

³Sigmund Freud, *New Introductory Lectures in Psychoanalysis*, trans. W. J. H. Sprott (New York: Norton and Co., Inc., 1933), p. 104. Subsequent quotations from this course bear the page reference in parentheses after the abbreviated title *NL*.

⁴Norman O. Brown, *Life Against Death* (New York, Vintage Books, 1959).

Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization* (New York: Vintage Books, 1962); *One Dimensional Man* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966).

Philip Rieff, *Freud: The Mind of the Moralizer* (New York: Doubleday and Co., 1961); *The Triumph of the Therapeutic* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966).

Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (London, Hogarth Press Ltd., 1961).

A Note on Camus's "The Guest"

Albert Camus's well-known work "The Guest" is a nearly perfect short story, which ranks with the best of Maupassant. It has been included in so many anthologies, both in French and in translations, that it is familiar to most college students today. For many readers, however, the end of the story remains an enigma. As a result of submitting this story to the most acid of all "laboratory" tests (i.e. the classroom), we have arrived at a conclusion that differs from that of most critics.

"The Guest" centers on Daru's intention of granting self-determination to the Arab, of giving the latter the choice of going to Tinguit and to prison, or of going to the nomad region and to freedom. At this point, it will probably appear that the Arab is incapable of making a decision. Since, after all, he has not read the seven hundred plus pages of Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*, he is unaware of the existential implications of his action. The clue to the Arab's decision, however, is provided by Germaine Brée, who emphasizes the fraternal relationship between Daru and the Arab ("a dignity in their silence, a mutual respect in their attitude").¹ This dignity and this mutual respect, then, engender the sentiment that will furnish the ultimate solution of the story, but it is important to review the origin and the development of this fraternal relationship.

It is Daru, and not the gendarme Balducci, who suggests that the Arab's hands be untied so that he might drink the mint tea. And it is again Daru who kneels in order to loosen the bonds of the squatting Arab, who "watched him with his feverish eyes."²

Later, when they are alone, the Arab is drawn to Daru by his laconic speech in the same inexplicable manner that Marie, Céleste and others are attracted to Meursault. Readers of *The Stranger* will readily understand the following cryptic exchange of words. It begins with the Arab's query: "Why do you eat with me?" To which Daru responds: "I'm hungry" (p. 99). The act of eating with "them" is, of course, one of the primary taboos of any racist. The Arab, then, immediately senses the absence of any racial prejudice on the part of Daru.

Still later, before going to sleep, the Arab, without revealing any outward emotion, twice enjoins Daru to accompany him on the journey to prison the following day. (The Arab assumes that Balducci will conduct him to Tinguit.) His

terse words: "Come with us" (p. 101) assume greater eloquence by the manner in which he looks at Daru. The scene is all the more poignant when we consider the existence of the language barrier between the two men, Daru knows only scattered words in Arabic, while the Arab has difficulty expressing himself in French.

During the night, Daru tries to combat the fraternal feeling that is growing within him. He reacts almost violently to the Arab's senseless crime, but the fraternal sentiment is, nevertheless, present. Daru, moreover, recognizes its source in the most lyrical passage of the work: "Men who share the same rooms, soldiers or prisoners, develop a strange alliance as if, having cast off their armor with their clothing, they fraternized every evening, over and above their differences, in the ancient community of dream and fatigue" (p. 102). Evidently, there is a subtle communication between the Arab and Daru, and what is transmitted is precisely the sentiment of fraternity.

The following morning, on awakening the Arab, Daru hastens to allay the latter's apprehension: "Don't be afraid. It's me. You must eat" (p. 104). On seeing only Daru before him, the Arab is immediately calm.

Finally, after hours of walking, comes the moment of decision: Daru hands the Arab both money and food and points to the east where Tinguit and the prison are located. Then he turns the Arab around and points to the south, to the nomad region and to freedom. Daru starts his return journey, but he is only too eager to see which direction the Arab has chosen; hence, Daru returns to the spot where he left him. With a heavy heart Daru perceives the Arab taking the road to prison. The story ends with the utter loneliness of Daru, when, upon his return to the school, he reads a message on the blackboard which threatens to punish him for having delivered the Arab to the authorities in Tinguit. Daru, at the end, faces alone the threat of physical exile from his desert domain, and spiritual exile from the kingdom of fraternity.

Let us go back now to the decision on the hill, and review the scene from the point of view of the Arab. When Daru presents him with the choice of directions, "a sort of panic was visible in his expression" (p. 108). Many readers assume, at this point, that the Arab simply balks in front of a decision. Some might feel that the Arab, a subject raised under the French regime, is afraid to take his chances with the unknown nomads.

We feel that neither of these possibilities is valid in view of the development of the story. The Arab himself tries to begin an explanation with the one word "Listen" (p. 108), but Daru will not listen. Finally, when Daru is at some distance and then turns around, the Arab is standing at the same spot, looking intently at Daru. Now the motive for the Arab's action must be evident: after the fraternal feeling has been inculcated as a result of mutual respect during their few hours together, the Arab realizes, not vaguely but very clearly, that his bolt for freedom into the nomad region will cost his brother dearly. The Arab, therefore, deliberately chooses prison, unaware of the fact that his fellow Arabs will misunderstand what has happened. His *beau geste* rivals the heroic action on the part of Katow, who offers the cyanide pill to his fellow prisoners in the pre-execution scene of André Malraux's *La Condition humaine*.

In conclusion: it is the Arab, and not Daru, who accepts fully both the exile and the kingdom. "The exile and the kingdom are not two continents separated by an ocean: they are two aspects of the same breath and heartbeat. The kingdom is in the exile, the exile is a path toward the kingdom—in fact, exile could actually be the kingdom."³ In no instance is this formula as evident as in the case of the Arab, who embraces the *exile* of prison in order to achieve the *kingdom* of fraternity.

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NOTES

¹Germaine Brée, *Camus* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964), pp. 136-37.

²Albert Camus, *Exile and the Kingdom*, trans. Justin O'Brien (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), p. 91. Other references will be found in the body of the text.

³Gaëtan Ficon, "Exile and the Kingdom," trans. Josephine Valenza, in *Camus: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Germaine Brée (Englewood Cliffs: New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1962), p. 155.

Mirror Images in *Three Trapped Tigers*

Guillermo Cabrera Infante begins his novel, *Three Trapped Tigers*, with an epigraph taken from Lewis Carroll: ". . . and she tried to fancy what the flame of a candle looks like after the candle is blown out."¹ He calls this epigraph one of the "happiest in English literature," a combination of man's metaphysical necessity and of that crystallized nostalgia which is one of the names of poetry."² The novel can be seen as an expansion of its epigraph in its metaphysical concerns (however cavalierly treated) that parallel its existence as art. Through art or crystallized nostalgia one is able to control philosophically such aspects of experience as death or the inevitability of the present becoming the past. The book represents the author's attempt to freeze time and space, and it is about the efforts of his counterparts in the novel to do the same. Cúe, the actor; Sesoribó, the musician; Silvestre, the writer, and Códac, the photographer, are all artists trying to capture the very transience of the flame blown out. The key to creating art in a total present is to fancy what the candle looks like rather than what it looked like. Memory becomes exaggeratedly important as the present of the novel is equal to the sum total of the past. It is, in fact, difficult to ascertain when the narrative reaches a present point of view, for the present is no more than crystallized nostalgia—the total presence of what has gone before.

The present becomes a crisis of memory upon the deaths of Bustrófedon and La Estrella, and the recollection of the extinguished flame becomes a metaphysical necessity. Bustrófedon represents art as pure process, never setting down a word as product, and La Estrella is similarly pure creation, the "plasma of her voice" inventing songs that seem to have been only incompletely created before (p. 62). After their deaths, the problem that remains for the central characters is some variation of "Who was/is/will be Bustrófedon?" (p. 213). Bustrófedon-La Estrella