The Guest:
The Reluctant Host, Fate’s Hostage

One character aids or shelters another who would normally be the former’s enemy. This literary topos, which lies at the heart of Camus’s The Guest, can be found in many versions, from folklore and legend to modern popular culture. It was especially popular with the romantics, in works like Hernani and The Lady of the Lake, and with other writers preoccupied with heroism, like Corneille and Saint-Exupéry. In these heroic versions, the guest’s identity is often revealed late, and the host is presumed to be strongly motivated to harm the guest, even as he protects him in accordance with the laws of hospitality. Typically, the guest responds to this honorable behavior by promising to return for a second encounter between equals.

Camus gives us a distinctly modern variant, which could be outlined—still very abstractly—as follows. A schoolteacher in an isolated area is ordered by a policeman to keep a prisoner overnight and conduct him to jail. The teacher treats the prisoner kindly, offers him several opportunities to escape, and in the end gives him food and money and shows him the road to freedom. The prisoner, however, takes the road toward the jail.

Not only are schools, police, and prisons institutions of the modern state, but also the teacher’s attitude reflects a very contemporary alienation. Policeman and teacher, agents of the same social order—indeed, both civil servants in this story—share no common sense of law. The conflict that was internal in the heroic versions has given way to a division of labor and the
alienation that it entails. Yet the policeman and the teacher of the story are not enemies, either; they share a racial, cultural, and class background in contrast to the prisoner; and before the incident of the story, they had been friends.

With so bare an outline, one could imagine several reasons for the teacher's attitude: approval of the prisoner's crime, or belief that the prisoner had not committed any crime, or doubt that the prisoner would be treated fairly, or fear, or inability to carry out the orders. None of these, however, is the reason given by the story. The teacher, Daru, expresses no sympathy for the prisoner's act or any mistrust of the judicial system, and Camus has taken some pains to establish Daru's ability to do the job. He simply does not want to because he does not want to accept that responsibility. If he suffers from any inner conflict, it is of a sort quite different from the dilemmas of the romantic heroes, for he feels no desire at all to harm his guest. Despite the fact that the man has committed murder, Daru feels no obligation to participate in the process by which society attempts to deter such crimes.

The prisoner's last gesture, then, is highly ironic, a black parody of Hernani's vow to reconstitute himself prisoner of Don Ruy. It remains, moreover, unexplainable. As we shall see, many suggestions have been advanced to justify the prisoner's decision; but with the story narrated rigorously from Daru's perspective, there can be no fully persuasive explanation. In the earlier versions, the comparable twist in plot transformed this topos from mere episode to plot element by installing some weight from the past within the hero. Camus ends the encounter at this parting, but Daru's concern about the prisoner's decision reveals an involvement in it that contradicts his previous professions of indifference. Like it or no, he too has been weighted with the responsibility of the prisoner.

Camus, of course, added a final, uniquely modern touch of irony. When he returns to his school, Daru finds a threat written on the blackboard: "You handed over our brother. You will pay for this" (109). This message contains still more mystery than the prisoner's actions. We never know the identity of its authors or their actual relationship to the prisoner; for "brother" can be
taken literally, as blood kin, or more loosely, as an active member of some organization (a political party, for example), or more loosely still, as a passive member of some group (fellow countryman, for example). Why they prefer making the threat to freeing the so-called brother, an easy task under the circumstances, is not explained. And, of course, we never learn what happens afterward.

I have deliberately generalized this story before mentioning its most important particulars. Set in Algeria in the mid-1950s, it is the only story that alludes to the political crisis of the time. The prisoner is an Arab; Daru and the gendarme, Balducci, are both “pieds-noirs,” Algerian-born of European descent. Balducci refers vaguely to the rebellious violence that led ultimately to the end of French rule in Algeria, and both he and Daru wonder whether the Arab might be a revolutionary terrorist, although they think not. Now, a quarter of a century later, Algeria has long since won its independence from France; but the real problem touched on has by no means disappeared. Given Camus’s personal involvement in the early stages of debate, critics have quite naturally looked for political interpretations. In my view, this is a mistake. In revising, Camus consistently softened the possible contacts between fiction and reality. As the real conflict worsened, Camus made the story less and less precise. One could easily transpose the story into dozens of other settings without significantly altering its meaning.

To be sure, many elements drawn from reality support the basic story line. It is useful that racial, religious, linguistic, cultural, and class differences parallel the radical difference between an accused prisoner and everyone else—useful, but not necessary. Equally useful, at least for the moment, is the well-known existence of a liberation movement in Algeria; one accepts without question the rumors of a forthcoming revolt, knowing that in fact it came. But in how many places, in how many causes, have similar resistances occurred by now? A fictional underground would serve as well. We are accustomed by the events of our age to credit such things, including their most important trait, a certain irrational violence, born of weakness and anger. This trait, in the end, was as much a mark
of the reactionary “Algérie française” movement, the clandestine secret army organization (O.A.S.) and terrorists of the right, as of nationalist or leftist guerrillas at the start. The Guest has nothing to teach about the Algerian conflict, except insofar as its problems were those of all conflicts, in all ages and in all places, between all sorts of people and for all sorts of reasons.

The question that inevitably preoccupies readers of this story is why the Arab takes the road east toward Tinguit, where the jail is, instead of the path south toward the plateau, where the nomads will provide protection. I wrote a short piece on this question myself in 1967, subtitled “A Note on the Value of Ambiguity.” Peter Cryle lists and refutes many critics of widely divergent opinions, including me; and there have been others since Cryle’s book came out. Roughly speaking, we can judge the Arab along four scales. First, and most basic I think, a passive/active scale: is he docile and dependent, or is he deliberate and autonomous? Second, a social/asocial scale: is he allied with an Algerian nationalist movement, or is he a loner, acting for personal reasons? The first two scales deal with questions of fact, although that does not imply that we can give a clear yes or no answer. The third scale concerns his placement in a social category: is he to be regarded primarily as a criminal, or as a victim of circumstances beyond his control? Within this scale would fall the matter of his guilt or innocence in the murder for which he was arrested, with all the extenuating circumstances that the judicial system recognizes; but also, more broadly, the possibility that French justice has intruded into a foreign domain, so that the Arab, having acted under one set of principles, is now to be tried under a different set that he may not even comprehend. Finally, the fourth scale of interpretation is really literary: is the Arab a hero—one who incarnates the author’s conception of good or right behavior in some fashion—or is he a villain—one who denies the author’s message or remains unaware of it and obstructs its accomplishment?

Each of the four scales can be applied independently of the others, so that there are sixteen possible characterizations, with of course a considerable range of shadings within many of them. Roughly, they can be arranged as follows:
The Arab as hero. In general, such interpretations look on the Arab's decision to go to jail as an effort to help Daru in one way or another. If the Arab is taken to be more intelligent and purposeful than he seems, then his choice is an existentialist's act of assuming responsibility. Whether he is a rebel or a loner, whether he is a common criminal or the hapless victim of an unjust colonial regime, he is sufficiently affected by Daru's fraternal attitude to be converted. His choice may represent an effort to please Daru, to honor Daru's system of justice, to dignify Daru's inevitable and unjust punishment. If, on the other hand, the Arab is taken to be ignorant, passive, and helpless, his final act is hardly a choice at all but a pathetic mistake. He may be trying to please Daru, or he may be so conditioned to dependence that he is afraid of freedom, or he simply may not understand and be taking the more familiar route. In any case, he means Daru no harm. If he has been a rebel, he must be trying to please an unexpectedly kind man. If the other was an existentialist reading, this one is liberal or humanist. Both Daru and the Arab (and even Balducci) are men of good will, trying to do the right thing, yet bringing misfortune on each other. The Arab's character, his passivity and ignorance, his possible rebelliousness and criminality, are creations of the government Daru represents.

The Arab as villain. The most extreme interpretation would make the Arab a conscious terrorist, who goes in the direction of Tinguit to deny Daru any sense of brotherhood; we do not know, after all, that he goes as far as the jail. One critic has suggested even that he turns himself in to provoke increasing violence, sacrificing himself as a sort of martyr for the revolution. It is perhaps more plausible to suppose that his "brothers" had planned an ambush along the road to Tinguit, and that he expects to rejoin them. If we consider the Arab as a loner, his motive must be simply an insurmountable hatred of Europeans. In any case, such readings can be characterized as extremist; they divide the characters into good and bad, and that division matches the division between European and Arab, between master and servant, between comfortable and impoverished, between policeman and prisoner, and so forth. From the
bourgeois European perspective of the usual reader the fol­
lowing summary would be accurate: “to a Frenchman who gives
him a great proof of humanity, an Algerian responds only with
hate.” It should be noted, however, that an Algerian could
equally well turn the extremist reading inside out; the prisoner’s
intransigent hostility would then be a heroic virtue. It seems
highly unlikely to me that Camus meant the characters to be
separable into good and bad.

A more subtle version of the Arab as villain arises when he is
regarded as a passive figure. Obviously, he cannot be held
morally responsible in quite the same way. As a brutelike
creature, killing a fellow Arab on blind impulse, seeking the easy
way by instinct, he brings violence and hate in his wake. If we
assume that he has become a political terrorist, we must suppose
that it was because of his preference for easy answers. He goes
toward Tinguit at the end, perhaps to rejoin his “brothers” along
the way, perhaps to have a secure bed and three meals a day
during hard times, but in any case untouched either by Daru’s
concern for his motives or by Daru’s kindness. Daru, a kind of
Camusian saint, has met his opposite and failed to awaken him
to freedom. These readings are fundamentally pessimistic and
tragic. The saints are few, the brutes many; and if the stupidity
of the latter brings ruin to the former, there seems little hope
that dreams of brotherhood could ever be realized.

Although the advocates of one or another interpretation will
disagree, I do not find any explanation of the Arab’s character
and behavior satisfactory. Some are more plausible than others;
but none is entirely without flaws, and none can be demon­
strated false. Camus surely intended it that way. Daru does not
understand, and we are to share his confusion, not view the
events with an omniscient superiority. The presentation of the
Arab in the story, scrutinized closely, confirms this ambiguity as
intended. The Arab speaks only twelve utterances, totaling fewer
than fifty words. Six are questions, three are imperatives, two
are the single word “yes,” leaving only the reply, “He ran away. I
ran after him” to Daru’s question, “Why did you kill him?”
(100), as a direct statement of the Arab’s view of anything. The
rest is all our inference, much of it influenced by Daru’s own
inferences. The Arab’s eyes are “full of fever,” his forehead “obstinate,” his look “restless and rebellious” (90). He watches Balducci “with a sort of anxiety” (93), looks at Daru with eyes “full of a sort of woeful interrogation” (100). In the darkness, the Arab turns toward Daru “as if he were listening attentively” (103); and at their parting, the Arab takes the package “as if he didn’t know what to do with what was being given him” (107). Daru thinks he hears the Arab moan (102) and thinks that he is escaping (103). The Arab’s expression the next day is “frightened,” then “vacant and listless” (104); twice he seems not to understand (106, 107); and in our final close view of him, “a sort of panic was visible in his expression” (108). In short, Camus has been very careful to give us no authorial insights into the Arab, but to link every judgment of Daru’s to a precise physical source. Daru is sometimes wrong, however, as when he thinks that the Arab is escaping.

The ending of the story appears to mean that, in some significant way, Daru has misapprehended the situation. Analyses that attempt to explain the Arab simultaneously attempt to explain the story by revealing the nature of Daru’s error, and certainly a valid reading must focus on that error. Yet, as I have just shown, we cannot hope to solve the problem through understanding the Arab because Camus does not tell us enough about him.

The policeman Balducci is the only other character actually present in The Guest. Since he departs early, it would be structurally odd for him to represent the central focus. Nonetheless, he offers Daru a possible fraternal relationship, which does in fact go awry, at least temporarily. His role is worth considering, if only to see how it compares to the more important relationship between Daru and the Arab.

Balducci, of course, shares with Daru all those traits that separate the two of them from the Arab; no circumstantial barrier exists between them. Their past friendship has been close, almost familial. Despite being a policeman, Balducci expresses some misgivings about his role, and his attitude toward the Arabs is not unlike Daru’s. He can speak some Arabic, he willingly agrees to untying the prisoner, he sympa-
thizes with Daru’s reluctance to hold the Arab: “I don’t like it either. You don’t get used to putting a rope on a man even after years of it, and you’re even ashamed—yes, ashamed” (95).17 Certainly he is not presented as a man who has forfeited his claim to fraternal solidarity with other men.

Before the Arab, Balducci represents responsibility to Daru. He brings orders from their common master, the French government. Even though he is unhappy about it, Daru readily accepts this responsibility by signing the paper. The understanding between the two men on this point is perfect. Balducci knows that Daru will tell the truth in any case, Daru accepts the fact that the rules require a signature. By signing, Daru releases Balducci and takes on the responsibility himself. At the same time, Daru refuses to follow the orders. He reaches that decision promptly and tells Balducci bluntly: “But I won’t hand him over” (95).18 Moreover, he repeats his decision twice. Balducci disapproves, but his own sense of obligation stops short of denouncing Daru. Their disagreement on the ethical question weakens the ties of friendship between them, but no misunderstanding occurs.

As Balducci leaves, Daru offers a ritual gesture of friendship: “I’ll see you off,” which the gendarme declines, saying, “There’s no use being polite. You insulted me” (96).19 Daru’s refusal amounts to a criticism of Balducci’s conduct. Their disagreement remains open and frank, however; canceling politeness keeps the superficial forms of their contact in harmony with its underlying truth. Between these two there are none of the false starts, words left unsaid, or half-gestures that characterize the relations between Lassalle and his workers in The Silent Men, for example. Balducci even softens his rejection somewhat, by saying, “Good-bye son” (96),20 as he goes out. One feels that their long-standing camaraderie will not be permanently destroyed by the momentary conflict. Daru, it should be observed, neither contradicts Balducci nor apologizes for the insult. As with the responsibility for the prisoner, Daru acknowledges the disagreement readily if not gladly.

In short, Daru’s relationship with Balducci comes near to being an ideal fraternal bond, capable even of surviving the
inevitable troubled moments and crises that less-than-ideal reality produces. Critics who have blamed Daru for hesitation and indecision should reread the opening more carefully; Daru decides almost instantly to take responsibility for the prisoner but not to hand him over, and nothing in the story suggests that he is ever tempted to change his mind. The prisoner himself is too mysterious a figure for us to know with certainty how Daru ought to have acted, assuming that he ought to have done something different. A last critical resort has been to accuse Daru of some general complicity in his fellow Frenchmen’s presumed guilt toward the Arabs. Daru, so the reasoning goes, represents an imperialist culture. He is master of his school, he feels like a lord by contrast to the poverty-stricken people around him. He is paternalistic, doling out the food and supplies, along with the civilization, shipped in from France. He is elitist, equating knowledge with the French school curriculum and imposing it on his pupils. Perhaps the best symbol of his clash with his surroundings is the map of French rivers chalked in four colors on his blackboard—the ruling country imposed on its subject, rivers in a desert, colors in a landscape turned black, white, and gray by the snow. It is the fitting spot for the threat to be written at the end.

Yet, though there is a certain symbolic justice in the desecration of the map, and a certain truth in regarding Daru as superior (in a pejorative sense), in human terms we must recognize that he has done about all anyone could to overcome his Otherness among these people. His feeling of lordship stems not from wealth but only from his acceptance of what little he has as enough. Undeniably he has had privileges of training and of comfort, but he is trying to share what he has and to give these poor people some of his privileges. Perhaps it is misguided to teach them the geography of France, although I see nothing to suggest that Daru does it with any spirit of condescension or of domination; I think that one must be frighteningly sure of one’s own opinion to condemn him just for not knowing the best way to accomplish a worthy goal. Daru’s treatment of the prisoner recapitulates his general attitude toward the Arabs. He insists on the prisoner’s humanness, on his freedom, and on his
equality with himself. They eat together and sleep in the same room, two rituals of fraternal bonding. Daru supplies the Arab with shelter, food, even money, and makes a small effort to educate him, not only about the route to freedom, but also, in asking about the murder, about moral responsibility. It seems from the changes in the Arab’s expression and behavior that Daru wins his trust. Whether his gifts, his instruction, his kindness, his example of humanity succeed in making a lasting impression on the prisoner remains forever unknown.

In the end, there is nowhere to fix the blame and no place to locate Daru’s misapprehension, unless it be that he misunderstands reality. He is a humanist in an inhuman or dehumanized world. He genuinely sees a brother in the Arab, but Balducci and the Arab’s “brothers” can see only a criminal or a victim, a pretext for vengeance or a problem, an object within a system of objectified relationships. Daru is furthermore a respecter of ambiguity, who lives appropriately on the plateau between the desert and civilization, who wants to be a middleman between knowledge and ignorance, between plenty and poverty. But his world is growing increasingly polarized; one must be for or “against us,” as Daru puts it, an act must be right or wrong, a person must be guilty or innocent. Daru is in many respects the most tragic, or at least the most moving, of Camus’s heroes in Exile and the Kingdom, but he shares many traits with others, and especially with his immediate predecessor, Yvars.

All the first four stories of the collection are presented through the consciousness of a central figure. They all misperceive their world in some way at the beginning; all of them are relaxing in an illusionary certainty or habitual complacency, only to have their tranquility disrupted by some unexpected turn of events. The stories end on the apparent alteration of the central figure’s consciousness, but in terms of action, it is not very clear what this alteration portends. Janine’s story contains the least drama in external events, the Renegade’s makes the external world a scene of incredible barbarity and violence. Yvars and Daru occupy a middle ground, ordinary lives touched by an extraordinary event.

Both men, as they are initially presented, are decent and
likable. Yvars mulls over the strike as he rides to work, and his meditation leads him to justify everyone, including the boss who won and the union that refused its support to the wildcat strikers. Despite some anger and bitterness, Yvars’s main feeling is sympathy for others, especially certain co-workers like Said who have suffered more than he has. Daru likewise appears first in a role where he sympathizes with others, his poverty-stricken pupils, the Arab prisoner, even Balducci. Both heroes are well-meaning, honorable, conscientious, and broad-minded.

The problem arises as an encounter with the Other: for Yvars, the boss; for Daru, the prisoner. Thus Yvars is an inferior looking up, Daru a superior looking down, yet their problems are the same: how to sustain a human relationship in a politically charged setting. Yvars has impulses of cordiality toward Lassalle and Ballester, but they are blocked by his awareness of the class barrier between them—an awareness heightened, of course, by the recent collapse of the strike and the workers’ communal resentment. Daru’s impulses of solidarity toward the prisoner are blocked by his disgust for the Arab’s crime, which, under the French-Algerian government, has become his responsibility. Of course, Daru’s position is in many ways more like Lassalle’s than like Yvars’s, and it seems plausible to imagine that Lassalle feels a frustration like Daru’s in confronting his silent, “unreasonable” men. The Arab’s unspoken feelings may well resemble the coopers’: an insurmountable distrust and self-defeating humiliation before the boss or judge. In short, each one traps the others in their social or political roles, and feels trapped himself.

As they struggle to find practical ways to resolve an inner conflict, outside forces intervene to inject unintended meanings into their actions. Daru’s prompt decision to free the Arab does not provide a code of behavior for their night together, nor does Yvars’s return to work predicate the course of his day. As each one wrestles in silence with his conscience and his feelings, Lassalle’s daughter is stricken and the Arab’s “brothers” steal up to Daru’s school. Suddenly Yvars’s silence becomes a rejection, and Daru’s becomes a police action. With our inner views of their minds and of the events, we can regard these interpreta-
tions as false. Viewed from the outside, however, they are plausible, even in a sense true. Both Yvars and Daru find that they have greater involvements with the Other than they had intended or realized. Indeed, there is a kind of role reversal for both: Yvars discovers that, in some circumstances, he, not Lassalle, holds the power to give or withhold help; Daru learns that he himself was the guest of the Arab in some ways.

The titles, with their possible multiple references, underscore this change in role. "The Silent Men" eventually seem to include Lassalle, reduced to silence by personal tragedy. "L'Hôte" is a wonderfully ambiguous term in French; it means either "guest" or "host" and could designate either Daru or the Arab in either function. The Guest is, in certain respects, a retelling of The Silent Men from the boss Lassalle’s perspective. The gesture of fraternity goes unreturned, and the passivity of the Other is transformed by circumstance into hostility.

It is, in the final analysis, a silly romantic daydream to think that Daru could have done any more for the prisoner than he did. Can anyone seriously believe that Daru could have joined the Algerian nationalists who were fighting a guerrilla war against the French? Or ought he then to have accompanied the prisoner to the nomad tribes? It would have made no difference in the outcome. The threat was coming to Daru, regardless of what he did, and regardless of what the prisoner did. If there is any immediate connection between the prisoner and the "brothers," between the fate of the prisoner and the acts of the "brothers," that connection defies analysis, given the paucity of information available to Daru and to us. Daru's choice is between turning the prisoner in and setting him free. That is a moral choice for Daru, and he makes what is probably the right decision (although how many of us, given the chance, would free a presumed murderer?). The bitter irony of The Guest, which makes it the most bleakly pessimistic of Camus's stories, is that right moral choices do not change the world.

If there is a villain in The Guest, it is the same one as in the other stories, not a person or a society, but the universe itself. That is the truly silent, completely passive and indifferent element in every story. In many regards, the Arab is explicitly
identified with this impersonal natural reality. His skin is "weathered" and "discolored by the cold," like the landscape (90). Balducci refers to him as a "zèbre" and compares the murder to the slaughter of sheep (92–93). All this recalls Daru’s opening meditation on the region and the climate, ending: “The sheep had died then by thousands, and even a few men, here and there, sometimes without anyone’s knowing” (88). Later, he thinks again about the same general themes, and sums up the passage of history in the region: “Towns sprang up, flourished, then disappeared; men came by, loved one another or fought bitterly, then died. No one in this desert, neither he nor his guest, mattered” (97–98). The Arab belongs to that eternal cycle, like the stones cracking in the sun, the stinging wind, the tireless waves, the wheeling stars, motifs that recur in almost every story. The Arab is just someone who passes by. His actions—the murder, his words to Daru, his staying at the school, his taking the road to Tinguit—signify no more than do the changes in the weather. If a mind and soul inhabit that body, they stay as unrecognizable as the mind and soul of the material universe.

Daru’s error, then, is this: he had believed that his monastic life, his solitude, his love for others and his acceptance of his place, had created a harmony between him and his universe. The story ends on the line, “In this vast landscape he had loved so much, he was alone” (109). He loved a landscape and nourished a delusion that it loved him, that in it he was not alone. He is, and always has been, alone in his moral existence. The honor he chooses to obey is his, not Balducci’s or the Arab’s, and certainly not the world’s.

Looking back to my own earlier note on this story, I think I would not now use the word ambiguity to describe the theme or the situation. The Arab is not a puzzle we are meant to solve but rather a blank, eternally, irrevocably meaningless. It is pathetic that Daru becomes interested in him, and actually cares what road he takes, after Daru has any chance left to be involved. It is pathetic in the same way that Daru cares enough about honor to offend Balducci by refusing to go along with orders. Daru is a quixotic figure—Don Quixote too freed prisoners out of honor, and suffered for it later. But Camus’s vision of the universe is a
This confrontation between Daru and the universe is the very locus of the absurd. Daru lives through a pointless, meaningless, and unresolved incident, yet he invests it with a conclusion, fits it into a signifying system, and projects a resolution. Since we see it all through his eyes, we share his desperate yearning to make sense of it. Even though this longing may be an error, pathetic, quixotic, self-deluding, foredoomed, the human refusal to subside into purely passive insignificance is our glory, our one possibility of revolt against the absurd.

1. P. 1621: “Tu as livré notre frère. Tu paieras.”
2. “Camus’s Mysterious Guests: A Note on the Value of Ambiguity.” It is distressing to realize how poorly I seem to have made my point, to judge by subsequent citations. I had written my commentary as a response to two previous articles in the same journal; both assumed the Arab prisoner to be an ignorant, helpless, passive victim. I made an opposite case to show that it was equally plausible, not that it was the right answer; but I have been recorded as one who believes in the Arab as terrorist. Peter Cryle attributes to me the view that “Daru has only to know the exact circumstances to see clearly what to do” (126n: “Daru n’a qu’à connaître les circonstances exactes pour voir clair devant lui”), and he quotes my sentence: “If he could truly know his Arab guest, know his guilt or innocence, he could make without difficulty the choice to free him or lead him to jail,” with the comment: “The ambiguity of the situation is not a simple consequence of the lack of communication” (“L’ambiguïté de la situation n’est pas une simple conséquence du manque de communication”). If Cryle had quoted my next sentence too, “But of course, no one ever truly knows another, and yet we must all choose again and again,” I believe it would have been obvious that I do not attach so much importance to the circumstances or to the lack of specific communication, but rather that I regard the situation as a paradigm of the universal human situation.
4. This judgment was offered by Franz Rauhut in “Du nihilisme à la ‘mesure’ et à l’amour des hommes,” in Richard Thieberger, ed., Configuration critique d’Albert Camus, 2:39: “Un Français qui lui donne une grande preuve d’humanité, un Algérien ne répond que par la haine.”
5. Comparable perhaps to the attitude of the French family toward the German officer in Vercors’s Le Silence de la mer.
7. P. 1611: “pleins de fièvre . . . buté . . . inquiet et rebelle.”
8. P. 1613: “avec une sorte d’inquiétude.”
10. P. 1618: “comme s’il écoutait de toute son attention.”
11. P. 1620: "comme s'il ne savait que faire de ce qu'on lui donnait."
12. P. 1618: "crut l'entendre gémir."
13. P. 1618: "Il fuit, pensait-il seulement."
15. P. 1620: "sans paraître comprendre", "sans comprendre." O'Brien translates the latter as "blankly."
16. P. 1621: "une sorte de panique se levait sur son visage."
17. P. 1614: "Moi non plus, je n'aime pas ça. Mettre une corde à un homme, malgré les années, on ne s'y habitue pas et même, oui, on a honte."
18. P. 1614: "Mais je ne le livrerai pas."
19. P. 1615: "Je vais t'accompagner.—Non. Ce n'est pas la peine d'être poli. Tu m'as fait un affront."
21. P. 1611: "recuite . . . decolorée par le froid."
22. Pp. 1612, 1613: "On m'a dit de te confier ce zèbre"; the slang term zèbre is colorlessly rendered as "guy" in the translation. "Il a tué le cousin d'un coup de serpe. Tu sais, comme au mouton, zic! . . . " Ellipsis in the text.
24. P. 1615: "Les villes y naissaient, brillaient, puis disparaissaient; les hommes y passaient, s'aimaient ou se mordaient à la gorge, puis mouraient. Dans ce désert, personne, ni lui ni son hôte n'étaient rien."
25. P. 1621: "Dans ce vaste pays qu'il avait tant aimé, il était seul."