



La maison d'Albert Camus à Lourmarin

## SOMMAIRE

Premier Colloque  
Universitaire sur  
Albert Camus  
en Roumanie

Compte-rendu du  
Colloque de Keele  
(Angleterre)

Débat universitaire  
sur Camus et Derrida  
aux U.S.A.

En Algérie

En France

Le 10<sup>e</sup> anniversaire  
de la Société des Etudes  
Camusiennes au Japon

Bibliographie

**Les 15 et 16 octobre 1993  
se tiendra  
à l'Université "Babel Bolyai"  
à CLUJ-NAPOCA  
le premier colloque universitaire  
international  
consacré à  
"ALBERT CAMUS AUJOURD'HUI"**

### ***INVITATION***

**A l'occasion du 80ème anniversaire de la naissance d'Albert Camus, le Département de Philosophie romane et le Département d'Histoire de la Philosophie et de Logique de l'Université "Babes-Bolyar de Cluj-Napoca, sous le patronage du Professeur Andrei Marga, président de l'Université organisent le colloque international**

#### **ALBERT CAMUS AUJOURD'HUI.**

**Le Comité d'organisation vous invite à participer à ce colloque. Les frais d'hébergement à Cluj-Napoca seront pris en charge par les organisateurs.**

**Date limite d'inscription: *le 30 juin 1993.***

***Pour s'inscrire, mais aussi pour proposer éventuellement votre proposition de communication écrire directement et rapidement à***

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**ROMANIA**

## COLLOQUES

### Albert Camus, les extrêmes et l'équilibre

Keele University

25-27 mars 1993

Pendant trois jours, l'Université de Keele a accueilli sur son verdoyant campus des camusiens venus des Etats-Unis, du Japon, d'Argentine, d'Irlande, de Belgique, d'Espagne, de Grèce, de Grande-Bretagne et de France. Le thème choisi par David Walker a permis la confrontation d'analyses littéraires, philosophiques et politiques. Il est à noter que toutes les communications ont été prononcées en français. Tous les participants ont apprécié la parfaite organisation de la manifestation et se sont félicités de l'élargissement de la famille camusienne aux chercheurs britanniques comme de l'avènement de nouveaux chercheurs.

Après quelques mots de David Walker, premier président de séance, il est revenu à **Jean Sarocchi**, de l'Université de Toulouse - Le Mirail, d'ouvrir le colloque par un exposé extrêmement riche qui met les écrits de Camus en résonance avec ceux de Dostoïewski, Péguy, Proust, Malraux, Shakespeare, etc. De Saint-Just à Kalayev, Camus se montre hanté par les adolescents furieux, il finit par exorciser celui qu'il avait porté en lui. D'où son allergie aux "fureurs adolescentes", c'est-à-dire à l'irresponsabilité extrémiste et à la démagogie des intellectuels progressiste.

Puis **Maurice Weyembergh**, en un dense exposé, a vu dans la pensée camusienne une dialectique sans synthèse. La recherche philosophique ou historique de l'unité appelle la totalité qui sacrifie les tensions inhérentes au réel. L'art et la morale refusent cette mutilation. La création est exigence d'unité et refus du monde. Ainsi la politique anti-totalitaire de Camus est-elle cohérente avec ses écrits philosophiques.

**David Walker** étudie ensuite la figure du criminel dans la pensée et l'œuvre de Camus. D'abord fasciné par elle, comme de nombreux auteurs du XXe siècle, celui-ci s'en est libéré par l'écriture. L'orateur souligna l'importance du livre d'Alexander et Staub, *Le Criminel et ses juges*, lu par Camus avant 1940. Il rappelle enfin qu'il y eut en 1939 synchronie entre l'exécution publique de Weidmann et le vol de "L'Indifférent", deux événements dont on retrouve la trace jusque dans *La Chute* et *Réflexions sur la guillotine*. Chemin faisant, l'orateur note l'absence de référence à Genet qui, dans cette perspective, est l'anti-Camus par excellence.

La journée s'achève par quelques réflexions de **Maria Matala** venue d'Athènes sur la "création consciente" et sur l'inspiration grecque chez Camus.

La journée du lendemain est d'abord consacrée au dialogue camusien, sous la présidence de Jean Sarocchi. **Toby Garfitt**, de l'Université d'Oxford, présente les rapports de Camus et de Jean Grenier auquel il a consacré un livre. Il distingue plusieurs périodes. De 1930 à 1936, Camus subit l'influence de son maître, puis il a le sentiment que celui-ci l'abandonne. Il s'en démarque: *La mort heureuse* et *Noces* sont conçus à distance de lui. Les deux hommes sont éloignés l'un de l'autre dans les années 1940. Dans les années 1950, ils se penchent sur leur passé. Garfitt signale de nombreux emprunts et influences.

**Robert Mc Lure**, de l'Université de Keele, étudie ensuite la façon assez critique dont son compatriote Ayer a passé, en 1946, *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*, *L'Etranger* et *Le Malentendu* à la moulinette scolastique de la philosophie analytique.

**Anne-Marie Amiot**, de l'Université de Nice, s'attache enfin aux convergences jusque-là inaperçues entre le jeune Camus et les auteurs du mouvement Dada, eux aussi nourris de Nietzsche. Camus certes ne pouvait avoir contact avec Tristan Tzara, Marcel Duchamp et Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes, mais Jean Grenier les connaissait fort bien et a dû là aussi servir de médiateur. Elle note ainsi des affinités saisissantes entre *Frontières humaines* et *L'Empereur de Chine* de Ribemont-Dessaignes et *Caligula*.

Du dialogue on passe alors aux polémiques sous la houlette de Jacqueline Lévi-Valensi. **Jeanyves Guérin** montre d'abord l'actualité de la politique camusienne, insistant notamment sur la critique du communisme, la démythologisation du tiers mondisme, la condamnation du terrorisme, la recherche d'un nouvel ordre international, enfin le soutien à l'unification européenne. Il voit en Camus le sage qui a tant manqué aux années Mitterrand et dans ses écrits civiques de quoi nourrir le "big bang" de la gauche française et européenne.

**Philippe Vanney**, de l'Université Dokkyo, s'intéresse, dans la foulée, à la notion de trêve que, rappelle-t-il, Camus élaborait dès 1939. L'éditorialiste du *Soir Républicain* entendait, pour sauver des vies, éviter l'ascension aux extrêmes sans, pour autant, maintenir le statu quo. Mieux valait, pour lui une bonne trêve qu'une mauvaise paix. Le conférencier montre comment en 1955-1956 la limitation de la violence devait résulter d'un consensus entre les deux adversaires. Le parti de la trêve était alors l'avant-garde d'un tiers parti utopique. Accepter la trêve c'était mettre en place l'engrenage du droit international. Des considérations sur les idées fédéralistes de Camus et la place du droit dans son œuvre achèvent ce remarquable exposé.

**Ian Birchall**, de l'Université de Middlesex, se propose ensuite de relire, quarante ans après, la polémique de 1952. Ce qui est alors en cause, selon lui, ce n'est pas le stalinisme, mais le marxisme. Se présentant lui-même comme adepte de cette doctrine, il donnait sur le fond raison à Sartre et Jeanson. Camus est, pour lui, le démocrate tel qu'il est présenté dans *Réflexions sur la question juive*. Il lui est reproché par Jeanyves Guérin et Maurice Weyembergh de solliciter les textes et surtout d'oublier que l'histoire concrète a massivement donné raison à Camus.

Puis **Peter Dunwoodie** s'attache à la polémique, littéraire celle-là, qui a opposé, toujours à propos de *L'Homme révolté*, Camus et André Breton. Le premier avait provoqué les surréalistes en parlant sans sympathie de Sade et de La Fontaine. Sa conception de la révolte fait la part trop belle à la notion de mesure qui horripile les surréalistes. Camus et Breton sont néanmoins beaucoup plus près l'un de l'autre qu'ils ne veulent le reconnaître. Tous deux ont rejeté fermement le communisme et fréquent alors les milieux libertaires. Le désaccord entre eux porte sur l'accessoire. Sans doute le second, alors marginalisé dans le paysage intellectuel, l'a-t-il accentué sous la pression des jeunes surréalistes qui alors l'entourent.

Avec la session suivante présidée par Jeanyves Guérin, les passions retombent. **Hélène Rufat**, de l'Université Pompeu Fabra de Barcelone, présente d'abord dans une ambiance apaisée une étude du paysage méditerranéen camusien inspirée par la mythopoétique de Gilbert Durand en mettant l'accent sur l'ambivalence du soleil, de la nuit et de la mer. Puis **Inès de Cassagne**, de l'Université de Buenos Aires, rappelle, textes à l'appui, l'idéal classique de Camus et ses conceptions de la tragédie. **Jacqueline Lévi-Valensi** pose alors la question de son originalité par rapport à la doxa véhiculée par l'école. Elle fait remarquer qu'il est plus question, dans les écrits camusiens, de la tragédie grecque que de Racine et que *La Princesse de Clèves* est l'objet d'une lecture originale.

Enfin **Ray Davison**, de l'Université d'Exeter, propose une lecture extrêmement suggestive des *Muets*. Cette nouvelle écrite contre le réalisme socialiste est, pour lui, une parabole philosophique sur l'intersubjectivité, l'altérité et la pluralité où passent les influences de Guilloux et de Poulaille. Elle apparaît, comme le recueil de 1957 et comme *La Chute*, une réplique littéraire à Sartre, lequel, à cette époque, a définitivement renoncé au roman.

La séance du troisième jour est présidée par Maurice Weyembergh. **Maria Longstaffe**, de l'Université d'Ulster, étudie d'abord l'inspiration pascalienne dans *L'Étranger*, *La Peste* et *La Chute*. Meursault est pour elle l'anti-Pascal et Clémence l'anti-Meursault, tandis que le gorille du Mexico Bar serait le dernier avatar de ...Meursault.

Antony Rizzuto prend alors la présidence de séance. **Catherine Henry**, de l'Université de Dublin, s'attache d'abord aux aspects moliéresques de *La Chute*, après avoir repéré les allusions à l'auteur de *Tartuffe*, nombreuses dans les années 1950. Ces allusions semblent influencées par les mises en scène de *Dom Juan* par Louis Jouvet et Jean Vilar.

Il revient à **Jacqueline Lévi-Valensi** de conclure par une belle et riche communication. Camus a, pour elle, ressenti la tentation de la démesure dans *Noces*, le premier *Caligula* et encore *L'État de siège*. Les formules de *L'Homme révolté* ne disent pas tout le projet artistique de celui-ci. Il y a une tension entre sa passion d'écrire et sa stratégie du moins disant littéraire. Elle montre ensuite en s'appuyant sur *La Peste* et *La Chute* comment cette tension demeure et dans ses récits et dans son écriture. Et de rappeler la richesse herméneutique des mythes et symboles camusiens.

Les actes du colloque devraient paraître, dans des délais raisonnables, aux éditions Rhodopi.

Jeanyves Guérin.

## Un débat universitaire aux U.S.A.

En décembre 1992 la revue *College English* a publié un débat entre Donald Lazere, professeur de littérature anglo-américaine en Californie et auteur d'une remarquable étude intitulée *The Unique Creation of Albert Camus*, et Quentin G. Kraft, de Denison University, au sujet de "l'indifférence camusienne et la différence derridienne", mettant en évidence quelques aspects fondamentaux de la pensée de Camus opposée à celle de Derrida. Notre vice-président Raymond Gay-Crosier nous a communiqué ces textes que nous reproduisons intégralement pour votre information. Notons au passage que la pensée d'Albert Camus se révèle ainsi déborder le domaine des seuls départements de français dans l'Université américaine. "Notre public mondial et plurilinguistique savourera avec plaisir le style de cet échange de lettres" commente Raymond Gay-Crosier, que nous remercions vivement de cette communication.

COMMENT & RESPONSE

A COMMENT ON "TOWARD A CRITICAL RE-RENEWAL"

Quentin G. Kraft's "Toward a Critical Renewal: At the Corner of Camus and Bloom Streets" (*CE*, January 1992) is admirable in its favorable attention to Albert Camus, a writer heretofore dismissed by poststructuralists (close who even bother to read him) as quaintly *passé*, in large part because he was so naïve as to write in comprehensible language and affirm the social value of clear communication. Unfortunately, Kraft's account of Camus's ideas and their relation to Derrida's is too sketchy and unclear to convey what makes Camus remain a powerful alternative to the currently fashionable theorists.

Kraft goes off on page 53 in concocting a relation between the words *différence* in Derrida and *indifference* in Camus; Derrida's is a term in epistemology, Camus's in metaphysical and moral philosophy. Thus Kraft dares, "In short, for all of Derrida's emphasis on the play of differences in writing, the tendency of the overall project of deconstruction would seem to be toward likeness or rather *indifference in the world*." (The accuracy of this and several more of Kraft's judgments on Derrida is questionable—but I will leave that to those who claim to understand Derrida better than either Kraft or I do.) Kraft continues, "While the deconstructors seem to move toward indifference, Camus starts from it." Kraft then quotes Camus summing up Ivan Karamazov's notion that if there is no God, everything is possible and life has no value: "Awareness of the absurd makes murder seem a matter of indifference." Kraft correctly says that Camus "moves through and from this indifference portrayed in *The Stranger*, to its opposite portrayed in *The Plague*—call it *différence* for the lack of a better term." But *why* call it *différence*, when affirmation of the value of living (not a central problem in deconstruction, to my knowledge) is what Camus is talking about at this point—not epistemological differentiation? Moreover,

Kraft fails to explain *how* Camus makes this move or how it salvages "a world for fiction and

the novel" (52), as opposed to the implication Kraft claims to find in deconstruction that "there are no ingredients for story and no time-space for narrative events" (53).

In order to untangle Kraft's account, it is necessary to reconstruct (or should I say "deconstruct" to be *au courant*?) the main line of Camus's theory of language and literature, in a barebones précis of the chapter "Meaning and Value" in my book *The Unique Creation of Albert Camus* (Yale UP, 1973). The starting point of *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Camus's 1942 essay criticizing phenomenological and existentialist philosophers including Husserl and Heidegger, is modern humanity's frustrated longing for the Derridean "metaphysics of presence"—the "nostalgia for unity, that appetite for the absolute" (*The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*, trans. Justin O'Brien (New York: Vintage, 1955) 13), consisting of belief in both a metaphysical foundation for moral value and an absolute epistemological correspondence between the physical world and human reason and language. After describing the suicidal despair that may result from this initial experience of the absurd gap between longing and reality, Camus eventually reaffirms that value can be found within the ontological boundaries of the absurd condition, through existential freedom, revolt, and passion for life, and within the 'United epistemological usefulness of thought and language:

Our appetite for understanding, our nostalgia for the absolute are explicable only in so far, precisely, as we can understand many things.... Our lives and nature may be operative up to a certain limit, beyond which they turn against themselves to give birth to the absurd. Or else, they may justify themselves on the level of description without for that reason being true on the level of explanation. (27)

Indeed, reason for living can be found in the very exercise of the mind confronting its own limitations and the meaninglessness of the universe: "In a man devoid of blinders, there is no finer sight

than that of intelligence at grips with a reality that transcends it" (41).

In Camus's absurdist aesthetic, writing literature is both an affirmation of existential love of life and an expression of "lucid reasoning within its limits":

The work of art is humbled by the intelligence's refusal to reason the concrete.... The absurd work requires an artist conscious of these limitations and an art in which the concrete signifies nothing more than itself. (72)

Absurdist literature, then, will deal solely in description rather than abstraction, argument, or explanation; nor will it seek to unify experience: "Any thought that abandons unity glorifies diversity. And diversity is the home of art" (86). ("Diversity" here seems close to what Derrida means by *différence*.) Camus exercised this absurdist aesthetic himself preeminently in *The Stranger*, whose narrator Meursault's famous stripped-down, noncommittal language and paratactic sequence of sentences and narration matter that novel's strong influence on Sartre, Barthes, Robbe-Grillet, and subsequent French theorists.

*The Myth of Sisyphus* and *The Sisyphus*, however, marked only the initial phase of a dialectical sequence in Camus's thought that continued with the partial negation of the above ideas in *The Rebel* and *The Plague*. In *The Rebel*, Camus presents a life-affirming alternative to Ivan Karantazov's and Meursault's metaphysical "indifference" or nihilism, while reaffirming, in even stronger terms than in the *Myth*, the value of the mind's struggle to make order of inchoate experience as a form of existential rebellion: "The rebel obstinately confronts a world condemned to lead and the impenetrable obscurity of the human condition with his demand for life and absolute clarity" (*The Rebel: An Essay on Man in Revolt*, trans. Anthony Bonner (New York: Knopf, 1956) 101). Wilde continuing to reject Platonic idealism and the empty abstractions of political and conventional social discourse, Camus backed away from the near-

total skepticism toward language now associated (accurately or not) with deconstruction. "Any philosophy of nonsignification survives on a contradiction by the very face of expressing itself. Simply by being expressed, it gives a minimum of coherence to incoherence, and introduces consequence where, according to its own tenets, there is none" (*Rebel* 8; bracketed passages here and in the following citation are my own translations where Bower's version is inaccurate). Any speech or writing whatsoever, even on the relatively concrete level of Meursault's narration in *Le Stranger*, is an abstraction of sense experience into symbols and an ordering of disparate phenomena into syntactic and narrative sequence.

Applying this point to literature, he continues:

**This passion which lifts the mind above the commonplaces of a dispersed world, from which it nevertheless cannot free itself, is the passion for unity.... Religion or crime, every human endeavor in fact, finally obeys this unreasonable desire and dares to give life a form it does not have. The urge impulse, which can lead to the adoration of the heavens or the destruction of man, also leads to ecstatic literature, which derives its serious content from this source.**

**What, in fact, is a novel but a universe in which action is endowed with form, where final words are pronounced, where people persecute one another completely, and where life assumes the aspect of destiny? (Camus's footnote: Even if the novel describes only nostalgia, despair, frustration, it still creates form and salvation.... Despairing literature is a contradiction in terms.) (262-63)**

Finally, from his account of the phenomenological position in the *Myth* that language is a prison-house within which each of us is estranged from authentic contact with others and ourselves, Camus moves in his later phase to a more positive, pragmatic view of the prospects for communication and solidarity among humans. As he puts it in the essay "The Enigma," "What, in fact, does 'literature of despair' mean? Despair is silent.... If he speaks, if he reasons, above all, if he writes, immediately the brother reaches out his hand, the tree is justified, love is born" (*Lyrical and Critical Essays* [New York: Knopf, 1968] 160).

At this point in Camus's dialectic, the rebel's—and the writer's—challenge is to combat the social and political forces that obstruct communication through propaganda, lying, invective, euphemism, and bureaucratic jargon. Camus's 1946 essay *Neither Victims Nor*

*Executioners*, published in *Combat*, the newspaper he had edited as a voice of the French Resistance, reviewed the grim history of World Wars I and II and the grim prospect of, at worst, nuclear war between Russia and the West, or, at best, a perpetual

Cold War. Camus urged intellectuals to turn their concern for language toward overcoming nationalistic divisions, devising a third-camp, democratic-socialist alternative to a world terrorized by super-power rivalries, and working toward an international "civilization of the dialogue":

**Yes, what it is necessary to combat today is fear and silence; and with them the separation of minds and souls that they entail. What it is necessary to defend is the dialogue and universal communication between men. Servitude, injustice, falsehood are the scourges that shatter that communication and forbid that dialogue. (My translation from *Albert Camus: Essais* [Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1963] 350)**

And in *The Rebel*:

**The mutual understanding and communication discovered by rebellion can survive only in the free exchange of conversation. Every ambiguity, every misunderstanding, every cult to death; clear language and simple words are the only salvation from this death (283).**

It was these ideas that made Camus a hero of American nonviolent antiwar, civil rights, and student activists in the 1960s.

Thus Camus was able to reject the solipsistic tendencies in modern linguistic philosophy and to reaffirm a pragmatic, humanistic, and politically committed view of language and literature. In today's cultural wars, I think he would have joined with those of us on the political left as well as the right who denounce the literary intellectuals who call themselves leftists, yet who have not just abandoned their responsibility to combat verbal mystification and cul-

tural/cognitive atomization in the larger society, (but have themselves "valorized" coterie jargon and epistemological anarchism leading to political paralysis.

In *Le fair*, Camus's pragmatic reaffirmation of human dialogue is not so distant from the ultimate position of many of the influential poststructuralist theorists. Though Kraft gives little indication of it in his dubious account of deconstruction, Derrida and his more politically inclined followers insist that deconstruction is a mode of political demystification and have applied it to subjects like colonialism and apartheid. Other theorists, after all their ruminations, simply conclude that practical communication and political action are necessary, but in a separate realm from theory. Nevertheless, whether these various positions reflect political or apolitical attitudes, today's younger scholars who have been intimidated into spending years struggling through the labyrinthine thought and prose of poststructuralist theory might well find a more direct route to

sense on Camus Street.

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QUENTIN G. KRAFT  
RESPONDS:

I welcome Professor Lazere's helpful elaboration of my admittedly "sketchy" and perhaps "unclear" account of a major sequence in Canius's thinking. Though Professor Lazere states quite clearly what I intended in giving an account of some of Canius's thinking, I sense that his project, and therefore his agenda, is different from my own. My aim was not to represent Camus fully but only to show how his notion of the absurd might be useful as an alternative to one fashionable and yet, as I understand it, harmful notion in poststructuralist thinking. That harmful and yet influential notion, emerging from critiques of the "metaphysics of presence," is the complete rejection of any possibility of "presence," a rejection that derives strong support in and from Derrida's writings. In what follows I would like to clarify, as best can, some of what Lazere did not understand in my essay.

Lazere is correct in saying I "concocted" the relationship between "difference" in Derrida and "indifference" in Camus. It is his judgment that, in doing so, I went "off the track" because, it seems, I did not respect his sense of categorical differences. He tells us, "Derrida's is a term in epistemology, Camus's in metaphysical and moral philosophy." But my point is that what one does in one context may, and often does, affect what one does in another context. This is the point I wish to clarify first. "Difference" and "*différence*" are terms that Derrida elaborates in his discussion of the way terms gain meaning within a linguistic system. In fact, *ch/terence* is the principle of meaning. Because *reference* in the traditional sense cannot serve in that capacity. Insofar as "reference" is taken to mean a referral to something in the

world and the world is taken to mean something outside: the system, that is, outside any and all texts, reference cannot be the principle of meaning because, as Derrida puts it, "From the moment that there is meaning there are nothing but signs." Thus there is no movement outside and beyond the system of signs, only moves within the system: signs gain their meanings by their differential relations to other signs. So the claim about the interdependence of signs and meaning leads right on to the even more influential claim: "Il n'y a pas de hors-texte."

It is this explicit denial of an outside and implicit affirmation of the inside that establishes the possibility of the opposition between difference and indifference. The emphasis on difference applies to meaning in texts and tests alone. For that reason, if no other, I do not believe this "difference" is, as it seems to Lazere, very "close" to the "diversity" that Camus espouses and calls "the home of art." Derrida's "différance" is not a term, like Camus's, that applies to an extratextual world if there is such a thing. But that is, after all, the crucial question: is there, or is there not, an outside world? That question—absurd because impossible—is still crucial, not because we can ever get a certain answer, but because, one way or another, we are going to act as if we had an answer and because the answer we act on, however problematic, will have consequences in most everything we do. Put in different words, the crucial question is then: what are the consequences of thinking, and encouraging others to think, as if there were no world apart from texts? More precisely, if Derrida's claim is false and there is, indeed, a world apart from texts and textuality, as there seems to be—a world outside all interpretation and all the conceptions we have of it—what happens to our relations to the events and the inhabitants of that world if we nevertheless think of them as if they were mere 'turners of text'? One very likely answer is that our responsiveness to them and our concern for them will be very much diminished. Indeed, concern solely for differences inside texts is nearly tantamount to indifference to everything outside—if for no other reason than that no outside is ever even imagined. Pain, if nothing else, is felt in places that only an extraordinary indifference world allow anyone to think of as inside a text.

But, of course, there has been argument about what Derrida meant by the claim "there is nothing outside the text." As I note in my essay, he himself feels he has been misunderstood. He explains himself by saying that what he calls "'text' nimble" all the structures called real, "economic," historical, socio-institutional, in short: all possible referents." He can speak of a world and even make *référence* to it, but all this is done without ever leaving the confines of the text. So no difference is made on the main issue; still he allows for nothing outside the text. More recently in *I'll be Ilirong with Pastmodentinn* Christopher Nierré has deluded and "nottirions (and widely misinterpreted) remark." He writes:

For Illerrida's point here is not to endorse the postmodernist line, i.e. the notion that truth and reality are simulated values, products of an infinitised textual "freeplay," so that nothing could count as an effective critique of past or present ideologies and systems of representation. On the contrary, as I have argued at length in this volume and elsewhere, Derrida's writings are always aimed at locating the stress-points or moments of self-contestation where tests come up against the ineluctable limits of their own ideological project. (38)

But *even* this does not argue that Derrida allows for an extratextual world, though that may be part of Norris's point. And if, for instance, we read, say, Norris's discussion—by way of Irené Ilyarvcy's *Derrida and the Anonymity of Ilifférance*—of Derrida's critique of Husserl on language and time, we note that the emphasis is on presence defined, in Norris's words, as "a purely *deirential* concept, unthinkably out-site the structural economy of a time that can nowhere lie fit to coincide with the punctual self-presence of a transcendental ego" (202). In other words, the emphasis is on the inside and on the impossibility of getting to the outside.

In any case, the critique of presence is here as elsewhere not only a critique of the evidence we rely on for our sense of an external world but also a critique of our capacity to know anything at all. Either way, the argument tends to bring about indifference. That is, indifference results not just from the asserted sense of the inexistence of the external world but also—as much, if not more—front an implied sense of the impotence of anyone who pretends to know anything about such a world. Since it seems mild and capricious to maintain in a quiet literary way that nothing exists outside the text, one may suspect that Derrida did not mean it literally, that he meant only that it is *as if* there were nothing out there beyond the text and, further,

that he meant that only because, given the idiosyncracies of our perceptual-conceptual abilities, we are simply unable to make any direct and tenable contact with the external world. If this is so, then the denial of an external world entangles with a denial of human capacity. In *Dualizing the Subject* (1988) Paul Smith suggests how far that denial goes. Derrida's "view of

human agency," he says, is "limited in such a way that it could not be adapted to any oppositional politics." He states, moreover, that deconstruction "requires that subjectivity be construed in such a manner that it cannot take responsibility for its interpretations, much less for the history of the species" (50-51). Later he notes that "Derrida's arguments continually turn back into discussions of 'textuality' at precisely those moments when the issue at hand demands to be treated in a more pragmatic manner"—that is, at just those moments when the issue demands "an active mediation by subject-Individuals" (53). In sum, both propositions—one, that there is no world outside the text and, two, that even

if there were, there is no one capable of knowing it—tend alike to produce indifference. As one might say, "What difference does it make? It is just a matter of the text. And, besides, there is nothing we could do about it anyway."

Lucre goes on to question the use of the word "difference" as an opposite for Camus's "indifference." He asks, "But why call *h* *différence*, when affirmation of the value of living (not a central problem in deconstruction, to my knowledge) is what Camus is talking about at this point—not epistemological differentiation?" No doubt I may mistake my own words as well as Camus's meaning. Still, I must say with difficulty understanding how any reading of the essay not predisposed to dismiss rather than consider its statements could fail to find ready answers to this question. The very paragraph from which Lazere quotes and then takes his question is, after all, plainly focused on Camus's affirmation of living as opposed to the 'consumers' "concerts with reading tests rather than living life." Moreover, that paragraph points to show that what I have called "difference for a lack of a better term" plays an important part in that affirmation. Indeed, its point is that Camus's "epistemological differentiation," to use Lazere's preferred term, as opposed to the deconstructors' "epistemological homogenization" (again for the lack of



a better term), is just what is required for his emphasis on living as opposed to their emphasis on reading. The same paragraph begins by noting that insofar as they deny a world apart from tests, the deconstructors commit what Camus calls "philosophical suicide" by negating one if not both "terms of the opposition" in Camus's definition of absurdity. Specifically, they negate the "world that disappoints," if not also "the mind that desires" (Alyth 37). The point is, if there is no world external to text or consciousness, there can be no absurdity, no presence, no difference and, according to Camus, no life. If, as Camus claims, "Living is keeping the absurd alive," then living depends on keeping the difference alive, specifically the difference between consciousness and the world. Affirmation of the value of life is, therefore, an affirmation of the value of a difference that deconstructors tend, as a rule, to deny.

Lazere also complains that "Kraft rails to exploit." two important points: (1) "how Camus makes this novel front indifference to difference or, rather, to the affirmation of life, and (2) "how it salvages a mud for fiction and die novel (Kraft 52), as opposed to the implication Kraft claims to find in deconstruction that 'there are no ingredients for story and no time-space for narrative events' (Kraft 53)." I would like to respond to the second point first because its answer follows directly from the preceding discussion.

As I see it, Camus maintains a world for fiction—as well as for human action—just by sustaining the "opposition" and keeping the absurd alive, that is, by sustaining a sense of the difference

tween the "mind that desires" and the "world that disappoints" and, hollower, by sustaining a sense of the mind or consciousness as something in the world rather than, as Derrida would have it, the world as something in mind or consciousness or text. The point is that, for Camus, the world is still a place within which human agents may attempt to live and to act—and within which fictional characters may be said to live and to act. It is the degree that deconstructors do away with difference and locale the world in the text with nothing (inside), there is no place for or even imagine characters to live and to set. Indeed, there is nothing for them to do but read and misread.

As for the first point, Lazere is no doubt better prepared, as an authority on Camus, to explain how Camus makes his crucial move. Moreover, I do not believe that explaining the "how" of the novel was ever a requisite part of this project. Still there is a point I should like to make. In *The Rebel*, Camus suggests that choosing to live rather than to commit suicide, that is, choosing to sustain the opposition and keep the absurd alive, may lead to a further affirmation of difference, this time an affirmation of other lives. He writes, say that life is absurd, the conscience must be alive.... From the moment life is recognized as such, it becomes good for all men." Despite a hint of logical necessity in Camus's statements on this point, the movement here from one's own life to the lives of others—the novel that takes place between *The Stranger* and *The Plague*, the very novel Lazere wishes to have explained—is anything but a necessary invention. It is not dictated anything prior to and inside of itself. If there is a bigle

connecting the two choices, it is not a necessary logic; it is only a possible and therefore chosen logic. But in making the choice, Camus once again, in a new and more nuanced way, affirms difference and thereby engages himself, again and more fully, with a world external to himself and to any text. The point is, nothing outside himself demands that he make either choice. He simply made it. And now nothing outside himself, at least nothing to which we must give heed, demands that we also make the same choices. But we need to make them, all the more so since so much in our lives encourages us to think of all events, whether environmental, political, social, or personal, as incredible media events, happenings of the world but of the text. Otherwise we are likely to remain still on our sofas forever.

Denismi University

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## ALGERIE

Le Docteur algérien Laadi Flici, assassiné dans son cabinet de la Casbah d'Alger le mercredi 17 mars 1993, écrivain et membre du Conseil Consultatif National, sorte de Parlement non élu mis en place lors de l'arrêt du processus électoral en Algérie, avait écrit ceci, en réponse à ceux qui considéraient encore et toujours Camus comme étranger à l'Algérie:

*"Mais qu'est-ce qu'ils voulaient? Un Camus maquisard? - Camus, c'est nous. De ce pays, il avait tout. Les désirs, les joies et même les maladies de la misère. Il aimait le football, la mer, le soleil, l'amour, et il était tuberculeux. Sa mère? une espèce de fatma européenne. Il l'a préféré à la justice? Mais c'était elle la justice!"*

*septembre*

Il y a longtemps, le Dr Flici, alors membre de l'Union des écrivains algériens, a fait lui aussi, une conférence. Scandale. *"L'affaire a déclenché tant de haine que depuis je n'ai plus écrit une ligne."*

En mai dernier (1991) il reprend le dossier, veut lancer une journée Camus. Projet abandonné avec les événements qui déchirent Alger. La prochaine fois sera la bonne. *"S'il y a un auteur d'actualité pour notre jeunesse vouée aux impasses de l'absurde, c'est bien Camus".*

Propos cités par Martine Gozlan dans L'Événement du Jeudi (sans date)  
et repris par "A LA UNE" journal bi-mensuel algérois,  
Revue de la Presse Internationale, n°10, du 4 au 17 mai 1992.  
Cette publication a cessé de paraître

Au **Centre Culturel Français d'Oran**, le samedi 12 juin 1993, conférence **d'Abdelkader Djemaï**: "Camus à Oran". Textes dits par **Saïd Benyoucef**. *"Camus et Oran. Un parcours, une topographie, une présence, celle de l'écrivain dans une ville <présente le dos à la mer>, leurs relations heurtées, marquées par l'écriture allégorique de La Peste ou l'image minérale et rugueuse du Minotaure secrétant l'ennui. Histoire d'un séjour (1941-42) et d'une rupture annoncée. D'une double exclusion aussi".*

## FRANCE

Au **Collège de France**, le mardi 29 septembre 1992, au cours du Colloque organisé par l'Association Internationale des Amis de François Mauriac, **Bernard Roussel**, professeur honoraire au lycée Henri IV (Paris), a donné une conférence sur: "CAMUS et MAURIAC devant le problème du mal"

Au Club du Temps Libre, à **Nogent-le-Rotrou**, le jeudi 3 décembre 1992, **Geneviève Sevel**, professeur honoraire au Lycée Molière (Paris), a donné une conférence sur "Bonheur et temporalité dans l'œuvre d'Albert Camus"

*LA CHUTE*, mise en scène et interprétée par **Marcel Guignard** (du Théâtre du Pilier de Belfort) a obtenu un tel succès au Théâtre du **Guichet-Montparnasse** (15, rue du Maine) à Paris, du 16 février au 3 avril, que des représentations supplémentaires ont dû être programmées du 7 avril au 1er mai. Succès tout à fait mérité par le montage du texte et la qualité de son interprète.

Au **Centre Culturel Algérien** (171, rue de la Croix Nivert, 75015 -Paris), le vendredi 18 juin 1993 à 20 h.30, **Abdelmaki Boumaza** donnera *NOCES A TIPAZA* et *LE VENT A DJEMILA*, spectacle qu'il avait donné l'an dernier au Centre Georges Pompidou, puis en Algérie.

Du 3 au 27 juin 1993 y est présentée une retrospective du peintre d'Alger **Sauveur Galliéro** (1914-1963).

## JAPON

### La décennie de *Camus-Kenkyu-Kai* (Société des études camusiennes) au Japon

En mars 1983 à Osaka, nous avons fondé la *Kansai-Camus-Tomono-Kai* (Société des amis de Camus au Kansai), composée de neuf membres habitant dans la région du Kansai (Osaka, Kyoto et les alentours). Cette petite société s'est agrandie de plus en plus et en 1986 elle a été rebaptisée: *Kansai-Camus-Kenkyu-Kai* (Société des études camusiennes au Kansai). Depuis 1984 nous avons adhéré en groupe à la Société des études camusiennes, et en 1988, à la demande de Madame Lévi-Valensi, notre société a décidé de cumuler la section japonaise de la SEC. Cela lui a permis de prendre de l'envergure. En 1989, nous avons enlevé le mot *Kansai* du nom de notre société qui n'était plus régionale, déjà composée de vingt membres habitant non seulement au Kansai mais aussi à Tokyo et un peu partout au Japon. Depuis son début, notre société a tenu, toujours au Kansai, deux fois par an, au printemps et en automne, une réunion composée d'une ou deux communications, d'un rapport bref des études de chaque participant et d'une soirée amicale. En 1990 nous avons tenu une réunion pour la première fois à Tokyo, ce qui a marqué la naissance d'un nouveau système de réunion: au printemps à Tokyo et en automne au Kansai (en 1992 à Hiroshima au lieu du Kansai).

Maintenant notre société compte vingt-six membres, dont la liste est la suivante:  
ABE Isomi (Sendai), HIMENO Kenji (Ikoma), HIRATA Sigekazu (Ibaraki), IJIMA Tsutomu (Kawaguchi), INADA Harutoshi (Shizuoka), IZUMI Ryôichi (Chiba), KAMIGAKI Kyôsuke (Takatsuki), NAGURA Masayuki (Hirosaki), MATSUMOTO Yôsei (Hiroshima), MINO Hiroshi (Takatsuki), MISUMI Yoshitsugu (Kyoto), MURAO Kazue (Izumi), OKUBO Toshihiko (Kawasaki), SAKAI Toshio (Kiyose), SUZUKI Tadashi (Gifu), TACHIBANA Kikuko (Uji), TAKAHASHI Hiroyuki (Tokyo), TAKEUCHI Shûichi (Tokyo), TASAKI Meiko (Owari-asahi), TOURA Hiroki (Amagasaki), UKAI Atsuko (Kôbe), UMEKI Eiichi (Okayama), VANNEY Philippe (Tokorosawa), YANAGISAWA Fumiaki (Morioka), YANAGISAWA Toshie (Kunitachi), YOSHIMITO Takashi (Tokyo).

Hiroshi MINO.

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### Livres

ISAAC Jeffrey C., *Arendt, Camus, and Rebellion*, Yale University, New Haven and London, 1992, 320 p.

BELLEMIN-NOEL Jean, *Interlignes 2*, Presses Universitaires de Lille, 1992.

De nombreuses mentions de Camus se trouvent dans les Actes, réunis par Jacques André, du colloque *Les instants privilégiés: Jean Grenier* de Cerisy-la-Salle qui viennent de paraître aux éditions Folle Avoine, et tout particulièrement dans les communications de Camille Tarot ("Inévitables, les problèmes du sujet") et de Christian Pelletier ("Jean Grenier et la littérature").

#### Articles

SMETS Paul-F., "Absurde, n'est-il pas? - *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* a 50 ans" dans la Revue *La clé des loisirs*, Bruxelles, avril 1993, p.35-40.

McGREGOR Rob Roy, "Camus' "Le Renégat". An allegory of existentialist pilgrimage" *The French Review*, 66, 5, avril 1993, p. 742-751.

#### Informations diverses

Le livre de **Jeanyves Guérin**, *Camus, Portrait de l'artiste en citoyen* était le livre du jour de **France-Info** le 24 avril 1993.

De Camus, il fut aussi beaucoup question au cours de la Soutenance d'habilitation à diriger des recherches, à l'Université de Paris X-Nanterre, le lundi 7 juin 1993, où Jeanyves Guérin présentait la synthèse de ses travaux: "*Novateurs et progressistes: Matériaux pour une histoire des intellectuels français (1944-1965)*".

## PRIX ALBERT CAMUS 1993

Le 7ème prix Albert Camus a été attribué pour 1993 à

**Vassilis ALEXAKIS**

pour son roman

**AVANT**

paru aux éditions du Seuil

Dans la "pré-sélection" avaient été retenus:

*Une Citadelle de sable* d'Alain Gerbert (R.Laffont)

*La Femme sans tête* de Marlène Amar (Gallimard)

Rappelons que le jury de ce Prix, présidé par Emmanuel Roblès, est composé de Mmes Mrs André Bonet, Henri Bonnier, André Brincourt, Louis Gardel, Raymond Jean, Willy-Paul Romain, Michèle Gazier, Annette Degand, Andrée Fosty, Françoise Foucqueteau, Renée Testot-Ferry et Paula Chauvin.