Rhode Island College
Literary Magazine

1968

RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE
LITERARY MAGAZINE
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Weaver Of Relation

Weave, O calloused talent
A chair of bamboo and iron
A seat of craftsmen delight.
Shuffle, O aimless maneuverer
Surrey coddling, a steed
And pinto roving rain, sweat.
Fine, patient
endeavoring
clever witted
youngster.
Knowing how I have
suffered, my breath is heavy
my fear is complete.
Metal to be met with positive culture,
Pennants of Princeton, lobster claws,
The vulture, swooping, drooling
Gnawing the flesh of our humors.
A clown
moves on
The sphere, a disk
smiles, huge red nose
Knowing all black spots
Feeling all creatures
Of one I am sure.
Tonight! Domingo Arruza fights
the Bull,
Proud he fights with cape
Confidant, he dies in joy
Smiling, the bull bleeds.
Even in dying the matador
Weaves a rug around
The already dead spirit.
Dear Christ,
Would my passion
inhabit the quill
All glories I could scratch
And yet
Unexplained tears spread laurels
O my onslaughts.

I am a red horse with
wings of white hot ash
And huddled near my brother's artistry I humble.
Could I relate
Could I ever understand that relation.
But if it were for me to know
I would
Bear my subjections.
Pebble the master
Clothe the sand
Weaving imagery
Never interrupted.
I found an empty bottle
topped of cork and wax
holding a paper, perhaps
secret.
But I always leave secret
messages to others
that is me.
Preference for white sheets
is universal
I love candy stripes
And that is me
An ear of corn
Butter and salt
Each niblet a colony
All colonies a man
A colony
And that is me.

Ron McLarty

and she said to grow up
and I tried but I can't
and people don't really care my mother says
    because they'll always see me as a child
and if I grow up and think I'm a man
    I won't be a man
    because people will still see me as a child
and mother says people don't care
and I'll just grow up for people who don't care
and that's not fair
and I tried but I can't

and I can't leave this jack-in-the-box world of lilliputian dreams
and I can't forget my soap-opera moments of bobsy-twin adventures
and I can't release my claire durand joys
    my mimi struck comfort
and I can't leave my backyard world of london-bridge downfalls
    of little-sally-saucers
    of hide-and-go-seek traumas
and I can't forget the lizzy borden drama of rabelaisian creatures
and I can't discard my marye richards philosophy
and I can't stop my mulberry bush go rounds
and I tried but I can't

and I can't leave this cosa nostra life of petriarca longings
and I'll just stay and listen to the lackadaisical memories of my mind
and people don't care if I grow up
and I hate people who don't care
and I won't grow up
and they'll be mad
and I'll laugh
and I'll be happy
and I'll be glad
and I'll do anything I want
and no one will care
and my mother says

Normand Fortin

The sorrow of leaves as they fall . . .
The joy of a bright
        spring day
            laughing and flying
Balloons and kites—
    red
        orange
            yellow
                pink!
Children run care-free . . .
Chasing the wind through all
            eternity.
Are we not like little children searching
    in the midst of ethereal beauty
        for
            a
                dream?

Roberta Moretti

Autumn time repeats again
It's stream of colored leaves.
They fall upon the summer grass
And make a path of nature's crass
But pretty faces.
The look that hides behind spring
        greens,
Behind the happy leaves of youth;
That look is seen as truth
When life matures
And wisdom from a world of storms,
From shadows that appear at dawn
Gives withered leaves and lives
        its flavor.

Kathy DeMoia

Poem

(*Nov. 8, 66, from Brown's library window*)
Buildings are greying with outmoded use
and from gloomy, shadowed skies.
Squirrels aren't bothered though.
They pause
        then scamper
            to their warm tree havens.
Leaves no longer rustle in the wind.
They are naked, somehow still.
Grass is dead. And the world is withdrawing.
Winter is upon us.

Ann Acker

softly
luminous
cat slipping
through spears
of green
flame

pink
tongue smiles
at jeweled
birds fired
with sun as
they loosen
cool throats at
a pale
sky from
high in the wind—
tree of
a white
smoked bark

darkly
eyes pierce
the provocative
air

and the
red sun
hangs
smoldering

burning

Patricia Euart

the alabastor
swans dip
and brim on
a sunglazed
sea and blue
glistening

Patricia Euart

When I Was Ten and Couldn't Sleep

He came to the back porch. "Sit down, Will." Uncle Frank began his pipe ritual.

"Mr. Barnes, you know what I . . ."

"Oh, where did you get that Mr. Barnes stuff from, Will, asked Uncle Frank, tapping the bowl of his corncob into his rock-tough palm? Why when your pa and me settled down here . . . let me see that would be back in eighteen and sixty-seven — no, no it wouldn't either, cause I remember it was the year of . . ."

"All right, Frank! I didn't come here to listen to stories about when you and Dad settled here. I'm sick of pioneer legends. This isn't Kansas eighteen sixty-seven; what you and Dad did thirty years ago is no concern of mine."

"Don't hurry me, boy!" Uncle Frank was stuffing his pipe with that tobacco which Aunt Jennifer used to give him every Christmas and which he'd put away every year until after the harvest. For the first time, his temper flared, but with the flicker of flame from the match as it scraped across the leg of the chair, it abated. "It was the year of that terrible war in Paris, France that we all heard about. When was that, Will?" Uncle Frank was in command now.

"Eighteen seventy-one," Will muttered.

"Eighteen and seventy-one," Uncle Frank echoed, sucking both the words and the smoke through the pipe. "Funny how a body could be four years wrong about an important thing like finding your very own farm, your own land. Well, anyway, your pa and me, we took a chance and bought up this land. Nobody else wanted it, Will, see, but we took the chance. You gotta move when you see your chance, boy, you gotta grab at that chance." Uncle Frank was illustrating with his pipe; then he stuck it in his mouth, suddenly and clamped down on it hard. "I miss your pa, Will, miss him something awful, especially now, you know when I've got time on my hands."

"I know, Frank. I miss Dad, too."

They sat quietly for a long time, and Uncle Frank began to bang the bowl of his pipe on the porch railing. The sun was just sitting on the horizon. "It's gonna go down fast now, Will. Watch it. I see it in the morning between the branches of that old elm out in front and at night out here on the porch, and those are only times it's beautiful. All the interval it's just hot." He turned to face his young neighbor, pipe at his side, his eyes pained and hurt, but dry, his face a mass of wrinkles caused equally by sunshine and age. "I'm tired, Will."

"I'll come back some other time, Frank; we'll talk later, when you're feeling better. It was a tough harvest this year. I guess it gets tougher every year, though. Huh, Frank?"

"You don't understand me, Will, and I don't guess I understand you either. I'm tired, not sick. What do you want?"

Will resumed his seat, hesitatingly. So far the old man had had the best of it and Will hadn't been able to even approach him with his proposal. But now Uncle Frank had tossed him the ball. Now was the time Will so dreaded. Now was the time so necessary to his future. But the preliminaries were not over, yet, and Will, fidgeting with his hat, flipping a coin (which he dropped several times), and periodically jumping up, walking to the porch railing and back to his chair again, talked amiably about his father and farming and the agricultural wonders which had been fashioned by Uncle Frank and him. Uncle Frank just sat back and listened. He had done his talking and was now watching the obvious nervousness of Will with a growing anxiety of his own. At last with the tension reaching an unbearable peak, Will blurted out, "Frank, I turned the papers over to my lawyer, Saturday."

That's your pa's deed you're talking about. Am I right, Will?"

"Damn it, Frank, what the hell else do you think I'd be talking to you about." The tension had exploded in Will's throat and the feigned ignorance of the old man had caused him to give it vent. Once free, the torrent of words was unstoppable. The anger and hatred, so long suppressed, gushed up from a place so deep in Will's soul that he lost control of his body, leaped off his chair and, with his face no more than six inches from the granite visage of Uncle Frank, screamed, "You old bastard, you don't even own this land. My father bought every acre of it. You just live on it. You and my father, such great friends. Why you robbed him every day you lived here. He was a sucker, and you were a dirty thief. What could have been one great farm, you've made into two little ones, neither one able to survive with-

out the other's help. But he's dead now, and what was his is mine. Legally you don't own anything. I'm your landlord — do you understand that, your landlord? But I wanted to do it differently; I wanted to give you a chance to stay on. But you've got to be so damn condescending, you've got to call me "boy," you've got to talk about how 'me and your pa settled this land,' but why didn't you ever tell me how you lived off his money, why didn't you ever tell me that this house is on my land, why, why? Because Frank you're a stinking, lousy fraud. Your harvest was rotten this year, Frank, wasn't it? Why don't you admit it, Frank, you can't even run a farm efficiently. You can't even run a farm." And then he had run out of words.

Will collapsed against the porch railing. Uncle Frank looked up at the stars, shook his head sadly and relit his dead tobacco. "I hope you didn't wake Jennifer. She sleeps poor these days, you know. I hope she didn't hear you. It would trouble her."

"Why? Have you lied to her, too, all these years?"

"Will, I'm afraid I'm gonna have to ask you to leave the porch if you don't lower your voice a mite."

Will broke into hysterical laughter. "You'll ask me to leave the porch? Me! Frank, I'll have you put off the land. Don't you understand, Frank, I own this property."

A long time passed before another word was spoken. Neither man looked at the other. Will wondered why he felt so ashamed. Why should the truth, which both he and Frank knew, have made such painful speaking? How could this old sponger sit there so placidly, in light of his exposure?

For Uncle Frank, it was a moment for remembering. Yes, he had played on the friendship of Jack Blessington; Jack seemed to need him so terribly. Hadn't he given Jack something, then? Hadn't friendship for free land been a fair exchange? Hadn't he and Jack both been happy for thirty years or so? No, he hadn't been a good farmer, but Jack was and if Jack had had all the land under his care, it would have been a great farm. Jack could have become a wealthy man. Will had reason to be bitter. But he did love Jack near the end. No, it wasn't all a fake.

"Will," he said without the slightest affectation, "your pa will curse you from heaven if you turn me out."

"Please let him rest, Frank. He's not running the show anymore; I am. And I can't even afford to wait and let you die here. Oh, I know, you'll ask me if thirty years aren't worth something. But, Frank, I'm afraid. In five more years or so you'll turn this farm into a desert. I'm afraid, Frank, because I really do love this land."

Will started down from the porch, turned to look at Uncle Frank, and then quickened his pace homeward. It would all be over soon. It would hurt, but it had to be done. Uncle Frank thumped his pipe into the palm of his hand. "Can't I even keep the memories, though? I guess I own those." For the last time that night he loaded his pipe. "Thirty years? I've come that far with just one good friend, but I could never learn to love him, never until the end." He rose and started towards the house door, lighting his pipe one final time. "If I could have just brought in good harvests these last few years . . . why I can recall the summer when it rained every day for a month, summer of eighty-one, I believe. No, no it was the year . . ."

The porch door sprang shut.

David Curtis

And now
again those
nights of cherry-
blossoms and crystal
moon rain shattered
omogranates into
my outstretched
hand

Clusters of
jewels dark
and moist
I touch
to my
tongue

Each a core
of bitter
stone

Patricia Euart

Sharers Of Loneliness

I came across my friend one day; her tears
slid through her fingers as she tried
to hide her face.

I looked deep within her soul and saw
the horror of loneliness dwelling there.

I pressed her closely to me, offering my love.
She accepted and at once two dejected souls
cast their loneliness into each others hearts.

Geraldine Faria

In the Small, Dark Hours of our Loneliness

In the small, dark hours of our loneliness,
When the groping reaches out indefinitely
To outward expanses of unfathomed pain—
The pain of losing all the heart for sight,
All the tenderness of hearing.
And then:
All shades of darkness penetrate
To form one soft, shining globe of love;
The soft, translucent glory of light
Captured in the moist sphere of recovery.
And the silk-screened sparkling diamonds
Of fully wedded silence and truth,
When softly, calmly speaks the sunrise;
And filtered through the quiet dawn
Of teardrops molded to fit stars,
The arisen desire to enfold and cherish
Opens wider, like a breath of chilled night-air—
Like the circlet-pining of a stone cast in
And the water's silent weeping for the stone.

Leslie Cameron Kelly

Dido: the eternal feminine

Behold in neon-flashing Troys;
Behold serenely, dumbly quakes
Of mirthless joy and quiet laughter;
Behold what in her soul awakes.

A Dido standing still, unfed
The fires of her heart unturning;
And takes to wed this purple guise,
This pacified Aeneas burning.

Within concentric circles flame,
And upwardly avenge this earth;
For gods and men can move,
But never will they fill the dearth.

The pushing, straining forces lift
And bargain with the winds for laughs,
And always reaching — racing shadows
The victory gall Aeneas quaffs.

The ferris wheel aboutly moving
These stumbling giants of our minds,
And forever there ahead it lies,
The jumbled litter of the winds.

How easy for the phallus now!
Man, its bearer, trudges home,
And waiting there with faith undone,
And lying waiting — eternal womb.

The neon flashes in our minds,
And rankles where there's force;
Whatever men — their seed unspoiled;
Whatever women — Man's chosen course.

Leslie Cameron Kelly

Pride Be Not So Vain

Oh how I wish to tell you what I feel.
Each time I see you my heart speeds
Its palpitation to an uncontrollably
Rapid beat, trying desperately to break
Through its viscous walls and hoping
Fervently that this will be the very
Last time the battle is waged.
As you walk briskly and nonchalantly
Pass me, my trembling yet ever so anxious
Hand wants to reach out and touch your
Slendor shoulder . . . to whisper — but no.

Pride that proud never humble creature
Has me within her covetous and tenacious
Grasp.
Her long, spiny finger-like projections
Are entwined about my heart choking out
Any expression of love or affection.
Every attempt to pry loose the strong
And overpowering grip is futile; and I
Submit painfully to this unjust servitude.

Soon you will be leaving — some distant
Strange new existence.
Never again will I behold the kindness
And gentleness so pleasing in your face;
Those eyes dark, rich and sparkling like
A child's when he has received A new
Plaything.
And they are eyes that speak when you
Are silent.
Yet shall anguish permeate my body when
I no longer view that wide, bright smile
Which laughs when you are happy, allowing
This frigid, bloodless world to fade away
If only for one succinct moment.

Pride, be not so vain;
Free me from your clutches;
Let me love my Love now,
Before it is too late.

Lynne Marie Boissel

What I Want

I want this
to lose myself
in being
of joyous nature
in quiet dreams
I'll be free
where truth is mine
this is all I ask

to be happy
to feel an urge
a peaceful hope
I'll live
a daring nonchalance
where freedom does not stop
a life of contemplation
for my restless soul

(can be read across, down, from the last to the first line, and diagonally)

Sharon Callahan

Letter Left In A Typewriter

by *Michael Drury*

Dear Sir:
Yours of the fifteenth date received.
I grieved.
Is that what you hoped I would do?
I knew
from the touch of the envelope
that hope
was dead. and I should never trace
your face
again in wonder on my breast.
Request
you do not speak of me — to her,
dear sir
my own dear sir. As for my part
my heart
is still. I shall not leave my job
nor rob
your office peace. I still must eat
and meet
my rent and other things, and pay my
way.
I won't do anything unruly.
Yours very truly,

Poetry

Butterfly thoughts that flit through my brain
Have been crushed by the touch that hoped to detain.

Can I ever, then, hope for a share
In that which inhabits ephemeral air?

James W. Dawson

The Beach

Summer 1948

An abandoned skiff slept in the shade of a large dune as the summer sun of France rose to greet the morning hikers. The beach of Normandy, once the scene of bloody battle, stretched out to meet the horizon, while airborne scavengers sought their morning fare.

Jean did not remember the war. His mind was filled with thoughts of fishing and swimming and other trivial matters which clutter the dreams of youth in the first heat of summertime. All of his eleven years had been spent in the village, and each summer, as far as he could remember, had been like this. There was always the deserted sunlit beach, and there was always Emile. It was their private ritual—their secret joy, to behold the serenity of the coast on the first morning of summer.

Emile was older than Jean, yet he found the same pleasure in the hike. He had known the fighting at St. Mere-Eglise—far from this seaside quiet. How different it all was then! No matter how busy he was, Emile always came with Jean—perhaps to recapture his own youth—perhaps to forget the past.

Stunned by a sudden inspiration, Jean dashed down the hillside, into the blue-green surf.

"Allons, Emile. C'est tres bon!" he shouted.

Emile did not hear. It was apparent that his mind was preoccupied. There was a faraway look in his eyes—a distinct longing.

"Emile, vite!"

"Un moment Jean, un moment."

Winter 1948

A Silvery light cast shadows on the frozen sand. The wind had ceased its howling and all the beach was shrouded in frigid quiet. A lone figure crouched beside a dune. He had not been here for seven months. Cold and fear beset him, but not as greatly as did loneliness.

Emile had died. It was different now. Jean had never known life without him. It was so sudden. Emile had always been there—not speaking often, only helping, sharing, understanding; just being there. Now there would be no one to greet the summer with him. Jean clutched at the cold piece of metal. This was all he had left. He thought of the day Emile had died. He remembered his last words: "We will never stop seeing the sun rise on the first day of summer." So very like Emile to say that.

Jean did not cry. The tears would not come. Rising, he cast a hasty glance at the cold sea; turning, he ran home in the moonlight.

Summer Twenty Years Later

A young boy ran down the dunes. "Papa, viens!" he cried.

The man paused at the crest of the hill—reflecting. It had been a long time since he had come. Now it was like before.

The boy, like his father, loved the beach. He too shared the same ecstasy that the first day of summer brought.

"Papa, si on allait nager dans la plage!"

"Oui, un moment."

Those same words—twenty years later, those same words. Jean's fingers instinctively touched the metal cross which hung on his chest. Emile's words so long ago—Emile, who had been so close to him. The cross—Emile's legacy—Jean's inheritance—a cold piece of metal. Jean remembered that winter night. Now, watching his son frolic in the surf, the tears which had for so long been unshed, flowed freely.

"From the rising of the sun to the setting of the same." These words were the only ornament of the cross. Emile's devotion to him—his to his son—the significance of the words on the cross—the first day of summer on the beach—all formed a carousel of thoughts in Jean's mind.

"Papa, alons!"

There was no time, now, to reflect. The memories would only be vague—the thoughts, disconnected.

"We will never stop seeing the sunrise on the first day of summer."

Jean hurried to join his son. Only the faith remained. . .

Sharon Callahan

The Gifts

To live
this gift is given me
to see or
not to see,
the gift to wonder free
to be
and to be me.
The gift to love
and unafraid
to think as I
desire.
to be a friend or
to conspire
against,
to fire
my hate or love
to whom I please
to glow or freeze.
The gift to sing my
thoughts aloud
among a crowd
to protest or
to look on as a cloud.
These gifts are given
you and me
and may it always be,
each a pilgrim of his
thoughts and ways
to live and as he may
find happiness each
day.

Kathy DeMoia

Life's Glory's Bound in Love

Life's glory's bound in love;
The tenderest reproach caresses
With lightning dawn; uplifts
The quicksilver majesty of thought—
The poetry of words
Lies in their feeling.
The feeling reaching out of one
Who, like that dawn, must rise
To meet his own recovery.
And sweetness will enjoy
The benefactress and her charms;
The truthful bane of life's not love
But the incandescent hope to overcome
That reaches into might of black
To there procure a morsel.
The men who lie in wait for love
But speak the oldest death:
The death of turning coins to find a way,
A way of seeking past
What has been there for years.

Leslie Cameron Kelly

Delilah

I'd stop the world from going 'round, if I could
Stop the room from spinning; my drink
Lies evaporating in the corner. If only I could think
Straight, lost romantic, misfit, twisting Good,
And talking riddles to the Regiment (standing stiff,
Indignant at my impropriety.) Only if
I thought—(oh I'd trade it all for a half hour's look
Through the Kama Sutra) —I could learn loving from a book.
The sins of a second Dante are my sins, Francesca's; I could not recognise
Them as sins, as evil beautiful to beholding eyes: my eyes.
I love you is a lie; that giving brand of selflessness can only be
A sham, a fake. The sensuality was mine, it was for me!
Did you think it was for you? Can you say you love me still,
For all that? I tempt your mind and soul and will,
Eroding it with structure and establishment,
Pinned it struggling to the wall—if I seem a bit beyond the reach
Of comprehension, it's only the I lent
Reality to both roles with compromise, and lost a bit to each.
Waste no invocations on this scarlet head,
Shameless, arrogant, filled with love child conceptions,
Weighted, pregnant, defiled by black deceptions:
Its only salvation is freedom, stirring gently in your bed.

Janet Loren

For God Or Country?

Here is my station, my assigned duty.
My heart is in pain. Where's the Patriot's beauty?
My love for my country consumes my heart;
But can I ever ply the warrior's art?

Whom shall I obey when the captain cries,
"Kill, your country needs you; Kill, for love of country."
Unable to kill, or even to hurt,
I am caught in the race, wearing golden dirt!

In a country founded by the grace of God
Why do men fight, spilling each others' blood?
I am a man, one of God's many children.
What can I do for a world so hate-ridden?

My mind's in a cage, unable to express
The conflict in my heart and my soul's distress.
I tell my mind "Just simply obey.
Don't buck the system. Don't make any waves."

Learn to be a robot. Forget how to think!
Don't worry about the Truth. Don't waste the poet's ink.
And then you'll be ready to join the ranks
Of mechanical "people", drowned in their own thanks.

My God swells my heart for compassion for those
Who think that peace can be bought with blows.
Have I the right to suppress my love
For any child of our Father above?

My shoes are shined, but my mind is dulled.
My perception is sharp; my perspectives, lulled.
These little people can't see the world.
They revel in sameness, and blindly grow old.

Why not give up? Why bother to try?
GOD HASN'T GIVEN UP; Why should I?!

Jerry Long

Nocturne

for L.M.F.

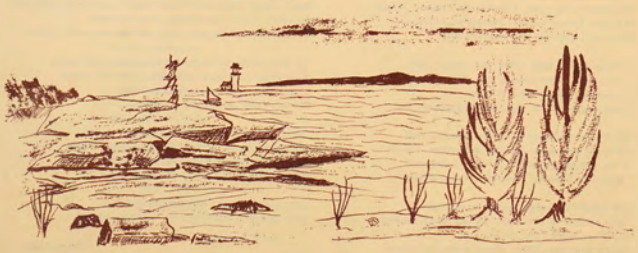
Softly at first
as the cool grass
where you lay
dizzy on the flat green cliff
high above the sea:
come, quickly my love
come, gently my love
Now a whisper
caressing her ear
blowing back the silver of her hair:
Come, quickly my love
Come, gently my love
Then loudly shouting in a shrieking that rips the lungs:
Come Quickly My Love
But again,
hear above the crash of the sea
only as a soft whisper
that,
caught in the foamy splash of the spray,
dances,
laughing diamonds
dying,
evaporating in the sunlight:
come, quickly my love
come, gently my love
leap with me from the cliffs
and we will dance among the clouds
and laugh at the sky
and love with the winds,
and love with the winds
until smashed
on the rocks
below.

Sharon Callahan

I'm Running through the Sea

I'm running through the sea,
The white-foamed crashing
Of omnipresent waves.
The softness of the sky
Touches down on my head;
No crushing weight—just love.
The sun can light my way,
The darkness me enfold
To hide away my loneliness
And soften pierceful stars
That prick the velvet sky.
I'm running through the sea,
The ocean's blest-felt kindness:
Through all the obstacles
Of time and space and energy,
These waves have come to rest,
To bathe my feet and kiss my hands
And softly reassure.

Leslie Cameron Kelly



Janet Loren

On Seeing A Sunset

It is the evening time so cool,
The sun is now about to set.
The sun is reflected in the calm pool;
The earth is trapped in a silent silk net.

The wind is still; the sky is red.
In the distance, a bird does call.
It is the time for day and night to wed.
Over the earth, night's veil does fall.

Heartbeats ago the earth was alive.
Now all the earth slumbers so deep.
The earth that once was a buzzing beehive
Is now held by the chains of sleep.

All the hostilities do cease,
The earth is now truly at peace.

Charles Haskel

Delicious Apple

My Love, my apple
And all I live to see,
If you don't like my apple,
Don't shake my apple tree,
For if an apple falls,
I'll blame no one but thee.

Sam Hayford

The Trellis

The trellis was bare
Save for a rose,
One lovely rose
Clinging there.
In anguish
I crushed it—
The trellis is bare.

Dianne Sansoucy

Thoreau's Moral Individualism

ITS QUALITY AND EXTENT AS REPRESENTED IN WALDEN AND "CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE"

Judith Cabral

Alienation and depersonalization in a rapidly changing technological society are dilemmas which modern man views as indigenous to the 20th century. The critical problem of salvaging the individual self from mass society and the difficulty of being a total and complete human personality in a fragmented and highly specialized society have evoked much concern from contemporary writers, particularly Marshall McLuhan and William Whyte, to name but two. However, Henry David Thoreau in the mid-19th century felt the impact of the burgeoning industrialization.

The solution to this crucial problem at which Thoreau aimed was one of the assertion of the self in the face of a Gargantuan society. It was a timely and timeless attempt to resolve this conflict by the affirmation of the worth of individualism and the individual human being. The quality of Thoreau's individualism lies in its refusal to view a human being as a mere cog in the machinery or as subordinate to an omnipotent and quasi-divine State. Rather the individual is a unique entity.

Thoreau viewed the pressure for economic success and the accumulation of property as a destructive force on the human soul. Men who own businesses soon discover that the businesses own them. Life is debased to ceaseless bookkeeping and eventually all humanity is crushed out by the monstrous burden of ledgers and self-perpetuating paperwork. "Most men, even in this comparatively free country, through mere ignorance and mistake, are so occupied with the factitious cares and superfluously coarse labors of life that its finer fruits cannot be plucked by them." Thoreau insists that there is something more to life than this. Life should have a deeper meaning—a spiritual contentment and harmony with nature. This harmony can be achieved through a moral individualism which refuses to submit to the corrosive philosophy of "conspicuous consumption." The ideal is to work as a means to life but not to live to work.

This view is anathema to an industrial society. The strength of Thoreau's individualism can best be seen in his own life style. Thoreau worked a mere six weeks a year—enough to sustain himself but not enough to wallow in opulence. This individualism can be an antidote to the "lives of quiet desperation" which have such a fatal effect on the human soul.

This individualism was further expressed through his sojourn at Walden where Thoreau set out to find his own basic humanity and individual value through Nature. He wanted to "live deep and suck out all the marrow of life." The individual must free himself from the extraneous irrelevancies of society and must find his own truth within himself and in nature. It is an ongoing process of individual and personal revelation.

The culmination of Thoreau's retirement to Walden was the need to return to society to transmit the meaning of his experience and his hopes for the creation of a more perfect society.

Thoreau's essay on "Civil Disobedience" is the living example of his moral individualism. It chronicles the struggle between an individual conscience and a government which it believes to be unjust.

Thoreau sees the individual in constant danger of being caught up in the gears of bureaucratic machinery. The honest man is obliged to stand up and defy this machinery if it is oppressive and unjust. Thoreau expressed his individualism by refusing to pay a church tax to support an institution of which he was not a member and by refusing to pay a poll tax to finance a war of aggression and territorial aggrandizement. Eventually Thoreau landed in jail because of his honesty to his conscience—a fate which may be the truest expression of individualism. It is not enough to pay lip-service to the ideals of freedom and moral individualism. Empty words solve no problems. "Those who, while they disapprove of the character and measures of a government, yield to it their allegiance and support are undoubtedly its most conscientious supporters, and so frequently the most serious obstacles to reform." One should possess the moral courage and individualism necessary to express one's beliefs by action.

Today, when parallels between the Mexican War and the Vietnamese war can be seen, dissent with governmental policy objectives must be viewed in proper perspective. The realization that honest and reasoned dissent is an expression of moral individualism is indispensable to the continued existence of a democratic society.

Thoreau through his voluntary temporary exile from society and his defiance of unjust government policy expressed a moral individualism which should be valued not only for its impact on 19th century America but also for its relevance to America in the 20th century.

Thoreau did not turn on and drop out of a society which needed, and still needs, vast improvement. Rather he committed himself to improving the inequities he saw by a moral individualism. It is through a selfless dedication to the eradication of injustice that one discovers the truest expression of self and becomes a total and complete human personality. If this moral individualism involves a rational dissent based on an honest search of one's conscience then this individualism will hopefully be a catalyst for the establishment of a more nearly perfect society and a realization that this type of dissent or individualism is the lifeblood of human society. As Henry David Thoreau so aptly stated it: "If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away."

Judith Cabral

PROFESSIONALISM?

Intelligentsia?

We sit, write, listen and speak,
sometimes,
if we get the chance,
the Great White Father
or Mother
stands before us
spilling lustrious pearls that we digest
and then spill forth
onto the usual form.

Numbers that sit and write
never thinking
never expected to.
Their only purpose is
to exist
not
live,
or so it seems.

Do they breathe?
I wonder.
Do we breathe?
I wonder.

The Great White Beings of gown and cap
breathe.
Or do they?
Is it of ice or fire from which they come
to torment us?
Is their purpose to bring us
to the peaks
of learning?
I think not.

Perhaps they want to bury us
under mountains of inconsequence?
Perhaps first,
we
will bury them.

Jane Driscoll

Pardon Me

Pardon me if I laugh in your face
as you stand in front of
the room,
Spouting pearls of wisdom and streams
of nonsense from that so-
called tablature of notes.
Gathered from books and authors of
much more noteworthy claim
than you.

Pardon me if I sit here doodling
and drawing on the hand-
out ditto,
Oozing with blue type and smelly
printers ink from the
noisy ditto room,
Bursting with active people like
you, trying to pawn off
some dittoes on people
like us.

Pardon me if all I can say is
pardon me while I take up
a chair and desk,
Listening to a far-away voice
which tells me how idiotic
this place is
and me too!—
For being here.

Sharon-Ann Oszajca

As Memories

a certain summer
I don't recall
when.
Our worlds
embodied
a season of pleasure
    finally it ended . . .
people mature
only to become distant
faded mutations of
a Memory
and worlds are
severed
    but thanks anyway

Ron Arsenault

Leaves,
falling,
twisting,
settling,
slowly from the trees.

Leaves,
drifting,
dancing,
sitting,
as memories.

Leaves,
me
sitting,
drifting,
slowly
thinking of you.

Betty Filippelli

Near the shoals and the rocks,
    with the ships and the docks,
I remember you used to play.
    There was a long ago day
You fingered your dream in the sand
—A ship to sail beyond all ports,
away from here and yet to one day return.
        Time was a shell you held in your hand,
        You were not quite a boy, not yet a man . . .
A smile left your eye when a ship went by.
    The sands shifting . . .
        The dream lifting . . .
Now you have come to recollect,
All that you knew as a child.
    Yes, the longing is still here,
    Near the shoals and the rocks,
    With the ships and the docks,
Your past,
    Your future,
        one . . .
Bathed in the summer sun.

Sharon Callahan

The river is still the same. It ripples in and out, going nowhere, disturbing no man's existence. The boats are all facing east, swaying gently on their moorings. The moon still remembers me. Every night it would beat its golden path across the river, vanishing before it reached me. And the eel grass, shining like jade in the night.

Nothing has changed.

Beauty and grace in a sea gull. Majestically circling overhead, she glides as if the cool sea breeze were her own. Below, in the water, a target; a goal. Cruising downward . . . a silent splash . . . and up again. Success! No one told her to go out and earn it. She wanted it, she determined what it was in her own mind, and she attained it. Success is love, success is hate, success is fullfillment, happiness, the first cry of life.

But it's not all beautiful. Six hours later, the nausea of low tide carries with it the stench of seaweed and a dead fish. All is exposed—the mud, the rocks, a broken bottle. But look at the miniature geysers of salt water as the clams perform in symmetrical harmony. Even from ugliness may a bit of beauty extend.

Where am I going? AS a child, there were no overwhelming fears, no deep thoughts. Where am I going now?

The glistening water reflects the past. Eighteen minute years are washed up on the shore amid pebbles and broken glass, and I am once again alone.

Nothing has changed . . . only me.

Ron Arsenault

The Message of The Crucifixion

David Curtis

One of the testing grounds of a drama's greatness is its effect upon the audience. The critic must not censure a play because it strikes both the audience and him as unpleasant. The dramatist may consciously have striven to shock, frighten, terrorize or disgust the audience. Such it seems to me is the case of Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* and the York miracle play, *The Crucifixion;* and the criticism which castigates either Albee or the York playwright as tasteless is not only invalid but embarrassingly misses the whole point of the art of the theatre. The York playwright then was not trying to delight the audience; neither was he intent upon retelling the New Testament version of Christ's death.

What the York playwright had in mind (and succeeded brilliantly in doing, in my opinion) was to look at the death of Christ in a fresh and imaginative manner. He cleverly shifts the point of view the reader expects in Passion plays and his Christ becomes little more than a prop. The death of Jesus Christ which to all Christians is the glorious act of redemption is, through the use of the four soldiers as the vehicles of point of view, transformed into a mundane piece of toil, merely another job standing between these weary soldiers and supper or rest. The glory of the Passion of Christ is, the York playwright implies, defined in the resurrection and ascension but not in the crucifixion. Crucifixion is a horrible, grim, painful death, sans radiance or glory; and it is as such that we see it depicted in the York play.

The grim realism of *The Crucifixion* then is the hinge upon which the entire drama turns. The realism is not to be approached as a novel quality to Medieval drama or as an interesting sidelight to the York dramatist's technique; but rather as the most important, and in fact, the vital element of the play. It is the insensibility of the soldiers which gives *The Crucifixion* its important dramatic theme, and it is the realism invoked in the creation of the four soldiers which produces that catalytic insensibility.

The horror of the crucifixion is emphasized by the casual manner in which Christ is nailed upon the cross. The holes were bored improperly, and so the soldiers tore the sinews and stretched the condemned man to fit the holes. The crucifixion is merely a job to the soldiers and if well-done may reap rewards. It is not an easy job, and they complain incessantly. Up the hill of Golgotha they carry the cross, and stop twice for breath. They whine about their inability to stand the rood upright and about the necessity of having to stretch Christ. Yet they turn about and mercilessly belittle the real sufferer's pain:

> "Fest on then fast that all be fit:
> It is no force how fell he feel."

Still as workmen, attempting to do a good job, the soldiers take a certain amount of pride in their labor: "Let see who bears him best." Their bumbling is almost comic, but the playwright does not allow slapstick to enter into this grim scene. But why grim? Analysis would prove to the reader that he brings the grimness with him as he reads. After all the soldiers are not Christians, but patriots, in a sense, eliminating a rather dangerous enemy of the state. *The Crucifixion* may be gruesome, but it is only as solemn as the reader's religion will allow it to become. If one's God is being destroyed through senseless slaughter the play is devastating, but the soldiers are not being condemned because they are brutal or callous.

They are, however, being condemned for being dull and inapprehensive. The signs are clear that this is no ordinary man they are crucifying; the soldiers recognize that a force is opposing them — a supernatural something. But the soldiers heed not the magical nature which their intuition tells them this man is possessed of. They go through with the crucifixion and turn their backs on communication they are obviously receiving from a supernal voice. That they disregard Christ's pain, make merry over their labor, treat the "traitor" with ignominy and draw lots for his clothes reflect merely the unhappier side of humanity, terrific in its truth; but when they deny the communication with a God — that is, when they deny the religious side of their humanity they are guilty of an egregious sin of pride.

The awful shock *The Crucifixion* afflicts upon the audience is sustained by a tremendously skilled employment of dramatic irony, which is to say that the audience knows something vital which the player's do not. Of course the prime irony of *The Crucifixion* is that the soldiers are killing God, at least the God of the York playwright and the Christians. That irony is enormous and makes the drama work. But the more interesting ironies are the subtle touches which the dramatist employs to contrast with the grossness of the major irony. A few examples will suffice.

At the drama's outset, the first soldier claims that there had better be no delay in the crucifixion, "If we shall any worship win." We, of course, understand him to mean reward and prestige to be given by the high priests and Pilate; but the ironic truth of the line lies in the Christian truth that without a crucifixion mankind could not have been redeemed. Hence the soldiers were winning rewards on two levels, the material and spiritual, the latter unconsciously, however.

And again the soldiers speak of meddling "with this unthrifty thing" and of "This travail here we tine," when ironically they are agents in the act which alone will profit them, the crucifixion of Christ being hardly a wasted effort. Now it is possible for a reader to impose irony on a line; however in this case it seems that the number of potentially ironic comments and the overt nature of some of them, make the playwright's tone and intention quite apparent. Such is the case, when after the cross has been reared upright in the mortice, the dramatist gives to the third soldier this richly pregnant line: "Me thinketh this cross will not abide." The cross, the conscious symbol of Christianity has, of course, stood firm through the centuries though battered time and time again by heresies and contempt of all types. Irony then is piled upon irony with the effect of having the most unchristian of men deliver Christian doctrine and propaganda, and thereby lending even more veracity to them, as when an enemy grudgingly praises, we may be more certain that the praise is valid than if it came from a friend.

The four soldiers of *The Crucifixion* serve one more role for the York dramatist, that of prefiguring the indolent Christian of later times. Their indifference, and it is complete indifference, to the pains of the tortured messiah remind the reader or should remind him of the tendency of all Christians to slide over the enormities committed on Good Friday in a desperate effort to forget the cruelty and unworthiness of mankind, not to mention the arrogance and indifference. And so all Christians from that very first time, have tended to slip into the comfort of Easter Sunday, coming in through the front door to the cozy living room, so to speak, as opposed to entering by the back door and crossing the bleak kitchen. The feverish desire is to see ourselves absorbed by a benevolent savior who forgives all, and makes the great Life-After not only possible but easily attainable. In short, Christians continually seek to make Christ the subject of all their religious sentences with themselves as the objects. That is "Christ saves me," "Christ grants me mercy," "Christ loves me."

Unfortunately, people like the York dramatist write unpleasant things like *The Crucifixion* and force us to juxtapose ourselves and Christ as subject and object. Then we are driven from the shelter of Easter sentences and wind up with Good Friday phraseology which we were wont to dismiss altogether. The story, then, reads, "I killed Christ," "I tortured Christ," and "I didn't much care what I did to Christ."

The man who wrote *The Crucifixion* forces Christians into a syntax which they find odiously true. Therefore the play is usually condemned as tasteless. "But how tasteful," might the playwright ask, "was the actions of mankind about which I write?" If we answer that question truthfully, we will realize the worth of *The Crucifixion*.

Jacob's Best Friend

It's only, Jacob, that I love her so very much
That I'm doing this, though you say I've lost touch
With life — living so long with her alone — its pleasures,
Its little joys. But you know those weren't the measures
I used in deciding on this course. Not the lost joys,
Not the missed enjoyments of company; but the noise
Of her laughter at your every jest, her beaming face
When you bought her that little golden necklace —
A perfect birthday gift . . . Oh, Jacob, don't struggle with the knots;
I tied them as tightly as you constructed those plots
To those happy tales you told that night — I first saw then,
You know, that I would never be good company for her again.
So a week from now when she asks me, "Where's Jake"? —
I'll make a joke — why she might laugh, to think me such a rake,
And then I'll have her again. What a tale I'll tell her!
But now I must get to work. . . Isn't this the coldest cellar
You've ever sat in — Where's my pick? — Goodness, but you're tall,
This might take time; but I'm so happy . . . Ah, here's the hollow wall.

David Curtis

Yellow bud
atop a stalk
Affrightened not
by threats of winter proper;
Existing in an everlasting
warmth
Because 2 lovers had once
chanced to see
(Astounded hyperbolically)
Your barely-opened bud.
Their hands as one
caressed your head
To leave a mark of love
forever:
That sought-for, everlasting
life
Which makes age youth
And knows death never.

Kathy DeMoia

Chivalry In Bloom; 1967

Oh, Princess of the Ranch-House-Castle,
Adorned in white velvet mini-robe,
I come to you, the Sweat-Shirt-Knight,
Upon my trusty, four-speed steed
To ask your benevolent Father-King
To grant me possession of your hand,
Or call a Banana-Smoking-Tournament in which your hand
I may win.
Oh, Princess of Virtue, n'er tarnished by the slightest sin;
I promise, you shall be Queen of my mortgaged-land,
Sporting upon your Queenly hand a matrimonial-class-ring.
I assert, you will be catered to your fancy and to your need.
My Psychology-Major-Merlin foresees a future bright.
We shall take a honeymoon-L.S.D.-trip around the globe.
Come away with me Oh, Princess of the Ranch-House-Castle.

Charly Totoro

Hybrid

Away! Away to the sunset!
Take my hand and run with me
As we chase the redding sky;
Pursuing the unattainable,
And yet, attaining such
By percieving it in thought.
Too, by fusing ourselves into a oneness,
By our love, and becoming an entity
Above human frailty.

An entity of what Plato
Perceives in his "philosopher-kings"
An entity of virtue,
To which we each donate
But love and devotion,
Nothing such as cruelty
Is mixed with these ingredients of sensitivity.

Continuously we follow the tracks
Of the straining steeds
Pulling the sun-chariot
Away from our captivity
As they race to earth's extermity.

We must capture not, the sun; but the moon,
To oversee our matrimonial unity,
And the ensuing nativity.

Charly Totoro

The Waiting Room

White, clinical walls rise to
a climax
8 feet above the floor
where people sit in
straight-backed chairs
gaping at one another's injuries
or wondering with prying eyes why
you are here
who seem untouched by pain or
illness.
Nurses fly past on their endless
errands.
The door is opened, then slammed
shut
and a gush of excited voices is
heard from inside.
Every so often a child cries.
Austerity is heightened by
cold, penetrating light
from large fluorescent tubes
hanging suspended from the
ceiling.
An antiseptic atmosphere
pervades the stuffy space.
Soon your hollow footsteps sound
on the smooth floor.
As you cross the threshhold
for that probable encounter with
pain,
you see a wastebasket full of bloody
cloths
and you look away.

Kathy DeMoia

Wishing

Wishing makes a growing,
A tree-sprig, sapling,
stripling fire of youth:
Upward, twistful, spurious
of all the taming, shrewing, loving things.
Roundward, forceful, naked,
Fire-bound, wind-done, out-flung.
Laugh's shriek that stops
One's own accomplishing.
And then one begins again,
in the height of impatience.
Wishing is upward and star-gaze;
Wishing is wall-fire and burn-stone,
It's the waywardness of youth
And the graceful eyes of love.
Wishing's active and sweeping:
It's alive and flowing, meeting the stars
Head-on.
Wishing crashes into Life and Loving.
Holocaust of splintering shatters,
daggers and slivers of light;
Smashing, cracking the surface where it hits.
Pushing, parting, straining,
Alleviating the pressure of its own
Creation.

Leslie Cameron Kelly

run your finger across
a whim
it's smooth
and pleasing to the touch

now place both hands around
reality
you hesitate
and your excuses are
valid

run your finger across a whim

Ron Arsenault

Introspectiveness

I yearn to be yellow balloon
And be snatched by the wind and
be carried away in its arms
To run among the clouds and
tip-toe on the rainbow-
bridge of the
sky
I yearn to be a poet
And send my words galloping
across the minds of
men
Leaving their tracks upon their
souls
I yearn to be a rose
And send my beauty to others
And send pain to those who
wish to pull me
selfishlessly from
my home
I yearn to be another,
And To (go) gaze upon her
And look inside her
and see if anything is there.

S. G. Lee

Janet Loren

A poem dedicated to Mrs. Eleanor Vallee

A land—embarrassed with Beauty
Bows its head to greater things—

But man—in all his vain majesty
Looks undauntedly ahead
Blind to the beauty of peace
Deaf to the sound of humility

Beauty bends its soul to fit the greater pattern of a
widened world.

Man stands in semi-consciousness
Blinking at the sun and not yet able to reflect its course.

Beauty's only fault is that she hides the precipice
But even if left open—who would take notice—Man?—with
his head in the dimming stars dreaming of majesty?

N. J. Compton

some smallness, your smallness,
breathes seasitive beauty,
sensitif. . .

your smallness breathes sensitive beauty.
because of this,
nothing is too large
and the day is not so long.

Ronald Leonardo

Where are you?
Where is your mind?
Consumed in books perchance.
Drowned by muddled writings?
Perplexed,
by genius self.
Where is your heart?
Wanting —
in your lonely sleep.
Or —
nestled in her warmth.
Where is your soul?
Searching for reasons to "why".
Or —
flying to her soul.

Ann Acker

The Essence of "Friends"

The people dressed in black come to
the edge of my grave to
mourn for me.

Weeping and sobbing they throw
themselves at my feet.

I can feel the ground tremble as
they beat it with their fists.

I hear, though muffled through the dirt
the words, "why, why him, such a
good man was John."

My name was Jim.

Geraldine Faria

Janet Loren

the big drops
i see
fall on all;
the sun shines
a lot
but it appalls
me
to see
the big drops
i see.
does the rain
fall
frequently on all
or
just on me?
does the sun
really
shine a lot
or just
just on thee?

Kathy DeMoia

From The Stranger To The Fall

The decline of religious faith was masked until the end of World War II by the substitute religions of faith in progress and materialism. All this was shattered by the war. In a world of shattered beliefs, Albert Camus was calmly putting the question why, since life had lost all meaning, man should not seek escape in suicide.[1] A world that can be explained by reasoning, however faulty is a familiar world. But in a universe that is suddenly deprived of illusions and of light man feels a stranger. He is an irremediable exile, because he is deprived of memories of a promised land to come. The divorce between man and his life, the actor and his setting, truly constitutes the feeling of absurdity.[2]

Central to Camus's thoughts is the experience and the idea of the Absurd. At its beginning stands the awesome human experience of awakening to the fact that man's comfortable world gives no answer to his question "Why?" What is the meaning of all this? It is the conflict between the profound nature of man which aspires to justice, to reason, to clarity and to the world in which he lives, a world irrational, indifferent to his aspirations. Fundamental to his thought is the conviction that man can hope for no life beyond the present; and that death, therefore, overshadows all men's lives. From the moment man realizes this he is deeply and inexorably involved in the drama of the Absurd, an irrational world confronting man in which he grasps at whatever seems likely to yield clarity.[3]

What is man to do when he finds himself in this cul-de-sac of absurdity? The absurd man will not commit suicide. Camus said that "no artist has ever expressed more than a single theme in different guises."[4] Camus's theme is his answer to the question of absurdity.

Two of Camus's most important protagonists, Mersault in his first novel *The Stranger*, and Caligula in his play of the same name, answer the question of the Absurd by revolting. Both men are shaken out of their previous acceptances of the world. This crisis in their lives is triggered by a sudden encounter with death. It is through an awareness of death that their destinies as individuals are accomplished. Once aware of death and the futility of existence, the tragedy begins. Both are solitary heroes marked for destruction by a fatalistic situation which they themselves have created. Camus gives a new twist to the fatalistic attitude by making man reject suicide and find in his consciousness of the Absurd and hopeless destiny, a true yet paradoxical happiness.

Mersault, the hero of *The Stranger*, is a quiet, unimaginative clerk. He goes through the routine of his life forming no attachments. He is unthinking, adjusting rather than questioning. He is more aware of the physical details of his environment than of spiritual matters. He is more concerned with the dryness of a towel than a promotion to Paris. He is intensely aware of the sun.

The pattern of Mersault's life is broken by the death of his mother. It is interrupted insofar as he must travel to the home for the aged where she has died to attend her funeral. He will have to miss a day's work. Mersault is not outwardly affected by her death. He reflects, "Really, nothing in my life had changed."[5] He returns to work and takes a mistress the following day. Mersault spends a day at the beach with a friend who is being followed by an Arab. If they must confront this man, Mersault would defend his friend. He would act only on the defensive. It would be unjust to shoot a man in cold blood. At this point Mersault realizes that he is indifferent as to whether he does or does not kill the Arab. This realization disturbs him. He meets the Arab on the beach. Conscious only of the blinding rays of the sun, and believing that it is trying to check his progress, Mersault shoots the Arab. This is his second encounter with death. His reaction to his mother's death was passive. When faced with the Arab's death he becomes aware of the absurdity of man's situation. His reaction is motivated by a desire to eliminate death from his life and to break the natural order. The act of killing the Arab is less important than the inner awakening of the hero. "I understood that I had shattered the balance of the day."[6] After Mersault's arrest he resumes his passive attitude and attempts to arrange the previous events logically. Mersault represents man in the modern age. His fervent desire is that the world should be explicable in human terms but he is painfully aware of the fact that this is not possible.[7] At his trial he realizes that the court is more appalled at the knowledge that he did not weep at his mother's funeral than at the murder of the Arab. The stranger Camus wants to portray is precisely one of those innocents who shock society by not accepting the rules of the game.[8] He lives among strangers, but to them too, he is a stranger. His girlfriend admits that she likes him vecause "he is odd."[9] Others, like the courtroom crowd, whose hatred he suddenly feels mounting towards him, hate him for the same reason. Mersault cannot justify killing the Arab. When he attributes his action to the sun, the crowd laughs. When questioned he says: "I've always been too much absorbed in the present moment or the immediate future to think back."[10] Looking back or trying to bring back past memories is in itself a "death", a momentary death, in the sense that one ceases to grow, and the moment one ceases to grow he ceases to live, at least for that moment. Such reminiscing activities are therefore rejected by Mersault, since death is precisely what he is trying to eliminate from his life. The ideal of the absurd man is the succession of present moments before an ever-conscious spirit. A priest tries to make Mersault confess his sin and be absolved. For the first time he reacts in an outburst of anger. He resolves to accept his human condition in all its finiteness and refuses, therefore, to be the dupe of blind hope and of faith in the supernatural.[11] He resigns himself to his death. It is the only certainty. He might have spent his life in any manner; he would still have to face death.

Camus conceived his idea for *Caligula* after a reading of Suetonius's *Twelve Caesars*. Like Mersault, the emperor Caligula realizes the absurdity of Man's condition after encountering death. Unlike Mersault's passivity and more like Achilles when Patrocles was killed, Caligula proclaims his hatred of all creation. He will make of himself a scourge and decimate it.[12] His realization is that men die and they are not happy. "At the instant of his discovery Caligula goes into absolute solitude, and this is the mark of his sovereignty . . . his victims are literally nothing but the food of solitude. Henceforth, he can justify his existence only by performing the tasks of death's Deputy."[13]

If Caligula did not have to die he would be happy. If he could have the moon, a hold on another world, he would become immortal. His clairvoyance brings about his freedom from illusion. Because Caligula realizes that the scheme of life is intolerable he wants the impossible:

> When all is leveled out, when the impossible has come to earth and the moon is in my hands—then perhaps I shall be transfigured and the world renewed; then man will die no more and at last be happy.[14]

Because Caligula has been surrounded by lies and deception he decides to make men live in the truth by eliminating contradiction and chance, by living according to logic. He intends to use his power to any extent in order to carry out his intentions. If life is absurd why not awaken men from the illusion that one thing matters more than another? "Everything is on an equal footing, the grandeur of Rome and your attacks of arthritis."[15] He orders executions to prove that it is not necessary to have committed a crime in order to die. Caligula issues an edict ordering all men to disinherit their sons and will their fortunes to the state. These men are liquidated as Caligula sees fit. This is to prove that if the Treasury is of paramount importance then human life has none.

Caligula confides in Chereas, a nobleman of the court. He considers him a man of equal temperament. Chereas recognizes the logic of Caligula's actions but cannot condone them, claiming that: "Reason by itself cannot fill the void in which the will to power plunges."[16] He envies Caligula because he knows what he wants. Caligula has been able to cast aside his illusions and can function logically without them. Both men want to live and be happy. Chereas thinks in terms of the span of human life, mortality; Caligula desires an immortal life. Chereas opposes Caligula's ideas because they trample on his illusions. He thinks that it is intolerable that his life should be drained of all meaning. A man cannot live without some reason for living. Because Caligula's theories are so logical, Chereas believes that where he cannot refute he must strike. ". . . all I wish is to regain some peace of mind. . . What spurs me on is not ambition but fear of that inhuman vision in which my life means no more than a speck of dust."[17] Chereas is aware of the fact that Caligula is carrying out his theories at the expense of human

lives. He agrees to work with the conspirators not because he wants to kill Caligula, but because he wants to put an end to the genocide. To Chereas Rome is more important than the emperor's theories.

Camus calls his tragedy a superior suicide. "One cannot destroy everything without destroying oneself. This is why Caligula depopulates the world around him and faithful to his logic, does what is necessary to arm against him those who will eventually kill him."[18] Chereas says that the deaths of the Romans were only side issues. Caligula will stop at nothing to reach his goal—immortality; even his own death becomes a side issue. In order for him to achieve his goal he cannot let anything obstruct his course. Because of the road Caligula has chosen, his death is inevitable. Thus, having arrived at the end of his logic, he is forced to admit his failure: "My freedom is not the right one . . . I did not take the right road." Fascinated by nothingness, insurgent freedom has killed creative freedom by identifying itself with the will to power. When he equated freedom and revolt, Caligula forgot that it is always within the power of freedom to annihilate itself.[19] Caligula can accept his death because he recognizes that the conspirators' desire to live justifies their murdering him. He accepts his death as the logical result of his actions and makes no attempt to escape it.

Camus's novel *The Plague* deals with individual reactions when the routine of their lives is broken and they are faced with the possibility of death.

A visiting journalist immediately attempts to leave the plague-stricken city of Oran and return to his wife in Paris. A clerk is hardly affected by the plague; he continues to reminisce about his lost love. He is also deeply involved in writing the first paragraph of a book. Paneloux, a priest, preaches that the plague is a punishment for the community's sins. He preaches fire and brimstone without having seen the suffering caused by the plague. After witnessing the death of an innocent child, Paneloux begins to change his attitude. The tone of his second sermon is dubious; "Paneloux's second sermon is more moderate and less certain than the first."[20] He speaks of an "all or nothing" theory. After the death of the child he finds hard to believe happiness in the afterlife can compensate for a moment's suffering. In the absurd world it is necessary to accept all Christian teaching or reject it all.[21] Only love of God can reconcile Man to suffering. God's will must be made Man's. When Paneloux himself is dying of the plague, he refuses to see the doctor. He has resigned himself to the will of God.[22]

Tarrou, a visitor to Oran, reacts by rebelling. He believes that the social order is founded on death. His reaction is to take the victim's side to reduce the suffering. Rieux, the doctor, remains the anonymous narrator of *The Plague* until the end of the chronicle. Rieux's decision is to reject all. No one believes in an all powerful God or trusts in Providence completely. If he did he would make no attempt to cure people of the plague. Dr. Rieux's purpose is to fight against creation as he found it.[23] Rieux's reaction, like Tarrou's, is to alleviate the suffering caused by the forces of evil thrust on Man.

Dr. Rieux and Tarrou have resigned themselves to life and its absurdities. For the first time we find in Camus's works, two characters who discover the theological virtues:

> What is it that sustains Rieux in his fight against the plague, if not faith, that is to say, beyond reasons and proofs, the certainty that the battle is worth fighting unto death. Where does Tarrou draw the strength to die "a good death" if not from hope, the ultimate unforeseen resource which springs from the death of human hopes. And how does he propose to attain sainthood if not through charity, which he calls "sympathy"?[24]

In November, 1954 "The Adulterous Woman" was published in Algiers; Camus had made rough drafts of other stories to appear later together in one volume as *Exile and the Kingdom*. *The Fall*, which was to have been one of these, soon achieved its autonomy and was published in 1956 as a separate novel.[25]

The story of *The Fall* is less important than some of the elements and implications contained in it. One of the most striking things about *The Fall* is the unmistakable Christian implications contained therein. It is those implications that I will present in this part of my paper.

Since *The Fall* is a very ambiguous book, my presentation of those Christian elements will of course be what appear to be Christian elements. There is no doubt as to whether the book is ambiguous. One can never really be sure of what Camus is saying. "It's very hard to disentangle the true from the false in what I'm saying,"[26] he wrote in *The Fall*. The ambiguity in *The Fall* does not detract from its greatness. One interpretation maintains that, in *The Fall*, Camus could be confessing his "sins" through Clamence, the hero of the story; at the same time he is making us aware of our own sins.[27] "His confession is ours." Camus is telling us: Let him who has never sinned throw the first stone. "Those who reproached him for playing judge and public prosecutor, what were they themselves if not so many Fourquier-Tinvilles?"[28] Roger Quilliot is very understanding, he says in reference to Camus: "Nietzschean power leads to delirium. Faith itself is equivocal, like the faith of Peter, the three-time renegade 'on whom the Church is built'."[29] If Camus is truly represented by Clamence in *The Fall* then the following quotation from Rachel Bespaloff is especially true of that novel: "His (Camus's) heroes, like himself, experience the common condition as an individual condition. . . They mime the passion and the agony of individuality; their cry is his cry . . ."[30] If the heroes in his works truly represent Camus himself, then a change in Camus's attitude toward life is reflected in his works. From Mersault's and Caligula's revolts to the resignations and acceptances of Rieux and Tarrou to Clamence's final happy acceptance of his absurd life, a transition, an evolution in Camus's thought is evident. This evolution in his thought is best defined in his own words: "Within the limits of the 'absurd' experience, suffering is individual. Starting with the movement of revolt, we are aware of suffering as a collective experience, as every man's adventure. I revolt, therefore we are. . ."[31]

"In the preface that Camus wrote to a new edition of his *L'Envers et l'endroit* (Betwixt and Between) . . . as in his story "The Artist at Work," he declares his intention to begin everything all over again. He confesses his ambition to go all the way back to his first work. . ."[32] If Camus planned to begin everything all over again, then perhaps: "*The Fall* is an act of purification. The author, like the fictitious narrator, like Faulkner's Temple Drake, like Dostoevsky's Nicolai Stavrogin, has let himself slide to the depths of confession, self disgust. . . To be born anew he has cleansed the abscess."[33]

Camus's last stage of evolution, of which *The Fall* is a product, has defined his positive dynamism much more sharply. Here his art assumes something comparable to a redemptive dimension. In *The Plague* he was interested primarily in serving men, not saving them. But in *The Fall* (1956) he stresses the new values of penance and expiation.[34] Too, during this period, c. 1956, Camus has been quoted as saying: "At the end of this tunnel of darkness, however, there is inevitably a light, which we already divine and for which we have only to fight to ensure its coming. All of us, among the ruins, are preparing a renaissance beyond the limits of nihilism."[35]

Thomas L. Hanna has said: "In both his novels and his plays there emerges at some point an element of Christianity, either in the form of an idea or in a person or both."[36] In *The Fall* there are a number of such elements:

> Certainly the development of his (Camus's) work must, if it continues, ultimately culminate in some spiritual position. The narrator's name in *The Fall* is a strong clue to the voice crying in the wilderness. It is quite possible that the novel expresses a realization of sin and unworthiness—the dark night before the coming of grace . . . the reader is told by Camus to identify the canals of Amsterdam with the concentric circles of hell; the title of the book is essentially religious; the concern with man's guilt links it to the Mauriac-Greene tradition and it seems to be an authentic cry for salvation.[37]

However some scholars are opposed to this conclusion, claiming that: "In *The Fall* he could conceivably be satirizing the whole notion of guilt and protesting its being used as a weapon for enslaving men and deadening their creative powers for self-transcendence."[38] But Murchland claims that this new dimension of Camus's work is something far greater than irony or satire, saying that: ". . . in *Exile and the Kingdom* he returns to the same redemptive themes and in this case it is more difficult to admit of the irony interpretation."[39] Murchland has quoted Roger Martin du Gard as having said: of Camus: "Each new work carries him one step further on a solitary way, laid out in advance."[40]

Unfortunately, since Camus is dead, it will never be known where that path would have led him. "It may be", as Henri Peyre has said, "that Camus at sixty would have embraced Catholicism."[41] It is not unlikely, Charles Peguy wrote: "It is frequently out of a pagan soul that the best Christian soul is made."[42] Rilke wrote in his *Book of Pilgrimage*: "I know that all paths lead to the arsenal of things where there is no life. Yet there is a great miracle in the world: I feel that all life is lived."[43] That paradox quite adequately summarizes Camus's own pilgrimage through absurdity to a high sense of purpose.

1. S. Johnson, J. Beerman, J. Hart, *The Play and the Reader*, p. 58.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Ernst Breisach, *Introduction to Modern Existentialism*, p. 107.
4. Albert Camus, *Caligula and Three Other Plays*, p. vi. Trans. by Stuart Gilbert.
5. ————, *The Stranger*, p. 20. Trans. by Justin O'Brien.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
7. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Literary and Philosophical Essays*, p. 27. Trans. by Annette Michelson.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
9. Albert Camus, *The Stranger*, p. 123.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 129.
11. Jean-Paul Sartre, *op. cit.*, p. 30.
12. Rachel Bespaloff, "The World of the Man Condemned to Death", from *Esprit*, (January, 1950) , p. 8. Trans. by Eric Schoenfeld.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Albert Camus, *Caligula and Three Other Plays*, p. 8.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
19. Rachel Bespaloff, *op. cit.*, p. 18.
20. Thomas L. Hanna, "Albert Camus and the Christian Faith", from *The Journal of Religion*, (October 1956) , p. 227.
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Ibid.*
23. Albert Camus, *The Plague*, p. 190. Trans. by Justin O'Brien.
24. Bespaloff, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
25. Roger Quilliot, "An Ambiguous World", from *Preuves*, (April 1960) , p. 28. Trans. by Ellen Conroy Kennedy.
26. Albert Camus, *The Fall*, p. 4. Trans. by Stuart Gilbert.
27. Quilliot, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
28. *Ibid.*
29. *Ibid.*, p. 35.
30. Bespaloff, *op. cit.*, p. 8.
31. Albert Camus, *The Rebel*, p. 224. Trans. by Anthony Bower.
32. Quilliot, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
34. Bernard C. Murchland, C.S.C., "The Dark Night Before the Coming of Grace?", from *The Catholic World*, CLXXXVIII, No. 1126, (January, 1959) , p. 310.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 308.
36. Hanna, *op. cit.*, p. 224.
37. Murchland, *op. cit.*, p. 309.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 312.
39. *Ibid.*
40. *Ibid.*, p. 313.
41. Henri Peyre, "Camus the Pagan", from *Yale French Studies*, No. 25, (Spring 1960) , p. 20.
42. Charles Peguy, *Clio, Dialogue of History and of the Pagan Soul*, p. 140. Trans. by Ann and Julian Green.
43. Rainer Maria Rilke, *Book of Pilgrimage*, p. 45. Trans. by A. L. Peck.

Peter Selafani

And now with awful shadows I awake
Feeling against the cold floor my own
Emphatic nakedness.
Not to myself or them but to elements as
We soon come to be named by searchers
Within the grasp of immortality but
Not nearly so close to realizing truths.
I smell the smells and wonder why the
Garbage should conceal the rose,
Or the cologne the man.
I wonder why my room is cold and descend upon
The thermostat! But, no, I feel much colder
Within, for others so balance me.
I leave it alone.

Ron McLarty

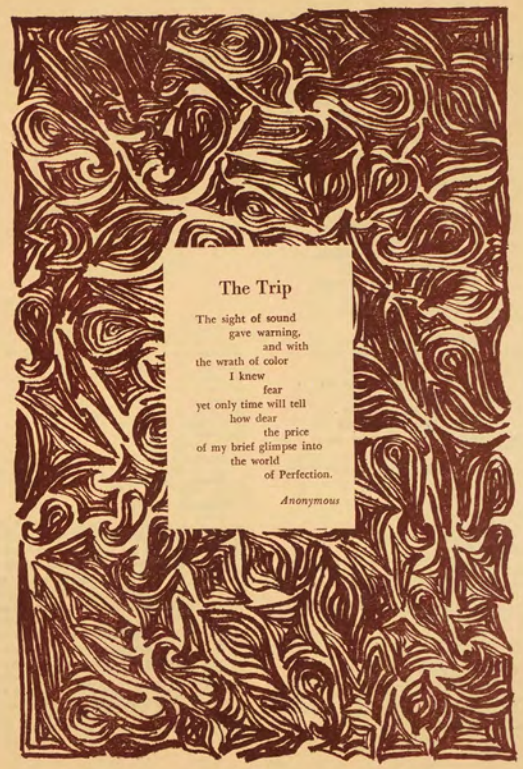
Clothes

While on a stroll, my eyes would feast
    On folks of varied sorts;
The women in their finery,
    The men decked out for sports,
The idle chap in careless togs,
    The one in tattered shreds—
And I would wonder if the soul
    With outer garments wed?

Is there perchance a medium
    Transmitting soul to mind,
Determining the shell we wear,
    Forsaking other kind;
What can we tell by looking at
    A fellow man's array—
Does such bespeak his inner code?
    What do his garments say?

To this conclusion I must come:
    We read upon one's clothes
His personality, his dreams,
    But just so deep it goes.
For underneath the gilt or drab,
    What counts is man's intent—
The way he lives within himself,
    And how his love is spent!

Ed Ortez



The Trip

The sight of sound
gave warning,
and with
the wrath of color
I knew
fear
yet only time will tell
how dear
the price
of my brief glimpse into
the world
of Perfection.

Anonymous