THE REED

A Journal of Existentialism
from St. Olaf College

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THE REED

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"Man is but a reed, the most feeble thing in nature, but he is a thinking reed...It is not from space that I must seek my dignity, but from the ordering of my thought. The posession of lands would give me nothing more. By space, the universe envelops me and swallows me up like a point. By thought, I envelop it."

-Blaine Pascal, *Pensées*

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To Submit a Work:

The Reed is an interdisciplinary journal of existentialism printed each spring. If you are interested in submitting a work for publication, please send it as an email attatchment to *thereed@stolaf.edu*. We publish undergraduate academic papers, creative writing, poetry, and visual art that addresses existential themes. Submissions are due April 15 of every year. Entries should not exceed 4,000 words.

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The Howard and Edna Hong Kierkegaard Library
St. Olaf College

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Daedalus, Give Me the Farthest Distance Between Two Points

By John Linstrom

Well – the distance
between this ant
and Alpha Centauri
might as well be
the distance between that black branch
and the cold layer of snow it sleeps with.

Like your skin
is so far
beneath your shirt.
Like even if I could scoop out
handfuls
of your flesh, I would still never
reach you.

Are the chill frames
of your glasses
actually pressing
those holy taut temples?
No. Please
Don't touch me. I am feathery
and falling

Antonin Artaud's "Equilibrium of the Flesh": Instrumental Delirium as a Generative Strategy

By Rachel Billstein

Since the publication of Michel Foucault's Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason (1961), scholars have been forced to reconsider the status of the madman, who has long presented a particular discomfort in the discourse of modern philosophy. However, the nonconformity of the madman serves as a natural deconstruction of philosophical concepts that poststructuralists seek to destabilize (i.e. presence, identity, epistemic certainty, and the univocity of meaning). One such madman, Antonin Artaud (1896-1948), appears in the works of Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze, Sontag, Kristeva, Bersani, Blanchot, and others as a facilitator of rather than a detriment to philosophical discourse[1]. I intend to demonstrate what the madman has to offer to both literature and philosophy by giving a textual analysis of Artaud's own work, which is profusely metaphorical and metaphysical. Artaud writes between poetry and philosophy, restoring passion to language and reconstructing what we call "sense" as variable rather than fixed in fact.

According to Gabriele Schwab, literature is an instrument with the potential to free one from certain prescriptions of identity; Schwab writes "Instead of simply taking in what a literary work offers in terms of knowledge or pleasure, in processing literature, we must actually engage in undoing and remaking ourselves, including our cultural formations."[2] Schwab proposes that literature provides an ontological function to society. Literature operates like a two-way mirror in that it both represents what is and re-presents what is not but could be. Literature impacts the reader's understanding of the empirical world only when writing and reading are performed as interactive, not passive, processes. Further, to the extent that thought mobilizes action, literature is thought and is thought-provoking, giving it the potential to alter our experience.

Artaud's madness is instrumental and serves as a keyhole through which one glimpses that which is barred by society – all that was checked at the threshold of sense. In The Umbilicus of Limbo (1925), Artaud confesses, "I would like to write a book which would drive men mad, which would be like an open door leading them where they would never have consented to go, in short, a door that opens onto reality."[3] Delirium liberates thought. Beyond the threshold of sense, where philosophy and poetry converge, Artaud creates a space in which the body participates in the sense-making of its speech. Text is made palpable. If literature is able to restructure culture and the individual, mad literature is able to restructure (or rather deconstruct) thought itself.

Artaud writes from the position of a man remaking himself after having suffered the death of himself as subject: "I am a man who has lost his life and who is seeking by every means to restore it to its place. I am in some sense the Generator of my own vitality: a vitality which is more precious to me than consciousness" (110). In Artaud's work, there is no self as subject from which the spoken or written word emanates, but rather a void or absence that speaks toward the very presence that it lacks; he refers to his consciousness as an "inner

1 Morfee, 6.
2 Schwab, 78.
3 Artaud, 59.

leakage,"[4] an "emptiness,"[5] and a "void."[6] In a letter written to Jacques Rivière, one of Artaud's first publications (which pertained to poems rejected by Rivière), he defends his craft by explaining the way in which language negates the self, which is a defining characteristic of his poetry:

> This scattered quality of my poems, these defects of form, this constant sagging of my thought, must be attributed not to a lack of practice, a lack of control over the instrument I was handling, a lack of intellectual development; but to a central collapse of the soul, to a kind of erosion, both essential and fleeting, of the thought, to a temporary non-possession of the material benefits of my development, to an abnormal separation of the elements of thought (the impulse to think, at each of the terminal stratifications of thought, passing through all the stages, all the bifurcations of thought and form). There is something which destroys my thought; something which does not prevent me from being what I might be, but which leaves me, so to speak, in suspension.[7]

Speech, says Artaud, is the soul in suspension. Such is the existential dilemma that is the subject of Artaud's entire oeuvre. When the subject speaks, he or she is in effect doubled. Essentially, the formulation of thought ends thought itself, and the assignment of signification renders the matter of one's speech meaningless. Words are far removed from the thought and sense experience that they refer to. For Artaud, not only does representational language inhibit thought, but it also negates being as such. The spoken and written word emanate from a subject that is not a subject; existence becomes transient nearly to the point of being phantasmagoric. Derrida comments on this doubling effect in "La Parole Soufflée," claiming, "What is called the speaking subject is no longer the person himself, or the person alone, who speaks. The speaking subject discovers his irreducible secondarity, his origin that is always already eluded; for the origin is always already eluded on the basis of an organized field of speech in which the speaking subject vainly seeks a place that is always missing."[8] Derrida is here describing the nature of representational language, namely the way in which the speaker has no choice in the selection of his terms if he is to be understood. Insofar as his words are chosen for him in that they already exist, his thoughts are not his own because each thought must conform to the terms made available to him. There can be no self-expression in word, spoken or written, that is not simultaneously the expression of that which is not one's own.

To circumvent this doubling effect of language, Artaud invents a writing style that is skeptical of the present state or form of all that is by nature structural (such as language, culture, and reality). Artaud's writing demands that the reader suffer in the process of the search for meaning, a process that is equally (if not more) important as the meaning arrived at. The reader is to be affected by the text as with a plague. To read Artaud, one must submit both body and mind to the cruelty of his text. By cruelty, Artaud means that the

4 Artaud, 91.
5 Artaud, 91.
6 Artaud, 85.
7 Artaud, 34-35.
8 Derrida, 178.

text destabilizes one's sense of self and radically reconsiders the culture in which the self participates by violently shattering man's false perception of reality. Artaud is disgusted by literature, theatre, and art that numb the public by producing works that reinforce tradition and the abstract rather than stimulating thought and action. In "An End to Masterpieces," Artaud writes, "Things must fall apart if they are to begin again... The masterpieces of the past are good for the past: they are not good for us. We have a right to say what has been said and even what has not been said in a way that pertains to us, which is immediate and direct, which corresponds to present modes of feeling, and which everyone will understand."[9] Mad literature is this very falling apart that Artaud calls for; without cruelty, modern man becomes a puppet yanked about by the dead – his thoughts, words, and actions are not his own.

Artaud's writing is generative in that it bends reason and language to create meaning where it did not previously exist. Recognizing symbolic or representational language itself as a structure requiring cruel reformulation, Artaud engages in a style of writing and speaking that uses glossolalia[10], portmanteaux[11], parataxis[12], vociferation, guttural sounds, and incantation[13] . These literary techniques subordinate words to a specific function rather than use them as symbols imbued with meaning. Artaud explains the objective of his speech in "Mise en scène and Metaphysics" as making language express what it usually does not express, "to use it in a new, exceptional, and unaccustomed way, to restore its possibilities for physical shock, to divide it and distribute it actively in space, to use intonations in an absolutely concrete manner and to restore their power to hurt as well as to manifest something."[14] Artaud's style internalizes the abstract and spits it back out, locating language within and upon the body. His language undermines the symbolic, thereby enabling speech to become an act or a process, generative rather than representational. This provides the speaker (and reader) with a means by which to regenerate the self.

Representational language is useful only in that it localizes a subject and communicates that subject's particular experience of the world as a rational mind. Such expression is not useful for Artaud's purposes. He aims at revolution, at the deconstruction and regeneration of the self, of culture and society, and of metaphysics. Therefore, representational language must be ruptured or destroyed. Such language runs the risk of no longer being understood at all, which Artaud notes.[15] For this reason, writing against writing within writing is extremely challenging. The structure must remain and language must yet be recognizable while at the same time taking the reader outside the bounds of himself as subject. As an example of how this balance is achieved, the first five stanzas of Artaud's "The Return of Artaud, Le Mômo" illustrate his generative style:

> The anchored mind, / screwed into me / by the psycho-lubricious / thrust / of heaven / is one that thinks / every temptation, / every desire, / every inhibition. / **O dedi / a dada orzoura / o dou zoura /**

9 Artaud, 252.
10 A type of speech or babble characteristic of certain discourses of infants, poets, and schizophrenics; "The realm of pure sound, where there obtains a total disjunction of signifier and signified" (Weiss, 152).
11 Words blended together to make a new word; the term originally comes from chapter six of Lewis Carroll's Through the Looking Glass, and What Alice Found There.
12 The combination of clauses or phrases without the use of conjunctions
13 The ritual chanting or use of supposedly magical words.
14 Artaud, 239.
15 Artaud, 259.

a dada skizi /o kaya / o kaya pontoura / o ponoura / a pena / poni /
It's the spider-web sanctuary, / the onouric tuft / of where-ere the sail, /
the anal plate of anayou. / (You're not taking anything away, god, /
because it's me. / You've never taken anything like this away from me. /
I'm writing it here for the first time, / I'm finding it for the first time.)[16]

The excerpt above uses portmanteaux to interrupt otherwise recognizable language. Words with ready definitions are paired with those of Artaud's own creation. The mind itself is depicted as something forced upon one; its placement in the body is likened to rape ordered by god. The pormanteau words of the poem invite the parenthesized stanza that follows; in using his own language, Artaud ensures that his writing is original rather than strictly representational. He distinguishes between god and the "me" or "I" that writes; one is an external creator who forces thought upon Artaud, while the other is a creator originating in Artaud's speech. If the mind is "anchored" in thought when externally motivated, pormanteaux unsettle the mind and allow it to drift from violation of the already-written to inspiration of the unspoken. Instead of disregarding Artaud's poetry as jargon of a madman or as useless, the diligent reader will discern what I have come to refer to as instrumental delirium, aimed at the resurrection of the text from tradition and of language from representation.

Artaud becomes the god of his speech and reclaims his mind, but can do so only by "losing" his mind – by lifting anchor and allowing thought and language to stray from the order of reason and representation. It is important to note that Artaud never abandons representational language completely; his use of pormanteux is always in combination with or in opposition to the recognizable. Artaud realizes that the communicative function of language requires a structure if it is to be understood; this he is not opposed to. What he is opposed to is the inflexibility of that structure and the submission that it demands from its participants. In Artaud's view, representational language cages expression and implies that passion is a beast that must be governed by reason. Conversely, generative language frees expression and admits passion to play a distinctive part in the assignment of meaning, thereby allowing the individual to embody his speech. Artaud's liberation of the passions might be understood as an inverse of Plato's revelation of reason as accessed by knowledge of the forms. In contrast with Plato's Allegory of the Cave in which all men are prisoners of their senses until they master knowledge of the forms, Artaud posits the mind itself as a "cave of being," and beckons that his readers "abandon [their] lodgings" to "surrender to the Universal Thought."[17] In his version of the allegory, it is the forms rather than the shadows that are illusive, and it is passion not reason that enables man to access reality. Borrowing Plato's imagery, Artaud declares:

> It is only by a diverting of the flow of life, by a paralysis imposed on the mind, that one can fix life in its so-called real physiognomy, but reality is not under this surface. This is why we who aspire to a certain surreal eternity, we who have long since ceased to consider ourselves in the present and who are, as it were, the real shadows of ourselves, will not permit your coming and annoying us in the mind... You must not draw our attention too often to the chains that bind us to the petrifying imbecility of mind. We have laid our hands on a new beast. The heavens respond to our attitude of senseless absurdity.[18]

16 Artaud, 523.
17 Artaud, 103.

The shape that reason or sense lends our experience, that "physiognomy" which we call reality, is regarded by Artaud as the death of inspiration. The metaphysical plight of the prisoner is not that he mistakes the shadows as real instead of the forms that cast them, but that he fails to perceive that he himself is a shadow. The only chains that bind him are concepts and forms, and the only cave that holds him is his mind. Impassioned delirium is the "new beast" that refuses the chains of being. If the mind is a cave, Artaud recommends an attention to the shadow play that suggests form but never manifests it. There are no fixed forms or absolute truths to seek knowledge of, only the traces of our ideas about form and truth. Similarly, there is no autonomous being or subject who writes, only a double whose transience attests to a soul that can never concretely manifest.

In Artaud's estimation, all of what has already been written or formed is expired in terms of inspiration or idea; once the idea becomes a formulated thought and is represented by the written word, it has been passed through the digestive process of the mind. And so he concludes that "all writing is garbage" or "waste."[19] Writing – and life itself – ought to be generative. For Artaud, the mind must never be sated, but always expanding, creating, and hungering for more. In a personal letter to Henri Parisot, Artaud comments, "People are stupid. Literature, exhausted. There is nothing left, no one left, the soul is insane, there is no love, there isn't even hate. All bodies are sated, everyone's consciousness resigned. Even anxiety is gone, passed into the hollows of the bones, there is nothing left but the vast complacency of these sluggards, these bovine souls."[20] Without passion and cruelty in his life man is no better than a grazing beast. The mind itself has been rendered docile, hence Artaud's instrumental delirium. What better way to liberate thought and regenerate man than by unleashing passions that wholly contradict man's present understanding of the self and of society? Artaud answers a cultural need with mad literature, at times seeming to lose his wits in the process.

Artaud extends his cruelty to the content of his speech, writing in vulgarities that elicit emotional responses so strong that they border on being physical impulses. Lesley Stern refers to Artaud's work as "systematically revolting" in his article, "All Writing is Pig-shit" (a title borrowed from Artaud's An End to Masterpieces), meaning that the content is revolting and that the message constitutes a revolt against (literary) culture.[21] Taking up Artaud's style, Stern criticizes his work; "For Artaud, it's true that whist the mouth is also the anus – a haemorrhoided arsehole – it is also the vagina – a sewer drilled with teeth. Reeling between the sink and the latrine he chunders, shits, disappears up his own arse and fucks with words."[22] Stern mimics Artaud in order to demonstrate how one revolts in writing by writing that which is revolting. The meanings of these words, grotesque in themselves, are mobilized in a way that enables their revolting nature to pass along the entire body of text, contaminating the whole. The reader is asked to consider the mobility of body and thought; Stern has entered upon the very same grotesquely volatile linguistic and literary space that

18 Artaud, 103.
19 Artaud, 83, 85.
20 Artaud, 444.
21 Stern, 78.
22 Stern, 79.

Artaud writes from. This "systematically revolting" writing practiced by Artaud challenges the reader to contemplate his or her reaction to the text, in a sense delivering the volts that will reawaken them to the original function of literature in culture.

The body is the lens through which Artaud makes nonsensical sense of the world; it is the tableau upon which the mind records and revolts. Whereas representational language disregards passions, desires, and bodily experience, Artaudian language includes the body as equally legitimate, even essential, to thought and speech. His writing style creates a mode of expression that allows the speaker or writer to act rather than react – to "write for the first time." By embodying language, we escape thoughtless repetition or representation. To the extent that they are representational, speech and text exist as intermediaries between sense experience and the language of sense as informed by reason. When we communicate, we testify to the interface of logic and our experience of the empirical world. This interface between logic and experience, the abstract and the concrete, is what we call sense. Drawing from Deleuze's The Logic of Sense, Todd May notes, "Sense is what happens at the point at which language and the world meet. It is the happening, the event that arises when a particular proposition comes in contact with the world." [23]As the "boundary between propositions and things,"[24] sense creates a surface or a form that discursive tradition regards as finite; Artaud postulates that this surface is infinitely porous. In Fragments of a Diary from Hell, he writes, "I worship not the self but the flesh, in the palpable sense of the word. All things touch me only insofar as they affect my flesh, insofar as they coincide with it, and only at that point where they arouse my flesh, not beyond. Nothing touches me, nothing interests me except that what addresses itself directly to my flesh."[25] Artaud refers to the interaction between oppositional categories of self and other as the "equilibrium of the flesh." Similarly, the interaction between oppositional categories such as the concrete and the abstract, or body and mind, also occur upon a surface. The nature of this surface is precisely what is at stake in Artaud's work. One can understand Artaud's body of work as a body, or as flesh; the words on page create a surface between the turbulent void of his thought and the inherent fixity of discursive tradition.

When reading mad literature, it is important to distinguish not only between sense and nonsense, but also between nonsense and what Gilles Deleuze calls "infra-sense" in his essay "Thirteenth Series of the Schizophrenic and the Little Girl." Deleuze distinguishes between the nonsense present in Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky" and Through the Looking Glass and the infra-sense present in Artaud's work, the difference being that the former reflects sense as if upon a mirrored surface while the latter shatters that mirror completely. The usual definition of nonsense is one that reaffirms the concept of sense, as it operates upon the same linguistic surface; nonsense remains a version of sense, albeit a jumbled or perverted version. As the inverse of sense, it inverts existing linguistic and literary conventions, and in this inversion is still bound by them. Deleuze asserts that Artaud writes in an entirely different dimension, concluding that, "Artaud is alone in having been an absolute depth in literature, and in having discovered the vital body and the prodigious language of this body."[26] Essentially, this surface, which Artaud seeks to permeate and transcend, is the prescription of discursive meaning to words, which limits language, speech, and thought itself. Beyond the surface of form is the space of force, which is for Artaud thought and inspiration. Concerning the surface of sense and its confinement of thought and expression, Artaud writes:

> The imagination, the dream, that whole intense liberation of the unconscious whose purpose is to raise to the surface of the soul all that it is in the habit of keeping concealed, must necessarily introduce profound transformations in the scale of appearances, in the value of signification and the symbolism of the created. The whole of concrete reality changes its garb or shell and ceases to correspond to the same mental gestures. The beyond, the invisible, replace reality. The world no longer holds.[27]

The surface of sense is variable, shifting as thought does (as there is a direct correspondence between "concrete reality" and "mental gestures"). Artaud understands the soul as obligated to interact with reality; the surface upon which sense is constructed should breathe and speak – should be a living surface – and not a dead one (a "garb or shell"). Recall Deleuze's notion of sense and nonsense as playing upon a surface that divides language from the body. As Artaud believes that "it is through the skin that metaphysics will be made to reenter our minds,"[28] his work challenges the reader to engage both mind and body in metaphysical inquiry. This metaphor of the skin also speaks to the nature of our ontological status. In an overview of Deleuzean metaphysics, Todd May distinguishes between the "dogmatic image of thought" and the world of difference. The "dogmatic image of thought" refers the mode of thought that results from representational strategies; this is thought in the traditional sense, which perceives a world consisting of "particular things with strict borders that interact with other particular things."[29] However, when we think or perceive in an alternative mode of difference, "the borders between things become porous and their identities fluid."[30] The surface that we perceive in this mode of thought lives, breathes, and moves. And this is precisely why it is a world of differences, because in its movement, we can never grasp it, nor can our words define it – we can only "palpate" this world.[31] Artaud comments on the elusiveness of thought and the illusory quality of that which reason regards as fixed in "Man Against Destiny:"

> One cannot grasp thought. In order to think, we have images, we have words for these images, we have representations of objects. We separate consciousness into states of consciousness. But this is merely a way of speaking. All this has no real value except insofar as it enables us to think...But in reality consciousness is a whole... There is no stopping the motion of thought. That which we place before us so that the reason of the mind can consider it is in reality already past; and that which reason holds is merely a form, more or less empty of real thought.[32]

23 May, 100.
24 Deleuze, 22.
25 Artaud, 93.
26 Deleuze, 35.

27 Artaud, 142.
28 Artaud, 251.
29 May, 72.
30 May, 72-73.
31 May, 82,
32 Artaud, 357-358.

The forms with which we are familiar – be they in language, literature, culture, or reality – are always already mere representations. As such, it is our responsibility to tend to those representations, ensuring that they generate thought and liberate human expression and experience. If we deny passion in life and opt for passivity where we ought to be (re)active if not cruel, we cast chains about our world – fixing it into fact and form, denying its variability. Perhaps mad literature will not always serve culture in the way that it certainly can today, as a deviation from the "bovine" and a vehicle for cultural and individual regeneration. It too, once made a masterpiece, ought to be cast aside as waste – but not before.

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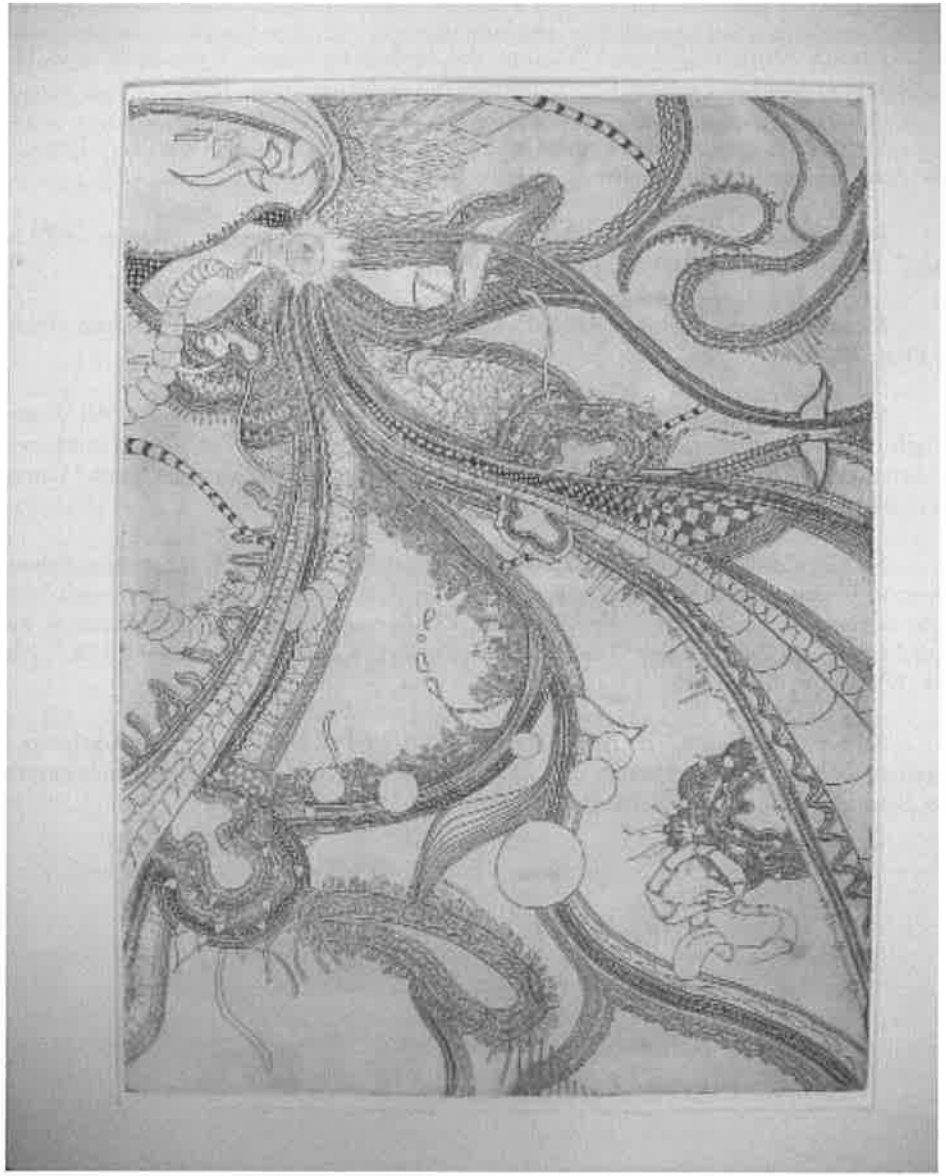

White Rives BFK
By Naomi Lee

Existential Rebellions
By Daniel Zwick

The atheist Albert Camus and the devout Christian Fyodor Dostoevsky were great thinkers whose philosophies and beliefs, in the final analysis, differed greatly. However, these writers produced two notable characters who are, in a sense, profoundly similar. These characters are Ivan Karamazov, from Dostoevsky's The Brothers Karamazov, and Dr. Bernard Rieux, from Camus' The Plague. Both Rieux and Ivan recognized the cruelty, suffering, senselessness, and overall absurdity that characterize the human condition. However, their respective responses to this absurdity are what distinguishes one from the other. Both "rebel" against the absurdity of life; Ivan chooses to rebel by rejecting and ultimately despairingly withdrawing from life, whereas Rieux refuses to despair in the face of absurdity, instead rebelling against it by actively fighting against his (and all of humanity's) cruel, seemingly meaningless, and inevitable fate. Thus, it is clear that Ivan and Rieux's respective "rebellions" differ greatly. Through examining the nature of absurdity, and Ivan and Rieux's respective actions and characters, it becomes evident that Rieux's response to the absurd is ultimately more responsible, sensible, "lucid" (as Camus would say), admirable, and satisfying than Ivan's.

Camus believes that man's deep thirst for life (i.e., to live) and for the future, as well as for great meaning and accomplishment in life, ultimately goes unquenched. These unrequited longings for life and meaning are two major sources of absurdity. Phillip Rhein writes, "the absurd always involves a contradiction between two perceptions. Here that contradiction exists between our longing for eternity and the inevitability of our death. It is the confrontation between the desire and the reality."[1] Thus, mankind's mortality coupled with its desire to live produces absurdity. Or, to put it more eloquently, "the certainty of death, makes life itself a charade and therefore absurd."[2]

Further, the human condition is also absurd because man always strives for and desires meaning, purpose, and understanding when the fact is that life is ultimately devoid of higher meaning. Camus writes, "what is absurd is the confrontation of this irrational [world] and the wild longing for clarity whose call echoes in the human heart. The absurd depends as much on man as on the world" (Camus, 410). Here, Camus shows that human existence and reality by themselves are not absurd. Instead, absurdity arises when human existence and reality collide (as they always necessarily do in life). Thus, what is absurd is man's desire for life (and release from suffering), understanding, accomplishment, and meaning in the face of the irrational and radically indifferent reality of this world.

Absurdity thus arises from mankind's natural desire for something that the reality of life cannot give them. Thus, it is clear that human existence and reality are not absurd. What is absurd is the collision of man and world. This "collision" is akin to a Heideggerian sense of "being-in-the-world," or to put it simply, the human condition. Yet, Camus is not as concerned with proving the absurdity of life as he is with discerning what follows from the fact of absurdity. In The Myth of Sisyphus, Camus writes, "I am interested – let me repeat again – not so much in absurd discoveries as in their consequences. If one is assured of these facts, what is one to conclude, how far is one to go to elude nothing? Is one to die voluntarily or to hope in spite of everything?" (Camus, 408). Camus wants to know the consequences of

1 Phillip Rhein, *Albert Camus*, 13.
2 Ibid., 61.

the fact of the absurdity of life; specifically, he wants to discern the proper way to live and act in the face of man's absurd condition. As Rhein puts it, "Camus seeks to discover a mode of action that will teach us how to live in the world as it is."[3] Camus essentially asks: In the face of the absurd, is one to despair and, as it were, quit life (a path which ultimately leads to nihilism and suicide)? Or are we to live hopefully regardless of one's unavoidable and unpleasant fate? Or, is there a third option?

Ivan Karamazov chooses the first option; i.e., he "rebels" against the absurdity and cruelty of the world by despairingly and pessimistically rejecting and withdrawing from life. He chooses this path essentially because he is unable to come to grips with the senseless suffering and evil that pervades the world. Ivan says, "in the final result I don't accept this world...I don't accept it. I won't accept it" (Guignon, 5-6). For Ivan, this means he does not want to participate in life, because to participate in life would mean to accept the world. As Charles Guignon writes, "To accept life, then, is to condone a scheme of things in which there is evil, and so it makes one an accomplice in the suffering in the world" (Guignon, xxv). Yet, although he despises life because of its moral absurdity, Ivan paradoxically also loves life. Ivan says his love of life springs from his Karamazov bloodline; he says, "It's a feature of the Karamazovs, it's true, that thirst for life regardless of everything" (Guignon, 2). In spite of his love of living, Ivan nonetheless asserts, "At thirty, though, I shall be sure to leave the cup, even if I've not emptied it, and turn away – where I don't know. But until I am thirty, I know that my youth will triumph over everything – every disillusionment, every disgust with life" (Guignon, 2). Here, Ivan is alluding that when he reaches thirty, he will commit suicide; for, this is the logical conclusion of a rejection of life. Thus, Ivan intends to bring the refusing and despairing of life to its logical conclusion.

Ivan's response to the absurd can be partly explained and illuminated by examining his character. Ivan is described as both a "tomb" and a "riddle" (Guignon, 2). This double description alludes to Ivan's paradoxical and double nature; he loves life, but at the same time sulkily rejects it – this is why he is a riddle. Ivan is thought to be a tomb because of his cold, pessimistic, arrogant, analytic, and individualistic nature. Many of these aspects of Ivan's character are shaped by the fact that he is highly intelligent. He is described as an intellectual and "Western-educated," and seemingly has adopted all the ideals of Enlightenment rationalism. His intelligence leads him to rationally reflect on the injustice, cruelty, violence, and destruction that pervades the world. Upon reflecting on all of the negative aspects of humanity and the world, Ivan decides he cannot accept either. Once Ivan begins to think about all the appalling and atrocious events of the world, he does not see how he could possible accept it; i.e. he is disgusted and appalled by the world.

Thus, Ivan's rationality and intelligence lead him to a pessimistic and negative outlook on the world and human nature. Logically speaking, Ivan does not see how life could ever be acceptable and worth living. Strict rationality tells him life is meaningless and full of too much suffering and absurdity to be acceptable. He says, that for now, "I go on living in spite logic" (Guignon, 2). Ivan's intelligence also causes him to be somewhat arrogant and prideful. Henri de Lubac notices this aspect of Ivan's character, calling it "diabolical pride" which leads to arrogance and pessimism.[4] This sense of pride only increases his disdain for

3 Ibid., 62.

4 Henri de Lubac, *The Drama of Atheist Humanism,* 291.

the world. For, the main reason why Ivan finds the world deplorable is because of all the suffering caused by mankind. Ivan is unable to come to terms with the evil done by man, and thus chooses to reject and withdraw from humanity.

It is Ivan's experiences of evil (while mostly second hand) that cause him to rebel against the entirety of creation. Ivan says, "there is suffering and suffering. Degrading, humiliating suffering, such as humbles me" (Guignon, 7). Specifically, the suffering of innocent children causes him to be outraged to the point of outright rejection of human existence. Absolutely nothing can make the suffering of innocent children make sense and be acceptable to Ivan, not even if endured for the sake of eternal salvation and harmony. Ivan passionately tells his brother Alyosha heart wrenching stories of senseless and repulsive evil done to harmless children. These stories, which Ivan has learned of primarily through newspapers, are the main reason why he rebels. He asks Alyosha, "Can you understand why a little creature, who can't even understand what's done to her, should beat her little aching heart with her tiny fist in the dark and the cold, and weep her meek unresentful tears to dear, kind God to protect her?" (Guignon, 12). Ivan cannot understand the suffering of the innocent, thus he refuses to accept, or even to try to make sense of, the world.

It is clear what causes Ivan to rebel, but the nature of his rebellion must be further examined. Ivan says that he cannot understand nor accept the cruelty, suffering, and injustice of the world, thus he will hasten to give back his "entrance ticket" (Guignon, 16) into the world. Further, Ivan says to Alyosha, "It's not God that I don't accept, Alyosha, only I most respectfully return Him the ticket" (Guignon, 16). Through his rebellion, Ivan is returning "the ticket" which symbolizes entrance into existence in this world; meaning, he is refusing to take part and be in this world. Thus, Ivan's rebellion is a powerful existential rebellion. He cannot accept existing in a world of irredeemable injustice, suffering, and evil. Thus, Ivan rebels against the evil and absurdity of the world by refusing simply to be.

Ivan says, "Let me tell you, novice, that the absurd is only too necessary on earth. The world stands on absurdities" (Guignon, 14). Because the world is morally absurd, Ivan is unable to understand it. Further, (possibly partly due to his pride) Ivan not only admits that when it comes to the moral absurdity of the world he understands nothing, but he also says, "I don't want to understand anything now. I want to stick to the fact. I made up my mind long ago not to understand" (Guignon, 14). Here, the true nature of Ivan's rebellion begins to show. For one, he does not want to make sense of the world, because to do so would be in part to accept it. More importantly, his rebellion against life and his rejection of participation in the world is characterized by a passivity that is ultimately problematic.

Ivan rebels against the moral absurdity of the world, but he does so in a passive way. He complains about the suffering of the world and is clearly deeply troubled by it. However, he is never stirred into action to try to end suffering or quell injustice in the world. Instead, in a pessimistic and individualistic mood, Ivan passively despairs and refuses to act in order to change the world for the better. In passively and pessimistically rejecting and withdrawing from the world, Ivan is in a sense, allowing evil by doing nothing. Ivan is intelligent enough to recognize the problems of the world and the evil in it, but he responds in what is an ultimately problematic, empty, selfish, and unenlightened way. For, Ivan's inaction, individualism, and anger ultimately lead to a destructive sense of despair. Camus himself points this out in The Myth of Sisyphus when he writes that due to the way in which Ivan chooses to

rebel against absurdity, "he [Ivan] ends in madness."[5]

Guignon agrees that Ivan's rebellion is problematic. Guignon asserts that Ivan's pride, individualism, and pessimism lead him to live a life detached from and unconcerned with others. This is so even though Ivan claims that he does not accept the world "From love for humanity" (Guignon, 16). This sentiment is clearly overshadowed by Ivan's dark view of human nature and many statements he makes, such as how he says it's impossible to love one's neighbor (Guignon, 7). Guignon argues that Ivan's greatest flaw is that he is irresponsible – he does not accept responsibility for himself or for others. This is evidenced by his inaction even though he is outraged by the moral depravity of the world. Further, because he is irresponsible he passively and sullenly expounds a type of destructive nihilism. Instead, Guignon says that Ivan should have recognized his responsibility and taken action. Guignon writes that Ivan's "stance is motivated by pride and cuts him off from the world and makes it impossible for him to see what can be done to improve the human condition" (Guignon, xliii).

Through his inaction, Ivan "tends to breed a second-order evil that intensifies the suffering that already exists" (Guignon,xliii). Thus, Ivan's rebellion is counterproductive. Ultimately he fails to overcome his character flaws, which in turn make his rebellion flawed. Yet, Dostoevsky himself thought Ivan's rejection of the world to be reasonable and coherent. Guignon writes that Dostoevsky held that Ivan's rebellion was rationally "unanswerable" (Guignon, xxxvi). Henri de Lubac writes that when Ivan asks how anyone could accept the evil done to innocent children, "Dostoevsky is thinking in the depths of his heart that, on the plane of reason, there is no answer."[6] Yet, what is problematic about Ivan's rebellion is not that it is unreasonable, but that it is untenable; Ivan's rebellion ultimately does nothing to remedy or fight against the moral absurdity of the world, it may even exacerbate the problem.

In the final analysis, Ivan's rebellion is contemptible because it is empty, irresponsible, and displays a harmful pride. It would seem that Ivan is too bitter and pessimistic to move beyond his passive stance towards absurdity to a more developed and satisfying active approach. Ivan is intelligent enough to recognize the absurdity of the world, but he does not have the fortitude to respond appropriately. Ultimately, there is something highly questionable and deeply troubling about both Ivan's character and his rebellion.

We have seen how Ivan answers the question of how to act in the face of the absurd; he answers by descending into despair and ultimately refusing to act. It is obviously essential, however, to note how Camus answers his own question. The rebellions of Camus' Sisyphus and Dr. Rieux illustrate his answer. For Camus, (as Ivan) rebellion logically follows the realization of absurdity. But, Camus conceives of rebellion quite differently than Ivan. He writes of the rebellion against absurdity: "It is not aspiration, for it is devoid of hope. That revolt is the certainty of a crushing fate, without the resignation that ought to accompany it" (Camus, 413). Thus, to truly rebel against the absurdity of the human condition is to realize the hopelessness and utter futility of one's revolt, but to revolt anyway.

In a sense, Camus (like Ivan) endorses rejecting the absurd. But, it is clear that Camus does not endorse a way of rebellion that ends in despair and refuses existence. Instead, the proper way to rebel is to recognize that one cannot escape the absurdity of their condition

5 Ibid., 316.
6 Ibid., 291

and eventual fate, but instead of despairing, one should choose to exist and actively fight fate anyway. It can be argued that this is the only way to truly reject the absurdity of the human condition. For, it is one thing to be passively and philosophically opposed to the absurd, it is another to actively confront it, even while cognizant of one's inevitable failure to overcome it. Thus, Camus' active sense of rebellion, which is beyond despair and hope, appears more forceful and effective than Ivan's conception of rebellion.

Further, Camus argues that actively revolting and fighting against the absurdity of life is how life is infused with value. He writes, "That revolt gives life its value. Spread out over the whole length of a life, it restores its majesty to that life" (Camus, 413). Thus, in fighting the absurdity and hopelessness of one's existence, one finds dignity in the refusal to surrender to it. The fact that dignity and value are the end results of Camus' active rebellion contrasts greatly with the end results of Ivan's passive attitude toward absurdity. Further, Camus shows that Ivan, in not combating the absurd, is actually accepting it. He writes, "Suicide, like the leap, is acceptance at its extreme" (Camus, 413). For, if one commits suicide because of the absurdity of life, then that person is completely accepting his condition as is, and also is recognizing his inability to change it. Here, Camus shows the contradictory and self-defeating nature of Ivan's rebellion.

For Camus, the correct way to undertake a rebellion is to act like Sisyphus. Sisyphus is the "absurd hero" because through his refusal to succumb to the absurdity, inevitability, and hopelessness of his task of continually rolling a boulder up a hill, he is "superior to his fate" (Camus, 417). Sisyphus thus illustrates how one can add dignity and value to their life by rejecting their absurd and hopeless fate, and by fighting on and refusing to despair. Thus, unlike Ivan who says no to life, "The absurd man says yes and his effort will henceforth be unceasing" (Camus, 418). Sisyphus as the absurd hero realizes the futility of his situation but refuses to be beaten by it. It is in this refusal that Sisyphus obtains his peculiar dignity, and why Camus writes, "One must imagine Sisyphus happy" (Camus, 419).

Another of Camus' characters who represents the correct response to absurdity is Dr. Rieux. Rieux spends the entirety of the novel The Plague combating the epidemic. This is highly significant, because on one level, the plague represents the inescapable absurdity of the human condition. This is seen when it is stated, "But what does that mean 'plague'? Just life, no more than that" (Camus, 307). Thus, Rieux symbolizes the proper response of actively combating and refusing to succumb to the absurdity of our condition, even though we know that in this battle we can never obtain a "final victory." In the face of immeasurable odds and incredible suffering, Rieux refuses to stop fighting and despair. In this way, he provides the perfect foil to Ivan.

In fact, Rieux and Ivan often appear to be profoundly similar. The best example of this is how they both are greatly troubled by the suffering of children. Similarly to how Ivan cannot accept cruelty towards children, Rieux breaks down after seeing a young boy die of the plague. After this unfortunate incident Rieux says, "Ah! That child, anyhow, was innocent, and you know it as well as I do!...And until my dying day I shall refuse to love a scheme of things in which children are put to torture" (Camus, 218). This quotation seemingly could be taken from one of Ivan's dialogues in The Brothers Karamazov, which illustrates the similarity (on one level) between Rieux and Ivan. Both initially are outraged by and
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absurd is profoundly different from how Ivan chooses to rebel. Ultimately, Rieux's rebellion, similarly to Sisyphus', is more satisfying and effective than Ivan's.

In a self-defining moment Rieux says, "Heroism and sanctity don't really appeal to me, I imagine. What interests me is being a man" (Camus, 255). Furthermore, Rieux was not under the false hope and illusion that there would be a "final victory" (Camus, 308) over the plague/the absurd. Thus, Rieux is not tirelessly and constantly fighting the plague because he desires to be revered as a hero, nor because he hopes to claim a victory. He is fighting it because he rejects the dismal fate it forces on Oran, and he refuses to succumb to its forces. Whereas Ivan resolves to rebel by "returning his ticket" and thus eventually completely submitting to the absurd, Rieux realizes that true rebellion "demands an ongoing struggle with the absurd."[7]

Camus writes, "Anyhow, in this respect Rieux believed himself to be on the right road – in fighting against creation as he found it" (Camus, 127). To Rieux, fighting against the absurdity of creation is not heroic or extraordinary, it is logical and a matter of common decency. Regarding this sentiment, Rieux writes, "There was nothing admirable about this attitude; it was merely logical," (Camus, 133) and "there's no question of heroism in all this. It's a matter of common decency" (Camus, 163). Thus, Rieux holds that it is only natural for the human being to actively resist the plague/the absurd; for, this is what we are supposed to do, it is our job as human beings. Here, Rieux's actions and words provide a strong criticism of Ivan. Rieux shows that it is natural to accept responsibility for oneself and others by fighting and helping others to fight against the cruelty and absurdity of our being-in-the-world. Thus, Rieux shows that refusing to act against the absurd is both irresponsible and unnatural.

Further, Rieux's story also shows that in refusing to succumb in the face of hopelessness, many valuable experiences can be had. The fact that Rieux does not give up (as Ivan does) once he recognizes the cruelty, absurdity, and hopelessness of his situation allows him throughout the course of the narrative to develop tight friendships (with Tarrou in particular), experience acts of love, sympathy, and compassion, realize that "there are more things to admire in men than to despise," (Camus, 308) and even to be "enlightened" by his experiences (Camus, 308). As Rieux says, "if you refuse to be beaten, you have some pleasant surprises" (Camus, 157).

Thus, through his action and persistence Rieux powerfully shows throughout the course of The Plague that actively revolting against absurdity and refusing to despair in the face of hopelessness infuses life with value and dignity. This is why, like Sisyphus, we must imagine Rieux, whose name is similar to the French noun rieur (one who laughs), happy in his own way.[8] Further, Rieux illustrates why Ivan is not happy but angry, bitter, and despondent. Rieux's rebellion is much more satisfying to the reader than Ivan's because Rieux is more responsible, admirable, and aware. It is important to remember that Ivan has never experienced great suffering firsthand as Rieux has. Thus, when Rieux says that "suffering" taught him (Camus, 129) his view on life and his commitment to fighting the plague even in the face of cruel reality, the reader is acutely aware that Rieux's experiential education has made him more lucid and aware of how to respond well to the absurdity of the human condition than Ivan's formal Western education has made him.

7 Phillip Rhein, *Albert Camus*, 14.

8 Steven Kellman, *The Plague: Fiction and Resistance*, 32.

Both Ivan and Camus think the proper response to the absurd is rebellion. Camus' sense of active rebellion gives value and dignity to life, refuses to succumb to despair, and shows an admirable concern and sense of responsibility for oneself and others. Thus, Camus' rebellion ultimately is more productive, positive, effective, and is founded on a more coherent philosophical basis than Ivan's passive, despondent, and nihilistic approach. Together, the solid foundation on which Camus' rebellion is based and the fact that Ivan's version is highly problematic, form a forceful argument for refusing to despair and for taking decisive action in the face of the experience of absurdity.

In Part Two of The Plague, Tarrou tells Rieux that the way in which he faces and responds to the absurd will never provide a lasting victory. Rieux responds by saying, "Yes, I know that. But it's no reason for giving up the struggle" (Camus, 128). Ivan gives up the struggle before it even begins; yet, the significance of Rieux is that he shows us the way beyond Ivan Karamazov to a more enlightened and dignified approach to the absurdity of the human condition. In this sense, Camus effectively shows that even when a higher meaning is rejected and one lives "beyond blasphemy and prayers," (Camus, 219) this does not mean that person necessarily is mired in despair and is individualistic, but rather, he can be a good and admirable man. In The Myth of Sisyphus and The Plague Camus calls for people to be "healers" who, like Sisyphus and Rieux, understand the importance and significance of putting their shoulder to the rock again and again.

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Buried Treasure

By Joey Fleming

I scan the sand, skip
a stone on the calm.
I'm a gull, I'm a hound, I'm the Sun.
I'm a dolphin carcass pulled in too late.
The tide rolls in,
the tide rolls out.
A wedding ring half buried under
mediocrity's weed green tarnish,
I'm a necklace in the rain.
Some bones,
I'm a Spanish gold coin with a hole
through the center.
Point me to abandoned
shells left empty by growing hermit crabs,
to abandoned
thatched huts left empty by growing hermits.
They tick their
razor-point feet
across the beach's
pale skin; they stoop to pick up a coin,
or a stone, washing
in and out with the
tide, I'm a stone. I'm the surf.
Barebacked, burrowing, and finding,
finally,
home.

The Scarecrow

By Alexanber B. Joy

Scarecrow, who starved you,
Set you in that icy wind,
And then forgot you?
-Richard Wright; Haiku: This Other World, #577

What is it about the human form that renders it so terrible to creatures great and small? Something must lie behind our shambling, bipedal gait that bespeaks a quiet malevolence to the rest of the world, something that skipped over the rest of nature and decided to concentrate itself entirely within our species. Most animals seem to have a way of recognizing this thing, this thing that I cannot adequately capture in words, since some internal compunction leads them to flee whenever we approach, abandon whatever it is they are doing to focus exclusively on flight, as if the most advantageous evolutionary trait its ancestry could pass on was the immanent knowledge of the perilous ways of mankind.

I must have been born an animal in a previous life, because when Pa built that lone scarecrow to guard the cornfield surrounding our house, I shuddered like a freezing horse. The thing stood nailed to its ramshackle post like a more impotent Christ, its under-stuffed head of hay lolling to the side as if its neck had snapped beneath its own weight. Pa had stitched a face on the burlap sack that substituted for its skin, and his palsied hands left on the scarecrow an expression I could only liken to deformed malice – a grin harshly upturned on one side, the other side straight but wider than the rest of the smile; two jet-black button eyes that did not line up properly and simply stared into you regardless of where you stood when you noticed; no nose save for a faded patch that an evaporated turpentine stain left behind, from a spilled bucket in the barn where Pa discovered the sack in the first place, and conceived the demented idea to bring that awful scarecrow into the world.

Later on in life I saw the same expression plastered on the face of a dead badger I found in the woods; and I had the same visceral, avolitional response to it. I did not even have time to bury the creature, or run away from the offending sight. I picked up a rock and smashed that horrible face, beating it again and again until the expression could not be seen any longer.

After Pa built his scarecrow, he walked about with a little extra verve in his stride, somehow proud of the monstrosity he created. His legs trembled less, and his voice adopted a cadence almost like a running mower. I noticed as the two of us were eating lunch after he placed the scarecrow in the cornfield. Between gaping catfish bites of ham sandwich, Pa looked up at me across the table and said:

"Yeah, Clora, let's see those crows try to dupe me now!" Pa ate another giant mouthful. His wrists shook as he raised his sandwich. "They think they're so smart, think they're so tough. I'll show 'em! Ain't nobody who shames Verne Sherman." Another bite. "Ain't nobody."

I could only respond with a perfunctory nod. I bit into my own sandwich, careful not to let my overlarge front teeth show as I ate. Pa was never pleased if I did. He claimed that to do so was not ladylike conduct. His teeth were normal-sized and more or less straight – mine were the product of a recessive gene whose shoddy workmanship Pa attributed to himself. Pa sat back in his chair, looking out the window at the scarecrow in the distance, and nodding

in satisfaction.

My friends, upon visiting the house, did not take long to discover the scarecrow. I remember when Gavin Wayne, a boy playmate roughly my age and the closest thing I had to a neighbor, came over to play one weekend. We did what seven-year-olds do, in that time before the other gender becomes something craved. We reenacted what we thought was a famous battle that occurred on the Iowa plains no more than fifty miles away. We were certain that the ghosts of old soldiers still walked the land, and so we paid them homage by reliving the skirmishes, real or imagined, in which they fought and died. Gavin held a wooden saber in his hand, and charged at me while he bellowed like a riled bull. He swung much harder than I could parry. By chance Gavin glanced out the living room window, and suddenly the fire of battle left his ice-blue eyes. In its place sparkled the glint one finds in the stare of a defiant prisoner, still thirsting to relive the moment of glory that incarcerated him until the last. Gavin ducked to the floor, dragging me by the arm with him.

"Clora! Clora, look out there!" He peered over the windowsill. "There's someone in the field watching us! He's dressed like...Like a fugitive or something."

"There's nobody outside," I said. "It's only that scarecrow Pa made a while ago."

"Scarecrow? You mean it's not a criminal?" Gavin stood up, seemingly disappointed. Sunlight through the window highlighted dark, hand-like bruises on his neck. Gavin often had such marks on him. "Piece of junk, raisin' my hopes. We could've had a tussle."

"Yeah, Gavin, maybe."

"You know I could take 'im, Clora!"

"Sure you could, Gavin."

"Don't you patronize me, Horse-teeth!" Instinctively, my lips covered my smile. "I know I could take 'im. I'm waiting for the day when I have the chance!"

From my bedroom window at night I could see the scarecrow enacting its solemn guard down in the field. When the winds swept waves through the cornstalks, the figure would turn and sway with them, sometimes moving so much that it stared right at me in my bed as I looked on. During those nights when the moonlight shone bright enough to cast a shadow, I could watch the scarecrow's head rise and fall with the breezes, as if it were scanning the ample rows of corn for something on which to pounce. Every morning, I woke up and peered out the window at the scarecrow, vainly hoping that it had disappeared in the night like a shadow on the edge of one's vision. But it was always there when I checked, and by my imprecise measurements it always seemed to encroach, inching closer and closer to the house as I slept unaware.

"I tell you, Clora, I ain't heard a single crow in days," Pa said one morning over breakfast, a meal consisting of sawdust-textured pancakes and artificial syrup. "The little black bastards is scared! That there scarecrow might be the best thing to happen to this farm in a long time."

"What about the tractor?" I asked. "We couldn't have planted a thing without the tractor, Pa. I think that's the best thing. Ain't that why you're fixin' it?"

"Haw!" Pa chuckled. "Clever girl, you are, Clora! Sure, the tractor was a plenty good thing, too. But planting the corn don't mean a thing unless you can keep it when it grows. All that work would've been for nothing, if it weren't for that scarecrow!" Pa thoroughly ruminated a bit of pancake. "Hell, I didn't take up this farm to feed a bunch of dirty crows, and neither did your Grandpa Sherman, Clora. I'd be disrespectin' him if I let all this land go to

the birds now."

Through the kitchen window I saw the hanging head of the scarecrow. Its black outline silhouetted by the rising sun gave the appearance of burning effigy, or a body freshly hanged at the hands of vigilante justice. My food began to taste like cloth. As Pa's quivering hand raised more pancakes to his mouth, I entreated, "Pa?"

"Yeah, darlin'?"

"I don't like that scarecrow."

"You don't?" Pa seemed taken aback. He looked down at his plate, as though he were silently gauging the quality of his culinary labors. Then he continued. "You don't like it? Well, what don't you like about it?

"No, Pa. I don't like it at all." I paused. His dark eyes looked at me as if through water. I struggled to articulate further. "It's scary."

"That's what a scarecrow's supposed to do, Clora! It wouldn't be much good to us at all if it weren't scary. You think those crows would be intimidated by something funny-looking?"

"But it's not meant to scare people, is it?"

"That depends, I guess." Pa chewed some more. "Sometimes a thing goes and does more than it's meant to, and other times, less." Another portion of pancake went into his mouth. "But no, I suppose it's not meant to be scary, 'cause then it likely wouldn't spook anyone it's meant to spook, and it would affright only the ones it's not supposed to scare."

"'Cause it scares me, Pa. I wish you'd take it down."

"Take it down?" Pa shakily placed his fork on the table. An ornate letter S adorned its handle, the insignia from my great-grandfather's silversmith shop. "You'd disrespect your Grandpa like that?"

"No, Pa, I only think..."

"Now you listen, Clora, and you listen good. That scarecrow is not comin' down. Your Grandpa Sherman gave us this here farm – gave it to us, and not to either of your uncles – to continue the work he began, and I intend to do exactly that, you hear? I will not be made a fool of by some idiot crows!"

"Pa, can't you..."

"Don't you try me on this," Pa warned.

"Pa, please..."

"It stays, Clora!" Pa slammed a fist on the oaken tabletop. The plates and glasses shook almost as much as his balled hand. "That is final!" Pa glanced at my teeth. "And take small bites, like a lady ought to take."

Breakfast finished in silence. The morning air stirred, and the scarecrow in the distance raised its head. I fancied I could see its coal-black eyes glisten in the sunlight, telling me it still remained in the field, ever watchful.

Two weeks passed, and every night I felt that scarecrow hopping closer to the house, bouncing along on its crucifix. On nights when it rained, or when the wind whipped itself into a frenzy, I lay awake in bed unable to sleep. It was during those sleepless nights that I monitored the scarecrow with especial caution, lest it mask the noises of its steady advance amidst the constant sounds of the weather. The latter week brought us heavy, continuous rains, and so for seven nights I slept little, refusing for even a moment to let down my guard. I knew I grew weaker with each passing night; knew that sooner or later I would have to sleep

for a lengthy period of time to compensate for my vigilance. When the weather forecast called for another half-week's worth of downpours, I knew that I had to act. I could not outlast the scarecrow.

Before my morning chores, I sneaked into the tool-shed behind the barn while Pa preoccupied himself maintaining the tractor. I fetched a long, lightly mildewed coil of rope from a hook on the wall. So that Pa would not notice, I repositioned some other tools to make the empty hook less apparent. I draped the rope over my shoulder, left the shed and closed its door behind me, and wandered into the labyrinthine cornfield. Although I had only a vague idea of where the scarecrow awaited, I followed the burning sensation I equated with its constant stare. Before long, I found myself standing before the wretched idol. My head reached up to the thighs of its torn and faded denim legs – jeans that Pa once called his own. Drops of rain or dew, I could not discern which, slicked the scarecrow's dark button eyes. I slid the rope from my shoulder and let it fall to the ground.

The human form is an inherently ill-designed thing. The head, the most vulnerable point on the body and the container of the most precious vital organ, rests atop the least protected spot in plain sight of any predator. The spinal column that relays all of the brain's signals resides in a similarly dangerous locale, running up and down the back with little protection other than some skin and muscle. Our legs, essential for our motion, can be crippled by damage to a single tendon. How fitting, then, that the scarecrow strung along its wooden post resembled the cadaver of some deformed and wounded individual etherized upon a table. Defenseless except for its probing stare, the scarecrow waited. Its gaze seemed to taunt me, challenging my strength, questioning my resolve.

I grabbed a length of the coiled rope and heaved it over the scarecrow's misshapen shoulder. Walking to the other side of the scarecrow, I tugged more and more of the rope toward me until little more than a yard remained where I initially stood. I returned to the front of the odious figure, and cast the other end of the rope over the other shoulder, ensnaring the scarecrow about its broken neck. I went back to the scarecrow's rear, took both ends of the rope in hand, and followed them as far as I could until I stood nearly on tiptoe. Then I pulled. I put my entire body weight into yanking that scarecrow off of its foundation. The crucifix did not budge, for it was wedged firmly in the soil. After that, I turned around and gripped the rope over my shoulders, pulling like a yoked ox, in an attempt to drag the scarecrow down to the earth. Sweat beaded on my forehead, and I began to pant, gritting my overlarge front teeth in exertion. The day's rain began to fall. As I trudged, the dirt beneath my feet emulsified, allowing me less and less friction to assist my efforts. The scarecrow's base started to slip as well, so despite my increasing fatigue, my will to knock it down persisted.

"Clora!" I heard my father call from afar. He sounded as if he had spoken from across the sea, as the rain punctured his voice and weakened its volume. "Clora! Come on back, now. We can't have you catchin' no fevers in the rain! Clora!"

I had come too far to abandon my venture. I kept pulling on the rope. Now wet, it slipped through my weakening hands, but I only gripped it more tightly. I even slipped part of the rope into my mouth, like a horse's bit, and set my neck and jaw muscles to the task of tearing down the vile scarecrow. The rope cut into my palms and cheeks. Against my will, I cried out in pain and exasperation – and immediately regretted making such a loud noise. Soon I heard the sounds of frantic crashing through the tall curtains of cornstalks. Pa

emerged, breathing heavily; adrenaline amplified the quaking in his joints.

"Lord Almighty, Clora, what in hell happened?" He surveyed me as he caught his breath, noticed my muddy clothing and the rope in my mouth, realized how the rope had been wrapped around the neck of the foundering scarecrow. His wet eyes dried in the fire that lit in his pupils. "Clora Sherman, what in hell do you think you're doing?"

For lack of a better response, I dropped the rope. It sank into the thoroughly churned mud at my feet. No words came to my mouth. Pa stormed over to where I stood and grabbed me by the collar of my work-shirt.

"What would your Ma say if she saw you today, Clora Sherman?" Pa bellowed. "What would she say about the girl she only had a minute to see? Lord, seein' you here like some kinda animal, haulin' all of that filthy rope in your teeth! What would she say?" I shook in his hands; I could not tell if I trembled, if he trembled in rage, or if he trembled involuntarily. "And here you are, makin' like you're bein' murdered, screamin' like that! And... and what do I find you doin', Clora Sherman? I find you tryin' to uproot all your Pa's hard work!"

Pa released me. I fell on my knees into the mud. The weighty raindrops stung my face and eyes. Suddenly Pa struck me across the face with the back of his hand. Blood from my cut cheek mixed into the mud and rainfall.

"I told you this here scarecrow stays! Do you hear me, Clora? It stays! My word on this is final! Why are you so desperate to undo all your Pa's hard work?" He slapped me again, and I fell to my hands. "What makes you so anxious to wreck all the work I did with my own hands, with my own miserable hands?"

"It scares me, Pa," I cried, tears streaming down my face, indiscriminate among the raindrops. "It scares me, and it won't go away."

"Damn right it won't go away!" Pa screamed. He raised his hand as if to hit me a third time, but paused as he noticed his readied arm. He sank in stature, his trembling increasing from the cold of the rain and other things. Pa bent down, and grasped my shoulders in his arms. His dark, wet eyes stared directly into mine. "Sometimes we all have to deal with things that don't sit well with us, Clora. It's a part of life. This is one of those things you'll have to learn to live with."

"It's scary, Pa," I burbled.

"You'll learn how to, Clora," said Pa. "You'll have to learn."

He went over to the scarecrow and brought it upright again. Then he came toward me and scooped me into his arms. Pa carried me all the way back to the house, crashing shakily through cornstalks that rose above our heads like hostile spears. Once inside the house, he stripped me down and placed me in clean, dry clothing. Pa brought a cool, wet rag. He wiped gingerly at the blood on my face, but his quavering hands thrust the rag deep into my cuts. I could not help but flinch. Pa saw me recoil. He tensed, then handed me the rag.

"No more chores for you today, Clora," Pa said. "You rest up, you hear? I don't want no more mishaps."

Pa headed back outside to continue the day's work. I stood alone holding the blood- and mud-soaked rag. Frustrated tears ran down my cheeks, their saline sting bothering my cuts. I found my way to the window. Wiping down my face, I stared through the curtain of rain at the acres of inherited farmland. The corn rose on all sides, a battalion sealing off the house from the outside world. The scarecrow stared back at me from somewhere out there.

I felt it stare all throughout that night. I felt it the morning after, and during the day

as I performed my required chores. For all the rainfall, the corn showed almost no noticeable progress, offering us nothing but long green stalks and a small amount of tiny ears. I suspect Pa discovered it, as well. As the rainy weeks came and went, his muscles started trembling to the point where I could notice it while standing some ways off. With less of a harvest to mind, I begged Pa to remove the dread figure from the cornfield. Still, he would not relent in banishing that scarecrow, even when we had so little worth guarding.

Gavin would come over every other weekend when I had no chores to complete. I would tell him about that weird creature out in the fields, about my theories of how it seemed to follow Pa and me wherever we went. Sometimes Gavin would laugh and continue to menace me with his soldier sword; other times, he would volunteer to "take 'im" for me.

"I could cut 'im up if you wanted, Clora," he would say. "He wouldn't stand a chance! I'd run him through for you."

"That wouldn't work, Gavin," I would reply. "Believe me, I tried to pull it down already. It's sturdy – strong, even."

There came a night in the midst of a long, dry week. Gavin and I watched the fireflies flit and glimmer, drifting between the cornstalks like itinerant ghosts. We walked around the yard carrying empty mason jars, occasionally bottling a firefly to watch it spark at close range. The parched dirt crunched underfoot as we went.

"Perfect night for a fire attack," Gavin mused. "Nights like these, where there's no wind and no water, they're perfect. I bet they did that back in the Civil War. Guys never knew what hit 'em. One minute they're walking like this, and the next, they're on fire!"

"Lord, Gavin! What made you think of that awful thing?"

"It's dry, Clora," Gavin responded. "Gotta be ready for anything, right?"

"Yeah," I said. "Yeah, I guess so."

"It's the perfect night for a fire attack," he continued. "Glad I'm not in a war right now. I'd be afraid to be walking around."

The days after Gavin's visit brought no rain. The earth chapped, and some of the plants shriveled. During those nights spent keeping vigil against the scarecrow, I watched the fireflies dance around its macabre figure. Their procession bobbed up and down, scattered erratically like flecks of lightning. The fireflies weaved in and around the scarecrow's flaccid joints like inextinguishable flames. Nights wore on, and the weather did not change. By my judgment, it still remained the ideal situation for a fire attack.

Over a quiet dinner of gristly beef and onions, I tried to suppress any manifestation of my thoughts. The sun had already set, and I could not see the scarecrow's dark outline lingering on the horizon. Pa poked at the meat on his plate, his unsteady fork missing its target time and time again and clattering against the old porcelain. I blocked the clinking noise and focused instead upon maintaining my composure. Between the leathern texture of the beef and the rising of excited acids in my stomach, keeping a straight expression required all my mind's efforts. After a time, Pa managed to spear a piece of meat. He cut into it with his knife, smiling inwardly.

"I got a letter today from your Uncle Quentin," Pa said. "He sends his best, as always."

"That's nice of him," I replied, not smiling for fear of smiling too much.

"From the sound of it," Pa continued, "it seems like all is right in the world for your Uncle Quentin. Apparently, his lumber company is makin' a fortune in pre-orders. Said that

people are gearin' up for a tough winter."

"It's gonna be cold, Pa?"

"Cold and long, so he says." Pa dropped his fork, but hastily reclaimed it. "Glad it's good for one of us, at least! He said he'd been out cutting wood with his men for hours, from sunup to sundown. Claims he's never felt better. Better than when he started it and turned a profit right off the bat, even...Back before your Grandpa Sherman passed on."

"Wow, Pa, that's good!"

"Yeah, Clora, it certainly is." Pa had finished cutting his meat, but still held his knife as if prepared to cleave his plate in two. "Things certainly are good for your Uncle Quentin. He said in the letter that your Uncle Clovis is doin' well, too. Got promoted in the textile factory. Says he's a floor manager now."

"Really?"

"Really and truly, Clora, so he says." He paused. "But they ain't the lucky ones, Clora, I tell you. Your Grandpa Sherman didn't give them no farm. Wouldn't have done them no good. They ain't the kind of men to use it. Takes a special kind of man to draw from the earth."

Pa's fork slipped out of his grip. The strident clang made me bite my cheek. I fancied that the scarecrow saw the scene and laughed, writhing on his post in derision. In my mind, I advised him to savor the moment, to relish his last opportunity to know the cruel joy he so favored.

"Did you finish fixin' the tractor today, Pa?" I asked.

"What? Naw, I didn't finish it yet. Close, though. I'll tend to it tomorrow morning."

That night, as Pa slept and snored alone in his room, I removed my pajamas and dressed in the clothing I had worn during the day. Already my shirt and pants were stained with dirt and sweat. Pa would never notice a little more wear. Silently I entered his room, and stole the book of matches that sat on his nightstand next to an unused pipe; we could never grow tobacco. I crept down the stairs and left through the front door, silent as a pending sickness. Stars like unblinking fireflies punctured the night sky, and the waning gibbous moon lit the still cornfields. I traced the perimeter of the house until I found the side from where I could see the barn. Sure enough, the ailing tractor lay beside it. A metal gasoline canister rested by its enormous left wheel. I snatched the canister as if it had been an unguarded purse, and set my sights on the looming cornfield. Above the stalks I could see the faint, unshaken figure of the scarecrow.

What is it about the human form that we are able to use it to repel other creatures? Is it the physical nature of our bodies that frightens the animals away? Or is it generations worth of knowledge that solicits them to run when they see us – knowledge of our stubbornness, our vanity? Of the unnatural instinct to abandon the needs of the young in order to minister to the insecurities of the old? Whatever it may be that makes the human form so terrible, I saw it in the scarecrow that night. But I was animal no longer. I was reborn as a human, and my propensity toward flight had long since been replaced with a new instinct, a notion of self-defense, of staking one's claim in the world – of justice. I hefted the sanguine-red canister and set off through the tall rows of cornstalks.

The leaves of the plants rustled and crinkled as I edged past them. They made sounds of dry rasping, like a bicycle chain without oil. Before long I stood at the nailed feet of the scarecrow. In the ample moonlight I could see it perfectly. That ragged pair of denim jeans,

once belonging to Pa, made up its legs. For a torso it sported a threadbare plaid shirt, also Pa's. The scarecrow reeked of rotting hay and fabric, and I thought I could see black fumes billowing from its body to accompany the cloying odor. Those dark, wet eyes stared unblinking. Atop its ill-conceived face and head, a tweed cap that Grandpa once wore crowned the hateful construct. This was what Pa thought of the human form, this was what minimal justice he could do it! Here stood the filthy humanoid effigy, confronted at last with another being that would not flee its foul presence!

I raised the canister above my head and poured. The gasoline soaked the scarecrow's impotent waistline, dripping down its legs in acrid trails. For good measure I doused the parts of its post that I could reach. The sweet fumes of gasoline embalmed the scarecrow's black odors. I continued until the lower half of the figure glistened in the light. I decided to allow a moment for the scarecrow's clothing to absorb the gasoline, to let it stew in the fuel of its own funeral pyre. I went through the cornfield again, replaced the canister beside the tractor, and retraced my steps. The scarecrow had not escaped. I struck a match against the rough patch of the matchbook. The match hissed to life. I stared into the scarecrow's wet, dark eyes for a moment longer. Then I tossed the match. The scarecrow's eyes regarded me with the same malign expression they always had as flames swallowed the figure's waist and legs.

The orange glow of the fire bathed me in light and warmth. I stepped backward to see more of the blaze. Some of the nearby cornstalks caught fire and shriveled, turning to black ash and returning to the earth as quickly as they had sprung from it. Flames licked the scarecrow's chest and legs, charring the blue denim to a shade of obsidian more befitting so black an entity. I could taste tiny cinders wafting into the air. I watched the trail of inky smoke climb into the sky, thinking that I witnessed the exorcism of some demon as it evacuated its host. A crumpling noise reached my ears. For a moment I thought it was the sound of the scarecrow's loathsome innards collapsing in on themselves. But suddenly a figure came crashing through the cornstalks. Pa stood in front of the conflagration in his robe, his jaw hanging open and trembling like his incapacitated hands.

"Oh, Lord Almighty!" he cried. "No, Lord! No! No!"

Pa fell on his shaking knees and cried aloud, quick staccato bursts that blended like one continuous wail. I remember him noticing me. I recall the fire reflected in his eyes, diminished in their wet blackness. At some point I remember him hoisting me over his shoulder and fleeing the burning cornfield, and standing outside of the house in tears as the fire department arrived and extinguished the spreading flames before they could consume a bit more than an eighth of the crop.

Most of all, I remember the smoldering remains of the scarecrow the morning after, how nothing remained in its place but a single melted eye.

I wonder what Pa thought at that moment the fire and the burning scarecrow reflected off his gaze. Perhaps he worried over losing what little crops he had grown. Perhaps he worried for me. Perhaps he saw a vision of himself from a younger time nailed to the blackening post, one freshly bedecked in farmer's clothing and a trademark hat dutifully assumed from his father. Perhaps he glimpsed at last the ruined product of his enterprise, the inevitable outcome of immolating himself to a calling given to him as a misguided charity.

Or perhaps he saw what I did. The aggregate of the human condition. The work of a hand obsessed. Dross.

Untitled
By Rachel Billstein

Good Faith, Continuity, and the Circuit of Selfness
By Joseph Wilson

Jean-Paul Sartre's existential ontology is a profound philosophical investigation into the existence of the human for-itself and its relations to the objects of the world. Sartre's concept of Bad Faith has been one of the most controversial ideas in his philosophy. This is largely due to the fact that Sartre presents it as a nearly inescapable condition. This inescapability derives from his conception of belief and his Cartesian quest for certainty. Bad faith is always a belief and consequently, for Sartre, is always insufficient and uncertain. Bad faith "stands forth in the firm resolution not to demand too much, to count itself satisfied when it is barely persuaded, to force itself in decisions to adhere to uncertain truths" (Sartre 113). Belief, for Sartre, is complete and blind acceptance of something as if it were truth despite insufficient evidence. The purpose of this paper is to argue the possibility of Good Faith by revealing the inadequacy of Sartre's conception of belief and its incoherence with the immediate structures of the for-itself.

Sartre has shown that an objective nothingness lies at the heart of negation and is one of the key factors in Bad Faith. This nothingness is revealed through the question, destruction, fragility, and absence. The for-itself is its own nothingness and the being through which nothingness comes into the world. This nothingness manifests itself in the for-itself's relations to the world. A nothingness slips between the past and future of the for-itself. "I am indeed already there in the future; it is for the sake of that being which I will be there at the turning of the path that I now exert all my strength, and in this sense there is already a relation between my future being and my present being. But a nothingness has slipped into the heart of this relation; I am not the self which I will be. I am the self which I will be, in the mode of not being it" (Sartre 68). The fissures of nothingness that separate the for-itself from its past and future eliminate the possibility of a deterministic causality. This situation can be shown through an example of the resolution.

Jeff has decided to quit smoking and has set down a firm resolution that he will not smoke another cigarette for the rest of his life. The next day Jeff is visiting his friends when Tom offers him a cigarette. It is quickly apparent to Jeff that the resolution does not carry deterministic causal power to determine his decision in the present. He must resolve again not to smoke another cigarette. "The resolution is still his to the extent that he realizes constantly his identity with himself across the temporal flux, but it is no longer him—due to the fact that it has become an object for his consciousness. Nothingness separates him from himself. The resolution stands behind him like a boneless phantom. It depends on Jeff alone to lend it flesh. He is as alone and naked before temptation as he was the day before" (Sartre 70).

A full understanding of the process of Bad Faith includes an understanding of the circuit of selfness. The circuit of selfness is composed of the presence to self, facticity of the for-itself, the for-itself and the being of value, and the for-itself and the being of possibilities. The presence to self refers to the non-coincidence of the self and consciousness. "The self therefore represents an ideal distance within the immanence of the subject in relation to himself, a way of not being his own coincidence, of escaping identity while positing it as a unity. The presence of being to itself implies a detachment on the part of being in relation

to itself" (Sartre 123-124). Consciousness is always consciousness of an object. Since the self can be made an object for consciousness it is necessarily outside of consciousness. The facticity of the for-itself is "the for-itself's necessary connection with the in-itself, hence with the world and its own past. It is what allows us to say that the for-itself is or exists" (Sartre 802). The for-itself as the being of values means that the for-itself determines itself as a lack of being. This lack is the origin of all transcendence. "Human reality is its own surpassing toward what it lacks; it surpasses itself toward the particular being which it would be if it is what it is" (Sartre 139). Lack cannot exist in the in-itself since the in-itself is what it is. The for-itself is the being through which lack/values arrive in the world. The for-itself as a being of possibilities means that the for-itself is the being through which possibility comes to be in the world. "The possible is the something the for-itself lacks in order to be itself. The Possible is not, the possible is possibilized to the exact degree that the for-itself makes itself be; the possible determines in schematic outline a location in the nothingness which the for-itself is beyond itself" (Sartre 155). The existence of a possibility requires the double nihilation of the for-itself. It requires the nihilation of the current state in favor of a projected end. This projected end is not. It is a nothingness. It is a possibility in the mode of not yet. All of these immediate structures combine to form the circuit of selfness. The circuit of selfness personalizes the world of the for-itself. It is the lens through which the for-itself views the world.

The for-itself's nothingness and immediate structures lay the groundwork for a more complete understanding of Bad Faith. Bad Faith is essentially an attempt to limit the freedom of the for-itself. It is a lie to oneself within a single consciousness. "Bad Faith apprehends evidence but it is resigned in advance to not being fulfilled by this evidence, to not being persuaded and transformed into Good Faith. It makes itself humble and modest; it is not ignorant, it says, that faith is a decision and that after each intuition, it must decide and will what it is. Thus bad faith in its primitive project and in its coming into the world decides on the exact nature of its requirements. It stands forth in the firm resolution not to demand too much, to count itself satisfied when it is barely persuaded, to force itself into decisions to adhere to uncertain truths" (Sartre 113). Thus it seems that Bad Faith is an identifying assertion of the for-itself that is tenaciously defended despite contrary evidence. For Sartre, Bad faith is always a belief and is always insufficient and uncertain. It seems here that Sartre has set the bar beyond the reach of the for-itself, condemning all consciousness to a life of Bad Faith.

How can the for-itself achieve objective certainty? The immediate structures of the for-itself personalize the for-itself's world according to its facticity, lacks, and possibilities. The for-itself's lacks influence the projected possibilities. Each for-itself's instrumental totality is constructed with regards to these lacks and possibilities. This is how looking at the same pile of wood, the unsheltered man sees the possibility of building a hut, while the freezing man sees the means to build a fire. It seems that for Sartre to require certainty in his formulation of Good Faith is to demand a certain correspondence of our beliefs with the in-itself, but since all phenomena are personalized through the circuit of selfness this certainty seems to be impossible. Good Faith would require either a coincidence with the transphenomenal in-itself or an alternative understanding.

Before we dive further into the question of alternative understandings of "truth," it

is important to describe Sartre's conception of cause and motive. Sartre describes the inability of the "factual state" of the world to motivate action. The factual state is what it is and it is only through the double nihilation of the for-itself that the factual state is recognized as insufficient in light of a projected end (nothingness). Sartre admits that "to speak of an act without a cause is to speak of an act that would lack the essential structure of every act" (Sartre 654). A cause has to be experienced as a cause. The value of a cause or motive is bestowed upon it by the for-itself. "Causes and motives have meaning only inside a projected ensemble which is precisely an ensemble of non-existents (projected ends)" (Sartre 564). It is by moving forward towards our projected ends that we construct an interweaving of causes and motives. "Cause, act, and end constitute a continuum. These abortive attempts to stifle freedom under the weight of being show sufficiently that freedom in its foundation coincides with the nothingness which is at the heart of man" (Sartre 568).

It has been shown that truth cannot exist in the "factual state" of the world. This is to say that it cannot exist as a belief corresponding with the reality of the in-itself, since the in-itself is transphenomenal. What do we mean when we say something is true? The American Pragmatists have the best answer to the question at hand. William James and Hilary Putnam have exposed the function of truth in human experience by rejecting the notion of "correspondence with reality" and embracing practical functionality. The pragmatic philosophy not only presents us with our working definition of truth, but also the model for good faith.

William James' philosophy states that beliefs are to be used as tools to help us navigate our world and should be judged based on their ability to be used successfully. Pragmatism agrees with the scientific view that beliefs are fallible approximations that are always subject to the discovery of new ideas. James describes his definition of truth, "ideas become true just in so far as they help us to get into satisfactory relation with other parts of our experience. Any idea upon which we can ride, so to speak; any idea that will carry us prosperously from any one part of our experience to any other part, linking things satisfactorily, working securely, saving labor; it is true for just so much, true in so far forth, true instrumentally" (James 100). James describes truth as an adjective used to denote a belief that functions well instrumentally. "The true is the name of whatever proves itself to be good in the way of belief, and good, too, for definite, assignable reasons" (James 109). James' conception of truth utilized in the Sartrean framework would run something like this: Truth is an adjective used to denote any idea or belief that functions practically in our instrumental totality and helps us to achieve our projected ends/fundamental project. With James' conception of truth Good Faith no longer seems impossible.

Hilary Putnam gives a pragmatic description of facts and values. Putnam realizes the necessity of values in our endeavor to find true beliefs. For Putnam "truth is not the bottom line: truth itself gets its life from our criteria of rational acceptability. We are trying to construct a representation of the world which has the characteristics of being instrumentally efficacious, coherent, comprehensive, and functionally simple" (Putnam 345). Putnam believes that we want this kind of system because this sort of system (instrumental totality) is part of our idea of human cognitive flourishing. Putnam argues that "we must have criteria of rational acceptability to even have an empirical world, that these reveal part of our notion of an optimal speculative intelligence. In short, the "real world" depends on our values" (Putnam 346). Putnam describes how the for-itself as the being of values motivates our search for true

belief. Since true beliefs function well in our instrumental totality, they must be functioning towards an end that the for-itself designates as both valuable and possible.
It seems that the pragmatists have given us a practical working model for Good Faith. If Bad Faith apprehends evidence but it is resigned in advance to not being fulfilled by this evidence, then it seems that Bad Faith is to cling to a belief as true despite its repeated failures instrumentally. Good Faith seems to be akin to the scientific attitude. Belief should always be understood as a theory that is continually verified or falsified in working experience.

Sartre's conception of belief does not seem to work well within his own system. The justified true belief, or belief as a correspondence with reality (transphenomenal in-itself) clash with the immediate structures of the for-itself. Since the values and possibilities of the for-itself are an integral part of the way the for-itself views the world, its seems impossible for the for-itself to meet Sartre's demands for belief. The pragmatists William James and Hilary Putnam have offered a viable alternative by appealing to practical experience. An example of bad faith and the pragmatic solution should help to clear up any confusion.

Dr. Hammer is a psychology researcher with a PhD in Experimental Psychology. Due to this overemphasis on his professional identity and activities he has assumed the concrete relation of indifference towards others. In his work he studies human participants in experimental situations. These participants are observed, measured, and recorded as objects in the world. Due to Dr. Hammer's over-identification with his profession and professional attitudes he denies the possibility of his own objectivity and the subjectivity of the other. He realizes his objectivity for others. He realizes the subjectivity of others. Dr. Hammer realizes them in order to deny them. Thus in one stroke Dr. Hammer's bad faith attempts to limit his own freedom as well as the freedom of the Other. "Like all bad faith it is the state itself which furnishes him with the motives for getting out of it" (Sartre 496). Dr. Hammer suffers anxiety over sudden revelations of his objectivity for others. He must recover his denial and assert himself. He compensates for these revelations of his bad faith by entrenching himself deeper in it. "I am a PHD!" "I guess undergraduates can not be expected to understand a research psychologist with a Doctorate!" Through denial Dr. Hammer is able to retain his bad faith.

How can Dr. Hammer's Bad Faith be transformed into pragmatic Good Faith? First, we start with Dr. Hammer's belief that he is an experimental psychology researcher. When this belief is put to work is it continually verified or falsified? It seems that the majority of the time it would have to be falsified. He is a husband. He is a father. He is a conservative republican etc... His belief that he is only an experimental psychology researcher does not hold up to continuous testing in practical experience. Secondly, his relation of indifference to others is put to the test as well. Does Dr. Hammer's belief in his own perpetual subjectivity function well in the realm of practical experience? It certainly does within security of the research laboratory, but once the belief is carried out into the world the contrary evidence must be denied in order to maintain his bad faith. Dr. Hammer must cling to his bad faith despite its failures to lead to beneficial practical consequences. This is what Sartre meant when he described bad faith as, "standing forth in the firm resolution not to demand too much, to count itself satisfied when it is barely persuaded, to force itself in decisions to adhere to uncertain truths" (Sartre 113). Dr. Hammer is constantly working to maintain his bad faith. This is why in bad faith the state itself is motivation to get out of it. Dr. Hammer's bad faith has frozen him in time. His constant maintenance interferes with the realization

of his projects. His stagnation adds to the ill effects of his bad faith. The pragmatic Good Faith can be understood as an evolution and adaptation of beliefs. The beliefs that best fit into the environment (instrumental totality) and produce the best results in practical experience are the ones that survive and continue to be useful. By understanding the fallibility of beliefs and allowing them the plasticity to evolve into more practically beneficial forms Dr. Hammer could escape his bad faith and resume progress towards his projected ends.

The pragmatic Good Faith advocates the constant motion of the for-itself towards its projected ends/ fundamental project. By subjecting belief to the constant testing in the realm of practical experience, good faith allows the for-itself to retain its continuity despite the fissures of nothingness between the past, present, and future. The consciousness of the possibility of the falsification of beliefs denies the limitation of freedom inherent in a statement limiting the world to a certain exclusive way of being. William James' conception of truth as beliefs that help us to get into satisfactory relation with other parts of our experience rescues the possibility of Good Faith from Sartre's unrealistic demands. Truth is an adjective used to denote any idea or belief that functions practically in our instrumental totality and helps us to achieve our projected ends/fundamental project. Hilary Putnam's idea that truth itself gets its life from our criteria of rational acceptability takes the inevitable role of values into account. The pragmatist account fits well within the Sartrean framework. It takes the immediate structures of the for-itself into account and presents good faith as an achievable state. Pragmatic good faith allows for a life of action and movement. It avoids bad faith through a consciousness of the fallibility of belief and a willingness to adapt beliefs according to their verification/falsification in practical experience.

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The Unconscious

By Brittany Grell

The Unconscious

Whales surface in melody
Like dreams from the abyssal cold
And when they die

Their sunken remains feed the deep

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