The Nietzschean Challenge
and the European Responses of Malraux and Jaspers

An Honors Thesis (ID 499)

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Preface

Without extensive encouragement and assistance from persons too numerous to list, this undertaking would have remained one of the many talked-about projects for which our age is becoming known. Nevertheless, the guidance and supervision of Richard Wires cannot be overlooked. His carefulness and efficiency furnish a model for any persons who pursue improvement and he is responsible for a substantial portion of what may be found valuable and lasting in this paper. Any faults herein contained have appeared since his several careful readings and are the responsibility of me alone. Praising Dr. Wires is, however, adding one small voice to a choral multitude; yet it is to him that this thesis is dedicated. I gratefully acknowledge a vast debt to Richard Wires, scholar and teacher.

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That Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche is one of the most influential thinkers of modern times is a fact recognized by all. Yet the precise manner in which this influence manifests itself is often left cloudy or dealt with dismissively. Most scholars seem to see Nietzsche’s thought in a selected few of his lucid sentences or aphorisms. It is also significant that his work appeared when the dominant mode of Darwinian optimism was coming to be seen as no longer suited to the times. For that reason the reaction of the age was mixed. As a result of such partial or disputed treatment his ideas have seldom received the attention they merit.

Nietzsche’s thought may be seen as two major parts: a challenge and a response. His challenge, that God is dead and that all values must be re-evaluated, evoked responses which form a vast portion of modern thought. Nietzsche therefore opens the doors to understanding a great deal of the thought of the twentieth century. Few littérateurs, psychologists, political scientists, or, of course, philosophers have ignored the Nietzschean challenge. Passing through Nietzsche leaves one scarred or purified, certainly changed, and Roland N. Stromberg stated that the mind of modern Europe has passed through it. During his productive years before his collapse on the streets of Basel in 1888, Nietzsche responded to his own challenge, producing the dual vision of the Übermenschen and eternal recurrence. Nietzsche called for a new man, capable of overcoming his times and himself, one who would be an enlightened poet-philosopher-statesman and who would lead Europe from what he saw as its stagnant bourgeois mediocrity. As these highest specimens are more important than any foreseeable or conceivable end, an
eternal recurrence of them is merely a corollary to the central thought. Phrases and titles from Nietzsche's works suggest the character of these Übermensch: The Will to Power, Beyond Good and Evil, "joyful wisdom," and "live dangerously."

Nietzsche himself as a philosopher offered only one of the responses to his challenge. Prominent replies in literature are the thoughts of novelists André Malraux and André Gide in France and the plays of George Bernard Shaw and Eugene O'Neill in England and America. There is also the response of psychologists. Described by Sigmund Freud as a person who knew himself more thoroughly than any person ever had or was likely to, Nietzsche greatly influenced the branch of psychology dealing with self-knowledge. As a psychologist in his own right, he anticipated Carl Gustav Jung and Freud in his aphoristic "thought experiments" concerning the creative impulse and the Dionysian and Apollonian conflict. In philosophy he has been notably more influential in continental Europe than in the Anglo-Saxon world, where he has only recently been rescued from infamy by the studies of Walter Kaufmann and George A. Morgan. In French thought he has influenced Albert Camus and Jean-Paul Sartre, in Germany, Karl Jaspers and Martin Heidegger. Through very selective use which ignored Nietzsche's own responses to his challenge, the German Oswald Spengler acknowledged his debt to Nietzsche. Conversely, some social Darwinists have ignored the challenge in their use of Nietzsche's theories of the Übermensch to justify greed and materialism, the very characteristics of his age which he stigmatized.

The reasons for the selection of Malraux and Jaspers as exponential of the responses to the Nietzschean challenge stem directly from their own separate significance. Malraux is important as a novelist, a politician, and as a representative of the modern French response to Nietzsche. La Condition humaine (Man's Fate) is often considered his greatest novel; it won
the Prix Goncourt in 1933 and brought fame for its young author. That work on the Chinese Revolution features a diversity of characters who can be seen as various responses to the death of God. They demonstrate the range from acceptance of to flight from responsibility. In the post-Nietzschean world, one must recognize the untenable and insufficient position of religion, and from this position one must create for himself the values by which to live. All of Malraux's characters recognize this, and their various responses suggest the range of reactions in this or any situation. In his life Malraux embodied the ideals of two countries and two ages, l'homme engagé of modern France and uomo universale of Renaissance Italy. The two most prominent of Malraux's diverse political activities were his participation in the French Resistance during the German occupation of Paris and his position as Minister of State in charge of cultural affairs in the government of Charles de Gaulle. Thus his significance as an important modern novelist and a prominent French politician allows for his consideration as a diverse and rich case study of the responses to the Nietzschean challenge in two important fields.

Jaspers is one of the two most important German thinkers of modern times, and, with Heidegger, is considered one of the high priests of existentialism, although both disliked and have repudiated that label. Both wrote formidable books on Nietzsche. Sartre occupies a place of comparable importance to the core thoughts of existentialism, although the three are not in agreement on essentials. Jaspers has been selected for several reasons. In Jaspers' thought, the seeds sown by Søren Kierkegaard and Nietzsche first grew into existentialism, or Existenzphilosophie, as Jaspers preferred to call it. He disdained the systematization and thought restriction of any "-ism," as did Nietzsche. Similarly, Jaspers advocated an honesty and authenticity in personal relations. Unlike Nietzsche, however, Jaspers urged a directness and lucidity
in communication: Nietzsche preferred subtlety. Jaspers was a student of Max
Weber and demonstrates this influence in his historical writings. Weber also
influenced Jaspers' conceptions of science. Jaspers' academic approach to
philosophizing (a term he much preferred over "philosophy" for expectable and
understandable reasons) and the history of philosophy allows for another
facet of the responses to the Nietzschean challenge to be examined. Jaspers'
importance as a thinker to the disciplines of philosophy and history, as well
as such personal aspects of his life as his Swiss-German nationality and his
Jewish wife, make him an especially interesting subject of study.

All told, Nietzsche's importance and influence extend to many fields.
Because his productive life ended in 1888 it is necessary for those seeking
an insight into the implications of his thought to study the manner in which
he influenced others. Malraux illustrates the response of a French novelist
and politician while Jaspers reveals that of a Germanic philosopher and
historian. Unequivocably, Nietzsche influenced both Malraux and Jaspers.
Yet the differences in the influence he exerted is testimony to the diversity
of his thoughts as well as to the mental fertility of those upon whom his
ideas fell. Nietzsche and the various responses to his thought characterize
a substantial portion of modern thought.
thought like history is often divided into component parts in the interest of improved comprehension. Nietzsche's thought can be seen as an amorphous mass with certain themes dominant and others near the surface. Yet to grasp his thought we must see it in terms we already understand. Arnold Toynbee's idea of understanding the development of Western civilization in terms of "responses" to variable "challenges" was far too broad for that topic, but it offers a suitable way of describing Nietzsche's impact and challenging stimulus for so much of modern thought. His challenge contained many concepts--that God is dead and religion no longer placates man's fears, that the outstanding elements in the contemporary age are actually bankrupt, and that modern society must re-evaluate all values by which one is to live and order one's life. Nietzsche responded to this himself in the dual vision of the Übermensch and eternal recurrence and in the psychological conception of the will to power.

The phrase "God is dead" has been received with anger, disgust, terror, question, doubt, and thoughtfulness, depending on the recipient and his times. It is certainly one of the most important ideas or phrases in modern philosophy. Nietzsche's recognition that religion was no longer a potent and viable force in society marks him as a perceptive social critic. Religion was becoming unsuited to the times, no longer a timeless sensibility. Nietzsche did not kill God, but only recognized and announced the death of traditional religion. His statement that "The
only Christian died on the cross" summarized his view. In addition to the failure of religion, Nietzsche noted the bankruptcy of other outstanding features of his age: he found Darwin, Schelling, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Bismarck, and Wagner the dominant intellectual, political, and cultural forces of the late nineteenth century and stigmatized his age as nihilistic and lacking in outstanding men. It seems fair to assume that Nietzsche's criticism was directed not against Darwin as a scientist but rather against the use of Darwinian insights to justify crass materialism and greed. Darwinism was a far more potent force than Darwin himself. This very fact, the popularization and extrapolation of specific knowledge, was another of Nietzsche's targets. The final and most important aspect of the Nietzschean challenge is the re-evaluation of all values. Nietzsche asked us how, given the death of God, we are to live and order our lives. This capstone of his social criticism is pivotal to his thought. Truths were no longer truthful, virtues not virtuous, and faiths no longer religious.

Nietzsche was more important as a critic than as a constructive thinker. His response therefore does not demand the same depth of treatment as his challenge, but as it contains some of the most novel ideas of modern times, it is consequently deserving of at least brief attention.

The Übermensch, eternal recurrence, and the will to power form the basis of Nietzsche's response. Due to an unfortunate error in translation on the part of Elizabeth Förster-Nietzsche, the philosopher's controversial sister, Übermensch has been rendered in English as "superman." Some shallow thinkers have misconstrued this to denote a figure resembling the comic strip hero. Nietzsche's meaning was far different. He saw as the only solution to the problems of the age a heroism to lead Europe from its decadent bourgeois mediocrity. A new elite must be created, one of enlightened
poet-philosopher-statesmen, an elite capable of creating and communicating culture and civilization to posterity. There is in German thought a tradition which extolls this sort of Übermensch: Georg Hegel and world historical figures, Johann Gottfried Herder and the plea for German national superiority, and the Führerprinzip of the National Socialists. Nietzsche argued that superior men appear from time to time to direct the path of civilization; they had always done so and would always continue to do so—"eternal recurrence." The manner whereby a man transcends his physis or physical nature and becomes a superior being is through exercise of the will to power, a psychological idea extant in all persons, but dominant only in those who cultivate it. Nietzsche's will to power anticipates the theories of unconscious creativity later articulated by Jung and Freud. Thus Nietzsche first acknowledged and identified the particular dilemmas of the modern world—the crisis of the death of God, the sources of creativity, and the need for re-evaluation—and then responded in his own thought to the challenges he raised. He urged what Rainer Maria Rilke later voiced in the last line of his "Archaic Torso of Apollo"—"You must change your life."

* * *

It is a widely held belief that Western civilization is based upon three sources: Greco-Roman, Germanic, and Christian. All three put forth a Weltanschauung which might well be described as a religion. Nietzsche's rejection of Christianity is only part of his rejection of religion. He believed Christianity propagated weakness and mediocrity. Christianity's antagonism toward excellence, its devaluation of the body and intellect in favor of the soul, and its disdain of this entire world in favor of another were anathema to the concept of the Übermensch. Christianity called for surrendering individual dignity to achieve a supernatural reward. The
individual was sacrificed for his own good, and this great paradox, that one must die before one can live, was thoroughly foreign to Nietzsche. Life could only be based on the here and now—the only reality of which one can be certain. Still God has died. This pronouncement and its implication shocked and horrified Europe. Nietzsche gives us the following picture of the death of God in the parable of "The Madman" in The Gay Science.

"Whither is God," he cried. I shall tell you. We have killed him—you and I. All of us are his murderers.... God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. How shall we, the murderers, comfort ourselves?... Must not we ourselves become gods simply to seem worthy of it? There has never been a greater deed.

Much of Nietzsche's thought can be seen in these few lines. First, Nietzsche recognizes the timeless human qualities that result in a search for God. These same irrational factors are the cause of many artistic productions. Modern surrealism attests to this in its art, poetry, and films. Surrealism, as the name suggests, attempts to go beyond the realism mirrored by the conscious side of life only. It seeks to reach the innermost being, the wild and irrational source from which much creativity flows, a great deal of this creative flow involving the unconscious search for God. The Comte de Lautréamont, a pseudonym for Isidore Ducasse, spoke of this unconscious quest in Les Chants de Maldoror. In the poem the hero Maldoror returns to the prehistorical time before human existence. The setting is inhabited by an array of sea animals and a purely spiritual being called God. Maldoror is drawn between the two competing forces, spirit and matter, but only after he investigates the nature of both. A seldom discussed virtue of Lautréamont's poem is that it investigates both the search for God and the crisis-filled
course one follows after the search has ended. Nietzsche's social criticism also recognized a need for satiation, a need more urgent because of the untenability of contemporary religion.

Second, the madman in his readiness to answer his own question hints at the Übermensch. To rise above the mentality of the herd, to give direction to an aimless mass, and to assert oneself in the face of others are all characteristics of the later-articulated Übermensch.

Third, that God is and remains dead is the culminating statement about the place of religion in society. Nietzsche's rhetorical style, which must be discussed at length, often concluded arguments in a terse and biting manner with a statement or phrase which his audience would find memorable and unsettling. "God is dead" is certainly such a statement.

Fourth, that Western European man had killed God spreads the burden of guilt from the religious institutions to society in general. Nietzsche considered himself a "good European" and his use of the first person in the parable is indicative of his position: all Europe is responsible for God's death. Although this is reason for contemplation, one need not be pessimistic.

Fifth, that we can comfort ourselves by aspiring to be gods ourselves reveals an aspect of the Übermensch, namely, the will to power. Nietzsche urged that a new elite should control the fusing of a new culture. That elite would be directed by the will to power, the aspiration to godhood.

Finally, that a deed has never been greater than the murdering of God indicates how a belief in a divine teleology can reduce the value and significance of man. Only now that God is dead can man revel in his
true freedom and aspire to the raised heights of human dignity. Still, the death of God resulted in fragmentation:

The needs and hopes which had found satisfaction still perdured in an era when religion itself could no longer be credited, and something else—science, education, revolution, evolution, socialism, business enterprise, or latterly, sex—must be seized upon to fill the place left empty, and to discharge the office, vacated by religious beliefs, which it could not now sustain.

The intense interrelationship of man and his age is exposed in this. Nietzsche's thought, which few feel can be systematized, had the effect upon his age of causing fragmentation. His aphoristic "thought experiments" (Nietzsche called them Versuchen) had the effect of scattering the popular and elite thought of the age. For this reason, both must be considered wholly.

Walter Kaufmann is perhaps the most prominent Nietzsche scholar working today. With respect to the phrase "God is dead," Kaufmann offers an exegesis nearly as laconic as the original phrase, saying that the death of God means madness, and upon mankind's discovery of it, universal madness will break out. "This apocalyptic sense of dreadful things to come hangs over Nietzsche's thinking like a thundercloud." In this way Nietzsche also raised the issue of modern pessimism and Angst.

Benjamin Franklin wrote in a letter to Thomas Paine, "If men are so wicked as we now see them with religion, what would they be if without it?" Religion as a social utility must be compared with and weighed against religion as a source of evil. W. H. Auden's poem "Ode to my Pupils" describes among other things the timeless nature of human conflicts which must be settled by war. In the poem captains of both armies feel they have a right to destroy the enemy because "They fought against God." Far from allowing universal madness to break out, some thinkers
feel that the death of God is the starting point for a new edifice. Fedor Dostoyevsky, in the legend of the Grand Inquisitor in *The Brothers Karamazov*, said, "If God were dead, all things would be possible."

Jean-Paul Sartre has said that this is the starting point for existentialism, making the death of God a solipsistic and intrinsic issue.

In Nietzsche's parable "The Madman" the statement is made that the news of the death of God has not reached the ears of man. In his continual worldly concern, he diagnosed contemporary civilization and did not offer a speculation on ultimate reality. Kafka's parable "An Imperial Message" deals with a similar theme, making comparisons between these two parables an intriguing possibility. In Kafka a messenger at the deathbed of an emperor is given a message of supreme importance, which he is obviously supposed to carry to civilization, but he can never completely escape the infinite number of rings around the imperial throne. The message intended for man and man's failure to receive it are of comparable importance. That man does not yet acknowledge the death of God suggests a clearly related issue.

In arriving at his personal and societal atheism Nietzsche revealed a great deal about his method and style of writing, which involved the rejection of all assumptions. His aphoristic essays attack each problem on its specific merits. A lack of intellectual integrity, such as is exhibited when systems are used to deduce answers, was anathema to him. He demanded that questioners experiment fully, with an open mind, and without reservations. The most important implication of this "existentialism" is that it obviates the hopeless incoherance to which other experimentation might lead. By constant experimenting Nietzsche hoped to escape the falsity of deducing answers from a ready-made system and by
and closed. He extolled the value of free thought to an extent not
surfeited by the "Isaac Newton of biology."

For Nietzsche both Schelling and Hegel represented all the problems
of speculative philosophy writ large: over-extension, extrapolation,
cloudiness of idea, systematization, and irrelevance to contemporary
needs. That both were German may have disgruntled Nietzsche even
further, for he felt no spirit of national unity, even under Bismarck.
In fact, Nietzsche said "Political superiority without any real human
superiority is most harmful," indicating a feeling of hollowness toward
Bismarck's and Germany's political dominance of the European continent. 10
Bismarck's engineered wars were only a manner of spreading this hollowness,
Nietzsche thought. In as far as admiration of a national culture
is concerned, Nietzsche had none, for this would imply an assumed
affinity, rather than the more critical approach which was his trade-
mark, as integrity of investigation is one of his lasting values. One
last comment on Nietzsche and Germany is that he felt "German spirit"
a contradiction of terms.

Nietzsche's break with Wagner is based on the condescension of the
latter to everything the former despised, including anti-Semitism. 11
Wagner, like Darwin, had been made into an "-ism" and Nietzsche found
Wagnerism the symbol of the ennui of the nineteenth century. In
trying to cure the malady, Nietzsche broke consciously with Wagner,
the first critical repudiation of the last half of the nineteenth
century by a herald of the twentieth. 12 To Nietzsche both Darwin
and Wagner represented the excess intellectualization and scientism
that had made Europe a continent of weary mediocrity. From this pos-
iton Nietzsche could see no other solution for the entire Western
world but a re-evaluation of all values.
The re-evaluation of values forms the core of the Nietzschean challenge. Of all Nietzsche's ideas it is the one to which the greatest portion of modern thought has responded. Therefore it is the most influential aspect of his thought and second in popularity only to the Übermensch. It is a reflection of the timeless need for change and renewal on a personal and societal level, as witnessed by Rilke's "You must change your life" and Heraclitus' "The only permanence is change." In short, it is the core of Nietzsche and of the modern world and is very close to a sensibility found throughout the Western world.

The Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset said that the most important intellectual fact that the present time can show is relativity. Both physics and philosophy have recognized this. The Michelson-Morley experiment of 1887, the relativity theory of Albert Einstein, and the uncertainty concept of Werner von Heisenberg are all tributes to this, as is Nietzsche's destruction of our faith in God, for in doing so, he left only the void. In this predicament no one can say what is up and what is down. Such relativity is one of the founding blocks of existentialism. For without recognition of the relativity of, for example, ethics, individual responses to absurd situations would be impossible. Seen in this light, Nietzsche is one of the founders of existentialism and of the thought of the modern world. Yet to see him only in this light is to miss his intended mark. "Re-evaluation" means a war against accepted values, not the creation of new ones, although the creation is all but necessitated by it. A prominent Nietzsche scholar has remarked, "The diagnosis itself is the revaluation." Here it can be most acutely seen that Nietzsche's value as a social critic far outweighs his importance as a speculative philos-
opher. Far more thinkers have responded to Nietzsche's challenge than to his response. Nietzsche was critically aware that the world was about to change, that the glory of Europe's golden age and the age of imperialism was about to be relinquished, and that the end of Western hegemony was near. He recognized that this vast social and cultural change would be mirrored not only in men thinking different things, but in their thinking them differently. Caught at this juncture, his thought is clearly a cause of what followed.

The present age is grossly unsatisfactory for human freedom, Nietzsche thought, and a new age is absolutely necessary, insofar as any one thing can be absolutely anything else. Walter Kaufmann has said:

The revaluation culminates in the claim that the so-called goodness of modern man is not virtuous, that his so-called religion is not religious, and that his so-called truths are not truthful. While those who are truly powerful and rich personalities will be kind and generous, spontaneously and instinctively, the weak who insist on conformity to the old standards—says Nietzsche—find in such conformity a mere screen for what is, according to these very standards, petty wickedness. In the weak the law abets and breeds sin.

Joseph Conrad announced the death and T. S. Eliot recapitulated it, but only Nietzsche sensed the hopefulness in "Mistah Kurtz—he dead."

Little doubt exists concerning the fundamental problem upon which all Nietzsche's philosophical labors are focused—values. This emphasis on ethics, personal action and responsibility, critical self-examination, and judgment and decision-making demonstrates Nietzsche's enormous stimulating potential in the crisis-striken modern world and in the pursuit of personal honor and dignity. Given a world he saw as being nearly wholly without these qualities, it can easily be seen why he called for re-evaluation. Again Nietzsche's particular world situation shaped his thought:
Modern man finds that his values are worthless, that his ends do not give any purpose, and that his pleasures do not give him happiness. Nietzsche's basic problem is whether a new sanction can be found in this world for our values; whether a new goal can be found that will give an aim to human life; and what is happiness.

In a study entitled The Tragic Philosopher, Frank Alfred Lea pointed out: "What we need before all today, Nietzsche infers, is absolute scepticism toward all traditional concepts." Answers to these essential questions are infused throughout modern thought.

Nietzsche's response to his own challenge can be seen in the concepts of the Übermensch and eternal recurrence and in the psychological idea of the will to power. The Übermensch is one of the most popular but misunderstood ideas to come from Nietzsche, for it has acted as a stimulus to many diverse interests. Eternal recurrence is the least plausible of Nietzsche's ideas and, as such, is often used by those seeking to discount his thought as products of his instability and irrelevance. The will to power is a theory of creativity, a theory of desire to excel which leads one to fuse and surpass good and evil in the creation of the new.

The Übermensch was a direct response to what Nietzsche saw as Europe's decadence. He felt the only feasible solution was to have enlightened poet-philosopher-statesmen come forth and create a new culture for the future. The Übermensch was not to be a genetic pure-blood or a nationalistic fanatic: he would represent the highest in the present and surpass it for the future. Thus he represents one of the highest ideals of humanity ever set, the passionate man in control of his passions, broader even than the philosopher-kings of Plato's Republic. Although it is difficult to foresee the specific nature of these Übermenschen, for they would surpass contemporary standards of
excellence, some phrases suggest the importance of the concept of "overcoming:" self-overcoming (selbst Überwindung) and the aspiration to supersede one's animal nature. One of the possibilities open to those of sufficiently strong character was artistic creation, for Nietzsche felt that a technician was similar to a refined chimpanzee, exerting or expressing similar characteristics, only in a more refined manner. An artist, however, was immeasurably more superior through his similarity to a supra-ape and demonstration of cultivated characteristics which other animals did not even possess. A similarity to the surrealists may be drawn here. The poet Baudelaire set forth an ideal of the artist as one who knows, such as the priest, one who kills, such as the warrior, and one who creates, such as the poet. These very qualities are set forth in Nietzsche's writings on the Übermensch, and had he not been a part of the tradition of Western philosophy, the influence of which the surrealists tried to escape, it can be said with certainty that he would have been recognized as one of their theoretical founders.

Nietzsche's conception of history sheds light on both his concept of the Übermensch and on the will to power, but surprisingly, not on the idea of eternal recurrence. History was a painful stimulant which could implore those who examined it to new heights, Nietzsche thought. To him the study of history was akin to purification by fire in classical mythology. His primary concern with history was an acknowledgment that it was permeated with suffering. This was not the result of a fin-de-siècle infatuation with the lurid, however, but a genuine concern for humanity. At any rate, the examination of history was sure to be harrowing, but for those who would not succumb to the suffering, history was a stimulant capable of leading to the Übermensch. Since a substantial part of the Übermensch idea meant overcoming the present, and the present
is certainly a result of the past, one would have to know the past in order to overcome it in the present. This is as true for politicians as for artists, a point on which the surrealists and Nietzsche would be in disagreement.

Nietzsche never suggested that the Übermensch would or should use his superior capacities for evil and much of this philosophy can be seen in a few sentences near the end of Zarathustra's speech "On Those Who Are Sublime," part 2:

And there is nobody from whom I want beauty as much as from you who are powerful: let your kindness be your final self-conquest.

Of all evil I deem you capable: therefore I want the good from you.

Verily, I have often laughed at the weaklings who thought themselves good because they had no claws.

From this it can be seen that the goal of the Übermensch is the creation of beauty, not the propagation of evil. Kindness as the final self-conquest suggests that the Übermensch must overcome himself in stages, almost in the fashion of a religious purification. When he has finally become powerful, his primary concern should be restraint from misusing his power. Nietzsche did not treat the modern liberalist concern with relativity of inherited and transmitted conceptions of culture, internalization and transmission of morals, or the clarification of values through hodgepodge questionnaires. These prohibitions of thought were shunned in favor of the realization that the Übermensch would be beyond any conceptions that modern man had of good and evil. Thus he considered quasi-speculative problem-making to be obsolete and redundant. Many have hesitated indeed too long to learn this lesson.

The capacity for evil was central to the creative force behind the Übermensch. Nietzsche's declaration that superior man is capable of all evil is among his reasons for calling such a person great or superior.
Overcoming the aspects of omniscience which could lead to evil is a far stronger claim to greatness than the inability to commit evil. This idea marks the conclusion to Shakespeare's ninety-fourth sonnet.

Nietzsche's goal carries a rational and emotional appeal. As with many aspects of his and other doctrines of supersession, in the wrong hands they become destructive of all civilization. The leader (little reminder needs to be given of the German Führer), whether cultural or political, who exerts a stimulating influence on diverse interests runs the risk of attracting an enemy to his cause, which actually is the furthering of civilization. "True believers" who are willing to forgo the critical examination of issues at hand in their fanatical devotion to any prominent cause offer a prime example of this problem. Furthermore, the use of Übermensch by an Untermensch as justification of his self-interest can do untold damage. A case in point is the distortion of the Übermensch concept and other aspects of Nietzsche's thought by the Third Reich.

A self-proclaimed Übermensch is almost certainly an enemy to all that Nietzsche extolled: the timeless desire in men to be cultured, conscious, and free.21

Zarathustra is the literary and philosophical character through whom Nietzsche introduced the Übermensch. In the account, Zarathustra approaches a crowd which Nietzsche called the herd and said, "Behold, I teach you the Übermensch." Nietzsche proclaimed in the prologue of Also Sprach Zarathustra that the Übermensch is a pursuer of knowledge and of the good, that he does not restrain his spirit of virtue, that he loves work and himself, and that he has a free spirit and a free heart. Zarathustra described the Übermensch as lightning in the clouds. When De Gaulle was once criticized for the irregularity of his cultural minister Malraux, the general remarked: "Clouds, clouds, everywhere clouds; but occasionally, lightning!" The reference was well taken.
Nietzsche suggested the nature and character of the Übermenschen in extensive and specific terms. Precisely because of this specificity the Übermenschen is better known than Nietzsche's more subtle and indirect concepts. He also supplied specific examples of the Übermenschen, namely the gods, demigods, and heroes of ancient Greece. The ancient Übermenschen were symbols of the repudiation of any conformity to a single norm, antitheses to mediocrity and stagnation. Additionally, the ancient Greeks set the tone of a remarkable portion of Western civilization, certainly an act of overcoming. Their new world-view was the beginning of the making of the West. Fusing ancient East and West, the Greeks also balanced Apollo and Dionysus in the controlled creation of new manners and morals. At the end of the nineteenth century a new mode was needed to overcome the contemporary outdated scene. To some Nietzsche's Übermenschen symbolized endless progress in material growth, but Nietzsche claimed that only "scholarly oxen" could construe his conception Darwinistically.22

The idea of eternal recurrence of similar events is Nietzsche's least plausible thought. It necessitates a belief which human reason is insufficient to justify, a leap into Kant's noumenal world, as it were. All events replicating themselves endlessly also diminished the value and significance of man, for then he is only a tool in the unfolding of a cosmic order, an idea reminiscent of the romanticism of Hegel. If a great deal of Nietzsche's thought can be synoptically interrelated, the doctrine of eternal recurrence should not gain entry. Nietzsche imparts a certain ethical significance to this doctrine as enumerated in Die fröhliche Wissenschaft: "The question in each and every thing, 'Do you want this more and innumerable times more?' would weigh upon your actions with the greatest stress."23 Although Nietzsche fervently
advocated integrity and critical examination, he may have intended only
to prevent anyone from forming his thought into a system. The doctrine
itself is similar in result to Voltaire's belief in the social utility of
religion: good for those who believe it and, even if not true, at least
a civilizing force. Although the doctrine does not produce positive
good, it may be effective in the prevention of evil. In this aspect, It
differs greatly from the will to power, the idea that a man can
create under any circumstances.

The will to power is Nietzsche's most penetrating psychological
insight. It is a fusion of psychology and philosophy which is the cap-
stone of his thought, an insight into the creative process which antic-
ipated Jung and Freud. Nietzsche had intended to write a multi-volume
work dealing with the will to power, but it was never even begun. For
this reason a scholar has suggested:

The most important thing to remember about The Will to Power: An
Attempted Transvaluation of All Values, is that it was never
written. All that survives of Nietzsche's ambitious project is
a vast assortment of notes accumulated over the years 1884-1888;
a dozen plans of the contents; and a single completed section,
"The Antichrist." ... The 'conception as a whole' ... must
always be a matter of inference and more or less dubious con-
jecture.

A work exists with the title The Will to Power but it is merely an
accumulation of notes by Nietzsche's sister, who is largely responsible
for the many misconceptions about him, not the least of which is the
whole notion of the "superman." Another scholar has written:

The picture that results from his psychological-philosophical
analyses is that of human beings trying continually to impose
an order and structure upon an unordered and senseless universe
so as to preserve their sense of dignity and importance.

Although some are hesitant to label Nietzsche an existentialist, given
the controversial nature of that title, one can clearly see that the
existentialist creation of values in the face of an absurd and ambiguous
situation is indeed an idea traceable to Nietzsche. The production of art is often the result of this striving.

The will to power involves the ascension to a position beyond good and evil. It is exercised in the re-evaluation of values, it is the capstone of Nietzsche's thought through which the entirety can be seen, and it is a way of preserving the value and significance of man. The will to power follows close acquaintance with history, for only acknowledgment that history is replete with suffering and that it fills us with a profound despair can prompt the healthy and strong to counteract the suffering by creating beauty. The will to power is an answer to man's simple task: not to let his *Existenz* be a thoughtless accident. Furthermore, it is a psychological urge that helps to explain diverse and complex types of human behavior, the basis of Greek culture, and it is envisioned as the basis of all human creations. Finally, it reconciled the duality of his earlier thought—Dionysus and Apollo, nature and value, wastefulness and purpose, empirical and true self, and *physis* and culture. Understanding the concept of the will to power leads to a greater grasp of Nietzschean essentials.

* * *

Nietzsche's thought was not the zenith of all things Nietzschean. His value as a social critic surpasses his importance as a speculative philosopher, but because he did not live his doctrines, only the side of them dealing with life within the ivory tower finds expression in his thought. Though advocating that man "live dangerously," he himself did not. That remained for Malraux. In virtually all manners of thinking, however, the twentieth century advocates dangerous living to a greater extent than did the nineteenth. In the twentieth century we find an acutely developed ideal within the intelligentsia of the intellectual committed to action,
l'homme engagé. The twentieth century cries out for such a figure, an existential Übermensch, to stop its movement toward self-destruction.

Ready answers and oversimplifications are unacceptable in the present age. Man's fate has changed, but his human condition remains the same. Malraux speaks to all ages on one level, but more powerfully he demands that we face our world, so that we can make it an uplifting world of man. The twentieth century need not see the demise of the ideal of the Übermensch: it is called for, and needed, now more than ever. Malraux is worthy of consideration as one.
MALRAUX: ACKNOWLEDGING MAN'S GREATNESS

The dominant theme in the thought and life of André Malraux is the acknowledgment of man's greatness, a condition most often achieved through commitment. In his life Malraux was an exemplar of l'homme engagé, the intellectual committed to action. He demonstrated a prophetic quality of knowing how and where the making of history was in preparation. The French see Malraux as un haut aventurier, a novelist of man's fate and the tragic heroes who defy it, l'homme engagé, a political agnostic, a new interpreter of universal humanism for writing Les Voix du Silence, and the central figure of the obscure and questioned cas Malraux.¹ Despite a lack of detail (Malraux believes his private life is indeed private) several facets of la vie Malraux have been documented and examined. His life has been focused upon art and politics. The commitment to politics may strike those living in an age of political cynicism as strange but, as Sartre has pointed out, politics offer the most acute opportunity for commitment. Malraux's first memorable public act was the alleged theft of a number of Indo-Chinese statues, for which he was imprisoned. His previous associations with the literary circles of Paris helped gain his release. Art and politics were fused when he became minister of state in charge of cultural affairs in De Gaulle's Fifth Republic. The decision to join the government was seen by some political compatriots as an act of abandonment of the leftist cause, but Malraux nevertheless rose above ideological issues to serve the state. This, his most prominent peacetime political
act, compares dramatically with his war-time activities. In 1936 as
Mussolini and later Hitler were testing their war machines in Spain,
Malraux organized and led an air force for the Republicans. During
World War II he was captured by the Germans, escaped, and, after
being active in the Resistance, became commander of the famed Alsace-
Lorraine brigade. More recently, he was directly involved in the con-
flict in Bangladesh in 1971.

Against this background Malraux's primary intellectual pursuits
have been as a novelist and art historian. To both fields he has
brought his dynamic personality, immense general intelligence, and
perspicacious erudition. His major novels are Les Conquérants, La
Condition humaine, La Voie royale, Le Temps du mépris, L'Espoir,
and Les Noyers de l’Altenburg. His most famous novel, winner of the
Prix Goncourt in 1933, was La Condition humaine, translated as Man's
Fate. Starting with the death of God, all characters are seeking values
to live by. Based in some part on Malraux's experiences in the East,
the novel is central to an understanding of Malraux's thought. Though
the book is very ambiguous politically, its lack of scenic and back-
ground detail allows for the characters to stand forth in a stark reality
which gives them a quality of solidarity amid solitude, an answer to the
human condition. La Condition humaine is a direct and conscious response
to the Nietzschean challenge, a conclusion which retains its veracity
when directed to most of Malraux's other works and to his life itself.
Both Malraux and Nietzsche express a particular modern type of humanism.
Both have important and not dissimilar theories of the creation of art,
involving variations of the idea of the will to power. Both clearly
recognize that religion is untenable, that God is dead, and that values
must be based upon some other truth. Malraux's major works on art history, including some of the most profound thoughts on that subject in recent times, are *La Psychologie de l'art*, *La Métamorphose de dieux*, and *Les Voix du silence*. Both Nietzsche and Malraux are known to have contemplated the position and nature of art and they are in fact very similar thinkers, though they lived in very different worlds and responded to their worlds in different ways.

* * *

Malraux's life is marked by an obscurity of detail. The French often speak mystically of *le cas Malraux*. Where he was educated, for example, remains unclear, although his erudition and wit are undeniable. Raised, as was Sartre, by bourgeois women, he became active and known in the Parisian intellectual circles, developing friendships and associations which would later prove helpful in gaining his release from the French authorities in Indo-China in 1926. Married to Clara Goldschmidt, he set out for Cambodia and was arrested for stealing native Khmer art works, perhaps a false charge by the French colonial authorities. Later he utilized his knowledge of the East in writing *La Condition humaine*.

In 1936 Malraux became an airfighter against Franco in the Spanish Civil War. He flew over sixty missions before conceding defeat to Franco's Nazi-aided forces. Yet such activity on the left did not confuse Malraux's politics, for, despite some flirting with communism, he later became and remained a staunch anti-communist. After being drastically affected by World War II he returned to his love of art, being often accused of deserting the causes of the left, especially when he joined De Gaulle's Fifth Republic as minister of state for cultural affairs. He worked closely with De Gaulle to restore France's glorious past and its land-
marks. Yet even after his retirement from French politics he remained committed. In 1971 when the independence of Bangladesh was threatened by invading Pakistani armies Malraux responded with characteristic vigor.

It does will to ask about the world view of a man of such diverse experiences. A 1927 essay, "D'une Jeunesse Européenne," is still considered a basic expression of Malraux's life program. It is also a critique on the continuous crises of European civilization. The essay contained practically all the germinal thinking for his future works: intelligent despair; "lucid, humanistic, and splendidly unconquerable" man; the assumption of the heroic and its risk of death, of virile fraternity, of defiance of what was classically called fate; the struggle against men's injustice; the idea that time is running out to save civilization; a love of art; and a dignified disdain of defeat. The writings of such a mind have a triple potential and effect: his ideas are always intelligent, his use of them gives the effect of poetry, and they support his personality perfectly.

_Le Condition humaine_ is Malraux's most important and famous novel. It was written on a sustained schedule of writing eighteen hours a day for several weeks. Starting with the death of God, Malraux has portrayed a diversity of characters who demonstrate responses to this cosmic crises ranging from tragic acceptance to cowardly flight from responsibility. Nietzsche did not speculate on this diversity, nor did he recognize its occurance. He simply announced that contemporary values had no basis and that a new base must be found. He could have foreseen that no single basis for all values would suffice, that a medieval world unified by the church would not reappear. That Nietzsche did not respond to his own challenge in this fashion makes Malraux's exposition and response considerably more important to our age and to
the understanding of Nietzsche, for as Nietzsche's belief that living an issue through can demonstrate its weaknesses, Malraux's elaboration of the responses to the death of God clarifies the initial issue. We see the implications of the death of God is the thought of Malraux.

In *La Condition humaine* Malraux stabilized the heroism of his characters by the pressure of revolution. He also aggrandized their normal human qualities of pity, tenderness, and patriotism and sacrifice and he included domestic relations as well. Led on first by hope, then by heroism, all the major figures in the novel come to a tragic end. The less active figures are allowed a sad survival, in which they can continue their unimportance. A point worthy of mention here is the direct connection between the fate of the main characters in *La Condition humaine* and the classical ideal of death as the culmination of life. Actaeon and Achilles both die at the highest point in their lives. Once the fury and glory of the moment have passed, only a decline to relative unimportance can follow. Perhaps the Napoleonic legend would have been an even more potent force in subsequent French history if Napoleon had been killed at Waterloo defending the homeland. To no small extent Pericles' funeral oration is a praise of the circumstances which allowed the soldiers the opportunity for a death that is an honorable conclusion to life. For Malraux's characters, the same is true, and cardinally so for Kyo and Katov. Any action in which they could have participated in a continued life would have been humiliatingly dishonorable and unimportant. *La Condition humaine* contains the suggestion that life may in some way acquire meaning through the fraternity of revolutionary action and sacrifice. Both Kyo and Katov made the supreme sacrifice; had they not perished during the resolution of their lives' works, further existence would have been pointless.
Malraux's thought is too diverse and varied for simple restatement through summary but, amorphous as it may be, a body of his thought exists. The fercious violence of La Condition humaine is disagreeable to some, but it is not to be forgotten that the violence is included in Malraux's fictional world because that world needs violence in order to be complete. Another characteristic observation is Malraux's juxtaposition of the evidence of man's weakness to the poetic proof of his tragic stature. This aspect of his thought was already evident in 1930. Throughout this juxtaposition, Malraux continually urged the recognition of man's latent greatness. Finally, it has been argued that concern effects a transposition of values in La Condition humaine. Strains of a noble European tradition can be seen here. As Nietzsche urged a re-evaluation of values, so too did Rilke emphasize that "You must change your life." The importance of the response of the individual to a particular dilemma can easily be seen in conjunction with the tradition of humanism. Ghiberti's thought "Man can be all things if he will" is central to this. That men should solve personal and worldly problems through dynamic control of themselves is another great tradition which is manifest in Nietzsche in yet another form. An acceptable definition of the Über-mensch is a passionate man in control of his passions. Not only must one change his life, but one must also retain control of it. Determinism is discounted because it does not lead to the assumption of responsibility necessary if the problems of the world are to be faced. This massive concern for the world is yet another form of rejection of Christianity, a doctrine which subjugated the world, the intellect, and the body in the interest of the soul. Nietzsche and Malraux are particularly modern
thinkers, yet they are not so iconoclastic that aspects of their thought have never appeared before. They can be linked to several great traditions, which reveals their importance in yet another manner: they demonstrate the vitality and viability of humanism in the modern world. Far from dead, humanism is diversely important, because of the diverse needs for a humanist frame of mind.

Several grounding points must precede the serious treatment of La Condition humaine. First among these is the idea that the style of the novel involves a constant shuttling of consciousness between the mind and the world outside. A prime example of this is the charged initial scene, in which Ch'en's mind is described in contraposition to the vast and indifferent world outside. The arrangement and design of the action in La Condition humaine are tragic. Malraux's account of the happenings at Shanghai is an account of a victory. The effects of the victory are enhanced by Malraux's juxtaposition of the quality of the depiction and the inescapable logic of events. It has been argued that this reduces the logic to relative unimportance. The ideas of being and doing are discussed metaphysically in the novel, their treatment consisting of the conflict between individuals being something, and communists doing something. Because of the political ambiguity of the book, the doings of the communists are favored over the individuals, who are so deeply entrenched in their own being that they ignored the world, a valid criticism of prewar intellectuals who were unable to see dangers and threats in their embryonic stage. Still, La Condition humaine is not an illustration of doctrine.

Though some scenes and episodes of the novel are based upon Malraux's experiences in the East, the background of the novel is unimportant. The entire work is action and character. Further refining D. H. Lawrence's
theories that literature should consist of characters and not plot, Malraux has revealed his characters without customary background detail. No traveller would find *La Condition humaine* useful for its depictions of Shanghai, because the action in the novel is not dependent on local "color." The characters stand out in a stark realism which emphasizes the solitude of their condition and the intensity of their responses. Against this starkness, and given the crisis of the death of God, some characters find consolation in the fraternity of revolutionary action, a cause so deeply gripping that they are willing to die for it. Political cynics would respond that no causes today are worth dying for. To this *l'homme engagé* would respond that the statement is based on a one-sided and incomplete view of the world. Malraux's characters stand out against the colorless landscape and can be described, as was Nietzsche, as "conscious, cultured, and free." Further, the characters illuminate the possible courses of action for the followers of an ideology. Throughout they are directed by ideas, sometimes calculated and part of an "-ism" and sometimes irrational and not based in the realms of the conscious. Yet continually they demonstrate how ideas function in the world. Malraux's characters in *La Condition humaine* are types, not individuals. Having names nevertheless, for obvious and understandable reasons, they must be treated individually and by name.

Katev is the Russian communist who aids the Chinese communists in the insurrection of 1927 against Chaing Kai-Shek. He is the central character in one of *La Condition humaine*’s most dramatic and cathartic scenes, wherein he gives his own cyanide to fellow condemned prisoners, thereby illustrating what is most powerful and lasting in Malraux's novels, a profoundly moving scene or image which is the focus of human dignity. Besides this pivotal scene Malraux gives direct insight into
Katov's character through speeches and actions. For example, Malraux tells us that "absolutely" works its way into everything Katov says. Truly, nothing for Katov is urgent or needed or required; it must be "absolutely" urgent or "absolutely" needed or "absolutely" required. The characteristic of wanting something to be absolute, especially when directed at something that is not, is akin to the romantic spirit.

Katov does not seek the absolute; he tries, by labeling, to create it. His particular Weltanschauung sees only black and white and he is moved by an imperative desire to see only this absolute. Further, the motif of "nothing" permeates his character. This harsh contrast between all and nothing resembles, in microcosm, a tendency of the modern "true believer," who allows himself, through personal insecurity, to desire all with fanatical passion. In Katov's response to this nothingness, Nietzsche's influence can be discerned. Katov says, "If you believe in nothing, then you are obliged to believe in the values of the heart."

Even in a completely Godless world, a man is not without values to live by. In this world, those values originate in man's very nature, his heart and mind. The heart has the capacity to restore and console even where rational means fall hopelessly short. This problem is explored in some depth in Miguel Unamuno's novel The Tragic Sense of Life. He discusses the complete impossibility of affirming life after death by rational means. At this juncture the emotional side of man offers consolation which the rational side cannot. Conversely, however, when this emotional compulsion seeks rational support and finds none, the rational faculties comfort with suggestions of means of survival in this world. Yet Katov feels that the values of the heart endure even, and perhaps best, when all else fails.
Malraux once said, "I am aided by an irrational feeling of invulnerability." This same idea dominates Katov in his death scene in _La Condition humaine_. After the insurrection fails, Katov and the other communists are imprisoned and await execution. For doctrinaire reasons, all the communists carried cyanide in their belts, but Katov chooses to be killed by being thrown into a locomotive boiler. In this situation he realizes that he can allow only two fellow prisoners the dignity of self-control through suicide. Katov feels a cosmic loneliness. His fellow revolutionaries are dead and he alone remains. At this time the true strength of his character is best shown. While being led to his flaming death, his indifference dominates: "Well, let's suppose I died in a fire." Enviable, contemptible, or admirable, this state of mind in the face of death is a rarity in fiction and in the world. Katov poignantly demonstrated that man can transcend the circumstances of his ignominy.

Ch'en also seeks this revolutionary fraternity, but cannot find it because of a murder he has committed. In the tense scene depicting the murder, Ch'en must decide whether or not to stab his victim through the mosquito netting, but the point of view shifts from Ch'en's mind to the world outside, leaving the reader exhausted by the transition. When Ch'en plunges with the knife it is with a force so strong that the body rebounds from the mattress. From this time Ch'en becomes part of "the nocturnal world not opposed to murder," feeling that it held for him a kind of warmth. Later he becomes estranged from the world of those who do not kill. Rejoining his comrades, he was able to give information but unable to convey how he felt. His separation was fated to continue and lead him further into the world of murder. He longed for
the intense sensation of death and murder, but mere violence does not satisfy either the Apollonian or Dionysian characteristics in him. According to Old Gisers, Ch'en's goal in life was to give meaning to death as others give it to life. Ch'en was incapable of living an ideology which was unable to be transformed into action. He became a presentist, denying any aspect of his life to have had an existence in the past. He was motivated by a craving for the absolute, much as Katov, and a craving for immortality—hence a fear of death. Above all, he understood how much weight the shedding of blood gives to an idea. He took his own life after an assassination attempt on Chiang Kai-Shek failed. For Ch'en, self-destruction was man's fate.

Ch'en rejected his conventional early learning and sought new values to live by. That he chose this course is equally important as the specific nature of his decision, for he exerted a will to power. Although he did not seek personal glorification, he valued his life by the contribution he could make to a movement. The success of the movement was paramount in his mind and he was willing to die for it. The communist uprising was a very human concern, the success of which would benefit the lower and working classes. This sense of justice was an obsession to the degree that Ch'en could not bring himself to question its intrinsic veracity. Ch'en wanted to turn ideas into action. Had he been of greater intelligence, yet still committed to this thought, he might have aspired to become an Übermensch.

Hemmelrich is the German phonograph dealer who feels that the universe, which for him is the situation of having a wife and child, despoiled him of his only possible dignity—his own death. His family prevented him from aiding the communists when they sought shelter from the police force of the Kuomintang. Yet his wife and child die when
he is not at home. Destiny's attempt to crush him thus failed badly: by taking everything away from him, it had freed him. This is the predicament from which Nietzsche would advise assertion against the hostile and ambiguous world. He would not be appreciative of killing a wife and child for personal satisfaction, but if the atrocity were committed by the world, he would strongly advocate response with the fury of the Valkyries.

Kyo, the Franco-Japanese leader of the insurrection, feeling that dignity is the opposite of humiliation, came to see the revolution as a living thing: "No man lives by denying life." Kyo's devotion to human dignity liberates him, according to one critic. The heroic sense existed in him almost to the extent that it did in Ch'en, but it had given Kyo a kind of discipline, not a justification of life. Here it can be seen immediately that Kyo is a much more sophisticated character than Ch'en. A discipline which is needed to give direction to an already vigorous life is quite unlike a discipline which creates vigorous life. Thinking that to die is passivity, Kyo concludes that to kill oneself is action. He takes his life with cyanide. By having a cause to die for, by asserting himself even in the face of his own death, by meeting those who sought to rob him of his dignity with spite, and by not evaluating his life until its conclusion, Kyo demonstrates a Nietzschean creation of values through the sheer power of will in the creation of meaning in life. The life Kyo infused with meaning was his own.

In contrast with these characters, whose response to their situations was acceptance of responsibility, Old Gisors flees into the world of opium. This was his relief, given that he could not escape himself into another being. He thought that the essence of man is anguish, the
consciousness of his own fatality, from which all fears are born, even
the fear of death. From this Angst, opium can free a man, and therein
lies its virtue. Old Gisors thought that every man dreams of being god.
In opium he found the ability to be god and master of himself. Opium
taught that aside from physical suffering, nothing is real. This
rejection of the temporal world in favor of a withdrawal into the world
of the mind is a sharp contrast to the violent but fraternal world of
the revolutionaries. Continuing this thought on suffering, Old Gisors,
Kye's father, felt that no dignity can exist that is not founded upon
suffering. Here is an interesting thought on the relativity of the
world, in contrast again to the "absolutism" of Katev and the quest for
the absolute of Ch'en. To say that no dignity can exist but that
founded upon suffering is tantamount to saying that no goodness can
exist unless evil is present also. Yet this argument, often used as a
"proof" of the existence of God, through acknowledgment and placement of
evil in the divine scheme, is no longer tenable. Evil and dignity are
not sufficiently explained in this way.

The entire conflict of minds between father and son explores
another facet of Malraux's complexity. If we are asked who fares better,
Kyo or his father, we must reply that the criteria of "best" must be
clarified. Kyo ended his life with dignity, and his life and death
acquired meaning through his activity in taking his own life. Old
Gisors continued his deep meditation separated from the world and en-
gulfed in opium. The preference for the destiny of Kyo or for that of
his father is a deeply personal matter.

Clappique is a mythomaniac. Old Gisors views this condition as a
means of denying life. Clappique continually gives the impression of
being in disguise, carries an attitude of ambivalence toward life and
destruction, and shows surprise at his presumed assumption of respen-
sibility late in the novel. Yet he could endure the idea of death better than the smell. Clappique avoided the Nietzschean challenge and simply substituted one myth for another in the values which he chose to direct his life. He sought the intensity of experience only in gambling. He evaded responsibility nearly to the extent that Old Gisors did. This is surprising, for his biographical sketch is similar to Malraux's: a French dealer in antiquities who smuggled wares. Yet the similarity ends there.

Ferral is the antithesis of a great deal of revolutionary thought and action. He feels it is stupid for a man who has only one life to be willing to lose it for an idea. This contemptuous rejection of all risk-taking can lead to a boring and pointless life which concentrates on the small thrills that somehow do not threaten the thrill-seeker but which do impart some infinitesimal degree of pleasure. Ferral's release of the birds in the hotel room of his mistress is a prime example of this. Ferral would assure himself of getting his way, we are told, even if it required the use of force or money, as those were his only available assets. That ideas motivate actions is of no consequence to Ferral, as he would see only the action, and it is action alone that justifies life, he feels. The right action for the wrong idea would be without significance or distinction to Ferral for the same reason. Ferral also argues that a man is only the sum of his actions. This complete discount of thought is extreme by any standards. Ferral, who countenanced no judgment, went to women to be judged. Whatever his object, his will to power was never satiated. Ferral is more characteristically "American" in these respects than any other figure in the novel: he is a robber-baron businessman, a man of personal infidelity, a stark materialist, and a fanatic pursuer of personal glory.
Man's pursuit of dignity is a strong theme in *La Condition humaine*, which makes the question of the achievement of it pivotal. An argument has been advanced that the novel illustrates our inability to rise above the human predicament and our inability this side of death to achieve a fitting dignity. This criticism is not entirely correct, though not so much from inaccuracy as from limited scope. The ultimate achievement for each main character—Kyo, Ch'en, and Katov—is a dignified death, which can be the only dignified conclusion to an honorable life. We are unable to achieve dignity this side of death, but this is not to say that we are unable to achieve it at all. Kyo was willing to die for human dignity and Katov gave cyanide to his fellow prisoners in the name of it. Both acts proved human solidarity. Defeat becomes tragic victory and within man's fate there exists the possibility of the power and glory of being a man. Human dignity is a value and hope for mankind is a goal of the revolutionaries. Human dignity is created and restored by people working for a better world.

The characters from *La Condition humaine* live the problems posed by Nietzsche's challenge to the modern world. When no God or absolute exists, new values must be created in order to fill the void. These values could be dangerous, even self-destructive, but they continually provide an answer to the essential question: how can man achieve his dignity? That no clear answer exists, that no authority can be enlisted to supply the answer, and that a suitable answer may never be found are the essential qualities of the post-Nietzschean world. Satisfactory, suitable, and significant answers must be formulated and chosen by a perfervid individualism, the essential existential act.

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Of all modern thinkers Nietzsche is one of the most influential and Malraux is a thinker greatly influenced by him. Malraux's first wife
said that he was obsessed by Nietzsche. Yet the precise manifestation of this influence is seldom treated or explored beyond mere acknowledgment. Intellectual influences are difficult to trace in any case, as any number of thinkers may express similar ideas independently. The ancients were such thinkers without precedents. In certain times before our century of "instant" communication, this is also true. At any rate, thinkers who do not leave a record of their sources, for whatever reasons, must always be shrouded in some sort of mystery because of the missing information. Malraux is exempt from this, however, as it is recorded that he read Nietzsche's writings during his imprisonment in Indo-China. Malraux never said that he owed everything to Nietzsche, as Spengler did, yet the direct influence of the German can be noted in the literary creations of the Frenchman. It cannot be said finally that Nietzsche was a necessary prerequisite for Malraux, as the latter would certainly have lived as dramatically if not as intellectually without the former. Yet if it can be granted that Malraux's thought consists of several core ideas, and that these core ideas existed, if in embryo form, in Nietzsche, then it can be concluded that the refinement of a nineteenth-century humanism, an increased feeling in the qualities of art to show truth, and a belief to examine existing values critically are amply demonstrative of Nietzsche's importance to Malraux and of Malraux's importance to a greater understanding of Nietzsche.

A central concern with human and natural affairs over and beyond a concern with aspects of the sublime and supernatural is characteristic of humanism in any age. Problems have arisen with this term in modern times, as clarity of thought has been replaced in many circles by a relaxing of semantical standards. When humanists are discussed, images of early Renaissance men and their conscious rejection of the church as the only basis for social and political action immediately come to mind.
Actually the term is broader in the era it describes and more specific in the type of man it delineates. In Raphael's famous painting "The School of Athens" Aristotle is obviously the humanist, though the breadth of his writings is very wide and probably beyond such a singular classification. Similarly, Voltaire is considered only a philosopher, an insufficient term for his diversity of interests and writings. More than anything else, Voltaire was a humanist whose disdain for metaphysics was juxtaposed with his passion for social justice. Nietzsche was also a humanist, for he was among the first to recognize that a belief in a divine teleology and supreme being diminishes the value and significance of man. Nietzsche's humanism was even more basic than an isolated political or social concern, as he sought to examine critically the basis of all action—ethics and values. How men order their lives was his primary concern. That the unexamined life was not worth living was as axiomatic to Nietzsche as anything could be.

Malraux once said, "I love to displease." Besides continuing the tradition of French humanist philosophes of the eighteenth century, especially Diderot, this is the core of Malraux's humanism. To challenge, to irritate, and to unsettle, so that the vast powers of the mind are set in motion, were central to Socrates' defense in The Apology. Malraux's concern for the fundamental bases on which men substantiate their action is very similar to Nietzsche's and this desire to question places Malraux in the long tradition of humanists. The domination of the critical attitude in any of several particular ages has led to the ages being demarked as humanist. The enlightenment is only the most prominent of these. Malraux's desire to examine man's values to the core extended of course to himself. His tensely knitted eyebrows, pensive and piercing eyes, and dramatically pursed lips all attest to this.
Striking in Malraux's humanism is his concern with all facets of human experience. As with Nietzsche, for Malraux the heroism of man was the fulfillment of a will. 21 His political and military activity when compared to his literary and theoretical work demonstrates that the world was his stage. To Malraux no doctrine was worthy of adherence and no absolute values existed because there was no absolute. The communist movement at one time had an appeal for Malraux, but he abandoned his interest at the first graceful opportunity, reasserting that his concerns were for free thought and the individual. Malraux throughout was enamoured of man and of his place in the world. He remained convinced that man is what he makes of himself. Additionally he asserted that man retains a greatness, despite all attempts to deprive him of it, and that this greatness is the basis for human dignity, which, being a prime concern of the characters in La Condition humaine, must also be considered close to Malraux's personal outlook as well. In all Malraux's fiction men live in an uplifting world of men. 22 None of the characters for whom Malraux expresses the slightest compassion acts unless directed by an overriding and pervasive concern for human dignity. Given the harsh physical world of bloodshed, hatred, and injustice, the only sanctity, Malraux argues, lies in the fraternity of revolutionary action. La Condition humaine has been termed a very ambiguous book politically, but the political concerns are not central: the actions of the characters are. Whether communist or not, Kyo and Katov are able to demonstrate that a commitment to human ideals rises above political ties. Malraux's novels are autobiographies in general, and they display his intellectual persuasions and inclinations amid the reporting of the world scene at the time of writing. For this reason a political preference is expressed. Cardinally politics is not central but incidental. It is with the human
condition that Malraux's characters are concerned. Germaine to this also
is an apparently obsessive concern with human dignity, for the attainment
and preservation of which men are willing to walk indifferently into a
fire or bite a cyanide capsule when captured and facing execution.

The idea of the Übermensch is seldom voiced in Nietzsche except in
conjunction with the concept of overcoming. Though peculiar, it is
important to mention that Nietzsche, through the tradition of this
actualization concept, is directly part of the tradition of Western
philosophy which he sought to destroy. The idea of overcoming is
important to the mythology of ancient Greece and finds popular expression
in the absorption myths of Zeus, the creation myths of Icarus and
Daedalus and Hephaistos, and in any of the myths dealing with prophecy
or prophets, for an acute degree of overcoming is needed to predict the
future or even to know the present and the past. Overcoming finds
expression also in Shakespeare, whose ninety-fourth sonnet voices several
ideas later appearing in Nietzsche. Shakespeare, insofar as his personal
Weltanschauung can be determined amid his range of characters and thoughts,
purported in the sonnets a love which would transcend mere physical lust.
This transcendent love must be of another sort than lustful pursuit:
it must eclipse lust and its transitory and physical nature. The Irish
novelist James Joyce expounded upon the same idea in terms of an
epiphany, a transcendence of normal ways of knowing, climaxing in the
achievement of a higher level of understanding. Malraux is also a part
of this tradition of transcendence. His encouragement for man to create
his world, either in art, politics, or literature, and through the very
act of creation to assert the greatness of the species are integral
parts of the tradition. Malraux's urging man to reach above himself in
artistic productions is a form of the will to power, for which unfortun-
ately only Nietzsche is known. The will to power as a creative force is
not foreign to Malraux's aesthetic, which continually asserts that man is to rise above his limits, without regard to who it was who established the limits, and then create his world.

Ethically Nietzsche and Malraux are closest. One qualification must be mentioned, however; whereas Nietzsche advocated an active life, the concept of living dangerously, and, of course, the will to power, only Malraux lived it, fusing theoretical activity with the life of l'homme engagé. Both recognized that for all practical purposes God was dead, and both sought to examine and establish a theoretical base for ethical action in the godless world. Malraux found in Nietzsche whatever incitement he needed to abandon obsolete values. As such a substantial part of the accumulated values which Western civilization passed to the two thinkers was firmly rooted in a belief in the existence of God, the entire Western world-view was in serious need of revision. Here Nietzsche's importance wanes. As a critic and diagnostician of the crisis of civilization upon its discovery of the death of God, he is unrivaled. Yet as a constructive thinker from this particular perspective, as one who suggests solutions to the cosmic problems that he recognized, and as a part of that humanist tradition which sought consciously to improve the lot of man, his contributions are meager. Here the importance of Malraux waxes, as he lived the life that Nietzsche advocated. Because of this intimacy of the implications of ivory tower speculations, Malraux demonstrated the consequences of the life of action far more than any histrionic thinker could. In Malraux the re-evaluation of all values occurs, whereas in Nietzsche it is only discussed. Through this relationship of two intellectual giants a further insight is to be gained. Malraux's life allows for concrete examination rather than only speculation on the developed thought of Nietzsche, thought developed after his death. This development is otherwise unattainable because of
the tragedy of Nietzsche's life. That is to say, in Malraux the quintessential thought of Nietzsche is expressed as Nietzsche never had the opportunity to do. In Malraux the spirit of Nietzsche lives on.

In direct correlation to the ideas of humanism, the will to power and the transvaluation of all values are the grounding points for the greatness of man and the subjugation of the world. The greatness of man is asserted through the will to power. Advocacy of it is a branch of humanism. The greatest of the great men cannot help being described as Übermensch and an authentically great man of the twentieth century would have undergone a re-evaluation of values necessarily. These are not, however, many terms for the same phenomena. A stronger argument could be advanced for the existence of all these similar ideas as being interrelated. In close proximity to this is the idea of free thought.

In a recent biography of Voltaire a recognized scholar argues that the term "humanism" has acquired a plethora of popular meanings which deprive it of any concrete significance or definite semantical value. Rather than join this fad of current usage, the biographer suggests seeing Voltaire as a freethinker, a term whose connotations and implications adequately describe the greatest of the philosophes. This idea of freethinking is central to Malraux and Nietzsche. Freethinking is the cornerstone of their own and, by implication, a significant portion of modern thought.

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In conclusion some commentary on the concept of truth in Malraux and Nietzsche is desirable. Today truth is clouded by divergences in modes of thought among the several academic circles which still pursue it. This divisiveness is compounded by the so-called "great divide" in modern thought, in which mathematical analysis pervades in Anglo-
American countries and ethical matters dominate Continental thought. Art as propaganda is rejected by both, yet this is not to say that propagandistic art is not in production, even within the Western world. Nietzsche said, "We have Art in order that we do not perish from Truth." Through epiphanies and transcendences we can still achieve a vision of truth, despite diverse efforts to derail the effort. As art and truth are both manifestations of the ideal, and if art, truth, and the ideal can be said to exist in the thought of one man and in the life and thought of another, then Nietzsche and Malraux are assured a place in the heritage of the twentieth century, the century of the misconception of the ideal.
Karl Jaspers is a modern German philosopher who, with Martin Heidegger and Jean-Paul Sartre, is considered one of the high priests and founding fathers of existentialism. A second basis for his importance is that his thought affords a further perspective on Nietzsche, for he points up aspects of Nietzschean thought which did not become prominent in Malraux. Jaspers is a metaphysical philosopher, but one who lived through the Nazi years (1933-1945), and his subsequent comments on the contemporary world make him a social critic comparable to Nietzsche.

To gain an understanding of such a thinker, some background on his life and the general characteristics of his thought needs to be known, among them the topic of communication, which defies classification elsewhere. That a philosopher such as Jaspers, whose reflections are poignantly directed at the peculiarities of the modern world, is not well known outside academic circles is another area of consideration. Jaspers' achievements and nationality, which led him to address directly the problems of the modern world, justify greater prominence, for his thought is valuable in understanding our world.

Among the most striking aspects associated with Jaspers is the continual emphasis on integrity in personal affairs. In the established tradition of Nietzsche and Rilke he advocated that one change one's life. It is part of Jaspers' emphasis on making philosophizing a widespread and public activity. Jaspers' own words reveal that from his childhood he stressed the importance of truth, loyalty, and
reliability. Later critics have lauded him for his integrity, strength of moral argument, clarity and economy of expression, and wisdom, humanity, and authenticity. The inner tension that is notable throughout his character is perhaps one of the factors contributing to his emphasis on communication.

Communication is important for its relation to the philosophic mood, the reality of self being, and the all-important extreme or boundary situation. Jaspers traced this devotion to achieving the ideal in communication to his wife. His own writing style was non-poetic, non-dramatic, and non-aphoristic, quite unlike that of Nietzsche. This contrast of styles must also be considered when discussing Jaspers and Nietzsche: what are their positions toward the achievement of the absolute through communication and how they relate to their total or at least identifiable philosophy?

The sort of character suggested by these superficial comments is revealed in more depth through Jaspers' various criticisms and comments on the world. He has written on the insufficiency of science, the limits of knowledge and reason, the nature of mental illness, the substance of academic freedom, the intellectual crisis of our time, the "total falsehood" of National Socialism, the responsibility of all Germans (and all men) for the calamity of Nazism, the meaning and prospects of German unity, and the role of the churches in the modern world. A writer of such diversity and relevance deserves not to be ignored.

The significance of his specific positions is enhanced if the general nature of Jaspers' philosophy is understood before one begins to study his detailed metaphysical works. Among the general characteristics which can be discerned is a deep-seated revulsion toward doctrines.