker, and the feeling of oppression is increased. The Hebrew inscriptions add another dimension: they signify that Mersault is in the Jewish quarter but since he cannot read them, the wall becomes both a psychological and a linguistic barrier, excluding Mersault from the space in which he finds himself. He peers through the railings and sees 'des grosses pierres brunes enfouies dans les herbes' (103). Since this is a cemetery, the signs 'tombale' or 'dalle' might have been expected, but the 'grosses pierres enfouies' signify not only death in this context but an impersonal and anonymous return to the earth. Gravestones normally bear inscriptions, but not these.

The wall seme also constructs a spatial opposition between closed and open, inside

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<sup>5</sup> There are strong echoes here of Jan's arrival in the hotel room in Le Malentendu (I, 145, 152).

versus outside. Only through the glass door of the hotel does he see ‘la petite rue de Prague’ (95); his room, ‘au-delà de laquelle il ne voyait plus rien’ (96), constitutes closed space. Everything Mersault notices is from within closed space, which affects his intrapsychic space: ‘[il] éprouv[ait] si clairement ce qu’il y a d’absurde et de misérable au fond des vies les mieux préparées’ (97). He tries to overcome this sense of enclosure by going outside, but even here another spatial opposition, high/low, is established in the description of the church towers (99-100). Even in open space, Mersault ‘tourn[e] en rond’ (100). It is just as oppressive as inside space, highlighted inside a church, where there is ‘une douceur [...] si amère que Mersault se rejeta sur le seuil’ (100). Mersault seems torn between closed and open, uneasy within both: experience of the open leads him back to the closed in the restaurant, the most enclosed space yet encountered. In this ‘caveau assez sombre’, the intensity builds to such an extent that ‘[Mersault] sentit que la fêlure qu’il portait en lui craquait et l’ouvrait plus grand à l’angoisse et à la fièvre’ (103). He flees only to encounter the oppressive feeling of the Jewish cemetery, closed off by its thick wall. Caught in the oppression of both spaces, Mersault ‘vomit avec effort’ before running back to his room, where he falls asleep instantly (103-4).

Water is the second recurring seme in Mersault’s Prague. It is an important aspect of geophysical space and is mentioned in relation to the weather, the Prague streets, and the Vltava river. In its different contexts it signifies oppression and malevolence, provoking angst and unease in Mersault’s intrapsychic space. It first appears in the room: ‘Sur une écœurante tapisserie à grosses fleurs jaunes sur fond gris, toute une géographie de crasse dessinait de gluants univers de misère. Derrière l’énorme radiateur, des coins gras et boueux’ (96). Through the signs ‘gras’ and ‘boueux’, water is an oblique signifier, connoting filth and abjection. The link between water and abjection then expands into the geophysical space of the town: ‘Il s’enfonça dans les rues plus



noires et moins peuplées. Sans qu'il ait plu dans la journée le sol était détrempé, et Mersault devait éviter les flaques noires entre les pavés rares' (100). In the atmosphere of decay connoted by reference to infrequent paving stones in the street, the signified of abjection continues, and water begins to connote malevolence. The sense of abnormality in the phrase 'sans qu'il ait plu dans la journée' suggests that the water is a malignant presence there by dint of mysterious forces: puddles are in darker streets with fewer people, despite there having been no rain.

This signified of malevolence starts to impact on Mersault's intrapsychic space when he encounters the smell of pickled cucumbers: 'Piquante, aigrelette, elle réveillait en lui toutes ses puissances d'angoisse' (100). The passage in which Mersault eventually finds the source of this repugnant smell constitutes a résumé of the function and connotation of the water signifier: 'Elle était loin, puis au coin de la rue, et entre le ciel maintenant obscurci et les pavés gras et gluants, elle était là, comme le sortilège mauvais des nuits de Prague' (101). The water signifier becomes attached to the vinegar and is clearly assimilated with the idea of malevolence, the evil spells hanging over Prague. The whole geophysical space of Prague now directly connotes malevolence without the water signifier in the phrase 'le sortilège mauvais des nuits de Prague.' Intrapsychically, Mersault is overpowered and leans against a wall to regain his senses. The stench of cucumbers 'l'envahissait tout entier, piquait ses yeux de larmes et le laissait sans défense' (101).

The vinegar smell illustrates the inside/outside spatial opposition and its relation to Mersault's intrapsychic space. Outside, it haunts him, making him seek refuge in enclosed spaces such as churches and the restaurant, complicating the rapport between open space and the intrapsychic space of Mersault's reactions. He even notices the smell

in the restaurant, sensing the oppression from outside, the ‘vieux monde méchant et douloureux [...] se réfugi[ait] dans la chaleur de la salle’ (103).

A solitary walk along the Vltava provokes the apotheosis of Mersault’s angst through the seme of water, in a passage directly anticipating the evocation of Europe’s shared beauty in the Lettres à un ami allemand. There, the Vltava is part of Camus’s ‘patrie’, here it is Mersault’s anguish:

Toute cette eau descendant avec son chargement de cris, de mélodies, et d’odeurs de jardins, pleine des lueurs cuivrées du ciel couchant et des ombres contorsionnées et grotesques des statues du pont Charles apportait à Mersault la conscience douloureuse et ardente d’une solitude sans ferveur où l’amour n’avait plus de part. (106)

The mysterious, malevolent signified of the spell reappears: the water once more signifies evil and darkness through reference to aspects of Prague already evoked. The ‘chargement de cris’, firstly, echoes the noises from nearby streets that Mersault hears in the hotel room: ‘toutes les voix de la rue, [...] les bruits des hommes [...] s’infiltraient dans le passage et montaient tout le long de la cour pour éclater comme des bulles dans la chambre de Mersault’ (99).<sup>6</sup> Here, the noises are like bubbles; the water seme carries the atmosphere of the street. Secondly, ‘mélodies’ echoes the blind accordionist’s ‘air puénil et tendre’ (104) and the orchestras on the riverbank (106). Thirdly, the ‘odeurs des jardins’ evokes Mersault’s hours in monastery gardens (105) and on the riverbank. The water of the Vltava river therefore flows through both geophysical and intrapsychic space, physically downstream and intrapsychically across Mersault’s conscience, transporting the ‘essence’ of the construction of Prague.

A third recurring seme in Prague is age. On several occasions, obliquely and directly, Prague is constituted as a town swamped by its own history. Reference is made to two

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<sup>6</sup> The hotel room scenes in La Mort heureuse echo Mersault/Meursault’s Sunday afternoon on the balcony in La Mort heureuse (MH, 44-7) and L’Étranger (I, 1137-40), not to mention the theme of the mother sitting at the window in Le Premier homme.

codes in the following passage: ‘sur la place de la vieille mairie et dans le soir un peu lourd qui descendait sur Prague, les flèches gothiques de la mairie et de la vieille église de Tyn se découpèrent en noir’ (99). Reference to architectural history (the Gothic period) places the buildings in a certain context and creates a sense of age and history, coloured by the inherent oppression of references to the weather (‘le soir un peu lourd’) and the buildings themselves, dark against the evening sky. Secondly, those familiar with ghost stories or horror films will recognise the cliché of the mysterious, dark gothic building. The code of architectural history reappears soon after: ‘la lumière devenait cuivrée et le jour s’attardait encore sur l’or des dômes *baroques* qu’on voyait au fond de la place’ (100, my emphasis). Upon entering a church, Mersault is ‘saisi par la vieille odeur’, becoming conscious of this feeling of age. He then visits the ‘*vieux* cimetière juif’ and the ‘*vieille* place de l’hotel de ville’ (103, my emphasis). Although these are proper names in Prague, they nevertheless enrich the sense of age. Later on, when Mersault plans his visits, the sites he chooses are intriguing: ‘Cloîtres et églises baroques, musées et vieux quartiers, il n’oublia rien’ (104). All signify age and history, either in the type of building or its contents.

This construction of Prague as a town full of a past never far from the surface can be related to the inside/outside opposition. When Mersault goes outside to pass time, his visits include only closed, inside spaces. Typical of his relationship with both spaces is the description of his visits to churches and cloisters: ‘[Il] cherchait refuge dans leur odeur de cave et d’encens puis, revenu au jour, retrouvait sa peur secrète’ (105). Mersault neither finds refuge, nor resolves his secret fears. In the remarkably intense restaurant scene, the most striking illustration of the closed/open opposition, Mersault feels mounting angst caused by a curious feeling that ‘des limites de la nuit qui dormait sur Prague tout le sens d’un vieux monde méchant et douloureux était venu se réfugier

dans la chaleur de cette salle' (103). This is interesting for its amalgam of the signified of malevolence and the sense of age.

The passage is also interesting for its anthropomorphic description of the old world taking refuge in the café, echoing Mersault himself: 'Mersault se levait tard, visitaient cloîtres et églises, *cherchait refuge* dans leur odeur de cave et d'encens' (105, my emphasis). Both Mersault and the 'vieux monde' take refuge; the 'vieux monde' in the modern-day Prague café, Mersault in cloisters and churches of the 'vieux monde' itself, described with the same code of behaviour and the same verb. It illustrates Mersault's uneasy intrapsychic relationship with the geophysical. The 'vieux monde' seeks Mersault out and deeply affects his intrapsychic space: '[...] projeté au bout de lui-même [...] l'ouvrait plus grand à l'angoisse et à la fièvre' (103), but Mersault then seeks refuge in that which causes him such angst. This is offset, however, by Mersault's visit to the museum: 'il voyait les musées et comprenait la profusion et le mystère du génie baroque qui remplissait Prague de ses ors et de sa magnificence' (105). On one level this is one more reference to Prague's rich architectural history, but on another reads like a museum guidebook, suggesting ambivalence, qualifying Mersault's search for refuge. He is distancing himself, faintly parodying the phrase. Indeed, once outside the churches and cloisters, where there is some comfort, 'Mersault se retrouvait sans patrie' (105). Prague is part of Camus's 'patrie' in Lettres à un ami allemand, which seems to have little rapport with this anguished description of a Central Europe of despair and malaise.

In 'La Mort dans l'âme', the coming description of Prague, and by extension the mythical north, is announced perfunctorily in the opening line: 'J'arrivai à Prague à six heures du soir' (II, 31). This text is much less emphatic than its equivalent in La Mort heureuse, even if the events and geophysical spaces are similar. Written in the first

person, descriptions are constantly related to the intrapsychic space of the narrator's feelings. The present analysis thus moves away from recurring semes towards a recurring signified of exclusion, also a common feature of La Mort heureuse but stated more directly in 'La Mort dans l'âme'. The first paragraph sets the tone:

Je sortis de la gare, marchai le long de jardins et me trouvai soudain jeté en pleine avenue Wenceslas, bouillonnante de monde à cette heure. Autour de moi, un million d'êtres qui avaient vécu jusque-là et de leur existence rien n'avait transpiré pour moi. Ils vivaient. J'étais à des milliers de kilomètres du pays familial. Je ne comprenais pas leur langage. Tous marchaient vite. Et me dépassant, tous se détachaient de moi. Je perdis pied. (II, 31)

There is a sudden transition from relative calm to chaos in the phrase 'soudain jeté en pleine avenue', suggesting that were the narrator familiar with the town, arriving in the square would not have been such a shock; the narrator is thus constituted as a stranger, compounded by his reference to Wenceslas square as avenue.<sup>7</sup> Wenceslas Square signifies the business and complicity of a city population with its own habits. Business is clear from the adjective 'bouillonnante' and the verb phrase 'marchaient vite', describing people who obviously know what they are doing and where they are going. Complicity stems from the use of 'langage' rather than 'langue', signifying a more specialist, exclusive bond between people. A prominent sense of exclusion is thus constructed. The townsfolk are completely indifferent to the narrator's presence: they physically surround him but move so quickly that he perceives only a chaotic crowd, conscious he is not part of it.

Unlike Mersault, the narrator of 'La Mort dans l'âme' begins the Prague experience in the open space of city streets. There is, nevertheless, a similar intrapsychic malaise brought about by the sense of exclusion, which extends to his search for a (cheap) hotel: 'J'étais dans la ville neuve et tous ceux [les hôtels] qui m'apparaissaient éclataient de lumières, de rires et de femmes. J'allai plus vite. Quelque chose dans ma course

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<sup>7</sup> Wenceslas Square is in fact a long street, but is known as square, from the Czech *náměstí*.

précipitée ressemblaient déjà à une fuite' (II, 31). He finds a hotel, but once inside, the exclusion continues; unlike in La Mort heureuse, the room is luxurious, whence further problems: '[le prix] est deux fois plus élevé que je ne pensais. La question d'argent devient épineuse. Je ne peux plus que vivre pauvrement dans cette grande ville' (II, 31). His presence in this inside space means financial exclusion from engagement in the life of the town.

Pecuniary difficulties thus impose a cheap restaurant, where the Prague experience continues in relation to people encountered. Passing back and forth in front of the restaurant, he is obviously nervous about entering, and is dismissive of it once he does, describing it as a 'caveau assez sombre, peint de fresques prétentieuses' (II, 32). The people inside are monotonous, with no distinguishing characteristics: 'Quelques filles, dans un coin, fument et parlent avec gravité. Des hommes mangent, la plupart sans âge et sans couleur' (II, 32). When they are described in more detail, any distinguishing features are exaggerated: the waiter, 'un colosse au smoking gras, avance vers moi une énorme tête sans expression' (II, 32). The girl the waiter asks to translate for the narrator has a 'sourire mouillé', and a 'bouche grasse et rieuse', standing in a 'pose classique' (II, 32). Both are held in disdain, portrayed as totally unoriginal.

Unable to communicate, the narrator is uninterested, illustrated by the following exchange: 'Vite, au hasard, j'indique sur le menu, incompréhensible pour moi, un plat. Mais il paraît que ça vaut une explication. Et le garçon m'interroge en tchèque. Je réponds avec le peu d'allemand que je sais. Il ignore l'allemand. Je m'énerve' (II, 32). This comes across more forcefully in the exchange with the girl: 'je pense à autre chose, à rien plutôt, fixant la bouche grasse et rieuse de la fille qui me fait face' (II, 32). In addition to forms of exclusion already present, the narrator is now excluded by language, unable to communicate and intrapsychically ill at ease: 'je ne suis pas ici.

Tout m'exaspère, je vacille, je n'ai pas faim. Et toujours cette pointe douloureuse en moi et le ventre serrée. [...] J'avais peur d'être malade, là, au milieu de ces gens prêts à rire' (II, 32). Despite returning regularly to the same restaurant the barrier remains between him and the others: 'Là [in the restaurant] du moins, j'étais "reconnu". On me souriait si on ne m'y parlait pas' (II, 33). The impersonal 'on' connotes an anonymous mass smiling benevolently but not trying to engage the stranger in conversation. Inability to communicate becomes a defining feature of the whole town, echoing Mersault's visit to the Jewish cemetery: 'Ville dont je ne sais pas lire les enseignes, caractères étranges où rien de familier ne s'accroche, sans amis à qui parler, sans divertissement enfin' (II, 34-5). Language itself signifies exclusion.

Later, in the old quarter, the narrator describes a similar sentiment: 'Je marchai dans la vieille ville, mais incapable de rester plus longtemps en face de moi-même, je courus jusqu'à mon hôtel, me couchai, attendis le sommeil qui vint presque aussitôt' (II, 32). The space of Prague is anthropomorphised, taking on the characteristics of the narrator himself. In the end, looking at Prague, a geophysical space, the narrator writes as if he were looking into a mirror; the signifiers 'vieille ville' and 'moi-même' combine to connote oppression similar to that of La Mort heureuse. The intrapsychic result is growing unease: 'l'angoisse gagnait du terrain' (II, 33).

Like Mersault, the narrator plans visits in order to fill as much time as possible. The description of one of these provides the clearest expression of his sense of exclusion from both inside and outside spaces in the geophysical space of Prague: 'Je me perdais dans les somptueuses églises baroques, essayant d'y retrouver une patrie, mais sortant plus vide et plus désespéré de ce tête-à-tête décevant avec moi-même' (II, 33). In contrast with La Mort heureuse, where age is oppressive and menacing, linked with an idea of malevolence, age and history are not negatively connoted in the same way; the

oppression in this passage comes from the confrontation between the geophysical and the narrator's intrapsychic space, not from simple descriptions of the geophysical space, which leaves the narrator cold, be it inside or outside. In the geophysical old quarter, the narrator sees his own intrapsychic walls. The fact that the narrator cannot find a 'patrie' in a town part of the 'plus grande patrie' in Lettres à un ami allemand clearly demonstrates the ambivalence of this fictional discourse and its uncomfortable relationship with the Resistance discourse.

In the Hradcany district, 'Je passais des heures démesurées dans l'immense quartier du Hradschin, désert et silencieux. À l'ombre de sa cathédrale et de ses palais, à l'heure où le soleil déclinait, mon pas solitaire faisait résonner les rues' (II, 33). Excessive space leads to oppression, provoked by the shadows bearing down. The sound of footsteps not only enhances this but points to the signified of exclusion: the fact that footsteps ring out means that the space is empty. This outside space is too much for the narrator, whose intrapsychic response is the now familiar 'La panique me reprenait' (II, 33).

Only once, in a passage describing the narrator's reaction to a cloister, is this unease nearly overcome. Apart from this the experience of the town is summarised in a section which the narrator claims to have written while in the town, describing his feelings of exclusion and observing the effect of travel as a sense of disequilibrium caused by a rupture between traveller and surroundings.

The problem of the time of the narration further compounds the signifieds just examined. The text is written some time after the 'actual' events occurred, giving rise to the narrator's comparison of his feelings in Prague to his 'normal' reactions. He considers himself almost a different person in Prague, as an earlier remark illustrates: 'on m'a toujours attribué [...] la plus grande indifférence à l'égard des questions d'argent. Que vient faire ici cette stupide appréhension?' (II, 31). He writes, after



transcribing the passage he claims to have written while there: ‘Mais ai-je besoin d’avouer que, tout cela, c’étaient des histoires pour m’endormir’ (II, 34). He dismisses *a posteriori* his feelings in Prague as artifice, while recognising that being there provoked them. Not only is the narrator excluded in Prague, but his intrapsychic reactions are not what they ‘normally’ would be. He claims, echoing La Mort heureuse, that ‘ce qui me reste de Prague, c’est cette odeur de concombres trempés dans le vinaigre, qu’on vend à tous les coins de rues [...] dont le parfum aigre et piquant réveillait mon angoisse et l’étoffait dès que j’avais dépassé le seuil de mon hôtel’ (II, 34). As in La Mort heureuse, a fictional discourse of Europe emerges in this text which inscribes despair at the heart of Europe, a discourse diametrically opposed to Camus’s wartime depiction of shared European beauty, and clearly demonstrative of his ambivalence.

Although these texts are part of Camus’s literary construction of an imaginary divided Europe, a similar principle to that of the political writing is at work. Just as Camus related dialogically to a series of sources, incorporating them alongside his own voice in order to create a political voice of Europe, in his fiction he also dialogically interacts with different discourses in order to construct his imaginary Europe. One such discourse is the literature of ‘Magic Prague’: his construction of Prague in the texts just examined reflects elements of an image of the Czech capital in *fin de siècle* and early twentieth-century literature.

By the time Czechoslovakia was founded in 1918, Prague was a thriving modern city after a vast programme of sanitary reform and slum clearance, especially in the Jewish quarter. There emerged, at the same time, a literary vision of Prague somewhat at odds with Prague’s modernity due to its foregrounding of magical and mystical elements. It re-emerged in the 1960s as a protest against Soviet-imposed socialist realism. A key text

in this renaissance was Ripellino's Magic Prague (1994 (1973)), which 'aimed to resuscitate the city as an eerie place of mystics and specters [*sic*], madmen and alchemists, poets maudits and soothsayers of occult powers – all in legitimate protest against the boring world of state planning and against the wooden and mercurial apparatchiks who feared change and spontaneity' (Demetz 1997, xiv). Ripellino's work is an annotated lyrical *promenade* through literary Prague, uniting many authors across history who mentioned, if only in passing, their experience of the Czech capital. Recurring themes are churches, the figure of the pilgrim, the city's sullenness, and the sombre malevolence of its streets, to highlight only those which Camus alludes to.

Peter Demetz dismisses this 'new-Left myth of Magic Prague' as a 'literary image of a topography long gone' (1997, xiv, 317-8), considering that it obscures the fullness of Prague's history: 'It has its rather recent origins in the idea that Prague harbours more secrets of the magic, or mystical, kind than any other city in Europe' (1997, xiii). It is nevertheless an important literary trope. Demetz attributes its origin to a wave of international travellers in the early and mid nineteenth century who were impressed by Prague's churches and its Jewish quarter. It then appears to have been propagated by English, German and American travellers before the slum clearances. These travellers 'on the grand tour once again became enchanted by the metaphysical, strange and spectral town of ancient cathedrals and synagogues, and dutifully wended their way through the old streets to the famous old Jewish quarter' (1997, 318). This can be compared to La Mort heureuse and 'La Mort dans l'âme', which feature many churches; Mersault also walks until 'il comprit qu'il était dans le quartier juif' (MH, 103), which, although considerably reduced in size by the slum clearances, constitutes for Ripellino 'the focal point of Prague's magic' (1994, 109).

Some works that propagate 'Magic Prague' include Francis Marion Crawford's The Witch of Prague (1890),<sup>8</sup> Rilke's König Bohusch (1899), and Jirý Karásek of Lvovice's Gothic Soul (1900). Apollinaire's 'Le Passant de Prague', studied below, was published in La Revue Blanche in 1902 after his visit the same year, and greatly influenced Czech (as well as French) surrealists. The Czech motif also surfaces in his 'L'Otmika' (1903), a story about a Bohemian gypsy woman describing Czechoslovakia as 'le pays merveilleux où l'on doit passer mais pas séjourner, sous peine d'y demeurer envoûté, ensorcelé, incanté' (cited in Ripellino 1994, 7). The first German golem movie in 1914 led to a third wave of occult Prague novels featuring the well-defined theme of Prague as eerie, harbouring well known spectres. Peška writes that before going to Prague, Camus saw the Czech film 'Le Golem', a new production of previous German films, in Algiers (1983, 447).

Apart from Apollinaire, the many French visitors included Jules Romains in 1928 and Gide in 1934, who describes Prague in his diary as a 'ville glorieuse, douloureuse, et tragique', writing that 'une sorte de véhémence mystique la mouvemente et la soulève' (Gide 1951, 1214; Ripellino 1994, 28, 160; Peška 1983, 445). In spring 1935 André Breton and Paul Eluard visited Prague, Breton lecturing on surrealism, describing Prague as 'La capitale magique de la vieille Europe', a phrase much misquoted afterwards, the Czechs missing out the 'vieille'.<sup>9</sup> This reflects a situation described by Demetz: 'Czech writers tended to look to Paris, which rarely responded to their love' (1997, 357). After Karel Capek translated the poem 'Zone' in 1919, Apollinaire

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<sup>8</sup> Reprinted four times between 1891-2 and widely available in cheap paperback form.

<sup>9</sup> As does Peška (1983, 445).

became a veritable beacon for Czech surrealists (Ripellino 1994, 260).<sup>10</sup> Ripellino also cites Camus, commenting: ‘Prague has the rhythm of slow, endless mastication, a catatonia from which it at times awakes with a burst of energy that immediately dies down’ (1994, 160). This is clearly the case in the two texts analysed here; the protagonist is nervous about so much time, trying to escape it by sleeping in and planning visits. A ‘burst of energy’ comes when Mersault witnesses a murder scene by night: ‘Il y avait là [...] une minute d’équilibre passée laquelle il semblait à Mersault que tout s’écroulerait dans la folie’ (MH, 108).

There is some evidence that Camus was aware of this ‘Magic Prague’ tradition. It is probable that he read the above-quoted passage from Gide’s diary in ‘Pages de journal’ in the *Nouvelle Revue Française*;<sup>11</sup> in a letter to Jean Grenier in 1932, Camus wrote: ‘mon goût pour Gide redouble en lisant son journal [...] Je continue aussi à le préférer à tout autre écrivain’ (CORR, 11). In addition, Camus doubtless reflects received notions about Prague, present in contemporaneous writing, as well as a picture from his own experience and that of others, which can be illustrated in several parallels. One important aspect of ‘Magic Prague’ with which Camus engages in his fictional inscription of Prague is the oppressive presence of history, reflected in constant reference to buildings belonging to the Baroque and Gothic periods. His protagonists

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<sup>10</sup> First published in 1912 in the journal *Les Soirées de Paris*, then in *Alcools* (1913), ‘Zone’ repeats a motif first appearing in ‘Le Passant de Prague’, that of the hands of the clock in the Jewish quarter turning backwards, as well as other aspects of Prague:

Epouvanté tu te vois dessiné dans les agates de Saint-Vit  
 Tu étais triste à mourir le jour où je t’y vis  
 Tu ressembles au Lazare affolé par le jour  
 Les aiguilles de l’horloge du quartier juif vont à rebours  
 Et tu recules aussi dans ta vie lentement  
 En montant au Hradchin et le soir en écoutant  
 Dans les tavernes chanter des chansons tchèques. (Apollinaire 1965, 42)

The clock image also appears in Blaise Cendrars’s ‘Prose du Transsibérien et de la petite Jeanne de France’: ‘Et le monde, comme l’horloge du quartier juif de Prague, tourne éperdument à rebours’ (Cendrars 1957, 48).

<sup>11</sup> No. 262, July 1935, 38-49, see p. 47.

are attracted to churches and cloisters: ‘Mersault se levait tard, visitait cloîtres et églises, cherchait refuge dans leur odeur de cave et d’encens’ (MH, 105), echoing Meyrink’s The Golem: ‘There I stood in the darkness, the golden altar gleaming at me like a veritable rock of peace’ (cited in Ripellino 1994, 171). Another element is Mersault’s experience of Prague by night: ‘[il] avançait par des rues courtes vers le fond de la nuit’ (MH, 103). Most ‘Magic Prague’ authors, according to Ripellino, describe the city at night.

However, the thesis that Camus related dialogically with this particular discourse of Prague is also shown by what he does *not* incorporate. His texts may invoke some aspects of Prague mythology but not others, notably magical or fantastical elements such as witches, magicians and alchemists. This can be borne out by comparison with Apollinaire’s short story ‘Le Passant de Prague’.<sup>12</sup>

In this tale, the French narrator arrives in Prague, and is welcomed and fêted due to his nationality. He finds a hotel, goes out to eat and meets a man who claims to have been alive for centuries, the Eternal Jew, who shows him around the city, taking him to louche streets and brothels. At the beginning of the story, the narrator announces: ‘En mars 1902, je fus à Prague. J’arrivais de Dresde’ (Apollinaire 1967, 11). Mersault also sees Dresden, but after leaving Prague. Apollinaire’s narrator leaves his luggage at the ‘consigne’, followed by Mersault and the narrator of ‘La Mort dans l’âme’. Then, ‘Je m’engageai dans les vieilles rues, afin de trouver un logis en rapport avec ma bourse de voyageur peu riche’ (Apollinaire 1967, 12). Camus’s narrator also leaves the new town, where the hotels were too luxurious, finding one in the old town. He also has financial difficulties: ‘Je ne peux plus vivre que pauvrement dans cette grande ville’ (II, 31).

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<sup>12</sup> First published in 1910. On Apollinaire’s visit to Prague, see Ripellino 1994, 254-257; Brett 1966.

The protagonists of all three texts go in search of a restaurant, those in Camus's texts finding it more difficult than in Apollinaire's. Indeed, 'Le Passant de Prague' generally recounts a far happier experience, due in part to language. Apollinaire's narrator asks directions in German: 'Pour mon étonnement, les cinq premiers ne comprenaient pas un mot d'allemand, mais seulement le tchèque. Le sixième [...] me répondit en français: – Parlez français monsieur, nous détestons les Allemands, bien plus que ne font les Français. [...] À Prague on ne parle que le tchèque' (Apollinaire 1967, 12). In the restaurant in 'La Mort dans l'âme' 'le garçon m'interroge en tchèque. Je réponds avec le peu d'allemand que je sais. Il ignore l'allemand' (II, 32). This reflects the position of the vociferous German minority in Prague, increasingly marginalised at the time these texts were written. By 1900 the number of German speakers had dropped to 7.5% from 15.5% in 1880 (Demetz 1997, 317). The German minority tried to offset this by establishing theatres and social clubs and maintaining a thriving literary life. Masaryk, however, did not help their self-esteem by declaring in a 1918 speech that the Germans 'had originally come to the country as immigrants and colonists' (Demetz 1997, 331). Apollinaire's narrator is welcomed everywhere because of his language; in La Mort heureuse and 'La Mort dans l'âme' there is practically no communication. Outside, Apollinaire's narrator sees a view of 'toute la ville de Prague avec ses églises et ses couvents' (1967, 19). In La Mort heureuse: 'Mersault se levait tard, visitait cloîtres et églises' (MH, 105).

The similar experiences depicted in Camus's texts and Apollinaire's tale written thirty-five years previously demonstrate the dialogue inherent in Camus's construction of a fictional north, which incorporates certain elements of the 'Magic Prague' discourse while avoiding the mysticism of 'Le Passant de Prague', with its Eternal Jew. Although other tropes in this literature of wizards and ghosts, however, are absent, he introduces

a malevolent undertone in La Mort heureuse, which reflects a more general sense of Ripellino's characteristic elements of 'Magic Prague'.

Despite the different medium through which Czechoslovakia is filtered, Le Malentendu (1944) offers a similar portrayal to those of La Mort heureuse and 'La Mort dans l'âme', while expanding the vision from Prague: Lévi-Valensi remarks that the play finds its roots in these earlier works, 'aussi et surtout dans la transcription qu'en donne 'La Mort dans l'âme', [...] qui lui fournit un climat, et des images' (1980a, 587). Judging by the didascalía (stage directions), the mimetic space (visible onstage space) is extremely austere, reflecting the paucity of the dialogue. Consequently, representations of diegetic space (invisible offstage space evoked through dialogue) are denuded of the richness and complexity of La Mort heureuse. Although few signifiers are used in the descriptions of north and south, however, they are blunt and unambiguous, just as charged as in the texts analysed above. As in these texts, one recurring theme of the mythical north is water:

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

As in La Mort heureuse, water signifies darkness and oppression through a similar evocation of omnipresent rain and the consequent sense of enclosure, also present in Martha's qualification of Czechoslovakia as 'un pays de nuages' (I, 143) and 'privée de lumière' (I, 178). The 'terres sans horizon' suggest imprisonment, no escape from never-ending land, reinforced by a suggestion that land merges with sky in bland uniformity, an impression lent weight by the remark 'Trop d'années grises ont passé sur ce petit village et sur nous. Elles nous ont enlevé le goût de la sympathie' (I, 140).

Greyness and the effects of time in geophysical space have sterilised the intrapsychic space. The 1947 script replaces the 'petit village' of this quotation with a 'point au centre de l'Europe' (I, 1792), connoting the enclosure of the 'terres sans horizon'. This is deepened in another of Martha's statements: 'je suis lasse à mourir de cet horizon fermé, et je sens que je ne pourrai pas y vivre un mois de plus' (I, 143). The 'horizon fermé' seems at first sight to contradict the 'terre sans horizon', but the adjective 'fermé' merely states what before was implied: there is no escape from this sombre country, rendered more apparent when Martha declares that she has grown up 'enfouée au cœur du continent et [...] dans l'épaisseur des terres' (I, 168). An even more explicit expression of this imprisonment comes after Jan's murder and the Mother's suicide.

Martha bitterly complains that:

Il me faut demeurer avec, à ma droite et à ma gauche, devant et derrière moi, une foule de peuples et de nations, de plaines et de montagnes, qui arrêtent le vent de la mer et dont les jacassements et les murmures étouffent son appel répété. (I, 170)

She is trapped, far from the sea and the freedom it connotes. Everything around her blocks the wind in a sinister way, suggestive of conspiracy to suffocate freedom and thoughts of escape. This mythical north is crowded and offers no respite for Martha, whose intrapsychic space is alienated from a geophysical space she detests.

The connotation of imprisonment is present when the mother mentions the town cloister to Jan. The Prague cloisters in La Mort heureuse were part of the system of oppression linked to the wall sense; in Le Malentendu, the impression is similar, despite the lack of detail. The enclosure it represents can be observed in a reference to vegetation, reinforcing the north's dull nature:

Ce que nous appelons le printemps, ici, c'est une rose et deux bourgeons qui viennent de pousser dans le jardin du cloître [...] Cela suffit à remuer les hommes de mon pays. Mais



leur cœur ressemble à cette rose avare. Un souffle plus puissant les fanerait, ils ont le printemps qu'ils méritent. (I, 149)<sup>13</sup>

The barren-ness of the north is striking. Not only is it grey and cloudy, but infertile, suggested by the fact that the roses need human intervention to grow – they are found in an enclosed cloister garden, not in the wild, adding to the idea of imprisonment.

Signified enclosure obviously echoes the idea of spatial opposition between inside and outside space. All descriptions of the north belong to the idea of closed space, be they geophysically inside or outside, in structures like the cloister and the hotel room or in the evocations of the 'horizon fermé' of Europe (I, 143). Even when space seems open, 'terres sans horizon' (I, 117), the impression is of closed space, indicating intrapsychic/geophysical discordance. In Camus's fiction, as opposed to his non-fictional writings, Europe, identified here with Central Europe and constructed as the mythical north, is one part of an antagonistic north/south pairing, at odds with the Resistance or pre-war discourse of unity.

### En route

The journey across Central Europe in La Mort heureuse and 'La Mort dans l'âme' takes the description of Prague and extends it into a wider geophysical space through the sustained presence of Prague semes in other areas of (northern) Europe. This section continues the analysis of recurring semes, and is limited to La Mort heureuse; in this text there is a much longer description of the journey south than the half-page account in 'La Mort dans l'âme', and in Le Malentendu no such journey takes place.

The seme of water returns in the Silesian plain, 'sans un arbre, gluante de boue, sous un ciel couvert et gonflé de pluie' (MH, 116). The signifiers used to describe the hotel

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<sup>13</sup> Compare this to Oran in La Peste, where the narrator talks of 'un printemps qu'on vend sur les marchés' (I, 1217).

room ('gluant', 'boue') are repeated and the signified of oppression of the Prague sequence is now connoted by the description of the weather. A 'ciel [...] gonflé de pluie' rather than the less intense 'petite pluie fine' of Prague, it connotes weight and heaviness, taken up in the description of the flight of the birds:

À perte de vue et à distances régulières, de grands oiseaux noirs aux ailes luisantes volaient par groupes à quelques mètres du sol, incapables de s'élever plus haut sous un ciel pesant comme une dalle. Ils tournaient en rond dans un vol *lent* et *lourd*, et parfois l'un d'eux quittait le groupe, rasait la terre, presque confondu avec elle, et s'éloignait d'un même vol gras. (116)

The sky is so heavy and oppressive that the birds seem to fly in slow motion. 'Dalle', the very signifier absent from the Jewish cemetery in Prague, here lends force to such connotations. Rich signifiers, the birds point towards most of the signifieds of Prague, darkness (the birds are black), dampness (their wings are shiny) and malevolence (their heavy flight). In Prague, 'noir', 'gras' and 'gluant' were used to describe streets and buildings.

Another recurrent seme is of age, but stretching beyond Prague's architectural and cultural history towards a more abstract idea of prehistory; the following passage also anticipates Janine's communion with the desert in 'La Femme adultère' (I, 1567-73):

Sur cette terre, ramenée au désespoir de l'innocence, voyageur perdu dans un monde primitif, il retrouvait ses attaches et, le poing serré contre sa poitrine, le visage écrasé contre la vitre, il figurait son élan vers lui-même et vers la certitude des grandeurs qui dormaient en lui. (116)

Mersault is a stranger in a strange land without points of reference, but within this construction of a primitive, prehistoric Silesia, Mersault echoes the sequence in Prague when both he and the 'vieux monde' sought refuge. As the plain returns to a primal state of innocence, Mersault comes to a 'certitude des grandeurs qui dormaient en lui', an almost pre-conscious state anterior to Mersault's 'normal' way of thinking. Both spaces are thus constructed as somehow prehistoric.

In one sense Silesia could be considered as the ultimate open space, but this is mitigated by a strong sense of enclosure in the heavy flight of the birds and the oppressive clouds. It is nevertheless open space in opposition to the closed space of the train compartment, from which Mersault contemplates it. Where in Prague neither inside nor outside offered intrapsychic solace, Silesia appears to offer a spatial ideal: Mersault is able to contemplate the outside from the inside in spatial equilibrium. This is, however, offset by fear and coercion; it is not a 'natural' spatial equilibrium. This is clear from the plaque Mersault notices in the train near the window, whose warning is spelt out in three different languages: '*Nicht hinauslehnen, E pericoloso sporgersi, il est dangereux de se pencher au-dehors*' (113, emphasis in original).

### South

The construction of the mythical south through description of northern Italy establishes the second term of the antithesis, in opposition to the north. This section compares the semes in the three texts with their previous uses in the north.

The description of Genoa is announced simply by Mersault's arrival in the phrase 'dans le train qui le menait à Gênes à travers l'Italie du Nord' (MH, 121). The description uses the same semes as those of the Prague sequence to dramatically different effect. Signs used earlier to connote water, then linked to signifieds of malevolence, misery and oppression, are delinked in Genoa from these and instead connote almost opposite ideas, illustrated by the following passage:

Bientôt, à mesure que le soleil avançait dans la journée et qu'approchait la mer, sous le grand ciel rutilant et bondissant d'où coulait sur les oliviers frémissants des fleuves d'air et de lumière, l'exaltation qui remuait le monde rejoignait l'enthousiasme de son coeur.  
(121)

The only rivers here are of air and light, in contrast to the negative picture of damp streets and dark puddles in Prague, stagnant with the nauseating smell of pickled

cucumbers. The water metaphor in Genoa is flowing and fresh; movement is introduced in the signifiers 'fleuve' and 'couler'. The Vltava provoked angst and despair; now rivers of air and light inspire feelings of 'exaltation' and 'enthousiasme' in Mersault's intrapsychic space.

A crucial difference between Prague and Genoa is of course the presence of the sea, the approach of which, added to the rising sun, triggers the 'fleuves d'air et de lumière'. There is therefore a shift in signifieds towards vitality, life and light: Genoa itself, described as 'assourdissante', 'crevait de santé devant son golfe et son ciel' (121). Furthermore, Mersault now throws himself into the water when in Prague it repelled him: 'Les dieux qui le brûlaient le jetèrent dans la mer, dans un petit coin du port, où il goûta le goudron et le sel mélangés et perdit ses limites à force de nager' (121). Intrapsychic reactions to this geophysical space are the opposite of those in Prague; the description explodes with enthusiasm – his desire to swim is stronger than Mersault himself.

A description of the odours of Genoa provides a further illustration of intrapsychic/geophysical concordance. In Prague, odours were overwhelming and repugnant; in Genoa, Mersault 's'égara [...] dans les rues étroites et pleines d'odeurs du vieux quartier' (121). 'Odeur' is not qualified in any way; it has been sidelined in favour of new signifieds already mentioned. They are then referred to as 'parfums' later on: 'Il [...] laissa monter vers lui toute la mer chargée de parfums et de lumières, dans un long gonflement' (121-2). Water has lost its malodorous properties to gain a fresh, vital signified in Genoa.

The idea of weight and heaviness, connoting the feeling of oppression so prevalent in the representation of Silesia, disappears: 'Il [...] laissa [...] les couleurs hurler pour lui, se consumer le ciel au-dessus des maisons sous son poids de soleil et se reposer à sa

place les chats parmi les ordures et l'été' (121). The weight in Silesia came from a sky heavy with rain; in Genoa the weight comes from the sun. The heavy sky in Silesia was associated with the flight of malevolent birds. In Genoa the sun makes cats rest among piles of rubbish. The animals in turn connote different images: the cat suggests laziness and sleep; the vulture-like birds evil and death.

In Genoa the age *seme* falls into the background as signs connoting vitality and freshness represent the town. The word 'vieux' only occurs once: 'Il s'égara [...] dans les rues étroites et pleines d'odeurs du vieux quartier' (121). This time, the adjective is associated neither with architectural history (it is too vague), nor malevolence. The same signifier now connotes by association vitality through warmth and loud colours.

The closed/open spatial opposition of Prague is still present in Genoa, between the narrow streets and the sea, an ultimate signifier of openness. The intrapsychic response to both is, however, the opposite of Prague. Gone are anguish and panic, which are replaced by exaltation and appreciation, more reminiscent of the Resistance discourse of Europe, but of course offset by the obvious sense of disunity between north and south.

As in La Mort heureuse, the description of Italy in 'La Mort dans l'âme' counters the Prague sequence; the same signifiers point to different signifieds. The description of the south is announced in the phrase 'dans le train qui me menait de Vienne à Venise' (II, 36), and in 'J'entre en Italie' (II, 37). The sense of exclusion then disappears: the narrator recognises his affinity with the south in an abrupt and significant statement: 'Terre faite à mon âme, je reconnais un à un les signes de son approche' (II, 37). There follows a long, lyrical description of Vicenza and its environs, constructed in opposition to Prague. A major difference is in the amount of detail: in Prague, much attention was

focused on the effect of small, closed areas (the hotel, the restaurant, the Hradcany district) on the narrator's intrapsychic space. In Italy, the town receives much more detailed treatment.

While approaching Italy the narrator refers to his surroundings as 'signes' (II, 37), which denote the south, for example 'maisons aux tuiles écaillées', 'vignes plaquées contre un mur que le sulfatage a bleui', 'linges tendus dans les cours' (II, 37). The vines suggest sunlight and vitality, and the fact that the wall has been coloured blue connotes a reversal of the situation in Prague, where walls in hotel rooms or restaurants oppress the narrator. There, the walls bear down and enclose; in Italy, people have power over the walls; the winemaking process (spraying copper sulphate) has changed their colour. Blue, in addition, suggests sky, sea and openness, signifying, as in Genoa, vitality, also suggested by mention of trees and vegetation, cypresses, olive bushes and fig trees. As well as denoting the Mediterranean, they highlight the contrast with Prague, where no vegetation was mentioned.

Once in Vicenza, the narrator writes about his room as being all that he could ever wish for, in another echo of 'La Femme adultère':

Qu'ai-je à souhaiter d'autre que cette chambre ouverte sur la plaine, avec ses meubles antiques et ses dentelles au crochet. J'ai tout le ciel sur la face et ce tournoiement des journées, il me semble que je pourrais le suivre sans cesse, immobile, tournoyant avec elles. (II, 37)

The room is open, overlooking a vast plain and the sky beyond. It offers plenitude, unlike the Prague room where he was 'réduit à moi-même et à mes misérables pensées' (II, 32). The narrator is not perturbed by the passing of time, whereas in Prague he was forced to plan his days to avoid unease and solitude. In Vicenza, he comments: 'Chaque être rencontré, chaque odeur de cette rue, tout m'est prétexte pour aimer sans mesure' (II, 37). People and odours in Prague provoked anguish, despair and unease; here the

contrast is total: people are no longer hostile, communication is possible, and the effect of this new geophysical space on the narrator is the opposite of what has gone before.

A further contrast is in the description of food. In Prague, the food '[lui] soulevait le coeur' (II, 33). In Vicenza, food adds another dimension to the signified of vitality and health: 'les étalages de fruits, pastèques rouges aux graines noires, raisins translucides et gluants' (II, 37). Added to olives, vines and figs trees, this not only signifies vitality but also fertility. The earth is a bounteous source of health and richness; in the north (Silesia), the plains are 'impitoyables', 'ingrates' and the earth 'gluant' (II, 36). In Italy the grapes are 'gluants', not the earth; the signifier takes on a new meaning. This is deepened by the smells of Vicenza, the 'chemins odorants parmi les lentisques et les roseaux', described as 'signes d'amour' (II, 37-8), a total contrast, as in La Mort heureuse, to the reactions evoked by the smell of vinegar.

Towards the end of the text, the narrator writes, 'À Prague, j'étouffais entre les murs. Ici [Vicenza], j'étais devant le monde' (II, 38). This is a striking résumé not only of the north/south antagonism itself (see below), but also of the closed/open spatial opposition. Although both spaces were present in Prague, the comment only focuses on the inside space. The same can be said for Vicenza: all that is seen is open, outside space. Intrapsychic responses to both spaces play a large part in this summary. In Prague, exclusion was felt everywhere, inside and out; the narrator shifts vainly between them, trying to feel at ease. In Vicenza, however, the reactions are positive and exaltant, no matter what the space, as is seen in the above description of the 'chambre ouverte sur la plaine' (II, 37).

This idea of spatial opposition is subordinated to the larger opposition of north and south. Within each of the two halves of this antithesis, both kinds of spaces are present; in the end, it is the protagonists' presence in the north or south that determines the

intrapsychic response to the individual spaces. In the north, all is exclusion and anguish; in the south well-being and joy.

The narrator's new geophysical surroundings in 'La Mort dans l'âme' lead to intriguing intrapsychic responses as he reflects on questions of death and his own existence. As a consequence, Italy and the south begin to signify something more. The signifieds examined above are brought together in the idea of 'tant d'ardente beauté', which the narrator finds oppressive. The reason for this is his discovery that his surroundings are completely indifferent to his presence. He finds in this, however, a source of comfort: 'J'avais besoin d'une grandeur. Je la trouvais dans la confrontation de mon désespoir profond et de l'indifférence secrète d'un des plus beaux paysages du monde' (II, 39). The despair mentioned here is close to the Sartrean existentialist definition of limiting one's hopes to one's own choices (Sartre 1970, 49-54), and prefigures the well-known definition of the absurd in Le Mythe de Sisyphe, 'cette confrontation entre l'appel humain et le silence déraisonnable du monde' (II, 117-8). Although this aspect of the text is not of direct concern here, it illustrates the signified of indifference which Italy takes on. The narrator experiences health, vitality and fertility, grouped together as beauty, which in turn begins to connote indifference, an intrapsychic sense of strangeness in a world perceived as indifferent.

According to the pattern of the north/south antagonism, Le Malentendu contains descriptions of a south that resembles the Italy of the earlier texts in its signifieds of warmth and vitality:

MARTHA Mère, est-il vrai que, là-bas, le sable des plages fasse des brûlures aux pieds?

MÈRE Je n'y suis pas allée, tu le sais. Mais on m'a dit que le soleil dévorait tout.

MARTHA J'ai lu dans un livre qu'il mangeait jusqu'aux âmes et qu'il faisait des corps resplendissants, mais vidés par l'intérieur. [...] j'en ai assez de porter toujours mon



âme, j'ai hâte de trouver ce pays où le soleil tue les questions. Ma demeure n'est pas ici. (I,124)

The southern sun gives warmth, both geophysically and intrapsychically, where it does not in the north. The passage suggests that the north incites excessive and angst-ridden reflection reminiscent of the ominous sense of history in Mersault's Prague. In the south, life is portrayed as far simpler, with no need for self-questioning. Replying to Martha's question about whether the beaches are deserted, Jan says:

C'est vrai. Rien n'y rappelle l'homme. Au petit matin, on trouve sur le sable les traces laissées par les pattes des oiseaux de mer. Ce sont les seuls signes de vie. Quant aux soirs [...] ils sont bouleversants. (I, 148-9)

This contrasts with the oppressive 'foule de peuples' of the north, connoting freedom and emotions absent from the north; Jan speaks of more powerful feelings provoked by the southern climate in response to Martha's lament over the northern spring:

Le printemps de là-bas vous prend à la gorge, les fleurs éclosent par milliers au-dessus des murs blancs. Si vous vous promeniez une heure sur les collines qui entourent ma ville, vous rapporteriez dans vos vêtements l'odeur de miel des roses jaunes. (I, 149)

Vitality and fertility dominate in this passage: there are thousands of flowers compared to one or two roses in the north. The spectacle of spring brings a concordance unknown to Martha of the geophysical and the intrapsychic. Alone in the hotel room, Jan evokes the evening in the south: 'Les soirs de là-bas sont des promesses de bonheur' (I, 145).

The spatial oppositions in the south are similar to those of the earlier texts. The sea represents an ultimate open space, contrasting with the closed space of Central Europe. In addition, an above/below opposition is introduced in the passage above with the idea of walking above the town in the hills, connoting elevation and freedom in marked opposition to the idea of enclosure of the north.

In a similar way to his fictional inscription of north, in which Camus dialogically interacts with the discourse of 'Magic Prague', Camus interacts with external sources in

his inscription of the Mediterranean, southern towns, and of the north/south antagonism itself. One is the discourse of the *École d'Alger* in late 1930s Algiers. Others include the writings of Gide and Jean Grenier.

During the genesis of La Mort heureuse, and contemporaneous with the composition of L'Envers et l'endroit, Camus was a youthful contributor of some note to Algiers political life, as seen in his journalism examined in Chapter One, added to theatrical activities, and participation in the Maison de la Culture. Critics have noted the lack of *engagement* in La Mort heureuse compared to the contemporaneous journalism; in the description of Prague and Italy, there is no mention of late 1930s political developments in Prague, as recorded in Malraux's Le Temps du mépris, which Camus had adapted for theatre, or of the rise of fascist Italy (Lévi-Valensi 1980b, 59, 70). However, the texts signal Camus's negotiation with another political discourse, that of the 'École Nord-Africaine des Lettres', later the 'École d'Alger', a group of Algiers writers who disputed the Algerianist discourse of such writers as Louis Bertrand and Robert Randau.

A major precursor and also *animateur* of the *École* was Gabriel Audisio, whose 1920s writing began to challenge the Algerianism of his contemporaries. Instead of focusing on Algerianist constructions of a Christianised Latin, rigidly enclosed colonial space, which sought to establish the legitimacy of the colonial presence in North Africa, Audisio produced an 'alternative mapping of colonial co-existence' (Dunwoodie 1998, 175) which glorified the entire Mediterranean basin, describing the sea itself as the home country:

The long-established *face à face* between European and Muslim (and, equally intractable, between the French and non-French Europeans) *within* Algeria is thus sidestepped in favour of a globalising, non-conflictual refocusing of the issue of identity and belonging *around* the entire Mediterranean, both temporally and spatially. (Dunwoodie 1998, 178, emphasis in original)

Audisio celebrated an idea of Mediterranean man, the embodiment of youth and vitality, portrayed as picaresque adventurer. The Mediterranean was a spiritual homeland, and encompassed both European and Muslim cultures, while eliding the problem inherent in this of constituting the region as a playground independent of existing colonial issues (Dunwoodie 1998, 180; Alhau 1995, 90).

The presence of elements of this discourse in Camus's inscription of a mythical South is clear. As his protagonists head south towards the sea, they appreciate the vitality of the area and feel themselves returning to life after their contact with 'Mediterraneity' (Dunwoodie 1998, 177). Camus engaged with this discourse on a deeper level, however, in his own involvement with the *École d'Alger* in the late 1930s. As a Communist party member, he helped launch the 'Maison de la Culture', giving its inaugural address in April 1937 (II, 1321-7). This speech, 'La nouvelle culture Méditerranéenne',

constituted the cultural-political manifesto of a group of young writers, artists and intellectuals who openly engaged with the principles of the established Bertrand-inspired Algerianists, asserted their roots in Algeria, and sought to articulate the colony's local, indigenous specificity *and* its place within a wider, Mediterranean cultural network [...]. (Dunwoodie 1998, 185)<sup>14</sup>

It rejected right-wing colonial discourse and construction of identity, instead glorifying Audisio's Mediterranean ideal. Camus demarcates his notion of Mediterranean regionalism from the dominant assimilation of Mediterranean with *latinité*, wishing instead to re-establish roots in ancient Greece, as he does in the 1950s with L'Homme révolté. In this, he rejects Algerianist discourse, and also Maurras's glorification of the Latin spirit. Another target is the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1935, and the petition signed in its favour by French intellectuals (II, 1324; Winock 1997, 264-6, 625-7).

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<sup>14</sup> See Dedet 1968 for a less critical view of the *École*.

Camus then invokes 'Mediterranean' attributes, inspired by Audisio, such as spontaneity and vitality, redolent also of his fictional Italy.

The speech, while attempting to dissociate the *École d'Alger's* Mediterraneanism from the Algerianists, is highly problematic in other respects, presenting an essentialist view of Mediterranean peoples and their languages and cultures which tends to repress the Muslim community.<sup>15</sup> It also shows how this 1930s political discourse is re-worked in Camus's fictional texts, since he refers in it to the journey through Central Europe:

J'ai passé deux mois en Europe Centrale, de l'Autriche à l'Allemagne, à me demander d'où venait cette gêne singulière qui pesait sur mes épaules, cette inquiétude sourde qui m'habitait. J'ai compris depuis peu. Ces gens étaient toujours boutonnés jusqu'au cou. Ils ne connaissaient pas de laisser-aller. Ils ne savaient pas ce qu'est la joie, si différente du rire. C'est pourtant avec des détails comme celui-ci que l'on peut donner un sens valable au mot de Patrie. La Patrie [...] c'est un certain goût de la vie qui est commun à certains êtres, par quoi on peut se sentir plus près d'un Génois ou d'un Majorquin que d'un Normand ou d'un Alsacien. (II, 1322-3)

The Audisio-inspired theme of a Mediterranean community is particularly strong in this passage, but is also added to a characterisation of north inviting comparison with Martha's lament in *Le Malentendu*. Camus's fictional inscription of this discourse shows how his construction of north and south is dependent on dialogic interaction with elements of *École d'Alger* thought also reflected in other forms of his own writing.

Earlier, a quotation from a letter to Jean Grenier highlighted Camus's appreciation of André Gide, who, Camus writes in a tribute in 1951, 'a régné [...] sur ma jeunesse'. He writes that he read Gide's entire *œuvre*, and 'appri[t] à lire dans *Les Nourritures terrestres* l'évangile de dénuement dont j'avais besoin' (II, 1118). Some of Gide's works reflect a north/south antagonism *avant la lettre* and must be considered as further examples of Camus's dialogue with external discourses in his own fiction:

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<sup>15</sup> 'By focusing on the pleasures and the freedom of the natural world and forgetting that the Muslim population did not share the same freedom of movement, such texts attempt to bypass, in their turn, the constraint and the rigours of the colonial context' (Dunwoodie 1998, 190).

Villes du Nord! débarcadères; usines; villes dont la fumée cache le ciel. Monuments; tours mobiles; présomption des arcs. Cortèges cavalcadants dans les avenues; foule empressée. Asphalte luisante après la pluie; boulevard où les maronniers s'alanguissent: femmes toujours vous attendent. Il y avait des nuits tellement molles qu'au moindre appel je me serais senti défaillir. (Gide 1972, 125)

Elements of Mersault's Prague are close to the surface: the rain, crowds of people and the covered sky echo elements of this text, as does its depiction of angst; Mersault too experiences *défaillances*. But an even clearer presentation of a north/south antagonism is in Michel's account of his illness in L'Immoraliste (1969 (1902)). The opposition underpins the entire *récit* as Michel describes how he returned to health in Algeria after an attack of tuberculosis before coming back to France, becoming a landowner and socialite. The south represents freedom, sexual adventure and an ideal of pagan vitality, close to Audisio's later doctrine. The north, however, stands for Christianity, duty and bourgeois comfort. When Marceline, his wife, falls ill, the couple travel around Europe in search of the correct atmosphere for Marceline's recovery. Michel insists on heading south, in memory of his own recovery, but, 'de même que de semaine en semaine, lors de notre premier voyage, je marchais vers la guérison, de semaine en semaine, à mesure que nous avancions vers le Sud, l'état de Marceline empirait' (Gide 1969, 164-5). Michel's belief is that healing comes from within, and that the south provides the perfect background for a rebirth of vitality. Marceline relies on the grace of God, and weakens in relation to Michel's belief in human strength and agency. The description of the south includes a representation of Italy reminiscent of Camus's protagonists' observations:

La descente en Italie eut pour moi tous les vertiges d'une chute. Il faisait beau. À mesure que nous enfoncions dans l'air plus tiède et plus dense, les arbres rigides des sommets, mélèzes et sapins réguliers, faisaient place à une végétation riche de molle grâce et d'aisance. Il me semblait quitter l'abstraction pour la vie. (Gide 1969, 158)

A better-studied dialogue within Camus's Mediterraneanism is Jean Grenier, his erstwhile philosophy tutor, early mentor and lifetime friend.<sup>16</sup> Aside from the formal similarities between Camus's essays in L'Envers et l'endroit and Noces and Grenier's collections, notably Les Îles, there is a distinct similarity between their Mediterranean world-views.<sup>17</sup> In Camus's 'Maison de la Culture' lecture, many phrases echo Grenier: 'La Méditerranée, c'est cela, cette odeur ou ce parfum qu'il est inutile d'exprimer: nous le sentons tous avec notre peau' (II, 1323) is a similar formulation to Grenier's phrase, 'Une configuration sensible au coeur, voilà ce qui fait l'esprit méditerranéen' (1930, 643). On the common origins of the Mediterranean peoples, Camus writes: 'Les hommes qui hurlent dans les cafés chantants d'Espagne, ceux qui errent sur le port de Gênes, sur les quais de Marseille, la race curieuse et forte qui vit sur nos côtes, sont sortis de la même famille.' (II, 1322). Grenier had written in 1930: 'De Marseille à Constantinople, dans les ports de la Méditerranée, tout un peuple – le même – vit pieds nus sur les quais [...] (1930, 642).

In his preface to Les Îles, Camus acknowledged their influence on his own writing (II, 1157-61). His dialogic interaction with Grenier's texts can be shown through a comparison between his own and Grenier's fictional north/south antagonism. In 'Les Îles Borromées', Grenier writes: 'Faut-il le dire? Faut-il l'avouer? Transplanté dans un pays du Nord, la vie me fut lourde et sans poésie' (1977, 153). In 'Les Îles Fortunées', he continues:

Qu'on travaille à Paris ou à Londres, passe encore. Mais partout où règne perpétuellement le soleil et la mer, il faut se contenter de jouir, de souffrir et d'exprimer [...] Et lorsque lentement sonnaient les coups de midi et que tonnait le canon du fort Saint-Elme, un

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<sup>16</sup> Garfitt 1981, 1995. For a detailed examination of Grenier's career see Garfitt 1983. Grenier played down his influence in Albert Camus (souvenirs) in 1968, doubtless frustrated by his almost mythical status as the teacher who introduced Camus to the world rather than as a talented philosopher and essayist in his own right.

<sup>17</sup> Added to the fact that Grenier encouraged Edmond Charlot, Camus's first publisher, to go into publishing and to edit Mediterraneanist texts (CORR, 241).

sentiment de plénitude [...] s'emparait de moi et de tout ce qui était autour de moi. De tous côtés affluaient des torrents de lumière et de joie qui de vasque en vasque tombaient pour se figer dans un océan sans bords. (1977, 89-90)

Camus's Mediterraneanism, and indeed his whole north/south antithesis, can be viewed as a dialogic interaction with *École d'Alger* ideology, Gidean aesthetics and the influence of Grenier,<sup>18</sup> added to the incorporation of certain 'Magic Prague' elements. Through this dialogue with external discourses, there grows a fictional voice which destabilises the political/persuasive construction of European unity in the 1930s journalism and Lettres à un ami allemand, and prefigures the ambivalence which pervades the post-war journalism. In the Algiers and Resistance texts Europe is part of the same universal history; the north and south of the fiction, however, portray disunity and unease. As will now be shown, closer examination of the antithesis reinforces this problematic disharmony.

### Barthes's Antithesis (ii): 'Mitoyenneté'.

With a clear idea of how the north/south antagonism is constructed, the remaining analysis applies other aspects of Barthes's understanding of the antithesis to the three texts, demonstrating how a great deal more is represented by the north/south antithesis than is at first obvious. 'Mitoyenneté', the median position or passage between two terms of an antithesis has been hinted at so far, inasmuch as there must be passage between the two halves to make the description of both possible. Applied to the three works in question, however, 'mitoyenneté' is interesting for three reasons.

It renders possible, firstly, the idea of the north/south antagonism, framing the description of different places, showing how they relate to each other in a more direct way than through opposing description. The train journey in La Mort heureuse and 'La

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<sup>18</sup> Along with the more minor influence of Montherlant and Giono (Lévi-Valensi 1980a, 508-18).

Mort dans l'âme' widens the use of the Prague signifiers and applies them to other areas of Europe. The train can be imagined as a textual device pulling signifiers and coupling them with signifieds in other areas, connoting similar images. The train takes Mersault through Silesia to Vienna, passing through a series of other towns, mentioned asyndetically in the phrase 'Dresde, Bautzen, Goerlitz, Liegnitz' (MH, 115). Breslau, similarly, is covered in ten lines, compared to fifteen pages on Prague, but, once more, the signifiers are similar. The train also passes through northern Italy, not just Genoa, thus widening the use of the Genoa signifiers to other parts of the south. The same process is at work in the journey in 'La Mort dans l'âme'.

Secondly, and most importantly, the train represents in both texts a transitory crossing between the opposing sides of the antithesis, placing the protagonists in the same position between both sides of the antithesis, like the narrator of Balzac's 'Sarrasine' in the window between garden and salon (Barthes 1994, 569). In La Mort heureuse, the time spent in Vienna is concisely dealt with, in a much flatter style than the emphatic descriptions of Prague and Genoa. It can thus be considered a 'ville mitoyenne'; apart from the less emphatic language used to describe it, Mersault makes contact with people in a way in which he did not in Prague, and in a less contented way than in Genoa. It is a half way house in the textual journey through Europe. Vienna thus constitutes a new perspective on the north/south antagonism: its presence establishes the antagonism as an antithesis with a problematic (for reasons explained below) median position. Vienna demonstrates how, the more Mersault approaches the south, the more the contrast is felt with the north. In 'La Mort dans l'âme' the narrator's experience of Vienna is not as developed as Mersault's: 'J'arrivai à Vienne, en repartis au bout d'une semaine, et j'étais toujours prisonnier de moi-même' (II, 36). There is no description of the town itself, but it remains a 'ville mitoyenne'; the fact that the narrator states that he



is still a prisoner of himself expands his reactions to Prague to other areas of his mythical north.

The passage from north to south, from one term of the antithesis to the other, thirdly, leads to important *résumés* of it. Until now, the analysis has highlighted contrasts between the two terms without examining those phrases in the texts which posit both together as an antithesis, such as those in the ‘mitoyenne’ position of the train in La Mort heureuse: ‘Ce wagon qui le [Mersault] menait à travers la moitié de l’Europe le gardait entre deux mondes’ (MH, 114), the two worlds being the two terms. In a more oblique way, the antithesis is summarised thus: ‘À nouveau dans le compartiment le jeu croisé des *ombres* et des *lumières*, le recouvrement de *noir* et d’*or*’ (MH, 115, my emphasis). The opposing signifiers summarise the essence of the two geophysical spaces. Similar *résumés* can be found in ‘La Mort dans l’âme’: ‘dans le train qui me menait de Vienne à Venise, j’attendais quelque chose. J’étais comme un convalescent qu’on a nourri de bouillons et qui pense à ce que sera la première croûte de pain qu’il mangera’ (II, 36). Prague, and therefore the north, is inferior and not as ‘authentic’ as the south that the narrator is about to describe. The use of ‘convalescent’ continues the idea examined above that the narrator is somehow not ‘himself’ in Prague.

The median position in Le Malentendu is a little different from that of the other texts. Rather than geographically separate, described consecutively through the medium of a journey, both spaces are described simultaneously from within the same mimetic space. The above analysis of north and south in the play was, as a result, slightly artificial – its descriptions are often juxtaposed. The median position is therefore more complicated than in the earlier texts. As noted earlier, the southern traveller remains constantly in the north and his arrival is unseen. The two sides of the antithesis are, therefore, constantly juxtaposed in their evocation, an inevitable result of the nature of the play itself, which

follows at least one tragic unity through its action taking place in one (mimetic) place. One (diegetic) space is never described without reference to the other, and their juxtaposition leads to numerous résumés of the antithesis, for example in Martha's outburst: 'vous qui m'avez mise au monde dans un pays de nuages et non sur une terre de soleil!' (I, 143). Another résumé also announces Martha's deepest wish 'pour l'oubli de ce pays et pour une maison devant la mer' (I, 142). The effect of this is a median position that is more intense and prolonged than in the other texts, indeed, the play takes place entirely within it.

### Barthes's Antithesis (iii): Transgression.

Since, as said in the introduction, the antithesis for Barthes is a 'combat de deux plénitudes, mises rituellement face à face comme deux guerriers tout armés' (1994, 572), interference with it leads to death. The following section relates these ideas to Camus's fictional north/south antithesis in the three texts in question.

It is clear in La Mort heureuse that Mersault is more at ease in one part of Europe, the south, than in the other; in the north, he acts 'machinalement' (MH, 96), feels 'diminué' (99), has revealed to him his 'puissances d'angoisse' (100), and is 'mal à l'aise' and 'affaibli' (101). The word 'angoisse' appears three times, and Mersault has a 'sentiment confus d'un manque' (107), added to unexplained tears (98). He does not belong: '[Il] se retrouvait sans patrie' (105). Emotions are of a different order in Genoa; he hears 'les milles voix qui en lui chantaient vers le bonheur' (121), feels an 'enthousiasme', a 'danse intérieure', and once he has left Genoa he senses 'l'eau claire d'une âme revenue à la bonté et à la décision' (123). As Lévi-Valensi has said:

À Prague, le narrateur tente de se fabriquer des points d'appui, qui se révèlent factices, et illusoires; à Vicence, c'est le monde qui les lui offre; à Prague, ses sensations ne parviennent pas à lui délivrer le sens de ce qu'il vit; à Vicence, en lui apportant des nouvelles du monde, elles le révèlent à lui-même, et sont autant de messages dont la signification lui est claire. (1980a, 577)

In the median position of the train there are also important intrapsychic résumés of the antithesis. Mersault is simultaneously aware of his ‘conscience éperdue’ and his ‘volonté de bonheur’ (115), the former applying to the north, the latter to the south. In Vienna, Mersault writes to his friends of a ‘singulier *mélange* d’amertume et de bonheur’ (118, my emphasis). There is a further résumé in the phrase: ‘lui, empoisonné de *solitude* et d’*étrangeté*, avait besoin de se retirer dans l’*amitié* et la *confiance*’ (120, my emphasis). Mersault therefore discovers his own intrapsychic antagonism between the angst of Prague and the exaltation of Genoa, inherent in the descriptions of each. His presence in the north is therefore transgressive; he is clearly at home in the south. He has crossed over the wall of the antithesis, to use Barthes’s terminology, but he does not transgress with impunity. Since ‘le sens [...] est une question de vie et de mort’, the text bears the consequence of Mersault’s transgression and death appears to him in Prague. It is not he who dies, like Sarrasine, but a stranger in the Prague streets:

Un homme était étendu sur le trottoir, les bras croisés et la tête retombant sur la joue gauche [...] il y avait là [...] une minute d’équilibre passé laquelle il semblait à Mersault que tout s’écroulerait dans la folie. [...] La tête du mort baignait dans du sang. C’était sur la plaie que la tête s’était retournée et reposait maintenant. (108)<sup>19</sup>

Death is the result of Mersault’s transgression. It is suddenly and without warning revealed to him: ‘la mort se révélait douceuse et insistante et c’est son appel même et son souffle humide que sentit Mersault au moment où il partit à grands pas sans se retourner’ (108). He tormentedly relives this experience, which has profoundly affected him. In the train crossing Silesia a few lines later, nostalgia for the south overcomes him as a result of this revelation of death: ‘Une ferveur ardente et secrète se gonflait en lui avec des larmes et c’était une nostalgie de villes pleines de soleil et de femmes, avec des soirs verts qui ferment les blessures’ (109). Transgression has been emotionally

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<sup>19</sup> For an earlier version of this scene, see CI, 19-20.

injurious, and Mersault can only flee south.

In 'La Mort dans l'âme', intrapsychic responses to geophysical spaces have in large part already been examined. In the north the overwhelming feeling is exclusion; in the south of belonging, no clearer than in the description of Italy, '[t]erre faite à mon âme' (II, 37). There is much less nuance than in La Mort heureuse with its depiction of 'mitoyenneté' in Vienna. As such, there are fewer résumés in 'La Mort dans l'âme', and none in the median position, but they are interesting for different reasons.

The Barthesian transgression of the antithesis is also present. In the north, the narrator is crossing the wall of the antithesis, leaving behind that which is familiar and comfortable, a transgression that also provokes death. In Prague, the narrator discovers that a body has been found in the hotel room next to his: 'La porte de la chambre était à demi ouverte, de sorte que l'on voyait seulement un grand mur peint en bleu. Mais la lumière [...] projetait sur cet écran l'ombre d'un mort étendu sur le lit et celle d'un policier montant la garde devant le corps' (II, 35). The narrator's reaction is similar to Mersault's: he is overwhelmed by the suddenness of the event, sympathising with the dead man: 'Je passai l'après-midi entier dans un état que j'aurais peine à décrire' (II, 35). Like Mersault, he is overcome with nostalgia: 'je pensai désespérément à ma ville, au bord de la Méditerranée, aux soirs que j'aime tant, très doux dans la lumière verte et pleins de femmes jeunes et belles' (II, 36).

There are two additional dimensions of the transgression in 'La Mort dans l'âme'. The narrator, firstly, has a premonitory sense of the results of his actions. As he describes walking along the Vltava, he writes: 'je me disais tout bas: 'Qu'est-ce que ça signifie? Qu'est-ce que ça signifie? Mais, sans doute, je n'étais pas encore arrivé aux confins' (II, 34). The sense he is looking for is the consequence of his transgression. His suspicions are awakened by a knock on the door of a neighbouring room. After seeing a

porter, the narrator is 'poursuivi par un douloureux pressentiment' (II, 35), a premonition which accompanies him until his later return, when he sees the body. This discovery of death does not entirely surprise him: 'C'était bien cela' (II, 35), as if he knew subconsciously that transgression would lead to this.

The second dimension is after the event, where résumés of the antithesis appear for the first time, rather than in a position of 'mitoyenneté' as in La Mort heureuse. The narrator reflects on his Prague experience while contemplating the landscapes around Vicenza. The consequences of his transgression return to him: 'Ce pays me ramenait au cœur de moi-même et me mettait en face de mon angoisse secrète' (II, 38). The presence of death in Prague makes him reflect on his own death, arriving at the conclusion that there is no promise of immortality, even in the beauty of the Italian plains. In a sense, he assimilates his discovery of death in the north with his contemplation of the south: 'en même temps, entrait en moi avec le soleil quelque chose que je saurais mal dire. A cette extrême pointe de l'extrême conscience, *tout se rejoignait* et ma vie m'apparaissait comme un bloc à rejeter ou à recevoir' (II, 39, my emphasis). Both sides of the antagonism of Europe are present in the narrator's mind and he cannot separate them. Instead of fleeing the difficult experience of his discovery of death, the narrator wishes to maintain it:

Au reste, je reviens souvent à Prague et aux jours mortels que j'y ai vécus. J'ai retrouvé ma ville. Parfois, seulement, une odeur aigre de concombre et de vinaigre vient réveiller mon inquiétude. Il faut alors que je pense à Vicence. Mais les deux me sont chers et je sépare mal mon amour de la lumière et de la vie d'avec mon secret attachement pour l'expérience désespérée que j'ai voulu décrire. (II, 39)

The antagonism is clearly stated as such: there is a radical difference between the two terms, yet the narrator feels attached to both, albeit for different reasons. He is, in other words, maintaining a position of transgression, stated in the phrase: 'On l'a compris déjà, et moi, je ne veux pas me résoudre à choisir' (II, 39). The transgression is thus

almost sustained, unlike in La Mort heureuse where Mersault never again refers to Prague. There remains a profound antagonism in the textual representation of Europe, but one which the narrator of 'La Mort dans l'âme' seeks to straddle, not to reject.

Le Malentendu, however, interrupts this attempt at sustaining the transgression. Since the median position is prolonged through the entire play in constant juxtaposition of the two terms of the antithesis, the transgression is more severe, reinforced by the fact that more than one character transgresses. There is a multiplicity of transgressive positioning and a series of deaths, rather than the single revelation of the previous texts. The result is the construction of an even more irreconcilable division within Europe than in the earlier texts.

Jan and Maria's arrival in the north precipitates events and overcrowds the median position. Their presence is transgressive, as they come from another space. Maria does not belong in the north, declaring to Jan: 'Cette Europe est si triste. Depuis que nous sommes arrivés, je ne t'ai plus entendu rire, et moi, je deviens soupçonneuse. Oh! pourquoi m'avoir fait quitter mon pays? Partons, Jan, nous ne trouverons pas le bonheur ici' (I, 124). To Maria, happiness is impossible in the north; her intrapsychic space can never be at one with the geophysical.

Jan is in a different position. He is returning home to help his family after a twenty-year absence in the south. When he arrives at the hostel he reveals that he is originally from Bohemia, and gives the (false) name Karl Hasek (I, 130).<sup>20</sup> When Martha questions him as to his provenance, he says he comes from Africa, 'de l'autre côté de la mer' (I, 131).<sup>21</sup> He talks of the south in terms of happiness, but northern Europe signifies duty: returning to support his family: 'Ce n'est pas le bonheur que nous sommes venus

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<sup>20</sup> We never discover his 'real' surname.

chercher. Le bonheur, nous l'avons' (I, 124). Despite the fact that he wants to find his homeland (I, 127), Jan realises that he is not at home in the north: '[J]'ai le sentiment de m'être trompé et de n'avoir rien à faire ici. [...] J'ai l'impression pénible que cette maison n'est pas la mienne' (I, 156). Even though he is the prodigal son, he does not reveal his identity to his mother and sister, who see him as merely a presence from the south. When she eventually discovers Jan's identity, Martha reinforces this idea: 'Il [Jan] a connu d'autres espaces, la mer, des êtres libres' (I, 167).

The presence in the north of all these characters from the south is untenable. All are transgressing, leading to the play's tragic conclusion. Transgression begins, even before Maria and Jan's arrival, in Martha's desire to leave the north. Declaring 'Ma demeure n'est pas ici' (I, 120), she has already killed one traveller in order to amass enough money to flee. Her mother is less enthusiastic, but follows Martha in her murderous intent. She says of the south 'je n'aurai pas le sentiment d'aller vers ma demeure' (I, 120), but transgresses anyway. Martha's and her mother's actions can be described as an intrapsychic transgression – in their own minds they have crossed the wall of the antithesis and since they do not have the financial means of attaining the geophysical signified of the intrapsychic signifier, they have to kill and steal.

Into this scene come Jan and Maria, whose presence aggravates the intrapsychic transgression already present. After they arrive, the mother says to Martha, 'Aujourd'hui, moi, je suis fatiguée, et te voilà irritée' (I, 142). Jan and Maria's own transgression precipitates a series of deaths, beginning with Jan's murder. The fact that he has talked about the south merely precipitates Martha's actions. Thanking Jan for the time they have spent talking about his country, she says: 'il [ce temps] a réveillé en moi

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<sup>21</sup> In the manuscript from (possibly) 1943 (I, 1783), Jan says he comes from Morocco. This changes in the 1947 text to 'je viens du Sud' (I, 1790).

des désirs qui, peut-être, s'endormaient' (I, 151). Justifying the murder to her mother who tries to prevent it, Martha declares: 'il m'a parlé des pays que j'attends et, pour avoir su me toucher, il m'a donné des armes contre lui' (I, 161). The consequences of Martha's intrapsychic transgression and Jan and Maria's geophysical transgression are Jan's murder, then Martha and her mother's suicide.

## Conclusion

The three works of Camus's fiction examined in this chapter present a highly subjective vision of Europe. In the north there is abjection, decay and malevolence, impacting on the intrapsychic space in feelings of oppression. In the south there is vitality and light, leading to feelings of exaltation. The texts present different areas in Europe as two distinct mythical spaces, set in an antagonistic, antithetical relationship. Barthes's understanding of the antithesis has helped to elucidate this antithesis through a breaking down of its component parts. Use of this concept has shown that there is more happening in Mersault, the narrator and Jan's journeys than at first seems. Analysis has shown the north/south antagonism to be a tangible threat. Thus, Mersault and the narrator have transgressed and crossed the wall of the antithesis, as have several characters in Le Malentendu. This has severe consequences and death has been revealed to them. Mersault flees towards the south, whereas the narrator of 'La Mort dans l'âme' tries to maintain his transgression in a tension which is far from being resolved. Forced to make a choice, he is unable to do so and the transgression continues. In Le Malentendu, the transgression is even more extreme and leads to multiple deaths. The theory of the antithesis, and its transgression leads to the conclusion that the Europe of La Mort heureuse, 'La Mort dans l'âme' and Le Malentendu is divided, and dangerously so, in the sense that there is no communication possible between the two halves.



The construction of the antithesis clearly illustrates Camus's ambivalence to Europe, which becomes clear in the gradual abandonment of Europeanism after the war, but nevertheless demonstrates a certain level of attachment through Camus's persistence in writing about it. The fictional construction of unity, therefore, constitutes a second, fictional, 'voice' of Europe, which contrasts with and problematises the political ideals examined in previous chapters. The next chapter aims to show dialogue between these voices, which until now have appeared as separate.

## V. Sites of resolution

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### Lettres à un ami allemand, La Peste, L'État de siège

The previous chapter has shown that contemporaneous with Camus's espousal of Europeanism as a political goal is his elaboration of a fictional image or construction of Europe as a radically divided entity in which north and south are rhetorically shown to be incompatible. They constitute two terms of an antithesis, a Europe of fault lines and transgressions, a sombre portrayal of a continent where unity is almost inconceivable. This antithesis seems strikingly at odds with the political/journalistic arguments for European unity, explored in the first three chapters, beginning with the nascent Europeanism of the Algiers journalism, and developed in the construction of a united, humanist Europe in the Lettres à un ami allemand, leading to Camus's active militancy on the Comité Français pour la Fédération Européenne. It does, however, indicate his growing post-war ambivalence towards Europe.

At first sight, these two discourses themselves appear to be in an antagonistic relation, suggesting that the antithesis analysed in the previous chapter obtains on a metatextual level in relation to the overall structure of Camus's work. Where the fictional meets the political/journalistic writings, Europe is a site of incompatibility. The 'space' of the Camusian *œuvre* is itself divided. This chapter aims to show how this metatextual incompatibility is overcome, through analysis of potential 'sites of resolution' of this antithesis. The two discourses can be conceptualised as different voices within a wider polyphony of voices of Europe. Generic indeterminacy in some texts enables these voices to interact and overlap, entering a dialogue that undermines the rigidity of each. Beginning with an examination of Lettres à un ami allemand, this chapter shows how these texts straddle genres, thereby permitting resolution of the

fictional European antithesis and of the metatextual fictional/persuasive antagonism. The chapter then examines the image of Europe in La Peste, showing how it also resolves the fictional antithesis, but in attenuated fashion. Finally, the chapter turns to L'État de siège, a text superficially similar to La Peste but which undermines the resolution achieved in other works, reverting to the rigidly divided Europe of the earlier fictional texts.

### Generic indeterminacy: Lettres à un ami allemand

In the literature on Camus, the Lettres à un ami allemand are generally studied either in the context of the genesis of L'Homme révolté, or of Camus as Resistance fighter and committed intellectual. There is little, if any, emphasis on the texts themselves, which are treated as a minor component of the *œuvre*. In the 'European' context, however, they are pivotal: they bridge Camus's literary construction of a divided Europe and his political writing on a united Europe.

The generic definition of the literary outlined in the introduction, i.e. a text becoming literary by virtue of the genre in which its writer places it, is the starting point for this return to the letters, which lie between Camus's political and fictional, or 'persuasive' and 'literary' genres. As Fowler has said, consideration of genre 'primarily has to do with communication. It is an instrument not of classification or prescription, but of meaning' (1982, 22). Accordingly, the following analysis shows how the Lettres à un ami allemand belong to both of the genres at issue, and in so doing how they reconcile the two presentations of Europe (fictionally divided and politically united) so far encountered, allowing exchange and dialogue between the voices.

In Chapter Two, the Lettres à un ami allemand were treated as the same kind of persuasive writing as the Algiers journalism as they belong to this genre in several

respects. Their publication in the clandestine Resistance press situates them in the rhetoric of the Resistance fight against the Nazi occupier, pitting a view of France as humanist, democratic and patriotic against totalitarianism and barbarism in an attempt to undermine more organised Vichy/Nazi propaganda. For obvious reasons, Camus's letters shared a generic trait of the clandestine writings: in those actually published in the Resistance press he wrote using pseudonyms.

A second feature of the letters' persuasive nature is their treatment of the opposition, the Nazi occupier. As seen in Chapter Two, the letters glorify eternal humanist values associated with France and Europe in opposition to a caricatural idea of Nazi barbaric, unreflective and inhuman behaviour – the enemy is thus constituted as an inhuman symbol, albeit nuanced by an underlying call for Franco-German reconciliation.

A third point is the (non-) reference to figures of authority, for example, De Gaulle, who features in many Resistance texts. Interesting in its own right, this absence might be interpreted as a desire to undermine the dominating logic of Vichy/Nazi propaganda with its deferential praise of patriarchal leaders, an attitude denounced in the fourth letter, when Camus criticises the German people for their acquiescence to Hitler.<sup>1</sup> Indeed the only figures mentioned are 'je', 'vous' and 'nous': the epistolary device constructs a democratic ideal of unity of view and purpose, replacing the authority figure with the authoritative voice of the people. The letter gives access to individual thoughts and feelings, which are then widened to a larger 'nous' signifying, effectively 'nous autres résistants': '*Je n'ai jamais cru au pouvoir de la vérité par elle-même. Mais c'est déjà beaucoup de savoir qu'à énergie égale, la vérité l'emporte sur le mensonge. C'est à ce difficile équilibre que nous sommes parvenus*' (II, 224, my emphasis). The

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<sup>1</sup> 'C'est qu'en chemin vous avez abandonné la lucidité et trouvé plus commode [...] qu'un autre pensât pour vous et pour des millions d'Allemands' (II, 240).

'nous' implicates the reader in the struggle and constitutes the resisters as the dominant group with the upper hand over the opposing 'vous'.

The use of the letter itself belongs to a powerful persuasive tradition, however, different from the approach characteristic of the Algiers journalism. The letters are not factual – they neither report on events nor give editorial voice to an opinion. They nonetheless constitute an argument in which a certain idea of Europe and of European unity is portrayed. In one respect, therefore, the 'je' of the letters is similar to the 'je' of the Algiers editorials. An opinion is introduced and defended, but the letter device introduces rhetorical reinforcement in the form of the authoritative 'nous'. The fact that there are four letters, referring to each other and to an imagined reply from the interlocutor (who cannot be called a correspondent, as no reply exists), implies an ongoing dialogue, even though it is impossible that readers in 1944 would have been able to read more than two of the letters. This is a more subtle way of characterising the opponent's point of view and valorising one's own than the more typical form of persuasive writing found in the clandestine press. Instead of one voice declaring rights or wrongs, the letters construct a collective position.<sup>2</sup> This is consistent with the ideal of future European unity expressed in the letter as it implies that the German interlocutor is still 'human'.

Moreover, references between all four letters reinforce the verisimilitude inherent in epistolary genres, which itself acts as a powerful persuasive technique, emphasising the exemplary actions of the author. Suggestive of a highly personal level of thought, the letters portray a 'je' who accepts in a quotidian way the values deemed to be representative of the Resistance struggle. They describe one individual's journey, linked

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<sup>2</sup> See Dunwoodie 1992 for an interesting critique of the Camusian opposition between dialogue and polemic.

at the same time to a collectivity ('nous'), offering it as a virtuous example.

This verisimilitude is, of course, misleading. The interlocutor, the 'vous', does not exist. This creates a complex 'pact' between reader and writer: it is obvious from the outset that the 'vous' is illusory – the letters do not begin with 'Cher Klaus', for example, nor do they close with a salutation. Neither are they presented in the clandestine journals as truthful documents. The pact between reader and writer is therefore knowing: the reader knows that these are imaginary letters, and is implicitly told by the writer 'this is what I would write to a German soldier, were the chance to arise'. This complicity further reinforces their persuasive power. The verisimilitude of the device thus bears out Guillén's comment that 'one of the most sought-after purposes of the epistolary genres [is] the *illusion of truth* or what might call the *illusion of non-fictionality*' (1994, 1, my emphasis). The complexity of the pact, and the equivocal verisimilitude of the letter device show that the Lettres à un ami allemand are more than just persuasive writing: they are also self-consciously literary, belonging to the epistolary genre of the familiar letter, one of European literature's three epistolary genres (Guillén 1994, 12). It has already been mentioned that no addressee is actually mentioned, nor a salutation included in the letters' composition. These absences undermine their verisimilitude and hint at fictional construction, which is even more evident in their publication in book form in 1945 (and subsequently) in the Gallimard 'collection blanche', introduced with a preface, a dedication ('à René Leynaud') and an epigraph from Pascal (II, 217).<sup>3</sup> These literary features, what Genette has described as the 'paratexte', 'ce par quoi un texte se fait livre et se propose comme tel à ses lecteurs' (Genette 1987, 7), underline the letters' literary nature. They are thus constitutively literary.

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<sup>3</sup> The fourth letter even bears its own epigraph, from Obermann (II, 239).

The issue of the imaginary interlocutor foregrounds another aspect of Guillén's examination of the epistolary genres:

It is in the imaginary impulse connecting the writer with the addressee that we find the particular equivocation of a letter. The ambiguity of the references to the everyday environment in which the communication takes place is surpassed by the blurred identity of that psychic presence, that second person, to and for whom the letter is written. (1994, 7)

The imaginary interlocutor therefore functions both as a pact with the reader that constitutes the Lettres à un ami allemand as persuasive writing, and as a sign of the letters' literariness. In Guillén's terms, the imaginary German constitutes an 'equivocation' that enables the letters to straddle genres. Nowhere is this more evident than in Horst Wernicke's suggestion that the imaginary interlocutor was Yves Bourgeois, not an *ami allemand* but an 'ami des allemands' (Wernicke 1990, 77, emphasis in original), and none other than Camus and his first wife's companion on the trip around Central Europe in 1936. Bourgeois, according to Wernicke, was perturbed by Camus's intolerance towards right-wing political opinions, and was enthusiastic about Nazi Germany. This is not borne out in either Todd or Lottman's biographies, which describe Bourgeois as a left-wing pacifist who fought against the Nazis (Lottman 1981, 94, 113; Todd 1996, 78, 112-3, 116). But despite his rather unlikely and ill-founded assertion, Wernicke's assertion connects the Lettres à un ami allemand to the earlier fiction: the interlocutor is presumed to be the very person who accompanied Camus on the trip which provided him with experiences described in these texts.

This in turn points to the fact that the Lettres à un ami allemand are also literary by their content, constructing the very kind of 'poetic' realities Widdowson defines as 'literary' in their elaboration of a certain vision of France and Europe. This can be observed in the passage already quoted in Chapter Two inscribing elements previously part of the fictional constructions of Europe:

Il m'arrive quelquefois [...] de penser à tous ces lieux d'Europe que je connais bien. C'est une terre magnifique faite de peine et d'histoire. Je recommence ces pèlerinages que j'ai faits avec tous les hommes d'Occident: les roses dans les cloîtres de Florence, les bulbes dorées de Cracovie, le Hradschin et ses palais morts, les statues contorsionnées du pont Charles sur la Vltava, les jardins délicats de Salzbourg. Toutes ces fleurs et ces pierres, ces collines et ces paysages où le temps des hommes et le temps du monde ont mêlé les vieux arbres et les monuments! Mon souvenir a fondu ces images superposées pour en faire un seul visage qui est celui de ma plus grande patrie. (II, 235-6)

This extraordinary passage, as suggested in Chapter Four, contrasts utterly with the imaginary inscription of Europe of the earlier fiction. The 'terre ingrate' of Silesia is now subsumed into a elegiac, mythical image of European unity, a 'terre magnifique'. The areas referred to are all present in the fiction, but subordinated to the north/south antithesis and thus mutually incompatible. Prague and Italy now form part of the same homeland and unite within them the ideals of nature and human struggle that underpin Camus's *œuvre*. The fictional encoding of these geophysical areas was indeed a system of 'images superposées', but Camus now retracts from this and offers a vision of unity and harmony. That the north/south antagonism of the fictional texts is absent clearly demonstrates its sublimation through the letters' generic indeterminacy. Since the texts are not fully political, or persuasive, they can include domains ordinarily reserved for the fiction (the European cities of La Mort heureuse). But because they are not fully literary and contain persuasive elements, these evocations serve the purpose of arguing for European unity. The fictional Europe can now be mustered in a persuasive text focusing on an idea of European solidarity and unity. This straddling of genres resolves the antithesis both within the fictional Europe and between the fictional divided Europe and the persuasive united Europe. It establishes the letters as a 'site of dialogue' between two voices of Europe, fictional and persuasive, leading to resolution. Through their simultaneous persuasive and literary characteristics, therefore, the letters are pivotal when read through the prism of Camus's constructions of Europe.



## Enforced solidarity: La Peste

Along with L'Étranger, La Peste (1947) is probably Camus's best-known work, and needs no introduction. Its central themes and ideas were elaborated while Camus was convalescing at Le Chambon; it is thus contemporaneous with Lettres à un ami allemand and Le Malentendu.<sup>4</sup> The following section argues that a sense of European solidarity underpins La Peste. It begins by showing how Oran acts as an allegory for Europe, not merely Occupied France, through textual devices such as metonymy, juxtaposition of tropes of north and south of the earlier fiction, and through similarities with these texts' description of town and landscape. It then shows how this fictional representation resolves the north/south antagonism through a construction of solidarity, with the two sides brought together and differences overcome. Although La Peste is constitutively literary, a fictional account presented in the form of a novel with attendant paratextual features, its content hints that the resolution of the antithesis also takes place through a generic indeterminacy of its own, in addition to its description as a 'chronique' and in the semi-literary, semi-factual '194.' (I, 1217). This will be shown through analysis of various encoded references to Camus's contemporaneous political writing, showing how La Peste also operates as a site of resolution of fictional and political voices of Europe. The resolution it permits is, however, dramatically undermined, as will be seen in L'État de siège, a much more fictionalised account than La Peste.

Traditionally, the plague and its effects in Oran are viewed as an allegory for Occupied France; this is indeed the primary focus of the narrative, which contains many allusions

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<sup>4</sup> For its genesis see I, 1927-35; Grenier 1987, 167-94; Lottman 1981, 256-63, 425-7 and *passim*; Todd 1996, 330, 417-20, 432, 438 and *passim*.

to aspects of the Occupation and to Resistance activity.<sup>5</sup> O'Brien and Said also retain this interpretation, but with a different agenda (O'Brien 1970, 45; Said 1993, 211, 217).

La Peste can also be viewed as an allegory for the problem of evil in other contexts, as

Quilliot and Grenier highlight (I, 1928; Grenier 1987, 171, 173-8). Quilliot does, however, offer an interesting reading of the reason why Camus chose Oran: "[...] la ville [...] lui semblait, d'une certaine façon, la moins algérienne des cités d'Algérie, *la plus européenne*, donc la plus propre dans sa banalité au mythe de portée universelle' (I, 1967, my emphasis). Only Guérin briefly notes that Oran is a 'métaphore allégorique de l'Europe livrée au nazisme' (1993a, 168, my emphasis). Indeed, many features of the topography of Oran suggest a context both wider than occupied France and more precise than the problem of evil. Early in the novel, Oran has 'deux cent mille habitants' (I, 1281); later on it is populated by 'plusieurs centaines de milliers d'hommes' (I, 1371), a curious and significant increase.<sup>6</sup> The infrastructure of the town suggests not only France but any European city; there is a strong bureaucratic administration, legal apparatus, hospitals, schools, restaurants, cafés, clubs, theatres and cinemas. The war memorial reflects European commemorative practices (Kidd 2000, 25-6), as do monuments such as Joan of Arc and La République. The church plays a central role in the town as in the narrative; Paneloux's two sermons are key moments, and although the townspeople are not particularly religious, Rieux describes the 'semaine de prières' as 'une date importante dans l'histoire de cette période' (I, 1292). Two convents are also

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<sup>5</sup> A traditional interpretation reinforced by introductory guides to Camus: see Brisville 1959, 65; King 1964, 74, 75, 76-8; Masters 1974, 90-3. It can be supported, for example, in the development of the 'formations sanitaires' and through reference to the creation of a new newspaper 'qui se donne pour tâche d'"informer nos concitoyens, dans un souci de scrupuleuse objectivité, des progrès et des reculs de la maladie..." (I, 1314). The reference to Combat, and indeed the clandestine press in general, is clear. See Guérin 1986c; 1993b, 63-82.

<sup>6</sup> I am grateful to Jeanyves Guérin for drawing my attention to this. Interview, 20 January 1999, Université de Marne-La-Vallée.

mentioned, further reinforcing the centrality of Christianity in the narrative; although the town is North African, no mosque or minaret is mentioned. There is, furthermore, a preponderance of Spanish references: the asthmatic is Spanish, as are the men (Garcia, Raoul and Gonzalès) of the escape network (I, 1333-4, 1337-8). They meet in a Spanish restaurant, and Rambert has fought in the Spanish Civil War (I, 1349). Elsewhere, reference is made to a ‘petite maison espagnole’, and to ‘danseurs et des musiciens espagnols, assez nombreux dans notre ville’ (I, 1234, 1381).

One of a series of metonymic features representing Europe is Joseph Grand’s interest in etymology. In his room he writes Latin words on a board, partly because ‘on [lui] a assuré que c’était utile pour mieux connaître le sens des mots français’ (I, 1240-1). Although he does not say it, one could surely add that Latin forms the root of many other European languages in addition to French, emphasising the generic nature of Grand’s intellectual pursuit and his belonging to an entity wider than just France. Latin, in fact, is one example of a common trope of historical roots, joined by the emphasis on the importance of Christianity already mentioned, and by a reference to Greece following Rieux’s angst-ridden gaze from his window after meeting Castel, during which the two doctors conclude that they are dealing with a plague outbreak. Rieux calls to mind historical precedents, including ‘Athènes empestée et désertée par les oiseaux’ (I, 1247). This coexistence of Greek, Latin and Christian heritages situates La Peste within Valéry’s classic definition of Europe.

In addition to these references to a Europe unique to La Peste, there are numerous references to the fictional Europe constructed in La Mort heureuse, ‘La Mort dans l’âme’ and Le Malentendu, suggesting that Oran is an amalgam of the north and south of the earlier works. Examples occur early in the text:

Cette cité sans pittoresque, sans végétation et sans âme finit par sembler reposante, on s'y endort enfin. Mais il est juste d'ajouter qu'elle s'est greffé sur un paysage sans égal, au milieu d'un plateau nu, entouré de collines lumineuses, devant une baie au dessin parfait. On peut seulement regretter qu'elle se soit construite en tournant le dos à cette baie et que, partant, il soit impossible d'apercevoir la mer qu'il faut toujours aller chercher. (I, 1219)

Described as soulless, lacking beauty and vegetation, Oran resembles the northern space of Le Malentendu as viewed by Martha, a *rapprochement* further illustrated in the curious reference to the Oran spring, 'un printemps qu'on vend sur les marchés' (I, 1217), echoing Martha's frustrated condemnation of the Czech spring ('ils ont le printemps qu'ils méritent' (I, 149)). Unlike the southern towns of Genoa or Vicenza, Oran does not blend with the surrounding landscape; the verb 'se greffer' rather suggests transplantation, uprooting from one space and adding to another. Clearly there is a contrast between town and landscape in Oran ('tournant le dos'), but they are nonetheless brought together within the same space. The north and south were separated in the earlier fiction; now in Oran they coexist. In a description finally left out of the final version of La Peste, the narrator writes enigmatically about the problems of dying in a place which demands energy, in terms which support the north/south juxtaposition through the presence of sun and rain, omnipresent in the north and south spaces in the other fictional constructions of Europe:

imaginer ce qu'il en est du mourant qui va passer entre des murs crépitant de *chaleur*, au milieu d'une mer de *boue* (notons que le cimetière de la ville est aussi hideuse que n'importe lequel de nos cimetières urbains mais qu'il s'y ajoute le *soleil* et la *pluie* excessive). (I, 1969, my emphasis)<sup>7</sup>

This brief description of a cemetery further situates Oran within the fictional discourse of Europe. Camus often refers to European cemeteries, for example the Jewish cemetery in Prague, and the unease they provoke, unlike their North African counterparts. In a 'Dialogue Europe-Islam' in the Carnets, Camus writes to Europe: 'Et quand nous

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<sup>7</sup> The juxtaposition appears on numerous occasions in the final text, for example: 'Des pluies diluviennes et brèves s'abattirent sur la ville; une *chaleur* orageuse suivait ces brusques ondées' (I, 1239, my emphasis).

contemplons vos cimetières et ce que vous en avez fait, alors nous sommes pris pour vous d'une sorte d'admiration pitoyable, d'un effroi plein de considération devant des hommes qui doivent vivre avec une pareille image de leur mort...' (C1, 155-6, c. April 1939).

Further north/south juxtapositions include the placing of the cathedral next to gardens of palm trees. The cathedral itself recalls those of La Mort heureuse in its 'odeur d'encens et d'étoffes' (I, 1294), and its 'voûte obscure' (I, 1340). The image of cats who 'dormaient à l'ombre des murs' recalls Vicenza, where 'Il [Mersault] laissa [...] se reposer à sa place les chats parmi les ordures et l'été' (MH, 121). La Peste unites geophysical features previously irreconcilably separated, operating a resolution of the fictional antithesis.

The presentation of the people of Oran reinforces this 'European-ness' and further demonstrates resolution. O'Brien has rightly highlighted the total absence of the Arab population after Rambert's conversation with Rieux about his report on their sanitary conditions (1970, 35, 46-9). Indeed, the story's protagonists dominate the narrative and form a microcosm of Europe similar to that of town itself; a depiction of normality in Oran thus focuses entirely on them:

Apparemment, rien n'était changé. Les tramways étaient toujours pleins aux heures de pointe, vides et sales dans la journée. Tarrou observait le petit vieux, et le petit vieux crachaient sur les chats. Grand rentrait tous les soirs chez lui pour son mystérieux travail, Cottard tournait en rond et M. Othon, le juge d'instruction, conduisait toujours sa ménagerie. Le vieil asthmatique transvasait ses pois et l'on rencontrait parfois le journaliste Rambert, l'air tranquille et intéressé. (I, 1267)

Rieux, the provincial doctor, 'a un peu l'air d'un paysan sicilien' (I, 1238); no-one is sure where Tarrou comes from; Rambert is an urbane journalist from a European capital; Cottard the mediocre profiteer, and Grand (from Montélimar) the archetypal civil servant, described as 'de ces hommes, *rare dans notre ville comme ailleurs*, qui ont toujours le courage de leurs bons sentiments' (I, 1252, my emphasis). In other

words, Grand could be from anywhere, as could any of the protagonists. As mentioned earlier, the asthmatic and the men from the escape network are Spanish, and the judge ('qui ressemblait moitié à ce qu'on appelait autrefois un homme du monde, moitié à un croque-mort' (I, 1224)) prefigures Jean-Baptiste Clamence in La Chute, the judge-penitent of all Europe.

The rest of the townsfolk also contribute to this textual construction of Europe in microcosm. The first few pages of La Peste portray a people devoid of passion, aspiring to petit-bourgeois financial security and well-anchored habits:

Ce qu'il faut souligner, c'est l'aspect banal de la ville et de la vie. Mais on passe ses journées sans difficultés aussitôt qu'on a des habitudes. Du moment que notre ville favorise les habitudes, on peut dire que tout est pour le mieux. Sous cet angle, sans doute, la vie n'est pas très passionnante. Du moins, on ne connaît pas chez nous le désordre. Et notre population franche, sympathique et active, a toujours provoqué chez le voyageur une estime raisonnable. (I, 1219)

Although they seem pleasant, the people only elicit 'une estime *raisonnable*'; earlier the narrator described the town as 'sans soupçons, c'est-à-dire une ville tout à fait moderne' (I, 1218). Oran, then, gives an impression of banal normality; the qualification 'moderne' is just as ambiguous as when it is applied to the Europeans in La Chute. The town could be anywhere: the people have no distinguishing features, the narrator declaring: 'On dira sans doute que cela n'est pas particulier à notre ville et qu'en somme *tous nos contemporains sont ainsi*' (I, 1218, my emphasis). Oran prefigures Clamence's Amsterdam, and echoes Camus's dubious national psychology of northern people as 'boutonnés jusqu'au cou' in the 1937 *Maison de la Culture* lecture (II, 1322). A description of their mercantilism offers a further swipe at the Oranais: 'Ils s'intéressent surtout au commerce et ils s'occupent d'abord, selon leur expression, de faire des affaires' (I, 1217-18). This comment feeds into the pithy 'L'Europe boutiquière – désespérante' in the Carnets in 1950 (C2, 329), but alongside bourgeois comfort, the narrator alludes to a passionate and vivacious aspect of the town: 'De tous les quartiers

alentour, comme chaque soir dans notre ville, une légère brise charriait des murmures, des odeurs de viande grillée, le bourdonnement joyeux et odorant de la liberté qui gonflait peu à peu la rue, envahie par une jeunesse bruyante' (I, 1263). This is more reminiscent of the vocabulary of the south in other fictional works, demonstrating once more the juxtaposition in the imaginary Oran of the fictional tropes of north and south through descriptions employing vocabulary used to portray both in previous fictional works.

The juxtaposition of north and south operates a resolution, then, in the description of the town's topography and of its contrasting people. Resolution also occurs through the solidarity generated by the plague outbreak: the people draw together, showing that La Peste operates a reconciliation of north and south which is ultimately fruitful and no longer transgressive like Mersault's journey to Prague. This solidarity is inscribed, in fact, from the beginning in the narration itself. The townspeople are often referred to as 'nos concitoyens', and the plural 'nous' is used throughout. The narration is not exterior to the textual space, as in the fiction analysed in the previous chapter, where the narrator or protagonist was a traveller exploring areas to which he did not belong. As discovered in the final chapter, Rieux is the narrator, and it is clear throughout that the narrator is an *Oranais*.

As the narrative progresses, this solidarity deepens and strengthens as various people join the struggle. A turning point is the sealing off of the town: 'Mais une fois les portes fermées, ils s'aperçurent qu'ils étaient tous, et le narrateur lui-même, pris dans le même sac et qu'il fallait s'en arranger' (I, 1271). This is a common motif: once the sanitary teams are in operation, Rieux writes: 'Parce que la peste devenait ainsi le devoir de quelques-uns, elle apparut réellement pour ce qu'elle était, c'est-à-dire l'affaire de tous' (I, 1325). In his spiritual trajectory between the two sermons, Paneloux also comes to a

realisation of solidarity; of the second sermon, the narrator writes: ‘Chose curieuse encore, il ne disait plus “vous” mais “nous”’ (I, 1399). Even Cottard recognises this *de facto* state of affairs: ‘tout le monde est dans le bain’ (I, 1375), and in an earlier version of the story, he even joins a sanitary team: ‘C’est la première fois que ça m’arrive d’être exactement comme les autres. Alors il faut bien faire quelque chose pour les autres quand on s’aperçoit qu’ils sont exactement comme vous’ (I, 1983). Othon the judge, a changed man after the death of his son and his own quarantine, volunteers to work in one of the camps: ‘Il n’était pas possible que dans ces yeux durs et plats une douceur s’installât soudain. Mais ils étaient devenus plus brumeux, ils avaient perdu leur pureté de métal’ (I, 1429).

The most dramatic expression of solidarity is the case of the journalist Rambert, unable to return to Paris. The account of his almost desperate attempts to escape, followed by his decision to stay and join the struggle, features many metonymic representations of Europe. The conversation with Rieux introduces the first:

Cette histoire est stupide, je sais bien, mais elle nous concerne tous. Il faut la prendre comme elle est.

- Mais je ne suis pas d’ici!

- À partir de maintenant, hélas, vous serez d’ici comme tout le monde. [...]

- Non, dit Rambert avec amertume, vous ne pouvez pas comprendre. Vous parlez le langage de la raison, vous êtes dans l’abstraction.

Le Docteur leva les yeux sur la République et dit qu’il ne savait pas s’il parlait le langage de la raison, mais il parlait le langage de l’évidence et ce n’était pas forcément la même chose. (I, 1287-8)

This conflict of ideals is a microcosm of La Peste in its tension between individual happiness and collective struggle. Rieux chooses to stay; Rambert decides that his own happiness is more important. The statue of the Republic in this passage is a signifier for a philosophy of solidarity and common goals, standing for a European humanist tradition, torn between reason and romanticism, empiricism and idealism. Later on, waiting in front of the cathedral for an illicit rendez-vous with the people who might be



able to help him escape, Rambert notices ‘le soleil, derrière les maisons de l’est, [which] rechauffait seulement le casque de la Jeanne d’Arc entièrement dorée qui garnit la place’ (I, 1340). No commentary is provided, but there is a hint that Rambert is being called to something other than his own pursuit of happiness – the statue is golden and sunlit, unlike the previous statue of the Republic, which was ‘poudreuse et sale’ (I, 1287; see Kidd 2000, 26). Another interesting metonymic feature comes at the point before this when Rambert and Cottard go to a café to discuss escape:

[...] d’un coin obscur, après un peu de remue-ménage, un magnifique coq [sortit] en sautillant. [...] Un petit homme, perdu dans un long tablier bleu, sortit du fond, salua Cottard du plus loin qu’il le vit, avança en écartant le coq d’un vigoureux coup de pied et demanda, au milieu des gloussements du volatile, ce qu’il fallait servir à ces messieurs. (I, 1333)

It appears that whenever Rambert seeks escape, he is reminded of higher ideals, represented by a trope of French republicanism and European values, here the ‘magnifique coq’ (although it is given a swift kick by the café-owner). Resolution of north and south through solidarity bringing together people from both comes in Rambert’s decision to stay in Oran: ‘maintenant que j’ai vu ce que j’ai vu, je sais que je suis d’ici, que je le veuille ou non. Cette histoire nous concerne tous’ (I, 1387).

Rambert’s agonising embodies a particularly Camusian tension between collective struggle and individual happiness. Its presence in the narrative is another factor of the generic indeterminacy of *La Peste*, already clear in its epithet as a ‘chronique’, in the semi-historical, semi-literary ‘événements [...] en 194.’ (I, 1217), and in the role of the narrator. Its inclusion of politico-historical elements not previously part of the fictional representations of Europe will now be shown.

Rieux’s first reflex is to persuade the authorities that the mysterious illness is indeed the plague and that something must be done: ‘il importe peu que vous l’appeliez peste

ou fièvre de croissance. Il importe seulement que vous l'empêchiez de tuer la moitié de la ville' (I, 1255). The vocabulary of this phrase echoes the tenor of 'Ni victimes ni bourreaux', examined in Chapter Three, in its argument that preserving human life is more important than fighting for political ideals.<sup>8</sup> The similarity between Rieux's plea and Camus's contemporaneous political stance shows Camus's overarching motivation at this time (Lévi-Valensi 1990a). Since his late 1940s political writing focused on these and other European problems, the similarity between discourses suggests another level at which Oran represents Europe. Inclusion of characteristics of the persuasive genre also constitutes La Peste, like the Lettres à un ami allemand, as a site of dialogue between fictional and political, overcoming the antagonism between these discourses regarding Europe.

For Rieux, there is no other option than fighting the plague, and his sanitary teams constitute a powerful form of collective struggle that unites the town:

Ceux qui se dévouèrent aux formations sanitaires n'eurent pas si grand mérite à le faire, en effet, car ils savaient que c'était la seule chose à faire et c'est de ne pas s'y décider qui alors eût été incroyable. Ces formations aidèrent nos concitoyens à entrer plus avant dans la peste et les persuadèrent en partie que, puisque la maladie était là, il fallait faire ce qu'il fallait pour lutter contre elle. (I, 1325)

Camus's ethic of struggle penetrates this fictional narrative. The vocabulary in the Lettres à un ami allemand of the 'lutte commune', or the 'lutte [...] contre le monde, contre les dieux, contre lui-même' (II, 235,6) is mirrored in Rieux's conception of his constant struggle against creation, death and the fatalistic assumptions of his contemporaries who view the plague as a judgement against which man is powerless (I, 1325).

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<sup>8</sup> In one of the 'Ni victimes ni bourreaux' articles, Camus wrote: 'Cela exige seulement qu'on y réfléchisse et qu'on décide clairement s'il faut encore ajouter à la peine des hommes pour des fins toujours indiscernables [...] ou s'il faut, au contraire, épargner autant qu'il est possible le sang et la douleur pour donner seulement leur chance à d'autres générations [...]' (II, 350).

Grand, who joins the struggle, is marked out as particularly heroic in his quiet obstination. He also illustrates a further Camusian exhortation for post-war Europe: the reconciliation of art and concern for humanity. In 'Le Témoin de la liberté' (1948), Camus argued that the artist and the politician were engaged in the same struggle to create a better society. Grand personifies this dual effort in the reconciliation of his daily work for the local administration and for Rieux, and his nightly efforts towards the perfect novel with its endlessly re-worked first sentence: 'Oui, il [Grand] était fatigué par cette recherche qui l'absorbait tout entier, mais il n'en continuait pas moins à faire les additions et les statistiques dont avaient besoin les formations sanitaires' (I, 1328).

Tarrou is one of the first to join Rieux, and his account of how he came to join the struggle introduces another metonymic reference to Europe and an overt reference to Camus's political writing.<sup>9</sup> He reveals that his father, a solicitor, was able to memorise the train times and the distances between any European city from the 'indicateur Chaix'. Later, after Tarrou has witnessed his father plead for the death penalty to be applied to a defendant, Tarrou declares: 'je ne pus regarder l'indicateur Chaix qu'avec un dégoût abominable. J'ai cru que la société où je vivais était celle de la condamnation à mort et qu'en la combattant, je combattais l'assassinat' (I, 1421). Europe has come to represent to Tarrou, through the metonymy of his father's railway timetable, a society based on the death penalty, a constant object of Camus's opprobrium from L'Etranger to 'Réflexions sur la guillotine'. Yet Tarrou confides in Rieux in La Peste that he remained in Europe, fighting against its excesses, before continuing that struggle in Oran, which in his narrative becomes yet another European city where the fight must go on: 'Je me suis donc mis avec les autres que j'aimais et que je n'ai pas cessé d'aimer. J'y suis resté

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<sup>9</sup> The balcony sequence when this occurs may also constitute one of the 'courts répits que nous laissent les longues heures de la lutte commune' of the Lettres à un ami allemand (II, 235-6).

longtemps et *il n'est pas de pays en Europe dont je n'ai partagé les luttes*' (I, 1421 my emphasis). The inclusion of encoded political references not usually part of Camus's fictional construction of Europe illustrates well this aspect of the generic indeterminacy of La Peste, which renders resolution of the north/south antithesis possible.

This resolution, however, does not subordinate the fictional Europe to an argument for European unity as in the Lettres à un ami allemand. Indeed, the solidarity of Europe portrayed in La Peste is at first attenuated by Rieux's cutting remarks on bourgeois comfort. The solidarity in struggle that follows is then, of course, brought about by a disease that kills thousands. The text is therefore less impassioned than the Resistance writing, although presumably the sense of European solidarity depicted in the letters is also brought about by horror at Nazi Occupation. Although La Peste operates a north/south resolution through an ideal of common struggle, its catastrophic impetus must not be forgotten. Nevertheless, the unfolding of the story allows, on a metatextual level, the fictional and political discourses of Europe to enter into dialogue. La Peste therefore constitutes a site of resolution, albeit somewhat attenuated, of the fictional north/south antithesis, and a site of dialogue between the different voices of Europe examined thus far.

### The Return of the north/south antithesis: L'État de siège

The resolution of the antithesis in Lettres à un ami allemand and La Peste is totally undermined by L'État de siège, in which the fictional north/south antithesis returns, even stronger than in the earlier fiction. Set in Cadiz in southern Spain, L'État de siège recounts the citizens' reactions to an outbreak of plague in the form of a totalitarian regime under the dictatorship of a 'plague' represented by a uniformed officer.<sup>10</sup> Since

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<sup>10</sup> Although Camus wrote the text, L'État de siège was written in collaboration with actor Jean-Louis Barrault. The concept behind it was influenced by Antonin Artaud, who, in 1938, had published Le Théâtre et son double on the role of drama in society (Artaud 1964). See Camus's 'avertissement' to the

the theme is similar to La Peste, one might have expected a similar representation of solidarity. This is emphatically not the case. As will be shown, resemblance to La Peste is only superficial: L'État de siège demonstrates none of the generic indeterminacy of either Lettres à un ami allemand or La Peste. It is quite obviously fictional, and marks a return to the construction of radical division in Europe.

There are many superficial similarities with La Peste (the outbreak occurs in a seaside town, the doors to the town close etc.), but Camus sought to quash the idea that the play was an adaptation of the novel (I, 187, 1730). Critics recognise and highlight the many differences (Camus 1998, 10-11, 13-14; Freeman 1971, 82-5; Gay-Crosier 1967, 137-141; Toura 1999, 6), and sometimes compare it to Caligula (Gay-Crosier 1967, 139; Toura 1999, 6-8). Where La Peste is subtle and subdued, L'État de siège is transparent and facile. Sarocchi states that the play 'abonde en formules superbes. Mais précisément ce sont des formules, dont La Peste et sa Secrétaire, allégories sans arrière-plan religieux, ne sont que les porte-voix, et que l'on a envie de remettre dans le recueil d'aphorismes, sinon la chronique de Rieux d'où elles se sont échappées' (Sarocchi 1999, 9).<sup>11</sup> Some account for part of the play's failure through comparison to La Peste:

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play (I, 187), and for its genesis see Rey's introduction in Camus 1998, 8-10; Gay-Crosier 1967, 134-7; Grenier 1987, 195-6. For Barrault's involvement with Artaud see Virmaux 1970, 189-91. For discussion on Artaud and Camus, see Valette-Fondo 1992 and Clayton 1969. Freeman states that Caligula is a far more Artaudian play than L'État de siège, the latter not conforming to Artaud's concepts (1971, 86-8). According to Garnham, Camus departed from the Artaudian concept of supernatural forces purging the spectators through a play in which nothing was obvious, wishing instead to show how one might rebel against such phenomena (1995, 140-1). In an Artaudian manner, L'État de siège combines several types of dramatic expression (I, 187), and aims at dynamism and movement, inspired by Artaud's idea of the cruelty of nature and of theatre as a way to disconcert the spectator. As in Le Malentendu, Camus had in mind his conception of the 'tragédie moderne', and was keen to adopt aspects of the Spanish 'auto-sacramentale' theatre as practised by Lope de Vega. The *mise en scène* itself is complex, bringing together several distinct spaces simultaneously, e.g. a church interior, a house interior and a market scene. For a description of the *mise en scène* in a recent representation of the play in November 1998, see Barré 1999.

<sup>11</sup> For other critiques see Barrault's comments in Camus 1998, 214; Freeman 1971, 95-7; Sarocchi 1999, 10; Toura 1999, 6. Gabriel Marcel criticised Camus for situating the play in Spain, arguing that it ought to have been Eastern Europe. Camus's responses are better known than Marcel's original criticism (II, 391-6; for Marcel's article see Camus 1998, 206-7). Sarocchi has written of the 'fiction mensongère' of the portrayal of Spain in L'État de siège (1999, 10).

Freeman considers that the characters appear to deserve their punishment, whereas in La Peste they are portrayed as innocent (1971, 88).<sup>12</sup> Jean-Louis Barrault remarks that the character La Peste perhaps represented ‘le sauveur par le plus grand mal’ (Camus 1998, 214). It is easy to agree with this conclusion, as the negative portrayal of the people of Cadiz suggests that La Peste’s arrival is provoked and not random.

In its lambasting of totalitarianism, Gay-Crosier sees L’État de siège as a continuation of Lettres à un ami allemand (1967, 145). This is probably valid on one level – the play is a good example of committed writing – but since it is highly fictionalised it does not in any generic way resemble Camus’s persuasive writing such as the Algiers journalism. In fact, L’État de siège bears more resemblance to La Mort heureuse, ‘La Mort dans l’âme’ and Le Malentendu than to La Peste or Lettres à un ami allemand. The following analysis thus deploys the Barthesian model of the antithesis used in the previous chapter. The first section examines the construction of the two terms of the antithesis – the sombre, oppressive north and the radiant, vital south – comparing them to similar constructions in earlier texts, and takes into account the specificities of the dramatic text. The diegetic and mimetic aspects of the construction of north and south echo Le Malentendu: there is no passage between two areas, but rather than the simple diegetic evocation in Le Malentendu, the north and the south in L’État de siège occupy the same mimetic space. Cadiz *before* the plague’s arrival represents, obviously, the south, and Cadiz *under* the plague regime the north. The didascalia announce changes to the mimetic space in order to represent the plague regime. The consequences of this north/south distinction will become clear in analyses of *mitoyenneté* and transgression.

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<sup>12</sup> Described as ‘le plus cuisant échec que Camus ait connu sur la scène’ (Gay-Crosier 1967, 133), L’État de siège, like Le Malentendu, was badly received at its première in October 1948, despite an illustrious cast, music by Honegger, and set and costumes by Balthus.

The construction of the diegetic space of Cadiz before La Peste's arrival, i.e. the first term of the antithesis, is organised around three signifiers connoting a mythical south similar to that of the earlier fiction.

The first is the summer. At the opening of the *première partie* of the play, after the governor's reassurances about the comet, the chorus declares, with a didascallic 'cri d'allégresse': 'Ce n'est pas une calamité, c'est l'abondance de l'été!' (I, 197). There is an element of self-delusion in this pronouncement, which blindly enacts the governor's edict prohibiting that townsfolk mention the comet as anything other than an astral phenomenon. Nevertheless, it signals return to normality after the previous wild speculation; the didascallics simultaneously announce light, animation and movement in a lively market scene lasting nine pages. While the chorus speaks there is life and activity, signified both by the juxtaposition of dialogue and didascallics, and by the powerful signifiers the chorus employs:

À peine si le printemps s'achève et déjà l'orange dorée de l'été lancée à toute vitesse à travers le ciel se hisse au sommet de la saison et crève au-dessus de l'Espagne dans un ruissellement de miel [...]. (I, 197)

The summer signifier is rich; the 'orange dorée' connotes warmth and bounty. The movement of the sun, 'lancée à toute vitesse', adds ideas of strength and vitality, expanded by an element of conquest and superiority in its rise to the summit. The discourse suggests that the sun provides safety and assurance; moving through their diegetic geophysical space, the sun encourages positive moods in the chorus's intrapsychic space, and there is perfect concordance. The sun's movement, added to the didascallic 'mouvement [qui] se précipite' also connotes liberty, in contrast with the comet's movement that the sun mirrors in this passage, which induced anguish.

The passage makes reference to two further codes that enrich the signifieds already observed: sensuality and the biblical exodus. The sun rises to a peak only to 'crève[r]

au-dessus de l'Espagne dans un ruissellement de miel', thus portraying the summer as a season of *jouissance*, the culmination of the year and a time of sensual abundance and joy. Biblical allusion springs from the sign 'miel', which expands the notion of culmination yet further. Present from the book of Exodus through to the Revelation of Saint John, honey is a common biblical metaphor for bounty and riches, and Camus's use of it here echoes the sensuality of the Song of Solomon: 'Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honeycomb, honey and milk are under thy tongue' (Song of Solomon 4. 11).<sup>13</sup> Since the chorus speaks in the freedom of the market place, the 'ruissellement de miel' alludes to the flight of the Israelites out of Egypt in the book of Exodus. God declares to Moses: 'And I am come down [...] to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey' (Exodus 3. 8).

The chorus continues: 'Voici l'été, offrande et non calamité' (I, 197), bringing an idea of the rhythm of the seasons. The sign 'offrande' suggests that they benefit from the provision of the seasons and their faithful equilibrium, spelt out when they declare: 'la terre est douce et [...] le ciel nourricier reste fidèle au rendez-vous'. Indeed, after La Peste's arrival, the chorus picks up this refrain with plaintive nostalgia: 'J'étais heureux sur le sommet de l'année, abandonné parmi les fruits, la nature égale, l'été bienveillant. J'aimais le monde, il y avait l'Espagne et moi' (I, 224-5). There is, once again, concordance of geophysical and intrapsychic; the people and the seasons work together with joy as partners with the earth itself, joyfully dependent on a faithful provider. They are in equilibrium with an ordered universe giving them all they desire at the correct times, suggested by praise of the natural order:

Les saisons tournent autour de leur pivot et dans le ciel suave circulent des astres sages [...]. En vérité, tout est en ordre, le monde s'équilibre! C'est le midi de l'année, la saison haute et immobile! Bonheur, bonheur! Voici l'été! Qu'importe le reste, le bonheur est notre fierté. (I, 205)

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<sup>13</sup> All Bible verses taken from the Authorised Version.



The alliterative 's' in the first line suggests regularity, perhaps the motion of the sea, reinforcing the idea of the natural order. The signifier of the summer, then, connotes abundance, bounty, riches, liberty, sensuality, vitality, all part of a happy equilibrium where people are part of the natural order and rejoice in it.

The second recurrent signifier is fruit, of which there are many evocations during the market scene and the chorus's speech, connoting a great many images and codes and often overlapping with the seme of summer. A passage cited above continues:

[...] pendant que tous les fruits de tous les étés du monde, raisins gluants, melons couleur de beurre, figues pleines de sang, abricots en flammes, viennent dans le même moment rouler aux étals de nos marchés. (I, 197)

In a shift in emphasis from the seme of summer, the focus moves from joyful satisfaction at the fidelity of the seasons, to the centrality and superiority of Cadiz, a focal point to which the products of the whole earth come flooding, as if the Cadiz summer were the apotheosis of summers everywhere, irresistibly attracting produce from near and far. The passage is accompanied by another didascalic 'cri d'allégresse', indicating the chorus's mood in this extraordinary evocation of abundance connoted through the quantity and rich description of the fruits, which rise on a scale of magnificence indicated by their adjectives. 'Gluants' and 'couleur de beurre', for instance, are reasonably predictable, connoting intensity of flavour and colour, and by extension the same notion of health and vitality mentioned above. The 'abricots en flammes', however, suggest more. As in the Lettres à un ami allemand, the flames connote warmth, light, vitality and passion. An unusual and figurative adjective for an apricot, it points to many signifieds that enrich the heady image of Cadiz, accentuated by a lyrical description of how the fruit arrives in the town:

O, fruits! C'est ici qu'ils achèvent dans l'osier la longue course précipitée qui les amène des campagnes où ils ont commencé à s'alourdir d'eau et de sucre au-dessus des prés bleus de chaleur. (I, 197)

This reinforces the idea of Cadiz as the centre of a network, uniting the fruits of the earth in a display of abundance and vitality. The seme of the fruits joins the seme of summer, the season that triggers growth and abundance, in a pastoral scene of growth and peace, linked with the idea of the measured rhythm of the seasons.

In many ways, the most important seme in the chorus's discourse at this point is water, the common factor to the play's construction of the geophysical space of Cadiz, and Spain by extension, as a living organism in perfect harmony:

[...] parmi le jaillissement frais de mille sources ensoleillées peu à peu réunies en une seule eau de jeunesse aspirée par les racines et les troncs, conduite jusqu'au cœur des fruits où elle finit par couler lentement comme une inépuisable fontaine mielleuse qui les engraisse et les rend de plus en plus pesants. (I, 197)

Water connotes a source of life and health; it springs from the earth, nourishes the fruits and is mediated to the people, developing an idea of the cycle of life, adding to the qualification 'de jeunesse', and implying once more the vitality and strength of the sun's path across the sky mentioned above. The biblical metaphor is also reinforced: the 'inépuisable fontaine mielleuse' alludes to the Exodus land of milk and honey. Water, then, connotes an idea of source and origin, vitality, bounty and strength. Furthermore, the 'racines et troncs' suggest that the seasons and fruits combine in a form of living organism; when put together with the 'mille sources', roots suggest veins and arteries, which becomes clearer in the following passage describing the fruits' journey to Cadiz:

Et si lourds qu'à la fin les fruits coulent au fond de l'eau du ciel, commencent de rouler à travers l'herbe opulente, s'embarquent aux rivières, cheminent le long de toutes les routes et, des quatres coins de l'horizon, salués par les rumeurs joyeuses du peuple et les clairons de l'été [...] viennent en foule aux cités humaines. (I, 197)

Sources and fountains of water flow into rivers and are assimilated into a network which brings the fruits ('de tous les étés du monde') from the farthest reaches to the centres, all converging on Cadiz. The rivers are like arteries, bringing life itself (in the form of nutrition) to the people. The water signifier, then, connotes the people's rootedness in

the earth, part of the organic interdependent network, expanded in two further references. In a passage cited earlier, the 'eau de jeunesse' is taken up into the 'cœur des fruits', where it runs slowly like honey. Clearly, this represents the heart, maintaining the cycle of life and pumping the water of youth around the network. It is reinforced by what seems an incongruous adjective used to describe the figs: 'figues pleines de sang'. Although at one level an apt description of colour, its use, added to the fig's shape, echoes this idea of a heart maintaining the network's life. After this, the chorus talks of 'le sang, la sève et le soleil à la rumination de l'homme', which openly states what was previously implicit: that the construction of Cadiz is deeply humanist. The network of life is described in human terms as a living organism with a heart and arteries, and is praised for upholding the lives of the Cadiz townsfolk.

Later, after the plague has gone, the chorus returns to praising all these aspects of the town, this time in terms of a woman's body:

Et la victoire alors a le corps de nos femmes sous la pluie de l'amour. Voici la chair heureuse, luisante et chaude, grappé de septembre où le frelon grésille. Sur l'aire du ventre s'abattent les moissons de la vigne. Les vendanges flambent au sommet des seins ivres. (I, 285)

This 'earth mother' idea echoes the humanist organism of life, adding a notion of femininity which suggests continuation or reproduction of the network.

Under La Peste's regime, the chorus often evokes the seme of water in relation to the sea, access to which is cut off, as in La Peste:

Nous sommes les fils de la mer. C'est là-bas qu'il nous faut arriver, au pays sans murailles et sans portes, aux plages vierges où le sable a la fraîcheur des lèvres, et où le regard porte si loin qu'il se fatigue [...] la mer libre, l'eau qui lave. (I, 224)

The seme of water connotes liberty and harmony; it allows access to the vastness of the earth and to the network of sun, fruit and life constructed in the first half of the antithesis. It is unbounded, a 'pays sans murailles', connoting freedom and permanence.

harmony and regularity, evoking also the *École d'Alger* view of the Mediterranean as 'patrie': 'Elle [la mer] a vu et recouvert bien des gouvernements! Elle n'offre que des matins rouges et des soirs verts et, du soir au matin, le froissement interminable de ses eaux tout le long des nuits débordantes d'étoiles!' (I, 224). This signified of freedom is equally present in the seme of the wind, also frequently evoked under the plague regime. At the beginning of the outbreak, the sorcière announces that the plague abhors wind (I, 208), after which the people talk of it with nostalgia: 'Ah Cadix, cité marine! Hier encore, et par-dessus le détroit, le vent du désert, plus épais d'avoir passé sur les jardins africains, venait alanguir nos filles' (I, 223). With the absence of wind, connoting freedom and purity, the town becomes more oppressive and enclosed.

The construction of the south, then, is rich and varied, similar to Vicenza and Genoa in earlier texts, but with distinct connotations of its own in the idea of the living network. The plague's arrival in Cadiz announces the second term of the antithesis, in which similar semes connote different ideas. This second term can be understood as north: although the geophysical space is the same, its character changes utterly, bearing similar characteristics to northern Europe in the earlier fiction. The seme of water reappears in the chorus's lamentation once La Peste gains control of the town:

Des brumes affreuses commencent à s'épaissir aux quatre coins de la ville, dissipent peu à peu l'odeur des fruits et des roses, ternissent la gloire de la saison, étouffent la jubilation de l'été. (I, 223)

The seme of water now connotes new signifieds; the fog is stagnant and immobile, sucking life from the town's former bounty. A clear antithesis is constructed, rendered more striking in certain more subtle echos; the 'quatre coins de la ville' clashes with the earlier 'quatre coins de l'horizon' (I, 197): a sense of imprisonment is generated by this diminution of space. Furthermore, where before there were 'mille sources ensoleillées

peu à peu *réunies*' (I, 197, my emphasis), the fog now disperses what was united in the image of the network, driving a wedge between the people and their environment, the geophysical and the intrapsychic. In addition, the water signifier is linked to the malodorous vinegar so pervasive in the Prague of *La Mort heureuse*, which infects the purity of the water signifier. In *L'État de siège* the people are silenced when La Peste gives the spurious order to put a vinegar-soaked pad in their mouths to prevent the spread of infection. In a similar way, La Peste declares: 'Je suis celui qui aigrit le vin et qui dessèche les fruits' (I, 284). The water signifier thus signifies loss of liberty and the negation of the fresh tastes evoked in the south. Didascalia announce what becomes of the characters:

[L]e nombre de voix diminue en même temps que l'ampleur de l'orchestre. Le chœur commencé à plusieurs voix finira en une seule voix jusqu'à la pantomime finale qui se déroule dans un silence complet, les bouches des personnages gonflées et fermées. (I, 227)

The movement on stage is also dramatically curtailed; a curfew is imposed and movement restricted to those with passes (I, 223), changes within the mimetic space announced in didascalia at the opening of the *deuxième partie*:

Les fossoyeurs en tenue de bagnard relèvent des morts [...] des tables comme celles où l'on distribue les cartes de ravitaillement. Derrière l'une d'elles, le premier alcade [...] entouré de fonctionnaires. [...] Les gardes chassent le peuple devant eux et l'amènent devant et dans la conciergerie, femmes et hommes séparés. [...] Du haut de son palais, La Peste dirige des ouvriers invisibles dont on aperçoit seulement l'agitation autour de la scène. (I, 231)

An authoritarian presence now directs the characters in a scene in total opposition to the market scene described earlier, characterised by almost Brownian movement in all directions. A signifier present in the pre-plague scenes, also connoting liberty, also disappears: the chorus often declares that the wind is no more, lamenting: 'Nous étions un peuple et nous voici une masse! On nous invitait, nous voici convoqués! Nous échangeons le pain et le lait, maintenant nous sommes ravitaillés! Nous piétons!' (I,

248). The description of the north is thus both mimetic and diegetic, comprising images (vinegar, impurity) and movements (loss of freedom).

The signified of oppression is further reinforced in the mimetic space when didascalía announce: 'On aperçoit en découpure des cabanes et des barbelés, des miradors et quelques autres monuments hostiles' (I, 248). As this develops, the chorus declares: 'Tout se fixe, nous ne sentons plus sur nos lèvres l'ancienne fraîcheur du vent' (I, 226). Liberty is curtailed in the town's transformation into a prison:

À présent nous sommes dans la douleur et nous avons à tourner en rond dans cette ville étroite, sans arbres et sans eaux, cadenassée de hautes portes lisses, couronnée de foules hurlantes, Cadix enfin, comme une arène noire et rouge où vont s'accomplir les meurtres rituels. (I, 227)

The town suffocates and encloses, devoid of vegetation and free movement, its people imprisoned. There is complete discordance of geophysical and intrapsychic spaces, the former now existing to crush the latter. Elsewhere, the chorus speaks of 'les murs qui n'en finissent pas, les barreaux aux fenêtres' (I, 249).

Apart from the prison dimension, which is particular to L'État de siège, the description of the diegetic space of Cadiz under the plague's regime echoes the north of the earlier texts. There is a feeling of oppression generated by the walls and enclosure, and a reference to vinegar and dampness. The fog continues the idea of the dark puddles in Prague. The extra dimension of L'État de siège serves to intensify the antithesis; both spaces are depicted in headier, richer terms.

As said earlier, north and south, as in Le Malentendu, are described simultaneously from within the same mimetic space. The median position of the antithesis therefore also resembles the complex median position of the earlier play. The antithesis represents not two opposing 'natures' of distinct geophysical spaces, but the same (southern) town,

before and after the outbreak of the plague. The antithesis comes not from a passage between the terms, but from their juxtaposition in the same space. Because the diegetic north and south meet in the same mimetic space, the median position stretches through most of the play when Cadiz is under the plague regime. It leads once more to some important résumés of the antithesis, for instance when the chorus cries: '[J]e n'entends plus le bruit des vagues. Voici les clameurs, la panique, l'insulte et la lâcheté' (I, 225). La Peste's discourse also carries résumés: 'Je les ai concentrés. Jusqu'ici, ils vivaient dans la dispersion et la frivolité, un peu délayés pour ainsi dire! Maintenant ils sont plus fermes, ils se concentrent!' (I, 243).

The most striking résumés belong to Nada after he becomes a 'fonctionnaire', his ideas opposing those of others, particularly in a simultaneous speech with La femme:

LA FEMME La justice est que les enfants mangent à leur faim [...]

NADA Choisissez de vivre à genoux plutôt que de mourir debout [...] (I, 247).

As in Le Malentendu, the median position in L'État de siège is prolonged and intense. In the previous chapter, it was seen that in the north, the protagonist from the south was in a state of transgression, inhabiting a space which was not 'his', and disrupting an equilibrium. The prolonged median position in L'État de siège is equally transgressive, since there is a constant juxtaposition of the two terms of the antithesis. As in the earlier texts, this has consequences, now far more severe due to the fact that there is not just one character who transgresses, like Mersault or the narrator of 'La Mort dans l'âme'. In Cadiz, the prolonged untenable median position leads to a multiplicity of transgressive positioning, and a series of consequent deaths, rather than the single revelation of death in La Mort heureuse and 'La Mort dans l'âme'. Transgression is not the preserve of one voyager between the terms, but of several protagonists. As Diego says, 'Je sais qu'ils ne sont pas purs. Moi non plus. Et puis je suis né parmi eux' (I, 290). The result is the

construction of an even more irreconcilable division of Europe than that of the earlier texts.

At the start of L'État de siège, transgression is inherent in the symbiotic relationship between the attitudes of the government of Cadiz and of its people. The first example of this is in the government's announcement concerning the comet:

Les bons gouvernements sont les gouvernements où rien ne se passe. Or telle est la volonté du gouverneur qu'il ne se passe rien en son gouvernement afin qu'il demeure aussi bon qu'il l'a toujours été. Il est donc affirmé aux habitants de Cadix que rien ne s'est passé en ce jour qui vaille la peine qu'on s'alarme ou se dérange. C'est pourquoi chacun [...] devra tenir pour faux qu'aucune comète se soit jamais montrée à l'horizon de la cité. (I, 194)

This speech prefigures the jargon, word-abuse and sinister irony which La Peste will institute later in the play, and strays into the discourse of the other half of the antithesis, an example of which is found at the beginning of La Peste's regime:

Toutes les denrées de première nécessité seront désormais à la disposition de la communauté, c'est-à-dire qu'elles seront distribuées en parts égales et infimes à tous ceux qui pourront prouver leur loyale appartenance à la nouvelle société. (I, 223)

There is a similarity between these discourses in the way that they deny either physical realities or generally accepted concepts, seeking to undermine language. The governor's comments are transgressive because they do not correspond with the pre-plague Cadiz. Diego illustrates this in the prologue through reference to aspects of the townspeople that contradict the governor's attitude, responding to his announcement with the remark, 'C'est une sottise! Mentir est toujours une sottise' (I, 195). He goes on to claim that honour is 'Ce qui [le] tient debout' (I, 196), and thus illustrates two concepts absent from the speech. Interestingly, rebellion against the governor goes unnoticed in the prologue whereas every rebellion is punished under the plague regime. This proves that the governor is adopting a discourse that does not belong in Cadiz; if it did, it would be reinforced by the plague's justice system. Although the above speech is clearly political, an obvious parody of wartime propaganda, its fictionalisation here militates against



considering it 'persuasive' in the sense of the Algiers journalism. It cannot be considered an incursion of the political into the fictional in the same way as often occurs in La Peste.

A more obvious form of transgression takes place in the transfer of power between the governors and La Peste. The governor asks: 'Si je vous cède la place, moi, les miens et les alcades aurons-nous la vie sauve?' (I, 220), to which La Peste replies 'Mais naturellement, voyons, c'est l'usage!' (I, 220). The Governor then declares to the people: 'Bien entendu, c'est dans la liberté que je conclus ce nouvel accord' (I, 221). There is the same subterfuge and misuse of words as in the other speeches.

The people of Cadiz also transgress, adopting attitudes of the other term of the antithesis which are rhetorically shown not to belong in their own term, i.e. blind acceptance of power, which is the submission La Peste seeks later on. They unquestioningly feed off the governor's assurances repeating 'il ne se passe[ra] rien' four times, twice in the present, twice in the future tense (I, 197-8). This amounts to psychological denial, betraying either blind allegiance or irony. The latter can be discounted in the Alcades' reply to one citizen, who declares: 'par tes soins, bon gouverneur, on nous annonça qu'il ne s'était rien passé et que nos oreilles avaient mal entendu. Du coup, nous voici rassurés avec toi' (I, 204). They reply:

Le gouverneur a bien parlé! Rien n'est bon de ce qui est nouveau. Nous autres, alcades, mandatés par la sagesse et les ans, voulons croire en particulier que nos bons pauvres ne se sont pas donnés un air d'ironie. L'ironie est une vertu qui détruit. Un bon gouverneur lui préfère les vices qui construisent. (I, 204)

In this relationship, the government is protecting itself by deluding its citizens, who in turn profit from their delusion to focus only on petty issues. The tone of the responses to the comet perhaps betrays a certain awareness of their transgression since it prefigures the outbreak of the plague. The ideal to which they fail to conform is Diego, who talks

of virtues that the Chorus never mentions, and in so doing exposes the transgression.

Nada, too, sees through their self-delusion:

Je vous informe que nous y sommes et que, de plus en plus, nous allons y être. Remarquez bien que nous y étions déjà. Mais il fallait un ivrogne pour s'en rendre compte. [...] Du moment que vous avez fait vos trois repas, travaillé vos huit heures et entretenu vos deux femmes, vous imaginez que tout est dans l'ordre. Non vous n'êtes pas dans l'ordre, vous êtes dans le rang. Bien alignés, la mine placide, vous voilà mûrs pour la calamité. (I, 193)

He mounts a critique of petty-bourgeois habits and declares that they will pay for their transgression. Indeed, the people soon see the results. The wall of the antithesis is crossed and the consequence is death, arriving with the outbreak of the plague which will intensify with random killings, concentration camps and segregation (I, 206). This bears out Barrault's remark about *La Peste* as 'le sauveur par le plus grand mal' (Camus 1998, 214): the people of Cadiz are presented in a negative way that suggests that their transgression provokes *La Peste*'s arrival.

The people and their governor are soon joined by Nada, who transgresses later in the play by working for the plague regime. The Secrétaire's suggestion 'Passe de ce côté-ci. Tu seras fonctionnaire de notre royaume' (I, 238) is prefigured earlier, when the Secrétaire mentions to *La Peste* that Nada 'a le genre qui ne croit à rien et que ce genre-là nous est bien utile' (I, 219). Nada compromises his beliefs in declaring allegiance to a regime that believes in its own absolute power. Where before he declaims his nihilism ('Vive rien, puisque c'est la seule chose qui existe!' (I, 237)), he now crosses over into the other term of the antithesis, bearing the consequences on himself, committing suicide at the end of the play: 'O vieux monde, il faut partir, tes bourreaux sont fatigués, leur haine est devenue trop froide' (I, 300).

The most interesting transgression is Diego's. It is far from simple, and also ends in death, but is used in positive ways. At the beginning of the play, as seen earlier, he is the ideal, embodying virtues such as honour. Once the plague arrives, he helps its victims

but his attitude evolves. Victoria finds him cold and distant when before he was loving and passionate – he declares: ‘Je ne me reconnais plus. Un homme ne m’a jamais fait peur, mais ceci me dépasse’ (I, 213). He is ashamed of his own fear and of being alive while others die. After a brief attempt to stand up to the new regime, he flees to the Judge’s house, threatening to transmit the disease, of which he bears the first signs, to the Judge’s son when the Judge tries to throw him out. When Victoria tells him ‘ceci est lâche’, Diego replies: ‘Rien n’est lâche dans la cité des lâches’ (I, 253). He echoes what the Judge has just remarked, that ‘L’honneur est une affaire d’hommes et il n’y a plus d’hommes dans cette ville’, which itself echoes Diego’s remarks in the prologue. His evolving attitude is only offset by his realisation: ‘J’ai honte de voir ce que nous sommes devenus’ (I, 256). Nevertheless, he can no longer face Victoria: ‘je suis trop fier pour t’aimer sans m’estimer’ (I, 258). Once the Secrétaire’s guards have contaminated him, he tries to contaminate Victoria, unable to cope with the idea of her outliving him. Here he takes on characteristics of the other term of the antithesis, declaring to Victoria ‘Tu es de l’autre côté, avec ceux qui vivent!’ (I, 261). His position is confused. He claims not to understand, seeks to flee the town, but feels bound to those who suffer. He cannot accept the idea of his own happiness with Victoria; in the prologue, he said: ‘Je dois m’occuper d’être heureux’ (I, 196), but now, once contaminated, the tone has changed:

VICTORIA Je ne vais pas encore me charger de la douleur du monde! C’est une tâche d’homme, cela, une des tâches, vaines, stériles, entêtées, que vous entreprenez pour vous détourner du seul combat qui serait vraiment difficile, de la seule victoire dont vous pourriez être fiers.

DIEGO Qu’ai-je donc à vaincre en ce monde. sinon l’injustice qui nous est faite.

VICTORIA Le malheur qui est en toi! Et le reste suivra! (I, 262-3)

Diego is now torn between collective struggle and individual happiness, which, Victoria believes, would solve wider problems of itself. From the moment Diego fails to escape, he adopts methods of the plague regime, but in order to save the town. Standing up to

the Secrétaire, he finds out that he has discovered the secret: to overcome fear. Significantly, at this point the Secrétaire tells Diego: ‘Vous êtes à moi, d’une certaine manière’ (I, 268). In his rebellion, Diego loses the happiness he would have had in pre-plague Cadiz, but manages to save the town from the regime. He therefore transgresses in adopting elements of the new regime, and pays for it in his own death, but not before conquering La Peste and his reign: ‘Je me suis desséché dans ce combat. Je ne suis plus un homme et il est juste que je meure’ (I, 297).

At the close of L’État de siège, a series of deaths results from multiple transgression. Several inhabitants of the town, including Diego and Nada, have been killed. The result is to portray a north and south that are irreconcilably split between the sombre oppressive north and the radiant sunlit south, a dramatic return to the antagonism of the earlier fiction that is almost overcome in the Lettres à un ami allemand and La Peste.

## Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the fictionally divided and the politically united voices of Europe in Camus’s *œuvre* enter into dialogue in some texts from the 1940s. Through their generic indeterminacy and inclusion of elements from the fictional works without the antithesis they previously bore, the Lettres à un ami allemand resolve both the fictional antithesis and the antagonism between the fictional and persuasive writing when it deals with Europe. They allow both voices to interact, their tones merging in passages redolent of particular characteristics of both. La Peste continues this resolution, although in attenuated form. Itself a generically uncertain text, featuring many encoded references to Camus’s political debates of the late 1940s, it portrays a Europe of solidarity but within a struggle to overcome a mortal disease. It constitutes a similar ‘site of dialogue’ leading to resolution, bringing together fictional and political. Finally, the chapter has shown that L’État de siège, similar in many ways to La Peste,

nevertheless marks a complete return to the fictional, divided voice of Europe of antithesis and transgression, bearing very similar elements to the representation of Europe analysed in Chapter Three. Indeed, the north/south antagonism is even more radical due to the prolonged median position and multiple transgression.

The analysis has therefore demonstrated the potential dialogic compatibility of Camus's voices of Europe, provided that the particular site of dialogue, the text in which it occurs, is generically uncertain and can sustain both the political and fictional voices. Once a text evoking Europe is fully literary, with little or no reference to the persuasive genre, the construction of Europe reverts, as in L'État de siège to the division of the north/south antithesis. As soon as, like Lettres à un ami allemand or La Peste, the construction of Europe contains references to contemporaneous political events or struggles, the vision is much more hopeful, constructing unity and solidarity, enabling resolution through a dialogue of voices. In fully persuasive, political texts such as the Algiers journalism any references to features of the literary voice are omitted, separating the fictional from the political. This generic examination offers an insight into Camus's ambivalence towards Europe, which seems to be the preserve of the fictional genre as demonstrated in L'État de siège. It is, however, more pervasive, as shown in aspects of the description of Oran, and it was seen in Chapter Three how an ambivalence towards Europe pervades the late 1940s political writing. The persuasive genre therefore evolves, as will be shown in the next chapter, towards more general political values and concerns, a further distinctive voice of Europe articulated around a history/nature antithesis. This is represented by L'Homme révolté, in which the political begins to merge with the fictional, permitting dialogue within the construction of Europe and clearly reflecting ambivalence alongside a consistent preoccupation with Europe's problems.

## VI. History and nature as north and south

L'Été (1953), L'Homme révolté (1951)

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By the 1950s, Camus was becoming increasingly preoccupied with what he saw as a European crisis of conscience. As argued in Chapter Three, it becomes clear in 'Ni victimes ni bourreaux' that integration was no longer a sufficient solution to European problems, whose origins he sought to trace in L'Été (1953)<sup>1</sup> and L'Homme révolté (1951). In these texts, contemporaneous with the political writings examined earlier, there is a clear shift in Camus's discourse of Europe away from pragmatic political solutions towards an examination of deeper historico-philosophical issues. This voice of Europe is articulated around an antithesis between history and nature. Europe is portrayed as a continent submerged in its own history, suffering from its rejection of nature, in opposition to Greece, the incarnation of equilibrium and appreciation of nature. As will be seen, this throws into question the resolution adumbrated in Lettres à un ami allemand, examined in Chapter Five, overshadows the 1940s and 1950s political writings and demonstrates Camus's ambivalence towards Europe through its different dialogue of literary and political to the texts examined in the previous chapter.

A highly refractory and complex work, L'Homme révolté has bemused critics since its publication.<sup>2</sup> It is ostensibly anti-totalitarian, assimilating Nazism and Communism, and criticising historicist thought in general. It has multiple agendas; the book is at once a rupture with Communism, a reaction to World War Two and the developing Cold

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<sup>1</sup> L'Été is a collection of lyrical essays in the same vein as Noces, Camus's first collection of lyrical essays originally published by Charlot in Algiers in 1939 and re-edited in Paris in 1947. Although published three years later than L'Homme révolté, L'Été contains material written between 1939 ('Le Minotaure ou la halte d'Oran') and 1953 ('La Mer au plus près').

<sup>2</sup> L'Homme révolté attracted the vitriol of left- and right-wing critics alike; a large part of Actuelles II is taken up with Camus's replies to various criticisms (II, 729-74), and the Carnets show his growing disillusionment with the Paris politico-literary scene in the 1950s. See Barilier 1977, 57-73 for an excellent overview of the politics of L'Homme révolté and its reception. See Weyembergh 1998, 137-50 on its similarities with Karl Popper's The Open Society and its Enemies.

War, an exorcism of some literary and philosophical demons, and a clear refutation of Camus's reputation as an existentialist which he had accrued from L'Étranger and Le Mythe de Sisyphe. It argues political cases with highly subjective literary examples, operating through several Camusian discourses at once, leading critics to complain that it is too complex for the general reader and too shallow and hasty for the scholar (II, 1626). It suffers from logical and philosophical inconsistencies, not least the fact that for Camus's analysis to stand, those whom he describes as betraying rebellion must accept his analysis of the motivations behind it. Since this derives from Camus's own principles, he assumes from the outset what he tries to prove, the philosophical sin of question-begging.

The aim of this chapter, however, is not to evaluate the validity of the book's arguments, but to analyse its representation of Europe.<sup>3</sup> Like many of the 1940s political texts examined in Chapter Three, L'Homme révolté begins with a statement on a major problem facing Europe.<sup>4</sup> In this case it is political murder which claims to justify itself through humanitarian principles: 'Puisque toute action aujourd'hui débouche sur le meurtre, direct ou indirect, nous ne pouvons pas agir avant de savoir si, et pourquoi, nous devons donner la mort' (II, 414). Camus begins by establishing the purely western or European climate in which the conditions have been present for his concept of rebellion to develop: 'le problème de la révolte semble ne prendre un sens précis qu'à l'intérieur de la pensée occidentale' (II, 429). L'Homme révolté constitutes, therefore, 'l'histoire de l'orgueil européen' (II, 420). Through his contextualisation of the idea of rebellion, Camus offers a perspective on Europe which differs from representations seen in other chapters. It is united in rebellion, and in the problems resulting from rebellion's

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<sup>3</sup> Critiques of L'Homme révolté are numerous. See, *inter alia*, Cruickshank 1970. Most general studies also contain an outline of the book and situate it in the context of Camus's general political engagement.

<sup>4</sup> As seen in Chapter Three, the dominant themes of L'Homme révolté appear in many guises in his political and lyrical writing throughout the 1940s – the book had a long gestation, Camus writing 'Remarque sur la révolte', essentially its first chapter, in 1945. See II, 1609-30.

drift from first principles. The depiction of unity thus resembles, *a priori*, the Lettres à un ami allemand idea of Europe, before Camus begins to undermine it by showing how Europe is united in its rejection of nature in favour of a historicist world-view. In antithetical contrast, Greece represents a holistic appreciation of nature and a notion of equilibrium, a contrast which problematises the Resistance view.

The history/nature discourse of Europe was already present in milder form in Camus's *œuvre* before 1951. In the Carnets in 1937, he had evoked 'l'antithèse de l'histoire et de la nature' (CI, 100).<sup>5</sup> Texts in L'Été develop the theme. 'Le Minotaure ou la halte d'Oran' (1939), for example, begins by describing humanity's need for silence and space, contrasting Oran to European towns (Paris, 'quelques villes espagnoles', Florence, Prague, Salzburg, Vienna and Amsterdam) which are too encumbered by their own past:

Les villes que l'Europe nous offre sont trop pleines des rumeurs du passé. Une oreille exercée peut y percevoir des bruits d'ailes, une palpitation d'âmes. On y sent le vertige des siècles, des révolutions, de la gloire. On s'y souvient que l'Occident s'est forgé dans les clameurs. Cela ne fait pas assez de silence. (II, 813)

The geographical areas are those of La Mort heureuse, 'La Mort dans l'âme' and Le Malentendu, but are apprehended as part of the same entity, albeit slightly negatively in their preponderance of history. This is also the theme of 'Petit guide pour des villes sans passé' (1947): 'Mais l'Espagne et l'Italie regorgent de souvenirs, d'œuvres d'art et de vestiges exemplaires. [...] Les cités dont je parle [Algiers and Oran] au contraire sont des villes sans passé' (II, 847). This contrasts slightly with the positive light in which European history is portrayed in Lettres à un ami allemand, and prepares the terrain for the texts examined in this chapter. Nevertheless, in 'Petit guide' the preponderance of history does not invite the kind of critique contained in L'Homme révolté.

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<sup>5</sup> For a detailed overview of the development of the history/nature antithesis, see Barilier 1977, 57-60.



'Les Amandiers' (1940) is a cry for hope in the future as war breaks out. It begins with a quotation from Napoleon that anticipates Lettres à un ami allemand ('À la longue, le sabre est toujours vaincu par l'esprit' (II, 835)). However, in a more overtly philosophical note, Camus also states: 'Je ne crois pas assez à la raison pour souscrire au progrès, ni à aucune philosophie de l'Histoire', clearly anticipating the position adopted in L'Homme révolté. Indeed, Quilliot suggests that this passage was probably one of three paragraphs Camus modified when 'Les Amandiers' was published in L'Été in 1952 (II, 1823), also suggested by the past tense, 'Quand j'habitais Alger', suggestive of greater distance than the date would indicate, and the 'encore' in 'cette Europe encore toute pleine de son malheur' (II, 836, my emphasis). 'Prométhée aux enfers' (1946) and 'L'Exil d'Hélène' (1953),<sup>6</sup> and especially L'Homme révolté, develop Camus's understanding of European history as a general adoption of historicist thought over appreciation of nature, a paradigm directly responsible, Camus argues, for Europe's twentieth century problems. Barilier suggests that in the 1951 essay 'cette opposition va toucher son paroxysme et se durcir en doctrine' (1977, 57).

This chapter begins by examining those texts in L'Été which articulate the history/nature antithesis, reading them as another 'voice of Europe' that problematises the view in Lettres à un ami allemand of European history as an uninterrupted and untroubled stream. The third section of the chapter is devoted to Camus's attempt in L'Homme révolté to trace the origins of historicist thinking around this history/nature antithesis, which will be compared to the north/south antithesis familiar from earlier texts. Throughout the chapter, the texts examined will be related to other representations of Europe in the Camusian *œuvre* and will chart the persistence of various forms of

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<sup>6</sup> 'Prométhée aux enfers' was first published by Palinugre in 1947; 'L'Exil d'Hélène' in *Permanence de la Grèce* by Cahiers du Sud in Marseille.

division and antagonism within them. The chapter also evaluates Camus's attempt to find resolution through a notion of equilibrium.

## L'Été

'Prométhée aux enfers' and 'L'Exil d'Hélène' illustrate in clear terms the new voice of Europe which Camus develops in tandem with his progressive move away from Europeanism. They anticipate (or prolong) some of the arguments of L'Homme révolté on the idea of Greek moderation and European 'démésure'. Although written in highly figurative and in many senses literary language, their style closely resembles the Lettres à un ami allemand; although the language is lyrical, the subject of the essays is the European post-war political situation. The essays begin, however, to deconstruct the wartime view of European history, problematising the relation of Europe to Greece.

### 'Prométhée aux enfers'

Its title an obvious allusion to Aeschylus' Prometheus Bound, which the Théâtre de l'Équipe staged in the late 1930s in Algiers, 'Prométhée aux enfers' is a meditation on the place of the myth of Prometheus in Europe in the late 1940s. At the same time, it constitutes a powerful commentary on Europe's deep-seated malaise that needs to be dealt with in order to overcome the problems Camus identifies elsewhere.

A persistent reference in European literature and thought, the myth of Prometheus has undergone various transformations. According to Trousson, in a relatively recent interpretation, Prometheus 'has become the symbol par excellence in western culture of the rebellion in the field of metaphysics and religion, as well as the embodiment of the rejection of the absurdity of the human condition' (1992, 968). Trousson also highlights Camus's placing of Prometheus 'in the very centre of the dilemma of modern civilisation' (1992, 981). Archambault (1972), however, demonstrates how Camus picks and chooses between sources for his interpretations of many Greek myths, adopting a

sometimes uncomfortable compromise in order to illustrate his own view. This is obvious from his account of Prometheus: in *L'Homme révolté* he is part of an unfolding minor conflict between the gods; in 'Prométhée aux enfers', he represents not so much metaphysical revolt as the values Camus seeks to put at the heart of Europe.

Camus uses the myth in 'Prométhée aux enfers' to illustrate the loss of an ideal of equilibrium between extremes in Europe. Each mention of the Greek hero is an exhortation to Europe to maintain a balance and adopt a holistic understanding of humanity and society. Writing of his abortive plan to visit Greece in 1939 at the outbreak of war, Camus used the analogy of hell to describe a Europe not yet recovered from World War Two: 'Nous étions dans l'enfer, nous n'en sommes plus jamais sortis' (II, 842). The brief evocation of Greece is important, as it represents, as in many other texts, an ideal of beauty and liberty, which are coterminous in Camus's interpretation of Greek aesthetics and in equilibrium with intelligence and courage. This is a well known aspect of Camus's writing, but in this text it emerges in the context of the European malaise, which Camus understands as a rejection of the central message of Prometheus, 'ce héros qui aima assez les hommes pour leur donner en même temps le feu et la liberté, les techniques et les arts. L'humanité, aujourd'hui, ne se soucie que de techniques. Elle se révolte dans ses machines, elle tient l'art et ce qu'il suppose pour un obstacle et un signe de servitude' (II, 841). Humanity has rejected equilibrium and favoured only the physical aspect of its emancipation, described in terms of provisionally abandoning the spirit while the body is saved. He even suggests that, were Prometheus to return, humans themselves would chain him to the rock. Camus concludes that it is impossible to let the spirit die provisionally, and that true revolt maintains both.

By privileging the physical over the spiritual, history over nature, Europe becomes 'humide et noire' (II, 842), evocative of the sombre fictional representations found

elsewhere in Camus's writing. History signifies the physical struggle of mankind and nature earth's beauty forgotten in the fight: 'L'histoire est une terre stérile où la bruyère ne pousse pas. L'homme d'aujourd'hui a choisi l'histoire cependant et il ne pouvait ni ne devait s'en détourner. Mais au lieu de se l'asservir, il consent tous les jours à en être l'esclave' (II, 842). This is the crux of the issue: Prometheus' balanced rebellion, comprising physical and spiritual elements, has been ignored. Europe has become too focused on History, at nature's expense. Camus ends with a rather abstruse call for 'les hommes de Prométhée' to rise up and rehabilitate true Promethean values: 'S'il [l'homme] a faim de pain et de bruyère, et s'il est vrai que le pain est le plus nécessaire, apprenons à préserver le souvenir de la bruyère. Au cœur le plus sombre de l'histoire, les hommes de Prométhée, sans cesser leur dur métier, garderont un regard sur la terre, et sur l'herbe inlassable' (II, 844).

For a Europe perceived as profoundly out of kilter with nature, Camus reworks the Prometheus myth, proposing a holistic reading of man's estate that refuses to abandon nature. It anticipates the critique of historicism of L'Homme révolté, and the equilibrium represented by 'La Pensée de midi'. Most importantly, for the moment, Camus has constructed an idea of a Europe united in its abuses and torn apart by its own excesses and from which Greece (metonymically represented by Prometheus) has been excluded through Europe's rejection of its values. This description of Europe echoes aspects of the Nazi vision depicted in the Lettres à un ami allemand; the rejection of nature and beauty calls forth ideas of the 'tâche colorée' and the militaristic view of Europe as terrain ripe for conquering (II, 235). This is an important development in Camus's understanding of Europe: he now suggests that those who fought against nazism have unwittingly adopted their uncultured barbaric view of Europe so derided in the third letter. Although the Lettres à un ami allemand argued the necessity of adopting some of the enemy's tactics ('Il nous a fallu [...] accepter de vous ressembler un peu'

(II, 242)), it now seems that this has become permanent, leading to Europe forgetting the values it had to provisionally sideline. It strikingly illustrates Camus's ambivalence towards Europe in his 1940s political activity and writing.

### 'L'Exil d'Hélène'

If 'Prométhée aux enfers' describes a progressive abandonment of the values of nature and beauty, 'L'Exil d'Hélène' makes this explicit even in its title. A reflection on the opposition between equilibrium and European 'démésure', this essay expands on 'Prométhée aux enfers', going beyond the single myth towards a wider view of Greek civilisation and radically undermining the Lettres à un ami allemand vision of European history. Europe is once more apprehended as a unity, but is taken to task for its perceived drift from key values.

The presentation of Europe, to begin with, is as sombre as in 'Prométhée aux enfers': 'Notre temps [...] a nourri son désespoir dans la laideur et dans les convulsions. C'est pourquoi l'Europe serait ignoble si la douleur pouvait jamais l'être' (II, 853). Greece is in complete contrast to this, and appears to be definitively amputated from Europe: all that remains of the latter is an impoverished shadow. The antithetical relationship of the two spaces is announced in the first line, which echoes the earlier fictional Europe: 'La Méditerranée a son tragique solaire qui n'est pas celui des brumes' (II, 853). The antithesis is articulated around three idea(l)s, beauty, justice and values, in relation to which Europe and Greece have opposing reactions.

Greece, Camus writes, takes up arms in defence of beauty, and nourishes a sense of despair, in the Camusian sense of the word, in the midst of nature. Europe also nourishes her despair but in ugliness, denying beauty: 'Elle nie la beauté, comme elle nie tout ce qu'elle n'exalte pas. Et, quoique diversement, elle n'exalte qu'une seule chose qui est l'empire future de la raison' (II, 853). Praise in the Lettres à un ami allemand of the delicate beauty of many European cities is now attenuated. Hegel is

condemned for privileging the town over nature: 'Délibérément, le monde a été amputé de ce qui fait sa permanence: la nature, la mer, la colline, la méditation des soirs' (II, 854-5). Camus observes the same phenomenon in European literature from which, he argues, nature has disappeared.<sup>7</sup> In 'Le Témoin de la Liberté' (1948), Camus makes exactly the same point, emphasising the gradual shift in his discourse of Europe from historical Europeanism towards analysis of a European crisis of conscience which expresses his ambivalence (II, 403). The antithesis continues with the idea of justice, which, Camus writes, has spiralled out of control in Europe to become an idol, in contrast to the Greek ideal: 'Les Grecs qui se sont interrogés pendant des siècles sur ce qui est juste ne pourraient rien comprendre à notre idée de la justice. L'équité, pour eux, supposait une limite tandis que tout notre continent se convulse à la recherche d'une justice qu'il veut totale' (II, 853). It is implied that European justice is based on hasty presumption compared to the Greeks' centuries-long self-interrogation. A similar contrast, finally, is laid bare in their respective attitudes towards values:

Tandis que les Grecs donnaient à la volonté les bornes de la raison, nous avons mis pour finir l'élan de la volonté au cœur de la raison, qui en est devenue meurtrière. Les valeurs pour les Grecs étaient préexistantes à toute action dont elles marquaient précisément les limites. La philosophie moderne place ses valeurs à la fin de l'action. Elles ne sont pas, mais elles deviennent, et nous ne les connaissons dans leur entier qu'à l'achèvement de l'histoire. (II, 855)

The announcement of L'Homme révolté is clear in this condemnation of historicism, which is also a résumé of the antithesis between Europe and Greece, echoing strongly the north/south antithesis of Camus's fiction and the antithesis between visions of Europe in Lettres à un ami allemand. Where in the letters the humanist ideal was set up in opposition to Nazi militarism and its rejection of nature and justice, the vision presented in 'L'Exil d'Hélène', as in 'Prométhée aux enfers', is of Europe adopting the barbaric attitudes denounced in the third letter. Europe goes against a southern, Greek

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<sup>7</sup> 'On cherche en vain les paysages dans la grande littérature européenne depuis Dostoïevski' (II, 855). Camus also observed this in his own work (C2, 206, 1947).

ideal which previously was part of its own value system, a more explicit north/south, history/nature antithesis than ‘Prométhée aux enfers’.

‘L’Exil d’Hélène’ also shows similarities with texts such as La Mort heureuse in its description of transgression, a feature of ‘Prométhée aux enfers’ rendered more salient in ‘L’Exil d’Hélène’, and anticipatory of L’Homme révolté. According to Camus, ‘La pensée grecque s’est toujours retranchée sur l’idée de limite. Elle n’a rien poussé à bout, ni le sacré ni la raison, parce qu’elle n’a rien nié, ni le sacré ni la raison. Elle a fait la part de tout, équilibrant l’ombre par la lumière’ (II, 853). Camus insists that limits exist within Europe, despite its excesses: ‘[...] il n’empêche que les bornes existent et que nous le savons. Dans nos plus extrêmes démences, nous rêvons d’un équilibre que nous avons laissé derrière nous et dont nous croyons ingénument que nous allons le retrouver au bout de nos erreurs’ (II, 854). This notion of limits is accompanied by an idea of transgression: ‘Héraclite imaginait déjà que la justice pose des bornes à l’univers physique lui-même. “Le soleil n’outrepassera ses bornes, sinon les Érinyes qui gardent la justice sauront le découvrir”’ (II, 853). As before, transgression invites punishment, and Europe is described as not only deserving of it, but actively courting it through wilful rebellion. While aware of limits Europe continues to transgress, pursuing power rather than grandeur, leading to the situation described in the oft-quoted ‘ce n’est plus à coups de marteau que l’Europe philosophe, mais à coups de canon’ (II, 855).<sup>8</sup> In its transgression, the Europe of ‘L’Exil d’Hélène’ overlaps with the Nazi quest for power and an ‘avenir fabuleux et ensanglanté’ (II, 234).

‘L’Exil d’Hélène’ problematises the Resistance Europe in an additional way, which also separates Europe from Greece. Camus condemns the glorification of leaders such

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<sup>8</sup> Weyembergh sees this logic at work in Les Justes: ‘Le héros tragique est puni pour sa démesure ou il en meurt, parce qu’il ne saisit pas qu’il y a quelque part dans sa révolte contre un ordre donné une limite à ne pas franchir. Kaliayev, au contraire, meurt de ce qu’il découvre une limite qu’il ne peut transgresser qu’en payant la transgression de sa vie’ (1998, 183).

as Alexander the Great and regimes such as the Roman Empire: 'il est indécent de proclamer aujourd'hui que nous sommes les fils de la Grèce. Ou alors nous en sommes les fils renégats. Plaçant l'histoire sur le trône de Dieu, nous marchons vers la théocratie, comme ceux que les Grecs appelaient Barbares' (II, 854). He rhetorically separates Europe from Greek history and civilisation. A wedge is driven through European history, separating not only north and south, but dislocating the continuity, in Lettres à un ami allemand, of 'cette terre de l'esprit où depuis vingt siècles se poursuit la plus étonnante aventure de l'esprit humain' (II, 234).

Writing of Alexander the Great, Camus was heavily influenced by Simone Weil, whose L'Enracinement constitutes a source of his new European discourse. Written while she worked for the Free French in London during World War Two, it was probably inspired by the work of the 'commission dite de Réforme de l'État', which prepared a new 'Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen.'<sup>9</sup> In 'L'Exil d'Hélène' Camus deploras history books, which 'par une incomparable bassesse d'âme' teach admiration for conquerors such as Alexander. This is taken directly from L'Enracinement: 'Qui peut admirer Alexandre de toute son âme, s'il n'a l'âme basse?' (Weil 1990, 292).<sup>10</sup> Weil's analysis of the problem of roots includes her view of the teaching of history, which had for her been subordinated to the idea of progress: 'C'est d'ailleurs seulement parce que l'esprit historique consiste à croire les meurtriers sur parole que ce dogme semble si bien répondre aux faits' (Weil 1990, 290). This is another sentence to which Camus refers on different occasions, for example in the 'Projet de préface' and more importantly in the 1949 Brazilian lecture 'Le Temps des

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<sup>9</sup> The subtitle of L'Enracinement is 'Prélude à une déclaration des devoirs envers l'être humain' (Pétrément 1973, 451-2, 464, 466). After the Liberation, Camus edited most of Weil's works for his collection 'L'Espoir' at Gallimard, including L'Enracinement, for which he wrote the preface (II, 1700) and another unpublished 'Projet de préface' (II, 1700-1702). He greatly admired Weil, and described L'Enracinement as: 'l'un des livres les plus lucides, les plus élevés, les plus beaux qu'on ait écrits depuis fort longtemps sur notre civilisation' (II, 1700).

<sup>10</sup> The sentence obviously struck Camus, as it is quoted in full in the 'Projet de préface'.



meurtriers’, where he misquotes it slightly to match his own argument: “L’histoire officielle consiste à croire les meurtriers sur parole” a dit Simone Weil. Et nous ne pouvons pas douter en vérité que l’Histoire telle que nous la concevons, aurait consacré Hitler et justifié la terreur et le meurtre’ (Bartfeld 1995, 57). Weil rejects the traditional histories viewed by the conquerors to privilege instead the influence of the conquered on French culture, writing, for example, of the Middle Ages, pre-Roman antiquity, the Albigensians and the troubadours (Weil 1949, 139, 158-9). Camus may not follow Weil here, but he does begin to question along with her the validity of the accounts of powerful civilisations of the past, and most of all his previous ideal of historical continuity.

Despite the definitive separation of Europe from Greece in ‘L’Exil d’Hélène’, Camus makes a call for resolution through a return to ‘Greek’ values: ‘L’ignorance reconnue, le refus du fanatisme, les bornes du monde et de l’homme, le visage aimé, la beauté enfin, voici le camp où nous rejoindrons les Grecs’ (II, 857). He issues a plea to artists, who, as he makes clear elsewhere, share politicians’ motivations in their wish to remake the world, but also know limitations, and as such maintain a desire for liberty. As in ‘Prométhée aux enfers’, Camus brings together ideas of liberty and beauty, writing that pursuit of one implies pursuit of both. He believes in the power of individual struggle to create solidarity, provided that it maintains a sense of beauty and art, and ends with a hopeful if rather poetic statement: ‘Malgré le prix que coûteront aux artistes leurs mains vides, on peut espérer leur victoire. Une fois de plus, la philosophie des ténèbres se dissipera au-dessus de la mer éclatante’ (II, 857).

### ‘Pensée nordique’ vs. ‘Pensée de midi’ in *L’Homme révolté*

Although the critique of European ‘démésure’ in *L’Homme révolté* is announced in some texts in *L’Été*, the much longer 1951 essay builds a more sustained vision of European problems, and offers a more developed perspective on potential resolution.

Camus's method in L'Homme révolté is markedly different from 'Prométhée aux enfers' or 'L'Exil d'Hélène', where he observed a problem and gave a brief sketch of a solution. Although the conclusions of L'Homme révolté are almost identical to those of the shorter texts (the final chapter, 'La Pensée de midi', maintains the plea for moderation), its breakdown of the problem is more complex. The problem is not observed primarily in terms of a rejection of Greek values but is seen as residing in Europe's progressive abandonment of a concept of rebellion. The essay therefore charts the history of rebellion in order to determine why and when Europe abandoned its roots. These ideas are just as subjective as those of Greek harmony, but are more nuanced than in L'Été.

As stated earlier, this section aims to analyse the representation of Europe in L'Homme révolté, which, as in L'Été, is in opposition to Camus's construction of Greek thought. The subject matter and different framing of this work compared to L'Été lead to an intriguing formulation of antagonistic spatialities of rebellion. In a range of literary and political discourses, Camus adumbrates what one might term 'closed spaces of rebellion', viewing the history of European revolt as the construction of these oppositional spaces which betray first principles of rebellion. These are in antagonistic relation to an idealised 'open' space exemplified by Greece and signifying reverence for nature. The following section begins by outlining how the opposition between history and nature equates with north (Europe) and south (Greece) respectively, then examines the construction of closed spaces of rebellion, arguing that they coincide with the north/south antagonism of the earlier fiction. In 'La pensée de midi', in which Europe comes to represent a creative tension between history and nature, Greece is almost brought back into Europe. However, as a later section will show, resolution is unsuccessful due to its uncomfortable relationship with the rest of the essay.

L'Homme révolté appears on one level, however, highly gallocentric. To Camus, rebellion springs from the contradiction between what exists and what is said to exist, similar terms to those of the 1944 essay on Parain examined in Chapter Two: 'il y avait du mal dans les âmes parce qu'il y avait contradiction dans le discours' (II, 1673). This leads him to write in L'Homme révolté: 'l'esprit de révolte n'est possible dans les groupes où une égalité théorique recouvre de grandes inégalités de fait. Le problème de la révolte n'a donc de sens qu'à l'intérieur de notre société occidentale' (II, 429). The vocabulary suggests French republican values of 'liberté, égalité, fraternité', and a preoccupation with social inequalities in a supposedly egalitarian society. The French revolutionary interpretation is lent force by a statement that the idea of rebellion only coheres at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, which, it is assumed, signifies 1789. The essay's historical section, in addition, focuses heavily on the Revolution. This gallocentrism is further compounded by the overlooking of the situation of France's colonies, where there was undoubtedly a far more flagrant contradiction between theoretical equality and actual inequalities.<sup>11</sup>

The essay nevertheless presents itself as 'l'histoire de l'orgueil *européen*' (II, 420, my emphasis), and *rapprochement* with Lettres à un ami allemand makes this clear. One of Camus's conditions for collective rebellion is a realisation of solidarity, 'une conscience de plus en plus élargie que l'espèce humaine prend d'elle-même au long de son aventure' (II, 430). In Lettres à un ami allemand, European history is described as 'la plus étonnante *aventure* de l'esprit humain' (II, 234, my emphasis), an obvious crossing point between the two texts establishing the analysis as European. Another *rapprochement* is the contextualisation of rebellion as post-Christian, a *Weltanschauung* the vestiges of which incite rebellion through their very monotheism – the creator God

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<sup>11</sup> A situation Camus should in theory have been more receptive to, having reported on the poverty of Kabylia. See II, 903-38 (Misère de la Kabylie).

is seen as responsible for human suffering and is thus answerable to the rebel's accusations.<sup>12</sup> In Lettres à un ami allemand, Camus had written: 'la tradition chrétienne n'est qu'une de celles qui ont fait cette Europe' (II, 235). L'Homme révolté follows a similar line: 'L'actualité du problème de la révolte tient seulement au fait que des sociétés entières ont voulu prendre leur distance par rapport au sacré' (II, 431). The principal difference, however, with the Resistance writing is the focus of the European aspect: in 1944 Europe was glorified as an ideal, but in 1951 the emphasis is entirely on the problems besetting the continent. This becomes clear in another echo of the letters in the essay. Through their misreading of Nietzsche and adoption of Hegelian historicism, Camus writes, the Nazis represented the extreme consequences of Nietzschean thought:

Quand il [Nietzsche] demandait que l'individu s'inclinât devant l'éternité de l'espèce et s'abimât dans le grand cycle du temps, on a fait de la race un cas particulier de l'espèce et on a plié l'individu devant ce dieu sordide. La vie dont il parlait avec crainte et tremblement a été dégradée en une biologie à l'usage domestique. Une race de seigneurs incultes annonçant la volonté de puissance a pris enfin à son compte la 'différence antisémite' qu'il n'a cessé de mépriser. (II, 484)

This passage dovetails with the Nazi idea of Europe in Lettres à un ami allemand of 'industries domestiquées' ruled by 'une Allemagne de seigneurs' (II, 234 my emphasis). L'Homme révolté thus firmly situates the Nazi vision within the history of European thought, seriously undermining the Resistance-era vision. Despite his appreciation of Nietzsche, Camus came to view him as one of the 'mauvais génies' of Europe – European rebellion had led to consequences which were now part of the European landscape Camus criticised (II, 1341). The 1944 evocation of harmony into which an errant tradition has momentarily intruded appears, to say the least, shaky. His view of how Nietzsche had been misinterpreted illustrates the undermining of Lettres à un ami allemand, in which he had written: '[m]a tradition a deux élites, celle de l'intelligence et

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<sup>12</sup> 'On peut dire [...] que l'histoire de la révolte est, dans le monde occidental, inséparable de celle du christianisme' (II, 440). It is *post-Christian* because Christ's divinity is denied while the general Christian monotheistic world-view remains.

celle du courage' (II, 235). He writes in L'Homme révolté: 'Il [Nietzsche] avait cru au courage uni à l'intelligence, et c'est là ce qu'il appelait la force. On a tourné, en son nom, le courage contre l'intelligence; et cette vertu qui fut véritablement la sienne s'est ainsi transformé en son contraire: la violence aux yeux crevés' (II, 484).

Throughout the essay, this rebellion is contrasted to a Greek idea of divinity in which rebellion is constantly balanced by the nature of the divinities themselves. Camus had long been interested in the relationship between Hellenism and Christianity; in his 1936 Diplôme d'études supérieures dissertation, which charted the influence of the former on Christian thought through Plotinus, he wrote:

Il est bien certain qu'on peut dégager d'une civilisation un certain nombre de thèmes favoris, et, le socratisme aidant, de calquer à l'intérieur de la pensée grecque un certain nombre de dessins privilégiés dont la composition inspire précisément ce que l'on appelle l'hellénisme. (II, 1225)<sup>13</sup>

Archambault has shown the arbitrary nature of Camus's view of Hellenism, and its often shaky reliance on contradictory secondary sources. Whatever the criticisms one can level against the dissertation, it gave him the chance to develop themes which would inform his later work: in L'Homme révolté, Camus's goal is in any case not scholarly analysis of Greek myth and legend, it is to elucidate a view of rebellion against which a European tradition is seen to be at odds. Archambault himself concludes: 'Camus's general conception of the Greek universe was laden with the ambiguities, contradictions, and the confusions that were those of Greek civilisation itself. Any term such as "Hellenism" or "Greek universe", when it is meant to embody nearly ten centuries of civilisation, is exposed to the peril of ambiguity' (1972, 65). L'Homme révolté, then, sets Hellenism and Christianity against each other: the Lettres à un ami allemand are once more undermined through a questioning of their construction of European history.

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<sup>13</sup> There is little literature on this dissertation – Archambault's sustained critique (1972) is the most developed.

To Camus, Attic rebellion demonstrates the principle of moderation and avoidance of the extremes of European post-Christian rebellion: ‘Œdipe sait qu’il n’est pas innocent. Il est coupable malgré lui, il fait aussi partie du destin. Il se plaint, mais ne prononce pas les paroles irréparables’ (II, 439). He then returns to Prometheus, reading into the myth not an unending battle between Good and Evil but ‘[...] un règlement de comptes particulier, [...] une contestation sur le bien, et non [...] une lutte universelle’ (II, 439). This minor conflict between the gods illustrates equilibrium, exemplifying the Greek relationship with the gods in opposition to European rebellion, ‘[qui] suppose une vue simplifiée de la création, que les Grecs ne pouvaient avoir. Il n’y avait pas pour eux les dieux, d’un côté et, de l’autre, les hommes, mais des degrés qui menaient des derniers aux premiers’ (II, 439-40). In Europe, there is perpetual conflict between Man and God; in Greece a continuum between Man and the *gods*, a more complex but harmonious view – Prometheus, after all, was part-god. A vital element in this is the relationship between God, or the gods, and the earth. In Europe, rebellion arises because God is seen as lone Creator, held responsible by the rebel for everything that occurs within it. In the Greek system, the gods were not the earth’s creators, and were themselves subjected to nature’s limitations (Archambault 1972, 78). Camus does not deny the Greeks their rebellion, but demarcates it from European rebellion by underscoring its provisional and limited nature. In so doing, he highlights the way in which Greek rebellion ends by celebrating and affirming its origins, nature and the natural order, in contrast to the European vision which denigrates nature and man’s relationship to it. This is Camus’s history/nature antithesis, so important in L’Été. In L’Homme révolté, it too coincides with a north/south antithesis familiar from the fiction. To simplify, the north (Europe) has adopted historicism leading to the rejection of nature whereas the south (Greece) has remained faithful to nature and the holistic understanding of the universe it represents. As in the texts examined earlier, the south now signifies a much smaller area

consisting of one country (Ancient Greece), whereas north encompasses areas previously considered as south in the fiction.

### Oppositional space vs. contemplative space

For Camus, the historical development of Christianity in Europe engendered a new, linear conceptualisation of the universe, with a point of departure (Creation), an unfolding sequence of events, and an end point (Parousia). When this privileging of history becomes coupled with metaphysical rebellion, it leads to the creation of new realities: 'l'unité du monde qui ne s'est pas faite avec Dieu tentera désormais de se faire contre Dieu' (II, 471). The rejection of nature inherent in European metaphysical rebellion and historicist thought leads to the edification of alternative, oppositional spaces as a challenge to God, an important characteristic of what Camus terms 'la pensée nordique'. They contrast with the open, contemplative spaces of Greek moderation, and echo the sombre closed spaces of Europe in the earlier fiction, even though the focus is now on philosophico-religious world-views. Camus's analysis of revolt thus involves an examination of literary figures whose rebellion leads to the creation of closed spaces and a rejection of nature. From such manifestations as the Dandy's unified individual personage, Camus highlights the building of nations and empires, beginning with the French Revolution, and continuing, through the progressive influence of Hegel and Marx, with the Nazi and Soviet regimes. Running contrary to his notion of the spirit of rebellion these new spaces reject the unity of nature that the Greeks celebrate.

One such literary figure to build such closed spaces is Lautréamont in Les Chants de Maldoror: 'Toutes les créatures des *Chants* sont amphibies, parce que Maldoror refuse la terre et ses limitations' (II, 494). A space is created in which new principles are given free reign in 'un attentat convulsé contre les lois de la nature' (II, 494). 'La révolte des

Dandys' represents a similar construction of oppositional spaces, in the form of the individual personage, cut off from others and seeking coherence in attitude and poise:

Le dandy est par fonction un oppositionnel. Il ne se maintient que dans le défi. La créature, jusque-là, recevait sa cohérence du créateur. À partir du moment où elle consacre sa rupture avec lui, la voilà livrée aux instants, aux jours qui passent, à la sensibilité dispersée. Il faut donc qu'elle se reprenne en main. Le dandy se rassemble, se forge une unité, par la force même du refus. Dissipé en tant que personne privée de règle, il sera cohérent en tant que personnage. (II, 462)

Impatient with the chaos and mystery of the natural order, the Dandy constructs his own order, denying the complexity of nature. This leads, for Camus, to the crime exalted by Lacenaire and Baudelaire, who created another closed space of rebellion, 'le jardin du mal où le crime ne figurera qu'un espèce plus rare que d'autres' (II, 463).

In his section on Dostoevsky, Camus characterises a scene in The Brothers Karamazov and describes the creation of a new Empire ruled by Grand Inquisitors: 'Il faut régner d'abord, et conquérir. Le royaume des cieux viendra, en effet, sur terre, mais les hommes y régneront, quelques-uns d'abord qui seront les Césars, ceux qui ont compris les premiers, et tous les autres ensuite, avec le temps. L'unité de la création se fera par tous les moyens, puisque tout est permis' (II, 470). As rebellion claims more territory, the object is no longer the protection of human nature, but the construction of a new world. Creation is thus rejected and re-fashioned to give space for new principles to operate.

In his depiction of the libertarians' attempt to form an organisation of their desires. Sade too creates oppositional closed spaces of rebellion. Since the rest of the world does not follow their laws of crime and destruction, the libertarians create their own space in which they can rule: 'il faut donc créer de toutes pièces un monde qui soit à la mesure exacte de la nouvelle loi [...] La loi de la puissance n'a jamais la patience d'atteindre l'empire du monde' (II, 452). Those who lead absolute rebellion impose the reign of absolute crime and construct closed spaces, symbolising rejection of God. Camus describes Sade's imaginary castles and dungeons, the spaces of libertarian rule, as 'lieux



clos', a phrase reminiscent of Sartre's imaginary construction of hell as a locked Second Empire *salon* in Huis Clos (Sartre 1978).<sup>14</sup> A corollary of Sade's creation of closed spaces is his rejection of nature. In rebellious imperialism, he declares 'J'abhorre la nature' (II, 455), wishing to overturn the natural order which disturbs him. According to Camus, this is Sade's undoing: in his inability to destroy the natural order, he realises that the only order that applies to him and his group of followers is power, resulting in internecine destruction and mass suicide.

These literary instances of construction of closed spaces of rebellion are paralleled in L'Homme révolté with elements of European political history. Just as literary figures sought unity and coherence as a challenge to God, so have states and regimes. 'La pensée nordique' is thus represented in political as well as literary terms. At each juncture in Camus's critique of historicism, he foregrounds initial rebellion's institution of states, boundaries and even concentration camps in the denial of nature implicit or explicit in thinkers he sees at the root of modern European rebellion.

Before dealing with historicism, Camus focuses on the consequences of the French Revolution, foregrounding the debates on the establishment of the Republic. Quoting Saint-Just's remark 'Ou les vertus ou la Terreur' (II, 533), Camus argues that the Conventionnel's desire for a republic based on virtue, in which moral corruption was coterminous with political corruption, prepared the ground for repression. He compares him with Sade, showing how both justify crime: 'Tous deux [...] légitiment un terrorisme, individuel chez le libertin, étatique chez le prêtre de la vertu' (II, 533). To Camus, 1789 'exige l'unité de la patrie' (II, 534), and factions within that space had to be punished: 'Qui critique est un traître, qui ne soutient pas ostensiblement la république est un suspect' (II, 534). This constitutes a further *rapprochement* with Sade.

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<sup>14</sup> A similarity doubly interesting in the light of the infamous break with Sartre in the early 1950s as a result of L'Homme révolté.

Saint-Just desired a State instituting the reign of virtue, from which renegades would be banished. Both elaborated closed spaces, one imaginary, the other the historical reality of the nation-state.

Camus goes on to argue that the growth of the nation-state constitutes just as powerful a historical motor as Marxist class struggle:

L'histoire du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle jusqu'à 1914 est celle de la restauration des souverainetés populaires contre les monarchies d'ancien régime, l'histoire de la principe des nationalités. Ce principe triomphe en 1919 qui voit la disparition de tous les absolutismes d'ancien régime en Europe. Partout, la souveraineté de la nation se substitue, en droit et en raison, au souverain roi. (II, 539)

In this, he must surely have had in mind Sade's rebellion. The Romantic rebel's attitude and acceptance of crime in a sense prefigures the nation-state, which incarnates principles of right and wrong. In Sade's castle, the libertarians turn upon each other, like, historically, European nations. The Dandy obsession with unity is mirrored in nation-states each establishing its unity, and working against others when necessary. The individual space and the state space both illustrate the maxim Camus applies to rebellion's bifurcations: 'Tuer dieu et bâtir une église' (II, 510).

A similar critique of the closed spaces of 'la pensée nordique' underpins Camus's critique of historicism. Hegel, positing the dialectical progress of history towards an end point at which virtue will return, did away with transcendent concepts, arguing that until the end of history, values do not govern human conduct. Whatever the accuracies or lacunae of Camus's reading of Hegel, the essential point is that he believes Hegel to legitimate the privilege of the most powerful to wield power, which Camus interprets as an argument which could be used to support the collapse of the Spanish Republic in 1936 and the Weimar Republic in 1933 (II, 551). Hegelian thought, then, represents an apology of raw power through the creation of states.

Another aspect of Hegel's thought that Camus foregrounds is his rejection of nature in favour of the town as the privileged space of human interaction. already present in

‘L’Exil d’Hélène’. This prefigures the subsequent rejection of nature by the young Hegelians, as exemplified in L’Homme révolté by Marx. Characterised as adopting ‘la méthode critique la plus valable et le messianisme utopique le plus contestable’ (II, 593), Marx’s system resembles to Camus the Christian world-view, its emphasis on progress, history and rebellion once more announcing the creation of new spaces in opposition to nature: ‘*l’unité* du monde chrétien et du monde marxiste est frappante’ (II, 594, my emphasis). Marxism was, however, a ‘religion horizontale’, a non-transcendent religion based on Man and production. Marx’s prediction of a change in ownership of the means of production and the dialectic terminating in the workers’ revolution establishing Communism views nature as a harmful distraction that must be subjugated. Camus notes ‘l’hostilité des pensées historiques à l’égard de la nature, considérée par elles comme un objet, non de contemplation, mais de transformation. Pour les chrétiens comme pour les marxistes, il faut maîtriser la nature’ (II, 595). Environmentalism has emphasised the saliency of such an argument in more recent times with its critique of Marx’s presumption of the availability of unlimited natural resources. Camus’s point, however, is more philosophical: Marxism, and indeed historicism, is guilty of denying possible equilibrium between man and nature; the latter is seen as a resource to be exploited, not contemplated. There are echoes here, once again, of the Lettres à un ami allemand nazi view of Europe as the supply dump for Nazi conquest.

Camus aims to demonstrate how Hegelian and Marxist historicism forms the basis for the construction of yet more closed oppositional spaces. In its Nazi and Communist incarnations, he argues that absolute (historicist) rebellion terminates in oppression and murder through the edification of ever more powerful states. He builds on the comparison between Sade and Saint-Just to show the claim of perfection in each manifestation of historicist thought. When each state claims it has reached the end of

history, it must logically go to war to defend its own interpretation and claim to legitimacy:

Les gouvernements révolutionnaires s'obligent la plupart du temps à être des gouvernements de guerre. Plus la révolution est étendue et plus l'enjeu de la guerre qu'elle suppose est considérable. La société issue de 1789 veut se battre pour l'Europe. Celle qui est née de 1917 se bat pour la domination universelle. La révolution totale finit ainsi par revendiquer [...] l'empire du monde. (II, 516)<sup>15</sup>

Camus underscores another consequence of the historicist State: leaders will be the only ones uniquely qualified to judge when history ends. All others will therefore be expected to believe or be punished in the concentration camp, the final closed space constructed by absolute rebellion. Camus therefore establishes a direct link between historicist thought and the concentration camp, as he does in less detail in 'Ni victimes ni bourreaux': 'Si Nietzsche et Hegel servent d'alibis aux maîtres de Dachau et de Karaganda, cela ne condamne pas toute leur philosophie. Mais cela laisse soupçonner qu'un aspect de leurs pensées, ou de leur logique, pouvait mener à ces *terribles confins*' (II, 544-5, my emphasis). Absolute rebellion inspires defiant construction of oppositional spaces, the Dandy's personage, Sade's castle, and the warmongering nation state. With historicism, political rebellion terminates in obedience, conformity, and the 'terribles confins' of the ultimate closed space of the concentration camp.

Europe is synonymous with the abuses of rebellion, and is, moreover, apprehended as north through the characterisation of its philosophers as exemplifying 'la pensée nordique'.<sup>16</sup> The way in which Camus includes Soviet Russia within this 'pensée nordique' is simplistic but ingenious. It springs from the 19<sup>th</sup> century German influence on Europe, which sidetracks the French influence.<sup>17</sup> The voracious appetite for German philosophy in Russia, which Camus describes as a 'jeune nation' without an established

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<sup>15</sup> Hegel, writes Camus, believed that history had ended in 1807 when he was writing about Prussia; since then, many have declared the end of history – he would not have been surprised by Francis Fukayama.

<sup>16</sup> A notion not dissimilar to Erich Heller's argument in Encounter in 1964 that 'the modern mind speaks German' (cited in Furness 1992, 5).

history of socialist philosophy as in France, and eager to adopt new norms, explains the extremism of the Russian revolution and of Stalinism.<sup>18</sup>

Camus thus drives a wedge between the two traditions brought together in the Lettres à un ami allemand. The Christian conception of history, he claims, broke the link with Greece, the south, added to which

l'entrée, dans cette histoire, des peuples nordiques qui n'ont pas une tradition d'amitié avec le monde, a précipité ce mouvement. À partir du moment où la divinité du Christ a été niée, où, par les soins de l'idéologie allemande, il ne symbolise plus que l'homme-dieu, la notion de médiation disparaît, un monde judaïque ressuscite. Le dieu implacable des armées règne à nouveau, toute beauté est insultée comme source de jouissances oisives, la nature elle-même est asservie. (II, 595)

The continent is united but in a negative unity which turns away from the Greek south: European history, as in L'Été, is no longer seen as a harmonious development à la Valéry beginning with the Greeks and flowing naturally into the twentieth century. Europe has instead abandoned the lessons Camus perceives as essential in the Greek heritage. The Europe of L'Homme révolté is instead a space within which other closed and hostile spaces have been constructed, viewing nature as an exploitable resource.

An illustration of a consequence of this comes in Camus's critique of André Breton's efforts to deal with the fallout of Surrealism's involvement with Marxism: 'Breton, selon ses propres paroles, a compris que, malgré tout, la vie était donnée. Mais son adhésion ne pouvait être celle de la pleine lumière, dont nous avons besoin. "*Trop de nord en moi*, a-t-il dit, pour que je sois l'homme de la pleine adhésion"' (II, 506 my emphasis). Too much north makes a return to the south impossible.

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<sup>17</sup> 'La germanisation de la Russie au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle n'est pas un phénomène isolé. L'influence de l'idéologie allemande à ce moment était prépondérante et l'on sait assez, par exemple, que le XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle en France, avec Michelet, Quinet, est celui des études germaniques' (II, 557).

<sup>18</sup> 'Cette idéologie [German philosophy] n'a pas rencontré en Russie une pensée déjà constituée, alors qu'en France elle a dû lutter et s'équilibrer avec le socialisme libertaire' (II, 557).

In the light of this analysis of 'la pensée nordique', it is important to examine the signification of the south in the context of 'la pensée révoltée'. To Camus, the Greek heritage represents a diametrically opposed attitude towards nature to that of 'northern' thinkers; instead of subjugating nature, the Greeks sought to uphold and obey it. This understanding springs from Camus's reading of Greek aesthetics. Since the Greeks justified the world in aesthetic terms, the search for beauty was coterminous with the search for truth; everything beautiful was good, everything ugly evil, a contemplative attitude which holds that salvation comes from appreciation of nature. Christianity, argues Camus, creates a breach between aesthetics and morals through its view of history: if all that is important is individual salvation on a personal spiritual odyssey, it matters little how much one appreciates nature, which becomes a tool in the service of individual salvation and not an object of contemplation. This rather caricatural view is attenuated only by reference to Saint Francis of Assisi and the Albigensians, who, Camus underlines, were repressed by the established Church, thus maintaining the break with nature. A rather narrow view of the church, it is subordinated to the Manichean north/south antithesis of L'Homme révolté – Christianity represents to Camus dominance over nature, 'une vue simplifiée de la création, que les Grecs ne pouvaient avoir' (II, 439).

The Greek contemplative response to nature, writes Camus, differed from Christianity in its temporal expression: 'La notion grecque du devenir n'a rien de commun avec notre idée de l'évolution historique. La différence entre les deux est celle qui sépare un cercle d'une ligne droite. Les grecs se représentaient le monde comme cyclique' (II, 594). As a result, instead of subjugating nature, the Greeks sought to obey it, maintaining an equilibrium between man and nature represented, as seen earlier, by the degrees between men and the gods, who are as subject to nature as mortals (II, 595).

Since nature is a cyclical given, uncreated and omnipresent, both mortals and gods aim to accord themselves to its rhythms.

Compared to the long and detailed analysis Camus devotes to European rebellion, he has very little to say about Greek ideas of rebellion, other than to make the point that rebellion was temporary and limited; there always remaining higher principles to respect and maintain in the Greek world. Camus seems implicitly to recognise that there was little rebellion in Greece, or that if there was it did not lead to the same consequences as its development in Europe. In the end, therefore, the north (Europe) is a space of betrayal of rebellion and the south a space of delicate equilibrium, respecting first principles of rebellion. Rebellion in the north terminates in the construction of closed, oppositional spaces, from creation of a personage, to small communities, then through political struggle to the creation of states, war and conquest leading to the legitimisation of murder. Its desire for global domination and punishment of dissent leads to the closed space Camus most abhorred: the concentration camp.<sup>19</sup>

The epithet ‘peuples nordiques’ to describe the north is, in comparison with the reasoning of the rest of the essay, a hasty summation of what seems like a typically Camusian prejudice. Indeed, through its depiction of closed spaces of rebellion, L’Homme révolté echoes the fictional northern Europe seen through the optic of closed spaces of oppressive towns, walled cemeteries, castles, and cloisters. The history/nature antithesis is coterminous with the north/south antithesis of Europe familiar from, *inter alia*, La Mort heureuse – the north denies nature, and the south praises it. The difference consists of L’Homme révolté’s uncovering of the philosophical roots of closed space. The north, attenuated in the fiction by a luminous south, now comprises all of Europe, a sombre, overbearing Prague from which Mersault can only flee. Thus, Camus’s

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<sup>19</sup> See Weyembergh 1998, 187-95 for an analysis of the themes of enclosure and the concentration camp in Camus.

ambivalence towards Europe is clear from this history/nature antithesis which incorporates and inter-relates with elements of the political and fictional voices of Europe previously examined. The presentation of European history offered by the Lettres à un ami allemand is therefore torn asunder. The Greek heritage is no longer part of Europe, because Europe has rejected it. The only space which represents the attitude Camus would like to affirm has been cast out from Europe. Or so it seems in the main body of the essay, for the history of rebellion is coterminous with the history of Europe, within which Greece has no part to play due to the supposed Christian historicist world-view. But in the final section of the essay, Camus aims to rehabilitate the European tradition through a reconciliation of the two terms of the history/nature, north/south antithesis.

### Resolution? 'La Pensée de midi'

Camus arrives at the final chapter of L'Homme révolté via a discussion of the aesthetics of the novel, analogous to some of his speeches and articles in the 1940s. The process of re-fashioning creation and rehabilitating beauty which the novel represents to Camus, constitute a tradition that rebellion must incorporate if it is to be a valid response to the world's problems. As seen above, Europe is guilty of rejecting nature: 'Loin de cette source de vie, [...] l'Europe et la révolution se consomment dans une convulsion spectaculaire'. In an interesting use of the phrase 'l'esprit européen' so common in Resistance writings on Europe, he continues: 'Après avoir longtemps cru qu'il pourrait lutter contre Dieu avec l'humanité entière, l'esprit européen s'aperçoit donc qu'il lui faut aussi, s'il ne veut pas mourir, lutter contre les hommes' (II, 683). Europe is thus united in its misplaced rebellion.

Camus's proposed solution to these problems in 'La Pensée de midi' lies in a resolution of the history/nature (and by extension north/south) antithesis through a 'return' to the original ideas of rebellion. Indeed, 'La Pensée de midi', is an intense



*rassemblement* of the many antitheses of the Camusian *œuvre*, offering a way forward through the ideal of moderation which Camus discerns in his own vision of rebellion. 'La Pensée de midi' thus resolves the oui/non antithesis of initial rebellion. To Camus's mind, 'la pensée nordique' is guilty of affirming the 'non' over the 'oui': rebellion becomes a murderous challenge. Against this, Greek moderation represents for Camus a 'oui' of acceptance and contemplation. Neither is fully adopted in the final analysis, as both lead to consequences inconsistent with the idea of rebellion:

Réclamant l'unité de la condition humaine, elle [la révolte] est force de vie, non de mort. Sa logique profonde n'est pas celle de la destruction; elle est celle de la création. Son mouvement, pour rester authentique, ne doit abandonner derrière lui aucun des termes de la contradiction qui le soutient. Il doit être fidèle au *oui* qu'il contient en même temps qu'à ce *non* que les interprétations nihilistes isolent dans la révolte. (II, 688)

Camus also calls for resolution of being and becoming, the ontological foundation of the other antitheses. Once more, his analysis of rebellion isolates a European tradition of favouring historicist becoming over a Greek notion of being. This debate, of course, comes from a tradition first posited by Heraclitus, who recognised the existence of limits to his vision of constant movement through evocation of Nemesis, 'déesse de la mesure, fatale aux démesurés' (II, 699). Camus's solution of moderation embodies for him the creative tension between the two that he saw at the heart of Greek thought: 'L'être ne peut s'éprouver que dans le devenir, le devenir n'est rien sans l'être. Le monde n'est pas dans une pure fixité; mais il n'est pas seulement mouvement. Il est mouvement et fixité' (II, 699). This abstract statement contains the resolution of the antitheses this chapter has focused on: nature can be reconciled to history and being with becoming.

Rebellion, then, in its pure Camusian form constitutes a mediating value, negotiating between terms of antitheses in a Manichean world. Regulated by virtues of intelligence and courage, it is a romantic ideal of the human struggle to make sense of the universe. But the poetic vocabulary of 'La Pensée de midi' renders critics such as Cruickshank

suspicious: ‘phrases such as these [the impassioned pronouncements of ‘La Pensée de midi’] incline one to think that the moderate revolt finally commended is a highly private vision on Camus’s part and not a practical policy of general application’ (Cruikshank 1970, 117). Indeed, Camus’s thorough examination of many thinkers is offset by the introduction of extremely hasty and subjective *idées reçues* on, for example, north and south and the history of Europe. As Barilier writes, ‘Camus crée [...] un étrange dualisme où les mots nature et histoire n’ont plus leur sens philosophique ni même “historique”, mais se transforment en plexus verbaux, en centres de gravité sensibles, autour desquels s’agglomèrent toutes les valeurs positives et négatives d’un cosmos intérieur’ (1977, 72). This leads Cruickshank to suggest that the final sections of L’Homme révolté are not solutions at all to the problems Camus raises, but rather an attempt to cover up the fact that his points of view in the body of the essay and in its conclusion do not match up (1970, 117).<sup>20</sup> Cruickshank is right to point out, in addition, that the rebellion Camus describes at the beginning and end of the essay is not the same. In the final chapters, rebellion is in fact a method of escape from European revolution, not an affirmation of principles: ‘the book begins by emphasising the virtues of revolt and ends with what is really a plea for moderation and gradual political reform’ (1970, 118).<sup>21</sup>

It is precisely the problems raised by Camus’s subjective portrayal of European revolt and rebellion that link L’Homme révolté with the European problematic of the rest of the *œuvre*. Earlier, it was seen that revolution in its absolutist forms was equated with the north, and especially to Germany. Equally, the antithetical notion of equilibrium was found in the south, specifically in Greece. Camus reiterates this in ‘La Pensée de midi’:

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<sup>20</sup> ‘Lacking a close logical argument and convincing practical examples he tries, probably quite unconsciously, to conceal these flaws behind an increasingly poetic vocabulary’ (Cruikshank 1970, 117).

Que Dieu en effet soit expulsé de cet univers historique et l'idéologie allemande naît où l'action n'est plus perfectionnement mais pure conquête, c'est-à-dire tyrannie. Mais l'absolutisme historique, malgré ses triomphes, n'a jamais cessé de se heurter à une exigence invincible de la nature humaine dont la Méditerranée, où l'intelligence est sœur de la dure lumière, garde le secret. (II, 702-3)

Cruickshank's point about the argument's inconsistency seems to apply to this passage, which exalts the *Mediterranean*, in contrast to the previous analysis which only highlighted *Greek* tradition. The idea of Europe of the 1930s fiction, split between north and south, with south as Mediterranean, is re-introduced almost by the back door. The idea of Greece and the Mediterranean are not by any means incompatible, but the rehabilitation of the south here seems surprising. Where before it was part of the same Europe as the 'pensée nordique', largely through the retracing of the French Revolution and the Terror, and through the total absence of any other southern country, in 'La Pensée de midi' the south encompasses far more than just Greece. Indeed, Greece is never explicitly mentioned in the same way in this final section, which instead foregrounds a 'pensée solaire': 'cet esprit qui mesure la vie, est celui-là même qui anime la longue tradition de ce qu'on peut appeler la pensée solaire et où, depuis les Grecs, la nature a toujours été équilibrée au devenir' (II, 701). The idea of Greece is now seen as the origin, to be sure, but of a mode of thought which has never disappeared in Europe, unlike the claims of the rest of *L'Homme révolté*. Camus now claims that the tension between Mediterranean thought and German philosophy has always been present: 'L'histoire de la I<sup>re</sup> Internationale où le socialisme allemand lutte sans arrêt contre la pensée libertaire des Français, des Espagnols et des Italiens, est l'histoire des luttes entre l'idéologie allemande et l'esprit méditerranéen' (II, 701-2). He is surely drawing a contradictory conclusion by claiming that this north/south tension is omnipresent in Europe when the history/nature antithesis has dominated the previous analysis, but it is reintroduced nonetheless. Europe is once more divided into an

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<sup>21</sup> Or, as Bronner writes. 'Rebellion is simply identified with those actions of which Camus approves' (1999, 159).

antithesis more recognisable than the previous opposition between Europe and Greece, but this is at the expense of logical consistency in the essay as a whole.

## Conclusion

Camus's concluding observation of European history is at odds with the rest of L'Homme révolté: 'l'Europe n'a jamais été que dans cette lutte entre midi et minuit. Elle ne s'est dégradée qu'en désertant cette lutte, en éclipsant le jour par la nuit' (II, 703). The Resistance vision of history appears to be rehabilitated – Greece is no longer exiled and the south returns. It is a similar resolution to that of the third letter, which places north and south side by side in the same struggle. But a difference lies in the reinterpretation of the 'vingt siècles' of the third letter, which are viewed in 'La Pensée de midi' as the history of man's rebellion: 'En elle [l'idéologie allemande] s'achève *vingt siècles* de vaine lutte contre la nature au nom d'un dieu historique d'abord et de l'histoire divinisée ensuite' (II, 702, my emphasis). Despite an appearance of resolution, then, the harmony of Lettres à un ami allemand is not regained, and their vision of European history is undermined. Suggestive of north/south resolution, L'Homme révolté nevertheless constructs a history/nature voice of another divided Europe, which incorporates elements of the previous fictional north/south antithesis. The inconsistency of L'Homme révolté itself betrays this unsuccessful resolution – as seen above, 'La Pensée de midi' contradicts the body of the essay. The antithetical voice of Europe is pervasive and signals Camus's ambivalence. Resolution seems unattainable, beyond Europe's horizon like Java in La Chute, part of yet another portrayal of north and south. The failed resolution of L'Été and L'Homme révolté thus prepares the ground for the definitive expression of an irreconcilable north/south split, examined in the next chapter, devoted to La Chute.

## VII. Guilt and innocence as north and south

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### La Chute (1956)

The previous chapter charted the development of an idea of Europe predicated on a drift away from nature towards legitimised murder and the betrayal of first principles of rebellion. Europe was coterminous with the north, apprehended as a unity in its betrayal of values incarnated by the South. Camus's attempt to reinstate Greece as part of Europe and as the necessary southern corrective to its 'northern' excess was largely unsuccessful because of the inconsistencies such a position raised in relation to the rest of L'Homme révolté. In many ways La Chute, published in 1956, is an amalgam of elements of the earlier fictional works, as well as of Lettres à un ami allemand, L'Homme révolté and La Peste. The idea of Europe it develops bears important similarities with its previous fictional manifestations in the Camusian *œuvre*, and contains an intriguing fictional encoding of certain elements of other texts. North and south form the now-familiar backdrop to the tale, but are articulated in a different way, despite their surface similarities to the 1930s and 1940s fiction. La Chute can therefore be considered the definitive expression of Europe in Camus's works, containing many of the themes associated with its previous incarnations, pointing at its own resolutions, posing many further problems, and signalling Camus's ambivalence in powerful terms.

Written originally as one of the short stories destined for L'Exil et le royaume, La Chute took on a life of its own during its genesis, leading Camus to publish it separately a year before the other short stories. It was seen as Camus's best prose writing in his career to date, a 'règlement des comptes' with Parisian intellectual life after the difficulties following the publication of L'Homme révolté, and an encoded allusion to

the Camus/Sartre quarrel.<sup>1</sup> Closest to the focus of the present chapter is Wixon's work (1981) on the narration of space in La Chute, which reads the text as a construction of intersecting spaces: Amsterdam and Paris are seen as the space of the 'discours' and the space of the 'récit' respectively, overlapping while other spaces, dreamlike and biblical, are constructed in Clamence's imagination.

This chapter aims to relate these spaces to Camus's voices of Europe. In many ways, the text is obviously European: Clamence passes judgement on Europe by judging his own actions and thoughts as representative of those of other Europeans. Reminding the reader of Baudelaire's sinister 'hypocrite lecteur, – mon semblable, – mon frère' (1972, 7), he invites his interlocutor to be party to his fevered evocation of past failings and moral decay, a reflection of European society not unlike that developed in L'Homme révolté, though presented on a more quotidian level of human relations. Decaying and torn apart by its own abuses, Europe becomes the privileged object of Clamence's judgement, constituting a fictional encoding of the consequences of some of the problems raised in L'Homme révolté. At the same time Europe is presented as a unity with a similar attenuated solidarity brought about through catastrophe to that of Oran in La Peste. Like La Mort heureuse and 'La Mort dans l'âme', the text relies on a background of north/south opposition. The fictional representation of both closely resembles the earlier texts, but the relationship of the narrator to those spaces is very different, as is their relative position. As will be seen, the north, much as in L'Homme révolté, becomes almost coterminous with Europe, and the south increasingly dislocated.

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<sup>1</sup> See I, 1999-2006; Grenier 1987, 295-309; Guérin 1993b, 125-36; Lottman 1981, 561-6; Todd 1996, 636-49. For the reception of La Chute, see Abbou and Fitch 1970. See also Gay-Croiser, R. (ed.) 'Albert Camus 15: Textes, intertextes, contextes' in Revue des Lettres Modernes 1123-1132. 1994.

The chapter begins with a detailed analysis of the geophysical and intrapsychic features of north and south, before examining the nature of the solidarity Clamence describes in La Chute through comparison with L'Homme révolté, La Peste and Lettres à un ami allemand. The question is raised whether Clamence recognises a pre-existing sense of solidarity or whether he himself creates it for his own purposes.

## A Northern space of guilt

A preliminary observation: the north in La Chute is described in far more detail than the south, which, as shown later, becomes dislocated and vague in contrast. In the following section, as in earlier chapters, the geophysical features of the north will be described before turning to an examination of its intrapsychic effects.

### Geophysical features

As in the fictional texts examined earlier, the north of La Chute is largely based on the signifier of water in various incarnations, ranging from rain through canals and fog to the sea itself, each time connoting enclosure and decay.

The rain is a constant feature of Clamence's monologue, forming its background and the excuse for its continuation. Like Prague, in Amsterdam 'la pluie [...] n'a pas cessé depuis des jours' (I, 1479), which does not prevent the people from coming out into the streets, the 'pavé gras' (I, 1480), another feature of Mersault's *récit*. After briefly evoking the effects of gin (of which more later), Clamence confesses how he enjoys walking the streets by night, talking incessantly, inspired by Holland and its people, in descriptions echoing La Mort heureuse and L'Homme révolté. In a small 'closed space' of cold mist, the people are like ants going about their business in a way suggestive of the Prague citizens in 'La Mort dans l'âme': 'J'aime ce peuple, grouillant sur les trottoirs, coincé dans un petit espace de maisons et d'eaux, cerné par des brumes, des terres froides, et la mer fumante comme une lessive' (I, 1480). In this 'closed space' of

Amsterdam, water connotes oppression and enclosure. Preponderant in many forms, it becomes part of a system of walls hemming in a population too large for its geophysical habitus. Normally a feature of Camus's portrayal of south, the sea is even part of this system, the very source of the omnipresent fog. It offers no escape as it does in Cadiz in L'État de siège.

Further to its malevolent, obfuscating and oppressive presence, the water of Amsterdam is lifeless. Clamence describes 'le souffle des eaux moisies, l'odeur des feuilles mortes qui macèrent dans le canal et celle, funèbre, qui monte des péniches pleines de fleurs' (I, 1495-6). Under the water there is death and decay; behind the pretty exterior of the Dutch tulips there is crime and mystery. Rain, it seems, also conspires with Clamence to deepen and prolong his monologue: 'Puisque la pluie redouble et que nous avons le temps, oserais-je vous confier une nouvelle découverte que je fis, peu après, dans ma mémoire?' (I, 1502). The spell continues until a 'Tiens, la pluie a cessé' (I, 1509) which signals the end of this section of Clamence's *entretien*, but not before it prompts Clamence to speak of the central point in his memory: the young woman's suicide in the Seine.

Water in all its forms, then, underpins Clamence's inquisition. Crossing the Zuyderzee offers a further illustration of this: appearances are manipulated and an alternative view of the north constructed, around the shifting waters:

Vous vous trompez, cher, le bateau file à bonne allure. Mais le Zuyderzee est une mer morte, ou presque. Avec ses bords plats, perdus dans la brume, on ne sait où elle commence, où elle finit. Alors, nous marchons sans aucun repère, nous ne pouvons évaluer notre vitesse. Nous avançons, et rien ne change. Ce n'est pas de la navigation, mais du rêve. (I, 1523)

Lack of meaning has come to be a defining feature of Clamence's north – there are no signs, no reference points, only endless sea, which, as noted above, does not offer escape. In Holland, there are only dreams and an endless state of unease and uncertainty, with fixed points confused and blurred by the fog. And yet, the ship speeds



on, as if on a fatal trajectory through the uncertainty. It is an oblique reference to L'Homme révolté, and Europe's 'course folle' towards its mythical historicist endpoint.

Clarence's Holland is strangely hypnotic, made up of the sombre décor of fog, the dark waters and the dream-space of the Dutch wandering trance-like as if seeking escape, or at least a way of attaining their dream worlds. They are described as swans gliding around these still and stagnant waters in a Baudelairean image of malevolent peace also encompassing the myth, reworked by Wagner, of Lohengrin forever led by a swan in his small vessel away from his wife who mistakenly asked him whence he came. They have the appearance of typical bourgeois shopkeepers but Clarence offers a view beyond appearances which invokes a mysterious other-worldliness, as the following passage shows:

Ils marchent près de nous, il est vrai, et pourtant, voyez où se trouvent leurs têtes: dans cette brume de néon, de genièvre et de menthe qui descend des enseignes rouges et vertes. La Hollande est un songe, monsieur, un songe d'or et de fumée, plus fumeux le jour, plus dorée la nuit, et nuit et jour ce songe est peuplé de Lohengrin comme ceux-ci, filant rêveusement sur leurs noires bicyclettes à hautes guidons, cygnes funèbres qui tournent sans trêve, dans tout le pays, autour des mers, le long des canaux. Ils rêvent, la tête dans leurs nuées cuivrées, ils roulent en rond, ils prient, somnambules, dans l'encens doré de la brume, ils ne sont plus là. (II, 1480)

Reality seems to disperse and fragment as Clarence evokes the mystery he sees in the Dutch people who appear ghostlike, there and elsewhere at the same time. As they sleepwalk they follow a different logic, far removed from reality, mysteriously threatening in their funereal peregrinations, mirroring the decay and death of the waters around them. In fact, they embody the myths and contours of Clarence's discourse, constantly shifting, anticipating and quashing arguments, leading the interlocutor deeper into Clarence's confession/accusation like Coleridge's wedding-guest. The image of the eternally returning cyclists forms a hypnotic background, accentuating the already oppressive mist. With its peaceful yet confusing blend of colours from the neon lights, the mist softens the edges but thickens the plot, much as Clarence's 'beau langage'. It

also recalls Mersault's desperate search for meaning and rest in the incense-filled cathedrals of Prague. The swirling mists of Czechoslovakia and Amsterdam meet in a feverish evocation of north, bearing continuities with the earlier fiction but evolving towards the mystery and danger of Clamence's invitation, shot through with subterfuge and spells. For him, Amsterdam is at the heart of Europe, even though geophysically it is peripheral. Holland becomes exemplary of Europe in a description which, as in the previous passage, evokes some of the imagery of *La Mort heureuse* and other texts while deepening the mystery and rendering more oppressive the northern geophysical space:

Mais vous comprenez alors pourquoi je puis dire que le centre des choses est ici, bien que nous nous trouvions à l'extrémité du continent. Un homme sensible comprend ces bizarreries. En tout cas, les lecteurs de journaux et les fornicateurs ne peuvent aller plus loin. Ils viennent de tous les coins de l'Europe et s'arrêtent autour de la mer intérieure, sur la grève décolorée. Ils écoutent les sirènes, cherchent en vain la silhouette des bateaux dans la brume, puis repassent les canaux et s'en retournent à travers la pluie. Transis, ils viennent demander, en toutes langues, du genièvre à *Mexico-City*. Là, je les attends. (II, 1481)

Clamence views himself as a spider, waiting as his prey is drawn to him. He sees Amsterdam as the moral and spiritual centre of Europe in a notion of typicality, offering an alternative vision of Europe, which, flattering his interlocutor, he claims only a sensitive man can understand. Every signifier of water comes together in this passage; the sea, canals and rain conspire to connote malevolence and human evil while blurring the meaning Clamence's guests have come in search of. The passage allows a glimpse at a typically Camusian preoccupation with the meaning of life and the vanity of the quest for it. The fog hides even the silhouettes of ships which can nevertheless be heard, and coats the surroundings with its mystery – the beach is 'décolorée', its life and essence siphoned away. Thus, water in its various guises undermines signification, reinforcing a feeling of uncertainty, rendering Clamence's discourse all the more trustworthy despite its obvious dangers. Like the gin, it becomes 'la seule lueur dans ces

ténèbres' (I, 1479). Shortly before the previous passage, Clamence offers an even more disturbing depiction of Amsterdam:

Car nous sommes au cœur des choses. Avez-vous remarqué que les canaux concentriques d'Amsterdam ressemblent aux cercles de l'enfer? L'enfer bourgeois, naturellement peuplé de mauvais rêves. Quand on arrive de l'extérieur, à mesure qu'on passe ces cercles, la vie, et donc ses crimes, devient plus épaisse, plus obscure. Ici, nous sommes dans le dernier cercle. (II, 1480-1)

Europe is hell itself, Amsterdam's canals compared to the circles of hell in Dante's Inferno. The dreams of passers-by develop sinister undertones as they descend towards 'mauvais rêves' as the circles are crossed. He adds another layer to his tableau of Amsterdam life by describing the already sinister entrapment of sea and canals as circles of ever decreasing diameter, pulling in and choking the traveller who has met Clamence over a gin in *Mexico-City*. Amsterdam thus becomes the terrifying centre of a web of crime and deceit. The malevolence of Prague shifts to a new plane of human agency; the curious feelings of wizardry experienced by Mersault in Czechoslovakia pale in comparison to the crimes alluded to in the passage above, which, as will be seen, consist of the atrocities of World War Two.

This inscription of an idea of hell leads to an apotheosis in the sombre darkness which underpins the description of the island of Marken near Amsterdam. The north begins to embody, like the Dutch on their bicycles, the uncertainty of Clamence's words as he turns expectations inside out. Like Mersault in Prague, Clamence undermines conventional touristic notions as he strips Marken of all interest, reducing it to the elemental mystery of the enigmatic waters, shifting and uncertain like his words:

Voilà, n'est-ce pas, le plus beau des paysages négatifs! Voyez, à notre gauche, ce tas de cendres qu'on appelle ici une dune, la digue grise à notre droite, la grève livide à nos pieds et, devant nous, la mer couleur de lessive faible, le vaste ciel où se reflètent les eaux blêmes. Un enfer mou, vraiment! Rien que des horizontales, aucun éclat, l'espace est incolore, la vie morte. N'est-ce pas l'effacement universel, le néant sensible aux yeux? Pas d'hommes, surtout, pas d'hommes! Vous et moi, seulement, devant la planète enfin déserte! (I, 1510)

The idea of a photographic negative captures well Clamence's overturning logic, which sees beyond superficialities towards the sinister undergrowth. His vision strips the landscape of defining features and fuses beach, sky and sea in a grey uniformity.<sup>2</sup> Beauty (despite Clamence's superlative) takes flight, leaving behind a flattened, soulless void. Martha's comment in *Le Malentendu*, 'ce qu'on appelle le printemps ici' is mirrored in Clamence's 'ce [...] qu'on appelle ici une dune', showing the continuity of this despairing vision of the north, while transforming it into a negativity more oppressive and vague than the Czechoslovakia of either Martha or Mersault. The final sentence's depiction of Clamence and his interlocutor alone and peering into the void is sinister in its confrontation and challenge. Where Mersault flees in search of open spaces in *La Mort heureuse*, Clamence stands alone and proud in front of the spectacle of nothingness he creates, the dramatic reversal of expectations he operates. Like the Zarathoustrian madman in the main square he proclaims the death of Europe and uses his depiction of the north to illustrate the aching chasm where once there were certainties.

### Intrapsychic effects

The intrapsychic dimension of this presentation of Amsterdam is in many ways just as oppressive and uncertain. Clamence's discourse builds a complex picture of European human relations, with the shifting fog as its sinister backdrop. It is a disturbingly bleak image, presented with irony, humour and grim determination. Since Clamence is from the north, there is none of the intrapsychic angst displayed by Mersault in the depths of Prague; instead Clamence's 'œil renseigné des quadragénaires qui ont à peu près fait le tour des choses' (I, 1478) offers a limpid and penetrating analysis of the intrapsychic European 'soul', just as dark as the geophysical dimension. As he explains to his

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<sup>2</sup> 'Ici encore, dites-moi, ne sommes-nous pas sur l'eau? Sur l'eau plate, monotone, interminable, qui confond ses limites à celles de la terre?' (I, 1529)

interlocutor: 'Je suis un des rares [...] à pouvoir vous montrer ce qu'il y a d'important ici' (I, 1510).

Even as *La Chute* opens with Clamence's friendly if affected introductions, there is a hint of mystery and distrust as he reflects upon the *Mexico-City* barman. Clamence clearly harbours bitterness beneath his outward good humour, a microcosm of the tableau he will sketch: 'Quand on a beaucoup médité sur l'homme, par métier ou par vocation, il arrive qu'on éprouve de la nostalgie pour les primates. Ils n'ont pas, eux, d'arrière-pensées' (I, 1476). Clamence's entire inquisition is based on this appearance/reality dichotomy: his own life and career, the reader discovers, has been a long display of outward kindness hiding base personal motives. His portrait of European society also penetrates stated motivations to reveal a profoundly conflictual and selfish ego. In a similar way, then, to the depiction of the sinister landscape at odds with the superficial 'belle ville, n'est-ce pas' of the opening pages, Clamence's discourse on European man embodies the condition he acknowledges at the outset: 'Le style, comme la popeline, dissimule trop souvent de l'eczéma' (I, 1476). His depiction will lead, of course, to the situation he at once condemns and accepts: the climate in which everyone judges and is judged in turn, and into which Clamence is plunged in his vocation as 'juge-pénitent'. This bitter acceptance is, however, tempered by a certain nostalgia for a sense of innocence.

The first evocations of European man are marked by a sense that things are not what they should be, that life in Europe is a poor reflection of a former state. Paris is 'un superbe décor habité par quatre millions de silhouettes' (I, 1476); the description mirrors the uncertainties of the geophysical décor with its mysterious ghostlike inhabitants and its silhouettes of boats on endless waters. This is also a moral description, leading to a celebratedly pithy judgement on modern man: 'Je rêve parfois de ce que diront de nous les historiens futurs. Une phrase leur suffira pour l'homme

moderne: il forniquait et lisait les journaux' (I, 1477). Clamence's own life reflects this: as well as having been a serial philanderer he was an avid reader of the newspapers, indicated by the fact that he avoids them after the girl's suicide (Walker 1992, 12). Although he describes the Dutch as less 'modern' than the above judgement, he uses a similarly lapidary reference to them to proffer a further level of criticism of modern man using the image of the piranhas:

'Voulez-vous d'une vie propre? Comme tout le monde?' Vous dites oui, naturellement. Comment dire non? 'D'accord. On va vous nettoyer. Voilà un métier, une famille, des loisirs organisés.' Et les petites dents s'attaquent à la chair, jusqu'aux os. Mais je suis injuste. Ce n'est pas leur organisation qu'il faut dire. Elle est la nôtre, après tout: c'est à qui nettoiera l'autre. (I, 1477)

Oran's inhabitants in La Peste are an obvious point of comparison in this criticism of bourgeois normality, which encompasses all of Europe and not merely Holland. A lifestyle so organised would counter classically Camusian praise for passion and spontaneity. The criticism is expanded when Clamence pre-empts his interlocutor's thoughts and exclaims, in an allusion to two Rembrandt paintings:

Vous êtes comme tout le monde, vous prenez ces braves gens pour une tribu de syndics et de marchands, comptant leurs écus avec leurs chances de vie éternelle, et dont le seul lyrisme consiste à prendre parfois, couverts de larges chapeaux, des leçons d'anatomie. (I, 1483)<sup>3</sup>

Repeated here are the notions of fornication and bourgeois contentment. Clamence adds a further reflection on the poor relation of European humanity to previous ideals when he speaks of 'l'avidité qui, dans notre société, tient lieu d'ambition' (I, 1483).

Continuing on the theme of imperfect human relations, Clamence turns to the idea of friendship, observing that friends are only present in one's life when all is well, absent when one is on the point of suicide. He highlights how easy it is to respect someone once they have died, and how people put on grand emotions at funerals. L'Étranger echoes through La Chute at this point, and Clamence seems to prolong the implicit

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<sup>3</sup> See Wixon 1981, 128-9.

critique embodied by Meursault of a society in which emotions are used as much to situate oneself in relation to others as to reflect any 'authentic' inner feeling: 'un mort sous presse, et le spectacle commence enfin' (I, 1490).

Distrust is an important intrapsychic backdrop of Clamence's Europe, in which outward appearance, despite its apparent innocuousness, is viewed with suspicion. The barman,

à force de ne pas comprendre ce qu'on dit en sa présence, [...] a pris un caractère défiant. De là cet air de de gravité ombrageuse, comme s'il avait le soupçon, au moins, que quelque chose ne tourne pas rond entre les hommes [...] J'estime sa méfiance fondée, et la partagerait volontiers si ma nature communicative ne s'y opposait. (I, 1476)

Portrayed as an innocent victim of his surroundings, the barman is out of place in Clamence's Amsterdam. In the midst of the extreme complexity of human interaction to which Clamence bears witness, such a simple individual is bound to be overwhelmed; and he is described as 'l'homme de Cro-Magnon pensionnaire à la tour de Babel' (I, 1475). This is illustrated in the manipulation and double-entendre surrounding the theft of the Van-Eyck panel, cunningly hung in the bar by Clamence and then removed, all without the barman's knowledge of Clamence's reasons.

Clamence, unsurprisingly, is himself distrustful, but confronts it in his own uniquely biting way. After his initial claim to be willing to share the barman's reticence, he reasons, not without contradicting his previous remark, 'Quand je vois une tête nouvelle, quelqu'un en moi sonne l'alarme. "Ralentissez. Danger!" Même quand la sympathie est la plus forte, je suis sur mes gardes' (I, 1479). In the light of his slow, painful discoveries of the motivations behind his own fulfilled existence this reaction is understandable. It echoes the laugh he hears on the Pont des Arts, his sense of paranoia after the altercation with the motorcyclist at the traffic lights, and the irrational suspicion that people are trying to trip him up as he walks into courtrooms. Suspicion

and distrust signal, furthermore, two major components of La Chute which make up its depiction of Europe.

The first is the historical referent of World War Two. In its literary encoding of the events surrounding the Occupation, the text crosses genres in a similar way to the symbiosis of literary and persuasive in the Lettres à un ami allemand. The memory of the war, so present in La Chute is an underlying explanation for the breakdown in trust in the text. When Clamence evokes the barman's sense of unease, it is immediately after a reminder of the deportation of the Jewish population from Amsterdam. The terms in which Clamence describes it are reminiscent both of the Resistance writing and Camus's more general distaste for administration and its abuses, to which he frequently returns in his political writing. Interestingly, the Nazis are described as brothers, implicating all of Europe in the depiction of the war. The Lettres à un ami allemand evocation of the lack of absolute meaning is also present; in the absence of values, all is permitted and the only winners are the strongest. Thus the link with L'Homme révolté is also clear:

Moi, j'habite le quartier juif, ou ce qui s'appelait ainsi jusqu'au moment où nos frères hitlériens y ont fait de la place. Quel lessivage! Soixante-quinze mille juifs déportés ou assassinés, c'est le nettoyage par le vide. J'admire cette application, cette méthodique patience! Quand on n'a pas de caractère, il faut bien se donner une méthode. Ici, elle a fait merveille, et j'habite sur les lieux d'un des plus grands crimes de l'histoire. (I, 1479)

Clamence's tone is deeply cynical as it moves from the construction of Amsterdam as Dante's Inferno to a precise historical link which situates the town in relation to actual crimes. An Amsterdam deeply marked by the aftermath of recent events begins therefore to emerge, which Clamence relates to the suspicion and distrust he observes. A man who, out of his love for humanity wrote on his door 'D'où que vous veniez, entrez et soyez les bienvenus', was murdered by the militia who replied to his invitation (I, 1479). The text generates a profound sense of shock and uncertainty akin to the reaction Camus observes elsewhere when he writes of the war in relation to the



humanist European spirit.<sup>4</sup> Wartime concentration camps also appear, as Clamence recounts his experience as ‘pope’ in a camp with other French prisoners, leading to conclusions about the nature of power, his own standards, and guilt.

These references to World War Two and its aftermath of guilt and unease in La Chute lead to the second major component of its voice of Europe, which is its overlapping with L’Homme révolté, itself also inspired by contemporaneous events. The references to this text echo the textual intercrossings with Lettres à un ami allemand and further contribute to the slight generic indeterminacy of La Chute, permitting a dialogue between different voices of Europe in the *œuvre*.

The allusions to L’Homme révolté situate Clamence’s discourse within its problematic. One allusion is his discussion of slavery, inspired by a carving above a slave merchant’s door. From an acerbic comment on 1950s French intellectuals, who would sign petitions and publicly condemn such practices, Clamence draws more general conclusions, illustrating a vision of hierarchy and hidden oppression: ‘Je sais bien qu’on ne peut se passer de dominer ou d’être servi. Chaque homme a besoin d’esclaves comme d’air pur. Commander, c’est respirer, vous êtes bien de cet avis?’ (I, 1496). In Clamence’s Europe of the north, human relations are clearly reduced to a Hegelian power struggle akin to the discussion of Hegel in L’Homme révolté. Judt has shown how in France, Hegel’s master-slave dialectic, as interpreted by Kojève, was privileged above other aspects of his philosophy (1992, 76-9; Werner 1972, 20-31). In La Chute, Clamence joins this discourse and presents an image of European man as engaged in a terrible and endless struggle. Even those at the bottom of the ladder still have someone or something to oppress: ‘Le dernier dans l’échelle sociale a encore son conjoint, ou son enfant. S’il est célibataire, un chien’ (I, 1496). Even family relations are encompassed in this dark vision, which also transposes Salamano in L’Étranger onto

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<sup>4</sup> For example in his 1946 lecture ‘La Crise de l’homme’ examined in Chapter Three, p. 141-2.

the Europe of La Chute. Clamence's vision also highlights the superficialities of European opposition to slavery in a parody of the French intellectuals: 'L'esclavage, ah, mais non, nous sommes contre!' (I, 1496). He aims to demonstrate how similar power relations are at work in all domains of life, even in his own desire to be served by employees and *subalternes* with a smile. Faced with its ubiquity, he suggests, opposition to slavery is useless since one cannot presume that it means only trade in other human beings.

The voice of Europe in La Chute also encompasses the idea of power relations, reflecting another aspect of L'Homme révolté, in which Camus describes the desire to dominate in the absence of the divine or of divine values. Its fictional encoding brings its conclusions uncomfortably close to the surface, showing them to be observable even in day to day life:

La vérité est que tout homme intelligent, vous le savez bien, rêve d'être un gangster et de régner sur la société par la seule violence. Comme ce n'est pas aussi facile que peut le faire croire la lecture de romans spécialisés, on s'en remet généralement à la politique et l'on court au parti le plus cruel. Qu'importe, n'est-ce-pas, d'humilier son esprit si l'on arrive par là à dominer tout le monde? (I, 1502)

Clamence moves from domain to domain, observing the same corrupt human relations based on abuse of power and slavery. In this passage, it is the turn of politics to bear the mantle of cruelty in a depiction which cynically attributes intellectual self-abasement to the actions of (at least some) political parties. It is easy to see the reference here to the critique in L'Homme révolté of Nazism and communism as political movements in which obedience is more highly valued than intelligent debate. Indeed, the passage is a heavily encoded reference to the French Communist party and its suppression of facts about the existence of Soviet concentration camps: 'Celui qui ne peut s'empêcher d'avoir des esclaves, ne vaut-il pas mieux qu'il les appelle hommes libres? Pour le principe d'abord, et puis pour ne pas les désespérer' (I, 1497). The reference works on two levels. It can be seen, firstly, as a comment on the naming of Soviet camps as either

work or re-education camps. Secondly, the phrase refers to a wider PCF attitude – since the USSR constituted the workers' Promised Land, knowledge of the camps had to be suppressed in order not to 'décourager Billancourt' (Judt 1992, 211).

The phrase also refers back to L'Homme révolté and indeed to a constant element of Camus's political writing: the subterfuge and mendacity he saw at work in much of political life. The meanings of words, it was seen in Chapter Two, were at the heart of his preoccupation with language in the Resistance, and the idea of dialogue was central to his political ethic. Camus viewed his and his contemporaries' experiences as those of the breakdown of dialogue and language, especially so with the rise of totalitarianism in Europe and Russia. Indeed, misuse of language constructs another link between La Chute and L'Homme révolté:

[N]otre vieille Europe philosophe enfin de la bonne façon. Nous ne disons plus, comme aux temps naïfs: 'Je pense ainsi. Quelles sont vos objections?' Nous sommes devenus lucides. Nous avons remplacé le dialogue par le communiqué. 'Telle est la vérité, disons-nous. Vous pouvez toujours la discuter, ça ne nous intéresse pas. Mais dans quelques années, il y aura la police, qui vous montrera que j'ai raison.' (I, 1496-7)

As noted above, Clamence's reflection on slavery becomes a commentary on human relations in Europe as a whole, in which private and public life are ruled by abuses of power. The passage clearly echoes 'l'Europe philosophe à coups de canon' in L'Été, and many observations in Camus's post-war political writing.

The apotheosis of Clamence's proclamations on Europe is, of course, his terrifying declaration of the inevitability and omnipresence of judgement, of which he constitutes the incarnation. Although this proceeds naturally from the growing tension in his discourse, it also echoes L'Homme révolté. One of La Chute's many aphorisms is the previously quoted 'Commander, c'est respirer', which recalls a similar phrase in the 1951 essay, 'respirer c'est juger' (II, 417). The two texts therefore dovetail in a logical progression from power to judgement, and illustrate even more clearly Clamence's vision of a Europe of 'démésure', to borrow the language of L'Homme révolté, which

he himself embraces through his vocation as 'juge-pénitent'. The history/nature voice of Europe thus joins Clamence's voice of European guilt. Judgement is the deeper layer of his multifarious discourse, the inner core beneath superficial niceties, respect for the dead and master-slave power relations; and explains the nature of the laugh Clamence hears on the Pont des Arts. In the end, Europe is coterminous with the 'malconfort', and human relations are forever poisoned:

Tous cancre, tous punis, crachons-nous dessus et hop! au malconfort! C'est à qui crachera le premier, voilà tout. Je vais vous dire un grand secret, mon cher. N'attendez pas le jugement dernier. Il a lieu tous les jours. (I, 1530)

The intrapsychic dimensions of the text are therefore mirrored by the geophysical. The veneer of the picturesque town, and Clamence's social successes, conceal deep uncertainty and sinister undertones, the oppressive waters and the laugh, itself emerging disembodied from the Seine. Beneath this lie the concentric circles of hell, the very symbol of eternal judgement, and the intrapsychic omnipresence of judgement. The geophysical malconfort represents intrapsychic judgement; there is a symbiosis in which the two mirror each other in Clamence's disturbing revelations about the European soul in a wider dialogue of several of Camus's voices of Europe.

### A Southern space of innocence

Plunged deep into the gloom and malevolence of a northern space of guilt and judgement, La Chute makes few references to the south. Those that exist, however, added to the fact that they are rare, constitute an important dimension of the text; their evocations constitute a geophysical referent representative of an intrapsychic wish. Once again, there is an interesting symbiosis of geophysical and intrapsychic. There are certain similarities to Le Malentendu: southern spaces are evoked from within the north, and there is no actual travel between them. This explains the relative paucity of references, but also their interest.

A significant reference to the south is Clamence's moment of impassioned dreaming of distant islands, an amalgam of southern European and distant Asian spaces. Nevertheless, this dream is tainted by his own psychological need to dominate, which proves his belonging to the northern space, in which, he writes, all need to have someone or something to reign over:

Ce que j'aime le plus au monde, c'est la Sicile, vous voyez bien, et encore du haut de l'Etna, dans la lumière, à condition de dominer l'île et la mer. Java, aussi, mais à l'époque des alizés. Oui, j'y suis allé dans ma jeunesse. D'une manière générale, j'aime toutes les îles. Il est plus facile d'y régner. (I, 1496)

This is a sinister vision of the south as a space in which Clamence can give full expression to his desire to dominate. The passage negates the innocent view of the south in other texts as a space of 'recueillement' and simple joy; Clamence sees the islands as colonies of his own imagination, spaces of potential domination. In this, the Mediterraneanism of the 1930s fiction is dramatically undermined. In a dialogue of voices, the northern guilt questions the innocence of earlier Mediterraneanism in highlighting the motives behind a love for islands and clarity, and perhaps revealing its neo-colonialist undercurrent.<sup>5</sup> Clamence posits himself as northern man (by his own definition of north) seeking a space in which to expand his kingdom.

The next reference to actual southern spaces follows Clamence's description of the Zuiderzee as monotonous, bleak and uncertain. The Greek archipelago, in total contrast, is clearly defined, sharply outlined and beautiful. There is a sense of certainty in the south, a trenchant presence offering absolute meaning:

Sans cesse, de nouvelles îles apparaissaient sur le cercle de l'horizon. Leur échine sans arbres traçait la limite du ciel, leur rivage rocheux tranchait nettement sur la mer. Aucune confusion; dans la lumière précise, tout était repère. Et d'une île à l'autre, sans trêve, sur notre petit bateau, qui se traînait pourtant, j'avais l'impression de bondir, nuit et jour, à la crête des courtes vagues fraîches, dans une course pleine d'écume et de rires. Depuis ce temps, la Grèce elle-même dérive quelque part en moi, au bord de ma mémoire, inlassablement... Eh! là, je dérive, moi aussi, je deviens lyrique! Arrêtez-moi, cher, je vous en prie. (I, 1523)

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<sup>5</sup> See Chapter Four, p. 183-6.

Closer to descriptions in earlier fictional texts, this evocation echoes their image of the south, incorporating light, laughter and plenitude. In the south are certainty, innocence and happiness. The exaltation of the passage echoes L'État de siège in its depiction of the joys of summer and the summit of the waves, similar to the 'course précipitée' of the sun. But Greece is only present at the frontiers of Clamence's memory; it is no longer reality, and unlike characters in earlier fictional texts, there is self-censorship on Clamence's part: he refuses to allow himself to embrace his dream of the south. There is thus a caesura between north and south; no travel between them is permitted and the south becomes a dislocated dream space, imagined from within a fallen north.

A further remark demonstrates the radical north/south split, or at least the unattainability of the south, which becomes a nostalgic memory, no longer a possible geophysical or intrapsychic destination for a tragic Europe united in its history and terror. Europe is henceforth cut off from what previously was part of it:

À propos, connaissez-vous la Grèce? Non? Tant mieux! Qu'y ferions-nous, je vous le demande? Il y faut des cœurs purs. Savez-vous que, là-bas, les amis se promènent dans la rue, deux par deux, en se tenant la main. [...] Mais dites-moi, prendriez-vous ma main dans les rues de Paris? Ah! Je plaisante. Nous avons de la tenue, nous, la crasse nous guinde. Avant de nous présenter dans les îles grecques, il faudrait nous laver longuement. L'air y est chaste, la mer et la jouissance claires. Et nous... (I, 1523-4)

In other texts, the south provides an opportunity for rebirth; Mersault comes to life in Vicenza and Martha dreams of how different things would be. In Amsterdam or Paris, Clamence declares that a return to the south is impossible because of their corruption and loss of innocence. Europeans are inhibited by 'la crasse', and the final ellipse leaves the reader with the idea that Europe is now the very antithesis of the primal innocence of the Greek islands. As in the descriptions of the north, the south, in these terms, echoes L'Homme révolté: in addition to the historical rejection of Greek equilibrium that Camus discerns in his history of rebellion, everyday European life is now condemned for a similar exclusion of Greek purity. Like Diego in L'État de siège, who cries 'je sais qu'ils ne sont pas purs', Clamence portrays a tragically corrupt north,

unable to comprehend its lost purity. Clamence himself embodies this loss of innocence; his vocation consists of exposing it in order to condemn. In his previous life in Paris, he bathes in a 'lumière édénique' in his seemingly pure-hearted devotion to defending the poor and downtrodden in professional and private life. His successes give him a sense of well being and plenitude, until the laugh makes him realise that all is not what it seems, and that his motivations are in reality impure. This fall from grace is metonymic of his portrait of Europe itself; as in *L'Homme révolté*, *La Chute* demonstrates how, from being the home of humanist values, Europe has rushed into war and persecution on a grand scale. Since the fall, Europe lies in stunned mediocrity, unable to return to its Eden, dreaming instead of far-off islands and exotic lands: 'Sur l'innocence morte, les juges pullulent, les juges de toutes les races [...] réconciliés dans le malconfort'. Judgement is the lot of this impure Europe, and Clamence is the ideal 'prophète vide pour temps médiocres' (I, 1533).

In the midst of the mediocrity Clamence discerns, then, the south becomes the unattainable dream, reflected in the way it is described. The first overt reference to the south is Clamence's description of the Dutch cycling trance-like through the town. The south is in fact too precise a term; their dreams are of an 'elsewhere', places way beyond the confines of the European continent:

Ils [the Dutch] sont partis à des milliers de kilomètres, vers Java, l'île lointaine. Ils prient les dieux grimaçants de l'Indonésie dont ils ont garni toutes leurs vitrines, et qui errent en ce moment au-dessus de nous, avant de s'accrocher, comme des singes somptueux, aux enseignes et aux toits en escaliers, pour rappeler à ces colons nostalgiques que la Hollande n'est pas seulement l'Europe des marchands, mais la mer, la mer qui mène à Cipango, et à ces îles où les hommes meurent fous et heureux. (I, 1480)

In this evocation, the sea loses some of its negative connotations so prevalent in the description of the north to become the more familiar opportunity for escape and openness. But the geophysical referents are more disparate than, for example, Vicenza: Indonesia was a Dutch colony, and the term Cipango was a late Middle-Ages term for Japan. Notions of time and distance mingle and separate in an almost surreal depiction

of a Dutch dream-space populated by imagined gods. The only point of similarity with other fictional texts is the final phrase ‘où les hommes meurent fous et heureux’, which echoes Martha’s dreams. The Dutch, however, dream of distant lands, thus hinting that the south of Europe has lost its status as the locus for human happiness. Aside, therefore, from actual mention of geophysical spaces, the vocabulary of the south is transposed onto northern objects and people – there is no other way of imagining the south. This is also present in the way Clamence refers to objects and people. Clamence too can only dream of the south without being able to go there, as seen in his evocation of Greece. Shortly after beginning his inquisition, his self-consoling praise of gin strongly echoes the Camusian vocabulary of the south:

Tout ce monde, hein, si tard, et malgré la pluie, qui n’a pas cessé depuis des jours! Heureusement, il y a le genièvre, la seule lueur dans ces ténèbres. Sentez-vous la *lumière dorée, cuivrée*, qu’il met en vous? J’aime marcher à travers la ville, le soir, dans la *chaleur* du genièvre. (I, 1479-80, my emphasis)

Gin is the only light in the northern darkness, and embodies the distance between north and south: access to the south is only possible, with the risk of appearing abstentionist, through self-deluding inebriation.

Clamence’s description of ‘ces dames, derrière ces vitrines’ shows a similar dislocated southern vocabulary and almost dreamlike escape from the north towards a surrogate elsewhere from within the north itself:

Le rêve, monsieur, le rêve à peu de frais, le voyage aux Indes! Ces personnes se parfument aux épices. Vous entrez, elles tirent les rideaux et la navigation commence. Les dieux descendent sur les corps nus et les îles dérivent, démentes, coiffés d’une chevelure ébouriffée de palmiers sous le vent. Essayez. (I, 1481)<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> In addition to the most well-known echo of Baudelaire quoted earlier, the passage cited here is very close to ‘La Chevelure’: ‘La langoureuse Asie et la brûlante Afrique, / Tout un monde lointain, absent, presque défunt, / Vit dans tes profondeurs, forêt aromatique!’ (Baudelaire 1972, 184).



## La Solidarité dans le mal(heur)

On several levels, the Europe of Clamence's dreams and stories is a unity of history and of the present. La Chute therefore operates a similar textual *rassemblement* to L'Homme révolté and Lettres à un ami allemand. As in the 1951 essay, all of Europe is united in its abuses and crimes. The dislocated south serves to highlight the unity of the north in its abandonment of the purity and innocence of the south. Henceforth, evocation of the south consists of longing for lost innocence and purity, a powerful geophysical metonymy for intrapsychic guilt. Clamence's discourse also echoes, but on a different level, the third of the Lettres à un ami allemand in its treatment of solidarity. After the lyrical sense of belonging of the letters, the enforced solidarity of La Peste, and the grim burden of crime in L'Homme révolté, there is an additional 'will to solidarity' in La Chute, which constitutes its distinctive voice.

Through what is known of him, Clamence is obviously a northerner. Born in France, he studied in Paris, where he worked for many years before relocating to Amsterdam. There is, however, a slight ambiguity in his situation, which seeps through in his nostalgia for the Greek archipelago and the islands of Indonesia: 'La Grèce elle-même dérive quelque part en moi' (I, 1523). But this constant reminder of the south is merely a reminder of his own innocence, the time when '[il] planait, littéralement'. When the interlocutor meets him in *Mexico-City*, his innocence is no more, and his confession constitutes his own fall as paradigmatic of the entire continent: 'nous sommes tous coupables les uns devant les autres' (I, 1533). Although there is regret, represented by dreams of islands and happiness, Clamence accepts his guilt, his geophysical 'northernness', with lucidity, building upon his geophysical provenance a clear acceptance of his destiny and solidarity with Europe:

J'aime le souffle des eaux moisiées, l'odeur des feuilles mortes qui macèrent dans le canal et celle, funèbre, qui monte des péniches pleines de fleurs. Non, non, ce goût n'a rien de morbide, croyez-moi. Au contraire, c'est, chez moi, *un parti pris*.' (I, 1496, my emphasis)

When Clamence realises his guilt, he recognises at the same time that there is no escape, talking of ‘le jour où je compris définitivement que je n’étais pas guéri, que j’étais toujours coincé, et qu’il fallait m’en arranger’ (I, 1529). In geophysical terms there remains only north; the innocence of the south is dead.

Little by little, as more detail is revealed about his life, Clamence shows his interlocutor his discoveries about human nature, demonstrating how everyone is part of the same problem. Until the final section of *La Chute*, this is done with subtlety, almost without the reader noticing, through the use of the first person plural ‘nous’. To give but two examples, when Clamence talks of friendship, he interrogates: ‘qui couchera sur le sol pour nous’; and earlier talks of ‘l’avidité qui, dans notre société, tient lieu d’ambition’. Walker shows how Clamence achieves this through the use of a succession of anecdotes, *faits-divers*: ‘The circuit of hearsay is itself a kind of proof of the collective nature of the human existence – which suits Clamence, of course, because he wants to generalise guilt through these channels in order to achieve his own form of domination’ (1992, 13).<sup>7</sup> The elements of his confession tend towards a similar pattern of description of an episode in his past followed by an epigrammatic glance outwards at the rest of society, showing that everyone feels similar emotions. He closes the subject of respect for the dead, for example, with a sinister statement: ‘L’homme est ainsi, cher monsieur, il a deux faces: il ne peut pas aimer sans s’aimer’ (I, 1490).

Towards the disturbing close of the confession, Clamence envisions his European compatriots in an even darker way. Beyond the initial mocking epigram at each stage of his monologue, Clamence pronounces judgement and condemns European man, showing what is at work beneath the surface. To begin with, the people Clamence

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<sup>7</sup> See also Holm (forthcoming), who likens Clamence to Roquentin in Sartre’s *La Nausée*, who declares: ‘un homme, c’est toujours un conteur d’histoires’.

describes resemble the interlocutor in their supposed search for meaning. Thus, it is claimed in a passage quoted earlier, Europe is in search of the innocence it has shed:

[L]es lecteurs de journaux et les fornicateurs ne peuvent aller plus loin. Ils viennent de tous les coins de l'Europe et s'arrêtent autour de la mer intérieure [...] Transis, ils viennent demander, en toutes langues, du genièvre à *Mexico-City*. Là, je les attends. (I, 1481)

The passage links with Clamence's previous characterisation of modern man, and indicates that he is coterminous with Europe: he speaks many languages. The adjective 'transis' suggests that they are as dreamlike and confused as the Dutch, heads in the fog, dreaming of somewhere else. Clamence, however, has found the answer behind modern man's malaise: in terms redolent of the 'lieux clos' of L'Homme révolté and indeed Sartre's Huis Clos,<sup>8</sup> Clamence declares that human relations are radically organised around judgement, leading to fear, persecution and enslavement:

[P]uisque nous sommes tous juges, nous sommes tous coupables les uns devant les autres, tous christes à notre vilaine manière, un à un crucifiés, et toujours sans savoir. Nous le serions du moins, si moi, Clamence, je n'avais trouvé l'issue, la seule solution, la vérité enfin... (I, 1533)

As in the biting *mise en abyme* of the Van Eyck panel 'Les Juges Intègres', justice is separated from innocence, and thus debased. This returns to Clamence's musings on the signs one might choose for oneself: 'Oui, l'enfer doit être ainsi: des rues à enseignes et pas moyen de s'expliquer. On est classé une fois pour toutes' (I, 1497). In Clamence's world, this is what justice has become, a race towards servitude in which the strongest wins, the same 'course folle' of L'Homme révolté:

Couvert de cendres, m'arrachant lentement les cheveux, le visage labouré par les ongles, mais le regard perçant, je me tiens devant l'humanité entière, récapitulant mes hontes, sans perdre de vue l'effet que je produis, et disant: 'J'étais le dernier des derniers.' Alors, insensiblement, je passe, dans mon discours, du 'je' au 'nous'. Quand j'arrive au 'voilà ce que nous sommes', le tour est joué, je peux dire leurs vérités. Je suis comme eux, bien sûr, nous sommes dans le même bouillon. J'ai cependant une supériorité, celle de savoir, qui me donne le droit de parler. (I. 1545-6)

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<sup>8</sup> Sartre, of course, considered La Chute to be Camus's masterpiece (Todd 1996, 630).

In another reference to L'Homme révolté, the conflict and degeneration brought to the surface by this first principle that Clamence has discovered is symbolised by the fact that Descartes' house in Amsterdam is now an insane asylum. And although Clamence recognises his solidarity with the people of the north, his vocation consists of finding the way to reign over all of them as the only one to understand the nature of judgement and the power of confession. Thus, Europe is Clamence's; it is a closed space over which he rules, like those of L'Homme révolté or the cathedrals of Prague:

[P]lanant par la pensée au-dessus de tout ce continent qui m'est soumis sans le savoir, buvant le jour d'absinthe qui se lève, ivre enfin de mauvaises paroles, je suis heureux, je suis heureux, vous dis-je, je vous interdis de ne pas croire que je suis heureux, je suis heureux à mourir! (I, 1547)

Speaking of himself as preaching in his own cathedral, Clamence fulfils power functions on every level: 'Je tiens aussi à condamner la porte du *petit univers bien clos* dont je suis le roi, le pape et le juge' (I, 1539, my emphasis). In the light of his own discoveries about himself, Clamence pronounces judgement on European man, declaring all to be alike, all as guilty as each other, and all in line in the 'malconfort'.

In a *récit* so based upon doubt and subterfuge, however, the solidarity of modern (European) man that Clamence observes and critiques is uncertain. It is described as a state of affairs, but is also to an extent willed. There is a curious grey area in the extent to which Europe is united in its abuses and evils, and to which this is merely willed by Clamence. This is hinted at in a passage above, in which Clamence describes how he creates a situation and manipulates it in order to confess and thereby pass judgement. He chooses his words carefully, adapting his stories and cadences in order better to twist the desired outcome. This is mirrored in the way in which his interlocutor is addressed throughout the text. Beginning with 'Monsieur', he becomes 'mon cher compatriote', 'cher', then 'cher maître' (Bronner 1999, 119). Clamence creates a relationship with his interlocutor all the better to draw him closer to the intrigue, like Baudelaire's 'hypocrite lecteur'.

It was stated earlier that there was a certain similarity between La Chute and Lettres à un ami allemand: in both there is an implicit dialogue between two parties, even though the reader is aware that the German friend does not actually exist. In La Chute, the dialogue is more obvious; even though the interlocutor's voice is never heard, some of Clamence's monologue is in obvious reply to a question.<sup>9</sup> But, like the Resistance texts, the inherent dialogism is monologically manipulated. The major difference, however, is in the way the use of the interlocutor impinges on the idea of Europe in each text. In Lettres à un ami allemand solidarity is permitted with the German friend in order to prove the Republican virtues of the resistance Europe Camus constructs. The interlocutor in La Chute, however, is slowly dragged into Clamence's web in order to prove that 'nous sommes tous dans le même bouillon', and that no one is pure.

This highlights a certain similarity with La Peste: in this text the solidarity is born of adversity: the people come together only in the face of catastrophe. In La Chute the catastrophe is a loss of innocence, and is much more philosophical and mysterious than Oran's plague outbreak. It is so mysterious that those who experience it only have a vague sense it is there, leading them to *Mexico-City*. La Chute shows how a sense of philosophical despair and loss of innocence is shared by all of Europe, and that Europe is *ipso facto* united in its despair, typified by the amputation of the south. Nevertheless, there is an element of doubt in Clamence's already highly misleading and deliberately manipulated discourse on this level. As noted earlier, there is doubt as to whether Clamence imagines a European solidarity or if he manipulates an already existing solidarity. It is possible, therefore, to suggest that Europe in La Chute is as nebulous as Clamence's discourse itself. In this case, La Chute provides an intriguing corrective to La Peste, Lettres à un ami allemand and L'Homme révolté. If Clamence is merely an

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<sup>9</sup> For analysis of the theatrical element of La Chute, see Fitch 1970. See Holm 1997 for a Bakhtinian dialogic analysis of the text.

insignificant prophet with delusions of grandeur, creating and willing his own dream world, then the solidarity built up in the other texts is undermined. Again, La Chute's generic indeterminacy plays a role. Since it echoes so strongly the arguments of L'Homme révolté, it is possible to see Clamence as a solitary figure either reinforcing those arguments through his cynicism, or showing them to be false through his manipulation and subterfuge.

## Conclusion

In the final analysis, all rests on the uncertainty of Clamence's discourse. Whether he lies or tells the truth, the reader, like the interlocutor, is left guessing. Upon this shifting layer of mythomania is built a potential European solidarity. If Clamence lies, Camus's Europe is torn apart and the solidarity he builds in other texts is severely questioned. If Clamence tells the truth, then Europe is united, but in its terrible abuses and sense of 'démésure'. Camus's Europe finishes in a double quandary, but not without constituting his definitive voice of Europe and an expression of his deep ambivalence towards it.

# Conclusion

## A Dialogue of Europe

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Smets has argued that Camus's work reveals a constant preoccupation with 'le destin de l'Europe et son insertion dans un nouvel ordre démocratique international' (1991, 13). This thesis has shown Camus's relationship with Europe to be much more ambivalent. In spite of the continued presence of Europe in Camus's *œuvre* and of his obvious support for European unity in the late 1930s and early to mid 1940s, there is a multiplicity of inter-relating discourses of Europe in Camus, some antagonistic, some reconciliatory.

Camus develops, for example, a Europeanist political voice in his Algiers journalism, as shown in Chapter One. From a series of observations on Europe's problems, he develops several first principles which he believes should guide any future European settlement. He then elaborates short-term solutions including the idea of peace in war and a truce, before expounding ideas for longer-term institutions such as a new League of Nations structure inspired by federalist principles and governed by international rule of law. His ideas can be traced to several late 1930s sources, ranging from Léon Blum's speeches and articles to the federalist debates in London, transmitted via the Nouveaux Cahiers. At this early stage, Camus's Europeanism is dialogic, reflecting his interaction with other discourses. Gradually incorporating these into his own discourse, he creates a 'voice of Europe' which forms the basis of its future manifestations.

In the Resistance, Camus's Europeanism becomes both far more personal, and part of a wider Resistance response to the question of language and its uses in occupied France. In Lettres à un ami allemand the concept of Europe is developed through interaction with a characterisation of a Nazi discourse of Europe, resulting in the rhetorical

glorification of a humanist, democratic Europe of harmony and culture. The political voice of Europe takes on a new dimension as it is elaborated as a Resistance rallying myth, part of a process of re-appropriation of elements of Nazi/Vichy discourse: 'notre Europe n'est pas la vôtre' (II, 233). His dialogue of Europe had a particular target: collaborationist notions of European unity under German leadership. As Chapter Two has shown, Camus's defence of the idea of Europe was shared by many other resisters, seeking to develop proposals for future post-war foreign policy. Although the Europe of the Lettres à un ami allemand is a lyrical construction of ideals of culture and nature, Camus's continued support for European politico-economic unity is demonstrated by his militancy for the Comité Français pour la Fédération Européenne (CFFE). By 1945, therefore, Camus has incorporated Europeanism into his wider political vision. The political voice of Europe is at its strongest; Camus has dialogically interacted with the Resistance struggle over the discourse of Europe, relating with other contemporaneous voices, and has imposed his own voice upon the nascent Europeanism of his 1930s journalism.

In the post-war years the European idea underwent major transformations and ideological appropriations, as shown in Chapter Three. With its increasing subordination to Cold War logic, added to the difficulties of post-war European reconstruction, Camus was led to two responses: he pursued the themes of his pre-war journalism in his Combat editorials, but gradually began to defend wider goals of *world* peace and unity. By 1946, in 'Ni victimes ni bourreaux', Camus's voice of Europe has moved onto a different plane. Rather than defending political Europeanism, he tackles problems he sees at the heart of Europe, offering a series of problematic and ultimately naïve solutions. A similar move away from Europeanism was charted in his organisational activity, which drifts from active involvement with the CFFE towards



limited, behind-the-scenes activity in small, almost Resistance-style groups. This reflects his growing anti-communism, and belief that Europe was in a state of near-occupation which required action reminiscent of the Resistance in occupied France. The political voice of Europe is therefore more fragmentary, shot through with growing ambivalence and belief that certain politico-philosophical problems lay at the root of Europe's difficulties. Europeanism was clearly no longer an appropriate solution.

Such is the evolution of the political 'voices' of Europe. Their development is complicated by the presence in Camus's *œuvre* of another, literary, voice of Europe. This voice of division and disunity sits uncomfortably alongside the political visions of unity and peace. Beginning with La Mort heureuse, continuing in 'La Mort dans l'âme' and Le Malentendu, this literary voice is characterised by a persistent north/south antagonism, which was analysed in Barthesian terms as an antithesis between whose terms a protagonist can only travel in a state of transgression. This serves to reinforce the sense of division in Europe engendered by the already contrasting fictional constructions of north and south as darkness versus light, enclosure versus openness. With the fiction there comes a second voice of Europe into the space of Camus's work, complicating the expressions of desire for European unification. Critics have of course noted this uneasy presence of different perceptions of Europe, but often privilege one over the other as Camus's 'true' attitude towards Europe. Moving away from such a biographical reading, this thesis considers these discourses as two voices in a dialogue.

A further voice of Europe develops in Camus's writing in the 1950s, adding to the existing fictional and political voices and interacting with elements of each. 'Ni victimes ni bourreaux' constitutes the passage between the political voice and this, new, historico-mythical voice. Texts such as L'Été and L'Homme révolté develop this 1946 identification of key problems at the heart of Europe, crystallising them as a peculiarly

European state of affairs in which Greek equilibrium has been abandoned in favour of ‘*démesure*’ and political murder in the form of totalitarianism.

Individual chapters of this thesis have aimed to demonstrate the nature and provenance of Camus’s voices of Europe, charting their evolution and dialogic interaction with wider discourses, Todorov’s idea of dialogue *in absentia* (1981, 119). A third aim of the thesis has, however, been dialogue *in praesentia*, i.e. within the heteroglossia of the *œuvre* itself. Since there are different voices of Europe, it is reasonable to look for sites of dialogue between them. This is the case in Lettres à un ami allemand, as shown in Chapter Five, where due to the generic indeterminacy of the texts, a dialogue is possible between the fictional and political voices. This is also the case in La Peste. However, analysis of L’État de siège demonstrates how, when the genre of the text in question is unambiguously persuasive or literary, the voice of Europe becomes more rigid. L’Homme révolté, while constituting its own distinctive historical voice of Europe, also allows a certain amount of dialogue between elements of previous voices, notably the fictional, which is manipulated in new directions through the construction of a north/south historical opposition between Europe and Greece. La Chute is a further example of this: the fictional and historical voices join in Clamence’s twisted discourse which remains Camus’s final, ambiguous and ambivalent word on Europe. The continent is split between solidarity in monotony, despair and crime and a mythical ‘ailleurs’, unattainable except through dreams.

This analysis of the different voices of Europe in Camus leads to the conclusion that there is not a progression towards any ‘understanding’ of Europe. Neither is there a constant preoccupation with European unity. Rather, there are different understandings of Europe in different texts. Taken together, these constitute a polyphony of overlapping voices: ‘a plurality of consciousnesses, with equal rights and each with its own world,

[which] combine but are not merged in the unity of the event' (Bakhtin 1984, 6). Europe in Camus must be understood in a broad sense as a space populated by different discourses depending on genre and context. There are several Europes, not one unitary locus of meaning. As Bakhtin writes of Dostoevsky,

[T]he utterly incompatible elements comprising Dostoevsky's material are distributed among several worlds and several autonomous consciousnesses; they are presented not within a single field of vision but within several fields of vision, each full and of equal worth; and it is not the material directly but these worlds, their consciousnesses with their individual fields of vision that combine in a higher unity, a unity, so to speak, of the second order, the unity of the polyphonic novel. (Bakhtin 1984, 16)

Camus therefore constructs a polyphonic 'novel' of Europe, in which different voices interact. Autonomous voices with their own particularities, they interact at certain moments, and constitute a Bakhtinian unity in dialogue.

Steve Robson has analysed some of Camus's writing as autobiography, most interestingly, for the purposes of this thesis, the Lettres à un ami allemand. Robson relates these texts to a 'Lettre à un désespéré' in the Carnets, in which Camus effectively writes to himself in order to address his sense of despair in Algiers in 1939 (C1, 178-82). The wartime letters place the German interlocutor in the position of the 'désespéré' in the previous text: '[they are] still a dialogue with the self, with the man that Camus had once been' (Robson 1995, 119). On a wider level, Todd, perhaps with a classic biographer's *parti pris*, writes of Le Mythe de Sisyphe that 'Camus évoque l'homme lorsqu'il parle de lui-même' (Todd 1996, 295). It is possible to conclude that Camus's polyphonous treatment of Europe reflects a deep *personal* sense of ambivalence, which he attempts to understand by constructing different voices in a dialogue with himself. This interpretation echoes the passage from the Carnets cited in the introduction, which describes 'l'intimité de deux adversaires' after a prolonged effort at coming to terms with a hostile country (C1, 60-1, August 1937). The polyphony of Europe can therefore be read as a way of discerning the contours of Camus's problematic relationship with

Europe. This is reinforced in Dunwoodie's analysis of Camus and Dostoevsky, which demonstrates Camus's interaction in many forms with elements of Dostoevsky's thought, which Camus challenges and reworks, aiming to find solutions to the existential difficulties of Dostoevsky's characters without resorting to the Russian's Christianity. Of Camus's attempts to find solutions to nihilism, Dunwoodie writes: 'Le plurivocalisme de son propre œuvre est donc l'expression des différents chemins explorés et le signe de l'angoisse qui le tenaille tant qu'il s'y débat' (1996, 51). The same could be said of Camus's treatment of Europe, which he explores, as this thesis has shown, using different discourses.

This thesis offers, however, a more far-reaching conclusion both for Camus studies and for the study of the idea of Europe. The multiplicity of discourses of Europe was noted in the introduction, which set the scene by illustrating how the European idea is a constantly shifting composite of often contrasting and conflicting notions, governed as much by external and internal threats as by internal logic. The European idea is never the same at two different historical moments. In addition, even though many writers have commented upon the idea of Europe (Bonneville 1961), it is possible to say that there are as many Europes as writers. The thesis has also illustrated that even within the works of one author there is a multiplicity of discourses of Europe.

Given these historical and literary multiplicities, it is easy to succumb to pluralistic vertigo. Jacques Derrida writes, however, that Europe cannot descend into a 'multiplicity of self-enclosed idioms'; neither must it succumb to centralising authority (Derrida 1992, 39). When dealing with the ideas of Europe in Camus one could impose a biographical or Europeanist interpretative grid, neither of which would do justice to their complexity. A Bakhtinian epistemology offers a path through these extremes, highlighting the multiplicity of discourses in Camus, and how they interact.

This has consequences for the study of the idea of Europe, which are beyond the scope of this thesis but which constitute potential areas of future research. A wider application of the methods of analysis developed here, expanded into a larger cross-section of writers or indeed through discourse analysis of a wider variety of writing, would equally highlight multiplicities and interactions between *a priori* opposing or overlapping discourses of Europe. In current times, adopting different views of Europe is seen as something of a crime, as if the term could or should only mean one thing. This is historically not the case, of course, and a Bakhtinian study of the multiplicity of the European idea may help to fruitfully underline the dialogic interaction between different discourses.

The fact that Bakhtin's analysis of language can be seen at the same time as a normative account poses a problem to some critics but may enrich such a study (Dentith, 1995, 46). A normative account would tend to centralise and impose, but it does recognise an important moral imperative: in Bakhtin's case the dialogic principle presupposes that one be prepared to engage in the dialogue. In the variety of overlapping discourses of Europe in Camus, a dialogic analysis shows fruitful interplay and intersection, correctives and additions through the construction of different discourses of Europe. In a wider project analysing many constructions of Europe, the dialogic tension between the unitary and the heteroglossic implies an ongoing creative process of European dialogue. It is not blind relativism: the word Europe can be seen as a territory registering different, transitory phases of social change shared by all:

We see no special need to point out that the polyphonic approach has nothing in common with relativism (or with dogmatism). But it should be noted that both relativism and dogmatism equally exclude all argumentation, all authentic dialogue, by making it either unnecessary (relativism) or impossible (dogmatism). Polyphony as an artistic method lies in an entirely different plane. (Bakhtin 1984, 69)

A larger study of the dialogue of Europe would aim to demonstrate the twin dangers of creating a unitary monolith and of ignoring the idea completely due to its perceived fragmented nature.

An area also beyond the scope of this thesis is the obvious question of the French colonies, and notably the place of Algeria within Camus's discourses of Europe. An offshoot of this project might, therefore, be an analysis of the place of Algeria within Camus's political vision. The question is usually studied as a *sui generis* issue, but its relationship with the idea of Europe is undoubtedly important. The place of the colonies is an important aspect of 1920s Europeanism and of the Resistance debate; it was often written that Europe should pool its colonies to make one larger European outpost in the world. Hopeless idealism or not, the question remains important, and Camus, as Algerian and European, lies in the crux of the question. Obviously, this aspect has a more obviously biographical focus which has not been the object of this thesis, but as a future project may prove to be an intriguing new element in Camus studies.

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Where reference is made to documents from these three sources, full references will be given in footnotes in the following form:

IMEC, Fonds Camus, etc.

HAEC, AS 7: etc.

HAEC, ER: etc.

For details of abbreviations when referring to Camus's published works, see p. x.

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## Appendix

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HAEC: AS 7: Letter from Albert Camus to Altiero Spinelli, 19 March 1945

*Lettre de l'Union*

COMITE FRANCAIS POUR LA  
FEDERATION EUROPEENNE

Paris, le 19 mars 1945.

Siège provisoire:  
10, rue des Pyramides  
Paris (1<sup>o</sup>)

Monsieur et cher camarade,

Afin de réunir les expériences des fédéralistes des différents pays et de confronter leurs points de vue pour élaborer une politique fédéraliste commune, le COMITE FRANCAIS POUR LA FEDERATION EUROPEENNE organise une conférence internationale du 22 au 24 mars.

Le Comité d'organisation vous prie de bien vouloir participer aux travaux de cette conférence qui se tiendra à la Maison de la Chimie - 28, rue St-Dominique - salle 33.

La première séance aura lieu le jeudi 22 mars, à 19 heures précises.

Ordre du jour :

- Rapport général du Comité Français pour la Fédération Européenne.
- La politique des mouvements démocratiques en vue de la Fédération Européenne.
- Les problèmes économiques de l'Europe fédérale.
- Le problème allemand.
- Rapport sur le problème colonial.

Veillez agréer, Monsieur et cher camarade, nos salutations les meilleures.

Pour le Comité d'organisation:

*Manus*

P.S.- Ci-joint la liste des personnalités invitées à participer à la Conférence.

AS. 7

PERSONNALITES INVITEES A LA CONFERENCE  
POUR LA FEDERATION EUROPEENNE

FRANCE :

MM. Vincent-Auriol (Parti socialiste, délégué à l'Assemblée Consultative), Jacques Baumel (Secrétaire général du M.L.N., délégué à l'Assemblée Consultative), Baumgartner (professeur de philosophie à la Faculté de Lyon), Béracha (du ministère de la Production Industrielle), Mme Renée Blum (Parti socialiste) MM. Raymond Beuyer ("Résistance Ouvrière"), Brizon ("Libertés" Albert Camus (écrivain, rédacteur en chef de "Combat"), Michel Collinet (rédacteur en chef de "Volontés"), Charles Dumas (Parti socialiste), André Ferrat (directeur de "Lyon Libre"), Fraisse (revue "Esprit"), Henry Frenay (Ministre des Prisonniers et Déportés), Albert Gazier (C.G.T.), Maurice Guérin (délégué à l'Assemblée Consultative), Hamon (Secrétaire du Comité Parisien de Libération), Pierre Herbert (écrivain, membre du Comité directeur du M.L.N.), Joseph Heurs (professeur à la Faculté de Lyon), Professeur Labrousse, Robert Lacoste (Ministre de la Production industrielle), Maurice Lacroix ("Résistance"), Georges Lefebvre (professeur d'histoire), ~~Lucot ("Résistance Ouvrière"), André Malraux (écrivain, membre du Comité directeur du M.L.N.)~~ André Mandouze ("Témoignage Chrétien"), ~~Martinet (Agence France-Presse), Mme André Marty-Capgras (Parti socialiste), MM. Daniel Mayer (délégué à l'Assemblée Consultative), Yvon Morandat (directeur de la revue "Esprit"), Neumeyer (C.G.T.) Pascal Pia (directeur de "Combat"), André Philip (délégué à l'Assemblée Consultative), Jacques Rebejrol (délégué à l'Assemblée Consultative), Jean Texcier (directeur de "Libération-Soir"), Robert Verdier (Parti socialiste), Verneyras (délégué à l'Assemblée Consultative), Gilbert Zaksas (délégué à l'Assemblée Consultative).~~

Sorbonne  
à la Sorbonne

Secrétaire de la  
Fédération de l'Ali-  
mentation

Rédacteur en chef

ANGLETERRE :

MM. Brailsford ("New Statesman and Nation"), John Hynd, (député travailliste), Sir Walter Layton (économiste).

SUISSE :

MM. Oprecht (secrétaire général du Parti socialiste suisse), François Bondy (journaliste), Pierre Robert (Fédération syndicale internationale des Transports).

ITALIE :

MM. IGNAZIO SILONE (écrivain, Parti socialiste italien), Antonelli (membre du Secrétariat du Parti de l'Action et du Mouvement italien pour la Fédération européenne).

ESPAGNE :

M. Gomez (U.G.T.)

HOLLANDE :

M. Vizert Hooft (membre du Comité directeur pour l'Union des Eglises protestantes).

ALLEMAGNE :

M. Willy Eichler (Union des socialistes allemands de Londres)

AUTRICHE :

M. MULLER, de la Direction du Parti social-démocrate autrichien

U.S.A.

Lewin (Parti socialiste des Etats-Unis d'Amérique)

Annex