



THE BARDIAN

JANUARY 25, 1947

P.HELLMAN

## THE BARDIAN

Official publication of the students of Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson.

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## BARD AND MATERIAL PROGRESS

The extensive drive for the material improvement of the college has begun. We are all deeply interested and excited by the concerted effort to raise money for the college, which is displayed by the students, administration, trustees, and alumni. If the goals are reached, we will be presented with the rosy prospect of new dormitories, a new theater, a new gymnasium, a new dining hall with comfortable social rooms and a host of other physical improvements to the college.

All of these wonderful things will help us to be more happy here by way if improvement of our comfort, but even more important to the college as a whole will be the raising of teachers' salaries and the lowering of tuition fees. The college will be in position to hire more teachers and be better able to base its admissions policy on academic attainment rather than on 'ability to pay.' Both of these are vital to the advancement of the college, in fact, of any college.

This brings us to the point concerning our future. We are inclined to think of all these additions as steps forward. Students are beginning

to consider that nice buildings, a good-looking campus, and a winning basketball team will give the college the fame and reputation it wants. They will help to spread the name in a way but we must not forget that the real reputation of a college stands on its scholastic achievements. The size of school, or the fact that it has a million dollar library, does not add to its reputation unless the graduates can show that such things serve to turn out better students who make a name for themselves in the graduate schools, in business, and other professions for which they prepare. New, bigger, and better buildings do not necessarily turn out improved student

The general interest on the part of the student body in the material progress of the college is quite misplaced when we consider that an 'Institution for Higher Learning' is judged by its products and their achievements. Therefore, we as students should bend our efforts toward the many student activities. The real and lasting fame for this college can be made, and is being made, by important efforts on campus. Among these are the BARD REVIEW, the theater productions, the concerts of the music department, the SCHOLA CANTORUM, the BARDIAN, the Social Studies and Science Clubs.

All branches in our liberal arts college are hard at work to produce the best they can. In most cases they are succeeding quite well in putting before the public something of which we can all be proud. Not only can we exhibit pride, we can also utilize these activities for publicity in the very things upon which the reputation of any college rests.

The disturbing thing is that not enough students participate in these things. The greatest contribution to the future of the college any student can make is hard work in the classrooms and in constructive extra-curricular activities. We don't mean to suggest that all of us should be 'academic grinds', or 'B. M. O. C.'s', however, each student should select some significant activity to which he can devote some of his time and thought. In that way, the real signs of progress can be made.

## THE BARDIAN

### A MODERN MOVEMENT IN PAINTING

*"Nature stimulates in me the imaginative faculty to feel the potentialities of expression which serve to create pictorial life - a quality detached from nature to make possible 'a pictorial reality.' This is, and must be, esthetically independent of a subject matter so that the creation may say what it has to say through purely pictorial means in the form of a spiritual unit which should exist and live for itself, as does nature, in accordance with the eternal law of the universe."*

—Hans Hofmann

The so-called 'Modern Movement' exists today as an academy. The young painter, in most cases, is preoccupied with the development of a personalized semi-abstract surrealist technique. In few cases is the individualism evolved through an intellectual process. Symbolism is literal in meaning. The painter's aim is an expression through visual means. His problem has always been of an explorative nature. It is solved as a mathematic or scientific problem. Today a young group is slowly being evolved. It is led by Hans Hofmann, an elderly German-American painter, and a former cowboy and student of Thomas Benton, Jackson Pollock. Their development comes as a natural step. They built on the preceding art movements. Theirs is not a change in the negative sense as was Dada, a change for the sake of change.

Hofmann recognises the problems of creating a two dimensional surface

to compliment the already existing flat surface of the canvas. The third dimension on a flat surface exists only as an optical illusion. Hofmann realizes that colors are capable of creating spatial illusions; he claims that the artist, in creating a second surface, validates the usage of color. He fails though, to realize that by placing one color in relationship to another, he has created different surface tension. This is heightened by coloring the forms in opposing colors. Thus, he defeats his attempt at creating a flat surface. This is also true of Miro, one of the group's main influences, in, for example, the Miro composition of free floating forms at the Modern Museum, of the seated women, owned by Peggy Guggenheim at Art of This Country.

Hofmann's movement of tension is between colored forms receding and advancing. It is a movement into the canvas. Mondrian creates a surface tension across the canvas. His is a relationship of sizes and of colors pulling across the canvas, thus complimenting the flat surface. In his finest works he creates a completely flat canvas by a careful balance of small areas of strong advancing colors balanced by larger areas of weaker receding colors.

Miro, only in a few specific problems, had an explorative interest in surface tension. Mondrian, though a strong innovator in the field, preferred to control it for all-over surface equilibrium. He differed from Miro, and the classical

## A MODERN MOVEMENT IN PAINTING (Continued)

concept, which placed forms in relationship to the painting area. Rather, he treated the canvas as a whole form which he would break down, thus realizing the sides and corners as integral parts of the painting. Hofmann more closely follows the classical pattern. He is completely preoccupied with surface tension. This makes for an extremely emotional canvas.

Previously, Hofmann painted with heavily pigmented strokes. He made savagely cut forms using strong colors. Recently, he has made a complete shift to methodically painted, thinly pigmented canvases. The basis for the change was a theory of Hofmann's that indefiniteness in a painting often hides from the painter and his audience inadequacies of construction. If Hofmann had fully realized his intellectual aim on the canvas, this would not be of importance, but he is still dependent for a full realization of the canvas as a whole on his linear patterns.

Hofmann uses the original subject as the motivating force for the picture. In the final form the picture bears no visual or emotional relationship to the motivation. Once he has achieved his foundation for the canvas, his treatment of his forms is as if they were non-objective. His subject of a painting is thus colors and forms. Pollack on the other hand, is still confined by the subject's form. Recently he has tried to escape this by using a personalized set of mystic symbols derived haphazardly from the more ab-

stract surrealists. This in cases, has lead to a valid mysticism which in no way adds to the plastic nor to the literal meaning. Here as in Hofmann's case, the problem is surface tension. His work is far more emotional then scholarly, by setting his forms and brush strokes in relationship to each other, rather than superimposing one on the other, he comes closer than Hofmann to achieving a flat surface. Some of his canvases, through the same set of balance and counter-balance of receding and advancing colors, achieves almost the flatness of Mondrian. I doubt whether in either case, they ever arrive at such a pictorial conclusion by an intellectual process.

Hofmann is important as the teacher of many members of the group. As a friend of Pollack, Hofmann was an important influence for him. At present Hofmann seems aimed at a conclusion similar to the non-objectivists. Pollack in his latest canvases has almost realized a pure abstract state. His conclusion is not merely dependent on constructions as if Hofmann's. They have not as yet used the flat surface to its fullest extent. They rarely use the corners of the painting panel as activated parts. Hofmann, rather than solve the more difficult problem of flat painting, has evolved another means of creating depth. Their contribution is not a revolution, but the young painter cannot disregard their influence.

-- David Smith



## STORY

Sometimes you forgot to pull down the shades before you got into bed; then, when you woke, it was not because you had had enough of sleeping, but because you could feel the huge bulks of heat around the room and the sheet was damp against your legs. An immense urgency pressed against you and you spurred yourself to remember what indistinguishable thing from yesterday you dreaded, what ghost you saw ahead of you. The minute that had passed and the minute that was coming loomed large and dark before you because the room was so light and so hot.

But if you had pulled down the shade....there was a specific deliciousness to waking in the dark room. Around you everything would be cool and black and you would not know it were morning, or if you had waked sometime in the night. Those minutes, in the soft darkness, as black as your inner lids, seemed not really part of the day, but some short extra time given you. You would not think at all, but, not quite awake, you would muse on the hundred small and unimportant sounds that were the convictions of a world outside your window. For a long time you would think about getting up, you would close your eyes and imagine that you were already out of bed. Finally you would go over and pull up the shade, and then that little while when time had rested on your finger-tips, when you had been away from the world and just watching it, the daylight, crowding through the window would have taken away.

Mrs. Donaldson said that you never really *forgot* to come, when you told her that you had forgotten, she said that you had not wanted to come, that you had made yourself forget. Everyday at ten you were supposed to be there...from ten until eleven...sitting on a wide brown sofa. Sometimes it was so easy to forget, and for a day Mrs. Donaldson wouldn't run your life; all day you lived wonderful secrets that you promised yourself you wouldn't tell her tomorrow. The feeling was that someone else owned your day...so it was Mrs. Donaldson that could make you happy or miserable.

After her, Mrs. Donaldson, the afternoons stretched long and intolerably hot. You would fight against seeing people, but you would see them. Sometimes you would tell them lies and insane fables about the people you knew and the places you had been to, but there was too much summer and too much heat, and no one cared enough to check back on the stories. You forgot the afternoons so that you wouldn't have to tell *her* about them. But forgetting would be frightening later when you tried to plan the day into squares of action. Losing minutes, sometimes half-hours, would make you race frantically to find and catch them and fit them into your tight little scheme. But it would be too hard and your memory would have lost its breath and you would have lost another hour in the chase.

This morning you didn't even pretend to forget, you just never

## STORY (Continued)

went to Mrs. Donaldson, coldly and deliberately you never went. Reviewing the day, you can see that you have lived it yourself, you can see and sense that you have done what you really want to. You have been alone all day because that's what you wanted.

Now, standing under the movie marquee, you remember your Mother sounding like a wounded animal, saying, 'you ought to stay home sometimes, we never see you...why don't you stay with us tonight...' But you *have* gone, that's what you wanted to do, you wonder if she is angry if she'll say anything. And you remember that she won't, she won't even ask you where you have been; now that you are going to Mrs. Donaldson she never even asks you where you have been. But she knows, after those secret conversations on the phone. She knows...

You look up and down the avenue, all the way north and all the way south, to where the street becomes a hump and goes uphill. For a moment there is no one walking. And then, suddenly people seem to slip from the toothed side streets and you notice them, but they never look at you. The lights on the marquee go off, now that it is dark you can see the sky and begin to wonder why it doesn't rain. Everything is so quiet that you wish something violent would happen, but the only action is a crazy neon light that goes on and off across the street. You think you had better go home, but you remember how the warm, brown mahogany turns in your stomach and you remember the shades that are drawn all day so that the sun will not bleach the carpet. And you do not think that you will be able to go home and not say anything again. But at the corner the bus is pulling away from the curb and you could not catch it, even if you ran very fast, so you have an hour to yourself until the next bus.

Now you have walked for a little while, you have wished that there were someone following you, you have almost listened to hear the steps of a follower, and you are back at the same place that you started. Across the street the neon sign of the restaurant is still flashing red and blue and you walk to it and sit at the counter. You watch the man and woman at the one table and you wait for your ice coffee. Through the window you see a man standing under the neon sign and watching you. You think he has gone away but he is coming through the door and coming to sit in the seat next to you. You

catch your breath because men who look at you through windows are not supposed to come in, but walk on, and sometimes later you remember their faces and wonder where you have seen them.

'I saw you from outside...a pretty girl like you shouldn't be sitting here alone...I came in when I saw you smiling at me.' Now you are panicky because you don't remember having smiled at him. 'Such pretty hair and such pretty eyes...' and you wonder and worry if you really did smile at him and why. 'Wrong for such a lovely girl to be eating all along..'

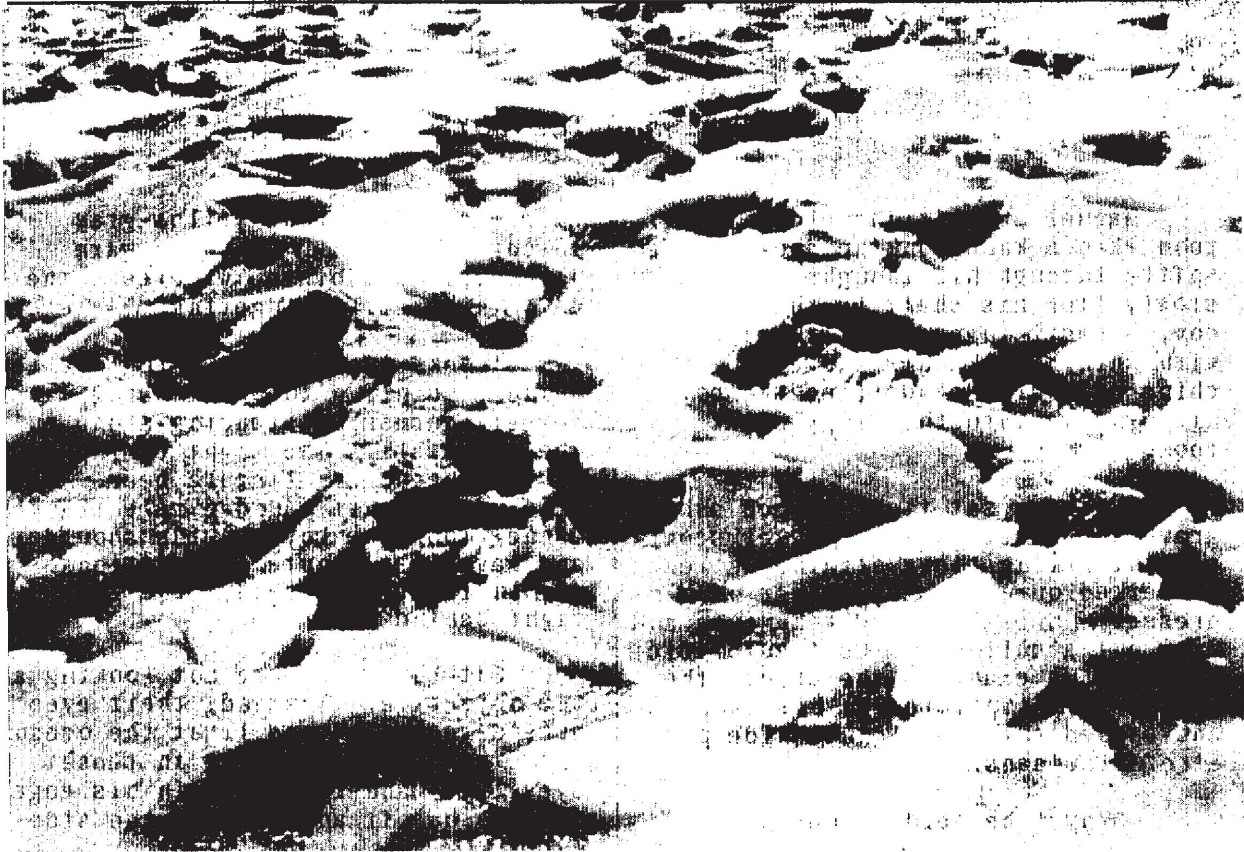
'How about another cigarette?'

'I can get my own..' and you buy a package of cigarettes from the girl at the counter and come back to your seat. But you do not answer anything he says, or even smile at him, so nothing is wrong. You read the menu on the wall and try to memorize it, and you watch your cigarette burn slowly to the end. Then the girl behind the counter asks who will take the check, and the man says that he will pay for your coffee. Now you think 'while his back is turned, don't say anything just leave.' Inside, through the window you can see him digging in his pocket for change to pay the check; you wish that he had not paid for your coffee and that you had not smoked his cigarette. It has begun to rain and you think of lying in bed at home and watching the elms through the window as they hold and catch the rain water.

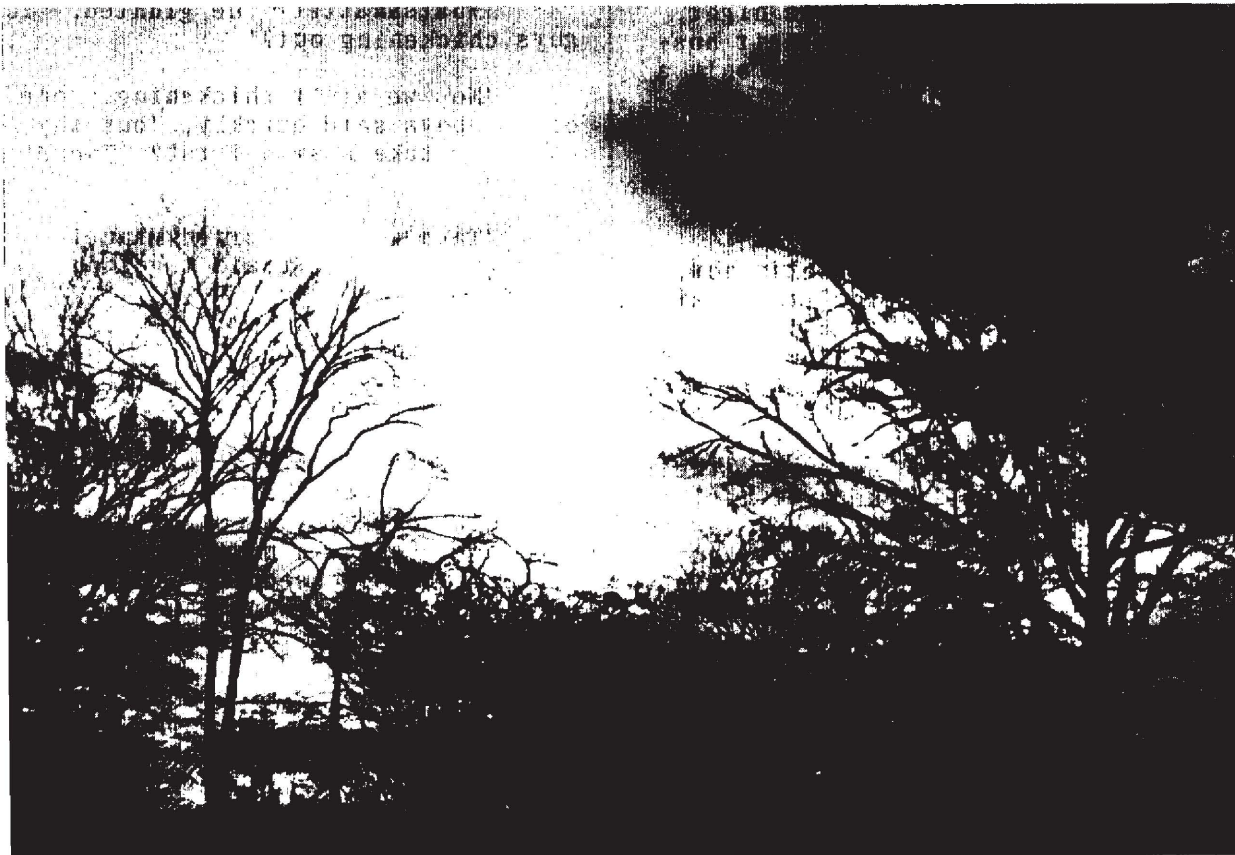
Now, the bus is coming to the corner and you pay your dime and sit in the back. Through the raindrops on the rear window you can see the man standing in the street, looking after you like a little black animal. And, leaning back, you know that no matter how fast he runs he will not be able to catch you, and you know also that you will only remember him once, hours and hours from now when you will wonder whom to blame today on.

Now you are frightened by things seen outside your window, or things merely suggester; you are frightened by the air beneath the elms, the deep sweat of all the leaves and the sweltering patches of black sky. There are nine hours more now - you begin to wonder if you can forget Mrs. Donaldson in nine hours.

--Madelon Shapiro



TWO PHOTOGRAPHS BY ELIE SHNEOUR



## MANUEL AND THE BOYS

Manuel was sitting alone in his room when a knock on the door sounded softly through his thoughts. He got up slowly from his chair by the low window, a small rugged-built Mexican with shiny black hair and eyes like chips of coal. He admitted two boys his own age into the dingy squat room.

The boys sat tight-lipped and grave on Manuel's bed. Manuel scowled, not liking their strained silence. He jerked open the top drawer of his dresser with exaggerated vehemence and drew out a dull black Colt automatic pistol. He examined the clip, the scowl still imprinted on his face, and shoved the pistol in a side pocket of his jeans.

'Okay,' he said. 'Let's go.'

They walked through the house and out into the California night, the sea breeze strong in their nostrils. There were no stars, only a low-hanging film of misty-colored whiteness in the sky. As they walked, decrepid crumbling houses floated by. Their footsteps rang in unison on the sidewalk.

'You guys know the setup now, don't you?' Manuel said with strained politeness. 'It's just a little joint with a couple guys behind the counter. I'll cover them while you get the cash. There's nothing to it.'

The boys nodded solemnly, their hands deep in the pockets of their jeans. They kept their eyes averted and made sure their feet came down on the pavement at the same time, the way you saw it in the movies.

As they approached the ocean, the clap of the surf became louder. The sidewalk inclined downward, and sand began to crunch under their feet. Off to the south the lights of the

amusement park shone yellow-gray through the mist. It was a warm night for California, windless, the day's heat still lingering.

'Look, there's the joint!' cried Manuel, pointing to a crumbling hamburger concession standing along on the boardwalk. The light coming from it was the color of stale beer. Behind it the surf pounded relentlessly. Manuel took the boys by the shoulder and gave last minute instructions. 'Go in first,' he said, 'and I'll be right behind you.'

But the boys were not looking at the objective. Instead, their eyes were directed beyond it at the ocean. There was such suffering in those eyes that Manuel stopped in his eagerness to be off and spat on the sidewalk.

'Whatsamatter?' he grunted. 'Yo' guys chickening out?'

'No, we ain't chickening,' one of the boys said quickly, 'but why don't we take a swim first? There's lots of time.'

'Take a swim?' cried Manuel. 'Are you crazy? We ain't got our suits.'

'We don't need 'em,' the other boy hastened. 'Lots of guys goes swimming without suits.'

Manuel spat again on the pavement, his face contorted with rage. Then he looked for a moment at the two faces beside him, and with a smile slowly crossed his lips. 'Okay boys,' he said, 'you go ahead and take a swim. I'm going home.' Without looking at the yellow-lighted hamburger stand he turned and walked slowly back up the inclining sidewalk.

--Tracy Thompson



## Two Poems by Tommy Zucker

## I

in the morning on her knees,  
 The cleaning girl  
 Scrubbed  
 And whistled exotic music.

The whistling  
 Struck the walls of the empty building  
 And came piping  
 Back to the scrubbing pail  
 Or  
 The whistling found a corner  
 And hid there.  
 And crouched,  
 Undiscovered by  
 (Ten-O'clock)  
 Businessmen  
 Who briefcased by in overcoats.

## II

## A FRAGMENT

("And then I saw a pretty girl,  
 With a sunbeam in her eye.")

-Why, I could walk a sunny day for miles  
 And frankly face my carefree self  
 Who laughed, delighted-  
 Stripped of all pretentious clothing.

But now she sweats in cobweb coats,  
 For, after the long years of seasons,  
 We have come again to Winter  
 And there stopped.

(So the People say,  
 "The Mad girl runs in the streets,  
 Her hair flying in the wind!"  
 .....I am mad, I am mad.....  
 My mother bids me bind my hair.)

We now are left alone and sobbing,  
 Amid cracked twigs and shrivelled sumac  
 In a naked, poorly Winter.  
 Our sun, even, is wrinkled with dismay.



## TWO BOOK REVIEWS

Jackson - THE FALL OF VALOR, Rhinehart.

Camus - THE STRANGER, Knopf.

THE FALL OF VALOR by Charles Jackson is obviously a novel of 'action.' Its theme is that a man and his wife cannot get along well together, and yet cannot get along at all apart. The husband, after he and his wife have fought and parted, falls upon homosexuality. He suffers from his degeneration; and his wife suffers in being away from him. As the book ends, they are going to come together again.

That is the substance of the plot. It is excellent material. The plot has a reality of conflict, and a neat paradox in that neither of the two is able to live with or without the other. In a sense, then, the couple are trying desperately to make their own decisions, lead their own separate lives, in short, trying to be individuals. If they had succeeded, this novel would have become one of 'decision,' but they don't succeed.

Nor does the author succeed. In spite of the brilliant elements of plot and character that Jackson has amassed, the novel, fails. THE FALL OF VALOR fails because it is poorly constructed, and terribly written. To give an instance of its bad construction: only at the end-as if for shock value-does Jackson bring in homosexuality. The tendencies towards this condition spring up halfway through the book, but the actual act (which is one of the weakest scenes in the novel) comes about ten pages before the end. It is badly written because the style varies from diluted Pater-like descriptive passages to fairly good dialogue and onto vile sentence construction. This last fault is the most glaring and consistent error in the book.

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What Jackson has presented is an excellent plot which leaks towards the end in order to give a shock, good character portrayals, but a mediocre job of writing. It is to be hoped that the author will write a more consistently good novel in respect to writing when he next tries.

## TWO BOOK REVIEWS (Continued)

THE STRANGER by Albert Camus is the finest novel I have read this year: it is, furthermore, one of the finest novels I have read in many years.

I can decipher very little about the motivation of any of Meursault's (the hero's) actions. All I can say is that he is controlled by a combination of forces, or perhaps, a single force, in working out the jigsaw puzzle arrangement of his life.

But there are certain factors I can understand. I can understand that Meursault has resigned himself to the fact that his life, as a whole, is controlled. He has resigned himself from attempting to work out the puzzle of his life's arrangement. Rather, he is concerned with the specific actions he controls. These deeds are minor in comparison with the whole pattern, but they are all that he has, and all that he can do. These actions primarily concern the desires to live and love as long and as hard as he can; and the fear of death. Actually, as Meursault realizes, he has no general control over these emotional acts, but he is in specific and temporary command.

Meursault has a rare objectivity to perceive this sort of situation. With this objectivity, he is distinctive from normal people who do not realize their 'fate,' who work and struggle against any force which might attempt to disrupt their patterns. Meursault does not struggle with this 'fate.' He gives in, and follows his desires as completely as he can. Therefore, he is a stranger. He is a stranger in any society because he does what he wants to as much as he can, and because he does not struggle with any power: human, natural, or supernatural. Most people struggle with at least one of these forces. He is a stranger because he does not fit into the mechanisms of society, and because he does not want

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to fit into any groove - social or otherwise.

Yet he is forced to fit into a regular pattern that he does not choose. No matter how vigorously he attempts to be a complete individual, he fails; and this failure is not due to any lacking in himself, but is the inevitable climax which must come and put the jigsaw puzzle intricately together.

--Roger Hecht

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