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David Madden

ONLY IN THE MOST LIBERAL SENSE can Albert Camus' *The Fall* be called a novel. Camus himself never claimed it to be a novel as such. Although it has characteristics of the conventional novel, it is also similar in form and content to a long personalized philosophical essay in the manner of Kierkegaard or of Plato's dialogues, the interlocutor's questions merely implied. Seemingly a monologue, there are suggestions that it is more a soliloquy. As an essay-novel, composed of anecdotes, aphorisms, epigrams, observations that include numerous ethical questions, poetic passages, and a faint story line, discernible in the progression of Jean-Baptiste's "spiritual" transformation, *The Fall* presents special problems of interpretation regarding form and meaning.

For a man with a philosophical attitude to express and illustrate, it would seem that the freedom of the essay-novel form is congenial. But to this freedom Camus has brought the artist's restraint and control. The structure of this novel is as tight as that of *The Stranger.* In *The Fall,* too, the major event occurs in the exact center of the book; the patterned progression of symbolic references, leitmotifs, and intellectual events informs this book as effectively as one may expect in a more conventional novel. A sense of place is sustained in the vivid description of Amsterdam and in the "feeling" of Paris; there is movement in Jean-Baptiste's ambulatory confessional and in the change he relates; and there are events—the drowning of the girl, the incident in the Paris traffic, Jean's pontifical adventures in Africa. But the book can hardly interest any but the most literate, patient, and alert reader because, despite the atmosphere of fascinating decadence and suspense Camus creates in the beginning, it moves on a high level of abstraction, its plot being the imitation of an action of ideas (for the willing reader, an exciting action).

Jean-Baptiste explains the lack of story, of detail: "having judged you [his listener] at your true value, I am skipping over them [details], so that you will notice them the better" (p. 123). Given Camus' intention (which should soon become obvious in so short a book), there are good reasons for the avoidance of mere narrative interest: a conventional sequence of events, or story line, and reader-hero

identification would detract from Camus' primary interest—the working out of ideas. This approach is indicative of modern man's tendency, in the absence of temporal and secular authority, to evaluate, explain, reason out everything about his predicament, and, of course, intellection is a major aspect of Jean-Baptiste's character. He is a symbolic character and the "story" is more an amplification of theme through example than through the usual fictional rendering of illustration.

Yet to the extent that he is everyone he is strangely real.

> I choose the features we have in common, the experiences we have endured together, the failings we share . . . the man of the hour as he is rife in me and in others. With all that I construct a portrait which is the image of all and of no one. . . . When the portrait is finished, as it is this evening, I show it with great sorrow: "This, alas, is what I am!". . . . But at the same time the portrait I hold out to my contemporaries becomes a mirror.[1]

(These lines also indicate the John the Baptist-Christ relationship between Jean and his listener.) The epigraph from Lermontov suggests Jean's significance as modern man: "an aggregate of the vices of our whole generation in their fullest expression." This line, together with the analogical ambiguities in the book, should discourage any primarily realistic evaluation of Jean's personality, character, or his "story." Nor should one infer from a superficial reading that in Jean Camus is at last speaking; less than is Meursault's, Jean's is not Camus' own voice.

Jean says, "It's very hard to disentangle the true from the false in what I'm saying." Camus often expresses his indefinite truths by way of falsity. Jean asks: "Don't lies eventually lead to the truth? . . . Truth, like light, blinds. Falsehood, on the contrary, is a beautiful twilight that enhances every object" (pp. 119-20). Much of what Camus is saying emerges in the twilight of ambiguity; the reader is forced to evaluate, in Camus' terms, for himself. The reader, out of his own knowledge, can corroborate what Jean says and thus identify with him. But the ambiguities, evoked mostly in the book's analogies, force the reader to re-examine the prosecutor's case. For to a certain extent Jean is deluded. In examining his sins, his guilt, his total self truthfully, a man may achieve a kind of intellectual superiority, hence an extension of illusion; he thinks that he is living only with what he can know, but what he can know are often at best only more effective, perhaps less dangerous, illusions. Camus says, "the only original rule of life today: to learn to live and to die, and,

[1]Trans. Justin O'Brien (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1956), pp. 139-40. Pagination in the Vintage paperback edition is the same as in the hard-cover.

in order to be a man, to refuse to be a god."[2] But Jean tries to be a god: "How intoxicating to feel like God the father. . ." (p. 143). Of course, we can't be sure he is sincere, since his general tone is one of sardonic humor. "Admit . . . that today you feel less pleased with yourself than you felt five days ago" (p. 141) is addressed to the reader. Displeased, we must take up the inquiry, the confessional, where Jean leaves it, with an apprehension of the cold water, a hesitant remembrance of the drowning girl in our own lives. The purpose is "to provoke you into judging yourself. . ." (p. 140).

My purpose is to examine some of the analogies in the book and to indicate Camus' free, intentionally ambiguous use of them. An awareness of this ambiguity should facilitate a fuller explication of his meaning. But in a sense, for an analogy to function, it is not always necessary for the reader to be consciously aware of it in the work; the force and power of a Christ analogy will assert itself even if it is unnamed. Primarily, the analogies serve as ironic heightening of the ideas, as in Joyce's *Ulysses,* although they are not worked out as fully as in that book. The analogies, like everything else, are "merely in a way," as Jean would say. Except for the rather idyllic references to Greek clarity and to Janus, Camus eschews, in this book, Greco-Roman mythology in preference to the Judaeo-Christian myths, which are more relevant to modern Western man. Once you deny the reality of certain Biblical assertions, you can use them effectively as myths. The usual result in *The Fall* is irony: the modern extension is usually the reverse of the ancient significance, and the ambiguity makes possible a rich evaluation of both the ancient and modern realities involved. For instance, Jean sees Christ as a wonderful mortal, and he sees all mortals as "Christs in our mean manner. . ." (p. 117). Camus has said that Meursault is "the only Christ we deserve."[3]

The Dante-esque frame of the story is apparent. "Have you noticed that Amsterdam's concentric canals resemble the circles of hell?" (p. 14). Holland is depicted as a real, modern hell on earth. But rather than being hot with fire, it is foggy, "a soggy hell, indeed!" (p. 72). For we are at the heart of things here. . . . The middle class hell, of course, peopled with bad dreams. . . . Here, we are in the last circle" (p. 14). Here are the giants in the central pit of the malebolge, whose inhabitants, looking like a city of great towers, are the sons of earth, embodiments of elemental forces unbalanced by love, of desire without restraint and without acknowledgment of moral and

[2] *The Rebel,* trans. Anthony Bower (New York: Vintage Books, 1956), p. 306.

[3] "Avant-Propos," in *L'Etranger,* ed. Germaine Brée and Carlos Lynes, Jr. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1955), p. viii.

theological law; they are symbols of the uninhibited passions of the beast. Here suffers Nimbus, builder of the Tower of Babel. But Jean reflects that the proprietor of *Mexico City,* the Cro-Magnon man, would be out of his element lodged in the Tower of Babel—one instance of the ambiguity of the analogy. Man is like Dante's neutral angels: "he puts them in Limbo, a sort of vestibule of his Hell. We are in the vestibule, *cher ami*" (p. 84). But the relationship is reversed: Jean (Dante) leads his listener (Virgil); not until the end, when Jean calls him *cher maître,* does the reader or Jean realize who the listener is. It is as though, having seen the poetic concept of a mythological hell, via Virgil's guidance, Dante were now conducting Virgil through the real, modern hell. "We are making progress and yet nothing is changing" (p. 97).

They float upon a dead sea, an "immense holy water font" (p. 109) (See *Inferno,* Canto XIX, 15-17), but it is like a dream journey. "It's not navigation but dreaming" (p. 97). Nor do they descend by levels. Here, all is horizontal. "Is it not universal obliteration, everlasting nothingness made visible?" (p. 72). This flatness explains why Camus chose Amsterdam as the book's locale. During the excursion into Jean's past, we encounter in *one man* most of the various vices and false virtues exemplified in the various famous sinners Dante interviewed in the inferno. But Camus does not rigidly adhere to this frame. For instance, the girl's suicide is the pivotal event (the one that precipitates the most crucial laugh) but nowhere in the novel does Camus refer to the seventh circle (the one for suicides) of the inferno.

Within the Dante-inferno setting (transformed for modern relevance into a *soggy* hell), Camus' very free utilization of analogies between Jean-Baptiste Clamence and Adam, Jean and John the Baptist, and Jean and Christ results in evident ambiguities. He sets up a complex system of relationships: Jean is talking to an unknown, unheard listener so that the reader is made to feel he is himself the listener, since most of Camus' readers, at least nominally, fit the general description—Sadducee (one who rejects oral authority), bourgeois. But in the end, the fictional listener is identified as a Parisian lawyer like Jean—they may be the same person. At the same time, to the extent that he identifies with the sole voice of the book, the reader is also Jean. Analogically, a similar relationship pertains: Jean is John the Baptist talking to an unknown listener (the reader), who, in the fictional reference, is revealed to be Christ (John calls him Master); thus, the reader is both John and Christ.

A third analogy is introduced in Jean's confession. Jean in Paris is Adam in Eden, unmarried, promiscuous, meeting his Eve and his

fall in the drowning girl; Jean as Adam is modern man. To prevent confusion, I won't pursue that complexity. Jean says to his listener (Camus to his reader), "If you are not familiar with the Scriptures, I admit that this won't help you" (p. 9). Often Camus' hints are blatant, although sometimes very subtle, and usually the analogies are ambiguous. Christ is directly descended from Adam and is John's second cousin. Jean was called something else in Paris (where he was Adam) and he is somewhat akin to the fictional listener: "I, too, was a Sadducee" (p. 10). And later, when he knows they are both lawyers (preachers), Jean says, "That strange affection I felt for you had sense to it then" (p. 147). This is the moment of recognition between John and Christ, although Jean as John is slow to perceive it. Jean as John prepares the way for Christ, even as he preaches and confesses to Him. But the Christ is within him and Jean has, in a sense, been talking to himself: "Are we not *all* alike, constantly talking and to no one . . . ?" (p. 147). Realistically, this soliloquizing would mean that Jean is insane and would negate most of the valid perceptions in the book; therefore, we must assume that the allegorical references take precedence. We are overhearing Jean's human inquiry with the silence of the universe; Camus says of Sisyphus: "For the rest, he knows himself to be the master of his days."[4] When Jean says *"cher maître"* he is addressing himself—a slave, he is his own master.

What evidence is there in the book for these analogies? The name, though a common French one, is obvious. Jean-Baptiste suggests John the Baptist, and like John, Jean wears a camel-hair coat (this is too much for coincidence); the initials JC suggest Jesus Christ, and the last name Clamence suggest *clemence,* that is, clemency, Christ's promise to believers. The combination name suggests that John the Baptist and Jesus are one, just as Jean has led a double life; he is compound sinner-and-self-savior, judge-penitent, priest-confessor, king-slave, fool-prophet, true and false prophet, pope-prisoner. Regarding John, Jesus said to the multitudes: "But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment?" (Matthew 11:8). Under the camel-hair coat, Jean does wear silk in a sense: "Nonetheless, style, like sheer silk, too often hides eczema" (p. 6). John didn't drink wine but Jean drinks gin. Like John, though, Jean was in prison, and even now his room is as bare as a cell, and, though he moves about, he takes his cell with him. He is both a true and a false prophet. The description of Jean's room is also the occasion for "the bare necessities, clean and

[4] *The Myth of Sisyphus, and Other Essays,* trans. Justin O'Brien (New York: Vintage Books, 1960), p. 91.

polished like a coffin. . . . [these] immaculate sheets—one dies in them as if already wrapped in a shroud, embalmed in purity" (p. 120). This line evokes Christ's sepulchre and further compounds the John-Christ analogy. The most obvious reference to the John analogy is:

> I would be decapitated, for instance, and I'd have no more fear of death; I'd be saved. Above the gathered crowd, you would hold up my still warm head, so that they could recognize themselves in it and I could again dominate—an exemplar. All would be consummated; I should have brought to a close, unseen and unknown, my career as a false prophet crying in the wilderness and refusing to come forth. (pp. 146-47).

Here is also suggested the kinship of Jean with the reader, and most importantly, the implication that, symbolically, Jean has never left his room, that he is talking to himself, "unseen and unknown," and "refusing to come forth."

Jean, too, is "called" to preach, not by celestial directive but by a human compulsion that follows his failure to act, to do *something* when he knew the girl had jumped. From behind the phony Janus face of virtue he presented to the world as its own self image, came the laugh; and from that evening he ceased being Adam and began to be John: ". . . when I was called—for I was really called—I had to answer or at least seek an answer" (p. 84). But Jean preaches ambiguously, mixing truth with falsehood. John could say clearly: "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He had the Word, and, heaven ordained, he was just, infallible. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Jean substitutes Earth for "heaven," Delusion for "Word," and Man for "God." "I am the end and the beginning," says Jean; he is the end of supernatural authority and the beginning of man's ambiguous law. "I announce the law. In short, I am a judge-penitent" (p. 118). The lawyer, being more appropriate for our time, replaces the preacher, although Jean does preach in parables, often beginning, "I knew a man once who. . . ." Jean's law is not based on the truth: "Truth . . . is a colossal bore" (p. 101). Camus believed that "crushing truths perish from being acknowledged."[5] But for Jean they become even more crushing.

Jean, too, is a voice crying in the wilderness, not to a "generation of vipers," but to a milder generation that fornicates and reads the papers, incapable of genuine love, preferring journalism to wisdom. He prepares the way not for Christ, who would sacrifice himself for all, but for that self-knowledge, half-deluded, half-true, in which we

[5] *Myth*, p. 90.

realize that we are ourselves Johns, baptizing ourselves in the overflow of conscience—". . . it's the overflow; as soon as I open my mouth, sentences [*double entendre*] start to flow" (p. 12); we realize that each of us is a Christ, too, "in our mean manner," dying alone, unknown, largely unknowing. We aspire to heights from which to dominate the "other ants" but end up in dungeons, in the little-ease, or preaching on the lowlands of Holland, loving not the new life smell of Jordan but the death smell of canals.

The Christian's freedom, John declares, may end in submission to Christ's redeeming love, but Jean says, "At the end of every freedom is a court sentence" (p. 133), (like the one Christ himself faced), after which, however, there is no resurrection. Jean's ideas on slavery would support Caligula's belief that "One is always free at someone else's expense."[6] Instead of Christ for all, each man becomes that "someone else." For Jean, the body's death, even in the midst of an earthly hell, is sufficient punishment, and of salvation he says: "Salvation was won (that is, the right to disappear definitely) in the sweat of the death agony" (pp. 90-91). In life, the only salvation is of a mortal nature, from a mortal source—the possibility of one's being capable of sleeping on the floor for a friend in prison: "Yes, we shall all be capable of it one day, and that will be salvation" (p. 32). The sacrifice of Christ the lamb will not suffice, because the "lamb of innocence" no longer exists.

Camus seems to be saying of Jean what John said of Christ: "And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come. He that has ears to hear, let him hear" (Matthew 11:14-15). We listen to Jean, for real confession must be to other men, to mortal Christs, to condemned priests. Confessions to John led to baptism and grace, but Jean realizes man is incapable of conferring grace. ". . . I have ceased to like anything but confessions," (p. 120) he says, because confessions allow him to act as judge by virtue of his own penitence; and in the little-ease, where atheists and Christians are reconciled, guilt cannot be denied and confession overflows. For "every man testifies to the crime of all others—that is my faith and my hope" (p. 110). The object of Jean's confession is to get others to confess. Confession is real, vital, productive, the highest form of preaching, of which St. Paul (the true judge-penitent) says: "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (I Corinthians 1:21). As for the Last Judgment: "It takes place every day" (p. 111), in the sterner judgment of men, who are guilty judges.

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[6] *Caligula*, trans. Stuart Gilbert (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1947), p. 39.

Jean, like Christ and John, is a friend of sinners and publicans, but of Jean may truly be said what was perhaps falsely said of John: "He hath a devil." Jean, having stated that we are all Christ, tells his confessor:

> In solitude and when fatigued, one is after all inclined to take oneself for a prophet. When all is said and done, that's really what I am, having taken refuge in a desert of stones, fogs, and stagnant waters—an empty prophet for shabby times, Elijah without a messiah, choked with fever and alcohol, my back up against this moldy door, my finger raised toward a threatening sky, showering imprecations on lawless men who cannot endure any judgment. For they can't endure it . . . that's the whole question. (p. 117)

Jean as John is also Christ. Between John and Christ there were many aspects of kinship: the circumstances of their conception, in a barren and in a virgin womb, were similar; when the pregnant cousins met, John jumped in Elizabeth's womb (Luke 1:43-44); and John was beheaded because he was believed to be the risen Christ (Matthew 14:1-2). That Jean is both John and Christ is further evidenced when he calls his listener (who is, in one sense of the ambiguous relationship, himself) *maître;* there being no father, no more rule, man being free and hence having to shift for himself, and God being out of style, one must choose a master, either in slavery or in oneself.

"My profession is double, that's all, like the human being" (p. 10). And he can say "there is nothing extraordinary about my story" (p. 42), because it is the story of the human being, about whom Jean has discovered a fundamental duplicity: he is a charming Janus with two faces; for instance, he cannot love others without first loving himself. On one side, he is John, on the other Christ. Janus was the god of good beginnings (the birth of man, for instance) sure to result in good endings; but that surety requires a cruel achievement, not submission to supernatural reward and punishment or to crucifixion by proxy.

One of the most interesting motifs in the book is that of baptism and the attendant doves. John baptizes Jesus: "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:16-17). Jean baptizes his listener (the reader as Christ) *in his confession,* crying out from a solitude of fog and concentration camps. The Zuider Zee, a dead sea (by which they walk, upon which they move in a boat, and in which Jean baptizes those who confess to him), is the Jordan metaphor. Above the negative landscape the sky

is filled with millions of doves, one for each Christ, but they are "invisible because of their altitude," and they are "carried hither and thither by the wind." Though they would like to come down (and grace their Christs), they "wait up there all year round," because there is "never a head on which to light" (p. 73). And no voice from heaven affirms pleasure in the earthbound Christs of the "last circle." The sea rises, the day is ending, the boat is leaving: "Look, the doves are gathering up there. They are crowding against one another, hardly stirring, and the light is waning. Don't you think we should be silent to enjoy this rather sinister moment?" (p. 96).

On the boat, he tells of the time he was on an ocean liner and saw a speck, a bit of refuse at sea, that reminded him of the drowning girl, and he realized that her cry had been waiting for him and had never ceased and would wait for him everywhere (he comes to the land of waters as a "certain mortification"), "where lies the bitter water of my baptism" (p. 108). As Adam in the Eden of Paris, he had been baptized in the Seine via the girl's drowning, and after three years he became John, and now he is with his Christ on the Zuider Zee (Jordan). "We shall never get out of this immense holy-water font. Listen. Don't you hear the cries of invisible gulls? If they are crying in our direction, to what are they calling us?" (p. 109).

These same gulls, it seems, were crying that day when he saw the speck on the water. The gull is modern man's dove, calling him to self-appraisal, but not to redemption. Again at the end, the doves are invoked: "In the livid sky the layers of feathers become thinner, the doves move a little higher, and above the roofs a rosy light announces a new day of my creation" (p. 144). Desperately, he says, "I won't let you think I'm not happy"—in this baptism which begins and ends in himself. But his last words invoke the girl and the Seine, his Jordan, again: "We'd have to go through with it. Brr . . .! The water's so cold! But let's not worry! It's too late now. It will always be too late. Fortunately!" (p. 147).

It is significant that Jean lives in the Jewish quarter of Amsterdam, "site of one of the greatest crimes in history" (p. 11). The slaughter of the Jews made the killing of Christ seem trivial: here were thousands of Christs who didn't want to die. Jean suggests that Christ, whom he admires, died to convince people of his sincerity, just as in committing suicide you futilely sacrifice "yourself to the idea you want people to have of you" (p. 75). "The real reason is that *he* knew he was not altogether innocent" (p. 112). Though he died for mankind, the children of Judea were slaughtered for him; alive, he couldn't forget them, always hearing their cries, rending the night. In not capitalizing "he," and in other ways, Camus suggests Jesus'

essential mortality: "my friend who died without knowing," as we all die. "But too many people now climb onto the cross merely to be seen from a greater distance . . ." (p. 114). "The rank injustice" done Jesus wrings Jean's heart.

Jean sees religion as a waiting game in prison, or "rather as a huge laundering venture—as it was once but briefly, for exactly three years, and it wasn't called religion" (p. 111). Now we are dirty, spitting on each other in the little-ease. God now is man, anthropomorphized into the proprietor of *Mexico City,* the ape, the Cro-Magnon, primitive man from whom, rather than from God, we are all descended. He, "master of the house," presides "over the fate of this establishment," he who rightly can't see the worth of the painting "The Just Judges," whose few words are "you can take it or leave it" (p. 4). He is indifferent, doling out the gin, raking in the cash as men, there and elsewhere, mourn the failure of the Tower of Babel, submitting to an illusion that has disassociated them from other men even more—the promise of heaven. For Jean, as John, concerned with the purely mortal dilemma, the whole human race are his accomplices, rather than his converts.

I have only suggested the implications of the John-Christ analogy. I will not go as thoroughly into the Adam analogy. Jean's "story" relates to his Edenic situation in Paris prior to his fall (Jean-Baptiste is not his real name).

> The judges punished and the defendants expiated, while I, free of any duty, shielded from judgment as from penalty, I freely held sway bathed in a light as of Eden.
>
> Indeed, wasn't that Eden, *cher monsieur:* no intermediary between life and me?
>
> . . .
>
> Yes, few creatures were more natural than I. I was altogether in harmony with life. . . . (pp. 27-28)

Near the end, he remembers Paris with the nostalgia of an Adam for Eden, concluding, "Ah, *mon ami,* do you know what the solitary creature is like as he wanders in big cities?" (p. 118). As Adam, he "was absent at the moment when I took up the most space" (p. 87); love, like most things, was a habit, kept interesting by making it a game which he couldn't take seriously. But he professes to having always loved mankind, and to loving life, even now, too much. After the incident on the bridge, where he "learned the fear of freedom," he felt shame, and, to alleviate that, scorn, going into a lassitude of debauchery that ended in physical dissipation. He tried to forget the girl, as he had forgotten most everything in his life, but a mocking inner laughter gave him no peace; it persists even now in his

partial solution as judge-penitent, he who accuses himself enough to have the *right* to judge others.

When he comes to the bridge (to the tree of knowledge where self-knowledge begins), he comes from a woman (one of many who unsatisfactorily compose his Eve). He dominates the island—Adam walking alone in Eden in his supposed innocence. But, in a sense, what awaits him has been prepared for. He has made brief mention of a girl who committed suicide because of his failure to return her love; he suffered himself when he felt the risk of losing love. The girl on the bridge is really his Eve, whose fall (it is not certain that she jumped) is also his own: that fall is the eating of the tree of knowledge that results in self-evaluation for Jean as Adam. Her cries and, later, the laugh, are like God's voice ordering him out of an Eden built on self-deception, on a facility for forgetting everything so as not to remember that which condemns him.

The bridge incident is fraught with ambiguities: to save the girl might have been good *or* bad, possibly the worst thing he could do, considering her predicament; had he saved her, he would have turned the incident into just another of his good deeds and learned nothing; besides, no one would have seen *him* jump either; perhaps they both might have died, or he alone might have died and she survived. The laugh, too, comes to him near the Seine at dawn, goading him into looking at the other side of the Janus face. Each dawn, he falls, just as each day the Last Judgment occurs when men judge him even more severely the moment he begins to judge himself. So each man falls alone, no one man falls for all (of this, the girl's fall is a symbolic manifestation).

In discussing the analogical ambiguities in *The Fall,* I have tried to imply Camus' purpose. To summarize, the analogies are used for ironic effect. Camus has chosen those myths which pertain most dramatically to our modern Western civilization. The irony depends upon his reversing or altering their meaning: for instance, Christ cannot even save himself. The ambiguity arises out of the free manipulation of these myths and out of their multi-level relationships to each other. The ambiguity would not exist, that is, if Camus had set up a one to one relationship in the analogies he uses. In Kafka's "In the Penal Colony," the ambiguous relationships within the analogy approach obscurity, so that only the force of the analogical reference is felt; we are not meant to feel intellectually certain of the source of the analogy, but we do feel its effect. Camus is such a conscious craftsman that he would not allow an ambiguous situation to exist in his novel if he did not intend it. There is so much ambiguity on a nonanalogical level that we must conclude that

Camus *intends* to entice us into the realm of ambiguity he creates in order to reveal his deepest meanings.

The reader cannot put down *The Fall* without having a sense of utter incompleteness. He must not only re-read it, as he would any profound philosophical essay, but in order to resolve (if resolution is possible) the ambiguities in the book, he must be willing to see in it a reflection of his own life, fraught as it is with ambiguities, and he must be willing to admit that he is less pleased with himself than he was.