From Solitude to Solidarity: The Significance of Love in Camus' Philosophy of Affirmation[1]

Myreen C. Raginio
University of Santo Tomas | mcraginio14@gmail.com

Abstract: Albert Camus sought to envision his works to express negation, affirmation, and love in a progressive manner. Negation found its expression in *The Myth of Sisyphus*, *The Stranger* and *Caligula*; while affirmation was conveyed in *The Rebel*, *The Plague*, and *The State of Siege*. Love, however, was left unexpressed due to Camus' untimely death.

When Camus died on January 4, 1960, a draft of an autobiographical work entitled *Le Premiere Homme* (The First Man), was found inside his suitcase. This work was supposed to be part of the third phase of Camus' works which would purportedly discuss about love. The main aim of this research project therefore is to expose Camus' notion of love and prove its significance in his philosophy of affirmation. It will make use of the triads included in Camus' projected works – finished and unfinished – in extracting the meaning of love and in proving that love has a vital role in his philosophy. The work desires to address the main problem in three ways: firstly, to discuss Camus' philosophy of affirmation; secondly, to elucidate his notion of love by extracting its meaning from *The First Man*; and thirdly, to bridge the two by attempting to articulate the role that the notion of love plays in the development of his philosophy of affirmation via the articulation of the close connection of Camus' political intentions and activities to his philosophical thoughts.

Keywords: Camus, love, affirmation, internationalism

"Absurdity is king, but love saves us from it."
Albert Camus, *Notebooks 1935-1951*

In a speech given by Camus during his 1957 trip to Stockholm to receive his Nobel Prize for Literature, he explained in detail the projection of his works.

> I had a precise plan when I started my work: I wanted first of all to express negation. In three forms. As a novel: this was *The Stranger*. Theatrically: *Caligula, The Misunderstanding*. Conceptually: *The Myth of Sisyphus*. I couldn't have spoken of it if I hadn't lived it; I have no imagination. But for me, that was Descartes' methodical doubt, if you will. I knew one could not live in negation and I declared that in the preface of *The Myth of* Sisyphus; I foresaw affirmation, again in three forms. As a novel: *The* Plague. Theatrically: *State of* Siege and *The Just* Assassins. Conceptually: *The* Rebel. I already glimpsed a third layer, around the theme of love. These are the projects I have in motion.[2]

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From the speech cited above, three main points may be gathered: (1) there is a pattern in Camus' works, i.e. the endorsement of a specific thought comes in triads of a novel, theatrical act, and conceptual text; (2) Camus' philosophical thoughts are greatly influenced by his life, it could thus be said that his unfinished autobiographical work entitled *The First Man* will reveal more of Camus' philosophy and; (3) Camus' works are interrelated and progressive inasmuch as each phase layers down the foundation for the next phase, ultimately arriving at its final destination. It can be argued therefore that firstly, from the fact that Camus' works are interrelated and progressive, there is an overarching theme beyond the absurd. This being said, the absurd no longer becomes the central theme in Camus' work, but rather serves as the context. The overarching theme will be argued to be the topic of the third and final layer of Camus' work – love.

In this paper, I will make use of Camus' unfinished autobiographical text to expose the beginnings of the third layer of Camus' works.

The First Man

When Camus died from a car accident on January 4, 1960, included in the wreckage was a 140-page-manuscript of an autobiographical work intended to be his best work.[3] It was not published until 1994 – thirty-four years after his untimely death, for the reason that Camus' daughter, Catherine Camus, thought it best to wait out the publication of this work for three reasons:[4] (1) to follow her mother's wish, (2) to wait for the political climate to settle down, and (3) to not allow Camus' enemies to use the work as "another stick with which to attack him."[5] *The First Man* would be more appropriately called a draft rather than an unfinished novel but it is perhaps this fact that contributed to its beauty as a work, for in this novel, Camus is nothing but honest and raw – where there is none to be filtered nor concealed.[6] Its unfinished state should not discredit the quality of the work however for as stated in the "Notes and Sketches" section of the published manuscript itself, "…the book must be unfinished. Ex. And on the ship bringing him back to France…"[7] The fulfilment of Camus' intention to leave the book unfinished may be untimely but plenty may still be gathered from what was left.

The novel originally entitled *Le premier homme*, became a best seller in France, selling over one hundred thousand copies over the first few months of its release.[8] Apart from its literary grandeur however, it could be said that *The First Man* is the work that could make it most possible to identify the core of Camus' thought by the fact that Camus' life, as stated by the man himself, greatly influenced his philosophical thoughts.

The First Man was published unaltered with all corrective notes, sketches, and scribbles still intact. It is divided into two sections: *Recherche du pere* (Search for the Father) and *Le fil* (The Son or The First Man), both being incomplete. A more scattered, unrefined and merely outlined chapter is also included in the "Notes and Sketches" section, and this is entitled "The Mother".[9]

As described by many, *The First Man* is a work that gives a detailed account of a man's journey to adulthood, his love for his family, and his search for his father. Moreover, it is the first installation to the third layer of Camus' works. It is here where love as understood and meant by Camus is lyrically expressed as (1) a love that is earthly and concrete, and (2) as a love directed towards all of humanity.

The Expression of Love in *The First Man*

As mentioned above, *The First Man* is an autobiographical work; the novel, however, was written as if it was still a literary piece, with pseudo-names for the different persons actually depicted. Thus, Camus took form in *The First Man* as Jacques Cormery, a man born in poverty to an illiterate mother and a father who died in action when he was merely a year old.

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It can be said that there are two central characters in *The First Man*: Jacques, and his father. Although Jacques' father is illustrated as dead most of the novel, he has been kept alive through the accounts of others, through memories of him that are sometimes portrayed in a present tone. If one were to consider Jacques' father as the representation of Camus' own, it can be said that the latter played an important role in the formation of one of the former's notion of love. There is another more inconspicuous central character however and the importance of this character will be made even more pronounced as the novel progresses – supposedly. This third character is the mother.

Both the mother and the father contribute greatly to how love is depicted, more so with the former inasmuch as it was even indicated in the Notes and Sketches section that the third chapter entitled "The Mother", will speak of "loves". [10] In this research, the "loves" which Camus hinted at will be proven to refer to a love of life that finds expression in two forms – a concrete and earthly love and the love of humanity.

Love of Life as a Concrete and Earthly Form of Love

The First Man is rich with the imagery of the sea, the forests, the feel of the wind, the effect of heat, the splash of the rain, and many more. Jacques Cormery, having grown in a household of poverty under the tyrannical rule of an illiterate grandmother, took on simple pleasures in life which one could consider earthly. This is the first expression of Camus' notion of love – a kind of love that is earthly and concrete.

In *The First Man*, the insistence on the existence of the now, and of the absence of anything beyond life lived on earth was best heard through Jacques' contemplations upon his mother's lifestyle and attitude.

> Remembrance of things past is just for the rich. For the poor it only marks the faint traces on the path to death. And besides, in order to bear up well one must not remember too much, but rather stick close to the passing day, hour by hour, as his mother did somewhat by necessity no doubt.[11]

There are two things to note in the excerpt above. One is the distinction between the rich and the poor, the other is the mention of death and the insistence of living in the present.

The life of the rich can be viewed as a life filled with escapism and delusions of meaning. The rich indulge in many activities that often make them forget the futility of life – where remembering things past equate to remembering adventures or happy memories. In contrast, the life of the poor is a life where one is forced to face the meaninglessness of life, of the futility of all acts.

There were many accounts of Jacques' family's toil for daily survival. Jacques' grandmother handled all the finances of the family as well as the distribution of it, and she was entirely economical about it. She would buy clothes and shoes a couple of sizes too big so they could be used longer, and would forbid Jacques to play soccer because it wore out his shoes faster. One instance which served as highly memorable for Jacques was the time when Jacques' grandmother looked for the two-franc piece that 'fell' on the 'toilet'. His grandmother's unhesitant move to look for the two-franc piece in the toilet made Jacques realize his family's need for every franc.

As a young boy, Jacques was unable to grasp the gravity of their poverty. He was not able to make sense of all actions committed in response to poverty – at least not until he had lied about dropping two francs in the toilet. When he saw his grandmother washing her hands after searching for the money, Jacques "understood (that) it was not avarice that caused his grandmother to grope around in the excrement, but the terrible need that made two francs a significant amount in his home." [12] This state of poverty can easily be connected to living in the present, and constantly being reminded of death.

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The poor have not any other choice but to "stick close to the passing day, hour by hour," because every hour, every day, counted for a new kind of labor in order to survive. The poor toil every single day and yet nothing changes; such is futility. The novel's message does not end there however, for it is also through this poverty, through experiences of futility where one is able to embrace and love life through nature and earthly pleasures.

Every person in Jacques' household has a simple pleasure which he/she indulges in whenever he/she can afford it. For Jacques, it is going to the beach, playing with his friends, and running around under the sky – be it rainy or sunny. For Jacques' grandmother, it is watching silent films on rare occasions that they have saved up for one viewing. For Jacques' partly mute and partly deaf Uncle, Ernest, on the other hand, it is hunting. All these are earthly and simple pleasures that make loving life more than possible.

In the following excerpt, one will be able to note the love attached to engaging with nature:

> In a few seconds they were naked, a moment later in the water, swimming with clumsy vigor, shouting drooling and spitting, daring each other to dive or vying as to who could stay underwater the longest. The sea was gentle and warm, the sun fell lightly on their soaked heads, and the glory of the light filled their young bodies with a joy that made them cry out incessantly. They reigned over life and over the sea, and, like nobles certain that their riches were limitless, they heedlessly consumed the most gorgeous of this world's offerings.[13]

Here, there is yet another allusion to the meaningfulness of life by mentioning the lifestyle of the rich. It could be argued that this would imply an escapism in response to futility or more concretely to poverty, but it would be more appropriate to argue that these earthly pleasures – engagements with nature, particularly – are answers to futility.[14] As mentioned previously, it is insisted that one should live in the present. It is also implied in this insistence that there is nothing beyond life on this earth. How else should one embrace the present, embrace life on this earth, other than by basking in the glory of what it contains – of all things earthly and finite? Of loving life through the fruits of the earth, be it natural or manmade? The recognition of futility will make one go beyond escapism and into an acceptance that culminates in the love of life. It is not merely a utilization of what one has been provided with, but an appreciation.

The concrete and earthly form of love is not only a love directed towards nature, but also to persons. The Greek notion of love called *eros* or the love pertaining to that which is passionate and romantic, oftentimes sexual, best describes this form of love. And this could be noted in the few charged lines expressing Jacques' longing for *eros*:

> In this dark place he would close his eyes, and, breathing the familiar smell, he would dream. Something obscure was stirring in him, something irrational, something in his blood and in his natures. At times he would recall the sight of Mme. Raslin's legs that day when having knocked over a box of pins in front of her, he knelt to pick them up and, raising his head, saw her parted knees under her skirt and her thighs in lace underwear. Till then he had never seen what a woman wore under her skirts, and this sudden vision made his mouth and dry and caused him to tremble almost uncontrollably.[15]

These lines, along with a few others in other chapters are suggestive of Camus' future affairs,[16] and supportive of the earlier stated loving of life through immersing one's self in earthly pleasures.

The Love of Life as the Love for Humanity

One of the main dilemmas in the novel is uncovering facts beyond Jacques' father's life as a soldier. This has been met with much difficulty on the part of Jacques because no one in his household ever talked about him nor did his

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mother ever tell him anything relevant about his father whenever he would ask her. In fact, it was mentioned more than a handful of times that Jacques' mother no longer remembers her husband in the sense that memories of their life together were no longer vivid. This fact made Jacques perceive this as his mother not allotting time for the remembrance of his father. Thus he himself as well had never known the man, never thought of him longingly as his father, nor felt anything towards him until he was forty years old.

In the love of life expressed as the love for humanity, there are yet again two layers: concrete and specific love directed at persons, and a more abstract and general love towards humanity as a whole. In the first layer, love takes the form of a love directed towards one's family or friend. What makes this love distinct from the earthly form of love is that instead of passion, what characterizes this love is a form of subtle devotion.

The First Man is dedicated to Camus' mother, who is said to "never be able to read (the) book,[17]" because she is illiterate. As the novel progresses, Jacques gradually comes to the understanding that he had loved his mother dearly and had longed to feel the warmth of her love. In a conversation with Victor Malan, Jacques' cherished friend, Jacques claimed that when he loves, he loves with faults included, saying further:

> I love or revere very few people. As for the rest, I'm ashamed of my indifference to them. But for those I love, nothing and no one, neither I nor certainly they themselves, can ever make me stop loving them. It took me a long time to learn that; now I know it.[18]

The kind of love being mentioned here is a concrete form of love that is referred to by the Greeks as *storge*.[19] *Storge* requires a feeling of familiarity but is also known to not be loudly nor frequently expressed and instead comes naturally to a person. This is the kind of love Camus, as Jacques, expresses for his family as well as for his cherished friends and his mentors.

These forms of love – i.e. the concrete and earthly love likened to *eros,* as well as the subtle devotion in the form of *storge* – are not the primary concern of this research however for there is not much to elaborate upon these kinds of love. What holds prime importance is the other kind of love greatly influenced, as apparent in the text, by Camus' father (or Jacques' father, Henri, in the novel). This love, in contrast to the earlier stated forms, is collective for it encompasses the whole of humanity.

As mentioned earlier, Jacques had not spared any thought nor longing for his father for forty years prior to him visiting his grave. Moreover, upon arriving in the cemetery and speaking to the caretaker of the graves, Jacques portrayed his utmost indifference towards his father when the caretaker had expressed sympathy upon hearing of Jacques' loss, by merely replying, "I was less than a year old when he died. So, you see," [20] internally thinking that "he could not muster a filial devotion he did not feel." [21] His loud indifference shifted to anguish however when he had seen his father's grave, even more specifically, the two dates summarizing the latter's years of being alive into twenty-nine.

> And the wave of tenderness and pity that at once filled his heart was not the stirring of the soul that leads the son to the memory of a vanished father, but the overwhelming compassion that a grown man feels for an unjustly murdered child.[22]

This is a line that holds primary importance to the kind of love that this research will focus on. Here, one will take note that Camus envisioned a form of love higher and vaster in scope than *storge* or *eros*. It is an all-encompassing, and truly collective love for all of humanity. What should be emphasized in the lines above is the explicit distinction between the feeling shared within a relationship like that of a father and a son, being subservient to the compassion towards one man

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to his fellow man. Here, one is given a glimpse of the form of love I argue to be the intended theme in the third layer of all of Camus' works: a collective love that will serve as a response to life's absurdities. This form of love may be further justified by the narrated events of Henri Cormery's experiences in war screaming of indignation towards the injustices inflicted by one human to another.

Jacques recounts what he had learned from M. Levesque, his school's principal as well as a man who shared posts with his father during the war in Morocco. It was said that when M. Levesque and Henri were about to relieve the sentinel at the bottom pass, they had instead seen two corpses killed inhumanely – heads turned towards the moon, necks slashed, and mouths stuffed with their own sexual organs. At this, said M. Levesque, Henri was beside himself, saying their enemies were not men because "a man doesn't let himself do that kind of thing! That's what makes a man or otherwise…"[23] It cannot be denied that Henri possessed a deep compassion and love for his fellow men, for, just the thought of man killing another in a manner that can never be deemed just, outrages and befuddles him. This is seen more so at yet another recount of what Henri did when men kill their fellow man.

An impactful memory of his father for Jacques was the time when an agricultural laborer named Pirette was sentenced to be executed for having allegedly robbed and killed his employers and their three children. Henri was said to have gotten up at night to attend the punishment. When he arrived home however, Henri "was livid… he went to bed, then got up several times to vomit, and went back to bed. He never wanted to talk about what he had seen." [24] The actions of Henri are consistent with what was earlier stated. He abhors injustice and the phenomenon of killing one's fellow human confuses him, more so brings him despair. This is perhaps what was meant when Camus wrote that Henri was "a hard man and a bitter one, who had worked all his life, had killed on command, had submitted to everything that could not be avoided, but had preserved some part of himself where he allowed no one to trespass." [25] That part which Henri is said to preserve is his love for humanity which tries in earnest to act in accord with this so long as it is possible. This collective and pervading love was what Jacques or Camus also inherited.

In one instance, young Jacques embodied this inherited distaste for violence when, driven by the 'duty of a man', Jacques engaged in a *donnade* – a duel of fists with the aim of settling a quarrel where:

> …the honor of one of the adversaries was at stake, either because someone had insulted his parents or his ancestor, or had belittled his nationality or his race, or had been informed on or accused another of informing. Had stolen or been accused of it, or else for the more obscure reasons that come up every day in a society of children.[26]

Jacques engaged in a duel to defend his honor after Munoz, his classmate, whispered that Jacques was a 'teacher's pet' for the whole class, including M. Bernard, to hear. The *donnade* is a ritual that Jacques and Munoz felt obliged to undergo. What is important to note in this specific scene is that the inevitability of this fight exposed Jacques' reluctance to participate in imposing harm towards another.

His execution of the said ritual can be likened to what was earlier exposed of his father. His father had committed acts which he would otherwise have avoided had he the choice. He acted out of duty, or rather, by the sheer fact that they were inevitable. Jacques, as well, recognized that conflict and violence are at times inevitable but with this acknowledgment came a recognition of the fact that its inevitability does not equate to one's acceptance or preference of it. When Jacques had successfully landed a hook to Munoz's right eye, rendering Jacques the victor, more than being glad over his triumph, he was saddened. After witnessing the effect of violence

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on his foe, Jacques realized that "war is no good, because vanquishing a man is as bitter as being vanquished."[27]

In the progressive development of all forms of conflict and injustices, Camus also finds himself questioning the occurrence of these events.

> By the time he had come of age, world events around him were such that his execution was no longer so unlikely a possibility, and reality no longer assuaged his dreams, but on the contrary was fed during a very [precise] number of years by the same dread that so distressed his father and that he had left to his son as his only clear and certain legacy.[28]

Some may say that what is expressed here is a personal anxiety towards an imminent danger, that this speaks more of the absurd than of a love towards humanity. It may be true in a sense, but it does not solely speak of an absurd world bound to end at any minute. In a closer reading one will be able to detect the urgency in tone of a question arising from an incomprehensible occurrence: man endangering other men's lives. This question arises because for both Jacques and Henri, man should love his fellow man instead of fight him.

This notion of love can be said to spring from Camus' firsthand experience or witnessing of the injustices brought on by social conflicts and war. In *The First Man* apart from the author portraying the search of a man for his father, it can also be viewed as the author's attempt to understand war and the conflicts arising from socially-constructed differences along with expressing his confusion for the existence of such wars when one could just love life – as expressed through nature or in humanity. It is thus once more exposed that Camus' philosophical thoughts are so rooted in his life that even his political activities and activism is an actualization of his philosophy.

Camus' Notion of Love and his Philosophy of Affirmation

Camus' Political Stance and its Implications to His Works

In 1933, Albert Camus began his political commitment by joining the anti-fascist Amsterdam-Pleyel movement. In the following year, he joined the Communist Party as a propaganda agent among the Arabs.[29] Later on, Camus severed his ties with the Party in 1935 as a reaction to its "playing down of colonial injustices and therefore a reduced interest in, among others, the Arabs of Algeria."[30] Although inaccuracies were noted by some commentators such as Conor Cruise O'Brien who argued that it is more probable for Camus to have left the party in 1937,[31] the fact still remains that Camus left the party that ignored injustices and favored the interest of one group over another.

In the previous sections of this paper, it was shown and proven by a close and thorough reading of *The First Man*, that Camus' notion of love is a love of life expressed in two ways: a passionate and the love for humanity. The former expression can be said to be a product of Camus' childhood and his early indulgence of the fruits of nature and various passions, while the latter can be connected to Camus' political intentions.

Camus wrote his first work, a collection of essays later to be published as *Betwixt and Between,* in 1935, his first play in 1936 and, in 1938, had written his second play entitled *Caligula* and had also began preliminary work on the elucidation of the Absurd to be found in *The Myth of Sisyphus.*[32] As apparent in the dates of his activities, Camus was politically active prior to his literary career. Camus' interest and eager participation in the throes of politics, and his passion to support the fight against injustices prior to his career as a writer, imply a deeper meaning to his works. In reading Camus' works, it could be argued that one must heed the social and political context in which they were formed.

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A discussion of Camus' political views is relevant to this research project therefore, since Camus' aspirations for Algeria is vital to his entire philosophical oeuvre which, according to John Foley, can be said to rest on the idea of 'Mediterranean humanism', moderation, 'limits', etc.[33] These are the underlying themes that irrevocably connect Camus' literary and political intentions.

Tracing the Love of Life in Earlier Works

Camus' works are interrelated and progressive. To justify this, one need only trace the thoughts and concepts found in later works in the earlier ones and vice versa. These specific characteristics make unearthing and concretizing the final phase of Camus' work feasible such that the ideas contained in *The First Man* may be discovered in the earlier works albeit not as concretely. Thus this research project will be true to the hermeneutic circle such that the whole will be understood in accordance to the parts, and the parts' meaning understood in the context of the whole.

Negation

As stated beforehand, the first phase which is known as negation is expressed in three ways: lyrically in *The Stranger,* theoretically in *The Myth of Sisyphus* and theatrically in *Caligula* and *The Misunderstanding.* Conor Cruise O'Brien, preferred to refer to this phase as the phase of the Stranger,[34] which may be more fitting since the Stranger is he who experiences negation in an individual level, and the first phase precisely demonstrates this.

Negation is the acknowledgment of the absurd which springs from the relation of man who ceaselessly seeks meaning, and the world who falls deaf to these cries.[35] This acknowledgement is a negation inasmuch as there is a removal of a possibility of and meaning itself in a perceived meaningful world and existence.

Negation is a problem that calls forth a proper response. If one were to stop at negation, the logical response would be suicide – physical or philosophical. Camus rejects suicide and does not see it as a solution to the absurd and sees it rather as an escape. The two forms of suicide are not solutions to the absurd for they merely eliminate one aspect of the problem. In physical suicide, what is removed is the individual seeking meaning, resulting to the problem remaining unsolved. Conversely, philosophical suicide removes the meaninglessness of the world and replaces it with a God and/or an idol. This solution does not address the problem at hand inasmuch as the formula of the problem is changed but the original problem is still lurking unseen. The response that Camus provided in *The Myth of Sisyphus* and *The Stranger* instead led to the opposite: a primitive form of an affirmation of life. Upon the realization of the absurdity of life, one is expected to become the Absurd Man who embodies the characteristics of Don Juan, the actor, and the conqueror.[36] The Absurd Man is one who prefers quantitative over qualitative experience and remains lucid in the present, foregoing any thought of a life beyond the current one. These characteristics boil down to the emphasis on two things: the here and now.

In *The First Man*, negation was expressly portrayed in the lifestyle of the Cormery family and their neighborhood. Affirmation, in turn, was manifest in the attitudes of Jacques and the people around him. It was shown in the novel that poverty necessitated an outlook that made one remain in the present and gather many experiences that are concrete and worldly. One area influenced by this outlook is the Cormery family's view on religion.

> Actually religion had no part in their lives. No one went to Mass, no one invoked or taught the Ten Commandments, nor did anyone refer to the rewards and punishments of the hereafter… It was not a matter of ignorance on (Jacques' grandmother's) part. For she had seen many die around her… But that was just it: she was as familiar with death as she was with work or poverty, she did not think about it but

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> in some sense lived it, and besides, the needs of the moment were even more urgent for her than they were for Algerians as a whole, who by their daily cares and their common lot were denied the funerary piety that flourishes in civilizations at their height… For Uncle Ernest, who lived by his senses, religion was what he saw; that is, the priest and the ritual… As for Catherine Cormery, only she with her gentleness might have suggested faith, but in fact that gentleness was her faith… She never spoke of God. In fact, that was a word Jacques had never heard spoken throughout his childhood, nor did he trouble himself about it. Life, so vivid and mysterious, was enough to occupy his entire being. [37]

Religion was exposed to be treated in a practical level in the novel. It was a practice of culture rather than an adherence to an actual belief, rendering concepts such as the afterlife foreign to the Cormerys.

The novel highlighted the here and now in every section, emphasizing the character of the Absurd Man. In the previous section, the accounts on Jacques' family's poverty was understood to lead to a love that is concrete and earthly further accentuating the present. In this chapter, this concrete and earthly love will be traced in Camus' earlier works, beginning with *The Stranger, The Myth of Sisyphus,* and *Caligula*.

The Love of Life as an Earthly Love in Negation

The Stranger is a novel littered with symbolisms. To grasp the message of this novel, one needs to read between the lines. Some important elements to note and analyze are the sun, the sea, the observer standpoint, Meursault's conviction, and the trial itself.[38]

The sun or the heat, rather, plays a vital role in the actions and moods of Meursault, affecting, in turn, the events that unfold in the novel. At times, the heat is a source of comfort. It is calming and can easily lull Meursault to sleep. At other times, it does Meursault a lot of good, refreshing him and making him happy. On the day of his mother's funeral however, the sun was harsh and Meursault felt nothing but discomfort and annoyance for it. During the funeral, Meursault says that while the evenings in the countryside may be a 'sad relief', "today, with the sun bearing down, making the whole landscape shimmer with heat, it was inhuman and oppressive." [39] He was dizzy and he was having a headache. After the funeral, the sun was portrayed in neutral or joyous tones. The sun was yet again described to be harsh when Meursault had seen the Arab in the spring. "The sun was the same as it had been the day I'd buried Maman, and like then, my forehead especially was hurting me, all the veins in it throbbing under the skin." [40] This explicit showcase of a connection implies a signification.

According to Syed Irfan, the English translators of Camus' *The Stranger* made a grave mistake when they had translated "*Aujourd'hui, maman est morte*" into "Mother died today." [41] This mistake was partially amended however, when Matthew Ward retained the word "Maman", in his translation, making it, "Maman died today." Nevertheless, Irfan still argues that the translators still fault Camus' work when they had failed to retain the original sentence structure of the first statement of *The Stranger*. The correct translation for "*Aujourd'hui, maman est morte,"* is "Today, Maman died." [42] It is this arrangement which enables the reader to understand three things: (1) Meursault is a man who lives in the present, (2) his relationship with his mother is not that of one who is distant with her and, (3) Meursault's day was disrupted by his mother's death – symbolically representing the abrupt awareness of the absurd. The importance of this specific structure and its implications can also fortify the connection between the event of Meursault's mother's death and his killing of the Arab wherein, as mentioned previously, the heat of the sun was just as intense, his dizziness and headache just as bad and finally, his day disrupted just as abruptly – only now expressed unambiguously:

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> The trigger gave; I felt the smooth underside of the butt and there, in that noise, sharp and deafening at the same time, is where it all started. I shook off the sweat and sun. I knew that I had shattered the harmony of the day, the exceptional silence of a beach where I'd been happy.[43]

It can be surmised then that the heat symbolizes the mild indifference of the world to its occupants seeking reason and order. When the sun is not harsh, there is normalcy but at times the heat will be immense, and actions will be rendered meaningless – such as Meursault's indifference to his mother's death, his killing of the Arab, and his detachment during his trial. This is how the absurd human condition is illustrated in the novel – like the 'why' that suddenly arises amidst one's routine. It should be stated however that the absurd can be distinguished as a human condition, on one hand, and as a state of consciousness on the other. If the heat symbolizes the absurd human condition, then the attitude of Meursault during his trial represents the absurd as a state of consciousness.

The trial of Meursault is an expression of the absurd inasmuch as the judge, the lawyer, prosecutor, and the press were all in search for the meaning behind Meursault's attitude towards the passing of his mother and his killing of the Arab when there was none. While the prosecutor applied his own meaning to Meursault's actions, the latter remained impassive, accepting the fact that there is no meaning to be found in his actions. They just happened.[44] This here, is an illustration of the absurd state of consciousness – a state wherein one is aware of the absurd human condition without trying to modify it, resulting to accepting it instead.

The symbol of the sea, on the other hand, will be shown to be the expression of the earthly and concrete form of love.

The main scenes in the first part of *The Stranger* contained two things: the beach and Marie. The day after Meursault returned to Algiers, he decided to go for a swim. If one were to analyze the order of the events, the beach is always mentioned after an encounter with the absurd. It seems to imply that the beach, or nature in general, is one way of keeping one's self grounded after an encounter with the absurd. In the first part of the novel, the state of absurdity and the absurd human condition were not yet fully recognizable. Meursault's consciousness of the absurd still tethered in other words, but after every episode, nature and the sea are shown to be constant sources of reprieve.

During the funeral of Meursault's mother for example, when the director talked to Meursault about what his deceased mother used to do when she was alive, reminding him albeit indirectly that she is no longer there, he turned his attention to his surroundings instead, appreciating its majesty and thinking of his mother in relation to what he saw rather than what he was hearing.[45] This may be interpreted as an attempt to stay in the here and now – to not be swayed into responding negatively to absurdity.[46]

The death of Meursault's mother symbolized a sudden encounter with the absurd. In *Caligula* as well, the death of Dursilla, Caligula's sister whom he had fallen in love with, became the trigger for Caligula to become aware of the absurdity of the world. Most of his subjects were thinking that he had a sudden change of behavior due to Dursilla dying per se, but it has been said by him explicitly that it was not about that:

> Now, I know. This world, as it is constituted, is not bearable. Therefore I have need of the moon, or of happiness, or immortality, of something which is demented perhaps but which is not of this world… I also know what you're thinking. What disturbances for the death of a woman! No, it's not that. I believe I recall, it's true, that some days ago a woman that I loved died. But what is love? A slight thing. This death is nothing, I swear it to you. It is only the omen of truth which makes the moon necessary to me. It's a truth entirely

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> simple and entirely clear, a little thing, but difficult to discover and heavy to bear.[47]

In the excerpt above one can distinguish the main difference between how Meursault and Caligula responded to the absurd. Meursault's response was that of someone turning his attention to the here and now while Caligula's was that of a nihilist playing God – wanting to achieve the impossible by exercising as much freedom in order to deny his unfreedom. According to Cruickshank, "the motives of (Caligula's) revolt – a desire for lucidity and readiness to act in accordance with the truth he finds – would have Camus' approval, but the methods of his revolts are utterly wrong." [48] Caligula resulted to killing many of his subjects for the most trivial reasons, torturing them and treating them like objects meant to bend to his every whim. Caligula had an awareness of the absurd but he could not accept it.[49]

In *The Stranger,* the insistence to stay in the here and the now through the appreciation of nature in the face of absurdity was even more pronounced in the second part of the novel wherein it could be said that Meursault is now lucid in terms of the absurd as a human condition and a state of consciousness.

As mentioned earlier, Meursault's trial is also symbol of the absurd human condition and Meursault's demeanor during the trial, an illustration of the absurd as a state of consciousness. When the absurd was descending on him in the form of the verdict, he once again resulted to focusing his attention on his surroundings.

> In the end, all I remember is that while my lawyer went on talking, I could hear through the expanse of chambers and courtrooms an ice cream vendor blowing his tine trumpet out in the street. I was assailed by memories of a life that wasn't mine anymore, but one in which I'd found the simplest and most lasting joys: the smells of summer, the part of town I loved, a certain evening sky, Marie's dresses and the way she laughed.[50]

Does this not remind one of Sisyphus, condemned to roll a rock atop a mountain only to have it roll down again for all eternity? Sisyphus is the true Absurd Hero according to Camus and although there are many opinions as to the reason behind Sisyphus' condemnation,[51] there are two main themes in them: a defiance of the gods, and a passionate love for the earth and living.

Sisyphus defied the gods by refusing to be subjected to them in like manner with Meursault's rejection of religion.[52] In one of the speculations on the reason behind Sisyphus' punishment, on the other hand, his love of life became the culprit.

> But when he had seen again the face of this world, enjoyed water and sun, warm stones and the sea, he no longer wanted to go back to the infernal darkness. Recalls, signs of anger, warnings were of no avail. Many years more he lived facing the curve of the gulf, the sparkling sea, and the smiles of earth.[53]

Emphasis should be placed in what Camus enumerates whenever the joys of the Absurd Heroes are discussed. Nature as well as the concrete and tangible manifestations of life, material objects and personified desires are always the contents. In *The Stranger*, apart from the recurring scenery of the sea, as mentioned previously, Marie, the personification of Meursault's carnal desires, is another frequent element worthy of note.

When Meursault was visited by the chaplain as a final attempt to make the former believe in God in order to liberate himself from sin, the chaplain had insisted that the only salvation from the anguish of life was God saying, "but deep in my heart I know that the most wretched among you have seen a divine face emerge from their darkness." [54] Meursault's response to this, in a way, summarizes the experience of the absurd, saying:

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> I had been looking at the stones in these walls for moths. There wasn't anything or anyone in the world I knew better. Maybe at one time, way back, I had searched for a face in them. But the face I was looking for was as bright as the sun and the flame of desire – and it belonged to Marie. When I had searched for it in vain. Now it was all over. And in any case, I'd never seen anything emerge from any sweating stones.[55]

The chaplain was suggesting a response to the absurd in the form of a philosophical suicide but Meursault answered differently – the love of life in the form of Marie who embodied all his passionate desires.

Apart from the imagery of nature and the sea, Meursault's love of life is also exhibited in his carnal desires, i.e. women. A scene with Marie was always intimate and pertaining to *eros*. As mentioned in the previous section, *eros* is a love that is passionate and romantic, oftentimes sexual. It does not go deeper than that and this was proven when Meursault reacted indifferently to Marie's proposal of marriage – accepting it without a hint of zeal. Marie was nothing more than an object of sexual desire for Meursault – an earthly pleasure always readily there, reminding him of his love of life. This was a response preferable to philosophical suicide but it is apparent in Meursault's later statements that this is not the most correct response. At one point, this love of life through desires may be sufficient but it will come to a point when one will realize that the fulfillment of desires is not the answer to the absurd. "I opened myself to the gentle indifference of the world. Finding it so much like myself – so like a brother, really. I felt that I had been happy and I was happy again."[56] In *The Stranger*, *The Myth of Sisyphus* and *Caligula* (albeit it being implied through the illustration of what should *not* be done in response to the absurd), the most proper response to the absurd is the acceptance of it.

The first step is the acceptance of the negation, affirmation is to come afterwards – as expressed in *The Plague, The Rebel, The State of Siege* and *The Just Assassins*. Although negation is the predominant theme in the first phase of Camus' works, as is evident from what has been shown above, there were still traces of Camus' projected theme as well as the concepts I argue to be the content of the said theme. The love of life also finds expression in two forms in these works: the love of nature and the love for humanity. Although the more abstract and general form of love directed towards the whole of humanity is harder to trace in this first phase, this predicament is understandable and even acceptable since the focus of the first phase is the individual facing the absurd. Camus' works are progressive apart from being interrelated and at this point, it should be clarified that the love aimed towards the whole of humanity is an end product of man's acceptance of the absurd. Its lack of presence in the first phase therefore is a necessary condition of progress. A new question arises: how does one go from a solitary revolt in negation to a collective affirmation? The answer lies in Camus' dictum, "I rebel – therefore we exist."[57]

The Love of Life as a Love for Humanity in Affirmation

In the age of negation,[58] it was recognized that human life is a necessary good. "To say that life is absurd, one must be alive,"[59] says Camus. Suicide is not a response to the absurd because it removes an element of the formulated problem rather than solves it. When it comes to murder however, the lines are yet to be cleared. As was evident in the demeanor of the protagonists of the works in the phase of the Stranger, murder along with other questions of morality are more or less met with an air of indifference. In *The Stranger* and *Caligula*, for example, the murder of the Arab in the former and the mass execution of the citizens of Rome in the latter had not rendered its offenders remorseful. The murders they have committed were made to look like mere details to prove a point – the way to answering absurdity. But again, this is part of the progressive response to the absurd.

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> The moment life is recognized as a necessary good, it becomes so for all men. One cannot find logical consistency in murder, if one denies it in suicide… In view of that confrontation which they both render impossible, murder and suicide are the same thing; one must accept them both or reject them both.[60]

In solitary revolt, what is rejected is suicide but once this rejection has been established one will necessarily proceed to the rejection of murder. This is the same principle contained in the dictum, "I rebel – therefore we exist." To rebel, according to Camus, is to say yes by saying no – to affirm one's worth by refusing submission into intolerable conditions and treatments inflicted on him by others. This rebellion, at first glance seems to be yet another solitary act but upon further scrutiny, one will come to the realization that apart from the affirmation of an individual's worth, the worth of other men is affirmed as well.

One rebels when he feels justified and this justification arises from the affirmation of one's worth. One's worth is derived from his identification with humanity such that there is a recognition of proper ways of treating men and a recognition of the difference in one's reception of treatment. As stated by Lana Starkey, a rebellion is always for 'something' and this 'something' could be understood as 'equality' and 'self-respect'.[61] It is through rebellion therefore, where one reveals a part of man that should always be defended. It is also in rebellion where solidarity is founded, and solidarity the only thing that justifies rebellion.

The transition from a solitary revolt to a rebellion done in solidarity therefore can be summarized in the excerpt below:

> In absurdist experience suffering is individual. But from the moment that a movement of rebellion begins, suffering is seen as a collective experience – as the experience of everyone. Therefore the first step for a mind overwhelmed by the strangeness of things is to realize that the entire human race suffers from the division between itself and the rest of the world. The unhappiness experienced by a single man becomes collective unhappiness. In our daily trials rebellion plays the same role as does the '*cogito*' in the category of thought: it is the first clue. But this clue lures the individual from his solitude. Rebellion is the common ground on which every man bases his first values, I rebel – therefore we exist. [62]

In *The Plague*, the transition from negation to affirmation – solitude to solidarity – was lyrically illustrated through the stages of action of the citizens of Oran who found themselves trapped in a plague-stricken city. More than this however is the expression of the form of love aimed towards the whole of humanity. In the second phase, the general and more abstract form of love for humanity is more palpable in comparison to any of the works in the earlier phase but less complete juxtaposed with the third phase.

The Plague centered upon the struggle of the citizens of Oran to counteract the plague. In this work it is shown that it was only through empathy – the realization of common struggles – where the citizens of Oran were able to be in solidarity with one another. This phenomenon is consistent with what was reasoned in *The Rebel* wherein rebellion is ineludibly tied to solidarity and implies the affirmation of commonalities across humanity. The collective revolt manifested by the citizens of Oran in the last leg of the plague as well as the rebellion elucidated in *The Rebel* can be said to be preludes to the end of Camus' philosophy: the formulation of a community of internationalism built on moderation, justice, and love.

Love as Springing from Indignation Towards Injustices

In the section discussing Camus' notion of love as extracted from *The First Man*, it was stated that one impactful story heard by Jacques about his father was the time when the latter rose early in the morning to witness the public execution of

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Pirette, only to return home traumatized, vomiting ever so often. This memory had been recounted in two other works: *The Stranger* and *Reflections on the Guillotine.*

In *The Stranger,* the memory of Camus/Meursault's father's attendance of the public execution led to a reflection of a condemned man, waiting in line to be one who would be publicly executed himself. In this novel one can say that the opinion articulated with regards to public executions is from the perspective of one who will be a victim of it. It is therefore not surprising that Meursault, while thinking about being set free, said, "I would make up new laws. I would reform the penal code. I realized that the most important thing was to give the condemned man a chance." [63] What Meursault was propositioning was that the 'patient' still be given hope – a chance to escape death. The guillotine, Meursault mused, gave the criminal no chance at all. No hope of surviving after staying under the sharp blades of the guillotine. These words were truly words of a man in the death row, shaken by the guillotine due to his future direct experience with it. In the *Reflections on the Guillotine* however, the view was that of an observer who, by way of research and analysis of a witness's account, brought into light the death penalty as it is in reality rather than discuss it in abstract terms and euphemisms. In the perspective of the observer, the death penalty is still a horrible ritual.

In the *Reflections on a Guillotine*, it was revealed that Camus' father was actually in favor of the death penalty at first but after witnessing a public execution firsthand,

> he had just discovered the reality hidden under the noble phrases with which it was masked. Instead of thinking of the slaughtered children, he could think of nothing but that quivering body that had just been dropped onto a board to have its head cut off.[64]

Here, Camus argues that if executions were able to unsettle the citizens it aims to protect to the point of vomiting, how would such a ritual bring forth peace and order in a community? In *The First Man,* the point of view is still not of the one who witnessed the execution, but it was also no longer that of a mere observer. The articulation of opinions based on facts were not elucidated in a detached manner. In *the First Man*, it was mentioned that after Jacques heard of his father's experience, he too was affected. Despite not being a witness to the execution itself, just the mere imagination of it nauseated him as well.

If one were to examine the reaction of both Camus' father and presumably Camus himself as represented by Jacques Cormery, the nausea felt towards the execution of a *person* regardless if that person was a criminal or not is a sign of a physical rebellion itself. The indignation towards murder – a new murder in response to an old one – is so immense that the body itself has expressed its disapproval. The body rebels because it recognizes that human life is a necessary good. One should therefore not recklessly reduce a person into his crimes. A similar outcry can be seen in *The Plague*. When Tarrou tells Dr. Rieux of the time he had experienced the 'plague'.[65]

Tarrou backtracked to his youth by speaking of his father, who he described as a good-natured man sticking to the middle way. His father was a prosecuting attorney of the death row but up until Tarrou's father invited Tarrou to watch one of his trials, he had not given much thought to what occurred in trials, thinking of them only in vague and abstract terms. For Tarrou, witnessing that trial was equivalent to the coming of the plague.

> The only picture I carried away with me of that day's proceedings was a picture of the criminal. I have little doubt he was guilty – of what crime is of no great matter. That little man of about thirty, with sparse, sandy hair, seemed to be so eager to confess everything, so genuinely horrified at what he'd done and what was going to be done with him, that after a few minutes I had eyes for nothing and nobody else. He looked like a yellow owl

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> scared blind by too much light. His tie was slightly awry, he kept biting his nails, those of one hand only, his right… I needn't go on, need I? You've understood – he was a living human being.[66]

I would like to emphasize the recognition of the criminal being tried as a human being rather than as a bundle of body parts that had committed a crime worthy of being punished 'justly'. The common element in all these recounts of a renewed view on the death sentence is the view of the criminal as a human being; of understanding the death penalty not in abstracts nor euphemisms, but as it is in reality. This could be traced back to the thoughts ingrained in *The Rebel* wherein killing is one of the concepts that required a reevaluation. It is included in the 'limits' that one must acknowledge in order to not become a nihilist that permits murder due to the indifference towards life, or a totalitarian whose passion for life is so strong that it produces criminal excess.[67] One should avoid these two extremes and instead adapt an attitude of moderation or *la mesure* which is vital in what he envisions to be what a community should be like.

Camus on Algeria and the Arab

In a collection of essays entitled *The Algerian Chronicles*,[68] one will note that in contrast to the setting and tone of Camus' other writings wherein there are portrayals of a beauty and prosperity embodied only by those persevering amidst destitutions, the Algeria contained in this collection of essays is bluntly depicted in its misery and poverty – an Algeria minus the ornate descriptions and euphemisms. These essays, along with his previous political activity and intentions can be argued to be one of the proofs that Camus does not glaze over the real Algeria.[69]

One of the criticisms on Camus is the scarcity of the traces of any direct relation to the communists and the Arabs of Algeria in his work.[70] According to critics, his efforts as the propagandist of the Arabs in the Communist Party are almost unheard of. In fact, Kamel Daoud, an Algerian writer, wrote a novel in response to Camus' *The Stranger* wherein, according to Daoud, the Arab was reduced to a nameless casualty – an instrument to proving a point.

> It happened, and everyone talked about it. People still do, but they mention only one dead man, they feel no compunction about doing that, even though there were two of them, two dead men. Yes, two. Why does the other one get left out? Well, the original guy was such a good storyteller, he managed to make people forget his crime, whereas the other one was a poor illiterate God created apparently for the sole purpose of taking a bullet and returning to dust – an anonymous person who didn't even have time to be given a name.[71]

Daoud aimed to provide an identity of the Arab by giving him a name, a history and a family. Daoud argued his claim of Camus' reduction of the Arab by laying down three points: (1) the Arab's namelessness and instrumentality; (2) the relation of the Arab, whom he had named Musa, to the prostitute that Raymond abused and; (3) Meursault's conviction as being the result of his indifference to the death of his mother rather than for the murder of Musa. Daoud also provided a new way of reading *The Stranger* – as an allegory of the French occupation of Algeria. According to him, the prostitute who Musa had been written to dutifully avenge symbolized Algeria, "plowed by customers and passersby, reduced to dependence on an immoral, violent pimp." [72] Accordingly, Daoud exposed the dualisms within the novel – the French and the Algerian, the original inhabitants, and the settlers.

Daoud emphasized the symbolic nature of the presence of both Meursault and the Arab in the beach, saying:

> What was *your* hero doing on that beach? And not only that day but every day, going a long way back! A century to be frank. No, believe me, I'm not one of

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> those. It doesn't matter that he was French and I'm Algerian, except that Musa was on the beach first, and it was your hero who came looking for him.[73]

This is clearly pertaining to the arrival and settlement of the French in Algerian soil. What should be highlighted are the phrases: "it doesn't matter that he was French and I'm Algerian, except that Musa was on the beach first, and it was your hero who came looking for him." The argument here is not as to who had the right to be in the beach or Algeria according to ethnicity but rather who was there first and who had invaded? According to Daoud, Musa, just like all the other original inhabitants had merely *waited* for Meursault, the symbol of the settlers, to leave. They knew it was inevitable. This was expressed in a memory of children staking claims to European neighborhoods once the settlers have left.[74] They did not view the French as Algerian, not even as French-Algerian. There were distinctions. Camus wrote these distinctions, Daoud did as well. But the purpose of these distinctions differed, the latter intended this distinction as a claim to identity and property – a right to land, and independence – the former, to express one thing: internationalism – unity in diversity.

The Meursault Investigation along with other works and criticisms of the same nature, argue that Camus' writings on Algeria are categorically too French – "putting too refined and metropolitan a French into the mouths of his Algerian characters.[75]" In reading Camus' works one cannot help but think that the author is a Frenchman, and his writings, of France, but it will be understood later on, that this fact is in line with the direction of Camus' thoughts and works. It should also be noted that in *The Algerian Chronicles*, one will be able to better see and believe that Camus did not view the Arabs and Berbers as strangers.[76]

Earlier on, I had enumerated Daoud's main arguments on Camus' reduction of the Arab in *The Stranger*. Included in these points was the fact that Meursault was convicted not for the murder of an Arab, but for his indifference towards his mother's death. Daoud viewed this as a reduction of the Arab, Conor Cruise O'Brien, on the other hand, saw the fact of a trial being held against a Frenchman killing an Arab, in itself, an expression of a "generalized human sentimentality."[77] In this situation, expounded O'Brien, the setting becomes that of a European town dealing with an Arab and a Frenchman not as separate classes, but as members of a homogenous population. The trial and conviction of a Frenchman killing an Arab with a knife, therefore, is an asseveration of a myth of French Algeria. In contrast, the reality of the European-Arab relation was retained.[78] Thus, the Arabs remain nameless. O'Brien, like Daoud, understood this namelessness as a reduction of the Arab to one who is not a man, additionally viewing this as Camus' inability to confront the problem of the European-Arab relation, resulting to the manifestation of a harbored historical guilt.[79] This, according to O'Brien, is relevant to forming an opinion on one of the roles often ascribed to Camus i.e. the conscience of the West. *The Stranger* is a dramatization of the Western conscience, conceded by O'Brien, however, it also contains the conscience's hesitations and limits, greater still, in the colony.[80] On the other hand, I argue, that *The Stranger's* place in the margin between myth and reality is a means of confronting the problem of the European-Arab relation.

Camus' political aspirations for Algeria were for them to not gain independence from France. Many have criticized Camus for this stand but not many have tried to understand where he is coming from.

Albert Camus is a *pied-noir*. He is neither French nor Algerian, but at the same time he is both French and Algerian. He is seen as an outsider by Algeria because of his French origins, and by France as a stranger because of his Algerian roots. This 'neither-and-both' status of Camus however has made it possible for him to embrace

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both cultures and to witness the possibility of cultures intermingling. When Camus says that Algeria should not be given independence from France therefore, he says this as a member of a minority who did not come to Algeria by conquest, but by being born there.[81] Camus' belief that he descended from the refugees who came to Algeria in the wake of the loss of Alsace and Lorraine after the Franco-Prussian war in 1871, is also significant to Camus' formed stand against the independence of Algeria. He had forgone the division between France and Algeria and had viewed Algeria as being capable of having more than one culture without it having to lead to building distinctions. Multiculturalism and internationalism,[82] which were what the myth of a French Algeria in *The Stranger* was signifying, were what Camus was pining for.[83]

If one were to study the notes found in *The First Man* outlining the content of the novel, one could presume that Camus' vision of internationalism was intended to be concretized in the third part of the novel which, if the first line in the draft were to be any indication of its main topic, spoke of 'loves'.

> Tomorrow, six million yellow people, billions of yellow, black, and dark-skinned people will pour onto the shore of Europe… and at best would [convert her]. Then everything that had been taught, to him and to those like him, also everything he had learned, on that day the men of his race, all the values he lived for, would die of uselessness. Then what will still be worthwhile? His mother's silence. *He laid down his arms before her.*[84]

In the original draft, Camus also added a marginal note to the above excerpt: "he dreams it during his siesta," quite probably pertaining to Jacques who is Camus himself. The above excerpt, albeit being fragmental, cannot be denied to be related to what Camus has written in his other essays such as *The New Mediterranean Culture*, those included in *Resistance, Rebellion and, Death*, and of course *The Algerian Chronicles*. It speaks of a vision of land settlers who are diverse and yet are united. Where previous known divisions, and distinctions of values vanish. In this setting, Jacques' mother's silence becomes the only thing that is worthwhile and this could only be a reference to love.[85]

All throughout *The First Man*, Camus associated love with Jacques' mother. This theory may also be supported by the importance of the mother in most of Camus' works and the fact that the third part of *The First Man* which was supposed to be about loves was entitled, 'The Mother.' The love being pertained to here is the second form of love: *storge*, but more on the love for the whole of humanity. This all boils down to the conception of solidarity, justice, moderation, and affirmation. In an international and multi-cultural setting, the first men, men of a different and unrefined dawn,[86] are born. These men become the settlers of the land belonging to no one and everyone at the same time. They embody 'the new Mediterranean culture' – a culture which is international, multi-cultural, and all-embracing.

Conclusion

Camus' Philosophy of Affirmation Leading to a Community Built on Love

Albert Camus began his philosophical project with a discussion of the absurd as theoretically expressed in *The Myth of Sisyphus*, lyrically in *The Stranger*, and theatrically in *Caligula*. In the three works stated above, the absurd is understood to arise from the relation of the irrational world and the person seeking meaning. In this sense, absurdity is both a state of consciousness and a human condition with the former referring to a person's lucidity of the latter – the perpetual tension between man and the world. Following negation or the absurd, is affirmation which, as opposed to philosophical and physical suicide, is the correct response to the absurd.

The philosophy of Camus began with the general meaning of life and ended with its particular forms. It started with a negation, then

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affirmation, and ultimately, love. To understand these transitions without a survey of Camus' entire oeuvre, one may refer to his letter addressed to a man in despair as recorded in *Notebook III* instead:

> We can despair of the meaning of life in *general*, but not of the particular forms that it takes; we can despair of existence, for we have no power over it, but not of history, where the individual can do everything. It is individuals who are killing us today. Why should not individuals manage to give the world peace?[87]

From the above excerpt, it can be acknowledged that the facticity of the absurdity of life in general cannot hinder one from fully participating in the here and the now. Camus' philosophy does not call for amorality and indifference. It instead calls for the exact opposite. The Absurd Hero is one who prefers quantitative over qualitative experience, the concrete and the temporal over the hereafter. To be conscious of the absurd is nearly equivalent to affirming life. Furthermore, the affirmation of an individual life necessitates the affirmation of the life of all. The dictum "I rebel – therefore we exist" expresses the transition from solitary revolt to rebellion in solidarity. This is Camus' philosophy of affirmation: persistence in living while remaining lucid, rebelling not only in solitude, but also in solidarity with others. The response to the absurd requires an ascension therefore. From the Absurd Hero to the Rebel and the Rebel to the First Man. In other words, from an individual rebellion to that of the whole, from negation to love.

Rebellion and solidarity are ultimately rooted on the love for all of humanity. As uncovered in *The First Man* and Camus' earlier works, love in the context of the absurd finds its expressions in two forms: (1) earthly, concrete and passionate and, (2) subtly devoted to humanity. In the second phase (affirmation), the reason for solidarity was shown to come from the realization of common struggles. In the third phase, the reason evolved and had become broader, making solidarity a necessary result of the recognition of man's humanity. Man is a finite being subjected to the absurd human condition yet man need not despair nor be led to nihilism. While metaphysical hope should be abandoned, there is still hope in mankind because man is in full control of history – of the here and now. Camus' philosophy of affirmation is not only an affirmation of life or a transcendence of the absurd. It is the call for a love of life as expressed not only as concrete and earthly but more importantly, as the love of and for humanity. This research project has illustrated that love plays a vital role in Camus' philosophy of affirmation. It is through love where one can remain lucid and affirm life. In solitude, this is achieved through passions; in solidarity with others, through a quiet devotion strengthened by the recognition of shared common struggles in the first level, but more importantly, love stirs justice and moderation through the recognition of sameness – of humanity. Dichotomies are demolished and views are leveled. Gone is the relationship between the marginalized and the majority – all are marginalized in the face of the absurd.

The third phase of Camus' work which revolved around the concept of love may never be fully grasped, but through the traces that Camus left in his earlier works, it could be inferred that the third phase, if the progressive assent of his works to a more political nature would be considered along with the said traces in the earlier works, will contain Camus' ideas and justifications for a community built on love, justice, and moderation i.e. a multicultural and international community.

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[1] This article is part of an undergraduate thesis with the same title. For the full manuscript, contact the author.

[2] Quoted in Zachary James Purdue, "Albert Camus and the Phenomenon of Solidarity" (Master's thesis, Kent State University, 2011), https://etd.ohiolink.edu/rws_etd/document/get/kent1305753098/inline.

[3] Adele King, "Le Premier Homme: Camus's Unfinished Novel," *World Literature Today* 69, no. 1 (Winter 1995): 83, accessed November 10, 2016, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40150862.

[4] Judith Jones, Editor's Note, *The First Man*, by Albert Camus, First Vintage International ed., trans. David Hapgood (New York: Vintage Books, 1996).

[5] King, *Le Premier Homme: Camus's Unfinished Novel*, 83.

[6] Cf. Camus, *The First Man,* Editor's Note.

[7] *Ibid.*, 297.

[8] *Ibid.*, King, Editor's Note.

[9] *Ibid.*, 309.

[10] Camus, *The First Man,* 309.

[11] *Ibid.*, 6.

[12] *Ibid.*, 51.

[13] Camus, *The First Man*, 97.

[14] Cf. Melissa Payne, "Discussion of the Absurd in Albert Camus' Novels Essays and Journals" (Master's thesis, University of Tennessee - Knoxville, 1992),78, http://trace.tennessee.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1093&context=utk_chanhonoproj.

[15] Camus, *The First Man*, 269.

[16] See Olivier Todd, *Albert Camus: A Life*, trans. Benjamin Ivry (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998).

[17] *Ibid.*,1.

[18] *Ibid.*, 3.

[19] C.S. Lewis, *The Four Greek Loves,* 1st ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1971).

[20] Camus, *The First Man*, 22.

[21] *Ibid.*

[22] *Ibid.*, 23-24.

[23] Camus, *The First Man*, 65.

[24] *Ibid.*, 82.

[25] *Ibid.*, 66.

[26] *Ibid.*, 153.

[27] *Ibid.*, 155.

[28] *Ibid.*

[29] Conor Cruise O'Brien, *Camus* (London: Fontana Press, 1970), 8.

[30] *Ibid.*

[31] In reference to Camus' claim of breaking ties with the Party in 1935, O'Brien says that "it does not seem however that Camus can have broken with the Party in any distinct way at this date since the following year finds him at the head of the Maison de la Culture in Algiers, which was under the control of the Communist Party. It seems more probable that he broke with the party in 1937." *Ibid.*

[32] *Ibid.*

[33] See John Foley, *Albert Camus: From the Absurd to Revolt* (London: Routledge, 2014), 143.

[34] O'Brien, *Camus,* 9.

[35] See Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*, trans. Justin O'Brien (United States: First Vintage International Edition, 1955), 21.

[36] See Camus, *the Myth of Sisyphus*, 66-84.

[37] Albert Camus, *The First Man*, The First Vinatge International ed., trans. David Hapgood (New York: Vintage Books, 1996), 164-165.

[38] Cf. Stuart Gilbert, Joseph Laredo and Kate Griffith. Syed Irfan, "The Stranger: Symbolism and Imagery by Albert Camus," *International Journal of Social and Applied Sciences* 2, no. 1 (Jan. & feb. 2013): 300, accessed January 12, 2017, www.abhinandanpublications.com/ijsas.

[39] Camus, *The Stranger,* 15.

[40] *Ibid.*, 58-59.

[41] As translated by Stuart Gilbert, Joseph Laredo and Kate Griffith. Syed Irfan, "The Stranger: Symbolism and Imagery by Albert Camus," *International Journal of Social and Applied Sciences* 2, no. 1 (Jan. & feb. 2013): 301, accessed January 12, 2017, www.abhinandanpublications.com/ijsas.

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[42] *Ibid.*, 302.

[43] Camus, *The Stranger*, 59.

[44] Cf. Irfan, "The Stranger: Symbolism and Imagery by Albert Camus," 300.

[45] "He told me that my mother and Monsieur Perez often used to walk down to the village together in the evenings, accompanied by a nurse. I was looking at the countryside around me. Seeing the rows of cypress trees leading up to the hills next to the sky, and the houses standing out here and there against that red and green earth, I was able to understand Maman better." Camus, *The Stranger*, 15.

[46] Cf. Brian J. Blanchard, "Albert Camus' Meditative Ascent: A Search for Foundations in The Plague," *LSU Master's Theses* (2006): 53, httpp://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_theses/2204 .

[47] Camus, *Caligula*, 8.

[48] John Cruickshank, *Albert Camus and the Literature of Revolt* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), 197.

[49] In the end however, it may be argued that Caligula had accepted it for when the assassins came to rid him of his life, he laughed as if in acceptance of the consequences for all that he did. Similar to how Meursault later on, would be wishing for an angry mob to greet him when the day of his execution arrives. So while Caligula's methods of revolt were not proper responses to the absurd, in the end, he had come to accept it.

[50] Camus, *The Stranger,* 104.

[51] See Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, 119.

[52] See *Ibid*, 119-123.

[53] *Ibid*, 120.

[54] Camus, *The Stranger*, 119.

[55] *Ibid.*

[56] Camus, *The Stranger*, 122-123.

[57] Camus, *The Rebel*, 22.

[58] Cf. Lana Starkey, "Albert Camus and the Ethics of Moderation," *Parrhesia* 21 (2014): 151, accessed February 16, 2016, https://www.parrhesiajournal.org/parrhesia21/parrhesia21_starkey.pdf.

[59] Camus, *The Rebel.* 14.

[60] *Ibid.*

[61] Starkey, "Albert Camus and the Ethics of Moderation," 151.

[62] Camus, *The Rebel*, 28.

[63] Camus, *The Stranger*, 111.

[64] Albert Camus, *Resistance, Rebellion, and Death*, First Vintage International ed., trans. Justin O'Brien (United States: Vintage Books, 1995), 175.

[65] Camus, *The Plague,* 228.

[66] *Ibid.*, 230.

[67] Camus, *The Rebel*, 6-7.

[68] *The Algerian Chronicles* was only recently unearthed, published, and translated (2013). It is a collection of essays on the economic and political situation in Algeria, written by Camus in a span of twenty years from 1939 to 1958.

[69] Cf. Foley, *Albert Camus: From the Absurd to Revolt*, 145.

[70] O'Brien, *Camus*, 11.

[71] Kamel Daoud, *The Mersault Investigation*, trans. John Cullen (Great Britain & Australia: Oneworld Publications, 2015), 1.

[72] *Ibid.*, 62.

[73] *Ibid.,* 63.

[74] *Ibid.,* 60.

[75] O' Brein, *Camus*, 11.

[76] In the essay, *Crisis in Algeria*, Camus wrote, 'I want to point out that the Arab people also exist. By that I mean that they aren't the wretched, faceless mob in which Westeners see nothing worth respecting or defending. On the contrary, they are a people of impressive traditions, whose virtues are eminently clear to anyone willing to approach them without prejudice." Albert Camus, *The Algerian Chronicles*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013), 90.

[77] See O'Brien, *Camus*, 23.

[78] "What is softened and distorted, by being made non-colonial, is the nature of the French rule. For the rest, relation between Europeans and Arabs are not sentimentalized." *Ibid.*, 23.

[79] In support of Pierre Nora's claim. See *Ibid.,* 25.

[80] See *Ibid.*, 27.

[81] See Foley, *Albert Camus: From the Absurd to Revolt*, 142.

[82] See *Ibid.,* 143.

[83] In a critical essay entitled, *The New Mediterranean Culture*, Camus states that there is only one culture and this is the culture that "finds life in the trees, the hills, and in mankind." It could be said that this culture that Camus speaks of is one wherein the people have a love of life expressed through nature and humanity – a culture that foregoes manmade differences and celebrates commonalities. Albert Camus, *Lyrical and Critical Essays*, Vintage Books ed., ed. Philip Thody, trans. Ellen Conroy Kennedy(United States: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970), 197.

[84] Camus, *The First Man*, 311-12.

[85] See *Ibid.*

[86] *Ibid.*, 319.

[87] Another similar passage can be found in *Resistance, Rebellion, and Death*: "I continue to believe that this world has no ultimate meaning. But I know that something in it has a meaning and that is man, because he is the only creature to insist on having one. This world has at least the truth of man; hence he must be saved if we want to save the idea we have of life. With your scornful smile you will ask me: what do you mean by saving man? And with all my being I shout to you that I mean not mutilating him and yet giving a chance to the justice that man alone can conceive." Albert Camus, *Selected Essays and Notebooks*, ed. and trans. Philip Thody (England: Penguin Books, 1979), 255; Camus, *Resistance, Rebellion, and Death,* 28-9.

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