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Ironic Self in Camus' *The Fall*

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Approval Letter

This thesis submitted to Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Pitam Bahadur Gurung, entitled "Ironic-Self in Camus's *The Fall"* has been approved by undersigned members of research committee.

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Abstract

Camus's self-irony in *The Fall* checks and reverses the vertiginous process of fall; it does so by confronting in lucid honesty the sources of moral anxiety from which Clamence flees, and by circumscribing the perilous fascination of the mirror of guilt and judgement to which Clamence voluptuously succumbs. Clamence's reaction to his discovery of self takes many forms. He tries to destroy his image of perfection before others. Love, chastity and debauchery are the manners of escape to form his new image but he becomes unsuccessful. By portraying an anguished, self-doubting central character who accuses himself of a moral fraud, Camus makes the realization of human existence an ironic one.

Contents

I. Ironic Self-Consciousness in *The Fall*

The confrontation with the ironic spirit of *The Fall* employs multiple modes of irony. The model of the way irony functions in *The Fall* is of ironic self-consciousness. The choice of narrative technique and its peculiarly dramatic mode are dictated by a conception of Clamence as ironist. Camus sees his fictional hero first and fundamentally as an ironic. Clamence engages the interlocutor-reader in dialogue with him luring him through moral self-doubt. He oscillates between past and present as well as between his personal story and his general statements regarding humanity, the narrative situation, and the places to which he leads his narrate. When reader is drawn into identification with the blank role of fictional interlocutor, he does indeed enter Clamence's sphere of ironic persuasion.

Clamence is ironically shown to expiate the betrayal of man and of his own human nature. He is false prophet mocked by his failures, perverted dialectician trapped in the toils of his own web, cynic betrayed by flashes of wounded idealism. Clamence’s figure, at the dramatic level is a tragic victim; and the more powerfully, in consequence, does he function, at the level of reflection, as a warning to human nature.

The effect of Clamence’s every disclosure shatters his self image. Every utterance of Clamence, his evocations of Amsterdam, his comments on man and society, his calculated confession with its nicely judged illustration and studied progression, together with the very manner and style of his address - are now viewed in the light of his designing narrative that serves to dismantle the image he forms of himself. Besides, every form of complicity afforded by the interlocutor (amusement, curiosity, sympathetic identification) is now seen as a perilously misguided

cooperation in his own destruction. His initial recognition is not of himself as guilty, therefore, but of himself as one of human beings who have "…features…in common" (102). Camus ironically reminds us in finally revealing the common features of human beings in general. Human existence, therefore, is always open to doubt. The crimes and vices of our century and the moral ambiguities of human nature itself challenge the moral security of modern man. Whatever its status in truth or intention, Clamence's case can not be dismissed against modern time. The echo of his voice or the haunting presence of his world never ceases to exist. In making and then breaking Clamence's ironic spell, Camus thus ensures the fascination of his own challenge to life. This assurance is transparently that of the ironic author himself. The mocking shadow of a likeness of existence reflected in Clamence's mirror thus completes the basic patterns of ironic provocation. Camus, thus, has sought to administer a shock of intellectual awakening and create a propensity to critical attention.

The Fall is an ironic parable of the modern failure to preserve the controlled balance of tensions of opposites in life. Human attempt to establish them at the superior position make their existence pathetic. Rather the recognition of man's less-than-divine nature makes to accept duplicity in stead of being upset about it. This realization makes Clamence to avoid judgement of his life at last. His perception of living changes as he says: "I have not changed my way of life; I continue to love myself and to make use of others" (104). His confession of his crimes allows him to begin again lighter in heart and to taste a double enjoyment, first of his nature and secondly of a charming repentance.

Clamence's realization ironically suggests internal ironies of certain intellectual and moral style of modern man. He reconstructs his identity to resolve the challenge of existence. Finding no solution he decides to yield to women, to pride, to

boredom, to resentment and even to fever. Here lies the modern failure of human being to attempt to rise at the level of divine.

The ironic mirror-play of *The Fall* is designed ultimately not to hold an image, but to generate a power of reflective awareness. Its function is to create thought out of receptivity, to raise dialogue out of monologue, and to incite the interlocutor. Thus, to seek for truths and values which have been rendered necessary to the restoration of his inner poise, Clamence has chosen monological dialogue. In the end, the most sophisticated and modern of ironic forms can thus be seen to operate in the service of the oldest ironic purposes: the subversion of complacency and its conversion to restless but potentially fruitful enquiry.

Pattern of irony in *The Fall* is created in both dimensions: self-consciousness and authorial provocation. It is thus be used to shape the reader's evolving response to the work. In its rhetorical form, irony is a means of reinforcing the dramatic spell and drawing the reader into Clamence's whirlpool of self-doubt, moral disarray and cynicism. In other, more complex forms, it functions as a distancing device, provoking a movement of moral withdrawal, intellectual resistance and - perhaps - the rediscovery of values in which the reader may find the saving grace that eludes Clamence. At all points the reader evolves through sensitivity to ironically exerted pressures; but, more importantly, he progresses in the conscious discovery of the ironic patterns and perspectives to which he is subject and in the understanding of the pressures thus exerted.

Clamence is ironically undermined as authoritative guide to his own world and human world in general by the operation of a number of devices common in ironic first-person narratives: self-betrayal through inconsistency, exposure to the contradictory outcome of events, involuntary creation of unsuspected level of

meanings, and so on. When returned to The Fall with a suitably sharpened sense of irony, the reader cannot fail to perceive this further ironic dimension of which the ironizing narrator is himself unaware: all is not double, as Clamence supposes, but triple. Clamence refers to the ravages caused in the Jewish quarter by Hitler: “What a clean up! Seventy-five thousand Jews deported or assassinated: that’s real vacuum-cleaning” (10). This reference is to be interpreted at three distinct levels. Superficially, it is a mild irony of distaste expressing the civilized man's repugnance for those Nazi brutes as he defines it as “one of the greatest crimes in history”; secondly, it is a preliminary insinuation of the universal fraternity of guilt; but thirdly, it is a comment on the profound spiritual kinship linking Clamence with a brutal totalitarian ideology born of nihilism (10).

Camus's mirror-play of ironic reflection displays a greater degree of strategic purpose, artistic control and then critical discussions. Given the complex overlay of ironies and their shifting, Camus has controlled the geometry of perspectives, references, and tone, that the reader will be initially disorientated. At the level of dramatic response, the experience of confusion is indeed integral to his descent into the modern tragedy; and there could be no experience of confusion if the eddying pressures of ironic suggestion were immediately resolvable into clear statements of authorial standpoint and purpose. In this respect, the disquieting ambiguities created by the complex play of irony contribute to the provocative dynamic of the work. Yet while they present a marked character of instability, they are not open to the charge of incoherence which casual or merely cathartic use of irony would invite. The basic pattern of ironic provocation ensures that the reader is drawn into fruitful dialogue with the work; and the expanding circles of his reflective insight reverse the

concentrational progression - that of the dramatic structure and symbolism - toward the innermost circle of hellish modern society.

In *The Fall*, Camus exposes the post-war human conscience by portraying an anguished and self-doubting central character: Clamence who accuses himself of a moral fraud; who lived in falsehood to recognize a truth that completely alters his worldview. When the truth is bluntly revealed to the self-deceived, he is dazzled. Therefore, it is better to avoid a direct and explicit expression of truth, as in philosophic argument Clamence claims “Truth, like light, blinds, falsehood on the contrary, is a beautiful twilight that enhances every object” (88). He is engulfed in alienation, fragmentation, disillusionment, disintegration and frustration when he realizes that during those long years he lived in falsehood and hypocrisy: “Thus, I progressed on the surface of life, in the realm of words as it were, never in reality” (38). He is the representative man of post-war generation, who indulges in Amsterdam recalling his past life of Paris, where he was a lawyer but now he works a judge-penitent. Here, the intensity of failure of modern civilization is highlighted through the ironic commentary upon the big city, Paris. Paris was thought to be the city of everything, an example of prosperous modern civilization. But he experiences “the emptiness of Paris”, its leaders being in “hypocrisy” (30).

When Clamence gradually penetrates the realm of consciousness, truth is diluted with falsehood. Then, Clamence finds it difficult to accept the bitter truth in his confession as he finds more difficult to avoid it. Eventually, he contends, falsehood and truth serve the same purpose in life as life is always in dialectic process. Clamence has chosen the endless repetition of his life story for delivering the message of contradictions and dilemma inherent in the human situation. Man is a finite being always strives to comprehend an infinite cosmos. But he can not grasp

incomprehensible reality of nature and its dialectic process of continual creation and decreation. Clamence as created by the nature, soon to be decreated, fails to acknowledge that he can acquire no permanent intellectual or experiential leverage over the whole; he is driven and programmed to grasp the world, to reduce it to order and coherence. So his attempt to impose order upon his existence proves to be vain. Any expression of his understanding of self and surrounding is inevitably limited because he is finite. Therefore, the contrast between Clamence, his hopes, fears wishes and undertakings affords abundant room for the exhibition of self-betraying irony that mocks Clamence's fate and his circumstances, his time and life.

II. Irony

Irony generally is taken as the difference between what is said and what is done or what seems to be the case and what happens later. Irony is humorous perception of inconsistency between saying and doing one thing while really conveying a quite different message indicating the reversal of a straightforward meaning. Therefore, the basic feature of every irony is a contrast between a reality and an appearance. Moreover, multiform of irony defines it as vague and unstable fundamentally characterizing human existence. Besides, in multiple forms of irony, there comes an element of the absurd and the paradoxical.

Irony is a perception of life which recognizes that experience is open to various interpretations of which no one is finite and final and that the co existence of incongruities is part of basic structure of human existence in cosmos. An ironic meaning making process is more complex and unpredictable beyond normal expectation which fluctuates with mood and situation. The essential nature of irony is that it escapes finite definition and this elusive nature gives way to multiple speculations. Therefore, even the multiform of irony does not cover entire aspects of ironic meaning making process.

The evolution of the concept of irony establishes the basic features of multiform of irony. In this regard, verbal irony is the use of words to convey something other than, and especially the opposite of the literal meaning of the words, to emphasize, aggrandize, or make light or a circumstance or subject. A common example of this use of verbal irony is the scenario of a man staring out a window looking at a miserably muddy rainy day and remarking, "lovely day for a stroll." This remark is ironic because it expresses the opposite of the circumstances. In verbal irony, the meaning the speaker implies differs sharply from the meaning that is

explicitly expressed. In verbal irony, ironist says “something in order to have it rejected as false” (Muecke, 56). In other words, verbal irony indicates the expression of one attitude to convey the opposite. Irony is “use of a word or phrase to convey an idea exactly opposite to its real significance” (Hutcheon 62). The ironist and ironic pretexts are the basic features of the verbal irony as D.C. Muecke clarifies:

> It is commonly said that a writer is being ironical when in fact what he is doing is presenting (or creating) something that he has seen as ironic; in other words we also see as Verbal Irony the verbal presentation of Observable Irony. This usage can be defended on the ground that such a presentation usually involves similar verbal skills…the more skillful the presentation the clearer the ironical situation ‘observed’. (63)

The above quote clarifies that verbal irony depends on the verbal skills of speaker. The difference between verbal irony and sarcasm clarifies it further that sarcasm is indicated as a provocative remark: the seeming praise for “mockery and scoffing” (17). In addition, verbal irony is amiable, inwardly serene and reserved, selected by gentleness and benevolence.

Self-betraying irony is a device to reveal the false image a character form of self and the world he inhabits that clashes with the real world. This kind of irony is commonly revealed through speech, dialogues and monologues. It refers to a way of deploying one's traits, role, self etc. in a self-ridiculing manner. By self-ridiculing oneself by the use of irony, a person can humble her/himself, but still not to the level of self-humiliation:

> “…man experiences himself as hesitant, open to many possible courses of action, confused, unclear. The process of making a decision is the

movement from confusion to clarity, multiplicity to unity". (Marsh, 487)

In the process of identity formation, man fluctuates among multiple experiences to come to a decisive conclusion. But this movement does not lead to clarity and unity. Rater it makes existence more ambiguous. Self-irony arises out of such a reflexive approach to the formation of self-identity. In order to pursue a lifestyle of self-irony, one must be able to understand your own role in society and culture. This leads to an ability not only to criticize, but also to celebrate the destiny of being human.

One important aspect of self-irony is that it can be used as a psychological defense-mechanism, in the sense that it can be used as a strategy by individuals to create a reflexive distance to the individual behavior. By doing so, the individual maneuvers him/herself to a point of action, where the individual can choose whether he or she shall take responsibility for the performed action. The social psychology has identified this concept as a strategy to downplay the significance of unintended violations of culturally agreed upon behavior-patterns. In this way, individuals can signal their own indifference to this violation, and by doing so, try to convince others of the insignificance of the committed violation. Others, in their turn, tend to react to this behavior by fulfilling the norm-breaking perpetrator's wishes, and help the individual in his/her efforts in downplaying the event.

In any fictional genre, hero's vain attempts to impose unity upon his life and the world he lives by interpreting it in terms of his wishes leads him to reveal his own fate and complex set of hidden psychological motivations. The revelation of such mistaken self, through such speeches and monologues, bases upon the perpetual self deception that characterizes human existence in general. For Schlegel the basic metaphysically ironic situation of man is that he is a finite being striving to

comprehend an infinite. In the dialectical process of creation and decreation of nature human being is victim of nature. Therefore man must acknowledge that "he can acquire no permanent intellectual or experiential leverage over the whole" (Muecke 23). He is programmed by the forces of social circumstances and he can not emerge triumphant from the struggle. He can not grasp the whole rather his attempt to make it ordered and coherent is limited. The firm grasp of life demands to cope with the creative and decreative energy of nature that base upon the acceptance of dynamic dualism of human existence:

> "…there are no free acts, no acts in which a man could have acted otherwise. Both the necessary and sufficient conditions for an apparently free act lie in conditions and causes prior to the act… Freedom is an illusion which cannot withstand rational, critical examination" (Marsh, 480).

Man's awareness of him as superior creature in this cosmos enhances his feeing of freedom and induces a mood of satisfaction, serenity, joyfulness and exultation. But he is conditioned by socio-cultural circumstances which generate multiple consequences. So, "…these feelings of superiority, detachment, amusement and satisfaction…characterize irony…" (Muecke, 49). Human being's unawareness to see him as a victim of nature makes him miserable. Their actions and thoughts have necessary and sufficient conditions. Human beings do not have sense of looking down on his intelligence. Therefore, the change of circumstances leads him into the frustration and absurdity. In this way, existence of human being belongs to the ironic mode. The contrast between man with his hopes, fears, wishes and a dark fate affords abundant room for the exhibition of tragic irony.

The inability of human being to uphold a positive self image is caused by an extreme and exaggerated form of self-irony. Self-irony in this sense shall be seen as self-reflexivity. Here self-irony can be said to have profound ontological consequences, questioning the conception of a unified self in a unified reality. Henceforth self-irony denotes a fragmented but reflexive self in a fast forward postmodern society. The concept of self-reflexivity is necessary and central when it comes to describe irony and the ironic. The communication of the ironic is a way of existence and constitutes identity. There is a reason why the ironic does come out; the reason - or ground - is the hate of self, which is letting its counterpart, the love of self, creates a balance. This duality is binding him up. This duality forces him to this communication, by means of speech and mimics, where he primarily keeps asserting, that he does not want to be what he is. The ironic brings forth that which he experiences, that which he innermost is, and presents it in such a way that the surrounding world (people) do understand, that he does not want to, that he is not able to be what he innermost is, that which has been withdrawn by himself, hidden into the forbidden. But a certain picture of his inner self has the ironic got, and he is choosing to accentuate certain traits with this former Self, and is building upon it, exaggerates into a grotesque for everybody to relinquish, to accuse, keep aloof, and at the same time this is the only, the sole thing he is doing: his life is - in other words - just presenting this picture and this keeping it at a distance. The ironic thus gradually becomes a picture of himself or a mirror for himself and his situation. He becomes a picture of the cleft between himself and the world, since he even has moved out a part of himself to the world, extinguished himself as acting subject, and transformed it into an object and a thing. The ironic has abstained from, most often once and for all, from trying to tune in with the rest of the world outside him, this world that he finds so

wholly unjust and insulting. Additionally, in Irony of Events, the reversal is in time; and the dramatic structure is clear. It has the typical case involving a victim with certain fears, hopes or expectations who (acting on the basis of these) takes to avoid a foreseen evil or profit from a foreseen good, but his action serve only to lock him into a casual chain that lead to his downfall. Thus it is the irony of events which "turned back toward a consideration of man as an author, because a general world-irony posed the question of man's ability to comprehend such a world and acts within it" (Seery 165-66).

Socratic irony is when a person pretends to be ignorance of something or someone in order to expose the weakness of another's position. Utilized in a debate or argument, one party may feign a lack of knowledge about a topic and thus will make the other party explain his/her position in great detail. In this way one is forced to explain in great detail the topic that is supposedly so foreign to the other person. It is in explaining the topic, that hopefully the person will expose the fallacy or weakness in the position.

Structural irony indicates that use of a naïve hero or unreliable narrator, whose view of the world differs widely from the true circumstances recognized by the author and reader. This literary irony thus flatters its readers' intelligence at the expense of a character (or a fictional narrator). In this irony, a deluded narrator's obtuseness leads him to an interpretation in which the reader is invited to change and correct them. To put the things in short, a double level of meaning is generated in structural irony.

Dramatic irony views a situation in which both the author and reader are well-acquainted with the present and future circumstances of a character who doesn't know it. The character acts in a way that is incompatible to the actual events. The audience later comes to know a difference between the character's perceptions and the results

they encounter. This inevitable reversal of situation or the recognition of reality produces the tragic or comic situation. The dramatic irony is most common in Greek tragedy in the sense that the outcome of the plot is already known to the audience or the reader while characters are oblivious of it. Sophocles's *Oedipus Rex* is an example of this kind of irony. It is similar to the tragic irony in which the sympathy for the victim predominates in the play or narrative. Tragic irony is employed to heighten the suspense in a given situation. In this form of irony the words and actions of the characters, unbeknownst to them, betray the real situation, which the spectators fully realize. The character speaking may realize the irony of his words while the rest of the actors may not; or he or she may be unconscious while the other actors share the knowledge with the spectators; or the audience may alone realize the irony. A perfect example is in Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, when Romeo commits suicide when he believes Juliet to be dead.

There is a close link between tragic irony and dramatic irony. Dramatic irony becomes more powerful when "the discrepant awareness" exists (Muecke 81). The dramatic irony becomes tragic irony when a victimized character attempts to rid of the future evil or goodness, in which his actions seem "to lock him into a casual chain that leads inevitably to his downfall" (69). The powerful impact of dramatic irony is cited as:

> The variety and power of dramatic irony depends on other factors as well: whether or not the language spoken by or heard by the victim of the irony has, unknown to him, a double reference to the real situation and the situation as he sees it; whether there are concealed characters and whether these victims are victims of observers; and what the relationship is between the characters. (81-82)

This citation reflects that the situations of characters depict the reality and the condition they observe it. In this sense, it indicates the significance of dramatic irony in terms of making a double innuendo between characters and their circumstances. Dramatic irony comes in the shape of comic irony if it generates humor. Speaking explicitly, it reveals the triumph of a sympathetic victim. So it becomes comic in the sense of a happy ending. When the character' "gloomy expectation are defeated", it makes his situation comic in general sense (51).

Another type of irony is cosmic irony. In this type of irony, a deity or fate is shown controlling in order to lead protagonist to illusion with an intention of a mockery or a frustration. It also highlights the relationship between supernatural power and mankind. It is sometimes used to indicate a view of people as the victim of deception of a cruelly mocking fate, as in the novels of Thomas Hardy. Thus it is in the cosmic irony that the character has a blind faith in divinity and destiny, though such conviction culminates in tragic consequences.

Romantic irony: romantic Irony occur when the author constructs the illusion of presenting reality to shatter it by a revelation that the author himself (as an artist) creates and controls the characters and their actions. Thus romantic irony views the world as chaotic, unpredictable and inexhaustibly fertile in which the artist is obliged to recognize the limitations of conscious mind. Anne K. Mellor puts views about the romantic ironist in this way:

> Who perceives the universe as an infinitely abundant chaos; who sees his own consciousness as simultaneously limited and involved in a process of growing or becoming; who therefore enthusiastically engages in the difficult but exhilarating balancing between self-creation and self- destruction; and who then articulates this experience

> in a form that simultaneously creates and decreates itself …. (qtd. In Enright 13)

This citation proves that romantic ironist's evaluation and judgment is in the process of completion and his vision moves between creation and destruction. As a result the romantics appear in the double entity like infinity versus finiteness, angel versus ape, passion versus reason, power versus impotence, praise versus lament—and all the traditional dichotomies.

Similarly, in the transition from traditional irony to romantic irony, irony is changed into an irony of fiction that may appear as the functionality of existence. Therefore, it is a process, "that starts with ambiguity, edges from ambivalence to paradox, and ends in an alienating derangement of the text and of the world" (qtd. in Enright 17).

Romantic irony comes out of the philosophical and aesthetic speculation, the major proponents of which were Friedrich Schelegal, August Wilhelm, Ludwig Tieck and Karl Solger. In romantic irony the inherent limitation of art, the inability of a work of art, as something created, fully to capture and represent the complex and dynamic creativity of life is itself imaginatively raised to consciousness by being given thematic recognition. The work thereby transcends naïve mimesis and acquires an open dimension that may invite us to further speculation. Romantic irony, according to Schelegal, "contains and arouses a feeling of indissoluble antagonism between the absolute and the relative, between the impossibility sand the necessity of complete communication" (qtd. in Muecke 24).

In this way, the artist in the romantic irony will be like God or Nature "immanent in every finite created element", but the readers are aware of his transcendent presence as an ironic attitude towards his creation (25). Hence, the

process of aesthetic product is integrated both to art and life. Therefore, such consciousness to self and surrounding makes the work more paradoxical and natural. But in this very relation of art and life, human beings develop paradox. The most important, when talking about the human being as a paradoxical being , is to observe the change in meaning of the word, the concept of self. The ironic life is indeed this: not wanting to be oneself, despairingly not wanting to be oneself, but at the same time despairingly to want to be oneself in another way. It is actually turns to want to be oneself as an ironic, which he truly is as soon as he has succeeded in explaining what he does not want to be in that indirect manner he is using.

Karl Solger locates irony at the very center of life. While the universal, the infinite and the absolute can be manifested only in particular, finite or relative forms, it is only by a "self-negation or annihilation" (25). On the other hand, this must self-destruct in the process of fulfilling their function which is to reveal the universal, the infinite and the absolute. The irony, thus, resides in the twofold opposed movement in which each sacrifices itself to the other. At a certain point something new comes up to the ironic: the double irony. It is twofold: directed towards the self and directed towards the other. The irony directed towards the own self is shaped like a double negation; it occurs when irony is accepted/liked by the recipient but not by the ironic himself. Then the ironic starts to use irony upon own self depriving the other of it. Through the double irony any utterance becomes exactly what it says, a straightforward assertion. The double irony directed towards the other is an exact parallel. The ordinary kind utterance to somebody who feels liked and accepted by the ironic: 'You are kind of fool.' becomes thus twice negated, i.e. direct. The ironic then is adding: 'I am quite mean to you, am I not?' by which he wishes to express, that he really is mean.

Romantic irony is the creative surpassing of creativity as it raises art to a higher power. It evaluates art as a mode of production that is in the highest sense artificial and natural, in which nature is "dynamic process eternally creating and eternally going beyond its creation" (Muecke, 25). Therefore, irony is a kind of confession interwoven into that mode of production itself. Thus, the representation becomes the bringing together of the opposites yet the complementary impulses such as of facts and feelings in order to achieve a balanced mode of life. In this regard, Friedrich Schlegel speaks of the "necessity for ironic self-imitation because wherever one does not restrict oneself, one is restricted by the world" (26).

Furthermore, romantic irony is also called a paradoxical irony as the perception of the reality of world is inherently contradictory and open. So, it produces the contradictory situation of life as it "is the form of paradox and paradox is its soul, its source, and its principle" (24). But unlike the romantic irony, the New Critics like I.A. Richards, Cleanth Brooks and Kenneth Burke view that paradoxical irony comes out of the multiple experiences and tendencies that are challenged by others. Any fictional genre for them is the fact of paradoxes and becomes the admixture of opposite experience and "experience is open to multiple interpretations, of which no one is simply right, and that the co-existence of incongruities is a part of structure of existence" (qtd in Anderson,23). As a result, I.A. Richards defines irony as "the bringing in of the opposite, the complementary impulses in order to achieve a balanced poise" (Muecke26). Thus the ironist who avoids one-sidedness by bringing together of the opposites gets detached or objective standpoint.

Wayne C. Booth in his *A Rhetoric of Irony* (1975) reduces all kinds of ironies into stable and unstable irony. In the table irony, the author provides the reader with a

position for ironically qualifying and subverting the surface meaning. For him, stable irony encompasses four intended, covert, fixed and finite marks that are most often used. The ironic author gives certainty of meaning. They are “all finite in application, in contrast with those infinite ironies” (Booth 6). The reconstructed meaning is local and limited. In this sense puns fo all kinds are close to stable irony in intending a reconstruction: they are more or less covert and fixed.

Stable irony renders the world and mankind its equivocal and ironic stance. Alternatively, the unstable irony gives no fixed pint that is not undercut by further ironies. Speaking lucidly, it reveals the paradoxes and incongruities in our existence and world. Accordingly the pose of non-fixity leads to the interdiction of the deconstructive irony in that Lillian R. Furst reminds that irony “may provoke a descent into and agonizing awareness of uncertainty” (qtd. in Enright 17). So for Derrida, Paul De Man and other poststructuralists, irony lies in signification, its negation and deferrals. In other words, irony is a way of writing designed to leave open the question of what the literal meaning might signify: there is a perpetual, deferment of significance.

Giving the overall effect of poststructuralist theories of the impossibility of univocal and stable meaning, Hutcheon says its “overt production of meaning through deferral and difference has been seen to point to the problematic nature of all language” (Hutcheon 57). So the deconstructive irony opens up a way t observe the multi-faceted interpretations and radical openness in which there is an interaction amid reader, author and text.

In its rhetorical form, irony is a means of reinforcing the dramatic spell and drawing the reader into character's whirlpool of self-doubt, moral disarray and cynicism. In other, more complex forms, it functions as a distancing device,

provoking a movement of moral withdrawal, intellectual resistance and - perhaps - the rediscovery of values in which the reader may find the saving grace that eludes the same character. At all points the reader evolves through sensitivity to ironically exerted pressures; but, more importantly, he progresses in the conscious discovery of the ironic patterns and perspectives to which he is subject and in the understanding of the pressures thus exerted. In this crucial sense, The Fall is seen as an education in irony.

Linguistically, irony can be defined as a discrepancy between pragmatic conditions and text linguistic context of the text, the implied meaning of which depends upon the illocutionary act and the perlocutionary effect. It is the ironist who is normally supposed to set up and ironic relation between the said and the unsaid. In establishing a differential relationship between the said and the unsaid, irony seems to invite inference, not only of meaning, but of attitude and judgment. In this sense it is what speech-act theory calls a perlocutionary act, "because it generates certain consequential effects upon the feeling, thoughts, or actions of the audience and speaker" (39). In this regard Hutcheon suggests:

> In order to deal with the issue of ironic meaning, you have to go beyond traditional concepts of semantics, where meaning is discussed in terms of truth-conditions or the relation of words to things, and look as well to pragmatics, to the social and communicative exchange of language. There would seem to be no other way to talk about the strange semantic fact that we can use language to convey messages that are different from what we are actually saying (58).

Irony happens as a part of a communicative process; it is not a static rhetorical tool to be deployed, but itself exists in the relations between people and utterance, and

between intention and interpretation. So irony is like all other communication acts in the sense that it is always culture-specific, depending on the presence of a common memory shared by addressor and addressee. In this sense, irony relies heavily on mutually "shared factual background information" (Enright, 98). But from the semantic point of view, the irony might challenge any notion of language as having a direct on-to-one referential relation to any single reality outside itself.

Irony always has satirical, moral and subversive function. The subversive functioning of irony is related to the view that it is a self-critical, self-knowing and self-reflexive mode that has the potential to challenge the hierarchy of the site of discourse. Now irony occurs in discourse in the dynamic space of text, context and interpreter. Likewise, an ideological critique is the butt of irony. In other words, it is ideology that mediates ironic and critical relations in a way language or culture mediated "the conflict of strategies and tactics" (Chambers 124).

In the modernist and postmodernist way irony indicates a paradoxical position in which all philosophical interpretations can be subverted by which one finds meaning in life and in surrounding by accepting and making a game out of the world's inherent meaninglessness. In this sense, irony demands reason and rationale to understand its message:

> Elegance and urbanity lend themselves to ironic modulation, and ridicule was widely regarded as a test of 'truth'. There is, moreover, in ironic writing that concession from reason to unreason which most truly rational men are prepared to make; a flickering at the edge of reason's candle, where light reaches towards the darkness round about. (Dyson 220).

The above quote clarifies that it is irony that breaks up the darkness of false thinking through the light of a caution. So irony is supposed to be a kind of intellectual teargas that affects the nerves, paralyzes the muscle and it is an acid that weakens the healthy tissues.

The falsifying process of self-betraying irony

> “…depends on the conscious logic of truth claim itself. On the side of the object known or proposition asserted, there is the necessary “questionableness” of what is asserted. To say that something is true is to have a good reason for what I assert. But a good reason is only known in the context of its possibly being a bad reason or a less good reason. If a reason is not possibly "bad," then it cannot be possibly "good" either. In the language game of making truth claims, "good" and "bad," "true" and "false" have meaning only in terms of each other. Because of this logic, holding something to be true implies freedom, in the sense of openness to at least two possibilities” (Marsh, 481).

III. Ironic Realization of Self in *The Fall*

Self-betraying irony is a device to reveal character's false image of self and his view of the world that clashes with the real world. This kind of irony is commonly revealed through speech, dialogues and monologues. In *The Fall*, Jean Baptiste Clamence gradually shatters his self-image and evokes in him the need to reexamine his life. By using different rhetorical devices, Clamence attempts to convince his narrate to make his own confession and reexamine his own life. In this reexamination, Clamence's earlier optimism of life is ironized primarily by what happens to him and his companions at last. Clamence's revelation of inherent duality of mistaken self through speeches and monologues is based upon the perpetual self deception that characterizes fundamental human existence.

The narrator of *The Fall*, who introduces himself under the pseudonym of Jean-Baptiste Clamence, begins his account with an appeal to his anonymous narrate to accept his services. This appeal establishes the situation of a monological dialogue which persists throughout the text. The use of monologue is the authorial method of ironizing a character with absolute authority of writer to expose character's false or inadequate view of self or the world at large. Clamence's false view of self is exposed when he realizes himself being "depressed" (33) quite contrary to his earlier view of his life "as something of a superman" (23). The greater focus upon the character and inner life of character is a method to make the character an ironic object in a social setting. Clamence finds him as an ironic object in the changed social circumstances of Amsterdam as he realizes the end of his "glorious life" and also the end of "frenzy and convulsions" (80).

In the course of five days, Clamence tells his story to the narratee which is centered on a traumatic event: *The Fall* of an unknown woman in to the water. This

fall is the central event of the narrative that paradoxically promotes the fragmentation of the narrative and shatters the self image of the narrator. During the period in between *The Fall* of the woman and the hearing of the laughter, Clamence made supreme efforts to preserve his self-image as well as his image in the eyes of others. He tried to endure his punishment but this punishment is not imposed on him by society but an internal mechanism. The feeling of guilt for failing to aid another at the time of her distress urges him to narrate his account to someone who is a total stranger to him, and the guilt also makes him fall lower and lower from the Olympus of self-satisfaction. Clamence's perception of life from "superman" to "solitary creature" gradually shatters his self-image (23, 87). Clamence philosophizes life and morality to sooth himself as he continues saying "…religions are on the wrong track the moment they start to moralize and fulminate commandments. God is not needed to create guilt or to punish" (81).

Clamence feels that the technique that he has chosen for delivering his messages; the endless repetition of his life-story enables him to forget the laughter that had haunted him, to restore his self-image, and to regain the position of superiority for which he has yearned. He stresses that he has regained the symbolic summit that distances him from the depths to which the anonymous woman had plunged and to which he had sunk after this incident. But the laugher has not totally disappeared. Rather, it has become his fragile self-image. In fact, his life including its vicissitudes, progressions, and retreats has ceased; instead he revolves in an internal circle from which there is no outlet.

The Fall is less a matter of literary traces than of a great shadow cast on Camus's moral and philosophic imagination, urging him to see darkly and negatively all the way to the end of sanity and morality in the aftermath of Second World War.

The tone of *The Fall* is extremely ironic throughout, except when Clamence is expressing certain of Camus' own views, such as his interpretation of Christ or his condemnation of bourgeois conformity. The ironic tone is underlined by the bleak, fog-bound world of Amsterdam, whose "concentric canals resemble the circles of hell" where Clamence and his listener find themselves within the inner circle (13). Clamence ironizes the morality of modern human as he says, "…one can wage war in this world, ape love, torture one's fellow-man, or merely say evil of one's neighbor…" claiming oneself to be "superhuman" (84). Clamence anticipates this proclamation that is clearly expressed towards the end of the novel; turning his personal guilt into collective guilt releases him from the need to judge himself. Clamence stresses that for him these survival tactics transcend the boundaries of logic, because the other is perceived as a potential predator that lies in wait for every expression of weakness on his part. In his narration, the narrator expects the objection of the well-educated and rational narrate and tries to frame a sufficient reply to it. At this phase it is enough for him to confound the narrate make it difficult for the latter to decipher the meaning of his motives, and reinforce in him the will to fathom him. The direct address to the narrate, the questions that the narrator asks him, and the astonishing mixture o self-irony, self-pity, sarcasm, and the search for empathy achieve the desirable effect in his interlocutor; raising his curiosity so that he will continue listening to Clamence's chatter. He describes himself to his listener: "My profession is double, like the human being. I have already told you, I am a judge-penitent" (20). In various stages, he explains how he has arrived at this profession, which he practices in a bar, among society's outcasts. Formerly, he had been an eminent Parisian lawyer, supremely satisfied with his own virtuous nature and hedonistic mode of life as he says "…joyful greeting would rise towards me. Thus at

least I took pleasure in life and in my own excellence" (20). His many faceted relations with people were all on a superficial level and he considered himself vastly superior to all. "I felt like a king's son, or a burning bush…personally marked out among all, for that long and uninterrupted success" (21). In a boasting voice he continues to define himself as a superior man in his character, success and heredity as he says:

> I already knew everything at birth…I was altogether in harmony with life, fitting into it from top to bottom without rejecting any of its ironies, its grandeur, or its servitude…life, its creatures and its gifts, offered themselves to me and I accepted such marks of homage with a kindly pride. To tell the truth, just from being so fully and simply a man, I looked upon myself as something of a superman. (23)

The sense of personal freedom which accompanies his feelings of uniqueness is complete. "The judge punished and the defendants expiated, while I, free of any duty, shielded from judgment as from penalty, I freely held sway bathed in a light as of Eden" (22).

Clamence discovers motives of his earlier behavior of which he had been unaware. In his reexamination of life, the way of expressing it is very ironic. On how he abused his glory and the respect people felt for him in order to use them like objects; he narrates "…one can't get along without dominating or being served. Every man needs slaves as he needs fresh air. Commanding is breathing- you agree with me?" in such boasting voice he adds "Power… settles everything" (34-35). He treated his female lovers too as means to an end as he says he indulged "mechanically in sex" (76)…sensuality alone dominated my love-life. I looked merely for objects of pleasure and conquest" (44). This confession leads his being to the degradation of

sexual morality. And his guilt consciousness is felt when he accepts the lack of his life in saying he do not have "…object of …love never to disappear" (76). Now living with such guilt consciousness makes his life miserable because "mind dominates the whole past, and the pain of living is for ever…" (75). Therefore, his past "wanting to be immortal" becomes pain of present when he realizes that he "was bursting with a longing to be immortal… [and was] too much in love with [self]" (75-76). This is an example of self-betraying irony Camus uses in *The Fall* as Clamence presents his traits, role and self in self-ridiculing manner. By self-ridiculing himself by the use of irony, he humbles himself, but still not to the level of self-humiliation. Self-irony also depends on a reflexive approach to self-identity. In order to pursue a lifestyle of self-irony, one must be able to understand own role in society and culture. This leads to an ability not only to criticize, but also to celebrate the destiny of being human. In this way all his seemingly altruistic feats were based on egoistic motives.

Camus has used self-irony as psychological defense-mechanism of his character, Clamence. It is used as a strategy to create a reflexive distance to the individual behavior. When Clamence reflexives upon his past self, it drives him to the point of action; where he chooses to take the responsibility of performed action. He has violated culturally agreed upon behavior-patterns. As a lawyer, he has advocated in favor of the criminals; as a lover he has cheated many female lovers; and as a human being he has counted himself as a superhuman. His past indifference to such violations makes his present panic and he now "surrenders" his life to the "charms of a virile self-pity" (63).

Clamence's fall from summit is gradual one, the beginnings of self-doubt taking the form of a distant laughter and an awareness of an inner anger in the episode with the cyclist. "…I discovered in myself sweet dreams of oppression" (23). His

failure to react to the cries of the drowning woman marks the final stage in this philosophic metamorphosis from certainty to doubt. His discovery is a dual one: all men bear a universal guilt, and all men seek to avoid judgment and proclaim their innocence to the world.

Clamence's reaction to his discovery took many forms he tried to destroy his image of perfection before others. Love, chastity and debauchery were other manners of escape from this new image of him, but were unsuccessful. Eventually, he adopts his career of judge-penitent, and succeeds in avoiding his guilt. By proclaiming his complicity in the evils of the world, he causes his listener to realize that he, too, shares the guilt of Clamence. Then Clamence himself is once again in a position to judge. He has also regained the summit from which he once dominated, and again feels his god-like nature, through is ability to enslave others through their feelings of guilt. His awareness does not lead him to any feelings of compassion for his fellow man. His chosen path is one marked by a lack of commitment; his isolation is as complete as before. The final picture is of a rather pathetic man, protesting his happiness while dreaming of sunny climes of his youth.

Clamence's vain attempt to impose unity upon his life and the world he lives by interpreting it in terms of his wishes leads him to reveal his own fate and complex set of hidden psychological motivations. He defines man as "solitary creature…as he wanders in big cities?"(87). He wanted to accumulate everything in life but now he has nothing as he says: "I was at ease in everything…but at the same time satisfied with nothing. Each joy made me desire another" (24). Now he realizes that joy and happiness are not long lasting. They fade as life goes on and therefore life is a matter of satisfaction: "Today… I possess nothing" (94). Therefore, he concludes that like life "The world's order likewise is ambiguous" (84). Now he realizes "I was probably

in the realm of truth. But truth…is a colossal bore" (75). This recognition that the world is ambiguous and absurd, that truth and true knowledge is impossible and that man is a stranger suffering anxiety in the face f nothingness, is an awareness that Camus shares in *The Fall*. Rather, there is always "…the comforts of slavery…it will be one of the blessings of the future" (100). "Truth and freedom of any kind are impossible" Marsh writes, "Freedom is an illusion" as Clamence experiences (Marsh, 480). The exposition of ironic realization of self is explicit when Clamence's existential condition of loneliness and isolation and his lot in his world without transcendental hopes is foregrounded in his acceptance of world order as ambiguous. So, he finds "trouble" to express himself in an orderly manner (33). Modern man's freedom is not free from different kinds of bondages. Within the choices human beings have freedom which is absurd that's why it is absurd freedom related with human existence. They have a special kind of reality existence that distinguishes them from nonhuman things.

Clamence discovers the universal guilt of each isolated man who reacts to this awareness in a manner that characterizes human existence as ironic having multiple shades and colors yet ambiguous to be distinguished. So, he concludes "Truth, like light, blinds. Falsehood on the contrary, is a beautiful twilight that enhances every object" (88).

The ontological insecurity, spiritual emptiness, the void of absolute values, the sense of cosmic absurdity, the frailty of human reason and fundamental condition of man is brought to light with an ironic remark in *The Fall*. Clamence defines his exile from Algerian upbringing as a common fate of all human beings as he says: "And from one island to another, ceaselessly on our little boat, which was nevertheless dawdling, I felt as if we were scudding along, night and day…" (97). Clamence's

consciousness of his own being as ironic depends on his realization of self always fluctuating in loneliness and isolation.

There is an obvious analogue on the Christian doctrine of *The Fall* of man in the novel. The theme of universal guilt which Clamence expounds is a tenet held by Christian thinkers. It is also an integral conception of any modern humanistic philosophies and has scientific exponents as well.

Clamence's awareness of him as superior creature in this cosmos enhances his feeing of freedom and induces a mood of satisfaction, serenity, joyfulness and exultation. But these feelings of superiority, amusement and satisfaction shatters when he realizes them to be "…illusion of general agreement…" (59). Then he experiences a kind of "secret suffering, a sort of privation that made [him] emptier [as he] acted the fool" (73). From all sides, judgments and mockeries rained upon him. Then he becomes alert that he is now clear of one thing, that is, "The whole universe then began to laugh at me" (60). In this way, such realization of self in the cosmos as empty and solitary creature belongs to the ironic mode. Now his awareness to see him as the victim of nature makes him miserable yet this awareness does not decrease the aura of his life as he says: "I am not worried about my safety, but about myself and my presence of mind" (94). Rather he lives with the dynamic dualism of past and present recounting his experiences; coping with the creation and de-creation of the nature. The communication of this ironic mode of life is a way of existence to constitute identity. There is a reason why the ironic mode of Clamence's life does come out; the reason - or ground - is the hate of self, which is letting its counterpart, the love of self, creates a balance. This duality is binding him up. This duality forces him to this communication, by means of speech and monologues. In asserting what he was, he brings forth what he experiences and what he innermost is and presents it in

such a way that his inner self induces ironic got. The ironic thus gradually becomes a picture of himself or a mirror for himself and his situation. He becomes a picture of the cleft between himself and the world, since he even has moved out a part of himself to the world, extinguished himself as acting subject, and transformed it into an object and a thing. The ironic has abstained from, most often once and for all, from trying to tune in with the rest of the world outside him, this world that he finds so wholly unjust.

Clamence is alienated from nature because he can not cope with the dialectic process of natural creation and decreation. His inability to balance between the opposites of life makes his life miserable. Thus he is alienated from life itself; from the life that he wishes to continue eternally because death is the master as Clamence mentions:

> Grace is what they want- acceptance, surrender, happiness, and maybe, for they are sentimental too…I am not sentimental- do you know what I used to dream of? A total love of the whole heart and body, day and night, in an uninterrupted embrace, sensual enjoyment and mental excitement- all lasting five years and ending in death. Alas! (99)

Clamence's early years were a serious attempt to live a life of clear meaning and absolute rules. But in mid-life he began to have the doubts of both ontological and moral skepticism. His choices mirror the anxiety and inner turmoil he experiences later. Alienated and dislocated Clamence is an expatriate in Amsterdam, a city f canals and cold light, where he pretends to be a hermit and a prophet. He can not bear being judged, and therefore, hastens to prosecute himself but only in order to better judge other persons. There is only one truth in this game of mirrors; pain and turmoil.

The narcissistic portrait of the narrator is clearly seen when Clamence presents the story of his professional success as a highly esteemed Parisian lawyer. Clamence considers himself as someone who has already arrived at the peak of his achievements, a perfect man both intellectually and morally. Clamence asserts he was "the master of his liberalities …rising to that supreme summit" (19). He "experienced…constant delights" in his life and in his "profession" (19). His life crisis begins with a deep and unrelenting feeling of unease incurred by a laughter that he hears behind his back on a bridge above the Seine, whose source, although not mysterious, is not entirely clear. This laughter later proves to be both internal and external, thus seemingly transgressing the border that separates the outside from the inside. Whatever its source, Clamence perceives it as a crying evidence for the false appearances of his life, its void pretence, and its decay concealed by arrogance. Slowly, penetrating the soul of the narrator, the awareness of all of these flaws makes him remember everything that he has preferred to forget. His success story necessitates the constant and willful forgetfulness of everything that is incompatible with it, whereas remembering makes him reconstruct his life story from the beginning as a story of permanent failure and fall.

Clamence's inner life is further ironized in his renewed examination of his life as released from former self-deception and the shame he feels. He has reformed his ways and experienced deep repentance:

> …there is no definitive solution. I very soon realized that. Once upon a time, I was always talking of freedom at breakfast I used to spread it on my toast, I used to chew it all day long, and in company my breath was delightfully redolent of freedom… I would bludgeon whoever contradicts me: I made it serve my desire and my power. (97)

He now is willing to bear full responsibility for his deeds, in contrast with his past behavior. Now, he realizes that "…freedom is both ironical and ambiguous" (Marsh 479). In his view, the starting point of his fall is *The Fall* of the anonymous woman into the river Seine, whereas the reminiscence of this fall hurls him into the abyss with dizzying swiftness. Whether by consequence of a conscious decision or of an instinctive reaction to a state of distress, Clamence avoids jumping into the water to save the woman. He did not even inform anybody of this occurrence and made no effort to figure out the identity of the drowned woman. But the attempt to treat as a nonevent such a dramatic event that put his system of values to the test fails when Clamence reexperiences the event, years later, as a trauma.

The Fall is thoroughly and essentially a work of irony. The brilliance of its ironic rhetoric is the mocking twist of its narrative manner. The brilliant verbal irony of Clamence's monologue establishes the most overt of *The Fall*'s patterns of ironic persuasion. Before the reader is conscious of being the intended victim or spectator of more covert ironies, he is drawn by the narrator's brilliant flow of ironic rhetoric which appears to address him as potential accomplice.

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savoring the delicacies of ironic style which will consistently serve to point up Clamence's subtly insinuating vision of the universe. Mastery of such delicacies makes Clamence an engaging guide to Amsterdam, to the wider political and social scene, and to the ambiguities of human nature. It serves initially to mask the cynical basis and the sinister trend of his derisive commentary: judgement is initiated as a game. For this reason his ironic rhetoric throughout the first half of the novel constantly veers towards wit and cynical humor.

Clamence's attempt to rid himself of all blame and responsibility is expressed in his long- lasting hedonism. In retrospect, Clamence admits that he found shelter in debauchery to forget the laughter that defied him and threatened the ostensible security and stability of his life. Debauchery served him as a kind of sedative that makes the debaucher forget everything that exceeds immediate pleasure and the means to achieve it. In Clamence's metaphorical language, his life was surrounded in fog. The fog symbolizes an existential state in which one banishes the past and the future to the margins of one's consciousness, thus narrowing one's field of vision and deferring and account of his deeds, a comprehension of his feelings, and an analysis of his motives. Clamence's selfhood shrank when he himself admits that "… a sort of melancholy which occasionally rose within me at the thought of the sterility of these gifts and the probable ingratitude that would follow" (19). This probable ingratitude becomes self ingratitude where his chosen existence as he realizes becomes consequences of internal and uncontrollable forces. He lived with "A certain type of pretension…" that made his self void and his internal contradiction made his way of living an illusion as he was "… a hypocrite in his pleasures" (49). It took into account neither aging nr death, which bring an end of all pleasures of the moment and render

them meaningless. Clamence's body eventually revolted against his insouciance, and he became ill. And his earlier yearning for freedom becomes burden now:

> At the end of all freedom is a court-sentence; that's why freedom is too heavy to bear, especially when you're down with a fever, or are distressed, or love nobody…for anyone who is alone, without God and without a master, the weight of days is dreadful. Hence, one must choose a master, God being out of fashion. (98)

Probably for the same reason, the attempt of the narrator to forget the laughter succeeded merely for a short period. One day, at the time of a cruise initiated in order to celebrate his seeming recovery, from his mental and physical crises, Clamence notices a black point in the ocean, which immediately reminds him of the drowning woman. On the same day, he realizes that the outcry of that woman and the laughter that ensued would never leave him, that he would never again be able to immerse himself in self forgetfulness. Clamence, therefore, feels extremely vulnerable as he fells himself "…the lowest of the low" (103). All of a sudden, his internal defense layers collapse like a stack of cards, his deceitful self-image cracks, and his life is about to become intolerable. The ironic rhetoric, in this way, turns judgement into a game; self-judgement is given an equally appealing by the use of comic anecdotes illustrating Clamence's confession. As all good raconteurs are aware, nothing is more engaging than a speaker who ironizes amusingly at his own expense:

> I presented a harsh exterior and yet could never resist the offer of a glass or of a woman! I was considered active, energetic, and my kingdom was the bed. I used to advertise my loyalty… I didn't eventually betray. Of course, my betrayals didn't stand in the way of my fidelity; I used to knock off a considerable pile of work through

> successive periods of idleness; and I had never ceased aiding my neighbor, thanks to my enjoyment in so doing. (63)

The account of Clamence's fall in its successive stages of hedonic harmony, dawning self-doubt and vain tentative; all have the function of sustaining the reader's complicity. Rooted in the trials of everyday experience, in the exploits and misadventures, they ensure that the account described before the interlocutor and reader receives an indulgent hearing. As Clamence's confession becomes such, on his own admission, as to provoke the feeling of “the failings”; this anecdote helps to arouse self-irony (102). The ironic formulation of this shared dilemma can thus be seen as an extension of Clamence the ironic stylist, drawing his interlocutor and Camus's reader into sympathetic identification with his case by virtue of the style adopted in presenting it.

Clamence encourages the listener to criticize and blame him before criticizing and blaming others, because in this way they commit, throughout the narration, the same essential error of self-deception that he has committed and of which they too become aware only post factum. The narrator implies that self-deception is a collective existential state that is unavoidable and not wholly releasable, at least not in modern bourgeois society:

> People hasten to judge in order not to be judged themselves…The idea that comes most naturally to man, as if from his very nature, is the idea of his innocence…Each of us insists on being innocent at all costs, even if he has to accuse the whole human race and heaven itself…if you tell a criminal that his crime is not due to his nature or his character but to unfortunate circumstances, he will be extravagantly grateful to you. (60)

The individualism, materialism, and pursuit of external achievements are the foundations of this society. Human beings believe that they are what they are not and that they are not what they are. They claim of being innocence and accuse whole human race for their misfortunes. Harmonious existence has become division due to individualism and materialism; and innocence has turned into duplicity:

> …after prolonged research on myself, I brought out the basic duplicity of the human being. Then I realized, as a result of delving in my memory, that modesty helped me to shine, humility to conquer, and virtue to oppress. I used to wage war by peaceful means and eventually used to achieve through disinterested means, everything I desired. (62-63)

In this existential state, the most one can do is to be aware of one's susceptibility to self-deception and to instill a similar awareness in others, as does Clamence. Paradoxically, his call for the narratee and the readers after they have fallen into his trap; to avoid repeating his own mistake becomes at the same time more effective because of the didactic value of experience and completely ineffective because his advice is given in retrospect, after they have been induced to err. In any case, the narrator is interested in making the almost bourgeois readers involved, responsible and even blameful as they read on, in spite of their habit to regard reading as detached from these concepts.

The retrospective enlightenment to Clamence's moment of awareness in tragedy, points out more pertinently that the pattern of tragic irony remains incomplete and potential as long as the interlocutor-reader refuses to be trapped by it. The prospect of tragic self-recognition, as prophesied by Clamence, is invested by his creator with a calculated force of provocation and challenge. It has been too little

remarked that the terms of the invitation to confession are designedly outrageous. The interlocutor-reader is to accept his likeness to the portrait contrived by Clamence, however fraudulent he perceives the manner of its contrivance to have been. In so doing, he will justify the cynical calculation which has prompted Clamence to reveal his hand- namely, that the intellectual client, if sufficiently shaken in self-esteem, can be relied on to respond in sheer morbid fascination to the game of judgement and self-judgement.

Clamence's confession, being in self-debasement consecrates his fall and seals his fate as victim of the contemporary moral tragedy. He realizes that his claim of being loved was an illusion as he says: "I thought I was in love. In other words, I acted the fool" (73). The shock administered here is to moral self-respect: the pointedly unacceptable terms are designed to incite the reader into breaking the infernal cycle of judgement and of tragedy in which Clamence himself is trapped. The language of *The Fall* is designed according to the paradoxical inversion of sign and intent which characterizes the ironic mode as he defines judge-penitent as a "noble profession" (87). The sympathy towards him heightens when he admits, "I made up my mind to leave the society of men… I experienced a secret suffering, a sort of privation that made me emptier…" (73). The prospective and potential pattern of tragic irony thus functions in concert with the retrospectively perceived pattern of dramatic irony. Revealed as dupe and threatened as victim, the reader is roused to intellectual and moral self-defense.

The experienced reality of freedom is an ambiguous unity of opposites, a unity which itself has several meanings. Clamence longs for freedom yet afraid of being free:

> …on the bridges of Paris, I too learned that I was afraid of freedom…the essential is to cease being free and to obey, in repentance, a greater rogue than oneself. When we are all guilty, that will be democracy. Not to mention the fact … that we must take revenge for having to die alone. Death is solitary whereas slavery is collective. (99-100)

Here Clamence finds freedom as both ironical and ambiguous. He expresses his self as undetermined and fluctuation on the issue of democracy and freedom. His self state is unreliable which creates his self as ironic. Moreover, it is ironical in that it attempts to defend as true. Freedom is also paradoxical and ambiguous because it is a thoroughgoing unity of indetermination and determination.

The more sober echoes of Camus's self-irony suggest the painful but salutary confrontation with the moral ambiguity of human nature and of his own position. The more humorous echoes remind us, on the contrary, that even in deepest self-doubt Camus retains the sense of proportion and the essential inner poise which Clamence so catastrophically loses. The significance of humor in *The Fall* is vitally different depending on whether we refer it to the designing narrator or to the author's vision obtained through ironic manipulation of his fictional creature. The element of humor running through the caricatured self-portrait of Clamence as judge-advocate unites the strains of self-mockery and of parody. Sometimes the latter predominates, as in the humorous play on the theme of moral superiority and love of heights; sometimes the former, as when ironic allusion touches on the streak of mistrustful over-sensitivity in Clamence's nature. The guilt of humorous recognition of self and of the other is not yet salvation: but it mocks the moral tragedy: "I haven't changed my way of life; I continue to love my self and to make use of others. Only, the confession of my

crimes allows me to begin again lighter in hear and to taste a double enjoyment, first of my nature and secondly of a charming repentance" (104). Thus the humor of *The Fall* contributes vitally to the total fabric of meaning of the work and distills the very essence of its implied values. He "appeals to conscious evidence and reasons to justify his position… [Yet] he contradicts himself" (Marsh, 480).

Clamence is capable of dealing with his fractured self-image only by defaming another, since he believes that a trouble shared is a trouble halved. This indeed evokes great antagonism in the reader. But from the point of view of the narrator, this antagonism corroborates the main argument of his account. According to him, readers who disapprove of this argument are interested in avoiding an active and involved position when reading about the life of another, and their intellect offers them an easy outlet from this position. Intellect does not lack emotion and motivation, since it expresses the unwillingness of the antagonist readers to deal with the ramifications of acknowledging their own blame. Hence the narrator tries to lure his readers into a trap from which they cannot escape: however readers interpret the narrator, whether they respond to him willingly or unwillingly, in any case they will not be able to elude Clamence's existential truth, according to which each one of human race lives falsely, because truth is too bitter and too difficult to deal with.

Clamence represents the modern conscience and his duplicity is exposed by the use of irony. On *The Fall*, Camus depicts the painful, solipsistic state of mind in an ironic voice as he makes the narrator to voice: "The world cannot be explained because it is empty…" (89). The emptiness of world and sense of alienation are the main concerns of Camus book. He expressed both the horror of living during Hitler's rise and World War II and the desire to establish a meaningful life in meaningless

world of war. *The Fall* is also the extermination of Jews during the war. Clamence reveals his condition in Jewish quarter, as he presents:

> I live in the Jewish quarter, or what was called so until our Hitlerian brethren made room. What a Cleanup! Seventy-five thousand Jews deported or assassinated; that's real vacuum-cleaning… here it did wonders, no one can deny it, and I am living on the site of one of the greatest crimes in history. Perhaps that's what helps me to understand the gorilla and his mistrustfulness. (10)

Clamence is struggling with the problem of human conscience in the aftermath of the world war. He is trying to understand the essence of human conscience. For that he tries to establish a significant philosophy of life on the background of twentieth century life after the war as he says: "I love life- that's my real weakness. I love it so much that I am incapable of imagining what is not life" (56-57). But he is unable to ignore the catastrophe of modern man because man is "poor in invention" as he finds human creature very vulnerable (56).

Clamence clarifies the German brutality in the period of colonization as he says: "Do you know that in my little village, during a punitive operation, a German officer courteously asked and old woman to please choose which of her two sons would be shot as a hostage? Choose!-can you imagine that? (11). This remark shows German brutality during the war. They did not love humanity.

Clamence's gradual discovery of self shatters the images of the mirror that he had formed of himself earlier. It now reflects human evil in us and others. One must surpass this mirror and reconstruct the meaning of life from its abysses, thus releasing oneself from feelings of doubt and absurdity. From this point of view, the mirror that Clamence places is perceived not as a vicious circle but as a starting point.

His courage to look in the mirror helps him to find meaning of his life even in void that is natural and necessary for a human being to live with. His courage makes his life now to live easily as he himself realizes: “life became less painful for me” (67). This courage makes him capable of dealing with the tendency to self-deception.

Clamence's account of self is evidence that the self-image of every person is based on a certain ideal or certain ideals, whose content is not permanent and whose very ideality creates a gap between the person and reality. After all, everyone is like Clamence; everyone is completely unaware of the duality of fate and time. Everyone desperately avoids a reexamination of oneself, one's values, and the motives of one's behavior; and everyone is constantly self-deceived, even if many are motivated to see themselves in a light that blurs their mistakes and weaknesses. Consequently, the mirror that the narrator places in front of the narratee and the reader is distorted from the start. Hence Clamence’s account is universal that challenges human nature.

The tendency of every human to feel morally or cognitively superior from certain aspects during certain phases of life is ironized by showing universal features of man that every individual shares. In his earlier days Clamence used to define his life as being in “great professional flights” and his “private life” being “more worthy” (49). But his superior feeling shatters when he realizes that he was “confused” about his own “feelings” (51). Now, he says:

> I don’t feel any self-satisfaction, believe me, in telling you this. I used to ask for everything without paying anything myself, when I used to mobilize so many people in my service…I used to put them in the refrigerator…in order to have them at hand some day when it would suit me…Isn’t it shame, perhaps? (51)

His realization of self being in shame is very ironic that it totally subverts his earlier feeling of superiority. His self esteemed self is shattered in his own understanding. He feels alienated because he used other people as commodities for his uses. He behaved as a superior upon the other fellow beings. He did not share humanitarian feelings and thoughts. Rather, his relation with other people was very materialistic, based upon profit. Now, he defines his earlier feelings as "silly emotions" (51).

The Fall points to the impossibility of a simplistic and naive perception of the world. Human beings feel them as superior being in this cosmos. Clamence's pathetic emotional state at his later life is cause due to this universal human error. Hence this novel makes human existence more critical that is always in open to examination and reexamination. Clamence's attempt for settling moral dualism of his life discovers the inconsistencies and incongruities of human existence in general. *The Fall* highlights this assumption by portraying the moral incongruities of Clamence's life situation. The revelation of his unreliability exposes the real purpose of his account: deflating the stability of existence.

The Fall focuses on the reevaluation of human nature and their world. Clamence's mental state about his own existence shows self-deception as a characteristic of human existence in general. Clamence's earlier attempt to detach himself from worldly responsibility and engagement, which are features of worldly existence, breaks his own life:

> I realized this all of a sudden the day I began to suspect that maybe I wasn't so admirable. From then on, I became mistrustful…My relation with my contemporaries were…out of tune…I was aware …of the dissonances and disorder that filled me; I felt vulnerable and as if I

> were handed over to public accusation…the circle of which I was the centre broke. (58)

Clamence tries to comfort himself by realizing his earlier emotions about his fellow beings and the consequent effect upon him. He tries to sooth his distress for a short while. This was his only one constant comfort. That serves gradual formation of self-deception that is based upon unreliability of his self.

Camus sees his fictional hero first and fundamentally as ironic by portraying his despair towards life. The covert design of his character undermines his self-esteem and raises within him moral self-doubt. The reader is drawn into identification with the character of Clamence and his sphere of ironic persuasion to mirror a reflection of everyone in the world. He represents the failure of universal claim about morality and condition of human character in general.

IV. Conclusions

The Fall generates ironic allusions of human world. The norms and conditions, the morals and manners, thoughts and politics all emerge from the ironic suggestions associated with the situation of Clamence. In the ironic depth**,** the mirror of Clamence and his situation, demonstrates reflexivity of human existence in both ways: inwardly upon its author in ironic self-questioning and humorous self-parody; outwardly through a spectrum bounded by the existential positions of Clamence.

Clamence is conceived not only to generate but also to organize reflective awareness of the age. The multivalent portrait of his character has the primary function of catching up a whole spectrum of contemporary condition of human existence into the dialectic trap. It serves Clamence to enter into common self-questioning. Its ironic play of reflecting facets also illuminates the nature of the universal human sickness: loneliness and meaninglessness. The situation of Clamence embodies the insights that human position contains identical germs of moral ambiguity and the common failure to come to terms to it. The judgement regarding morality itself is a mirror-game by which human being tender to others. But the image formed by the judgement turns to be the same. It, thus exemplifies the moments of the same general process, deeply characteristic of all the ages. Such fall of humanity is the case, *The Fall* recreates and upon which it ironically reflects.

The searching depth of Camus's confrontation with his own moral anxiety is to be read in the long echoes of ironic self-allusion with which The Fall reverberates; in references to his public persona; to his character and personal life, and to the themes and situations of his previous work. The universal dimension of the novel can be reached only through its most personal, almost intimate dimension. At the centre of this ironic echo-chamber of Camusian self-questioning is the doubt transposed in the

incidents of Clamence’s life. The laughter Clamence hears attacks the philosophic basis of Camus's humanism. His absurdist world-view had identified man as victim of a philosophic irony: the flaw of the human condition had been seen as external to man himself and located rather in man's contradictory relationship with a metaphysical order which denied meaning and justice. The moral optimism expressed in the earlier life of Clamence is gradually shattered by his own changed world view. His passive complicity in the absurd forms of life is an irony which mocks the assurance of human existence as coherent, unified and meaningful.

Clamence is caught in contradictions; he is torn between wanting to be free and yet afraid of freedom and the responsibility it brings. He is aware of his duplicity. He cannot feel oneness between himself and his fellow creatures. The values of freedom solidarity, forgiveness and innocence beckon within him but he can not respond in a meaningful way.

The Fall, thus is the ironic formulation of a shared dilemma: being something and at the same time being nothing. But the resolution of the ultimate dilemma of human existence will not be provided in the real world. Rather existence continues with the moral dualism of human behaviors. Twentieth-century man lives by virtue of its dialectic nature. But this dialectic character is always directed towards open enquiry. Such enquiry yet is not negation; and *The Fall* is not a negative work. Irony functions overall as an anti-plague serum, superficially resembling the virus itself, inducing some of the more painful symptoms of plague, yet capable of creating in the long run the intellectual and moral antibodies most likely to combat infection. It is a function that justifies the ironic nature of the novel and explains the effect Camus attributed to his work.

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